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THE JACKSON POST

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KNOCKOUT EVENT

Black Tie & Boxing brings in more donations for STAR Center

By Julie Cooke
Reporter

Black Tie and Boxing has become one of Jackson's favorite fundraisers.

It's big and loud with a Las Vegas feel and the crowd is dressed to the nine's.

The event has grown in leaps and bounds since entering a partnership with The Star Center.

Renovation of the Carl Perkins Civic Center is still underway, so this year's event was moved to the Jackson Fairgrounds.

Star Center President Jennifer Graves said the usual cheers from the balcony were missed but the excitement in the air and the will of the fighters were definitely there.

"Some of them have never done anything like this before so they've been working out three times a week for three months, and some have fought before," Graves said. "These are true amateur fights, fighters who are trying to go pro.

"We have a fight promoter here, Ryan Collins, who does a great job of bringing in local talent for us. There are also out-of-state fighters here."

The fundraising goal is in the $250,000 range and donations typically come in the week after the event.

The Star Center also hosts the Flint Cox Golf Tournament in May and Dancing with the Stars in October. Graves says there are other fundraisers in the works that will be announced soon.

The 10 member Black Tie Fight Club is made up of community leaders who advocate for the Star Center.

Since October of 2023, Arrow Athletics has trained club members, some with little or no fight experience. Each member agrees to raise $2,000. Fight Club Member Keith Busby was recognized for raising the largest amount with a total of $4,659.75. Fight Club winners were Jessica Vowell-Ross, Keith Busby, Eric Bays, and Will Eason.

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Supporters of The STAR Center and fans of combat sports packed into Jackson Fairgrounds Arena for Black Tie & Boxing on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026. (JULIE COOKE/The Jackson Post)

Members of the Black Tie Fight Club at the Black Tie & Boxing event to benefit The STAR Center support take part in matches and raise funds. The largest amount came from Keith Busby (holding the left corner of the check) who raised $4,659.75. (Photo courtesy of Ontoni Reedy for The STAR Center)

Sacred Heart community mourns loss of Andre Bell

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

As news spread throughout Jackson and Madison County on Monday of this week, people in the Sacred Heart of Jesus High School community and local basketball fans were sad to hear of the passing of Knight alum Andre Bell.

Bell was a part of the final graduating class at Sacred Heart before it closed in 2024.

He'd signed on to play college basketball at Fisk University in Nashville, and he was there in his second year with the school when tragedy struck this past weekend.

According to statements from the City of Nashville Public Affairs Office and Fisk University, Bell and a couple of friends had volunteered to help Sunday afternoon at a Fisk gymnastics event at the Fairgrounds in Nashville.

About 8 p.m. that night, Bell and his friends were on their way back to campus on I-65 North with Bell driving when a dark sedan pulled up beside them and gunfire came from the vehicle and fatally struck Bell.

"Bell's friends reported noticing a dark sedan in the left lane beside them," said the statement from the City of Nashville regarding the police investigation into the shooting. "Both said they were distracted by their cellphones when they suddenly heard multiple gunshots and realized Bell had been hit. The Sentra slowed and spun back into traffic before colliding with a red pickup truck. The dark sedan kept going."

Andre Bell

News of Bell's passing became public Monday morning, and those connected with Sacred Heart express sadness of Bell's passing.

"Andre Bell was a member of

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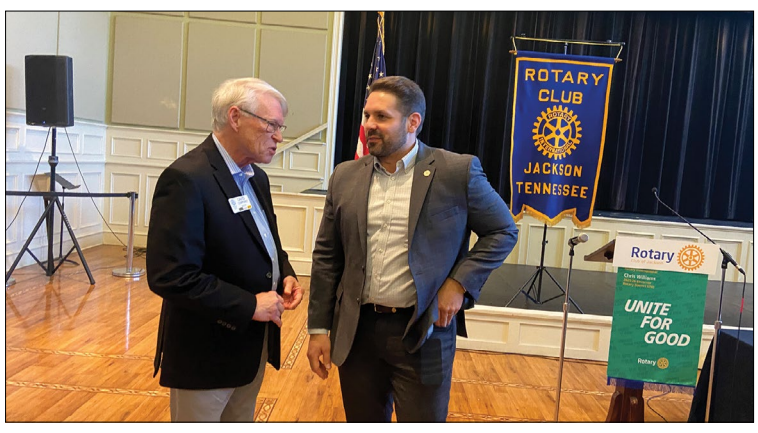

Jackson Mayor Scott Conger and Jackson Rotary President David Comperry talk after the completion of the Rotary Club's meeting where Conger gave the annual State of the City on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/ The Jackson Post)

Conger celebrates accomplishments with State of the City

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Jackson Mayor Scott Conger gave the first edition of his annual State of the City address to the Jackson Rotary Club on Wednesday, Jan. 7, and his speech highlighted the work of the departments of the City of Jackson during 2025.

He first acknowledged how City leadership found itself in familiar territory last year at budget time, having too much expenses left at the end of the revenue.

But he said everyone involved in the process including the department heads and the workers they manage did their best to continue the work for the citizens while staying within the confines of that budget.

The City's customer service, record keeping and accounting are all a simpler process ow because of the work done by the IT department as well as others in the City to modernize and digitize their paperwork and systems.

He praised the work of the Jackson Police Department not

See **CELEBRATES**
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Miller running for County Mayor again

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Frencherry Miller is a native of Madison County who served nearly three decades in the United States Marine Corps and came home a few years back with a willingness to serve.

On Thursday, Jan. 8, Miller and about 40 supporters gathered at the DoubleTree Hotel as he formally announced his intention to run for Madison County Mayor.

"I'm from here, and I love my home, and I want to do what I can to help it move forward any way I can," Miller said.

This is Miller's second time to run for the position after having run with the Democratic nomination in 2022. This time he's running as an independent.

"I'm not for one party or another," Miller said. "I'm for everybody, and it doesn't matter to me what your political beliefs are.

"There are some ideas from both sides that I like and others from both sides that I don't, so this is a better way for me."

Miller said leadership is something he's passionate about as he had a number of certifications after various training sessions and periods during his career with the USMC.

"There were times when I was stationed overseas when I was the highest ranking Marine in the country and was expected to make decisions that affected our people and the

Frencherry Miller speaks at his campaign kickoff event at the DoubleTree Hotel on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Post)

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Local News

Memphis' Perkins signs on to run for D-8 U.S. Rep.

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Leonard Perkins Sr. spent decades in the United States Air Force in air traffic control.

Since retiring, he's spent nearly 20 years advocating for military members in different roles in the Department of Veterans' Affairs and with private organizations like All Veterans of America and Vietnam Veterans of America.

He's a pastor who worked on staff at a church in Memphis for a year or two before stepping out on his own, restoring a condemned building and planting a church in that he's pastored for 25 years.

"I have a heart for people, for veterans and for all Americans, especially those of us in this part of the country and state," Perkins said.

That's why Perkins is running for the Democratic nomination to challenge United States Congressman David Kustoff for the District 8 position to represent Tennessee in the U.S. House of Representatives.

He worked hard Friday, Jan. 9, to show he's ready to run for the position and serve.

"My wife and I got a hotel room in Nashville last night and stayed up there so we could be at the state election office building to get a petition," Perkins said. "Then we drove straight here to set up and get signatures on my petition."

Just like with local elections in a county or municipality, a federal representative needs only 25 signatures to qualify to be on the ballot, but because District 8 includes part of Shelby and Tipton counties plus 13 other

Leonard Perkins Sr., a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Representative for District 8 for the state of Tennessee, talks with a person signing his petition at the Jackson-Madison County Public Library on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Post)

counties that cover northwest Tennessee all the way to Henry and Carroll counties.

After getting his ballot, Perkins drove back not quite to his home in Memphis, but to Jackson, where he and his wife stayed for a couple hours in the conference room of the Jackson-Madison County Public Library while supporters whom he'd met had the opportunity to sign his petition.

"Our plan is to get more than 25 to make sure we have enough and then some in case some of the signatures aren't valid for whatever reason and get back to Nashville and file my petition (Friday)," Perkins said.

He was successful in that endeavor, filing his petition and officially getting on the ballot for the Democratic primary.

"There are a lot of good people in District 8 who work hard and deserve to have someone fighting for them in Washington, and we don't have anyone fighting for us in Washington right now," Perkins said. "There's a monster in the White House, and one of his tentacles is right here in West Tennessee.

"It's time we cut that tentacle off, and voting him out is the way to do that."

Perkins said Kustoff has come up with some good ideas that he's tried to get passed in the House, but he said he gets talked out of his ideas by President Donald Trump and other members of the House and the Republican National Committee.

"When they do that, he takes opportunities away from our people here," Perkins said. "He takes money out of our pockets, food out of our children's mouths and resources away from our veterans who have served our country.

"We need someone who will fight for us and our people and to get District 8 what our people need to thrive."

Perkins said taking care of the vulnerable portions of the population is what the government should be doing.

"I think the measuring stick for a society is how it treats its babies, seniors, veterans and women," Perkins said. "We can be doing a much better job of all those things, so I want to raise the bar for District 8."

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Business owners, former officials among known challengers for elected office

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Here's a look at a number of notable people running for different offices and have at least pulled petitions for this year's elections.

Jenn Free

Mark Patey

County Commission District 1, Position 1

Lonnie Parker III is challenging for the seat after having submitted his resume to the County Commission last fall to fill the open seat left vacant by the passing of the late Luther Mercer. His wife is Sabrina Parker, the director of Helping Hands of West and Middle Tennessee and the Jackson Chapter of the National Action Network.

Tina Mercer, the incumbent for the position and daughter of Luther, has pulled her petition for the seat.

Both are running as Democrats

District 2, Position 1

Jennifer Greer has pulled a petition for this seat as a Republican.

Greer is the wife of Brad Greer, the chair of the Madison County Republican Party.

This is the seat vacated by Olivia Abernathy, who announced in November she wouldn't be running for re-election.

District 6, Position 1

Brian Wilson is running for the position being vacated by Jimmy Arnold, who isn't running for re-election. Wilson is a 30-year veteran of the Madison County Sheriff's Office who went to work for the County Highway Department after retirement.

District 6, Position 2

Current Commission member Arthur Johnson is resigning from the Commission at next week's meeting.

His nephew, Mike Bailey is running for the seat along with prominent South Jackson realtor Chris Phillips.

District 7, Position 1

Independent candidate Mitiz Merriweather is challenging Gary Tippett, and she works in the Jackson City Court Clerk's office and two of her children are City HR Director Kelsea Merriweather and construction business entrepreneur and former Harlem Globetrotter A.J. Merriweather. Both were former standout athletes at South Side High and went on to play college volleyball and basketball respectively.

District 9, Position 1

Incumbent Karley Bond is being challenged by independent candidate Gina Langley, who co-hosts a morning radio talk show on WNWS-FM 101.5, Mike and Gina in the Morning.

District 10, Position 1

This is the seat vacated by Andy Hall, who's running for County Mayor.

Two Republican candidates have pulled petitions.

One is Karen Bell, a longtime friend of Hall's who's the former finance director for the County before she retired last year after a public disagreement with Mayor A.J. Massey and Jackson-Madison County Schools Superintendent Dr. Marlon King.

The other is Julie Wiser, the wife of Sheriff Julian Wiser.

General Sessions Judge

Incumbent Mark Patey has pulled his petition.

While she hasn't pulled her petition, local attorney Jen Free has announced her candidacy and has announced a campaign kickoff event on Jan. 21.

Free was one of four other candidates who submitted their names to the County Commission last spring when they ultimately appointed Patey to serve on the bench after former Judge Hugh Harvey retired.

Whoever wins this election will serve the rest of the term Harvey was originally elected to serve in 2022 until 2030.

JMCSS Board District 5, Position 2

Marcia Moss is being challenged by independent candidate Sherry Franks.

Franks served for four years as the school board member for District 5, Position 1 before losing in the primary two years ago to Shane Barnes.

Jackson City Court Clerk

Jackson City Councilman Johnny Dodd has pulled a petition for this position after longtime clerk Darryl Hubbard decided not to run again.

Kim Condray, wife of former Jackson Mayor candidate Ray Condray, has filed her petition for the position too.

The deadline to pull and file a petition is Feb. 19. Once a petition is pulled, 25 signatures of registered voters within the district or county - depending on the position - is required for the person to be qualified for the ballot.

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Condray running for City Court Clerk

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Kim Condray has never sought out the limelight. She prefers being behind the scenes.

She stayed behind the scenes two years ago as much as possible, only stepping out a couple of times to join her husband for interviews some of the time.

But now she said she feels called to step out and has pulled a petition to run for City of Jackson City Court Clerk. She pulled the petition on Friday, and on Saturday morning, she was officially announcing it at the Madison County Constitutional Republican meeting. Two days later on Monday, she'd turned in her petition with all 25 signatures needed to qualify to be on the ballot in August.

Condray is the wife of Ray Condray, who campaigned for Jackson Mayor in 2023 and pushed Mayor Scott Conger to a runoff in June of that year before falling short.

"I watched Ray go through that campaign and was in it with him and gained so much respect for him than I already had," Kim Condray said. "And I never thought I might decide to do the same thing.

"And I really didn't decide to do it because I feel just like Ray felt God calling him to run for mayor,

Kim Condray announced her intent to run for Jackson City Court Clerk ahead of its election day in August. (Submitted photo)

I feel God calling me to this."

Darryl Hubbard is the longtime City Court Clerk, and he's announced he's not running for re-election, leaving the position open.

So far, Condray and Jackson City Councilman Johnny Dodd are the only two candidates who have pulled a petition for that position.

Condray moved to Jackson not long after she graduated college about 30 years ago.

"I've lived here ever since and love it here," Condray said. "I taught school for 12 years at the middle and high school level before I worked at different places in office administration."

Condray said she thinks her more than a decade of work in office management has given her quality experience to oversee the office that ensures the payment of fines from those with a guilty verdict or plea in Judge Thomas Anderson's court room.

"I haven't seen a job description anywhere on the City's website, but it says there are only two requirements - to have a high school diploma and to be a resident of Jackson," Condray said. "So I guess I'm OK to run.

"But if elected, I plan to have a symbiotic relationship with Judge Anderson in not only handling the money into the City from the court to make sure it's not running in the red like I've been told it is, but also handling court dockets, managing records and filings and just keeping the public informed of what's going on in City Court because we need to know."

Hubbard currently has a staff of seven who handles the day-to-day duties of the office, and Condray said she plans to work with each of them as well to make sure the office is efficient for the City's needs and for the court's.

"I'm not a politician and have no interest in becoming one," Condray said. "I'm just a hard-working woman who feels called to help out in this area, and I believe I can do that. I ask the voters of Jackson to give me a chance and give the office a fresh set of eyes in looking over what the City has coming in."

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

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Opinion

One piece of advice for spelling bee contestants

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

A few members of the local media were at Rose Hill School Tuesday morning talking about the upcoming JMCSS Spelling Bee next week.

We were gathered in the library interviewing the school's librarian Krista Grace, the two young men who will represent Rose Hill in the district-wide bee and their teachers.

And it brought back memories of my own glory days competing in spelling bees.

And it also brought back the memory of when I first began to learn the importance of proper preparation.

It was February of 1995, and I was in eighth grade.

I was a good student when I wanted to be, and I had - at one time - a really good memory.

Spelling was something that I was better at than most academic subjects growing up, almost to the point that in elementary school when it was time each day to get out our spelling books and get to that subject for an hour or so, that was almost like break time because spelling was easy for me.

So in eighth grade, I won my school's spelling bee and would represent Cloverdale Junior High in the Lauderdale County (Ala.) Schools District Spelling Bee. Winner would go to the state spelling bee in probably Montgomery or Birmingham.

I don't remember that part because I didn't need to know it since it had nothing to do with me.

At some point after I'd won the school bee, I was outside after school one day shooting basketball in my yard when a buddy came by riding his horse.

He asked me if I wanted to ride the horse for a minute, and I said sure because I thought we'd just go for a simple trot around my yard and then he'd ride the horse off down the road and I'd go back to shooting the basketball because my career plans at that point were to skip college basketball and be drafted by the Chicago Bulls and lead them to more championships than Michael Jordan ever did.

Shields

Except I got up on the horse behind the other guy, and he took off down the road like he was trying to win the Kentucky Derby.

I was beginning to panic and was trying to make sure I didn't fall off the back of the horse. He thought I was trying to push him up to the horse's neck, so to keep from doing that he decided to jump off the horse at full run without telling me.

I nearly broke my neck as I hit our gravel road chin first. I can remember this experience in my mind and watching trees on our road go by while my chin slid on the gravel until the rest of my body fortunately fell forward, causing a lot of impact on my abdomen, creating a massive gash in my hip and peeling a lot of skin from my chin like an apple.

I've been in a few car wrecks - nothing more serious than a rear-ending - and I've never been as sore as I was after this experience. It happened on Tuesday evening, and I didn't go back to school that week.

But there was an issue … the county spelling bee was that Thursday.

I didn't go to school that day, but my mother drove me to the event at a building on the campus of the University of North Alabama in Florence, and I proudly represented Cloverdale looking like my career plan was MMA and not the NBA and I needed to do a lot of work to improve.

It had also been a couple days since I'd looked at any of the words and hadn't even really thought much about the bee until our school counselor called my mother at home asking if they needed to go with our school's runner-up for the event. I said, "I got this."

I made it through the first couple of rounds of words and I wasn't the first one eliminated, so there's that.

But then it was my turn on the third round through, and my word was "beryl."

That word is short for the chemical "beryllium," which is on the Periodic Table of Elements as the fourth square. I was familiar with "beryllium."

But when it's shortened to "beryl," the pronunciation changes, so I very confidently spelled out the word that I heard at that moment.

B-A-R-R-E-L

I was shocked when I'd spelled "barrell" wrong because they let me know the correct spelling, "beryl."

And that's how my spelling bee career ended … in confused defeat because of a misunderstanding.

But you can ask for a definition. You can ask to use it in a sentence. I had options, and I took none of them because I didn't think I needed to. Because who doesn't know how to spell "barrel"?

So to all of the students in next week's spelling bee: I don't care if it's the word "I" or "a" or "the" or "it." Get the definition. Have them use it in a sentence. Get the origin. Ask for the first couple letters. Do whatever you can to make sure you're spelling the word they're reading every time.

Maybe you can go further than me. Because the winner of this bee has the chance to compete in Nashville for the chance to go to Washington D.C. and be on ESPN in the national competition.

Good luck to all of you.

Brandon Shields is the managing editor of The Jackson Post. Reach him through e-mail at brandon@jacksonpost.news. Follow him on X.com @JSEditorBrandon. Follow him on Instagram @EditorBrandon.

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MILLER

From 1A

people we were serving near in that country," Miller said. "And I not only worked with the people of the country, but I was working with translators too.

"And some of those decisions had to be quick decisions, so I did my best to talk with everyone and get their perspective before ultimately making whatever decision needed to be made at the time. I did it thoughtfully and prayerfully and feel like I gained respect from all sides when I did."

Miller said he feels like being able to bring that ability of diplomacy could work in his favor if he were to win election for this position.

"Four years ago when I ran, I came in ready to change the world and thought I had all the answers," Miller said. "But that's not my approach this time.

"I've been watching and paying attention and seeing how this position needs to operate. For example, I came in last time thinking I knew what everybody and every community needed. But maybe what I think a certain area needs isn't what the people of that community needs or wants. That's why I plan to have town hall sessions and get out and meet people in areas like Medon, Three Way, Spring Creek and all these different areas of the county to see exactly what they want and why."

Many who spoke at the event on Miller's behalf spoke about his integrity, faith and compassion for others.

"I think all three of those characteristics are needed for this position because you want someone who has integrity in that role," Miller said. "And faith will play a very large part of every major decision I make in this position or otherwise.

"And when I'm mayor, I will be mayor for everybody and not just the people who voted for me or liked me. So when you need me, I'll be there for you making sure Madison County is there for you."

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

ANDRE BELL

From 1A

Sacred Heart's final graduating class before the closure of the school," a statement from Sacred Heart said. "We are devastated at the news of his passing in a senseless act of violence.

Andre Bell was a bright scholar and a kind gentleman, a tremendous athlete and a dear friend. He will forever be remembered and beloved by his Sacred Heart family. Our hearts go out to his family and many friends, and we pray for the repose of his beautiful soul."

While at Sacred Heart, Andre was the recipient of the Ronald Reagan Leadership Medal.

"This award is given to the student who exemplifies the pillars of drive, humility, and service before self," the statement continued. "This student has the conviction, ambition and courage to take initiative in their endeavors, possesses the unique combination of altruism and empathy, and serves selflessly in pursuit of prosperity for their fellow students and citizens.

"These rare and admirable qualities were exemplified every day by Andre Bell."

Bell was an one of the leading players for Sacred Heart when the Knights were one of the best teams in West Tennessee. He was named to the Division II-A West All-District team.

"Andre was a smart, respectful young man who truly loved the game of basketball," said Nick Beauregard, the boys' basketball coach at SHJHS. "You could see that love in the countless hours he put into the gym, always working to get better.

"I had the privilege of coaching Andre for four years, and each year he grew not only as a basketball player, but as a student and as a young man. No matter what was asked of him, Andre did it without hesitation, always responding with a simple, 'Yes sir.' Andre was deeply loved at Sacred Heart and will be truly missed."

Bell also played baseball for baseball coach and athletic director John Barlow.

"Andre didn't have quite as much experience playing baseball as he did basketball, but he was a great athlete who definitely helped the baseball team," Barlow said. "He played outfield and was good at making contact with the bat.

"He was usually quiet around me but always did his best to do whatever he was challenged to do in practice and in games."

Former Sacred Heart Principal Dr. Ann Keyl made a statement about Bell and his family that both coaches made as well.

"Andre was a good kid who always wanted to help however he could," Keyl said. "And his family did everything and was as involved with the school as they could be.

"I've talked with a lot of people who knew him, and this is a great loss for a lot of us."

Fisk University is feeling the loss of Bell.

"Our hearts go out to his family at this most difficult time," said Fisk Athletic Director Valencia Jordan. "We will stand with them and support them in every way possible. We are a family that learns, loves, plays, and prays together and will continue to do so. Counseling is being provided for our team of athletes who are understandably heartbroken."

The basketball team is missing a leader in every way with Bell's passing.

"He was a dominant force on the Fisk University Men's Basketball team, but he was most remembered for his infectious smile, loving personality, and unique ability to always bring warmth to a room," said men's coach Jeremiah Crutcher. "We now have a deep absence in our program, but more importantly, we have a deep pain in our hearts.

"He will be truly missed. Our thoughts and unwavering prayers are with his family and the little kids in his family and in Nashville who looked up to him."

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Obituaries

Obituaries

Imogene Williams 1926-2026

Imogene Williams, 99, passed away Sunday, Jan. 11, at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. Burial will take place in the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Springfield, Mo. Daniel Funeral Home in Lamar, Mo., was in charge of the arrangements.

She was born in Muncie, Ind., to the late Dow and Vera Harris Hobbs. She was a dedicated educator who taught for 35 years and was a graduate of Arkansas State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree. She enjoyed quilting, RV camping, fishing, and playing bridge.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Clifton O. Williams; one son, Clifton L. Williams; and one sister, Evelyn Silsby.

She is survived by one son, Ron (Laurian) Williams; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

Carolyn J. McLemore 1949-2026

Carolyn J. McLemore, 76, of Jackson, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 7, in Jackson. A memorial service was held Saturday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., at Maple Springs Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

She was born in Lexington to the late Clark Diffee and Wilma Jo Johnson Diffee.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by one sister, Regina Gurley; one brother-in-law, Tony Bain; and one sister-in-law, Joanie Diffee.

She is survived by one brother, Leonard (Theresa L. Blakley) Diffee; one sister, Darlene Bain; one brother-in-law, Charles Gurley; several nieces and nephews; and one stepson, Jon (Toni) McLemore, and their family.

Those we love remain with us, for love itself lives on. Cherished memories never fade because a loved one's gone. Those we love can never be more than a thought apart— For as long as there is memory, they live on in the heart.

Gregory D. McGill 1967-2026

Gregory D. McGill, 59, of Pinson, passed away Sunday, Jan. 4, in Pinson. The family has chosen cremation, and a memorial service will be scheduled at a later date, with burial to follow in Big Springs United Methodist Church Cemetery.

He was born in Jackson to the late Charles Douglas McGill and Elaine Russell McGill. He earned his master's degree in special education and taught English in China. He later worked as a manager at Kirkland's Home Warehouse.

He is survived by his aunt, Margaret Cooper, of Bartlett; his uncle, Sonny Russell (Mahlia), of Henderson; and several cousins.

Gregory E. Hill 1954-2025

Gregory "Doll Baby, Cabbage Head" Eugene Hill, 71, of Jackson, passed away Monday, Dec. 29, at his home in Jackson.

He was born in Columbia to the late Rolland "Slick" Hill and Alberta Redding Hill. He dedicated his life to Christ at an early age and was a faithful member of New Harvest Church while living in Columbia. After relocating to Jackson, he became a committed member of Unity Temple Church and later joined Holy New Beginning Ministry under the leadership of Jeremy Myles. He served in the United States Air Force and later retired from Delta Construction. He was widely known for his love of motorcycle riding and racing.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, William J. Hill; his sisters, Linda Gail Hill, Linda Marie Williams, and Deborah Nelson; and his son, Dennis Gordon.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Mitchell Hill; four children, Donnell Liles, of Columbia, Chris (Gina) Wiggins, of San Diego, Calif., Crystal (Shawn) Pye, of Columbia, and Chasity (Jamii) Johnson, of Nashville; four sisters, Deborah E. Hill, Gina Hill, Linnie (Derrick) Davis, and Tonya (Michael) Jenkins, all of Columbia; two brothers, Elder Ronald (Theresa) Hill and Thomas Hill, both of Nashville; one sister-in-law, Deborah Armstrong Hill, of Columbia; and a host of grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Terry D. Dixson 1961-2025

Terry D. Dixson, 64, passed away Sunday, Dec. 28. Funeral services were held Saturday, Jan. 10, at 11:30 a.m., at Home Missionary Baptist Church in Jackson. Burial followed in Highland Memorial Gardens in Jackson. Mercer Brothers Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Terry Dwayne Dixson, affectionately known as "Playground," was born to Ms. Helen E. Dixson and the late John L. Mercer. He was a graduate of West High School, Class of 1979. He was employed by the State of Tennessee and Porter Cable before becoming self-employed and founding Terry's Lawn Care Services. He was known for his love of motorcycles and was a member of the Sunset Riders and later the Sin City Disciples.

In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Johnny B. and Mary L. Dixson; paternal grandparents, John H. and Carrie B. Mercer; two aunts; and four uncles.

He is survived by one daughter, Chelsea Dixson; two grandchildren; his mother, Helen E. Dixson; his stepmother, Maxine Mercer; four sisters; one aunt; four uncles; two nephews; two nieces; one godson; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Sarah A. Goyer 1952-2026

Sarah A. Goyer passed away Friday, Jan. 2. A celebration of life service was held Saturday, Jan. 10, at 1 p.m., at Gospel Temple Holiness Church. Burial followed in Montgomery Cemetery. Stephenson-Shaw Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Sarah Ann Goyer was born to the late John and Claudine Pewitte. She was a devoted Christian and a faithful member of Bethlehem #2 Missionary Baptist Church. She attended West High School and graduated in 1972. She continued her education at Jackson State Community College and Bethel University, later earning her bachelor's degree in nursing. She was a skilled and compassionate nurse who served faithfully until her retirement.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by one son, Monty Lawon Pewitte; and her siblings, John Lee, Raymond, Willie T., Ernest Cleve, James "Baball," Charles, Cora Ethel, Pearlie Lee "Easie," and Shirley Jean.

She is survived by her husband of 40 years, Curtis Goyer; three children, Saidrick (Christina) Pewitte, of Jackson, Christopher (Dawn) Pewitte, of Murfreesboro, and Monica (Maurice) Shaw, of Murfreesboro; two step-children, Cassandra Goyer and Curtis (Twonia) Goyer Jr.; one special grandson she raised, Saidrick Pewitte Jr.; two sisters, Nellie Guyton, of Denmark, and Janice (Elvis) Phelps, of Jackson; one brother, Alexander Vantrese, of Chicago, Ill.; and numerous grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Bryan M. Davis 1977-2026

Bryan M. Davis, 48, of Luray, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 6. No services are scheduled at this time. George A. Smith & Sons Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

He was born March 29, 1977, and was a resident of Luray.

Sterling R. Craig 1941-2026

Sterling R. Craig, 85, of Jackson, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 7, at his home in Jackson. A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church, with a reception to follow in Memorial Hall. Prior to the service, the family will gather for a private interment at Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery at Parker's Crossroads. George A. Smith & Sons Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Sterling Craig was born in Memphis and grew up in Covington, the son of J.T. and Carolyn Ruffin Craig. He served in the United States Air Force and later joined The Jackson Clinic as a dermatologist in 1973. He practiced there for 25 years before opening Dermatology Associates in 1998 and retired in 2007.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia "Jenny" Pentecost Craig; three children; five grandchildren; one brother; and one sister.

Republican commissioners expected to vote against rezoning

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

When the Madison County Commission meets on Tuesday, Jan. 20, one of the items they will be discussing is a possible rezoning in the southwestern edge of the county right on the Hardeman County line.

Its' at 254 Hailey Road that's currently F-A-R (forestry-agriculture-recreation), but the property owners want to change their five acres to recreation.

When they appeared before the Commission in December, they said they wanted to have a barn venue to host weddings and small concerts, but none of the neighbors support the move.

"This is way out away from everybody and very quiet, and the neighbors are afraid having a venue like that will take that away from them," said Gary Tippett, whose district the area in question is in.

Three property owners of adjoining or near the location were at the Republican caucus meeting on Monday, Jan. 12, to discuss the issue with the present commissioners.

Madison County Commissioner Mark Aday of District 8 listens to concerns of a couple of property owners regarding a rezoning issue in the southwest part of the county after the meeting of the Republican caucus ended on Monday, Jan. 12, 2025, at the Old Country Store. (BRANDON SHIELDS/ The Jackson Post)

They said the owners allegedly lived in Jackson for a few months then moved out of state to Birmingham, Ala.

Another property owner said there was a dispute about where the property lines were after they got there and started having some work done and actually knocked down some trees on property not belonging to them.

"That's definitely a concern," said Commission Chair Mike Taylor when listening to the property owners, particularly after they said when confronted, the new owners didn't have the land surveyed so they had their property boundaries off by an estimate of 30 or 40 feet.

Of nearly a dozen commissioners present for the meeting, they all asked Tippett what he plans to do, and he said he plans to vote to reject request because of too many questions and concerns.

All of the present commissioners said they'd follow what he plans to do.

The Commission meeting will be at Madison County Health on North Parkway starting at 8:30 a.m.

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

First Horizon appoints Bryant to lead Jackson market

Staff reports

First Horizon Bank announced this week that Mike Bryant is the new Jackson Market President, leading the local Jackson team and serving the bank's clients across the greater Jackson, Tennessee area. He succeeds Bill White, who will retire on March 31, 2026.

White began his 28-year career at First Horizon in Memphis as a commercial banker before moving to lead the Jackson market in March 2008. During his tenure, he helped strengthen client relationships, support associate development and deepen community partnerships across West Tennessee.

"Bill has exemplified client-first leadership and unwavering professionalism," said Bo Allen, Mid-South Regional President for First Horizon Bank.

Mike Bryant

"We are grateful for Bill's service and are committed to a smooth transition for clients, associates and the community under Mike's dynamic new leadership."

Prior to joining First Horizon Bank, Bryant served as Community President for Centennial Bank and continues to be deeply rooted in the local community through board service with the Madison County Commission, Carl Perkins Center and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, among others.

First Horizon Corporation, with $83.2 billion in assets as of Sept. 30, 2025, is a leading regional financial services company, dedicated to helping clients, communities and associates unlock their full potential with capital and counsel. Headquartered in Memphis, the banking subsidiary First Horizon Bank operates in 12 states concentrated in the southern U.S. The Company and its subsidiaries offer commercial, private banking, consumer, small business, wealth and trust management, retail brokerage, capital markets, fixed income, and mortgage banking services. First Horizon has been recognized as one of the nation's best employers by Fortune and Forbes magazines and a Top 10 Most Reputable U.S. Bank. More information is available at www.FirstHorizon.com.

CELEBRATES

From 1A

just for efforts like an operation in September that resulted in 15 arrests in a single human trafficking and prostitution ring, but also JPD's efforts in community engagement and crime prevention.

The grill team cooked up more than 5,000 hot dogs and hamburgers at various community events throughout the city while engaging with the people of those communities to create better relationships between the citizens and law enforcement.

Jackson Fire has increased its investment in training for its fire fighters and leaders, and that's resulted in safe rescue times dwindling from an average of 17 minutes to four minutes while two-thirds of all fire calls have a response time of less than four minutes.

The street department and public works resurfaced more than 48 miles of streets inside the city limits with plans to do even more later this year when the weather warms up and asphalt plans open back up.

Because of GPS tracking on City vehicles, leaders are able to take account of where all vehicles are at any given time and are able to cut down on idle time for each vehicle by increasing the efficiency of the work those departments do has cut down on the City's annual gas expense by $55,000.

Public works has also utilized artificial intelligence to identify the best way to address road deficiencies, drain failures, litter and illegal dumping.

Health and sanitation picked up 32,000 piles of trash, and litter crews picked up 110 tons of litter.

Work has continued on the stormwater assessment project, and Conger said the City is ready to move on to improvement and further development by the end of 2026.

The Carnegie Center for Art and History completed gallery renovations and has increased its membership by 290 percent.

Among the accomplishments for the parks and recreation department are a record 1,859 teams that played at the West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex, new equipment and refinished floor at the T.R. White Sportsplex, 10,000 people participated in different events at the South Community Center in Bemis and Cypress Grove Park celebrated its 40th anniversary.

This is all on top of some of the more celebrated accomplishments of the year like the opening of the new Animal Care Center, Senior Center, JPD's apprehension of accused quadruple murder suspect Austin Drummond and the Love Your Block program.

After he was finished, Conger took questions from those present, and one young junior Rotarian from one of the local high schools stood and asked about the possibility of new basketball courts being built around the city.

"That's something we can look into if we have enough people who see a need for it," Conger said in answering the question.

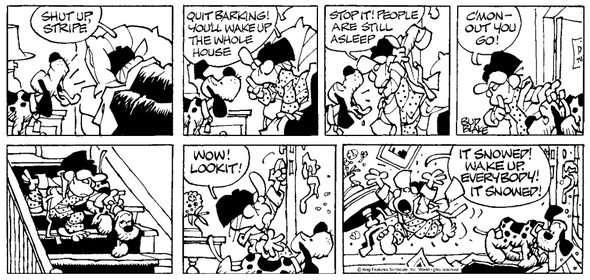
When asked about getting questions like that, he said he's glad to take those questions.

"We're here for the citizens, all of them, and we definitely want to know what they want to see in their city," Conger said. "And whenever I talk to school groups or other groups of young people, most of the time, one of the questions I get is what's my favorite thing to do, and every time my answer is talking to them because I want to hear from them."

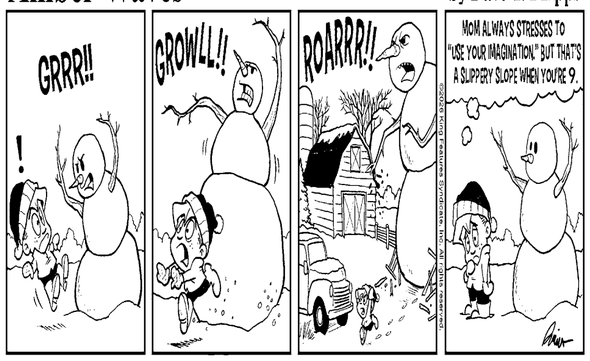
Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Leisure

TIGER — by BUD BLAKE



Amber Waves — by Dave T. Phipps



Even Exchange

by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Hand warmer	_ _ _ V _ _	Circular map	_ _ _ B _ _
2. More lethargic	S _ _ _ _ _	Tulip or gladiola	F _ _ _ _ _
3. Weeping tree	_ I _ _ _ _	Flounder	_ A _ _ _ _
4. Modify	_ _ _ E _ _	Church table	_ _ _ A _ _
5. Park seat	_ E _ _ _	Cluster of grapes	_ U _ _ _
6. Wander aimlessly	_ _ I _ _ _	Gentle wind	_ _ A _ _
7. Perimeter	_ _ _ G _ _	Hemingway's fish	_ _ _ L _ _
8. Hedge plant	_ H _ _ _ _	Use steel wool	_ C _ _ _ _
9. Prying bar	_ _ _ _ R	Even	_ _ _ _ L
10. Football takedown	_ A _ _ _ _	Touch with a feather	_ I _ _ _ _

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Weekly SUDOKU

3	7			2			5	
1						2	7	
	5	2		7	6	8	3	
	4	1				5	9	
			7	5	9	4		1
	6			1			8	
	1	5	6	3				
6		7				2	5	
2		4				1	3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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See This Week's Answers In Next Week's Edition

— Weekly SUDOKU —

Answer

4	1	2	6	5	7	3	9	8
3	5	9	1	2	8	4	7	6
8	7	6	3	9	4	5	1	2
5	6	7	2	8	3	9	4	1
1	9	8	7	4	6	2	5	3
2	3	4	9	1	5	6	8	7
6	8	1	5	3	9	7	2	4
9	4	3	8	7	2	1	6	5
7	2	5	4	6	1	8	3	9

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: L equals X

HQGI JNEGAQSID JPKKGIVB DNGJ GLASIYA WNX IN ZOOZXGIA XGZJNI, HQZA ESDQA BNP YZVV AQZA? ONNW NW GLSJAGIYG.

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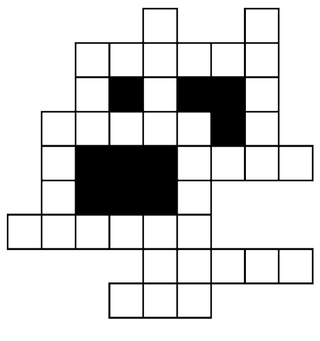
FEAR KNOT™

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

OBO
WENIUS
DUMIO
RTWI
DEMPIE
♥ EWO
♥ NCIO
♥ WEDNO
WOS
ENRAMB
TACIO
WMNO



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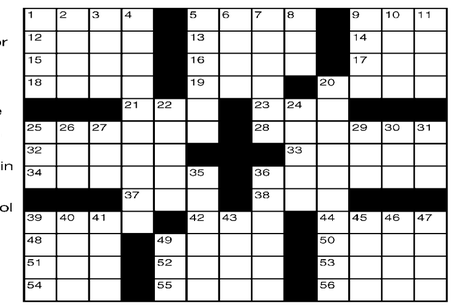
Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥ **RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Sketch
5 Old name for France
9 Microwave
12 Top-of-the-line
13 Golden Rule preposition
14 "As I see it," in a text
15 Lady of Spain
16 Teen fave
17 Stannum
18 Out of control
19 Pool unit
20 Faction
21 Humorist
23 Follower (Suff.)
25 Cerebral
28 Car safety feature
32 Tree bumps
33 Unfettered
34 Closed tight
36 Outlaw
37 Summer in Paris
38 Flavor enhancer, for short
39 Aspic shaper
42 Pair
44 Now, in a memo
48 Rock producer Brian
49 TV's Griffin
50 Painter Magritte
51 Thesaurus wd.
52 DLI doubled
53 Partner
54 Chopper
55 Diminutive suffix
56 Dance move

DOWN
1 Baby's father
2 Leeway
3 Part of A.D.
4 Easily swayed
5 Culpable
6 Forever — day
7 Perfect place
8 Texter's guffaw
9 Tubular pasta
10 During
11 Corn concoction
20 Coerces
22 Map feature
24 "The Da Vinci Code" monk
25 Small ammo
26 Wish undone
27 Coach Parseghian
29 Physique
30 "— was saying ..."
31 Retrieve
35 Sense
36 Low-budget flick
39 Small plateau
40 Cameo stone
41 Single
43 Legal document
45 Plane reservation
46 Pot starter
47 Incubator noise
49 Bovary's title (Abbr.)

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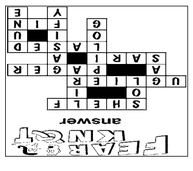
— King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

J	I	B	M	O	A	S	H	A	S	H	I			
I	S	U		I	O	T	A	E	D	U	T			
G	I	L	L	T		B	R	A	O	S				
F	A	L		F	L	A	T		A	U	N	T		
			G	L	A	D	E		G	L	U	T		
O	U	R	S		F	L	A	T	H	E	A	D		
S	A	I	L	E	R		I		S	S	E			
S	R	I		A	L	E	R	T		S	C	E		
H	E	A	D	W	I	N	D		S	O	A	B		
		H	O	I	S		H	E	A	P	S			
C	O	R	A	L			A	A	R	P				
A	P	O	P		W	I	N	D	E	A	L	L		
T	A	L	E		O	L	D	E		D	I	A		
E	L	L	S		E	L	I	S		E	N	D		

— Even Exchange — answers

1. Patch, Pitch
2. Would, World
3. Barber, Barbor
4. Model, Molel
5. Warren, Warden
6. Humor, Rumor
7. Faster, Fastien
8. Stream, Scream
9. Great, Great
10. Stick, Stuck



STICKELERS [sic].

by Terry Stickels

Which of the following numbers is the odd one out?

2745 8457 4233 5519

6271 3865 4773

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Trap — SUMBAH
Crack — CHERAB
Plan — BIGMAT
Plod — NICHED

" Looks to me like the birds will be doing most of the _____!"

TODAY'S WORD

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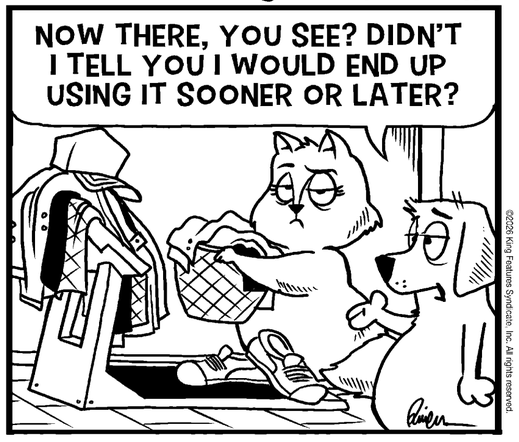
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIM & BEAR IT®

by Wagner

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"Now I have to go take it all back for the recall!"

Sticklers Answer

Each word forms a new word when read backward. This type of pairing is commonly called a "semordnilap," which is "palindromes" spelled backward.

Even Exchange answers

1. Patch, Pitch
2. Would, World
3. Barber, Barbor
4. Model, Molel
5. Warren, Warden
6. Humor, Rumor
7. Faster, Fastien
8. Stream, Scream
9. Great, Great
10. Stick, Stuck

SCRAMBLERS solution

1. Ballad; 2. Novel; 3. Regent; 4. Gather

Today's Word: **GARAGE**

CryptoQuip answer

Bizarre fashion magazine featuring photos of big water mammals with flippers: Manatee Fair.

Local News

Council approves bond issue, land sale at disc golf course

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

The Jackson City Council handled two high profile situations during their special-called meeting on Thursday, Jan. 8.

The first one was approving officially requesting the $26 million bond issue they voted to do nearly a year ago.

Now that the audit for the City's finances for fiscal year 2024 is in, the City's finances could be properly evaluated to determine the cost of the issuance.

The City Council, Mayor Scott Conger and City Recorder Nathan Reed had discussed possibly making it a 30-year bond, but they ultimately landed on a 15-year issue.

The $26 million will be used to pay for a number of things the City needs to do including more than $10 million in street repaving, which about half the Council members began discussing during the meeting specific streets in their respective districts they wanted to see get fixed this year.

Jackson City Recorder Nathan Reed answers a question from the City Council during discussion about the $26 million bond issue on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Sun)

The Council had a four-page document with 84 line items in 30 sections listed as possible items to be paid for with the money.

Some of the items on the list, however, are items the City has already paid for including the new risers that are being installed in the Carl Perkins Civic Center. Others are items that were proposed and discussed but have since been taken off such as the City's contribution to a homeless shelter.

Here's a look at the biggest items that cost more than $1 million:

- $1,634,175 for 18 new cars for Jackson Police
- $4,900,000 to put artificial turf on the infields for all fields at the West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex
- $2,500,000 for Phase I of the rebuilding of Airways Boulevard that's set to begin in spring of 2027

See **COUNCIL** Page 4B

This photo is taken from the local disc golf group website of one of the holes on the City of Jackson's municipal golf course at the former site of Highland Green Golf Course in North Jackson. (Submitted photo)

Local disc golfers oppose potential land sale on municipal course

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Editor's note: This story was written from an interview on Jan. 7, the day before the Jackson City Council's special-called meeting on Jan. 8. The issue was resolved during the Council meeting but posted here now to show the story and work put in by the local disc golf group and their perspective on the situation.

The Jackson City Council has a special-called meeting today (Jan. 8) at 3 p.m.

There are two major items on the agenda for the meeting.

The first one is determining how to handle the $26 million bond issue the City has been approved for and what all projects that will pay for.

The other is the item that was tabled from Tuesday's monthly meeting regarding the offer to buy 13 acres of land for The Crossings at Exum Place from the City's municipal disc golf course called The Bend that is formerly the old Highland Green golf course.

The land was given to the City when the golf course closed, and since then the Jackson Tennis Complex has been constructed there and different businesses have been housed in the course's clubhouse.

"A lot of people are confused because when you drive by it on Highland Avenue you see a bunch of big for sale signs in the front," said Thomas West. "But the only land that's for sale is the property within a couple hundred feet of the street that would be big enough to put a couple of businesses next two right on the highway.

"Everything else is the City's and The Bend."

West is the leader of the local Jackson Disc Golf group that's made of local disc golf enthusiasts.

West got into the sport after graduating from South Side High School in 2005 and has since continued to play.

In 2021, he approached the City's parks and recreation department on behalf of the disc golf group about converting Highland Green into a disc golf course, and after about a year of discussion and preparation, it happened.

"And we've been rolling since then," West said. "Our group has a lot of people who play there on at least a weekly basis, and we've got a number of people who drive from Nashville or Memphis or from one of the nearby states to Jackson just to play this course."

The course was also the site where the inaugural Tennessee State Games disc golf competition happened in June of 2025 and where it's slated to happen in 2026.

But those plans were put in limbo in the last few weeks when an offer the developers of The Crossings, which is adjacent to The Bend, to purchase 13 acres of land.

According to statements made during Tuesday's meeting, The Crossings (Joel and Shane McAlexander) and neighboring developers of Windstone (Kenny Southerland

See **MUNICIPAL** Page 4B

Property taxes, healthcare, education discussed by state legislators

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

The Southwest Tennessee Developmental District hosted its annual gathering of state legislators in the area with local mayors and other leaders from different counties in the region to get an idea of what their plans are for the upcoming legislative session that begins on Tuesday, Jan. 13.

Both of Madison County's State Representatives Johnny Shaw (District 80) and Chris Todd (District 73) were a part of the panel as well as Madison County's State Senator Ed Jackson, who joined virtually as he was en route to a committee meeting in Nashville at the time.

State Rep. Brock Martin (Huntingdon) was also a part of the panel.

Todd spoke about a month earlier at another event about his plan of sponsoring a bill that would put an end to state property taxes, and he continued to speak on that at this event.

"I've had a number of people - particularly seniors and veterans who are on fixed incomes - who are concerned about taxes going up and not sure how they're going to make it because their income isn't going up with them," Todd said. "And I feel like this is one way to do it.

"Because those of you in this room who own property, you paid for it and have the paperwork for it, but you still pay on it every year. And if there's a way we can do away with that from the state perspective and not lose any funding for our state and local governments, I want to try to do that."

Todd's proposed method is to increase the state sales tax by somewhere in the 4- to 5-percent range and get it to about 14 percent.

"We put our economic people on it to see what kind of a raise we'd need in sales tax to continue to keep having that revenue, but just coming from another stream, and 14 percent appears to be about where it needs to be for us

Southwest Tennessee Development Director Joe Barker emceed the panel discussion at the annual state legislators gathering at the SWTDD office in Downtown Jackson on Friday, Jan. 9. Next to him at the table were State Representatives Johnny Shaw (Bolivar), Brock Martin (Huntingdon) and Chris Todd (Madison County). Chester County Mayor Barry Hutcherson is speaking at the podium at the beginning of the event. (BRANDON SHIELDS/ The Jackson Post)

to continue to have that," Todd said. "And we're looking at what all would be taxed, because if we can get it without putting a tax on groceries, I want to do that too because groceries are already expensive enough as it is."

Todd assured all the mayors in the room that under his proposed plan so far that their respective entities would continue to get the same amount of money from the state they're getting now simply coming from a different pot. And if at any point they needed more money, they could simply apply for that extra funding with the state legislature.

During the question-and-answer portion of the meeting, Todd fielded a couple of questions about whether or not the higher sales tax would hurt poorer Tennesseans who don't own property.

"If they don't own property, they're renting, and when you're renting, you're still paying property tax because part of your rental price goes to the owner's property tax," Todd said. "I've even asked our people to see if they can figure out how much of the price of groceries go to property tax, but figuring that out may be a long shot.

"But if you think about it, if you buy a bag of potatoes, part of whatever you pay for that bag of potatoes goes toward that farmer who grew them and his property tax. Then another part of that goes toward the owner of the trucking company that transported those potatoes in from Idaho or wherever and their property tax. Then another part goes toward the property tax for Kroger or whichever market you get your potatoes from. And Kroger also pays property tax on the land, the building, the shelves the potatoes are sitting on when you pick them up, the equipment that's used to purchase them and the property taxes the employees pay to get those potatoes out there for you, get them purchased and get them to your car. So we're all paying property tax, but we're probably paying more property tax than we realize."

Todd also addressed the notion of a sales tax increase.

"We've talked with a few economic people about this, and they looked at the situation in our state," Todd said. "And they said, 'OK, you have 14 percent sales tax, but you have no state income tax and in this scenario you have no state property tax,' and they said that was a no-brainer.

"That would be a good move for everyone because it would be the people who are actually spending the money who are paying the taxes and not risking putting it on a large portion of the people who own property who aren't getting raises to keep up with tax hikes from the state or lo-

See **LEGISLATORS** Page 6B

State legislators: Great Wolf Lodge construction plans in bid phase

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Great Wolf Lodge is nearing the construction phase.

State Representative Chris Todd and State Senator Ed Jackson were both speaking as part of the panel at the Southwest Tennessee Developmental District's (SWTDD) annual discussion for West Tennessee legislators with local leaders at the county and city level.

When a question from the crowd came up about tourism, Todd's answer discussed a number of things happening that could increase tax revenue from tourism.

Todd mentioned Great Wolf Lodge.

"I've received a planning file with literally 1,200 blueprint pages of what they plan to do, and those blueprints included plumbing, electrical and that sort of thing," Todd said. "So the project is moving forward."

Great Wolf Lodge officially bought the property for a Jackson location near Liberty Tech High and Jackson Baseball Stadium in November of 2024 and did a lot of dirt-moving work last year.

Great Wolf Lodge is a national brand resort hotel with an indoor water park. In February of 2020, The Greater Jackson Chamber in conjunction with Great Wolf Lodge announced the resort's intentions to put a location in Jackson complete with money earmarked in that year's state budget for help for the company in their costs to locate in the Hub City.

The following month is when the shutdown happened for COVID-19, which put a pause on the Lodge's plans to come to Jackson and actually moved the project down on their priority list.

Over the years, the project has moved up the list as they've secured their plans and completed projects for new locations in other states.

The next phase is to lay the foundation and infrastructure for the hotel/water park and begin to build up from there.

Madison County Mayor A.J. Massey said during his State of the County address at Jackson Exchange Club on Tuesday, Jan. 6, that he knew there were plans that had been sent out to potential bidders.

On Friday, Jan. 9, Ed Jackson confirmed that statement.

"The work is up for bid, and from my understanding, there are really only two contractors who specialize in this work because of the volume of water Great Wolf Lodge will use," Jackson said. "And both of those contractors have those plans."

Greater Jackson Chamber President Kyle Spurgeon was also present for the meeting on Friday at SWTDD, and after Todd and Jackson had made their statements, the floor was offered to Spurgeon if he wanted to expound on what they'd said.

He declined to give any more specific information, but he did use a sports analogy to describe where the process is.

"We've been in this conversation for seven years now since Thanksgiving of 2018, and there have been times we felt like we were first-and-goal and then we'd get backed up," Spurgeon said. "I can tell you we're in the red zone and getting closer and closer to the goal line, but we're not quite there yet."

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Faith

Dooley Noted

How NOT to respond when people are hurting

Adam Dooley
Columnist

A family of four dies unexpectedly on the highway.

A routine visit to the doctor's office reveals a terminal illness.

A late Friday afternoon meeting concludes with a single father losing his job.

A tornado rips through a small town leaving nothing but debris in its wake.

A vacation trip turns tragic with the disappearance of a young child.

Examples like these illustrate how vulnerable all of us are to the unexpected tragedies that can change our lives forever. Thankfully, the most severe hardships often bring out the very best in our neighbors who are eager to love, support, and encourage the downcast. Good friends are often God's healing balm in our lives when everything else falls apart.

An ugly underbelly, however, also exists when adversity knocks on our door. Demeaning insecurities often plague us when trials invade our lives. We wonder if God still loves us. We worry that our pain is the direct result of our sin. We grieve what we perceive to be the absence of God in our lives.

Though these attitudes won't cause us to stumble when we aren't on the receiving end of calamity, there are other temptations when we witness others hurting. Most of us would never vocalize our darkest thoughts, but sometimes we sit in judgment over the misfortunes of others as if they are deserving of the difficulties we avoid. By

Dooley

inflating our sense of self-righteousness, we magnify the perceived inadequacies of those in the fires of misfortune. Driven by inward arrogance and outward apathy, our presumption reeks of sanctimonious foolishness.

Considering these dangers, allow me to offer a necessary biblical principle to remember when hardships arise. Namely, the presence of tragedy does not reveal the presence of sin. In Luke 13 Jesus addresses a well-known atrocity that left the Galileans bewildered and confused. Apparently, Pilate killed a group of Jews who were making sacrifices in the temple because he suspected them of sedition. Unfortunately, the common belief then, and even today, was that victims of such calamities were guilty of extraordinary sins.

Though unspoken, this idea also suggests that those who emerge unscathed from close destruction must do so because of their unparalleled morality. Interestingly, however, is that Jesus refused to assign guilt to those who were killed even as He resisted the urge to assign innocence to those who were not. The positive or negative nature of a people's circumstances is not an indicator of their need or lack thereof for repentance.

Jesus simply answers, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish (Luke 13:3)." Then, to drive the point further, our Savior shares another example about the danger of presumptuous interpretation when trials come. When a tower in Siloam fell and killed eighteen people, Jesus again refused to make reckless judgments (Luke 13:4). Though our Savior does not deny that some events are acts of judgment or that sin often causes pain, He does insist that we should never feel safe or proud because bad things do not happen to us. Again, He simply retorts, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish (Luke 13:5)."

My first reaction to any disaster should not be a moral evaluation of those who suffer and those who do not. Many wicked people live carefree lives, and many godly individuals face immense challenges. Could it be that God sometimes uses calamity to bring those of us who are spectators to repentance rather than to punish those who are immoral? Do bad things sometimes happen for reasons we do not understand? The painful realities of a fallen world should lead to our humble repentance rather than our boastful reassurances.

So how should we respond to blessings, trials, and hardships?

First, we should humble ourselves. Humble yourself before God and yield to His plan even when you are hurting. Humble yourself if you emerge unscathed after life's storms. Humble yourself as you enjoy the blessings of safety and tranquility. Refuse to use God's blessings as an occasion for boasting.

Second, we should pray for our neighbors when they hurt. Pray for wisdom about how you might encourage them. Pray that God will bring our community together when we face difficulties. Pray for a deeper, more sincere walk with God. Pray with thanksgiving for God's mercy and protection each day of your life.

Third, we should love more. Love God more than you did before your life fell apart. Love your neighbors as yourself when they suffer. Love your community and friends as precious parts of your life. Love your enemies when tragedies strike by burying past grudges. Love your place of worship and the believers there.

Finally, we should thank God. Ask Him to make you more aware of the blessings you take for granted. Thank God for His protection and care over the course of your life. Thank God for His unconditional love. Thank God that our circumstances do not reflect our eternal value. Thank God for the strength to endure our worst days.

Dr. Adam B. Dooley is pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, TN, and author of Hope When Life Unravels and Exalting Jesus in 1-2 Chronicles. Contact him at adooley@ebcjackson.org. Follow him on Twitter @AdamBDooley.

Choosing grace in a cynical age

By Rev. Adam Johnson
Columnist

We are living in a moment where suspicion often feels like the default posture. We assume motives before we ask questions. We scroll past one another's humanity. We brace for disappointment before we allow ourselves hope. Cynicism has somehow been reframed as wisdom, and grace as naïveté.

But what if the quiet work of culture-building begins somewhere much smaller? What if it begins by assuming the best?

Assuming the best does not mean ignoring harm, denying reality, or refusing accountability. It means starting from a place of generosity rather than judgment. It means believing—at least initially—that most people are doing the best they can with what they have. The writer Anne Lamott once said, "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." That's true of people, too. Grace creates space for recalibration.

Giving grace is a countercultural act. It slows us down. It requires patience. It asks us to resist the easy satisfaction of being right in favor of the harder work of being kind. The theologian Miroslav Volf wrote that grace is not a denial of justice, but its fulfillment—because justice without mercy often becomes cruelty. In everyday life, grace looks less like grand gestures and more like small, quiet decisions: choosing not to escalate, choosing to listen, choosing not to assume the worst.

Adam Johnson

And perhaps that's where culture is really shaped—in the small things.

Culture is not only formed in institutions or headlines. It's shaped at dinner tables, in parking lots, in text messages that could have been sharp but weren't. It's shaped by how we speak to baristas, how we respond to disagreement, and how we treat people who can offer us nothing in return. The poet Mary Oliver once asked, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" One answer might be: pay attention.

Taking notice is an act of resistance in a distracted world. Noticing when someone is struggling. Noticing when someone shows up faithfully without recognition. Noticing beauty that doesn't demand applause. The writer Frederick Buechner described vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Often, that meeting point is found not in sweeping change, but in attentive presence.

Faith traditions across time echo this same invitation. The prophet Micah distilled a complex religious system into something remarkably simple: "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly." Justice, mercy, humility. None of these are loud virtues. All of them require us to see one another clearly—and generously.

Humility, in particular, asks us to admit that we do not have the full story. That the person who cut us off in traffic, missed a deadline, or spoke with perceived rudeness may be carrying burdens we cannot see. When we assume the best, we refuse to reduce people to their worst moment.

This does not mean excusing harm or avoiding hard conversations. Grace does not eliminate boundaries. But it changes the tone. It allows correction without contempt. It keeps relationship at the center rather than winning.

In a culture that rewards outrage and insists on speed, grace feels slow and inefficient. But it may be the only thing capable of sustaining us. The small things—gentle words, patient listening, unearned kindness—accumulate. They shape the air we breathe together.

Perhaps culture does not change through force, but through fidelity. Through people who quietly choose to assume the best, give grace, and pay attention—again and again.

And perhaps that is enough to begin.

Adam Johnson is a strategy consultant and ordained minister with two decades of experience in nonprofit leadership nationwide, currently the CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Jackson TN. He holds advanced degrees in nonprofit organization from the University of Memphis. Adam lives in Jackson with his wife, Kayla, and their daughter Josephine.

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Questions to answer before marriage

By Becky and Jerry Drace
Hope for the Home

Becky and Jerry Drace

Engaged Couple: Becky, I have recently become engaged and my fiancé and I are beginning to make plans for the wedding. What advice do you and Dr. Drace have for us?

Becky: Congratulations on your upcoming marriage. It is our belief that outside your decision to follow Christ, the second most major decision an individual makes involves the choice of a spouse. My first bit of advice for the both of you is to schedule a pre-marital counseling session with a qualified Christian family counselor. Usually this will involve more than one session. We ask many questions to couples planning to marry. Here are six to get you thinking:

1. Are you ready to decide to make a lifelong commitment to God and one another? I feel it is vitally important that a Christian marriage start out with two Christians and not just in name only. Fittingly, the word "decide" stems from a root word meaning "to cut." Have you already cut ties with the demands of the world to follow the commands of Christ? Are you willing to cut ties with anyone and anything which would make your spouse feel abandoned, ignored and neglected?
2. Do you understand the purpose of marriage? As a Christian, I believe God uses marriage to help us become more like Christ. It can be a humble and challenging process, but a godly marriage will strengthen your faith.
3. Do you understand your job is to love your spouse – not to get your spouse to love you? We are selfish creatures and concentrating on the "other" person can be difficult. But if each person spent less time concentrating on themselves and more time serving the other person, they will be amazed at how strong and fulfilling their marriage will become.

Jerry: To follow up on the questions which Becky has shared, here are three more:

1. Are you ready to leave your past behind? Some couples find it challenging to adjust from their single lives to married life. It is not uncommon to encounter men and women who find it difficult to cut the apron strings from one or both of their parents. Your spouse should not have to compete with your mother or father for attention. Also, if this is not your first marriage have you resolved the issues which brought about the dissolution of your previous marriage?
2. Do you know how to manage conflict? It is one of the greatest myths that the absence of conflict is a sign of a healthy marriage. Differences of opinion in a marriage are healthy and inevitable. Conflict is an opportunity to learn something about yourself, your spouse, and your marriage. How you manage conflict is the key to achieving unity and harmony in marriage.
3. Are you part of a community? It is common for a couple to put some distance between themselves and their friends and their community after falling in love. Their newly formed relationship with each other often makes it easy to lose touch with those around them. However, every couple needs a strong network of support, including relatives, friends, and a church body. Just be sure your spouse is your best friend.

I strongly agree with Becky the need for premarital counseling with a qualified Christian family counselor. If you are not familiar with one, we will be happy to make recommendations. See our contact information below. Please keep in mind, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who built it," Psalm 127:1.

Jerry and his wife Becky are on American Family Radio weekdays at 4:20 PM (CT) and on Sundays at 5:35 PM (CT). Check out their resources for the family at HopefortheHome.org. Becky's latest book, "The Bright Side of Blue" and Dr. Drace's, "44 Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage" offer biblical principles and timely advice for dealing with the challenges and trials of life. You may order these and other resources by contacting them at: hopeforthehome@juno.com.

KNOCKOUT From 1A

Amateur Fight Winners: Kelton Dial, Colton Stoner, Cale Mackie, Carter Raines, Alexander Wynne, Dakota Ballard, Tayler Phayora-Kickboxing Title, Kiyren McKee-Featherweight Title.

The Star Center originated in Jackson 38 years ago. Now there are Star Centers in all 95 counties of Tennessee.with the goal of helping any person with any disability realize their potential.

The Center in Jackson now offers what Graves says is a much needed reading clinic for elementary students.

"This is for individuals in grades two through eight who have dyslexia and struggle to read," Graves said. "We've had a lot of success with the program. As a former educator, that is dear to my heart, and I felt like there was no one in Jackson really serving that group."

Other services available are assistive technology for all ages, speech therapy, an employment clinic, music therapy, low vision services and home care.

Julie Cooke, julie@richardsonmediagroup.net

Local News

A number of partners involved in launching the West Tennessee Music Census recently met at B3 Creative in Downtown Jackson including B3 Creative Founder Stephanie Riley, University of Memphis-Lambuth music/entertainment coordinator Dr. Jeremy Tubbs, local artists Lauren "LOLO" Pritchard and David Ashley Trent and DJ Von. (Photo courtesy of West Tennessee Music Census)

State launching of West Tennessee Music Census

Staff reports

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD), Tennessee Entertainment Commission (TEC), Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD) and Visit Jackson Tennessee are joining forces to announce the West Tennessee Music Census, an initiative designed to bring musicians, venues, music industry professionals and music nonprofits across West Tennessee together to gain a better understanding of the region's music ecosystem.

The Census, which is part of the broader West Tennessee Music Initiative, is a study of the region's music ecosystem that covers 21 counties in West Tennessee. It is currently in its discovery phase and open for community feedback. The broader initiative contains five components: Asset mapping, regulatory assessment, economic impact assessment, Census and round tables.

"Tennessee's music and entertainment industry continues to thrive, supporting more than 60,000 jobs and contributing over $6 billion annually to our state's GDP," said Deputy Gov. and TNECD Commissioner Stuart C. McWhorter. "With a rich history in this sector, we are proud to join our partners at TDTD, TEC and Visit Jackson Tennessee in announcing the West Tennessee Music Census, an effort that will further strengthen this ecosystem for years to come."

Results from the Census have the potential to influence a multitude of sectors in the music industry, including education and training, regulatory and policy framework, audiences, communities, venues and events. Civic organizations, media, public sector, companies, music educators and arts organizations across the region are invited and encouraged to complete this extensive survey and help spread the word about the Census. Additionally, those interested in becoming a community partner can sign up on the state's website listed at the end of this article.

"Jackson sits at the heart of West Tennessee's music story, helping define and shape sounds that influenced generations," said TDTD Commissioner Mark Ezell. "It's an honor to partner with TNECD, TEC and Visit Jackson Tennessee on this effort to listen, learn and elevate the voices that continue to define the sounds of Tennessee."

The founding agencies will work in partnership with Sound Diplomacy on the Census to engage individuals from the music scene and provide leaders and policy makers with potential solutions to uplift the music community and give everyone a voice. The objective is to garner comprehensive insights that will inform strategies to bolster the music ecosystem, identifying its strengths, challenges and opportunities for growth.

"The West Tennessee Music Census represents an important step in preserving, maintaining and strengthening our booming music and entertainment industry," said TEC Executive Director Bob Raines. "This Census recognizes the value of our rich music culture across the region and will help cement our status as a global cornerstone of the entertainment industry."

The power of music extends beyond its entertainment value, acting as a keystone for economic development. It creates a variety of job and business opportunities, invigorates local tourism through music events like festivals and concerts and influences sectors like fashion, film and advertising with its cultural reach.

"It's exciting that the TEC has chosen to invest in our area's unique and diverse music community," said Stephanie Riley, founder of B3 Creative. "From artists to key stakeholders, I believe this will bring incredible ideas and value to our region."

The West Tennessee Music Initiative is spearheaded by Visit Jackson Tennessee, marketed by B3 Creative and supported by funding from TEC and TNECD with Sound Diplomacy and the University of Memphis Lambuth providing administrative support for the Census.

"The purpose and importance of the Census is to better understand the value of our music culture," said Dr. Jeremy Tubbs, associate professor of teaching and area coordinator, music and entertainment at the University of Memphis Lambuth. "It's both educational and anthropological and will no doubt offer us a better understanding of where we succeed and where we need improvement."

The web address to sign up for the Census is https://tnecd.us7.listmanage.com/track/click?u=417345726792f1cad7973da96&id=6038781177&e=d14ee19ad9.

THE JACKSON POST
SPORTS
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PRESS FOR SUCCESS

North Side boys riding full-court defense to high ranking, winning record

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

HENDERSON - North Side's boys' basketball team started the first week of the TSSAA basketball polls ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 3A behind top-ranked Upperman in East Tennessee.

The Indians are highly ranked because they're 14-1, and they got their first district win on Friday, Jan. 9, on the road at Chester County, 72-22.

The game was a dominating performance in which the Indians made their full-court defensive pressure almost look easy, particularly in the second half when they outscored the Eagles 42-4 and didn't allow them to score in the fourth quarter after the mercy rule running clock had started.

"We go full speed all the time," said North Side coach Aaron Woods. "In practice, in every game, we take no time off because we want that do-or-die-now mentality and for it to be ready to go when we need it and not hope we have it when we need it."

The press frustrated the Eagles throughout the night. The Indians picked up 18 steals on the night as a team, most of which led directly to points on the other end of the floor.

There was a stretch of five consecutive Chester County possessions in which the Eagles were doing good to get it to the half-court line, but the ball never made it inside the 3-point line as North Side picked up a steal before they could and quickly got back down the court for a basket.

And while the press was the main catalyst that propelled North Side to dominance on this night, it wasn't the only thing that helped them to the 50-point victory.

On the offensive end of the court, they were 9-for-19 from the 3-point line including 6-for-7 in the second half.

"This team works so hard, and they're starting to see that work pay off," Woods said. "We know we're not near where we're aiming for and there's a lot of basketball play.

North Side's Jaron Simpson tries to make life difficult for a Chester County player throwing the ball in-bounds during the second half of the Indians' game at Chester County on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Post)

"This is only our first district game, and we've got a lot more to play, but right now, I like where this team is and how hard they work to maintain that."

Lincoln Woods led the Indians with 25 points at Chester County, while Michael Marshall had 12 and Tramel Jones finished with 10.

The Indians have two more road district games at Lexington and South Side this week.

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Young talent raising bar for Liberty girls

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

LEXINGTON - Liberty Tech girls' basketball player Rakeryia Clinton stood at the free throw line during the Lady Crusaders' 51-50 win at Lexington in overtime on Jan. 2.

With 6.2 seconds left and Lexington up by a point, Clinton was fouled. She hit the first shot, tying the game and putting it on the verge of going to a second overtime.

Then Lexington called timeout. Clinton walked to the sideline to get in the huddle with her teammates and the coaches before head coach Brian Lake sent her back to the free throw line.

"I didn't want her thinking about anything but hitting that shot," Lake said after the game.

That's what Clinton did during the somewhat awkward minute-plus of time she stood there by herself at the free throw line with the crowd yelling, music playing over the loudspeakers, officials standing at their necessary spots during a timeout in that situation and both teams in their huddles in front of their respective benches.

"I just stood there and thought about the shot and what I had to do to make it," Clinton said. "I tried not to think about trying to win the game or what a win would mean or anything like that. I just focused on making it."

Liberty freshman basketball player Rakeryia Clinton can be seen standing at the free throw line by herself during a timeout with six seconds remaining in overtime before she shot a free throw to give Liberty the win on Jan. 2, 2026. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Post)

Eventually the timeout ended and the music died down. The players returned to the court, and one of the referees gave Clinton the ball. After a couple of bounces on the court, Clinton's shot sailed just over the front of the rim and fell for a basket to give Liberty the lead.

The final six seconds of overtime took more than six real-time minutes to play because of timeouts and a couple of challenged calls on an in-bounds pass, but Clinton's free throws were the final points of the game, giving Liberty the win in a season in which the Lady Crusaders are now 11-5.

To put that record into perspective, the last three seasons of Liberty girls' basketball have combined for seven total victories.

So what's the difference for the Lady Crusaders this year?

"We had a lot of talent come in this year," Lake said. "North Parkway Middle had a really good team last year, and all eight of their eighth-graders said they wanted to stick together in high school, and they all came here."

Six of those now-freshmen play significant minutes for the Lady Crusaders, and one of them is Clinton with her ice-cold-water-in-her-veins free throw shooting.

Not only the players, but also their coach at Parkway, Kayonica Tate, joined Lake and fellow assistant coach Michael Gaines on the Liberty bench.

"We like playing for Coach Lake because he does a good job of instructing the game and preparing us for each opponent," Clinton said. "And every-

See **LIBERTY** Page 5B

Niven living up to taller role for TCA

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Zack Niven knows where he's headed with the game of basketball.

The son of Union University men's basketball coach David Niven, the younger Niven is in his senior season of playing high school ball at Trinity Christian, and he's committed to play for his father and the Bulldogs.

While he knows what his plans are for next year, he's grown into his new role for the Lions this year.

During the last couple of seasons, he was the starting center for the Lions after hitting his growth spurt and now stands at 6-feet-8-inches tall.

He's been the presence under the goal for the Lions while sharpshooters in last year's senior class did the bulk of the heavy lifting on the scoreboard.

But now that those scorers are gone, a lot of the scoring opportunities have come his way, and he's taking advantage of that.

His averages are a little more than 20 points per game, nearly seven rebounds and nearly four blocks. He actually had 11 blocks in one game early in the season, setting a new school record.

"We had some really good players last year who were great at scoring, and my primary role was rebounding, defense and scoring myself," Niven said. "But (TCA head coach Dexter Williams) and I had a conversation early in the offseason - probably not long after last season ended - about how I was going to need to step up in scoring.

Trinity Christian senior center Zack Niven tries to get open during the second half of the Lions' win over Power Center Academy from Memphis in the championship game of the Hub City Classic on Dec. 30, 2025, at Liberty Tech. Niven was named the MVP of the tournament. (BRANDON SHIELDS/The Jackson Post)

"And I was ready to do that."

Niven and fellow senior Gabe Lee are the main two scorers for the team as both can be counted on for at least 15 points per night if not 20 while the rest of the team has about six or seven other players who each have scoring ability too depending on who has the hot hand that night.

Because TCA is relying more on Niven's presence in the post, that has changed their offensive methods as Lee is the main one shooting from the outside this year instead of having three or four shooters on the floor at any given time.

But Niven said he enjoys the physicality that comes with playing in the post and being one that gets plenty of chances to score and be a factor for his team.

"I don't think of it as more pressure, but just a change in my role," Niven said. "If you want to look at it like pressure, then I put the pressure on myself all along to do my job for the team the best I could no matter what that job was."

His job now is to show up more in the box scores leading his team in points, rebounds and blocks.

"He's definitely embraced the role not just as the scoring leader for

See **NIVEN** Page 5B

Local athletes named all-state

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

The Tennessee Sports Writers' Association has released their lists for the fall sports all-state teams, and a number of Madison County athletes were named among the honorees.

Football

University School of Jackson and Trinity Christian each had multiple athletes named to the Division II-A team.

For USJ, running back Jackson Pugh, lineman Josh O'Neal and kicker Drew English were named to the offensive team, and lineman Barrett Shelton was named to the defensive team.

For TCA, Gabe Lee was listed as a wide receiver on offense, while Hank Miller made the team as a linebacker.

In Class 4A, Javonte Smith represents North Side on the defensive side as a defensive back.

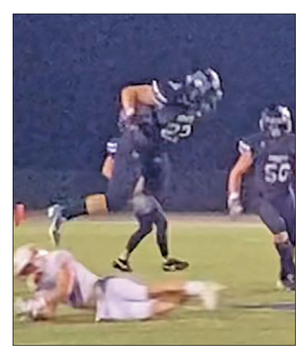
Girls' soccer

In Division II-A, Lilly Teague and Reagan Whitledge made the list to represent USJ after another run to the state semifinals for the Lady Bruins.

Golf

In Division II-A boys, Jackson Christian's Carson Andreoni and USJ's Houston Brasfield made the list.

On the girls' side, individual state champion Tori Robinson from TCA made the list for Division II-A too.



Trinity Christian's Hank Miller was named to the TSWA all-state team for Division II-A football. (Post file photo)

University School of Jackson running back Jackson Pugh was a semifinalist for Mr. Football and is now an all-state team member. (Post file photo)

Sports

AREA RESULTS

AREA RESULTS
High school basketball
Girls
TCA 62, Chester Co. 21

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
TCA	20	16	26	0	62
Chester Co.	8	4	9	0	21

TCA (62) - Payne 6, Arnold 2, Joyce 28, Tori Robinson 18, Williams 6, H. Cleek 5, M.G. Cleek 2, Ingle 7, Hidrogo 5, Friend 3.

Madison 41, Milan 37

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Madison	13	9	10	9	41
Milan	10	12	4	11	37

Madison (41) - Bowman 3, Knott 2, Ella Wainscott 14, Gilmer 4, Gabbie DIllon 15, Pearson 1, Laffoon 2.

USJ 71, JCS 34

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
USJ	32	10	21	8	71
JCS	8	11	8	7	34

USJ (71) - Sophie King 14, Via 2, Lilly Teague 16, Wright 7, Haylen Ayers 18, Holmes 8, Crider 3, Davis 3.
JCS (34) - A. McCurry 8, Hannah McMurry 12, Tinsley 8, Van Wyk 4, Holloway 2.

TCA 80, Tipton-Rosemark 17

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
TCA	29	25	17	9	80
TRA	9	3	2	3	17

TCA (80) - Payne 8, Arnold 9, Joyce 2, Tori Robinson 23, Williams 6, H. Cleek 2, M.G. Cleek 9, Ingle 6, Hidrogo 5, Annelise Friend 10.

Boys
North Side 72, Chester Co. 22

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
North Side	15	15	28	14	72
Chester Co.	9	9	4	0	22

North Side (72) - Cole 7, Michael Marshall 12, Lincoln Woods 25, Tramel Jones 10, Lindsay 8, Lawrence 5, Bradley 5.

TCA 56, Chester Co. 35

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
TCA	16	20	13	7	56
Chester Co.	3	13	17	2	35

TCA (56) - Reed Williamson 14, Gabe Lee 22, Helton 7, C. Moore 2, I. Moore 2.

USJ 40, JCS 39

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
USJ	10	4	11	15	40
JCS	13	8	11	7	39

USJ (40) - Brasfield 5, Vails 8, Redden 1, Sam Keyl 18, Finney 8.
JCS (39) - Kelsey Rose 17, Vargason 7, Smith 8, Jones 3, Jackson 4.

Milan 55, Madison 41

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Madison	4	13	6	18	41
Milan	17	12	18	8	55

Madison (41) - Harry Rowland 18, Meek 6, Dillon 3, Willett 4, Rickman 8.

TCA 67, Tipton-Rosemark 41

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
TCA	12	15	26	14	67
TRA	10	6	10	15	41

TCA (67) - Williamson 9, Gabe Lee 26, C. Dooley 2, Lake Helton 14, Zack Niven 16.

AREA SCHEDULE

Thursday, Jan.15
College basketball
Union men and women at Lee, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 16
High school basketball
North Side at South Side, 6 p.m.; Madison at JCM, 6 p.m.; Scotts Hill at Liberty, 6 p.m.; Tipton-Rosemark at JCS, 6 p.m.; TCA at Fayette Aca., 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 17
High school basketball
South Side at USJ, 2 p.m.
College basketball
Jackson State men and women at Walters State, 1 p.m.; Union men and women at Trevecca Nazarene, 2 p.m.; Lane men and women at Lemoyne-Owen, 3 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 19
College basketball
Central State men and women at Lane, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 20
High school basketball
USJ at TCA, 6 p.m.; Lexington at South Side, 6 p.m.; JCS at Gibson Co., 6 p.m.; Madison at Scotts Hill, 6 p.m.; Liberty at Adamsville, 6 p.m.
College basketball
Jackson State men at Bethel JV, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 22
College basketball
Mississippi College men and women at Union, 5:30 p.m.; Lane men and women at Edward Waters, 5:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23
High school basketball
Liberty at Madison, 6 p.m.; Tipton-Rosemark at USJ, 6 p.m.; JCM at Adamsville, 6 p.m.; North Side at Hardin Co., 6 p.m.; MHEA at TCA, 6 p.m.; South Side at McNairy, 6 p.m.; JCS at Fayette Aca., 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24
High school basketball
Fayette-Ware at TCA, 6 p.m.; USJ at Union City, 6 p.m.
College basketball
Jackson State men and women at Cleveland State, 1 p.m.; Delta State men and women at Union, 2 p.m.; Lane men and women at Savannah State, 3 p.m.

All high school games and times compiled from TSSAA website. College games are compiled from respective schools' composite schedules.

Here are all the players on the middle school girls' basketball roster at Trinity Christian. Front row: Lillie Cleek, Claire Plunk, Jenna Faith Warren, Hatley Vinson, Abby Porter, Farrah Carson and Sophie Hatch
Back Row: Tatum Farmer, Kylee Jane Loyd, Emma Grace Grones, Audrey Porter, Avery Grace Smith, Sadie Hayes, Hattie Pritchett, Chandler Graves, Grace Copley, Sophie Yates, Frankie Clampitt, Ellie Vance, Briley Williams and Bonnie Cleek (Photo courtesy of Tyler Porter)

Young Lady Lions win Dyersburg tournament

Staff reports

DYERSBURG - While many middle school teams utilized the Christmas break for relaxation, teams participating in the Dyersburg Middle School Christmas Tournament, including a few from Jackson and Madison County, remained focused on competition.

The eight participating teams - Dyersburg, Community Montessori, Jackson Careers & Technology, North Parkway, Trenton, Bradford, Trinity Christian, and Northview - showcased their skills.

TCA kicked off the tournament with a 39-18 win over crosstown rival North Parkway. Jenna Faith Warren and Hatley Vinson paced the Lady Lions with 12 points each, with Sophie Hatch scoring six points, Abby Porter adding four points, Chandler Graves notching three points, and Ellie Vance securing two points.

In the semifinals, TCA faced the Bradford Lady Red Devils and, despite trailing 30-25 in the fourth quarter, rallied to secure a 34-32 victory. TCA's aggressive full-court press applied pressure on Bradford during the game's critical final minutes, facilitating the comeback win.

Warren topped all players with 18 points, followed by Porter with seven, Vinson with five, and Hatch with four.

Advancing to the championship game, TCA set their sights on the undefeated host team, the Dyersburg Lady Trojans, whom they would need to defeat to capture the trophy.

In the championship game, Dyersburg started strong, securing an early advantage and heading into halftime with a 19-14 lead.

TCA Coach Jenny Pritchett implemented adjustments at halftime, aiming to slow down the Lady Trojans. Trailing 23-20 early in the fourth quarter, Hatch made a crucial jumper in the lane, reducing the deficit to one point. Shortly after, a steal and lay-up by Porter gave TCA its first lead of the game, 24-23. Key free throws down the stretch by Warren, Porter, and Hatch sealed the win and secured the title for TCA, 35-29.

Porter achieved a team-high 16 points, while Warren and Hatch contributed eight points each, and Vinson added two points. Farrah Carson delivered a strong defensive performance throughout the tournament, supporting the team's title win. Pritchett's halftime adjustments proved pivotal, as TCA outscored the Lady Trojans by 11 points in the second half.

Hatch, Carson, Porter and Warren (MVP) earned All-Tournament Team selections. This marks the third championship of the season for the TCA Lady Lions, who now hold a 17-2 record.

The Lady Lions will conclude the regular season with matches against USJ and JCS before competing in the James C. Haile State Tournament.

Entertainment

Community Calendar

Diamond Rio is a winner of multiple CMA, ACM and Grammy Country Music Group of the Year awards during their career. (Photo courtesy of Diamond Rio page on Facebook)

Celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. through music. Experience Requiem for a Drum Major with performances by the Dave Potter Quartet & Henry Conerway III Quartet. (Photo courtesy of the Jackson Hidden Tracks Facebook page)

Local musician Izzy Arthurs was a finalist in the 2024 TN Songwriters competition in 2024. (Photo courtesy of Izzy Arthurs Facebook page)

Here's a look at things to do in Jackson and West Tennessee in the next couple of weeks. Listings are courtesy of Visit Jackson TN, Jackson Downtown Development and various event organizers.

Jan. 17
Dreams Renewed
The Dream Center of Jackson announced its next fundraiser coming up early next year called Dreams Renewed 2026, a benefit event to be held at the Jackson Fairgrounds on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 5:30 p.m. The guests will enjoy dinner, a silent auction, a live auction, and a concert from the Grammy Award-winning group Diamond Rio.

All proceeds collected will benefit the Dream Center's mission to help mothers with children who suffer from homelessness.

Diamond Rio rose to fame with their 1991 debut single "Meet in the Middle," the first debut song by a country group to reach No. 1. Known for hits including "One More Day," "Beautiful Mess," and "How Your Love Makes Me Feel," the band has sold millions of albums worldwide and continues to draw fans across generations with their timeless music and engaging performances.

Five levels of sponsorship are available for the event, which include table(s) and can include media coverage, advertisement, partner recognition, and even exclusive meet-and-greet opportunities with Diamond Rio. Individual table sales are also available. For all sponsorship and table sales, contact our Executive Director, Gail Gustafson at 731-613-0741.

The Dream Center aims to serve as a guiding light and a source of hope for women and mothers with children who strongly aspire to transform their lives through Jesus Christ. As a gospel-centered residential recovery facility in Jackson, Tennessee, our center is funded almost entirely by private donations and ultimately aims to break the cycle of persistent homelessness among women. For more information visit dreamcenterjackson.com.

Jazz Foundation's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration
The Jazz Foundation of West Tennessee presents Requiem for a Drum Major: A Celebration to Dr Martin Luther King Jr., Jan. 17 at 7p.m. at the Ned in Jackson. The concert features the Henry Conerway III Quartet and the Dave Potter Quartet. Conerway III has become a leading presence on the modern jazz scene since moving to New York in 2015, as evidenced by his ongoing work with Freddy Cole, Marcus Printup and Jazzmeia Horn. Potter was a Julliard scholarship recipient and has played with such notables as Jason Marsalis, Greg Tardy, Eric Reed and Marcus Roberts. Requiem for a Drum Major is sponsored in part by the Hunt Properties, Crimeseen Examiner, the Tennessee Tribune and Hunt Services. Tickets are $30 in advance, $35 at the door and $15 for students with ID. Order now at: thejazzfoundationofwesttennessee.org or call 731.803.5818 for more information.

Jan. 18
Stargazing at Pinson Mounds
Join the Rangers of Pinson Mounds at 460 Ozier Road in Pinson to learn about stargazing practices during the Woodland period and how it helped to shape the construction of the Pinson Mound Complex. After a brief presentation by the Rangers, we will take time to relax under the stars. It all happens from 8-9:30 p.m. You will need to bring a picnic blanket or lawn chair, weather appropriate clothing, a bottle of water or warm drink, a red light flashlight and a positive attitude. Participation in this program comes with some perks. Hot chocolate will be available during the program. Registration for this program is required. This is a fee-based program at $5 per attendee. Please check in with the Ranger stationed at the entrance when you arrive. Tickets must be purchased through either the park office at 731-988-5614 or on the official Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park website. No third-party tickets will be honored.

Jan. 23
Lorrie Morgan concert
Country music legend Lorrie Morgan will perform at The Dixie Performing Arts Center in Huntingdon at 7:30 p.m., Tickets are available at dixiepac.net ranging from $55–$65. She brings her powerful vocals and emotional storytelling to The Dixie. The first woman in her genre to launch her career with three consecutive Platinum albums, Morgan is known for classics like "Something in Red," "Except for Monday," and "Watch Me." A Grand Ole Opry member and daughter of Country Music Hall of Famer George Morgan, she continues to deliver performances marked by authenticity, strength, and heart.

Jan. 24
Jeff Allen's Love & Laughter Tour
Comedian Jeff Allen is coming to The Dixie in Huntingdon at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available online at dixiepac.net ranging from $45–$55. He brings his high-energy, family-centered humor to The Dixie. With appearances on Dry Bar Comedy, America's Got Talent, Netflix, Comedy Central, and more, Allen's comedy has garnered nearly a billion online views. His latest tour offers a hilarious and heartfelt take on everyday life. Tickets for all are also available through The Dixie's box office, Monday-Friday, 10-4 p.m., 731.986.2100.

Pressed & Poetic
A night for the culture at Crystal's Zen and Juice (580 S. Royal Street) with free live music and spoken word from local artists. Complimentary mocktails while they last, and BYOB if you'd like something stronger. Pull up, pour up, and feel the art. It's sponsored by the City of Jackson and Neighborhood Improvement Project Grant / Love My Block. It all happens from 8-10 p.m. in Downtown Jackson.

Jan. 31
TN Songwriters 2026
Come out and support local songwriters as Visit Jackson, TN hosts one of the Tennessee Songwriters 2026 Qualifying Rounds on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, from 3-7 p.m. at Hub City Brewing. Grab a themed cocktail or Hub City beer, kick back, and enjoy an afternoon of original music from 20 local and regional songwriters as they compete for a chance to advance to the semifinals in Memphis and possibly perform at the legendary Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. Event highlights include live performances by 20 songwriters, great beer, food and community at the brewery and supporting Jackson's music scene. This event is free and open to the public, so bring your friends, family, and anyone who loves live music. Let's cheer on the next wave of Tennessee songwriters. Songwriter sign-ups are open until Jan. 12 through this link: https://forms.gle/wAbNCLATkwzdW-waF6. For questions, contact Visit Jackson, TN at 731-425-8333 or email paigek@visitjacksontn.com.

The Crystal Ball
Step into Old Hollywood glamour at the reimagined Crystal Ball, chaired by Elizabeth Farris, benefiting the programs of The Jackson Symphony. Think red-carpet arrival, classic elegance, and an unforgettable night supporting music education, community concerts, and music & healing events across West Tennessee. Reserve your table or tickets now call (731) 427-6440. Dress to dazzle, bring your friends, and celebrate the arts with your Jackson Symphony. The event will be at the Carl Perkins Civic Center starting at 6 p.m.

Feb. 6
Hub City Flea Market
Join Hub City Flea Market at the Jackson Fairgrounds Park. Discover unique finds, shop from a variety of amazing vendors, and enjoy a fun-filled atmosphere that the whole family will love. Don't miss out on this one-of-a-kind shopping experience. Doors are open from 5-8 p.m. on Friday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Feb. 7
Jackson Bridal Show
Make your wedding planning easy, fun, and inspiring at the Carl Perkins Civic Center. The Jackson Bridal Show kicks off at 11 a.m. and will go until 4 p.m. with vendors available with ideas and items in every part of the wedding day experience. So make your plans to be a part of the event.

Feb. 14
The Jackson Symphony
You're cordially invited to an enchanting evening of romance and glamour with The Jackson Symphony. Inspired by the music of Bridgerton, this Valentine's concert blends swoon-worthy classical works with modern pop hits—performed by two stunning vocalists and full orchestra—for a symphony ball filled with elegance, charm, and just a hint of mischief. It all starts at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are available at thejacksonsymphony.org.

Feb. 21
JEWEL Awards
Come join the Jackson-Madison County African-American Chamber of Commerce for a night of celebration and recognition at the Carl Perkins Civic Center. Get ready to honor outstanding individuals and organizations in our community who have made a significant impact. This in-person event promises to be a memorable evening filled with awards, speeches, and delicious food. Don't miss out on this special occasion to show your support and appreciation for those who make a difference. Mark your calendars and get ready to shine at the JEWEL Awards Banquet. It all begins at 6:30 p.m. For tickets and sponsorship information contact us 731.424.2030.

Tyler Farr concert
Are you ready to experience Tyler Farr like never before? With chart-topping hits like Redneck Crazy, A Guy Walks Into a Bar and Whiskey in My Water and 738.2K+ devoted fans, Tyler Farr is taking over Hub City Brewing. With multiple shows lined up, this one ensures to be the ultimate musical experience, where the energy of Tyler Farr will make you dance, sing, and maybe even cry (in a good way). Doors open at 7 p.m. with the concert starting at 8 p.m. Tickets are available online at hubcityevents.com.

Exotic Pet Expo
Explore the world of exotic pets at the Jackson TN Exotic Pet Expo. Enjoy a weekend packed with reptiles, small mammals, parrots, feeders, and a variety of pet supplies. It's all at Jackson Fairgrounds from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $5 per person. Bring the whole family for a fun and educational experience.

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

Legal Notices/Local Briefs

Local Briefs

RIFA celebrating 50 years

RIFA will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Feb. 12, 2026 from 3-6 p.m. in the nonprofit's on-site warehouse in downtown Jackson. The event will include birthday treats, photo opportunities, and other festive surprises as RIFA honors its long-standing history of serving the community since 1976. This family-friendly, come-and-go event is open to the public.

RIFA is happy to invite the community inside its doors to celebrate this milestone achievement. RIFA was founded on Feb. 13, 1976 with one mission: feeding hungry people. In 2025, RIFA distributed 584,831 meals among its eight hunger-fighting ministries. This event aims to celebrate the lasting impact of 50 years of service in the community.

Applications open for theLOCAL

Applications for theLOCAL, an incubator for entrepreneurs to get a taste of operating their own retail space by providing micro-retail units with low-overhead costs in Downtown Jackson, are open now through Feb. 16. One unit is available with a lease starting May 2026, and one food truck space is also available in the theLOCAL parking lot, with a lease start date available as soon as possible.

After applications have closed, interviews will be conducted from Feb. 23-27 and the anticipated lease start date is May 1, 2026. theLOCAL is for artisans, bakers, makers, chefs and more, and is a testing opportunity for businesses who would like to have a larger retail space in Downtown Jackson in the future. Rent starts at $600/month and includes utilities and internet for 1-2 year lease. Businesses who would be offering food service and may use more utilities could be subject to a potential increase that would be determined at the start of the lease agreement.

"Getting started at theLOCAL has been invaluable to my business," Rebecca Creasy, current tenant and owner of Gylden Bake House, said. "With low overhead expenses and support from theCO, I've been able to not only grow my business with intention, but to build a sustainable business model that benefits my community."

Through shared resources, mentorship opportunities through theCO, and a built-in community of fellow entrepreneurs, tenants are supported as they refine their products, connect with customers, and take meaningful steps toward long-term growth in downtown Jackson.

"Each new tenant at theLOCAL brings fresh energy and ideas to downtown Jackson," Beth Ann Simpson, Director of the Jackson Downtown Development Corporation, said. "We're excited to open applications and invite entrepreneurs who see downtown not just as a location, but as a community to build with."

If you want to learn more about theLOCAL and apply before Feb. 16, visit downtownjacksontn.com/thelocal.

Veterans' Coalition appoints new officers

The West Tennessee Veterans Coalition announce their new officers for 2026-2029. They are Larry Newson, Chair; Megan Holt, Vice Chair; Edward Cookenham, Secretary; and Marianna Lewis, Treasurer.

Newsom is a United States Army veteran. He flew 781 combat hours in MEDEVAC helicopters in the Republic of Vietnam while assigned to the 283rd Medical Detachment.

Holt is the Military and Family Readiness Specialist for Madison, Gibson, Crockett, Carroll, Decatur, Henderson, and Hardin Counties in Tennessee.

Cookenham is a former Senior Chief in the United States Navy.

Lewis has experience as a bank teller, and bookkeeper. She is the widow of a Korean War Veteran, and a widow of a Vietnam War Veteran.

The West Tennessee Veterans Coalition is a 501(c)3 organization. In addition to honoring area veterans with annual Veterans Day events (Honoring Our Veterans program, Veterans Day Parade, and Bridges of Honor), the WTVC hosts the annual Military Ball to raise money to fund the Veterans In Crisis Fund. To date, the Veterans In Crisis Fund has assisted over 150 veterans with grants totaling over $140,000.

For more information or to make a donation to the Veterans In Crisis Fund, go to westtnveterans.com.

Jackson Police investigations

Hughes Drive shooting

At approximately 4:26 a.m. on Jan. 12, Jackson Police officers were dispatched to a residence on Hughes Drive regarding a shooting. A witness reported seeing two male suspects on foot approach the residence and fire multiple shots into the front of the home.

Upon arrival, officers made contact with the occupants of the residence, who were uninjured. Preliminary investigations indicate this is believed to be an isolated incident. This incident remains under investigation, and no further information is available at this time.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Jackson Police Department at 731-425-8400 or Crime Stoppers at 731-424-8477.

Sheriff's office warns of scam

The Madison County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is alerting residents about a surge in scam calls targeting individuals in Madison County. These deceptive calls, often showing a legitimate phone number from the sheriff's office or other variations, falsely claim to be associated with the Madison County Sheriff's Office. The scammers may even use the name of an actual MCSO employee to further their deception. The most recent scam involves a person purporting to be Captain Lawrence with the Madison County Sheriff's Office; however, scammers use multiple names when calling. This is a scam!

Recently, we have found that scammers are calling from: 731-298-0688.... THIS IS NOT A NUMBER THAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MADISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

In these fraudulent calls, scammers pose as MCSO deputies and falsely accuse the recipient of failing to appear for jury duty, have unpaid traffic citations, or even have official documents to serve the individual with. Victims are then given specific payment instructions, which may involve withdrawing cash from an ATM, sending a money order, or purchasing gift cards. The scammers claim this payment is necessary to resolve the supposed court matter.

The Madison County Sheriff's Office wants to stress that it will NEVER make such calls or request any form of payment over the phone. No legitimate MCSO deputy will ever ask for cash, and any website provided for online payments by scammers is fraudulent and should not be visited. Additionally, any phone number or recorded message falsely claiming to be from the Madison County Sheriff's Office is also part of the scam.

If you receive a call of this nature, it is crucial to report it immediately by contacting the Madison County Sheriff's Office at 731-423-6000.

Testimonies at the Table returns to Old Country Store

Brooks Shaw's Old Country Store announced last week the return of Testimonies at the Table, a free, public community event series resuming in January 2026 after a brief hiatus in 2025.

Held Thursdays at 9 a.m. in the dining room of the Old Country Store, Testimonies at the Table offers a welcoming space for people of all backgrounds to gather, listen, and be encouraged through personal stories of faith, perseverance, recovery, and second chances.

Each week, complimentary light refreshments and coffee will be provided. Guests may also purchase more substantial breakfast options from the Dixie Café.

The series is coordinated by Team Members of the Old Country Store, who petitioned ownership to bring the program back in 2026. Several speakers reflect recovery and second-chance perspectives—values that align closely with the Old Country Store's long-standing commitment to second-chance hiring and supportive workplace culture.

The lineup for the rest of January is Town & Country Realtor Mike Baskins on Jan. 15, West Tennessee Healthcare Recovery Navigator Amy Merlo on Jan. 22 and Desiree Armstrong, a recovering addict who mentors others in recovery on Jan. 29.

LIFELINE Blood Services' schedule, critical need

Here's a look at LIFELINE Blood Services' schedule for January for mobile blood drives in Madison County.

- Jan. 22 - Jackson-Madison Co. General Hospital, 9-11:30 a.m. and noon-6 p.m.
- Jan. 24 - Top Ladies of Distinction, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Jan. 27 - Jackson State Community College, 10-11:30 a.m. and noon-3:30 p.m.
- Jan. 28 - Jackson Energy Authority, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

We the People

We the People of West Tennessee presents: "Make TN Healthy Again" featuring Dr. Ken Berry, MD – a free community event in Jackson. "Make TN Healthy Again," will be a free public presentation by renowned Tennessee physician Dr. Ken Berry, MD, on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, from 6-8 p.m. in the Ministry Building of Jackson First Assembly of God at 1027 W. Forest Street. Berry, a board-certified family doctor practicing in rural Tennessee with over 20 years of experience, is the bestselling author of "Lies My Doctor Told Me" and a leading YouTube health educator with over 3.6 million subscribers. In this engaging talk, Berry will share practical strategies for reversing obesity, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, and other chronic conditions through evidence-based nutrition, focusing on real food approaches like beef, bacon, eggs and butter.

With New Year's resolutions around the corner, this event is timed perfectly to empower our community to take control of their health. Dr. Berry's message is life-changing, and we're proud to bring him to Jackson.Admission is free and open to the public. First-come, first-served seating – attendees are encouraged to arrive early and bring friends. For more information, visit wethepeopleofwesttn.com.

Jackson's Got Talent

The Exchange Club-Carl Perkins Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse is holding its 2nd Annual Jackson's Got Talent. Jackson's Got Talent will be held on April 10, 2026, at 7 p.m., at The Ned in Downtown Jackson. This event is our community's version of America's Got Talent. It will be a fun and exciting night with friendly competition among many different talents. Last April marked the debut of Jackson's Got Talent, and it was a huge success! We raised an incredible $47,732 with 10 amazing acts, a full house, and four exciting awards including an interview with a talent agent, cash prizes, live performances at the Circles of Hope Telethon, and more!

To apply, simply:

- Complete a short application through our website
- Submit a 90-second audition video showcasing your talent
- Commit to raising a minimum of $2,500 (Don't worry, we'll support you every step of the way with your fundraising!)
- Pay a $100 non-refundable entry fee

The mission of the Center is to provide support to families in preventing and dealing with child abuse in West Tennessee and to help both parents and children meet the practical needs of preserving and improving the quality of family life. By attending Jackson's Got Talent, you can help make a difference in the life of a child.

For more information or to sign up today go to carlperkinscenter.org.

MEETING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of Jackson Energy Authority will meet on Thursday, January 22, 2026 beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the 3rd floor conference room of the Tennergy Building located at 250 N. Highland Avenue, Jackson, TN. A Jackson Energy Authority customer that wishes to address the board must call 731-422-7202 by 12:00 pm the day before the meeting to request to speak on a current agenda item. Visit www.jaxenergy.com for more detailed information.

Stacy Scoggins
Corporate Secretary

1/15 RT

COUNCIL

From 6A

- $10,010,000 for street paving across the city

Conger said it will take a couple of years for some of the money - such as the funds earmarked for Airways - to be spent because of the timing of the projects.

The turf will be installed at the Sportsplex in two phases during the two times of the year they're not hosting tournaments every weekend, which is in the middle of summer between spring and fall seasons and in the middle of winter when fall ball has wound down and before spring season starts.

Council member Larry Lowrance asked about how much the interest on the bond would cost and also asking about if there had been any consideration about borrowing the money in smaller chunks instead of getting it all in one big lump sum on Jan. 22 or 23.

Conger said any money not immediately spent would gain interest while sitting in the bank and be invested similarly to how Madison County Trustee Billy Burkhead invested the $48 million the County had set aside and partially borrowed for Pope School construction and made a few million dollars back on that before that money needed to be spent on the project.

The bond issue was approved by a vote of 7-1 with Lowrance being the dissenting vote and Russ McKelvey being absent for the meeting.

The other significant conversation was about the proposed sale of nine acres on the disc golf course at the former site of Highland Green Golf Course adjacent to The Crossings. Before the meeting, Parks and Recreation officials met with the developers of The Crossings - Joel and Shane McAlexander - and Thomas West with the local disc golf group to see if an agreement could be met.

The developers only wanted nine acres, as opposed to 13 that was somehow incorrectly placed onto the meeting agenda for Tuesday's monthly meeting, which affected only three holes on the course as opposed to six or seven.

That lower number of four acres and three holes being affected left enough property for West to work with to redesign the course without the nine acres, and the developers said it would be multiple years before they could do anything with the property anyway, so the State Games disc golf competition could still happen there definitely this year and possibly another year or two before a redesign would be necessary.

With all sides being OK with that resolution and the Council being informed of it, the resolution to approve the sale was approved unanimously.

Brandon Shields, brandon@jacksonpost.news

MUNICIPAL

From 6A

and Lee Godfrey) have irregularly-shaped areas and are trying to make infrastructure processes and installation and property boundaries a little cleaner and decide how to handle a low-lying area that's part of the property that doesn't drain well to be incorporated with The Crossings.

The Crossings began work a couple years ago as a planned residential area taking up a lot of property between Highland and the Highway 45 Bypass on both sides of Ashport Road that would also include a few businesses including a proposed grocery store along with some green spaces to allow residents to have much of what they might need or want within the confines of their neighborhood without having to get on the bypass or Highland to get it. That planned neighborhood reaches all the way to The Bend.

There was confusion about the proposed acquisition that was apparently nine acres when first proposed last spring and had grown to 13 acres before Tuesday's meeting that no one in the room knew why including Joel McAlexander. He was going to get that question answered from his son and partner, Shane who's out of town this week, for Thursday's meeting.

But Joel said they would be OK with a possible agreement if the sale were to be approved to delay any work to not affect the State Games in June, which would give the City and the disc golf group until June of 2027 to figure out another course option for the State Games.

West and other members of the disc golf group were encouraging all their social media contacts to contact the members of the City Council to let them know they're against the sale.

"I know I've put a lot of volunteered time and work into this course design and installation, and a large number of other members of our group have to, and I don't know if a redesign on essentially half the property would be able to work," West said. "Because one of the attractions of disc golf is like ball golf - each hole on a course is very different from the other 17 and every course is different.

"And designing them is like creating a work of art, and it feels like we're being asked to create a different work of art on half the canvas. While a disc golf course is considerably smaller than a ball golf course, I'm not sure we could put 18 holes on the remaining land and it not be 18 holes that look very similar to each other because the 13 acres they're wanting is right in the middle of the course where a lot of the wooded area we utilize is."

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Local News

JMCSS hosting district-wide spelling bee

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

The Jackson-Madison County School System hasn't had a district-wide spelling bee in more than 20 years.

That's changing next week as the auditorium at Liberty Tech will be the site of the JMCSS spelling bee.

Students in third through eighth grades have competed in school-wide spelling bees to determine their school champions that advanced to the bee at Liberty.

The winner from that will have a chance to advance to regionals.

"The way it works as there are a large number of districts who have spelling bees, and the winners of those are eligible to compete at regionals in Nashville," said Krista Grace, the librarian at Rose Hill School who's the coordinator and head judge for the district-wide bee. "But they only take 50 competitors in the actual competition, so the district winners have to take a test to qualify for the regional.

"Then the top 50 from the written test compete in Nashville."

The winner from Nashville moves on to the national spelling bee in Washington D.C. that is broadcast each year on ESPN.

Because elementary and middle schools are eligible to each have a representative in the district bee, three K-8 schools - Rose Hill, Community Montessori and Pope - get to have two students compete at Liberty, one each from elementary and middle school grades.

Fourth-grader Josue Calixto and seventh-grader Ryker Hays will represent Rose Hill in the Jackson-Madison County Schools Spelling Bee at Liberty Tech on Thursday, Jan. 22. (Photo courtesy of JMCSS)

Josue Calixto was the winner from the fourth grade and has won the school bee the last three years since he was in second grade. Ryker Hays was the middle school winner from seventh grade.

"Spelling is really a hobby for me," Calixto said. "I feel confident when I go into spelling bees that I'm going to win and I do my best because I know I've tried to learn as many words as I can."

Hays said he has a friend that helps him study.

"He calls out the words to me, and I try to spell them," Hays said. "And spelling is easy for me."

Both said they're looking forward to the district competition next week.

Terri Tims is Hays' English teacher and said she's proud of him, but she also can see a correlation between students who do well in spelling and students who excel in the classroom.

"Spelling is foundational for reading, and reading is essential for learning," Tims said. "And competitions like this are good for the scholars because it motivates them to do well."

Tiffany Rechis is Calixto's homeroom and math teacher, and she taught him in second grade too.

"Josue has always been a great student who picks up on most subjects quickly, and I think that ability has helped him become an excellent speller," Rechis said. "He's one of our top students in math too."

The public is invited to watch the district bee at Liberty on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 5:30 p.m.

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Jackson Area Professional & Business Women First Vice-President Kimberly Jones, Lane College interim President Donald Comer and JAPBW President Margaret Taylor pause for a pic with a Lane student in the check presentation to the school. (Photo courtesy of Lane College)

Lane partners with JAPBW to connect students with mentors

Staff reports

The Spring 2026 semester is off to a productive start as Lane College continues to advance its mission of preparing students for meaningful and sustainable careers through expanded career readiness and professional development initiatives.

As part of this effort, Lane recently received a gift from the Jackson Area Business and Professional Women's Club to support its growing career readiness framework and workforce preparation efforts.

"This generous gift ensures that our students can continue to show up prepared and ready to compete in a dynamic job market. It also strengthens initiatives already in place and those currently in development, including our Professional Launch Series for business and career focused students," said James Moore, Director of the Career Pathways Initiative.

The programming for the series includes resume and cover letter development labs, interview preparation and mock interviews with local professionals, LinkedIn profile development, and professional headshot support.

These resources are designed to reduce barriers to opportunity and better prepare students for interviews and career fairs.

The College is also expanding experiential learning opportunities by increasing access to internships and applied learning experiences.

This gift will assist in covering transportation costs, required professional materials, and participation in employer-hosted career exposure events, allowing students to fully engage in hands-on learning critical to their success after graduation.

In addition, the institution is strengthening community engagement through the launch of a Business and Professional Women Mentorship Cohort. Students will be paired with women leaders across Jackson and West Tennessee for structured mentorship focused on career navigation, leadership development, and workplace culture. The cohort will conclude with a recognition session celebrating student growth and mentor engagement.

Complementing these initiatives, Lane is also enhancing financial literacy programming related to professional futures through workshops covering budgeting, credit, banking fundamentals, compensation and benefits, salary negotiation, and preparation for financial independence after graduation.

The Jackson Area Business and Professional Women's Club's gift, designated to support business and professional pathways for students, further strengthens this work and supports leadership development, economic mobility, and workforce excellence across the region and beyond.

Madison County Juvenile Court Judge Christy Little pauses for a photo with the newly-appointed leaders of the Denmark-West Alumni Association after swearing them in earlier this month. Those leaders are President Murray Love, Vice-President Cynthia Chandler, Jane Kirk secretary, Carolyn M. Holloman treasurer, Flora Ellison assistant treasurer and board members James "Pete" Johnson and Thelma G. Williams. (Photo submitted)

Denmark-West Alumni swears in new leadership

Staff reports

The Denmark-West Alumni Association, Inc. announced last week the recent official swearing-in of its newly elected officers and board members in a ceremonial event administered by the Honorable Judge Christy Little.

The swearing-in marks an important milestone for the Association as it continues its mission as a community service organization dedicated to serving underprivileged communities, with a strong emphasis on youth programs, community engagement, and preserving the legacy of Denmark-West High School.

Little presided over the ceremony, offering words of encouragement and affirming the responsibility of leadership, service, and integrity entrusted to the newly installed officers and board members.

The occasion reflected both a sense of pride in the Association's heritage and renewed commitment to its forward-looking vision.

"These leaders represent dedication, service, and a deep respect for the Denmark-West legacy," said one of the members of the Association. "Their willingness to serve ensures that our organization remains a strong and active presence in the community."

The newly sworn-in officers and board members bring a diverse range of experience, passion, and leadership to the Association.

Together, their mission is to guide initiatives focused on youth development, community programs, alumni engagement, and the preservation of the school's historic impact.

For more information about the Denmark-West Alumni Association, Inc., its programs, or upcoming events, contact: Denmark-West Alumni Association, Inc. Email: info@denmark-westalumni.org Phone: 731-217-7888.

Whitacre to speak at Union's annual Faith in the Marketplace luncheon

Staff reports

Union University's McAfee School of Business will host Mark Whitacre, the highest-ranking executive in U.S. history to become a whistleblower, for its annual Faith in the Marketplace luncheon Feb. 10.

Whitacre's extraordinary true story inspired the Matt Damon film "The Informant" and the Discovery Channel documentary "Undercover," recounting his role as the FBI's key informant during the Archer Daniels Midland price-fixing scandal in the 1990s. Drawing on more than two decades of executive leadership, extensive international business experience and undercover work, Whitacre now speaks on ethics, leadership, integrity, redemption and the central role his Christian faith played in his personal transformation and second chance.

Mark Whiteacre

Whitacre holds a degree from Ohio State University and a doctorate from Cornell University and rose rapidly through Fortune 500 leadership, becoming the youngest divisional president in ADM history and later a corporate vice president.

"The annual Faith in the Marketplace luncheon is an opportunity for Union students and professionals in the Jackson community to hear from successful Christian business leaders," said Colene Trent, professor of economics at Union. "It also provides local business leaders with the opportunity to learn more about how Christians can integrate their faith into the workplace."

Sponsored by Centennial Bank, the Faith in the Marketplace luncheon is open to the public and will be held from 12-1:30 p.m. in the Carl Grant Events Center, with seating and food service beginning at 11:45 a.m. Cost is $35 per seat or $250 per table of eight. Registration is available at uu.edu/events/marketplace. Deadline is Feb. 2.

LIBERTY

From 1B

one on this team works well together since we've gotten to know each other.

"I'm glad I came to Liberty because of everyone on this team."

Lake has been the head coach at Liberty the last couple seasons and has been building the program up with a lot of the improvements last year over the previous year being mainly improvements that didn't show up in the win-loss record as they competed better, played better defense and took better shots.

Now the experience Lake has helped bring together is combining well with the ability the Class of 2029 is bringing in.

"I had to have some conversations with some of our older girls that this group would bring with them a lot of ability, but that will be a good thing for the team," Lake said. "And I think they're seeing that now.

"But I told them that every player would have at least one opportunity to shine throughout the season, and a lot of them have. Tonight's was Rakeryia's opportunity. And that's one of the fun parts about coaching this team is seeing different people make plays on any given night. It's a fun thing to see."

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NIVEN

From 1B

this team, but a leader in general on the court and in the locker room," Williams said. "He's one the younger players can look up to, not just because he's a full foot taller than some of them.

"But he leads by example with how hard he works in practice and in games even when he's not the one getting the ball. He proved that already before this year."

Niven said he's enjoying this year and hopes to bring home TCA's first boys' basketball state championship, but he's also looking forward to next year playing for his father.

"I've always wanted to play at Union for him, and I was glad to get an offer from Union and other NCAA Division II schools," Zack Niven said. "But when he felt I was good enough to play for Union, choosing to play for him was a no-brainer for me.

"I'm looking forward to it."

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Local News

About 100 gather in Downtown Jackson to protest ICE

By Brandon Shields
Managing editor

Indivisible Jackson had already planned to gather in Downtown Jackson near Jackson City Hall and the Madison County Courthouse for a peaceful demonstration.

"Originally, we had two ways people could choose to approach this protest," said Cindy Boyles, the coordinator of Indivisible Jackson. "They could either have a positive approach with 'Rise into the New Year' or a negative tone with 'Scream in the New Year.'

"And we had I think 47 people already signed up to show up for this one a week out from it, which would've been a good showing for us if everyone showed up."

Then last week happened and the events of Wednesday, Jan. 7, in Minneapolis in which a federal ICE agent shot the driver of a vehicle three times, sparking protests and outrage across the country.

Video from the incident showed the driver of the car moving the vehicle either away from ICE agents or into another agent, and the agent who could've been hit by the vehicle fired three shots through the windshield at the driver, killing her. Her name was Renee Good.

In the wake of that incident, the national Indivisible organization began to change the common thread of this past Saturday's protests as "ICE Out for Good."

Despite cold temperatures and a wet forecast for the afternoon, Boyles said they counted about 100 people who showed up in Jackson, made of mainly people from Jackson and others from around rural West Tennessee.

A protester holds up a sign in support of Renee Good, the 37-year-old woman who was fatally shot in Minneapolis, Minnesota last week by a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent. (HANNAH GORE/For The Post)

"There was one couple from Canada who were in Nashville vacationing and were open to joining a protest on their vacation Saturday, but nothing was planned in Nashville," Boyles said. "Then the Nashville group put one together and announced it early Saturday morning, but this couple had already committed to coming here, so they came on down to West Tennessee and joined us."

A protester holds up a sign in support of Renee Good, the 37-year-old woman who was fatally shot in Minneapolis, Minnesota last week by a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent. (HANNAH GORE/For The Post)

The group was on the sidewalks on Highland Avenue in Downtown Jackson with signs and messages.

Boyles said the overwhelming response from drivers passing by was positive with a lot of encouragements and agreements with a few people who disagreed.

"I think if nothing else, our protests show people who agree with us that they're not alone in a part of the state that is conservative and heavily agrees with the President's policies," Boyles said. "I know from some of our past protests, we've had people from the smaller, more rural areas who felt like they were alone in their beliefs found out there are many like-minded people who agree with them and want their voice to be heard."

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LEGISLATORS

From 6A

cal governments."

Speaking of local taxes, Todd also mentioned the bill he sponsored last year and plans to continue to do so this year that would put a cap on how much local tax rates can increase after apparently one community in the state raised taxes by more than 160 percent in one year. He mentioned Davidson County has increased taxes by more than 50 percent in three years.

"I want us to put a cap on that, but I also want to make sure we're not incentivizing local governments to raise their taxes incrementally each year," Todd said.

Martin, who is a doctor in his day job and the chair of the health committee, said the main thing that committee is doing this session is trying to decide what to do with the $208 million Tennessee is receiving from the federal government as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill that is earmarked for rural health.

"Rural health is certainly an important issue across the state, and there are a number of ways we can address it," Martin said. "But we've got to make sure we spend this money wisely because it's only a one-time funding, so we need to make sure we get the best return on that investment with the wisest way to spend it."

He noted that in his home area, there was a time where pregnant women had two birthing centers in Carroll County in Huntingdon and McKenzie to choose from to have their baby and get their prenatal care. Both of those units have closed down along with a neighboring one in Paris in Henry County, so their two main options are in Jackson and Martin, which is not an ideal situation.

"There are other counties in the state whose pregnant women will have to travel further to one option," Martin said. "We're glad we have two."

Shaw's portion of the panel began with letting the mayors know he wanted to hear what they had to say about Todd's property tax plan before he casts a vote on it whenever it would come up in the State House.

But probably the main thing he discussed was his plan to sponsor a bill that would streamline the process for churches who wanted to start their own private school to be able to do that.

"A lot of parents are homeschooling their children because they don't trust what's going on in our public education system, and churches including the one I pastor are looking into starting a private school," Shaw said. "So I'm looking to do that."

When asked about it later, he said these schools would need to be in line with state educational standards to be able to exist, but he sees the need for different options for families without necessarily taking funding from public schools."

Shaw also received a round of applause when the meeting recognized the fact that this will be his final session in office as he's not running for re-election after having been elected to the seat 13 times for 26 years.

Jackson started his portion of the discussion by informing the gathering he'd picked up his petition for re-election at the Madison County Election Commission before leaving town that morning.

The two main things he discussed were his perspective on the proposed Juvenile Justice Center Madison County that Mayor A.J. Massey, Judge Christy Little and Juvenile Justice Services Director T.J. King have been working on for years. Jackson said he's confident there will be a significant amount of funding for the center in the state budget when it's needed.

Jackson also discussed how the state is working with Christ Community Health in East Jackson to provide another option for dental, maternal and mental healthcare for underserved citizens in the area.

"With dental, Christ Community just opened up a dental facility in Obion County, and before that, if a person couldn't afford dental care, they just didn't go until they got to a point they had to go," Jackson said. "And then they were going to the local emergency room.

"So we're giving citizens an option there right here in Jackson, and we appreciate what Christ Community Health is doing."

The session starts on Tuesday and is expected to be done before the end of April.

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