

Paying it forward

Local officials lead efforts to help those impacted most by Hurricane Florence

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Franklin County needed a helping hand after the April 27, 2011 EF-5 tornadoes that ravaged the area, people from all across the United States converged upon Phil Campbell.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Florence and the devastation left in its path across the eastern United States, Franklin County residents are

See 'FORWARD,' Page 8



This 18-wheeler will be set up at the Russellville Walmart through this Saturday to collect supplies donated to the hurricane relief effort.

Council approves new Personnel Policies and Procedures manual

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

More than two years after commissioning Auburn University to conduct a study of the city's pay scale guidelines and job descriptions, the Russellville City Council approved a new Personnel Policies and Procedures manual at its September 17 meeting.

The council commissioned Auburn University's Government and Economic Development Institute—Human Resources Consulting Program in June of 2016 to help bring salaries in line with other similarly situated municipalities.

After Auburn officials completed their study, a lengthy process of reviews by the council, the Russellville Civil Service Board and the city attorney began.

"We knew it was going to take some time to be done, but we felt it was something that needed to be done for our city and its employees," said councilman Gary Cummings.

"We knew it was going to take some time to be done, but we felt it was something that needed to be done for our city and its employees," said Cummings.

The study looked at the pay scale for all city jobs and, through an interview process with employees, Auburn officials developed job descriptions for all city positions.

At the September 17 meeting, the council also adopted its 2018-19 general fund budget, which included a 3.14 percent raise across-the-board for all city employees. The budget for the new fiscal year was \$9,176,684.

See 'MANUAL,' Page 8

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Mary Louise Harrison, Russellville, age 81
Died Thursday, September 20, 2018. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Tharptown Cemetery.

W.T. Sumerel, Belgreen, age 84
Died Tuesday, September 18, 2018. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Belgreen Cemetery.

Shannon Heath West, Russellville, age 41
Died Thursday, September 20, 2018. A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, October 1, 2018 at Redemption Outreach Church, 206 Coffee Avenue, Russellville.

William "Bill" Edward Williams, Russellville, age 76
Died Thursday, September 20, 2018. Graveside service held at Dempsey Cemetery. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

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Council approves budget of nearly \$9.2 million

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council approved a budget of almost \$9.2 million for fiscal year 2018-19 at its September 17 meeting.

The council voted unanimously (with councilman Jamie Harris abstaining) to approve the budget with anticipated general fund revenue of \$9,176,796 and expenses of \$9,176,684.

The budget includes an across-the-board pay raise of one step for all city employees beginning October 1, 2018. The raise is an increase of 3.14 percent in each employee's pay. The budget also includes a longevity increase for city employees with five to 35 years of tenure with the city.

"We appreciate the hard work our city employees do every day, and I'm proud to recommend this pay raise to the council," said mayor David Grissom.

The largest source of revenue for the city comes from taxes and fees, totaling \$8.1 million. Sales tax revenue for FY 2018-19 is expected to total \$4,444,109. The next largest revenue source is the 7.8 mill ad valorem tax for city residents, which projects to bring in \$1,073,643. An in lieu of tax payment from the Russellville Electric Board is expected to be \$620,000.

City privilege licenses generate \$650,000 and garbage billing another \$645,000 in revenue.

Other revenue sources for the city include:

- State shared taxes of \$78,600.
- Intergovernmental transfers of \$342,225.
- Fines and forfeitures of \$146,300.
- Grants totaling \$150,864.

- Park and recreation revenues of \$45,550.
- Miscellaneous revenue of \$45,875.
- Alcohol revenues of \$205,900.
- Library revenues of \$18,000.

On the expenditure side of the ledger, the 2018-19 budget provides \$576,639 for administrative expenses. A partial list of these expenses include:

- \$88,557 payroll.
- \$96,000 elected officials salaries.
- \$80,000 for sales tax collection expenses.
- \$17,850 computer supply and support.
- \$23,000 for travel and education.
- \$29,484 for liability and casualty insurance.

The annual budget for the Russellville Police Department is \$1,990,255, with payroll comprising the largest share at \$1,003,307. Overtime expenses are budgeted at \$125,000. Jail expenses include \$21,250 for meal expense, \$500 for medical expenses, \$2,500 for repairs and maintenance, \$3,700 for supplies and parts and \$1,000 for prisoner transport.

The city's budget includes \$53,371 for school resource officers, with \$48,000 for payroll. All but \$24,000 of resource officer payroll is reimbursed to the city from the Russellville City Board of Education.

The budget for the Russellville Fire Department is \$1,610,660. Payroll is budgeted for \$863,982, with another \$66,000 for part-time and overtime expenses. The Russellville Street Department budget is \$1,771,038. Payroll is budgeted at \$372,813. Street lighting is budgeted for \$280,000, and garbage collection expenses are projected to be \$545,000.

Remaining expenses are:

- Building, License and Zoning \$115,453.
- Park and Recreation Department \$939,894.
- A.W. Todd Centre \$26,110.
- Foster Grandparents Program \$133,739.
- Senior Center \$44,414.
- Municipal Court \$126,013.
- Human Resources \$130,116.
- Appropriations \$1,173,792.
- Debt Service \$375,142.
- Russellville Public Library \$110,048.

In other action at the council's September 17 meeting, the council:

•Approved a \$10,000 annual contract with the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.

•Approved the annexation of property at 233 Twin Mountain Loop.

•Contracted with NACOLG/Area Agency on Aging for Senior Center operations for 2018-19.

•Approved school resource officer contracts for Kenny Hallmark and Sammie Washington in the amount of \$24,000 each.

•Approved a contract with Maria Mojica to provide referees for city soccer leagues in the amount of \$1,500.

•Appointed Milford Brown to the Russellville Gas Board. Councilmen Arthur Elliott and Gary Cummings abstained.

•Accepted a letter of resignation from Brett Evans with the Russellville Police Department.

•Hired Michael Hall as firefighter I with the RFD.

•Authorized the fire department to apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for equipment.

•Set a special meeting date of September 28 at 12 p.m. to approve payment of final accounts payable for FY 2017-18.

County school board passes five-year capital plan

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education recently approved its five-year capital plan required by the State Department of Education, but like many wish lists for kids at Christmas, they're not likely to get everything on their list.

The board approved the plan at its September 11 meeting. The capital plan layout report includes major projects for each of Franklin County's schools, including \$6 million for construction of a new school at Red Bay.

"Again, this is much like a wish list, but every school is included and we want to always be in position to make as many improvements as possible on our campuses," said Franklin County superintendent of education Greg Hamilton.

Other proposed projects, each with funding sources listed as 'unknown,' include \$4 million for additions at Belgreen School and \$1 million each for additions at East Franklin Junior High and Phil Campbell High School. Another proposal is for a \$1.250 million addition at the Franklin County Career Technical Center.

The lone project with an actual funding source is the \$4 million of additions at Tharptown Elementary School, with that project funded by leveraged public school funds.

In other action at its September 11 meeting, the board:

•Approved an expense of \$1,800 for general liability/errors insurance for the Franklin County Board of Education with a limit of \$300,000 in protection.

•Approved several out-of-state trips, including the Red Bay High School FFA to Indianapolis, IN October 22-27 for national convention; Belgreen special education students to Disney On Ice in Tupelo on December 6 or 7; Belgreen second grade to Disney On Ice in Tupelo on December 6; Tharptown PI Club to Great Smoky Mountains April 27-May 4, 2019; Red Bay varsity football team to Belmont, MS September 21; Red Bay athletic teams to Belmont November 12, Breese, IL December 26-29 and to Belmont on January 22, 2019, for basketball games; and Red Bay kindergarten to Buffalo Park and Pumpkin Patch in Tupelo on October 25.

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"Again, this is much like a wish list, but every school is included and we want to always be in position to make as many improvements as possible on our campuses," said Franklin County superintendent of education Greg Hamilton.

•Approved permission for Community Spirit Bank to set up and manage a student-led financial literacy branch at Belgreen High School.

•Approved a memorandum of understanding with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department and Franklin County Commission about funding a school resource officer at \$48,000 annual salary, with \$24,000 to be paid by Franklin County Schools and \$24,000 by the Franklin County

Commission. The sheriff's department will be responsible for vehicle, training, gun, equipment, etc. The agreement provides that the officer may not be pulled off school duty to answer other calls.

•Approved allowing the City of Red Bay to advertise for and hire a school resource officer exclusively for Red Bay School. Salary and benefits will be paid by the City of Red Bay.

•Approved the use of walk-through metal detectors for student population at schools where applicable. Phil Campbell School currently has a metal detector, Hamilton said.

•Approved use of employee identification badges for facility entry, athletic events entry and for sign-in where applicable. Replacement badges will cost \$10.

•Approved a speech-language pathology service agreement with Melinda Neal, SLP, at \$70/hour for the 2018-19 school year, with mileage to be reimbursed at the state rate.

•Approved the following personnel moves: Resignation - Michelle Puryear, Tharptown elementary teacher, effective August 15, and Vicki Burgett, ISS teacher at Red Bay, effective September 1; Retirement - Cynthia Carter, bus driver at Phil Campbell, effective October 1; Volunteers - Brian Whitten, James Boyd, Jerome Vandiver, Molly Henson and Nathan Atkins as boat captains for Belgreen High School, and Jonathan Ergle as a volunteer softball coach at Tharptown; Employment - Tina Little, bus driver for career teach bus route, Lindsey Norwood, cosmetology instructor, Carlee Berry, elementary classroom size reduction teacher at Tharptown Elementary,

Honey Do: The final step

As we wrap up our wall project from the past two weeks, it's time to learn how to match the paint to the rest of the wall. There are three ways to match the paint.

1) Use some leftover paint that you have saved from the original paint job. This is a great idea. Just be sure to keep the paint in a closet or storage room that is heated and cooled. Freezing temperatures and heat will quickly ruin stored paint. It will also begin to separate after about three years any way.

2) Use information you saved from the original paint job. Identify the paint using the brand name, color number and name, and type of finish, such as flat, eggshell or semi-gloss. A great place to save this information is on the back of the main light switch cover in the room. Just write it on there with a permanent marker. Take the info to the

store and have them mix the color for you.

3) When you cut the hole for the patch, you should have had a sizeable piece of the painted wall left over. It should be at least as big as a quarter. Carry it to your local hardware store and let them do a computer match for you. You still need to have an idea of the type of finish you have.

For the best color match, you will need a coat of primer, two coats of paint and a good, quality brush. Or, maybe it's time for a facelift with a new vibrant color for the entire wall or room. Use your imagination!

Next week, we'll talk about door stops to keep that doorknob from going through the wall again. Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green



We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out online at franklinfreepress.net!



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My take I know what I saw (or on this... what I thought I saw)

A truck stopped in the road in front of my house the other morning. A woman got out and placed what looked like a puppy on the road. She waited for it to cross the road, but it didn't move. I was so upset, because I can't stand to see an animal treated that way. She finally got back out of her truck and moved it to the edge of the road.

While all of this was going on, I was trying to get my window raised so I could let her know that what she was doing was illegal (among a few other things). That never happened, because she'd already gotten back in and sped away.

I was so furious that I grabbed my car keys to get her tag number and tell her she needed to pick that poor puppy back up and find it a home. I was a woman on a mission.

I had my car started and in reverse when something told me I should at least go see if the animal was still alive. After all, it could have already gotten run over. I don't always listen to this voice, but I did this time.

Boy, did I ever get a surprise when I saw it! That sweet, fuzzy little puppy turned out to be a turtle. I'm glad I listened to that voice inside my head. Regardless, it was still one of God's creatures, so I had to help it. As hot as it's been, I knew this poor turtle had to be thirsty. I carried it to the yard and finally came up with a solution on how to give a turtle a drink of water. The top of a

birdbath filled with a little water was perfect.

It took a while for the turtle to get calmed down. When it finally did, I watched in amazement how it slowly stuck its head out and leaned its head in the water and drank. I could actually see its throat moving as it drank. It was such a sight to behold.

When I went back outside later, the turtle had apparently had its fill. Its thirst was quenched, and it was onward to another adventure.

My anger toward that woman had turned into appreciation. She was trying to save that poor turtle from getting run over and giving it an opportunity to find water. It turned out to be one of those times about which we say, 'It was meant to be.'

It always gives me a boost of energy when I can help an animal in need. So my day was off to a good start.

I get excited every day to see what type of journey I'll be having. Whether it will be average or one where people will comment, 'That had to be Gail....', I always thank God for every day he lets me have.

So, until later, be kind, show appreciation, be thankful and pray often.



Gail Motes

Please send your guest columns and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



Sell personal car to help pay business debt?

Dear Dave,
My husband started his own one-man small business as a handyman a little less than a year ago. He has netted \$17,000 in that time, but the business has about \$13,000 worth of debt. We've always kept personal finances and business separate, but what would you think about us selling one of our paid-for cars to help with the business debt?

Robin

Dear Robin,
There's nothing wrong with small beginnings. On top of that, you should *always* keep your business and personal finances separate. Aside from the debt, it sounds like he's off to a good start.

I think you'll be able to pay off the debt from your future income. If your husband started his business less than a year ago, he has spent that time trying to get things off the ground and working with very little name recognition. If he's good at what he does, and he continues to work hard and market himself properly, he should be able to double what he made in the last year.

To do that, however, he's going to have to spend some time in accountant mode. He needs to figure out the types of jobs he makes the most money on for the time he puts into them. I know a guy in our area who made more than \$100,000 as a handyman in the last year. I'm talking about \$100,000 *in profit*! His prices are higher than most in that line of work, but he's the best. He provides superb, quality work, and he's always polite, on time and on schedule.

If your husband does the research and crunches some numbers, I think

he can dial it in and make a lot more money than he's making now. Find that sweet spot, and he'll continue to grow the business!

Dave

Forgive the debt?

Dear Dave,
Recently, I loaned some money to a good friend. He's going to help me with a big home project over the next few weekends, so do you think I should pay him for the work or forgive the debt instead?

Marvin

Dear Marvin,
First, I don't recommend loaning money to friends or family. Once in a while, things may work out and everyone ends up happy. But in most cases, it changes the dynamic of the relationship. The Bible says the borrower is a slave to the lender, and there's a lot of truth in that—financially *and* emotionally.

The big question is whether you've already agreed to pay him for the work. Another consideration is how he views the situation. He may be looking at this as just helping a buddy, and he still owes the money.

Ask him what his expectations are before you guys start the job. Just talk to him, and figure out what seems fair to you both. If you've already agreed on a certain amount, and the value of the work is close to what you loaned him, you might discuss the idea of paying back the debt that way.

But in the future, if someone close to you really needs financial help—and you're not enabling bad behavior in the process—just make the money a gift.

Dave

**Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

'PLAN,' from page 3

Skeetor Benford, special education aide at Tharptown Elementary, Tammy McCleese, child nutrition program assistant at East Franklin; Transfer - Nancy Hallman from federal programs assistant to federal programs director, Tasha Zills, from elementary teacher at Tharptown to East Franklin, and Jessica Nichols, from special education aide at Belgreen to elementary classroom size reduction teacher at Tharptown Elementary; New teacher substitutes including Brianna Bolton, Brian Compton, Darlene Hill, Marlena Mather, Sandra Smith, Savannah Smith, Laura Swinney and Kelley Welch.

The next meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education will be October 23, with work session at 5 p.m. and meeting at 5:15.

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Help us turn October into Socktober! This October, the Homeless Care Council of Northwest Alabama will be collecting socks to donate to the homeless in our area. A simple pair of socks can make a big difference in the lives of our neighbors who are homeless. To donate, call Christa Martin at 256-398-0192 or email hccnwal@gmail.com.



The Russellville High School Tiger Moms are holding a Gift Basket Raffle as a fundraiser. Drawing will take place at the Homecoming Game on October 12. Two baskets will be given away. Buy one ticket for \$5 or five tickets for \$20. Baskets include a variety of gift cards and items from local stores. Contact Melissa Andres at 256-460-5016 or any Tiger Mom for tickets.



Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 is selling Boston butts for \$30 each. Pick-up will be Saturday, October 13 from 8-10 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge on Coffee Street. Pre-order by calling 256-810-1970.



Belgreen High School presents "Stars Wars 2018," a professional wrestling match, this Friday, September 28 at 7 p.m. at the Belgreen High School gymnasium. Main event features a \$1,000 King of the Ring Battle Royal. Second main event features United States heavyweight title match between WWE superstar Johnny Swinger vs. The Wrestling Superstar. There will be a Southern Tag Team title match between Action Mike Jackson & Doink the Clown vs. The American Brawlers and the United States Jr. Championship Match between Thundercat vs. Ultimate Dragon. Advance tickets may be purchased from the BHS office for \$8 starting September 17. Tickets the day of the show will be \$10. Ringside seats will be available. No reserved seats. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Autograph Party at CJ's Grocery from 3:30-5:30 p.m.



The City of Sheffield will celebrate northwest Alabama's contributions to World War I this Saturday, September 29 at The Village School (206 Chickamauga Street in Sheffield) at 10 a.m. Historical presentations on the project's community impact, organizations and community's patriotic contributions to World War I will take place in the historic Village School Auditorium built by the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps. Seating is first come, first served. Program sponsored by Sheffield Historical Commission. The program speaker lineup is as follows: 10-10:25 a.m. - Tom McKnight, (U.N.) "Military History Overview: A Veteran's Call for National Unity;" 10:25-10:55 a.m. - Arthur Graves, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret) "Local Veterans of World War I;" 11-11:30 a.m. - Scott Angle, PhD. "Nitrate History: Muscle Shoals has Fed the World;" 11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. - Greg & Malinda Harrison, "A History of Village One;" 12:30-1 p.m. - Major General Buddy Moore, "Competence, Courage, and Bravery of North Alabamians during Time of War;" 1:15-1:45 p.m. - Laurence A. Lyons, PhD. "Wireless Technology and WWI;" 2-2:30 p.m. - Marty T. Olliff, PhD. Director of The Wiregrass Archives "The Montgomery Cooperative Canning Club: A Case Study in Civilian Mobilization;" 2:45-3:15 p.m. - Jim Brown, PhD. "German Nationalism - A Major Factor in WWI;" 3:30-4 p.m. - Bob England, NWSCC Emeritus "The Treaty of Versailles and Serbian Victory in the Great War." There will also be free Centennial birthday cake and free bottled water (while supplies last), live music, antique cars and food vendors, gifts and memorabilia, and home tours. For more information, call 256-383-0783.



Family and Friends Day at City Lake Park will be held this Sunday, September 30. Hosted by My Father's House Church, 104 E. Lawrence Street, Russellville. Will meet at church for worship at 10:30 a.m. that morning. Will leave immediately after morning worship for City Lake Park. For more information, call 256-460-1376.



Russellville FUMC hosts a men's and a women's Step Study on Sundays from 3-5 p.m. A step study guides you through a process of discovery and recovery over your hurts, hang-ups and habits. Everyone is welcome.



Celebrate Recovery! on Tuesday nights with supper at 6 p.m., large group at 6:30 and small groups at 7:30. Free childcare provided. Church is located at 311 North Jackson Avenue. Come and join us!



The Shoals Area Chapter of the Order of St. Luke will meet in the Sheffield Room at Park Place, 501 N. Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield, on Thursday, October 4 at 6:30 p.m. Rev. Bill Beard will continue teaching on "There's Healing in the Atonement." We believe God heals spiritually, physically and emotionally. All are welcome.



Belgreen High School will host its Fall Festival on Thursday, October 4 from 5:30 p.m.-8 p.m. There will be Bingo, Haunted House, Hayrides, Cake Walk, Fun Games, Fortune Teller, Toy Walk, great prizes, delicious concessions for sale and MUCH MORE! Admission is free, so come join the fun!



Tharpstown Elementary School will hold its annual Fall Festival on Thursday, October 4 from 5:30-8 p.m. Come and enjoy great food, friends, games and fun! Admission is free. There will be a cakewalk, bingo, a toy walk, chicken stew, darts, raffles and great prizes! All tickets \$1.00. Also, come check out the "Haunted Gym" on Thursday, October 4 from 5:30-10 p.m. and Friday, October 5 from 7-11 p.m. (Haunted Gym not included in free admission.)



The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris Jr., Camp #1833, will meet Thursday, October 4 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Everyone welcome!

What's Happening

256.332.0255

EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Relay for Life team will have a yard sale on Friday, October 5 from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday, October 6 from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at Born Again Auto Collision Center (formerly Wimberley Auto Collision Center) at the intersection of Hwy. 243 and Hwy. 81 in the Trapptown Community. Pancake breakfast, hamburgers & hot dogs, and bake sale on Saturday. All money raised goes to the American Cancer Society. Call 256-810-0009 for more information.

October is SUPER SUNDAYS month at Shiloh Baptist Church! Come join us to hear preaching from Jim Fiscus (October 7), Bo Shedd (October 14), Sherman Kimbrough (October 21) and Keith Box (October 28). Services will be held at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each Sunday. Shiloh Baptist Church is located between Hamilton and Hackleburg off Hwy. 43 on Hwy. 41 at 1920 County 41, Hamilton, AL 35570. Everyone is welcome!

The next meeting for American Legion Post 64 will be Thursday, October 11 at 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert at the Roxy Theatre in Russellville on Saturday, October 13 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Call 256-335-4356. The KGB will be the featured act at a show sponsored by the Franklin County Arts Council at the Roxy on the second Saturday of each month.

The Tharptown Volunteer Fire Department will host a gospel concert with Jeff and Sheri Easter on Saturday, November 10 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville High School Auditorium. Jeff Sanford from Decatur will be the opening performer. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 5-12 years old. Children under 5 will be admitted free. Please come out and join the Tharptown VFD for this special event.

The Russellville Farmers Market is now open! Weekly schedule from now through October is Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 6 a.m.-noon. Manager is Greg Stanford. Located behind the A.W. Todd Centre.



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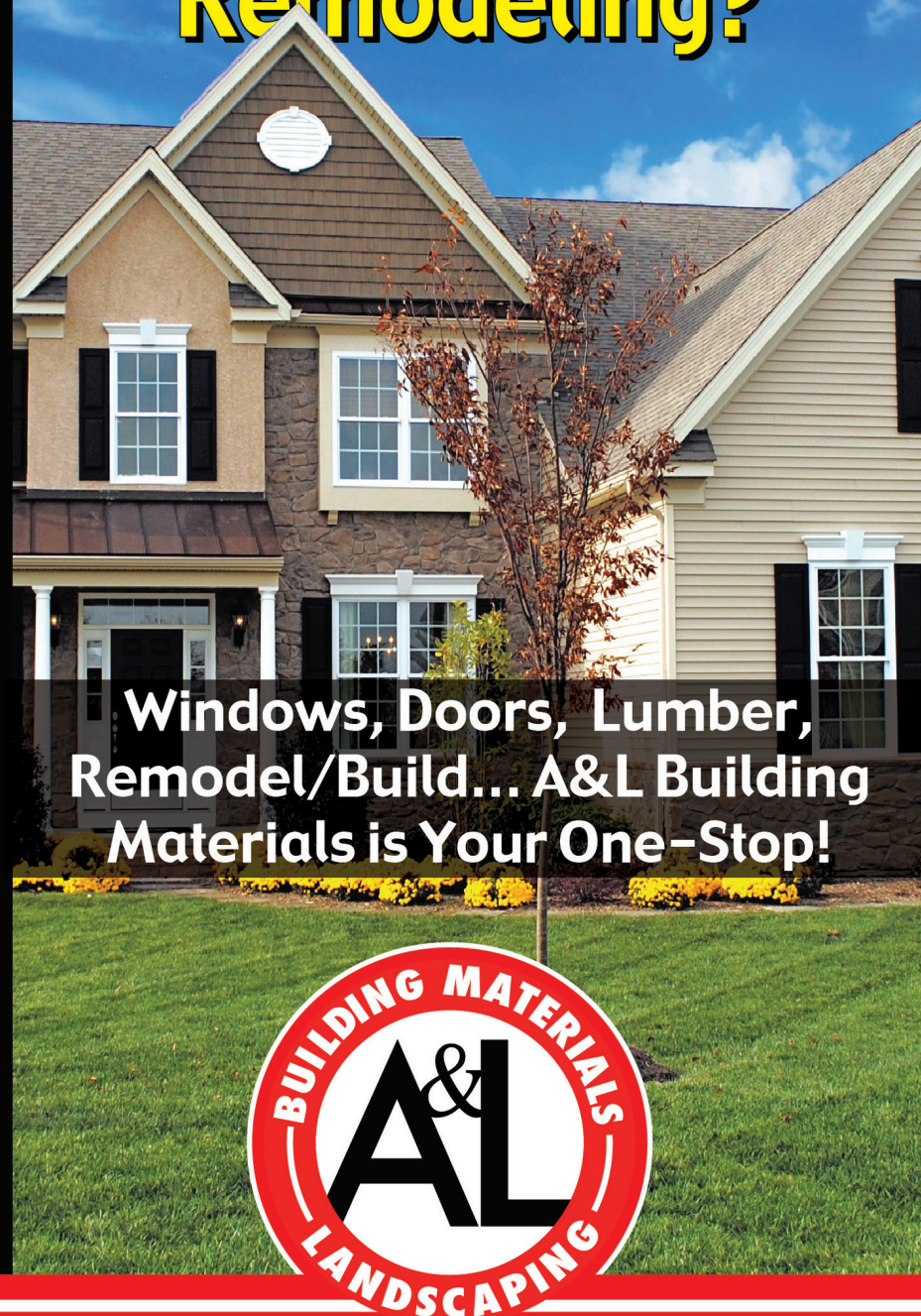
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'MANUAL' from page 1

After seeing an alarming trend of employees departing for similar jobs with other governmental entities, especially in the Russellville Police Department, the council and mayor David Grissom took action in 2016 to try and set more competitive salaries.

While the council previously adopted the salary guidelines recommended by Auburn officials, the actual Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual wasn't completed until a final review from the Civil Service Board two weeks ago and approval from city attorney Danny McDowell of the changes.

"We appreciate everyone's hard work on this," said councilman Jamie Harris. "It's taken a while to get where we are, and that's the result of hard work from everyone."

The new policy calls for overtime pay for all nonexempt employees who work in excess of 40 hours per week at a rate of 1.5 times their rate of pay. For fire department employees, a 14-day or 108-hour work period is designated for fire depart-

ment personnel. Overtime will be paid on all worked hours exceeding 108 within the established work period.

While the council previously adopted the salary guidelines recommended by Auburn officials, the actual Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual wasn't completed until a final review from the Civil Service Board and approval from city attorney Danny McDowell of the changes.

"We appreciate everyone's hard work on this," said councilman Jamie Harris. "It's taken a while to get where we are, and that's the result of hard work from everyone."

For police department employees, a 14-day or 84-hour work period shall apply for purposes of setting overtime pay.

A callout policy provides for a minimum of two hours pay at overtime rate for any employee who is required to report from off-duty status to perform

unscheduled work, regardless of the length of the callout. Overtime rate shall also be paid on any callout hours worked beyond two hours.

City employees may earn pay raises through merit increases or across-the-board increases (like the one that begins October 1, 2018). Merit increases apply only to employees who have not reached the maximum of their pay grade. An employee can be recommended for a merit increase based on his or her annual performance appraisal.

Longevity pay starts for employees with at least five years of continuous service with the City of Russellville. Only full-time, regular employees are eligible for longevity pay.

Longevity pay is capped at 35 years of continuous service, or when the employee reaches 60 years of age, whichever comes first.

The pay is calculated by the number of years of employment multiplied by \$10 to reach the employee's monthly longevity pay supplement.

'FORWARD' from page 1

being asked to 'pay it forward' and help those victims.

Single Source Logistics owner Greg Trapp has donated the use of an 18-wheeler that is set up at the Russellville Walmart as a collection point. The truck will be manned daily from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. through Saturday, September 29. The truck is located next to the building between the two main front entrances. Donations will also be accepted at all Franklin County town or city halls and will be transported to the collection site.

Russellville Police chief Chris Hargett said officials are encouraging the public to donate items that are truly in demand rather than the usual donations of bottled water, food and clothing.

"We will accept all donations, but in particular we are asking for shovels, rakes, hammers, crow and pry bars, pliers, hand scoops, push brooms and

dust pans, rolls of plastic or tarps, disinfectants, dust masks, safety glasses, gloves, shop vacs, batteries, flashlights, garbage bags and other clean-up items," Hargett said. "That's what they have requested. Be mindful that FEMA brings in a lot of water and food, so that's why we are collecting items more in demand."

Hargett said his department would post updates on social media and through local media if they learn of other specialized items that are in demand.

The effort is a joint project of the City of Russellville and the Franklin County Emergency Management Agency.

"[Franklin County EMA director] Jody Hitt reached out to the other cities in the county, and I, along with Mayor [David] Grissom and some council members, had already discussed doing

something to help people affected by Hurricane Florence," Hargett said. "We don't want to be a nuisance and take stuff to them that ends up sitting there. Our experience with the 2011 tornado was that we had way more bottled water than we ever could give out, so we ended up giving it away to other agencies."

Florence, although downgraded to a category 2 hurricane when it hit the Carolina coast, packed winds of 110 miles per hour and more than 40 inches of rain. More than 1.7 million people were located in mandatory evacuation zones as a result of the 400-mile diameter storm. Flood waters remain a major problem.

Hargett recalled meeting people from across the country who came to help Franklin County in its time of need in 2011.

"We wanted to be able to do the same thing for others," he said. "We appreciate Walmart allowing us to put the truck on their property, Single Source for donating it, and Clark Pulley for donating pallets and boxes to store the items we collect."

Hargett urged those wanting to donate clothing to give directly to the Salvation Army. As far as monetary donations, those won't be accepted as part of this drive.

"Those should be made directly to the United Way or the American Red Cross," Hargett said.

For more information on the relief effort, contact Russellville City Hall at 256-332-6060.

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Chamber thanking its members with appreciation days

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce will host a series of appreciation days as a way to say 'thanks' to its members and to introduce the chamber to prospective new members.

Franklin County Chamber of Commerce executive director Cassie Medley announced the three appreciation days and locations last week.

The first will be Tuesday, October 9 at the Phil Campbell City Hall. The second one is set for Tuesday, October 30 at Red Bay City Hall, and the final appreciation day will be Thursday, November 8 at the newly renovated Franklin County Chamber of Commerce office in Russellville. All receptions will be from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Previously, the Chamber hosted a Christmas Open House for its members, but Medley and her board of directors decided to take the chamber on the road to make it easier for people to attend.

"We did it last year for the first time and went to different communities in Franklin County instead of them coming to us," Medley said. "That way, you can take a break or swing by at lunch."

Medley said the events allow her and executive assistant Susan Hall to talk with members and see what's going on across the county, and also to provide new members with general information on the Chamber.

"Anyone is welcome to come, not just our members," Medley said. "We have brochures available about Franklin County and its festivals and events happening during the year. We can share that with everyone who comes."

"Anyone is welcome to come, not just our members," Medley said. "We have brochures available about Franklin County and its festivals and events happening during the year, and we can share that with everyone who comes."

Medley said last year's appreciation days introduced several prospective businesses to the Chamber and what it is about, and a number of those prospects ended up joining the Chamber.

"We had rain on two days last year but still had a great turnout," Medley said. "We met a lot of new people at all three places."

The appreciation days will be hosted by Medley, Hall and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Scott Wiginton is serving as president this year.

For more information on the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, call 256-332-1760 or log onto www.franklincountychamber.org.

50 years and counting....



COURTESY PHOTO

Larry and Brenda Hopson celebrated 50 years of marriage on August 14 with family and friends in Florence. The Hopsons are residents of Russellville, and Brenda is known for her artistic talents.

New Bethel School receives safety kits

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

New Bethel Elementary School will be the first school in the nation to begin using a new type of security measure.

The school was gifted 22 "Find Me Packits" courtesy of Russellville businessman Jamie Kiel, the Republican nominee for State House District 18. The kits are produced by Morningstar Investigations and Process Servers of Debary, Florida, and the Colbert County Commission office recently approved a \$2,000 grant to purchase more kits for every kindergartner in the system.

The primary use of the packets are in case of an emergency. If a child happens to go missing, the kits will provide some DNA samples to hopefully track down the missing child quickly. The kits take and store the child's fingerprints, DNA swab and an essence sample, which contains a certain

scent from the child.

The kits were unveiled during a presentation at New Bethel elementary school, which numerous officials attended along with the kindergarten classes of the school. Kiel, who donated the initial kits, and Franklin County Archives director Chris Ozbirn were in attendance for the presentation.

"Chris and I had discussed school safety issues, and she found out about the kits and got all the information she could on them," Kiel said. "When she asked me where I wanted to implement these kits, New Bethel was the perfect choice for a rollout in terms of numbers and location."

According to Kiel, New Bethel was the perfect location for the rollout of this program.

"Chris and I had discussed school safety issues, and she found out about the kits and got all the information she could on them," Kiel said. "When she asked me where I wanted to implement these

kits, New Bethel was the perfect choice for a rollout in terms of numbers and location."

The plans for having the packets make their way into a school system in Alabama have been in the making for the last few years.

Ozbirn said that once she found out about the packets, she immediately got to work.

"Over the last several years I had found out more and more information about these packets, and I found out that the only state that had access to this program was Florida," Ozbirn said. "I said to myself then and there that the children in Alabama were just as precious and important as those in Florida, and I would do anything I could to get it started."

In addition to having the program starting in Colbert County, Ozbirn hopes to see the packets make their way into not only Franklin County but all across the state of Alabama.

See 'SAFETY,' page 11



Classifieds

256.332.0255

BUSINESS • LOST & FOUND • GARAGE SALES • PETS • APPLIANCES • HELP WANTED • SERVICES • APPLIANCES • CLOTHING • FURNITURE

YARD SALES/ ESTATE SALES

Yard Sale this Friday & Saturday, September 28-29 from 7 a.m.-until in Brookewood Subdivision.

Multi-family yard sale this Friday & Saturday, Sept. 29 from 7-4. Hwy. 26, top of Spruce Pine Mountain. Follow signs. Too much to mention!

Yard Sale this Saturday, Sept. 29 at 489 Seminole Street in Russellville. No sales

before 9 a.m. Toys, baby clothes, children's clothing, furniture and lots more!

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Relay for Life team will have a yard sale on Friday, October 5 from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday, October 6 from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at Born Again Auto Collision Center (formerly Wimberley Auto Collision Center) at the intersection of Hwy. 243 and Hwy. 81 in the Traptown Community. Pancake

breakfast, hamburgers & hot dogs, and bake sale on Saturday. All money raised goes to the American Cancer Society. Call 256-810-0009 for more info.

HOUSES/ APARTMENTS FOR RENT OR SALE

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Houses and apartments for rent. Call

256-291-7572. (5)

PETS

Boxer puppies. White, brindle, tuxedo. \$50. Call 256-483-3675. (2)

FURNITURE

Sofa and Loveseat for sale. \$300. Khaki green in color. Good condition. 326 Ash Ave., across from RV Rec Center. Call 256-436-1699. (5)

HELP WANTED/ SERVICES PROVIDED

I will clean houses/office buildings for \$10 an hour. Call 256-324-4021. If no answer, leave a message. (5)

AUTO

1997 Pontiac Firebird with WS6 performance package. 107,000 miles. Can be viewed at Belgreen Car Wash until Sunday. \$7,500. (1)

MISC. FOR SALE

Grave for sale in Franklin Memorial Gardens in the Round Section (oldest Garden of Devotion). Call 205-993-4155. (1)

1985 Honda Spree Scooter. 50 Hp. 900 original hours. Good tires. All lights, gauges work. New batter, oil and air filter. 180-lb. maximum weight limit. Made for street riding. \$650. Call 256-332-1143. (1)

2007 Yamaha Road

Liner 1900. 22,000 miles. Hard Case Saddlebags. Craig pipes. Has windshield, backrest driver and passenger. 22,000 miles. \$5000. Call 256-332-1143. (1)

Playstation 3 for sale. \$100. Also have First Act Beginner's Guitar. \$50. Call 256-668-5250. (4)

Franklin Free Press Classified Rates: **FREE, Deadline Monday at Noon; Real Estate-Homes, acreage, lots for sale or rent. \$25 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 40 words per ad; Vehicles, Boats, RVs, Motorcycles for sale. \$15 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25 words per ad; Pets For Sale only \$10 for six consecutive weeks. Up to 25 words per ad; Free of Charge: Lost & Found, Giveaways, and Items Under \$100**

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Sixteen local eateries receive satisfactory ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Sixteen of the 17 Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the week of September 10-15 had scores that fall into the "satisfactory compliance" range.

Health ratings are required to be prominently posted in all food/lodging establishments. Scores are graded by the Alabama Department of Public Health inspectors on a 100-point scale.

Establishments with scores of 85 to 100 are considered to be in "satisfactory compliance" and are routinely inspected. Establishments scoring between 70 and 84 will be inspected again in 60 days, and those scoring between 60 and 69 will have another follow-up within 48 hours. Any establishment scoring below 60 will be immediately closed. Areas of inspection by ADPH include management and personnel; food storage, preparation and service; equipment; utensils; linen cleanliness; plumbing and waste; poisonous or toxic material storage; and an inspection of the physical facility or property.

Sixteen of the 17 Franklin County businesses listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

One business, Homestead Cafe, 6631 Hwy. 43, Spruce Pine, scored an 80. Violations included food not covered/shielded at buffet line, wire batter sifter damaged and food dating for nine days.

The highest score was 100, given to the Red Bay Senior Center, 115 5th Ave. SE, Red Bay.

Inspections of Franklin County businesses, with critical item violations noted, resulted in the following scores:

•Harold's Gas & Grocery, 6631 Hwy. 43, Hodges, 86. (Various toxic items/medicines stored with customers' food, kitchen handsink inaccessible (food stored in sink) and no chemical test papers or food probe thermometer).

•Quinn's Grocery, 9980 Hwy. 48, Russellville, 86. (Reach in cooler holding pizza proteins at 45-51 degrees, meat slicer dirty, no accurate chemical test papers).

•Hodges Senior Center, 1942 Hwy. 172, Hodges, 91. (No hot water available at restroom sinks, various toxic items stored with single service and above single service).

•Cardinal Drive In, 602 4th St. W, Red Bay, 91. (Chemicals stored above utensils).

•Piggly Wiggly Deli #93, 518 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 92. (Cooked chicken not date marked).

•Russellville Elementary School, 133 Chucky Mullins Drive, Russellville, 92. (Hose attached

without backflow prevention).

•Red Bay Food Mart, 211 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 92. (Damaged strainer).

•East Franklin Junior High, 1815 Hwy. 89, Phil Campbell, 94. (Mashed potatoes and broccoli being held at 96-110 degrees).

•Russellville High School, 1865 Waterloo Road, Russellville, 95. (Mold in ice machine).

•Russellville Middle School, 765 Summit St., Russellville, 95.

•Pizza Hut #2938, 13450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 96.

•Gas Mart North, 17060 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.

•Daisy Grocery, 125 North Jackson Ave., Russellville, 98.

•43 Grill, 15110 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.

•Fred's Stores of Tennessee, dba #2, 13150 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.

Of the 15 inspections done in Colbert County from September 10-14, no restaurant scored below the satisfactory range.

The high score for the week in Colbert County was 98, scored by Sparky's Drive-In, 701 Old Lee Hwy. Tuscumbia.

Updated ratings are available at www.food-scores.state.al.us and may be viewed by city or county.

Swinger headlines Belgreen wrestling event

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

This Friday night at Belgreen High School there will be a star-studded wrestling match headlined by some of the most exciting names in the wrestling industry.

The event, titled as "Star Wars 2018," will feature two main events and two title matches, with all proceeds benefitting Belgreen High School.

The main event will be a \$1,000 King of the Ring Battle Royale in which all participants will compete for the grand prize until one wrestler is left standing. Then, following the King of the Ring event, the second main event, the United States Heavyweight title match, will take place. The title match will feature The Wrestling Superstar taking on the biggest name at the event, WWE superstar Johnny Swinger.

Hailing from Long Island, New York, Swinger debuted on the professional wrestling circuit in 1993 and has been a mainstay in the industry ever since. After bouncing around a few different lower-level wrestling circuits, Swinger finally got his big break when he signed on with the World Championship Wrestling circuit.

While with the WCW, Swinger appeared in the highest-rated episode of the 'Monday Nitro' edition of WCW, a match in which he appeared with one of the biggest names in the history of wrestling, Hulk Hogan. In addition to working with the WCW, Swinger also had the opportunity to work for other circuits such as Extreme Championship Wrestling, Total Nonstop Action Wrestling, and on the Independent Circuit before joining the WWE.

Swinger made his WWE debut on July 31, 2005, on an episode of 'Sunday Night Heat' in which he won his first match. Swinger was sent to 'Deep South Wrestling' for a brief period of time before returning back to 'Sunday Night Heat' for a few more matches.

After leaving the WWE, Swinger returned to the Independent Circuit, mainly working for the Great Championship Wrestling circuit. Over his time in wrestling, Swinger has amassed numerous titles, some of which include the NWA Mid-American Heavyweight Championship, UCW World Championship, BCW Can-Am Heavyweight Championship (two-time champion) and the UIW

Heavyweight Championship.

Although he has performed all across the country and on numerous big-time stages, Swinger says there's something about wrestling in Alabama that separates itself from other places.

"Being from New York, it is just a completely different atmosphere when it comes to wrestling in the South, and especially Alabama," Swinger said. "I always have a lot of fun wrestling in Alabama, and it always seems to me like the fans are always more engaged and have a lot more fun that you see in other places. I just really enjoy it."

The one thing that separates this match from other matches, according to Swinger, is the fact that fans will have the opportunity to meet the wrestlers and get autographs and ask questions.

"Doing smaller events like this are great for the fans. This isn't something you can get at bigger matches in bigger cities," Swinger said. "The one thing I would tell people is to come out early so you can meet all the guys. This is a fantastic opportunity for fans of all ages, children, parents and grandparents, to come out and have a great time."

After the second main event this Friday night, there will be a Southern Tag Team Title match featuring Action Mike Jackson and Doink the Clown taking on The American Brawlers. Doink the Clown has been portrayed by different wrestlers over the years and was listed at No. 26 on the all-time list of 500 singles wrestlers of all-time by *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

Action Mike Jackson has been on the professional wrestling circuit for years and was in charge of getting this headlining event together. In addition to working with the professional wrestling circuit, Jackson also works with the Alabama High School Athletic Association, creating programs to sell at championship high school athletic events. Through his work with the AHSAA, Jackson was able to make some contacts and learned about the potential need for a fundraiser at Belgreen.

Jackson was on the WWE circuit for five years from 1988-1993 and has done numerous fundraiser matches, such as the one this coming Friday night.

According to Jackson, he can't think of a better way to support a local school.

"These matches are always great fundraisers,



COURTESY PHOTO

WWE superstar Johnny Swinger will wrestle in the Heavyweight title match at Belgreen High School's fundraising event on Friday night.

and we always make sure that people get what they pay for. Every match we set up is a title match, because the fans deserve the best of the best," Jackson said. "It is a family-friendly environment, and we make sure nothing crazy ever happens. It's just good, old-fashioned wrestling, and it is going towards a great cause."

Finally, to cap off the night, there will be a United States Junior Championship Match featuring young up-and-coming wrestlers like Thundercat, who will be taking on Ultimate Dragon for the title.

Advance tickets may be purchased from the Belgreen High School office for \$8, and tickets the day of the match will be \$10. Ringside seats will be available, and there will be no reserved seats.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., and there will also be an autograph party at CJ's grocery from 3:30 to 5:30.

'SAFETY', from page 9

"Once we were able to get the thumbs-up from Colbert County to start the program here at New Bethel, I immediately began calling some administrators in Franklin County," Ozbirn said. "I really hope that officials in Franklin County will see what a wonderful program this is to have and the potential it has to save lives in the case of an emergency."

The fact that the packets were unveiled on the 17th anniversary of September 11th was not lost on anyone. Ozbirn said that while there were not any direct plans to unveil the kits on the anniversary, there can definitely be some correlation.

"Safety was the number one priority for us when going through this process, and safety has taken on an entirely different meaning since that tragic day seventeen years ago," Ozbirn said. "Keeping our children safe is a priority. I have two children of my own who are grown, and I still want to keep them safe. You do what you have to do to make sure they are taken care of, and that is what we tried to achieve by getting this program started."

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A public notice from the Russellville Gas Board

RUSSELLVILLE GAS BOARD
1296 Walnut Gate Road
Russellville, AL 35654

The Russellville Gas Board is required by Federal Law to implement and maintain a Damage Prevention Program and a Public Awareness Program. The following information is provided in compliance with those requirements.

I. Damage Prevention Program

- A. The Russellville Gas Board (RGB) is to notify parties who periodically excavate in areas where RGB's natural gas lines are located and to inform those parties to request that RGB's natural gas lines be located. Requests for line locations may be made by calling Alabama Line Location Center at 1-800-292-8525 or the Russellville Gas Board at 1-256-332-2020. A 48 hour notice is required.

II. Public Awareness Program

- A. Natural gas has no odor, therefore, in order to identify possible leaks, the Russellville Gas Board (RGB) adds a foul smelling substance to natural gas. If you detect a foul smell near appliances, apparatus, equipment or at any other location near natural gas lines call the RGB at 1-256-332-3850 or after hours at 1-256-332-2230. If the odor is strong, proceed as follows.
- 1) Leave the structure.
 - 2) Do not flip light switches.
 - 3) Do not use electrical equipment.
 - 4) Do not create a spark or flame.
 - 5) Notify the RGB.
- B. Repairs or alterations to any natural gas facility should be performed by a licensed and bonded pipefitter.
- C. It is unlawful to attempt to repair or alter natural gas pipelines or facilities owned by RGB.
- D. The RGB's natural gas pipelines are located underground throughout the area of service. In order for the public to identify the approximate location of underground pipelines, the RGB incorporates the following measures:
- 1) Bright yellow markers identify the existence of underground natural gas pipelines.
 - 2) Above ground facilities are painted silver. Fences have signs attached identifying RGB facilities.
 - 3) An on-site location of natural gas pipelines is available by calling Alabama Line Location Center at 1-800-292-8525 or the RGB at 1-256-332-2020.
 - 4) Detail maps are available at the RGB office located at 1296 Walnut Gate Road, Russellville, AL, 35654.
- E. In the event of damage to RGB's natural gas facilities the affected public should leave the area and the party causing the damage should:
- 1) Leave the equipment and premises immediately.
 - 2) Do not create a spark or flame.
 - 3) Notify the RGB immediately.

Natural gas is a safe and reliable form of energy. By implementing the Damage Prevention Program and Public Awareness Program, the Russellville Gas Board is committed to ensuring that it stays that way.

Russellville Gas Board

La Comisión de Gas de Russellville
1296 Walnut Gate Road
Russellville, AL 35654

La Comisión de Gas de Russellville por requerimiento de la ley Federal tiene que implementar y mantener un Programa de Prevención de Daños y un Programa de Conciencia Pública. La siguiente información va de acuerdo a dichos requerimientos.

I. Programa de Prevención de Daños

- A. La Comisión de Gas de Russellville (RGB) deberá notificar a las partes que periódicamente excavan en áreas en que la RGB tiene líneas de gas natural e informar a dichas partes que piden que las líneas de la RGB sean localizadas. Para pedir la localización de las líneas puede hacerlo llamando al Centro de Localización de Líneas de Alabama al número 1800-292-8525 o en la oficina de la Comisión de Gas de Russellville al teléfono 1-256-332-2020. Se requiere notificar con 48 horas de anticipación.

II. Programa de Conciencia Pública

- A. El gas natural no tiene olor, por lo tanto para poder identificar posibles fugas, la Comisión de Gas de Russellville (RGB) le agrega una sustancia de olor fétido al gas natural. Si usted detecta este olor cerca de algún aparato o equipo o en cualquier otro lugar cerca de una línea de gas natural llame a la RGB al teléfono 1 256-332-3850 o después de horas de servicio al 1-256-332-2230. Si el olor es fuerte, haga lo siguiente:
- 1) Aléjese del recinto.
 - 2) No prenda luces o apagadores.
 - 3) No use equipo eléctrico.
 - 4) No cree una chispa o flama.
 - 5) Notifique a la RGB.
- B. Reparaciones o alteraciones a cualquier instalación de gas natural deberá ser hecha por un tubero con licencia y certificado.
- C. Es contra la ley intentar reparar o alterar una línea de gas natural o instalación propiedad de la RGB.
- D. Las líneas de gas natural de la RGB se localizan bajo tierra en el área de servicio. Para que el público pueda identificar la localización aproximada de líneas enterradas, la RGB incorpora las siguientes medidas:
- 1) Marcadores de color amarillo brillante identifican la existencia de líneas subterráneas de gas natural.
 - 2) Servicios sobre el suelo están pintadas de color plateado. Las cercas tienen señales identificando servicios de la RGB.
 - 3) Se encuentra disponible un servicio para localizar líneas de gas natural llamando al Centro de Localización de Líneas de Alabama al teléfono 1-800-292-8525 o a la RGB al 1-256-332-2020.
 - 4) Hay mapas detallados disponibles en la oficina de la RGB localizada en 1229 Walnut Gate Road, Russellville, AL, 35654.
- E. En el caso de daño a los servicios de gas natural de la RGB el público afectado deberá alejarse del área y la parte que cause el daño debe:
- 1) Dejar el equipo y el lugar inmediatamente.
 - 2) No provoque una chispa o flama.
 - 3) Notifique la RGB de inmediato.

El gas natural es una fuente de energía segura y confiable. Implementando el Programa de Prevención de Daños y Conciencia al Público, la Comisión de Gas de Russellville esta comprometida a asegurar que siga de esa manera.

Comisión de Gas de Russellville

Week 5 in the SEC

Last week's record: 4-0
 Year to date: 12-4

We took the easy road last week, riding predictable wins from Georgia, Alabama and Auburn to a perfect record. This week, the training wheels come off. At least a couple of these games could go either way.



Mike Self
Sports Editor

Let's dive right in.

Saturday, September 29
Texas A&M vs. Arkansas

A&M has beaten Arkansas six straight times since joining the SEC in 2012, and this doesn't figure to be the year that streak comes to an end. The Hogs, who managed only a field goal in last week's loss at Auburn, are in the mix with Tennessee to be the worst team in the SEC this season. A&M, meanwhile, out-gained Alabama on the ground last Saturday and did some good things offensively. Unfortunately, they had no answer for the Tide passing attack and got beat 45-23.

The Aggies will get well this week and give Jimbo Fisher his first SEC win as a head coach.

The Pick: Texas A&M 38 Arkansas 20
Florida at Mississippi State

I'm chalking up State's total no-show in Lexington last week as a classic trap game. That, and Kentucky is definitely better than we thought. I'm not ready to jump ship on the Bulldogs, though, despite an alarmingly bad performance up front on offense.

Back in Starkville, with Dan Mullen and Florida in town, I'll take State to get back on track and win the one game you know they've had circled for the past nine months.

The Pick: Mississippi State 27 Florida 20
South Carolina at Kentucky

Now we find out if Kentucky can handle prosperity. There's every reason to think the Wildcats will win on Saturday. They've owned South Carolina of late. They're at home. They're playing as well as they ever have under Mark Stoops.

So, naturally, it's time for a little regression to the mean. Reality bites. Plus, the Gamecocks showed with last week's thumping of Vanderbilt that they still have plenty of fight left in them.

The Pick: South Carolina 24 Kentucky 21
Ole Miss at LSU

Now sitting squarely inside the Top 5 in the AP poll, this looks like the perfect time for LSU to spit the bit and come crashing back to earth after its surprisingly impressive start. Don't count on it. If the Tigers can bully Auburn, they can certainly bully Ole Miss.

Look for LSU to run the ball all day long and survive a couple of big pass plays by the Rebels to remain unbeaten. [As a bonus, the battle between these Ole Miss receivers and the LSU secondary should be highly entertaining to watch.]

The Pick: LSU 34 Ole Miss 21

Give and TAKE



PHOTOS BY KYLE GLASGOW

COOL CATS - Shortly after taking the field against Vina last Friday (above), the Bobcats got a scoop-and-score from freshman defensive back Blaine Goodson to spark a 47-2 rout. Ridge Raper (below, 2) threw for two touchdowns, and senior Dakota Mansell (40) ran for two more.

A defense that has forced 11 turnovers the last two weeks has Phil Campbell eyeing its first three-game win streak in 17 years

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

A greedy Phil Campbell defense has helped the Bobcats snap a long losing streak and climb back to the .500 mark following an 0-2 start.

Two weeks ago, Phil Campbell forced five turnovers in a 15-7 win at region rival Clements, ending a span of 11 consecutive losses dating back to early last season. The Bobcats (2-2, 1-1 in Class 3A, Region 8) were at it again last Friday, coming up with six more takeaways—including a scoop-and-score by freshman defensive back Blaine Goodson on the game's first play—in a 47-2 rout of county rival Vina.

Sophomore corner Rowdy Elliott had one of three interceptions on the night by Phil Campbell, which held the Red Devils to just 100 total yards. The Bobcat defense has forced 11 turnovers over the past two games and has not allowed a point since the first quarter against Clements.

"Our defensive staff is doing a great job," first-year head coach Kevin Barnwell said on Sunday. "They're keeping us rolling right now. Overall, I thought we ran to the football really well the other night. Our goal is to become more physical, and we're becoming more physical than we were at the start of the season. The players are working hard and buying in on a weekly basis. They're getting more physical and becoming



Big-play offense fueling hot start for RHS

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

A year ago at this same juncture, Russellville had scored a total of two offensive touchdowns in its first four games while starting a season 0-4 for the first time since 1943. Last week at West Point, during one breathtaking stretch from late in the second quarter to late in the third, the Golden Tigers scored six offensive touchdowns in a span of barely 12 minutes on their way to topping the 50-point mark for the first time since September of 2016.

The 53-20 win over the Warriors ran Russellville's record to 4-0 and gave the Golden Tigers 165 points on the year, the most they've scored through the first four games of a season since the 2002 team put up 181. That team, generally regarded as the most talented in program history, went on to score a school-record 667 points (44.5 per game) and finished 14-1, falling to Homewood in an instant-classic state championship game.

It remains to be seen how far this Russellville team can go [the early schedule has admittedly been on the soft side], but the Golden Tigers have already scored more points in 2018 than they did in all of 2017. Driving that dramatic turnaround is a quick-strike offense led by the big-play trio of quarterback Lucas McNutt, tailback Zaye Boyd and receiver Devin Buckhalter, all of whom are seniors and none of whom played a down of football for RHS last season.

First-year head coach John Ritter has enjoyed the luxury of structuring his offense around three players who are each capable of finding the end zone at any time, from anywhere on the field.

"It's nice. I feel like we can stretch the field vertically and horizontally with those guys," said Ritter, whose team racked up 584 total yards on just 53

plays in the rout of West Point, an average of 11.0 yards per snap. "We try to take what the defense gives us and not press for the big play, just let it happen when it happens. But it all starts with being able to run the football. I truly believe that when you can run the football, it opens up a lot of other things."

Rest assured, the Golden Tigers (4-0, 3-0 in Class 5A, Region 7) can run the football. After rushing for more than 1,400 yards and scoring 25 touchdowns as a sophomore at RHS in 2016, Boyd transferred last year to Lawrence County High, where he led the Red Devils to a 25-6 win at Russellville in mid-September, their first over the Golden Tigers since World War II. Boyd returned to RHS late this summer and has been better than ever through the first four games, rushing for 672 yards and 12 touchdowns on 72 carries (an average of 9.3 yards per attempt).

"I feel like we can stretch the field vertically and horizontally with these guys," said Ritter, whose team racked up 584 total yards on just 53 plays in the rout of West Point, an average of 11.0 yards per snap. "We try to take what the defense gives us and not press for the big play, just let it happen when it happens. But it all starts with being able to run the football. I truly believe that when you can run the football, it opens up a lot of other things."

Equally adept at running through defenders as he is at running right by them, the 5'11, 195-pound Boyd shredded West Point for a career-high 242 yards on 18 carries, including long scoring runs of 64 and 47 yards. Half of his 12 touchdowns thus far have covered 30-plus yards, and he's averaging a ridiculous 13.9 yards per carry over the past two games.

Breaking down film of Boyd's big runs, Ritter likes what he sees from an offensive line featuring sophomore Edgar Amaya at left tackle, senior Will Rushing at left guard, junior Jonathan Vargas at center, senior Herson Rodriguez at right guard and junior Noah Pounders at right tackle.

"Great execution from top to bottom and left to right," said Ritter, whose team is averaging 272.2 rushing yards per game after gashing West Point for 416 on the ground. "We're getting better and better up front each week. When we make a big play, it all starts up front, and we've also got our receivers blocking really well on the edge."

That includes Buckhalter, who is fully healthy—and seemingly a step faster—after missing his entire junior season with a broken bone in his foot. The 6'0, 190-pound speedster is well on his way to a career year, having already caught 19 passes for 300 yards and four touchdowns in four games. Buckhalter burned West Point for a pair of long scoring plays in the third quarter last week, hauling in a deep shot from McNutt down the right sideline for a 57-yard touchdown and then taking a receiver screen 49 yards to the house on Russellville's very next play from scrimmage.

He also scored his first rushing touchdown of the season against the Warriors and finished the night with six catches for 138 yards.

"He really played a complete game," Ritter said of Buckhalter, who also helped spark a comeback win at Corner in Week 2 with a 23-yard touchdown toss to sophomore receiver Cole Barnett on a trick play. "It's kind of like what we've talked about before with Zaye; I'm more interested in what they do when the ball is not in their hands. Devin did a phenomenal job of blocking all night in the run game and running good routes, which popped Cole [Barnett] open a couple of times. Everybody was doing their job."

"And when Devin does have the ball in his hands, he's a special player. He can really make plays."

So can McNutt, who is getting better by the week as he shakes off the rust from having not played football since his freshman year. McNutt is rapidly improving as a passer [he's completed 16-of-22 attempts over the past two weeks for 264 yards and three touchdowns], but his dynamic ability as a runner has been a game-changing weapon for the Golden Tigers—particularly on third and fourth down.

In the season opener against rival Deshler, McNutt converted a pair of fourth downs with his legs on a critical third-quarter scoring drive to help spark a 40-34 double-overtime win. He broke off a career-long 63-yard touchdown run in a Week 3 rout of Hayden, and last week at West Point McNutt broke the Warriors' back early in the third quarter when he scrambled 31 yards for a touchdown on fourth-and-11 to push Russellville's lead to 28-20.

McNutt finished last Friday's game with a career-high 168 yards and two touchdowns on 10-for-14 passing while also rushing for 69 yards on just four attempts. For the season, the fleet-footed and slippery senior has rushed for 221 yards and two scores on 22 carries—an average of 10.0 yards per attempt that betters even that of Boyd.

Combine McNutt's dual-threat abilities with the speed and athleticism of Boyd and Buckhalter, and it's no wonder the Golden Tigers are scoring points at a rate they haven't approached in 16 years, with an offense that is both



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

BIG PLAY ZAYE - Through four games, Boyd is averaging 9.3 yards per carry and already has runs of 64, 61, 49, 47, 37 and 34 yards among his 12 rushing touchdowns. The senior back has rushed for 672 yards on the season, including a career-high 242 last week at West Point.

'HOT,' from page 14

versatile and explosive.

"It makes you defend the whole field," said Ritter, whose team is averaging 41.2 points per game heading into this week's game at Haleyville. "There are teams I've coached where if you stop the run, you shut our offense down, or if you cover our best receiver, you shut our offense down. With the guys we have now, it makes you defend everything and not just hone in on stopping the pass or stopping the run or stopping one guy."

"And it's not just those three guys; you've got Cole, you've got Austin Ashley, who's got five or six carries a game the last two games, you've got Rowe Gallagher, who's made some plays the last couple of weeks. You have to be a complete defense to stop this offense."

The next team to try and tackle that challenge will be the Lions (2-2), who were off last Friday following a 43-22 loss to Northside the week before. In its two wins this season (over Central-Florence and Oak Grove), Haleyville has allowed a total of just seven points; in their two losses (to Northside and Winfield), the Lions have allowed a combined 80 points.

Haleyville has a dynamic offensive attack of its own, led by senior quarterback Scott McAlpine. A Russellville defense that pitched a second-half shutout at West Point last week will have its hands full trying to slow down the Lions.

"With the guys we have now," Ritter said, "it makes you defend everything and not just hone in on stopping the pass or stopping the run or stopping one guy. You have to be a complete defense to stop this offense."

"Haleyville is a very explosive team," Ritter said. "Their quarterback is a really good player. He makes their offense go. He throws the ball so well, he almost puts it in a spot where the receivers have to catch it. He's a good runner as well. Defensively, they're very sound and good at what they do. Coach [Todd] McNutt does a phenomenal job with their defense. We're gonna have to play very well to have an opportunity to beat them."

Russellville has won the last 10 meetings with Haleyville, but the two teams have only played twice since the late 1980's and not at all since 1999. Ritter hopes to see his team use Friday's game as a spring board to a big second half of the season.

"We want to keep the momentum we've established and keep it going," he said on Sunday. "Even though this is not a region game, they're still gonna turn on the scoreboard, so it counts. From here on out, we want to handle our business one week at a time. When we step back into region play, our goal is to do our job and handle our business so we don't have to depend on somebody else to help us make the playoffs."

As pleased as he is to be 4-0 out of the gate, Ritter's enthusiasm is tempered by the knowledge that the Golden Tigers' toughest region games lie ahead of them, not behind them. Lawrence County (2-1 thus far in Region 7), Hamilton (1-2) and Dora (2-1) will all visit Russellville down the stretch, and the Golden Tigers' trip to Jasper (3-0) on October 19 is shaping up as a potential region championship game.

"There's no doubt our region schedule is back-end loaded," Ritter said. "We're gonna play two or three of the best teams in the region down the stretch. I know Hamilton got picked off last week [losing 46-0 at Corner], but we felt like they were one of the better teams in our region. We've still got Jasper, Dora and Hamilton, plus we've got Lawrence County coming up. They're much improved. They've played everybody well. They beat up on West Point, too [43-7 in Week]."

"Those last four region games are going to be tough. We'll have to make sure that we're playing really well going into those games to give ourselves an opportunity to be successful."

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Devin Buckhalter

Senior WR, Russellville

Back from a foot injury that cost him his entire junior season, Buckhalter looked better than ever last Friday at West Point. The 6'0, 190-pound speedster had touchdown catches of 57 and 49 yards on back-to-back offensive plays for Russellville in the third quarter and finished the night with six grabs for 138 yards. He also scored his first rushing TD of the year from six yards out in the second quarter.

For the season, Buckhalter leads the Golden Tigers with 19 catches for 300 yards and four touchdowns. He's also rushed for 67 yards.



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Wildcats roll into rivalry game with two straight wins

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Following a 50-20 loss at Westminster Christian on September 7 that dropped his team's record to 0-3, Colbert Heights head coach Taylor Leathers posed a question to his players in the post-game locker room before they boarded the buses back to Tusculumbia.

"After the Westminster loss, I asked our guys, 'Who wants to win seven in a row?' That's what we wanna do, and our kids are buying into that," Leathers said on Sunday evening, roughly 48 hours after his team survived a sloppy performance on offense to earn an 18-6 win over East Lawrence on homecoming. "The only way we can do that is one win at a time. We have to break that down and compartmentalize that on a weekly basis."

"Our goal coming into the year was to go 1-0 each week and to make the playoffs. We're adjusting our goal to being the region runner-up. We can adjust our goal and put our eyes on winning out."

The win over East Lawrence—in which Colbert Heights held the Eagles to just one touchdown and 238 total yards—followed the previous week's 40-34 victory over Lauderdale County and improved the Wildcats to 2-3 overall and 2-1 in Class 3A, Region 8. Their next hurdle on the road to seven straight wins is Friday's home game at Amos Mitchell Stadium against county rival Cherokee.

The Wildcats have played Cherokee 45 times, more than any other opponent in their program's 53-year history. The Indians lead the all-time series 26-19, but Colbert Heights has won the last 12 meetings. That represents a complete reversal of fortune from the late 1980's and all of the 1990's, when Cherokee beat the Wildcats 16 consecutive times.

"After the Westminster loss, I asked our guys, 'Who wants to win seven in a row?' That's what we wanna do, and our kids are buying into that," Leathers said. "The only way we can do that is one win at a time. We have to break that down and compartmentalize that on a weekly basis."

"Our goal coming into the year was to go 1-0 each week and to make the playoffs. We're adjusting our goal to being the region runner-up. We can adjust our goal and put our eyes on winning out."

"When Cherokee had the streak for several years in a row, it was big for their community," said Leathers, a native of Winfield now in his third season as head coach on The Mountain. "Now that Colbert Heights has won the past twelve times, it's big for our community. It's a fun rivalry game. We're in the same school system. Our communities work well together. We know a lot of their people, and they know a lot of our people. It's not a hatred type of thing. It's a fun rivalry, just a fun sports rivalry. I'm excited about getting it back."

After meeting every season for 32 consecutive years from 1984 through 2015, Colbert Heights and Cherokee did not play each other the past two seasons. Leathers says that, upon arriving from Lexington to take over the Wildcat program in 2016, he was immediately besieged with questions from Colbert Heights fans about when the Cherokee game would be back on the schedule.

"It's the longest-standing rivalry we have," Leathers said. "It's been a huge game for both communities for a long time. As soon as we finished reviewing the film from East Lawrence [on Sunday], we started talking about the Cherokee game. We pulled up the series history on the projector and told our players, 'Look at this, guys. This is rivalry football. This is county rivalry football.'"

"Our guys who are seniors now were freshmen the last time we played Cherokee. I asked how many of them remembered that game [a 42-15 win by the Wildcats at Cherokee], and Tyler Tubbs raised his hand and said, 'Coach, I remember it. I played two plays.' We only have a few guys who dressed as freshmen in that game, so [the rivalry] is not as fresh as it was because of the two-year absence. But I'm excited to see it back, and our communities are excited. It's been a big game over the years. I told our guys how important the game is from a community perspective and a school perspective, on both sides."

The significance of the rivalry may not resonate quite as much with current

See 'RIVALRY,' page 17

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'RIVALRY', from page 16

players, but Leathers believes that may change by the time kickoff rolls around on Friday night.

"We're trying to translate to our kids that it is gonna be a rivalry game," Leathers said. "They'll hear more about it from their cousins, their uncles, their older brothers, their fathers, their grandfathers, just because they've been involved with that game for so long. Several times [eight, to be exact, since 2002] it was a region game, when we were both 2A. Now they're down to 1A and we're up to 3A, but it's exciting to get the rivalry back."

Both teams enjoyed outstanding seasons a year ago, each advancing to the state quarterfinals in their respective classification. [Colbert Heights finished 11-2, while Cherokee went 9-4.] Both Leathers and Cherokee head coach Lymos McDonald were faced with the task of replacing major contributors on both sides of the ball, and the results have been hit or miss early in 2018. The Wildcats have begun to turn things around following their 0-3 start, and the Indians (1-3) have been all over the map through their first four games—a 26-22 loss to R.A. Hubbard, a 47-0 loss to Colbert County, a 60-0 rout of Vina and a 63-6 shellacking at the hands of Mars Hill last week.

"They lost some players from last year, but they're still a good football team," Leathers said. "They've got a very good quarterback who runs the football well, and what they do offensively is very effective. From what I've looked at on film, they're a very good football team, depending on who they play. The R.A. Hubbard game was very competitive, and R.A. Hubbard has a really good football team this year."

"We're gonna be in a dog-fight, no doubt about it, for four quarters. Our starters better get ready to play the full length of the game. There should be a huge crowd. I expect all of Cherokee to be there. There are a lot of people on both sides who wanna see how this turns out. We're looking forward to packing the stadium and getting our guys prepared to compete."

Despite the win last week over East Lawrence, Leathers wasn't pleased with his team's execution and attention to detail on the offensive side of the ball. Coming off a game in which they rushed for nearly 400 yards against Lauderdale County, the

Wildcats totaled just 244 yards of offense last Friday—their lowest output since generating 233 total yards in the opener at Red Bay.

"We did not play very well," Leathers said. "Defensively, we did. We played well defensively. We forced several three-and-outs and got some turnovers. Offensively, though, it was homecoming. We started on Sunday the week before talking about the distractions of homecoming and all the events of the week, from the bonfire to the parade to the pep rally. We talked about remaining focused on the game. As a coach, you can continue to preach those things all week, but the distractions are still gonna be there."

"Fortunately, we were able to win, but overall our offensive execution was not good. Credit East Lawrence—they changed some things up defensively, and it did give us some trouble. It wasn't all us. Credit them for having a good game plan. But we didn't execute. In order for us to be continue getting better and being able to be competitive moving forward, we're gonna have to fix those things. We won't be able to win many football games with that type of offense."

"We're gonna be in a dog-fight, no doubt about it, for four quarters," Leathers said. "Our starters better get ready to play the full length of the game. There should be a huge crowd. I expect all of Cherokee to be there."

Fortunately for the Wildcats, a defense that had yielded at least 34 points in each of the first four games rose to the occasion last Friday. Tubbs, a senior defensive end, led the way with a monster game, recording a team-high 10 tackles and making five stops behind the line of scrimmage.

"Tyler Tubbs had an exceptional game from his defensive end spot," Leathers said. "That was his best football game on the defensive side. Several of those tackles for loss were on the quarterback. [East Lawrence] did a lot of quarterback runs. They lined up in a Notre Dame Box type of deal, a single-wing package. We hadn't seen it on any film, but overall our defensive plan was solid, and Tyler was one who played exceptionally well."

Senior safety Cayna Balta also had a big night, recovering a fumble and logging his third intercep-

tion of the season.

"Cayne Balta has been a huge addition for our team this year," Leathers said. "I feel like he's just got a good nose for the ball. When I got here three years ago, Cayne was in the spring of his freshman year, and he didn't come out for football. He didn't play as a sophomore or junior, but we continued to encourage him to try to get him back out. I think the success we had last year helped convince Cayne that he needed to get involved in the football program."

"I knew he was gonna be a playmaker. He's an exceptional athlete, a really good safety, and I expect he's gonna keep making plays for us the rest of the year."

Balta has also made an impact on offense this season as a slot back, rushing for 227 yards and three touchdowns on just 24 carries while also catching 14 passes for 147 yards. Senior Braden McCaig also has 14 catches on the season, totaling 213 yards and one touchdown. McCaig, who plays slot back and fullback, is the team's second-leading rusher through five games with 314 yards and four touchdowns on 30 carries.

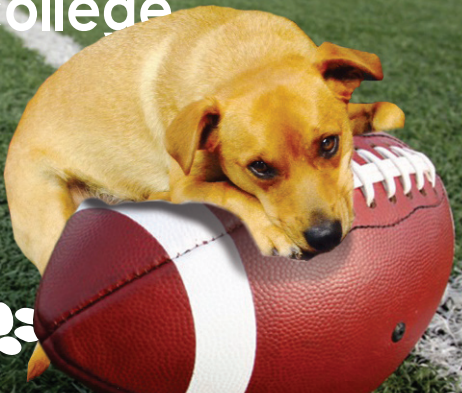
Sophomore quarterback Carson Shaw is having a fine first season as the starter, completing 59 percent (40-for-68) of his passes for 566 yards and five touchdowns with just one interception. Shaw also leads the Wildcats in rushing with 428 yards and five touchdowns on 96 carries.

Following this week's battle with Cherokee, the Wildcats will travel to Decatur Heritage for their final non-region game of the year next Friday. They will then close the season with region games at Lexington, versus Clements and at Phil Campbell. Win all three, and Colbert Heights will be hosting a first-round playoff game on The Mountain for a second straight season.

"Each game you win, with a team like ours, we're gaining experience and learning how to win," Leathers said. "We're learning how to perform in games, how to win and how to build confidence. We're starting to have players make plays that maybe they didn't know they were capable of making."

"Winning breeds winning. The more games we win, hopefully the more we'll continue to win."

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Submit your picks to us each week in one of two ways: Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. **Picks sent in by mail for Week 5 must be postmarked by Friday, September 28, and picks submitted by email for Week 5 must be received by Saturday, September 29 at 10 a.m.** Each week, the contestant who correctly picks the most games will win a free T-shirt and the chance to pick in the grand-prize final-week contest. If multiple contestants correctly pick the same number of games in a given week, the tiebreaker score will be used to determine a winner. Contestants are only eligible to win the weekly contest once. Thanks for playing, and good luck!

Congrats to Week 4 winner PAM SMITH, who correctly picked 9 out of 10 games and also picked Alabama to beat Texas A&M 42-21!

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Georgia

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Mississippi St.

Mississippi St.

South Carolina
at Kentucky

South Carolina

Ole Miss
at LSU

LSU

West Virginia
at Texas Tech

West Virginia

Virginia Tech
at Duke

Duke

Ohio State
at Penn State

Ohio State

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'TAKE' from page 13

more comfortable with what they're trying to do.

"We're nowhere near where we want to be, but we're making progress, and that's what we want."

The Bobcats are making strides on offense as well. They were balanced in the win over Vina, rushing for 181 yards and throwing for 131 on their way to topping the 40-point mark for the first time since the 2017 season opener against Tharptown. Senior back Dakota Mansell rushed for two touchdowns, and senior tight end Nate Owens caught a pair of scoring passes—one each from sophomore quarterbacks Ridge Raper and Luke Barnwell (pictured at right), the latter of whom saw his first game action since suffering a shoulder injury in the season opener against Red Bay.

Raper also connected with receiver Trey Leindecker on a long touchdown pass, but Kevin Barnwell said the Bobcats still have a ways to go before they reach their full potential—on either side of the ball.

"There's still a lot we can improve on, and we're gonna work on some of that stuff this week," Barnwell said. "From an offensive standpoint, it's about getting on our blocks and engaging and staying with them. One of the things we have to work on is making sure we're getting our assignments done. We played a little sloppy at times the other night. We missed some assignments with some of our younger guys. We're still trying to build a program. We have to learn to control our box and dominate our box, and we're still not doing that at the level we need to be for us to be where want to be."

Phil Campbell has already surpassed last season's win total, and Barnwell said he's been pleased thus far with his young team's effort and mental approach.

"Our constant emphasis, like we said last week, is controlling the things you can control and not playing based on circumstances," Barnwell said on Sunday. "We're getting better with that. That's been a real positive with this group. I've been impressed with them; so far they haven't gotten down. Even when we fall behind, they keep playing hard."

"These kids are playing hard. I appreciate their effort. This is a fun group of kids to coach, it really is. It's been enjoyable, and it'll be even more enjoyable once we start to get a few more wins under our belt."

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Heading into Friday's non-region game at Phillips, the Bobcats are seeking their first three-game win streak since the 2001 team opened the season 8-0. The 'Cats are also looking to turn the tide in a rivalry that has seen Phillips win six of the last seven meetings. Phil Campbell hasn't beaten the Bears in Bear Creek since winning 52-6 in 1983. [That was the last meeting between the two teams until the rivalry was renewed in 2006.]

"Every game is important, and we're not approaching this one any different than what we would do any week," Barnwell said. "We want to take it one play at a time and win that play, just control the things we can control. We're learning how to play with emotion but not emotionally. That'll be a big emphasis this week, because we know it's gonna be an emotional type of game. We want to play with emotion, but we have to channel it in a positive way and not in an emotional way. We have to stay even-keeled and not let ourselves be affected by the positives and the negatives."

Barnwell said his players have done a good job thus far of putting the previous Friday night's result—whether good or bad—behind them quickly and not getting too high or too low.

"They have. They really have," he said Sunday. "The past week of practice, I was proud of them for that. We have a 24-hour rule. Win or lose, you can think about that game for 24 hours. Once that 24-hour period is up, you move forward and start focusing on what's next. We put it like this: 'Be where your feet are.' That's really the only place you can be."

"Right now we're focused on getting ready for Phillips."

The Bears have stumbled to a 1-4 start this season, with their only win coming 41-0 at Vina on September 7. Phillips fell 19-14 to Decatur Heritage to open the season and has lost in lopsided fashion to Lynn (38-19), Mars Hill (64-0) and Waterloo (43-18). Still, Barnwell believes the Bears—who have experience on defense and a strong rushing attack on offense—will present a challenge for Phil Campbell on Friday.

"They're pretty good," Barnwell said. "They're a Wing-T team, and they have a lot of seniors. Against Mars Hill a couple of weeks ago, nine of their eleven starters on defense were seniors. It's gonna be a challenge for us. It's



PHOTO BY
KYLE GLASGOW

an emotional game, like we talked about, so we have to be able to go in there and do our job and play our assignments and hopefully come out of there with a win."

The Bobcats have faced offenses—like Red Bay's, for example—that incorporate elements of the Wing-T into their running game, but Barnwell said this will be his team's first matchup with a straight Wing-T team like Phillips.

"You've gotta control your gap and read your key," he said. "That's gonna be big—read your key, trust your key, and run to the football."

After this week's trip to Bear Creek, the Bobcats will begin a defining stretch of four straight region games (home to unbeaten Westminster Christian, home to Lauderdale County, at winless East Lawrence and home to Colbert Heights). Phil Campbell is seeking to return to the playoffs for the first time since making back-to-back trips in 2014-15.

"With this stretch run of region games we've got coming up after this week," Barnwell said, "we'll have to be prepared to get these missed assignments corrected and clean up a lot of things we're doing offensively to give ourselves a chance."

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