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06.03.20

# Community Action assistance applications now available online

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

There's a new face at the Russellville office of Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama, and some of the application process and criteria for assistance have been eased due to the COVID-19 health crisis.

Rose Rhodes succeeded Jill Hamilton as the director of Community Action's Russellville location on November 1, 2019. Community Action is a private non-profit corporation that works to help eliminate poverty in NW Alabama while encouraging self-sufficiency.

The organization serves Franklin, Colbert and Lauderdale Counties with separate offices in each. The Franklin County office is located at 1001 Washington Ave. South, in Russellville.

Rhodes, who worked for the Salvation Army in Florence for 22 years, said the changes were implemented to

make Community Action assistance easier to access.

Community Action provides utility payment and housing financial assistance to people who meet certain guidelines. Community Action programs also include Meals on Wheels, Responsible Parenting, Mothers Program, Youth Connect, Life Skills, counseling for first-time homebuyers and for families involved with the court system.

"We do the best we can to help the community in a variety of ways," Rhodes said. "We can help in situations like the current COVID-19 crisis, or bumps in the road where families might have a sickness or injury and be unable to work.

"We're here to help during those hard times so they don't have to stress even more and see things pile up. And we can assist people who rent from private landlords. It's not just open to those with income-based housing," she added.

See 'APPLICATIONS,' page 8

# Bowen dedicates hit single to truck drivers across America

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the importance of health care workers heroically battling this pandemic across the country.

For Spruce Pine resident Cody Bowen, there's another set of heroes on the front line, and Bowen sees first-hand the dedication of these men and women on a daily basis.

And a song Bowen recently released serves as a tribute to this forgotten group—America's truck drivers.

Bowen, a broker/dispatcher at Rowe Machinery in Haleyville, sees what they do on a daily basis and he's dedicated his single, *State Lines*, to these drivers.

"Truck driving is sort of its own counter-culture with all the truck stops, the communication through CB radios, and things like that," Bowen said. "I see these over-the-road guys spending weeks out on the road away from the very family they are trying to provide for.

"I understand what the health care people are doing and it's a great thing. My sister is a nurse. But these

guys (drivers) are also operating on the front line and nobody gives them any credit, so we decided to release the song as a tribute to them," Bowen added.

Bowen collaborated with songwriter and Shoals native James Thrasher to produce and release *State Lines*, and the song is drawing national attention, especially among America's truck drivers.

See 'BOWEN' page 4



Cody Bowen

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**Mary Sue Harris**, 82, of Tuscumbia, died on Thursday, May 28th. A memorial service is scheduled for a later date.

**Elise M. Holcomb**, 85, of Russellville, died on Tuesday, May 26. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

**William L. "Lanny" McAlister**, 77, of Tuscumbia, died on Thursday, May 28th. Interment at Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

**Della Ruth Davis McCarley**, 89, of Spruce Pine, died on Thursday, May 25th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

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## Over a century later, Watkins receives proper burial beside wife

Thomas McKnight  
Submitted to the FFP

Reverend Fred Lafayette W. Watkins, was the son of 1<sup>st</sup> generation Rev. Frederick W. Watkins, a Cherokee Indian, born in TN in 1811 who hid out and avoided Trail of Tears capture and removal during the late 1830s.

As the direction of 'West', in some traditional belief systems represents death, there came a time when Rev. Frederick or (Cherokee Fred as the family refers to him to distinguish from three generations of Rev. Fred W. Watkins) had to make a choice – whether to be banished to the western lands or to fall into the slave system; hence the latter was chosen and establishes the genealogy, history and cold case unmarked grave trail of which Tom McKnight, born in New York and Great grandson of Sophia Napier Watkins and Rev. Fred Lafayette W. Watkins set out on a journey to find his roots when his mother died in New York in 2004.

His mother's curiosity of what happened to the family, whose roots were in northwest Alabama, led McKnight, who worked for the United Nations for most of his life assigned to drought, famine and civil war environments serving in 20 countries led him to research the family tree, as little was known about, or shared by, the elders in the family.

Returning stateside in 2005 to launch the genealogy journey in her memory he drove 14,496 miles in 86 days his first stateside summer in many years armed only with a couple of family stories, one physical address aided by the first of its kind cutting edge technology in 2005 - a Magellan GPS unit as he set out to find family he never knew existed or met before.

McKnight maintains, after 15 years as a resident of Alabama that his "genealogy journey and mission" was guided by Divine Intervention.

He discovered after finding an elder in Arizona during the long distance drive that his Great-Grandmother was Sophia Napier Watkins, Helen Keller family cook when Helen was a child and wife to his Great-grandfather, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Rev. Fred Lafayette W. Watkins. 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Rev. Fred W. Watkins was an Uncle who moved to Louisiana and died at the age of 105.

Mrs. Watkins was also close friend, work colleague, church, community, and fellowship sister of Viney Murphy, Nursemaid to the Keller family siblings.

He also learned through Ms. Chris Ozbirn, head of the Franklin County Archives in Russellville AL, that his Great-Grandfather was "A very important man," according to Ms. Ozbirn's review of the American Star article, the African American newspaper edited by Professor George Washington Trenholm during the 1900s and printed in Tuscumbia.

The 'Star' as it was commonly known throughout the black community was the official document of the Muscle Shoals Black Missionary Baptist Association whose organizational formation was assisted by Rev. Dr. Josephus Shackelford, a white Baptist minister and instrumental in ordaining a number of African American preachers after Emancipation.

According to the article, McKnight's Great-Grandfather's funeral was presided over by at least a half dozen preachers and with his home-going celebration held on 26 February 1911, at First Baptist Missionary Baptist Church in Tuscumbia, Oakwood cemetery, a few blocks away became his final resting place as more than 2,000 people, one of the largest funerals witnessed in northwest Alabama paid their final respects to the popular and well-respected quarter-town preacher.

McKnight's Great-Grandfather was born 25 Dec 1853 and died 24 February 1911.

He was laid to rest in Tuscumbia's Oakwood Cemetery, but where?

This launched McKnight's cold case type mystery search for his unmarked grave with the goal to honor his Great-grandfather's resting place with a headstone.

"Reverend Fred" as he was often referred, lived in Tuscumbia and was assigned to Bethel Lauderdale MB Church in Smithsonia in 1901. Every

See 'WATKINS,' page 5

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# 'BOWEN,' from page 1

"We're getting a great response on social media, including from truck drivers. I talked with a driver in Washington and he said he felt like the song was written about him. That's a cool thing and a great honor for a songwriter to hear," Bowen said.

*State Lines* was the result of Bowen's daily interaction with his drivers at Rowe. After he wrote the song in 2019, Bowen did a work tape to pitch it to other artists, but he couldn't decide on anyone to approach and pitch it to. Bowen ended up recording the song because its lyrics were so personal to him.

*"And I ran out of time in Jackson before I was even tired.  
It's like I've got more bills to pay and I've got tread left on these tires.  
I wore a new hole in my seat, but I got more mouths to feed than this one of mine.*

*But I'll be fine."* (*State Lines*, Cody Bowen)

Bowen is the son of Johnny Bowen and Jadonna Bowen. He and his wife Joshlyn have four children. He is worship leader at Witness Outreach Ministries. *State Lines* is hardly Bowen's first venture into songwriting and music. Rather, it's a return to something he loves, but something that was leading Bowen astray, into drugs and alcohol. As a result, he gave music up for several years.

"The habits my music was bringing on did not have me in a good place," Bowen said. "I got my life straightened out and ended up getting back into it through worship leading at church. Then I got back into songwriting through some old connections in the Shoals and Nashville.

"I was just trying to write again. I didn't plan to release anything as an artist until the COVID-19 virus hit and I saw what these drivers are going through on a first-hand basis. I wanted to do something to show some appreciation to them," he added.

*State Lines* is available for download on iTunes/Apple music, Spotify, Google Play, Amazon, Deezer and most other major digital music distributors. The song is receiving airplay on radio stations in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Washington and Massachusetts. It will be released nationwide this month and sent to more than 2,200 radio stations.

Bowen's profile ranking on Reverb Nation, a site for indie artists, finds him number one locally and regionally in Northwest Alabama. He also ranked in

the top 20 nationally for two weeks with the release of *State Lines*. On Spotify, the song is up to 10,000 plays.

Bowen, through the Thunder Mountain Publishing International label, is working with Thrasher and Dan Hodges Music to pitch his music to major radio artists.

"*State Lines* is my debut single. (Thrasher and Hodges) will work to build me up as one of the next go-to songwriters in Nashville," Bowen said.

Bowen said he and Thrasher have discussed a way to give some of the song's revenue, possibly through merchandise sales, back to truck drivers. Bowen said he's looking for a way to do that, possibly through a partnership with the right organization.

In the meantime, Bowen said it's humbling to hear his music on radio stations in several states. And it's all the result of a song he released to tell America's truck drivers there's someone who understands what they're going through.

"I see that every day struggle their face," Bowen said.

"You can build all the ventilators you want, make all the masks and bottles of hand sanitizer, but if there are no trucks to haul it, it doesn't do anyone any good. Those products have to get from the manufacturer to the consumer," he added.

You can learn more about *State Lines* and stay updated on Bowen's music by following his Facebook page called "Cody Bowen Music."



COURTESY PHOTO

*State Lines* is available on multiple streaming platforms such as iTunes/Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon, Deezer, and Google Play

## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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The *Franklin Free Press* is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The *Franklin Free Press* reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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# The story of Peter Barker

Patrick H. Graves Jr,

*The Franklin Free Press was fortunate to be asked to publish a series of historical profiles on Franklin County residents. The well-researched articles are the work of Patrick H. Graves, Jr. We appreciate Mr. Graves' efforts to preserve history and public awareness of the people who helped shape Franklin County.*

Peter Barker was born September 2, 1819 in Lincoln County, Tennessee, the son of Ambrose Barker, Jr. (1788-1824) and Jane McClusky (1794-1857).

Jane appeared on the 1840 census with her four children in Franklin County, Alabama. In 1850, Jane was living near Newburg with her children John Randolph, Mary and Peter. Mary died in 1857 and was buried at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Newburg. John Randolph, Mary and Peter were farming near Newburg in the 1860 census.

When the Civil War began, Peter, 42, enlisted as a private in the 27th Alabama Infantry Regiment, organized at Fort Heimen, Tennessee, in 1861. Companies A, B and G were from Franklin County [it included present day Colbert County], Companies C, E and K from Lauderdale County, Companies D and I from Lawrence County, Company H from Morgan County, and Company F from Madison County. Peter quickly rose to the rank of 1st lieutenant of Company A.

The regiment was ordered to Fort Henry that fell to Major General Grant on February 6, 1862. The regiment retired before surrender and was posted to Fort Donelson which fell to Grant on February

16, 1862. Most of the regiment including Company A surrendered.

Officers were imprisoned at Johnson Island near Sandusky, Ohio. It was here on May 23, 1862, that Captain Peter Barker penned this letter to his brother in Alabama, remarkable in its content and in the sense that it has survived all these years. The letter was among the papers of my Grandfather, Dr. Alonzo Graves (1874-1941).

When paroled in September of 1862, some of the 27th POWs went to Mississippi. Barker resigned from service because of a bad back.

Peter Barker appeared in the 1880 census with his brother Randolph and sister Mary. Peter died on June 22, 1896, and was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery near his mother. He never married.

A Confederate marker is at his grave.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the Alabama Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act, Alabama Code Sections 32-13-1 through 32-13-8, the following motor vehicle will be sold for cash at 10:30 a.m., on July 11th, 2020, at M&N Wrecker & Service Center, 11833 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, Al, 35653. Seller reserves the right to reject any bid and the right to bid.

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# 'WATKINS,' from page 3

weekend he took the ferry in Cherokee to his Bend in the River church, in Florence, AL, where he served as pastor for 11 years.

His last sermon took place on 24 February 1911 and at its conclusion he stated that he wasn't feeling very well. He never returned.

Ms. Ozbirn, who the previous year with her daughter searched for Great-Grandmother Sophia Napier Watkins' burial spot, found her headstone and shared the details of her location with McKnight while he was stateside on bereavement leave before returning to U.N. duty in Sudan of 2004.

Both theorized that Rev. Fred should have been buried near his wife. Sophia died 14 August 1917 six years after her preacher husband.

While Ms. Ozbirn's coat-hanger dousing for graves approach in 2005 revealed a male buried in an empty spot to the right of Sophia Napier Watkins' headstone bearing Mosaic Templars of America (MTA) symbolic markings, an African American Fraternal organization formed in the late 1890s, assigned to the Celess Mullins Chamber 888, Tuscumbia, AL, it took a number of years of research to zero in on McKnight's Great-Grandfather's unmarked grave.

The connecting dots rested with family oral histories, some out of the box thinking and research. Viney Murphy, (of Keller household fame) became one of the lead officers of the Mosaic Templars of America (MTA) and was head of Tuscumbia's Celess Mullins 888 Chamber.

As McKnight's Great-Grandfather died in 1911, followed by Great-Grandmother's death in 1917, and having been a subscriber to the MTA's burial

insurance fund, instituted around 1914, because of the work, church and organizational relationships Viney and Sophia shared, Viney took responsibility to ensure that Sophia's burial was next to kin as the former Keller household cook died alone after her remaining children migrated to the mid-west.

Viney Murphy died nearly a year later - 30 October 1918.

"Spiritually ironic," is how McKnight often refers to his mission and journey to find his family - both above, and below ground.

On Friday, 22 May 2020, a headstone unveiling ceremony was held at 5 p.m. at Tuscumbia's Oakwood Cemetery with social distancing executed as the diverse crowd of "Family and Family," as McKnight refers to those that were instrumental to this ultimate mission success witnessed the unveiling event from their cars; and for those that stood, maintained safe distances.

Reverend Fred Lafayette W. Watkins' headstone unveiling was carried out by Great-great grand daughter, Christina Sophia Cobbs of Pensacola Florida.

The history of Rev. Fred's life was narrated by



COURTESY PHOTO

During a ceremony on Friday, May 22, a headstone was unveiled completing the journey home for Fred Lafayette W. Watkins.

Tom McKnight, with three preachers Rev. B.J. Bonner, Rev. David E. Gregg and Rev. Curtis Russell offering prayer over the site, witnessed by the matriarch of the family, 95 year old Mrs. Louise Goodloe Hyler.

The re-celebration event attended by a diverse community of supporters brought McKnight's search full circle in what he refers to as "Great Medicine Wheel Circle of Life" completion.

109 years after his death, Rev. Fred Lafayette W. Watkins and Helen Keller family cook, Sophia Napier Watkins now share the same burial ground - side by side - together again.

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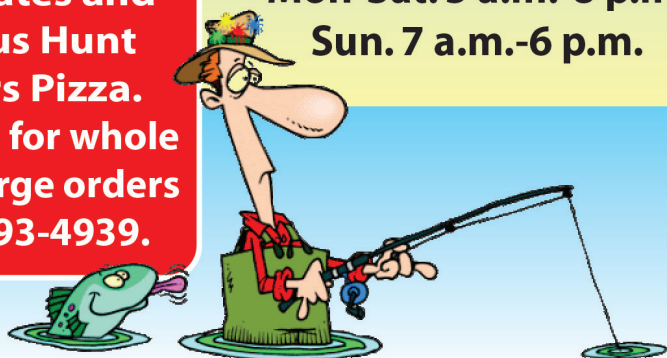


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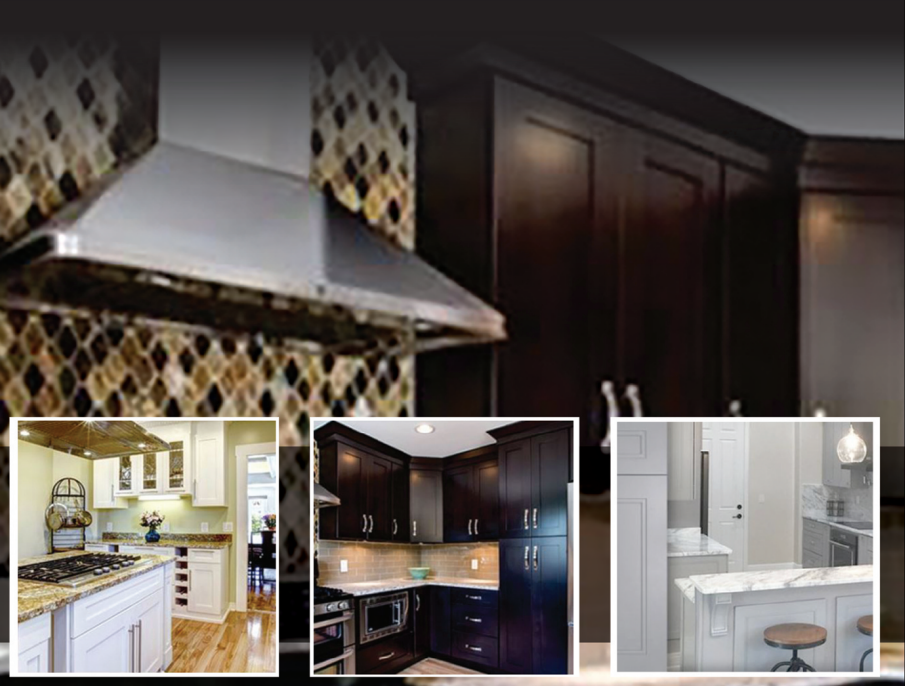
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**I**t's mowing season and time to remove old flowers from the Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Highway 724 in Newburg. Please do so by the end of May. Donations are needed for the upkeep of this historic cemetery and may be mailed to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Fund, 941 Highway 87, Russellville, AL, 35654.

**T**he American Legion Post 64 in Russellville will postpone its May meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Grant Atkins.

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**U**pcoming 11th graders, the deadline to apply for the Franklin County Junior Leadership Program has been extended to Friday, June 5th at 4 p.m. Applications including emailed recommendation forms should be received or post-marked by June 5th. Applications are available at the Chamber office, by requesting by phone (256)-332-1760 or email at [info@franklincounty-chamber.org](mailto:info@franklincounty-chamber.org).

**T**he family of Sid and Dore Hawkins invites you to the annual family reunion, Saturday, June 6th 10 a.m. at the Spruce Pine Community Center. Please bring your favorite covered dish and we look forward to seeing you!

**E**veryone is welcome to worship services at Duncan Creek Baptist Church, 3925 Duncan Creek Road, Russellville. Service times are Sunday School at 10 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m. and Bible Study at 5 p.m. Pastor is Bro. Joe Thorn.

**P**hil Campbell Cemetery will hold its annual Decoration on Sunday, June 7. The Phil Campbell Cemetery Fund is a voluntary organization that sees after the upkeep of the cemetery. The fund receives no monies from any other entity to help keep the cemetery maintained. There is more information on the "Friends of Phil Campbell Cemetery" Facebook page. For those wanting to make a donation, please send it to Phil Campbell Cemetery Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 419, Phil Campbell, AL., 35581.

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# McDowell concert moved to 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After it was rescheduled twice, the annual Ronnie McDowell Russellville birthday concert has been canceled.

Concert organizer Wanda Myrick said McDowell will return March 20, 2021, for his 30<sup>th</sup> show in Russellville.

Originally scheduled for March 21, 2020, the concert was moved to May 16 and then June 20 as a result of COVID-19 stay at home orders and safety concerns.

With the show set in less than a month, Myrick said there was still too much uncertainty in holding the event. The concert, which was to coincide with McDowell's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, was a near sellout, so that posed a problem as to how to comply with social distancing requirements inside the Roxy Theatre.

"We hated to cancel, but there's just no way we could do it. And it's already been moved twice, so we just went ahead and set next year's date," Myrick said.

The McDowell concert is one of the primary fund raisers each year for Russellville's historic Roxy Theatre, which is operated by the Franklin County Arts and Humanities Council.

Tickets already purchased for this year's concert will be honored for the March 20, 2021, show, Myrick said. For those wanting a refund on their tickets, contact Myrick at 256-415-3270.

Since America's stay at home transition began in March, McDowell has performed several concerts on Facebook Live for his fans. He also continues to paint and his most recent work is a painting of the legendary Jerry Lee Lewis, called *Looking Back At Me*.

McDowell's 20-song album, *Country Heaven: Ronnie McDowell and Friends*, will soon be released on Curb Records. It features the Righteous



COURTESY PHOTO

After being rescheduled twice, McDowell's concert was ultimately moved to March 20, 2021. Brothers, John Schneider and other country greats singing duets with McDowell.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)!



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# 'APPLICATIONS,' from page 1

While there are income limitations to qualify for Community Action assistance, Rhodes said that only actual unemployment income, not stimulus income, is considered. And federal unemployment benefits are not counted, just what is received from the State of Alabama.

There are also time limitations on how often a person or family may receive Community Action assistance. Depending on the program, these can be from one to three years, Rhodes said.

To make the application process with Community Action easier during the current COVID-19 situation, applications may now be completed online for utility or housing assistance or picked up at the Russellville office. Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama's website is [www.caanw.org](http://www.caanw.org).

Another easing of criteria, at least temporarily, comes with the age of children in the household to qualify for certain program. Rhodes said.

"If people will contact us we can let them know the age limits we can accept," Rhodes said. "We also changed our forms for no income where they don't have to be notarized at this time."

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Yard sale! Friday and

Saturday at the Gateway Church parking lot. The church is located on hwy. 43 in Russellville. Household items, furniture, clothing (up to 3X), toys, etc.

Yard sale! Saturday, June 6th 8a.m.-noon. 520 HWY 77, Russellville, corner of hwy 24 & 77. Avon, household items, clothes, etc.

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## Have a Sports Story?

Brady Petree, *Executive Editor*  
 franklinfreepress@yahoo.com  
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Brady Petree  
 Sports Editor

## Nichols optimistic for inaugural RBHS volleyball season

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - It's always a challenge when a program is made from scratch. Whether it's the first year for an expansion team in professional sports or the first year for a particular sport in college, there are some difficulties along the way.

In high school sports, that sentiment rings true as well.

One of the biggest challenges with building a new sports program from the ground up is the concern over participation for the sport.

As Red Bay began to prepare for their first season with a volleyball program, there initially was some concern over the amount of talent head coach Shane Nichols would have to work with. However, those concerns would evaporate as more and more students came out as interested in playing this season.

"I knew there was a lot of interest within the school at one point but I wasn't sure where it ultimately stood," Nichols said. "People then started approaching me asking me if I wanted to be a part of it and I was on board with it. I then had kids coming up to me asking when tryouts were going to be and all these other questions and I knew right then that this was something that was going to happen and that people were in support of it."

While it might be the inaugural season for the Red Bay volleyball program, you would think that the program had been a dynasty for the past decade if you take one look at the number of students interested in joining the team.

Nichols says that close to 70 girls expressed interest in joining the volleyball program in its first season. Not only has Nichols and the team received an outpouring of support from within the Red Bay school system, but within the city of Red Bay as well.

"Last year they had come up with a list of about 70 students that had some kind of interest in joining the team and while we haven't been able to hold tryouts yet, I think we're confident that there's still a lot of interest," Nichols said. "The support we've gotten from our community has been outstanding. We started a Facebook page and through that we've been able to reach close to 1200 people. From our parks and rec department with Dean Hubbard who we have been talking with, to our mayor, Charlene Fancher who has been excited about the program, to our board

See 'VOLLEYBALL,' page 13

# Getting back to work

After nearly three months waiting for the approval from state officials to get back to action, coaches across Franklin County are gearing up for summer practices



COURTESY PHOTO

Across Franklin County, head coaches like John Ritter (above) have been waiting for close to three months to get back onto the field and make up for lost time.

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world and put life as we know it on hold, sports understandably took a backseat amidst the chaos. After nearly three months of no sports across the high school landscape in Alabama, football fields are becoming the gateway back into normalcy as the world continues to recover and push forward through the pandemic.

Once state officials gave the okay for sports to come back on June 1st, head coaches across Franklin County wasted no time getting both their football and safety plans together for summer practices to begin.

Russellville head coach John Ritter and Phil Campbell head coach Kevin Barnwell are just two of many coaches across the state that are beginning to be able to get back to work beginning this week in hopes that when the fall rolls around, football will be played under the Friday night lights.

For Ritter and the Golden Tigers, the beginning of their return to normalcy began on Tuesday. However, once players return to the facilities on campus, they will notice some changes to the way practices are conducted.

"We're working in small groups with everyone six feet apart and we're following all of the state guidelines so that we can be safe and practice effi-

ciently. We're taking temperatures when the guys come to practice, and we're wearing masks as well just trying to be as safe as possible, Ritter said. "Luckily we're blessed with amazing facilities and larger facilities where we're able to do things normally while still maintaining that important distance."

While these changes might pose a small distraction in the beginning, Ritter is confident that his players will be in the right mindset once they step foot on the field.

"I fully expect our guys to be ready to come in here ready to work extremely hard and be detailed about what they need to be doing in order to get back up to where we need them to be," Ritter said. "Everything these guys do is detailed and they know that. Even the younger guys we have coming up know what to expect when they come to practice. I know everyone is raring to go and excited to be back."

The amount of players that will report to summer practices is still up in the air according to Ritter but based on the initial feedback he's gotten from both players and coaches, it seems as though there will be no shortage of talent on the field once practices begin.

"As of right now we're planning for 100 kids to come out but we anticipate that there could be close to 120 kids coming out once all of this gets

See 'WORK' page 12



# Why?

# United States<sup>®</sup> Census 2020

## Why is the Census important to me or my family?

The Census affects the amount of funding that Franklin County receives and how the community plans for the future along with representation in government. The data from the 2020 Census will be used for:

- Public services and funding for schools, hospitals and fire departments.
- Planning for businesses, new homes and improvement in neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats Alabama is all located in the House of Representatives.



**Deborah Freeman,**  
Russellville Housing  
Authority Inc., Executive  
Director

### How is Census data used for public housing in Russellville/Franklin County?

Our subsidy is calculated from demographics of our area, family size, ethnicity, income are areas of consideration.

Please list public housing in Russellville/Franklin County where federal funds were/are used?

We have 4 complexes Eastside, Westside, Washington and Engle Plaza.

If residents of Russellville/Franklin County do not fill out their Census 2020 form how will this impact public housing in Russellville/ Franklin County?

If our residence fail to complete the census it could affect the amount of funding we receive.

## 'WORK,' from page 11

going and of course we're still going to do this in small groups with players coming at different times and all of that. We're going to work extremely hard, but we're also going to be working extremely smart as well," Ritter said.

Across the county in Phil Campbell, Barnwell is spending his days making sure his players are getting back up to where they need to be in terms of training, while doing so in a safe manner.

"Prior to the pandemic, I was going to do two different workout times for our guys that work and for those that don't and we decided just to carry that over to now. So we put them in groups and we did a few drills today (Monday) which was a little difficult because we didn't use a football," Barnwell said. "It turned out that we had groups of five with no more than 6 in one group. Our emphasis is to stay six



**COURTESY PHOTO**  
Barnwell (above) and his staff are taking necessary safety precautions to move forward with practicing.  
See 'WORK,' Page 14

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# 'VOLLEYBALL,' from page 11

member Kacey Johnston who has been talking closely with us about it so she's excited and it's great to see this level of support so early on."

According to Nichols, after the initial meeting held on Monday night to discuss initial plans with parents and players, he was able to get a good idea as to how many players would be trying out later this summer.

Nichols received word that he got the head coaching job in mid-February. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic ending school earlier than anticipated, there was no time for tryouts, leaving Nichols and his potential group of players waiting for July 27th to find out who will make the inaugural team.

Having no prior volleyball coaching experience, this first season will be a learning point for both Nichols and his players.

"Learning the game, understanding it and things like that is really what we're going to try to do this first year so that way we can start building on that for future teams," Nichols said. "We've had some of our younger players participate in our city league and so the future is bright. But we just really need to focus on our strategy, our technique, and just playing the game the right way and once we do that, I think we'll be in good shape."



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# 'WORK,' from page 12

feet apart and clean each piece of equipment after we use it." Other changes have been made in terms of the facilities that Barnwell and his players are able to use as well. One of the changes includes moving the weight room outside so that players can be properly distanced while building up their strength and conditioning in a proper setting.

"We put up weight stations out in the parking lot so that our guys can still get their work in and also do it in a clean open area. We are focusing less on the amount of weight that our players are doing but more on the technique and getting the right form," Barnwell said.

Barnwell says that his players are in a good mindset even though there is quite a bit of work to do to get back into top shape.

"We've got some work to do no doubt. But our guys are excited. They know the work that goes into this and they know what to do to get better. We live in a society where people prefer comfort over being disciplined enough to look into the future and see what I need to do to get better as opposed to just being comfortable in the moment," Barnwell said.

"It's much better to feel some discomfort now and get to reap the benefits of an achievement later during the season instead of realizing disappointment during the season. I tell my guys to give it all you can over these next six months. Not for me, but for their teammates because they are the ones that are out there putting in the work every day. We do that, and we'll be where we want to be when the season rolls around."

## Job Opportunity

The Franklin County Commission will accept applications for the following position: **Animal Control Technician in the Franklin County Commission Office until 12:00 PM on Wednesday, June 10, 2020.**

An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Ave., Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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Our community will benefit the most when the Census counts everyone. When you respond to the Census, you help Franklin County get its fair share of the more than \$675 billion per year in federal funds spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs. Some of the most recognizable programs in Franklin County are: School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, SNAP, Afterschool Care, School Nurses, Computers and Chromebooks, Early Childhood Education, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Public Housing, Roads and Bridges, just to name a few! The 2020 Census will also affect redistricting in the State of Alabama Legislature and will determine the number of seats Alabama gets in the U.S. House of Representatives on the national level.

Filling out the 2020 Census only takes a few minutes but the impact will shape the future of Franklin County. The 2020 Census form is very simple; you can fill it out online, by phone or mail. For more information concerning the 2020 Census visit, [www.mycensus.gov](http://www.mycensus.gov) or call 1-844-330-2020.

Yours respectfully,

**Franklin County Commission**

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