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Local school administrators announce 2020-21 start dates

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although they are taking different paths to get there, both Franklin County Schools' and Russellville City Schools' superintendents want to end having accomplished the same goal—a 'traditional, in-person' school year for 2020-21.

Both Franklin County systems announced plans Friday to how and when they will begin the new school year. The announcements came after the Alabama State Department of Education released a 'Roadmap to Reopening' Alabama public schools.

While more like a 'suggested route' than a roadmap, the state plan is

based on five principles: Transparency; Equitable treatment; Listening to a diversity of stakeholders in education; Safety first and decisiveness.

Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes announced that his system will stick with its original start date for fall classes, Wednesday, August 12.

Franklin County Schools Superintendent Greg Hamilton issued a press release Friday that said his system will defer the start to its school year two weeks, from the original date of Thursday, August 6, to Thursday, August 20.

Franklin teachers and staff will

See 'START,' page 3

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Russellville Health Care officials dealing with Coronavirus outbreak

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Russellville Health Care is the latest Franklin County nursing home to face a COVID-19 outbreak, but the facility's administrator and staff are working diligently to address the pandemic.

According to Brenda Hovater, Russellville Health Care Administrator, her 50-bed facility had 33 residents and 11 employees test positive for the Coronavirus. 45 residents currently reside at RHC. The facility is located at 705 Gandy St. NE.

As with the outbreak last month at Burns Nursing Home, Russellville Health Care officials believe the source of the virus comes back to a staff member who was asymptomatic



COURTESY PHOTO

Russellville Health Care, located on Gandy Street.

prior to working a shift, but later felt sick and tested positive for the virus. "After that event we had another employee test positive," Hovater said. "After reporting this to the

See 'OUTBREAK,' page 5

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Earl Leroy Coan, 87, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, June 25th. Interment at Tharptown Cemetery.

Jewell Hargett Holcomb, 78, of Russellville passed away on Thursday, June 25th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Dorothy Akridge Kirchler, 96, of Haleyville passed away on Wednesday, June 24th. A private service was held with Pinkard Funeral Home assisting the family.

Ava Jean Mize, 89, of Haleyville, passed away on Saturday, June 27th. Interment at New Hope Cemetery.

Gena Louise Taylor Nix, 57, of Phil Campbell, passed away Wednesday, June 24th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Della Posey, 77, of Phil Campbell passed away on Friday, June 26th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

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'START,' from page 1

return to campus Monday, August 10.

"There will be traditional (face-to-face) schooling this year," Hamilton said. "There will also be a remote learning plan for those who feel it is not safe for their children to return to school and for those that are quarantined due to COVID-19."

The Alabama Department of Education is requiring all systems to have a virtual or remote teaching plan in place for students whose parents have concerns about their return to campus. That is made more difficult in rural areas like Franklin County, where it's estimated that nearly 70 percent of all students live in homes without reliable high-speed broadband internet access.

"We felt it was more realistic to call it remote learning when you look at those numbers," Hamilton said. "We will have a plan available to educate every student, whether they are on campus or whether or not they have internet access."

The Alabama State Department of Education's roadmap was released one week after its original scheduled release date. Superintendents received the guidelines during their annual summer conference last week. Hamilton said the guidelines are flexible to account for the needs of each school system and he expects they may change more than once prior to the new school year.

The roadmap also addressed sports and extracurricular activities, stating they will be allowed in the 2020-21 school year, subject to guidelines from the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). The AHSAA is expected to release those guidelines the week of July 13-18, during its summer conference.

Hamilton said the Franklin County Board of Education will release an amended 2020-21 school calendar once the system's detailed plan is approved.

Grimes, who has been a proponent of returning to a traditional educational setting since the COVID-19 outbreak began, delayed Russellville High School's graduation until June 18 so that students could enjoy, subject to social distancing, a traditional ceremony.

Russellville City Schools' current plan is to return to completely traditional, in-school schooling with "no plans for system-wide virtual schooling," Grimes said.

But the system will offer a virtual school option for those who do not feel it's safe to return to campus. Those students will remain virtual for the entire semester, Grimes said.

Russellville City Schools' officials will address technology, instruction, transportation and breakfast/lunch programs, as part of their overall comprehensive roadmap, Grimes said.

There will be new disinfecting and cleaning protocols, scheduling and class change protocols and classroom and extracurricular protocols.

While students may return to a "traditional, in-person" educational setting, there's no doubt the schools they return to will look significantly different than those they left behind in March.

Grimes stressed that the health and safety of students will dictate how athletics and extracurriculars are handled, although they will move forward with them as scheduled.

"We hope everyone in our community will do their part to limit the continued spread of this virus. In addition to putting students' health at risk, our actions in the community now will impact how we conduct school and fall extracurricular activities," Grimes said. "If our system experiences an outbreak and our teams cannot play, each game we can't play in each of our sports will count as a forfeit and will factor into making the playoffs. It will also negatively impact extracurricular activities."

"So for the health and safety of our community and for the chance for our students and faculty to have a more 'normal' fall semester, we hope everyone will do their part," Grimes added.

Both superintendents said additional details and specific plans for their systems will be released as they become available.

"We ask that everyone remain patient with us as we work hard to make the best decisions possible for all involved," Grimes said.

Hamilton said a detailed plan for Franklin County Schools will be released during the week of July 21.



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My take on this... laughter is the best kind of medicine!

Hello everyone!

We are having one more "unnatural first"? Fourth of July is almost here and there will be no music at Sloss Lake. There will be silence instead of a sky filled with beautiful fireworks. Even if there will be fireworks in the yards of many folks, it will be nothing compared to the amazing firework spectacular event at Sloss Lake each year.

Family gatherings will be fewer and the many hugs and laughter will be missing for the first time. Yes, times have become crazy.

Not a lot has changed with my own lifestyle because I've always been thoroughly entertained with the crazy that happens frequently in my own little world. So here I go again to share with the readers a few happenings of lately and once again telling on myself. My friends tell me there would be no way they would let it be known if they did these things.

My response is the crazy things I do will possibly cause some laughter in the lives of a heart that may be breaking or even forget about the crazy world we are having now for just a few minutes and that makes it all worthwhile.

After all, laughter is known to be the best medicine. Since medicine is so expensive, it's like getting one prescription for free! Some medicine makes you feel so much better and some causes a bad reaction. Hopefully this medicine of laughter will be a dose of happiness.

So now I'd like to share my life for a few minutes.

I was talking to a friend the other day and we were discussing something that had happened recently in the political world. I mentioned Nick Saban and she paused and asked why I would be saying anything about Nick Saban. It was at that moment I realized I'd meant Tubbsville. Of course, I knew he was a coach and I just chose the wrong one. She got so tickled she could barely talk. Of course, laughter began with me, so we both got a good laugh and just like that our spirits raised a few levels.

I was cooking scrambled eggs the other morning and had already added the butter to be melting in the pan while I was beating the eggs. I then turned around and saw the melted butter and couldn't figure out where my eggs had



Gail Motes

gone! It sounds simple but I was really mind-boggled. You have no idea how relieved I was to see the bowl of beaten eggs.

Last but not least, I think I've finally done something that is the "best of the best". I had been in a length conversation over the phone concerning an insurance and prescription plan that would be the best at this time for me.

Upon my decision, he began with the many questions required to complete the transaction.

I did great with my name, age and date of birth. When he said "city", immediately responded with "Country! I live in the country and I'm a country girl!"

I even repeated it twice.

No sooner than it'd left my mouth I knew he wasn't giving me a choice if I had lived in the city or country. It was the funniest thing to me that I had ever said! I started laughing and that seemed to give him the freedom to laugh which I'm sure he needed.

I bet his hard-to-hold in laughter was waiting to explode while he was doing his best to hold back to maintain his professionalism. It was difficult with the questions and answer amidst the laughter. I told him I doubted he had ever had so much fun on a call before. I was still laughing when the call ended. I have laughed quite a lot since then.

I do go crazy but my mind, thought and tongue are just using my freedom of speech. Maybe that has a lot to do with why I smile a lot. I keep myself entertained that's for sure!

So yes, the world is crazy right now but my little world has been a "good crazy" for many years now.

That got me to thinking how country folks are "mostly crazy" compared to "bad crazy" in the world right now. We stand for our flag, love and appreciate our veterans, love and stand up for our families and we would even give our lives for them if we needed to and we don't back down!

After all, I am one of the "crazy ones".

I am so thankful to be a "country girl" and I'll say it twice if I need to!

For now, please stay safe and smile often.

Until later...

FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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Publisher

John Pilati

Executive Editor

Brady Petree

E-mail: franklinfreepress@yahoo.com

Sales Representatives

John Pilati

Content Contributors

John Pilati, Brady Petree, Ree Shannon,
Doug Green, Rebecca Thomason, Sheryl Hamilton,
Ashley Cummins, Gail Motes

Graphic Design

Jason Hill

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Franklin County Development Commission approves multiple school grants, other moves

John Pilati

Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Community Development Commission met June 19 and approved a number of grants to local schools, non-profit agencies and one to the Franklin County Coroner's Office.

The commission, which includes Brad Bolton, Jeremy Campbell, Chris Wallace and Russellville Mayor David Grissom, meets quarterly to review grant applications. The next meeting of the FCCDC will be August 28, 2020, at 8:30 a.m., at the Franklin County Commission Annex.

Any grant request for that meeting must be received by a member of the commission on or before August 21, 2020, at 12 p.m.

With the most recent grants, more than \$2.059 million has been returned to Franklin County since the inception of the funding. The funds come from in lieu of tax payments from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The Franklin County Legislative delegation (Sen. Larry Stutts, Rep. Jamie Kiel, Rep. Proncey Robertson) each make an appointment to the commission to be their representative. Franklin County mayors fill the other position on a rotating basis.

Grants approved at the June 19 meeting includ-

ed:

—\$3,000 to the Franklin County Coroner for purchase of a transport cot and vehicle.

—\$5,000 transferred to the Future Economic Development Fund.

—\$1,000 to Phil Campbell Elementary School for purchase of flexible seating for one in the 2nd grade classroom.

—\$500 to the Red Bay Police Department for group counseling sessions.

—\$3,300 to Tharptown High School's soccer program for purchase of goals.

—\$200 to Red Bay High School Health Science for purchase of CPR instructional videos.

—\$500 to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Franklin County Scholarship Funds for t-shirts for mentors.

—\$250 to the City of Red Bay for the Founders Day Car Show.

—\$2,000 to the Tharptown Volunteer Fire Department for purchase of a pump truck, fittings and a hose.

—\$2,500 to Red Bay High School football program for purchase of and recertification of helmets.

—\$1,000 to Russellville High School for purchase of Chromebooks for English Language Learners.

See 'GRANTS,' Page 9

For updates on news and sports, visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net!

'OUTBREAK,' from page 1

Alabama Department of Public Health, they then informed us to do testing on all residents and employees."

Russellville Health Care continues to follow the protocol from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Earlier this month, Alabama Nursing Home Association President Brandon Farmer addressed the issue of nursing homes reporting positive cases.

"Alabama nursing homes have been transparent from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members have reported cases to their local county health department and the Alabama Department of Public Health from the start," Farmer said.

"In May, we began reporting cases to the CDC. Facilities also inform residents and their family representatives and employees of cases in their buildings. We are following the guidelines set forth by the multiple state and federal agencies that regulate our sector. No other business or health care provider reports COVID-19 cases to more government entities and people than nursing homes," Farmer added.

The *Franklin Free Press* spoke with a local resident whose mother-in-law lives at Russellville Health Care. The person wished to remain anonymous with the following comments:

"They did tell us when my mother-in-law was positive and they give us an update most every day. Russellville Health Care has a major outbreak. They have been wonderful (through the pandemic) but maybe they can get help to fight this horrible virus," the source said.

Additionally, the source said that, upon asking for something in writing verifying the situation, that RHC officials said they could not and would not release any paperwork.

Hovater said there are updates to family representatives and employees. "Residents and their representatives and our employees are notified of the conditions inside the facility related to COVID-19," Hovater said. "They are notified of any updates by 5 p.m., the next calendar day following the occurrence of positive residents and positive staff members.

"They are also given the number of each. All reporting will be in compliance with HIPAA privacy rules to ensure confidentiality of protected health information," she added.

Hovater also said the number of positives was fluid, in that some of the employees had recovered and returned to work, while others remain off. Also, the residents who tested positive are at various stages of recovery from the virus.

Staff members at Russellville Health Care are screened daily prior to their shift. That screening includes a checklist and a temperature check before entry. The screening also has a listing of all COVID-19/infection control procedures that are mandated.

Additional steps in response to the pandemic include monitoring residents for signs and symptoms of Coronavirus illness every shift. Full vital signs are obtained every shift, Hovater said.

Staff are regularly educated and observed to ensure proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), Hovater said. Signs are posted outside the doors of residents' rooms that describe the type of precautions needed and required PPE.

"Additional cleaning policies have been implemented to ensure all objects and environmental surfaces that are touched frequently are cleaned and disinfected with an Environmental Protection Agency-registered disinfectant that is for use against SARS-COV2," Hovater said.

Last month, the Alabama National Guard performed a decontamination process at Russellville Health Care as well as helping with training staff on the proper way to use PPE.

The Alabama Department of Public Health surveyed Russellville Health Care on June 17, 2020, to determine whether the facility is implementing proper infection prevention and control practices to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. That survey, Hovater said, found zero deficiencies inside the facility.

"We want you to know that the safety and well-being of our residents is top priority. We are doing what we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our facility," Hovater said. "We inform all updates, including supplies needed with our Franklin County community officials, Russellville Hospital and local nursing homes through our weekly Zoom meetings."



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!

Bolton announces candidacy for Russellville City Council District One

Submitted to the FFP

Terry Wayne Bolton has announced his candidacy for Russellville City Council District One.

Bolton is a lifelong resident of Franklin County and has been married to Carol Henson (Prince) for 58 years. They are blessed with two sons, two daughters-in-law, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Terry is a retired iron worker and Carol is retired from the Franklin County Department of Human Resources.

Bolton is a member of Russellville First Baptist Church, the Masonic Lodge, the Franklin County Shrine Club and the Franklin County Cattleman's Association.

Bolton supports public education and has attended Russellville City Council meetings for the past 10 years. Bolton said he's familiar with issues affecting the citizens of Russellville.

Bolton pledges to give this position his undivided attention for the future of Russellville.



Terry Bolton

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You are invited to join the services at Alva Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. Located at 4395 Highway 77, Russellville, AL 35654 in the Mountain Star community. There will be a singing Sunday, July 5th at 3 p.m. featuring the Beam Family! Everyone welcome to attend!

Revival at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Highway 195, two miles south of Double Springs. July 5-10, Sunday night 5 p.m., Monday-Friday 7 p.m. each night. Evangelist Elder Greg Thorne. Pastor Elder Buford Parker. We invite you to our services!

Everyone 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.

You are cordially invited to new service time at Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church on Highway 48 in Russellville, at 11 a.m., Sunday mornings. Social distancing practiced, mask optional. Pastor Roger Bond.

New Life Ministries invites you to join them for Sunday School at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings and for worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a fellowship lunch after morning services. You and your family are invited to come worship and fellowship with the Lord of Hosts and his children. New Life Ministries is located on Hwy. 24 west toward Red Bay, behind Tompkins Feed.

Mountain Valley Hee Haw 4th of July Festival and fireworks Saturday, July 4th. 5 p.m.-until. Live music and entertainment, wiener and marshmallow roast (please bring wieners and buns). No alcoholic beverages or drugs allowed. Please bring lawn chairs. Free admission! DIRECTIONS: From Russellville, follow Highway 243 to Highway 79 and turn right. Go 1/4 mile, third building on the left. From Haleyville follow Highway 195 to Highway 243, turn left and follow Highway 79. Turn left and go 1/4 mile, third building on the left.

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Hall announces bid for Russellville City Council District five

Submitted to the FFP

Russellville banker, Hillary Malone Hall, is excited to announce her candidacy for Russellville City Council District 5.

A native of Russellville and a graduate of Russellville High School, Hillary not only has a strong financial background but extensive leadership and management skills. She has been serving our community for twenty-four years in the financial sector and fifteen of those in a management position.

She is also a small business owner of Bennett Hall, a historic home located in downtown Russellville that serves as a local event venue receiving the 2016 Beautification Award.

She attended the University of North Alabama and Northwest Shoals Community College. She currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Russellville Public Library Board of Directors, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Past President of the



Hillary Malone Hall

See 'HALL,' page 9

Woodruff enters race for Russellville City Council District Two

Submitted to the FFP

Darren Steve Woodruff has announced his candidacy for Russellville City Council District Two.

Woodruff was born and raised in Russellville and specifically, District Two. He is married to Margie Harmon Woodruff. They have two children and five grandchildren.

Woodruff has been the president and owner of Petro Chemical Energy, a Russellville-based company, for 22 years.

He and his wife are members of God Cares for You Worship Center in Russellville.

Woodruff served as chairman of the Russellville Electric Board for more than four years and served as a board member a total of six years. He's volunteered with the Russellville City Schools Education Foundation, the Russellville Booster Club and Woodruff served on the board of directors for the Russellville Dream Center.

District Two continues to be underrepresented in city government. District Two has never had a representative on the Russellville City Schools Board of Education. Past council members have failed to give District Two citizens their fair voice and representation.

Woodruff wants to be the first councilman to name a District Two resident to the RCS Board of Education.

District Two also needs to be cleaned up. There are a number of roads and intersections that need to be widened, and several residents have requested speed bumps in their neighborhood to make them safer.

Woodruff will listen to the needs and concerns of District Two residents and represent them accordingly at council meetings. He pledges to be accessible to every resident, and to promptly respond to each citizen.

If you have a question for Woodruff, or would like a campaign sign or to get involved in the upcoming campaign, please call him at 256-577-0030.

Municipal elections are set for Tuesday, August 25, 2020.

Please vote Darren Woodruff, Russellville City Council District Two.



Darren Woodruff

JOB OPENING

The City of Russellville will take applications for a Police Officer through July 3, 2020. The average pay for this position is \$30,969.12-\$47,742.24.

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Respond to HazMat calls and aid in evacuation assisting firefighters. Operate Intoxilyzer 5000 instrument and complete related forms. Escort business personnel to banks as required. Assist ambulance, state troopers, or other law enforcement officers as needed. Traffic control in evacuation, crime scene, parade, civic functions, school crossings, accidents, funeral processions, oversize loads, etc. Assist stranded motorists or citizens as needed. Make routine traffic stops, issue citations as necessary, operate radar detection devices to monitor speed. Serve warrants and subpoenas. Transport prisoners as necessary. Enforce all city, state and federal laws. Compuired and notifies appropriate personnel.

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Check paperwork and releases prisoners. + Perform jail inmate inspections, administer prescribed medication to prisoners and assist inmates with telephone calls.

DRUG TASK FORCE (by special appointment)

Perform surveillance operations and documents observations; makes arrest after observing illegal activities.

Gathers and maintains intelligence pertaining to drug investigations and compiles information necessary to obtain search warrants. Prepare case files, evidence, witnesses, testimony etc. for court. Interview and interrogate defendants to procure information on contacts and other drug dealers. Performs undercover duties, recruits and develops informants.

MISCELLANEOUS

Familiar with operation and procedure for obtaining information through the NCIC terminal. Maintain good public relations with community.

Attend seminars and workshops as required.

- Inspect and maintain patrol unit and all other assigned equipment.
- Participate in EOC and hospital emergency drills.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge of the city buildings and street system of Russellville; city, state and federal laws; court procedures; first aid; firearms; drugs; HazMat; disaster and emergency procedures; modern police principals, methods and procedures; department rules, regulations and procedures; maintenance and use of weapons; radio codes, surveillance equipment and legal procedures involved with illegal drug cases. Must possess adequate communicative skills both verbal and written. Organizational skills to create and maintain case records, reports and files. Ability to understand verbal and written directives, reports, rules, regulations and policies. Basic math skills to obtain computations for tabulating report totals, Ability to: operate a motor vehicle; read; safely fire a weapon; communicate on telephone and radio; address a group; instruct individuals; testify in court; generate written documents such as reports and tickets; see in dimly lit areas; subdue and handcuff a belligerent individual and restrain prisoners; pursue and detail a fleeing individual; bend, crouch, stretch; stretch; walk; run; respond to emergency situations on short notice when off-duty; gain and retain respect of public by maintaining a good moral character and performing required duties in an efficient, honest, business-like, and professional manner; do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description. Emotional stability to work in stressful, dangerous situations. Willingness to: work overtime, irregular hours, weekends and holidays; travel and attend seminars and workshops; report to work in clean and neat uniform with appropriate weapon and gear; furnish firearm and other equipment as required for this job.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED Minimum of 19 years of age Must meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the State of Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission Possession of a valid Alabama Drivers License Possess the ability to obtain an Alabama Police Academy diploma or its equivalent

Grissom to continue teamwork strategy as he seeks third term as Russellville mayor

Submitted to the FFP

Russellville Mayor David Reed Grissom has announced that he will seek a third term to the city's highest office in the August 25, 2020, municipal election.

Grissom, a businessman, was first elected mayor in 2012. The 1990 Russellville High School graduate represented District 5 on the Russellville City Council from 2008-2012.

Grissom cited past success and several ongoing projects that he wants to see finished as the driving forces behind a reelection campaign.

"There are many positive things taking place in and around Russellville," Grissom said. "We continue to add new jobs, continue to improve our infrastructure, continue to improve our city services, and we continue to redevelop our downtown district."

During his terms as mayor, Grissom has seen the addition of over 1,200 new jobs in the city. He quickly praises local and state officials and their willingness to work together in enabling the city to land additional jobs in Russellville.

"Our existing industries in Russellville continue to add jobs each year and this has led to record lows in unemployment for the city. We are thankful for all of our existing industrial partners and are thankful for their continued success," Grissom said.

"One of the main things I campaigned on eight years ago, and it continues to be just as important today, is that we all work together as a team to accomplish what we want for the city. I think we have built relationships with people across the state and country that will help us moving forward," Grissom added.

Grissom and the Russellville City Council actively pursued grant funding that has helped the city complete more than \$9.3 million in grant projects, most paid through state and federal funds since elected mayor in 2012. That figure also included more than \$1.2 million in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Sidewalk Projects in the Downtown District.

The Russellville Commercial Historic District was also listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior on January 19, 2019.

"It is important to have safe and stable transportation and infrastructure in place," Grissom said. "Our work with the city council and the state has been a tremendous asset that has helped us do many much-needed projects throughout Russellville." Grissom is the son of Judy Keeton Grissom and the late Bob Grissom. He is married to Melissa Fuller Grissom, an art teacher at Russellville High School. They have one daughter, Kate Reed Grissom, who is 14 years old and will be in the tenth grade at Russellville High School.

He received a B.S. degree in Marketing and graduated magna cum laude from the University of North Alabama in 1994. Since that time, he has been involved in numerous business endeavors in northwest Alabama.

Grissom is a lifetime member of Russellville Masonic Lodge #371, a member of Scottish Rite 32nd Degree Valley of Birmingham, Cahaba Shrine, Huntsville, and a member of the Franklin County Shrine Club.

He and his family are members of South Side Baptist Church in Russellville.



David Grissom

Merrill cautions against violations of state crossover voting laws

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As the July 14, 2020, primary runoff election nears, Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill wants to remind Alabama voters about the state's crossover voting law.

The law, approved by the legislature in 2017, provides that voters who participated in the March 3, 2020, primary election may only vote in that party's runoff election.

Since there are no state or local level Democratic runoffs, Franklin County voters will only be able to vote in the Republican runoff election. That ballot will include the United States Senate runoff between Tommy Tuberville and Jeff Sessions, and one local race, Franklin County Revenue Commissioner, where Veronica Stencil faces Stratt Byars.

Only voters who cast ballots in the March 3 Republican Primary, or did not vote at all in the March 3 primary, may vote in the Republican runoff.

The deadline for registering to vote is June 29 and the deadline for submitting an absentee ballot application is July 9. Mailed absentee ballots must be postmarked no later than July 13 and if the voter is hand delivering the absentee ballot to the Absentee Election Manager, that must be done by July 13 as well.

A voter convicted under Alabama's crossover voting law is guilty of a felony.



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'HALL,' from page 7

Russellville Cultura Garden Club, and Book Lover's Study Club. Hillary also directed and wrote *The Roxy's Christmas Spectacular* which was recently awarded the 2020 Franklin County Best Kept Secret award.

Hillary was the proud recipient of the 2018 Franklin County Volunteer of the Year Award for her dedicated work to continue to better the lives of all residents of Russellville and Franklin County. She serves as the Committee Chairperson for the Christmas Decorations Committee for the historic downtown district where she designed the decorations.

Under Hillary's leadership she wants to see a new location for the Russellville Public Library. The library is a vital asset to all communities and it has been long forgotten in our city. The library houses many great resources for all patrons especially use of broadband internet due to limited rural access of many patrons in our area.

With Hillary's motivation and determination, she will work towards obtaining funding from both state and federal grants for improved roads, bridges, and sidewalks which are in much need of repair in District 5. We must act now to preserve and improve our infrastructure for the betterment of all residents.

As downtown areas across the country continue to flourish, Hillary would like to continue to work with the revitalization of the downtown district by bringing in new businesses and continuing to promote our current businesses. She would like to continue to promote Russellville across the state to be a go to destination with our lakes, festivals, and tourism.

Under Hillary's leadership, she will be an advocate for all city employees, as all are vital in making the city run efficiently. She will work to promote and listen to the needs of our Police, Fire, and Street Departments along with all

Utility Departments. Our first responders are important and I will continue to support their many needs. As a daughter of a Veteran, I will always have the utmost respect for all Veteran's and Active Duty Military.

As a parent, I know each child is different and must be provided education choices that elicit their personal best and should receive a high-quality education. Our children are the future of our city and we need to continue to promote our city for additional industry and recruitment of other businesses that will provide opportunities for our future growth.

Just as our children are the future of our city, we must not forget our seniors whom hold the key to our city. They were here long before us and we need to look to their wisdom and guidance to continue to grow Russellville. We must not overlook our history and our heritage from which our city was built upon.

Hard work and innovative thinking by people such as her grandfather, former Russellville Mayor Hayes Malone has brought us to this point and preserved our rich history in Russellville. Both of her grandparents were both small business owners which is the backbone of our economy. Hillary is the daughter of Susie Hovater Malone and Thomas "Tinker" Malone. Hillary along with her two daughters, Cameron and Catherine attend Russellville First Baptist Church.

Hillary would like to humbly ask you for your vote on August 25th to represent every constituent in District 5 and all citizens of Russellville with honesty and integrity. If you would like to get involved with the campaign you may do so by calling 256-460-8988. You can also follow the campaign on Facebook at Hillary Malone Hall for Russellville City Council Dist. 5.

Street Department in need of part-time employees to handle cemetery grass, weed maintenance issues

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With more than 100 acres for his department to mow and weed eat at Russellville cemeteries, City Hall and the Highway 43/Lawrence Street intersection, Russellville Street Department Shannon Wilson is facing a shortage of employees as a result of COVID-19 and recent terminations.

Using a combination of part-time employees and work release inmates from the State of Alabama Hamilton Work Release Center, Wilson's department is responsible for maintaining Luketown Cemetery, Knights of Pythias (KP) Cemetery, Devaney Cemetery, Sadler Cemetery, Olde Town Cemetery, Denton Hollow Cemetery (where Major William Russell is buried), and the grounds at the 43/Lawrence intersection where the city flies several American flags.

Additionally, those part-time employees and work release inmates must mow around Russellville City Hall and the welcome signs coming into Russellville.

The Alabama Department of Corrections halted its inmate work release program in March. Wilson said four work release inmates were assigned to the mowing team at the time the program was suspended. Additionally, due to terminations and other reasons, six of his part-time mowing/weed eating employees no longer work for the city.

That's left a big hole in his department's ability to upkeep these areas, Wilson explained, although some residents say maintenance at the local cemeteries has been a problem more than just this year.

"We're also trying to hire a laborer full-time to be over the mowing (team) and keep these guys working, but we're having a hard time getting anyone to do that," Wilson said.

Last month, Wilson received permission from Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver to take a team of county inmates out to pick up trash in the Highway 43 median after state officials mowed the grass.

Due to some disciplinary issues with these inmates, that is no longer an

option for the Street Department either.

Tresia McKinney, whose father, husband and brother are buried at KP Cemetery, said she has complained to city officials the last four years about upkeep of the cemetery.

"It's a city cemetery. You buy the lots from the city. We paid \$450 more than 20 years ago for an eight-plot lot. The city already owns the land. That money is supposed to be used for upkeep," McKinney said.

"I understand the problems they're having this year but this has been an issue for several years."

Wilson said he's actively looking for part-time hourly workers who can run a mower and weed eater. One challenge in finding applicants, though, is these employees can't work more than 29 hours a week in their part-time capacity.

With the full-time Street Department employees regularly working on roads and garbage/debris removal, Wilson said he simply doesn't have the manpower to get the job done.

"I'm needing some part-time workers. I can hire them on the spot. If someone is interested, contact me or Russellville City Hall," Wilson said.

In addition to mowing and weed eating, Street Department employees open/close all graves and maintain the roads running through local cemeteries, including the gravel roads.

"We have an ongoing problem there. We fix one of them and after a heavy rain, it gets washed away again," Wilson said. "It's a constant battle because very few of these roads are paved."

As of last week, three part-time employees were responsible for all the cemetery work. With no timetable for the state inmates' return, Wilson said the need for part-time workers is greater now than ever.

McKinney said she has had family members cut and weed eat around the graves of their loved ones.

"This has been a problem for years. I understand the issue with the inmates this year, but this isn't the first time upkeep of these cemeteries has been a problem," McKinney said.

'GRANTS,' from page 4

—\$5,000 to Union Community Center for a paving project to repair the parking lot.

—\$250 to Belgreen Bass Fishing Team for state tournament expenses.

—\$1,000 to the City of Red Bay for a Founders Day stage sponsorship.

—\$1,000 to Red Bay High School for purchase of a smart board.

—\$2,000 to Cultura Garden Club for purchase of plants and supplies for downtown Russellville.

—\$1,500 to Red Bay High School basketball program for purchase of new boys' and girls' basketballs.

—\$1,000 to the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce for sponsorship of the Franklin County Watermelon Festival.

—\$10,000 to the Franklin County Arts & Humanities Council for purchase of a new heating and air unit for the Roxy Theater. A grant from the Northwest Alabama RC&D Council will fund the other portion of this expense.



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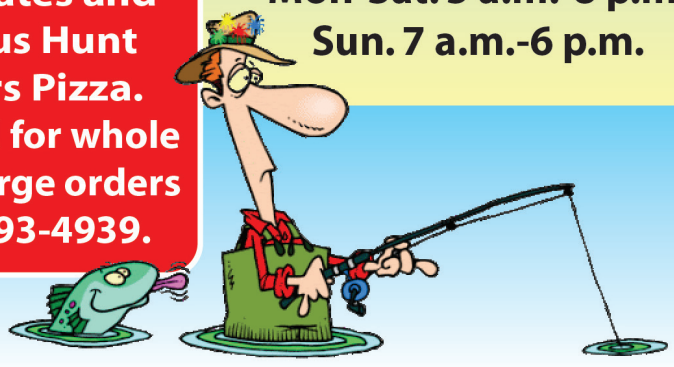
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Vina going above and beyond to ensure player safety amid virus concerns

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

VINA - Anyone who has ever coached a sport, whether it be little league or at the professional level, will tell you that it's not easy.

From crafting a winning lineup to making sure players are happy and everything in between, it's a job that comes with lofty expectations on all fronts. Add a global pandemic into the mix and all of a sudden a coaches job triples in terms of the difficulty surrounding the job.

However, as the Vina girls basketball team began their summer workouts weeks ago, head coach Richie Hester was going to put his players' health on the forefront, no matter how complicated things might get.

"It's been a challenge making sure that we've got everything in place in order to practice safely but we have taken every precaution necessary and also following all the state guidelines as well," Hester said. "It's a challenge but our girls have been very good about meeting that challenge head on and we hope everybody stays safe and

See 'SAFETY,' page 13



COURTESY PHOTO

Hester (above, left) is taking every safety precaution like taking temperatures to keep his players safe and healthy.

Taking center stage

After a historic career at Russellville, West Alabama receiver/running back Deyon Hill is ready to leave his mark at the collegiate level



COURTESY PHOTO

Hill (above) is ready to take the next step in his career at West Alabama after receiving significant playing time in 2019.

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

LIVINGSTON - Watching former Russellville football standout Deyon Hill suit up in the black and gold uniforms every Friday night was a spectacle worth planning your night around.

On any given night he could break off for a 50-plus yard touchdown run or catch a pass as time expired to give the Golden Tigers the lead in the late going.

Whatever it was, you could be sure that you were getting your money's worth when you went to watch Hill and the Golden Tigers.

Fast-forward five years later after setting a school record with over 2,300 total yards from

scrimmage and over 30 combined touchdowns in his senior season with the Golden Tigers, Hill is now donning a new set of uniforms, playing on a different day of the week and is in a new place.

Signing with West Alabama out of high school, there was a bit of a transition period before he finally got his first real taste of college football last year.

"Coming in I wasn't really sure what to expect. Going from high school to college is a big step but I went through the ACL injury and it set me back from the type of journey that I originally intended to have," Hill said. "But that's something that increased character in me and I wouldn't change it because it's made me a better person and a bet-

See 'CENTER STAGE,' page 12

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'CENTER STAGE,' from page 11

ter player because I learned from it."
After being redshirted his freshman season, Hill suffered an injury just three games into his redshirt freshman season sidelining him for the rest of the year. During his sophomore season, as Hill was still working his way back to being at full-speed due to his injury, he accumulated substantial playing time in which he accumulated nearly 200 all-purpose yards as a slot receiver, running back and kick returner.

Then 2019 came around and Hill, who was finally getting back to feeling like himself again, began putting up consistent numbers across a full season including nearly 200 yards receiving and nearly 75 yards as a kick returner to go along with his first college touchdown.

Last year as he played backup to one of the top receivers for West Alabama, Christian Saulsberry, Hill says he learned a lot and is ready to take over as one of the top receiving targets in 2020 for the Tigers.

"It was a good experience to learn under Christian and he helped me in certain situations and he was really a great leader for me," Hill said. "This year I'm hoping to have a much bigger role in the offense than I have in recent years because. No matter what my role is or how many times I touch the ball, I'm just ready to do anything to help my team win."

The expectations Hill has for his upcoming senior season? Help the Tigers win and go as far as they can.

"My expectations for this season are that I want me and my teammates to be really close and be as successful as we can be," Hill said. "I try not to think too much about individual stuff because whatever I can do to help the team get better, regardless of what it is, I'm going to do it because we all want to win and that's our main goal. We want to win."

Recently, Hill has attracted the attention of platforms that keep an eye out for football players from smaller colleges that could one day have a chance at playing in the NFL. For most small schools, there isn't much of a track record to go on based on professional talent, especially the NFL. However, West Alabama has produced its fair share of NFL players including Tyreek Hill (who was a part of this year's Super Bowl winning Kansas City Chiefs team) and Malcom Butler (who won a Super Bowl with the New England Patriots).

See 'CENTER STAGE,' Page 14



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'SAFETY,' from page 11

well and we can go back to school in the fall.”
Some of the things that Hester and his staff are doing to ensure that his players are in the safest positions possible to practice and workout involve intense cleaning and social-distancing parameters.

“We deep clean everything before our girls get there everyday. From the basketballs to the bleachers, everything is cleaned. Then the first thing we do when we get to the gym is we check temperatures before anyone touches anything or goes near anyone else. Then once we get going we break up into small groups while also staying apart from each other in those groups,” Hester said. “Everyone has their own individual water bottles, basketballs, masks and everything else. We have six goals available so we’re able to spread out and stay distanced from one another while also being able to get some work in.”

One aspect that is often not discussed during these confusing and difficult times is the mental toll that the pandemic might be taking on people, especially those that are younger.

Hester says that he has taken that point into consideration and has made sure to listen to his players if they have concerns or just simply need to talk about everything that is going on.

“Our girls have handled everything that’s going on very well. Just like everyone else they want this thing to be over with and gone,” Hester said. “They’re really smart and they understand what’s going on in the world. We talk about things during our workouts while we’re all spread out from one another and I think that really helps them.”

According to Hester the number of participants in workouts and practices so far has hovered around ten with the highest number being around 12 and the lowest around 9.

While sports in general might be taking a backseat for the time being, Hester is hoping that practicing can be a much-needed break from the grips



COURTESY PHOTO

Staying six feet apart during practice and workouts is just one of the ways that Hester is making sure his players are staying safe while getting some practices in.

of reality for his players.

“Our main priority is to keep our kids healthy and prevent them from getting sick. That’s goal number one far and away above everything else and basketball is a far away second,” Hester said. “At the same time we were just glad to be able to get out of the house for a bit and get back on the court and get a basketball in our hands for a few hours a week.”

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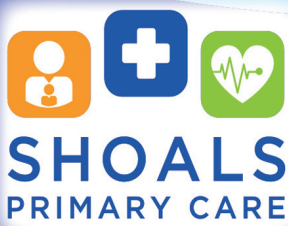
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'CENTER STAGE,' from page 12

Hill says that he hopes that the lifelong dream he has had of playing in the NFL can soon come to fruition with a strong showing in his senior season.

"The NFL has always been a dream of mine, ever since I was a kid. Growing up playing sports and things like that, it's what you work for and work hard to get to that point. I feel like if I get my opportunities I can have a real chance to make it," Hill said. "Guys like Hill and Butler give guys like me that come from smaller schools hope that we can make it to the next level. That's the kind of guy and player that I hope and pray that I can be."

If the NFL doesn't come knocking next spring and Hill finishes up his time at West Alabama, don't expect him to walk away from the game so easily. Hill says he hopes to eventually come back home to where it all started and inspire the next generation of star athletes in and around Russellville.

"Coming back and impacting kids has been something that I've wanted to do for a while. I want to have an impact on every kid but I really want to impact the guys who are born into situations they can't control like low-income situations and things like that," Hill said. "I've always wanted to come back to Russellville but any place that I go I know I want to be put in a position to help kids and give them hope and something to dream about."



COURTESY PHOTO

Hill is hopeful that he can take the next step in his career and become one of the top receivers for UWA in the fall.

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AHSAA to work with Alabama State Departments of Health, Education to plan for fall sports

Submitted to the FFP

MONTGOMERY – The AHSAA is currently reviewing the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) *Roadmap to Reopening Schools*, which was released Friday by State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey.

The ALSDE, in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), developed its plan as a guidance document for the upcoming school year which is designed to help meet the health and safety challenges Alabama's schools are currently facing concerning COVID-19.

"We appreciate Dr. Mackey and his staff for their tireless efforts. I am looking forward to working with school administrators and with the AHSAA Football and Fall Sports committees which meet on July 7 in addition to the Alabama Football Coaches Association on July 8 to discuss the ALSDE Roadmap and the ADPH guidelines," said AHSAA Executive Director Steve Savarese. "The AHSAA will continue to study and produce "Best Practices" (in conjunction with the AHSAA Central Board, Medical Advisory Board, ALSDE and ADPH) and will present the recommendations to the Central Board at its July 22 meeting.

Details and a synopsis of the ALSDE *Roadmap to Reopening Schools* and a special parents' guide can be found at the Alabama State Department of Education website: <https://www.alsde.edu/>

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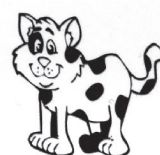
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