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Grimes: RCS to return to 'traditional' instruction

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Although his system's "Roadmap for Reopening" plan includes a virtual learning option, Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes has been adamant that his system would start, as scheduled, with traditional, in-classroom instruction.

And it seems most parents of the system's 2,500 students agree, as only 10 percent opted for the virtual option.

This is a significantly lower percentage than Alabama public schools are seeing across the state. Last week, Alabama Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey said up to half of all public school students will

begin the school year attending classes remotely through virtual instruction. Some of these students are in systems that are offering virtual instruction only, and some are students who opted into the virtual method.

Russellville City Schools will hold a staggered start for students on August 19, 20 and 21. This is one week later than the original schedule, but teachers will now have five additional in-service days to go through training for virtual learning. Teacher days are set for August 6-18.

On Wednesday, August 19, West Elementary School kindergarten students with last names A-I and all second graders will begin classes, along

See 'RCS,' page 5



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City Council District 2

Pd. Pol. by Darren Woodruff, PO Box 1236, Russellville, AL

JROTC experience inspires Howard to enlist in Navy

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When the COVID-19 outbreak abruptly ended their school year in March, many high school students treated their time off as an extended vacation.

Russellville High School senior Justin Howard had a different plan, though. Howard immediately went to work at Pilgrim's, then Innovative Hearth Products, and that full-time employment was on top of his part-time job at Taco Bell in Russellville.

It's that type of work ethic that recruiters with the United States Navy hope Howard carries with him into his military career. Howard will



COURTESY PHOTO

Justin Howard (with flag ball cap) with family members at a going away party held in his honor last weekend.


See 'HOWARD,' page 5

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This year, though, with a national health pandemic, I have made the decision not to use traditional door-to-door campaigning. This decision was made out of respect to your health and the health of your family, which must be our primary concern these days. We will be leaving door hangers at homes, but will do so without disturbing your family.

I am still available to meet, either by telephone or in-person (if so requested), with anyone in District Five. Please feel free to call me at 256-810-7388. Our city election is Tuesday, August 25, 2020.

I respectfully ask for your vote and the opportunity to represent you the next four years, as we continue to move our city forward.

Sincerely,

Jamie Harris
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Mary Nelle "Race" Entrekin Artz, 91, of Russellville, passed away Friday, July 24th. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

Anthony "Mark" Sampson Sr., 63, of Phil Campbell passed away Thursday, July 23rd. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

George Leroy Sansbury, 70, of Russellville, passed away on Monday, July 20th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Slyvester Scott Jr., 68, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Friday, July 17th. Interment at East Franklin Cemetery.

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Memorial service, 'last call' held in K9 deputy's memory

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The "end of watch" call, or "last call," is a ceremonial call over a police radio to honor the death of a law enforcement officer.

Sadly, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office transmitted such a call Friday in memory of one of own. Chill, the department's K9 deputy sheriff, died July 19th after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Chill, a German Shepherd born and trained in the Czech Republic, served with Sheriff Shannon Oliver's department since 2012.

A brief memorial ceremony was held Friday evening at the Sheriff's Office in the K9's honor.

During his eight-year tenure with the FCSO, Chill had two partners, Sergeant Jordan Seahorn and Deputy Matt Weeks. The K9 was responsible for the seizure of numerous pounds of illegal drugs, and he actively assisted in apprehending several violent felony offenders.

In addition to his on-the-job accolades, Chill was perhaps the best ambassador the department had when it comes to building relationships with kids across Franklin County.

"He was a staple of the community and loved by children in all the county schools," Oliver said. "Chill made multiple visits a year to see the students and help build a relationship between the youth and law enforcement, as well as helping check the schools for safety.

"Chill could bring a smile to anyone stopping by the office to see the staff or helping comfort a child who had a traumatic experience. He would always

See 'MEMORIAL,' Page 7



Deputy Chill

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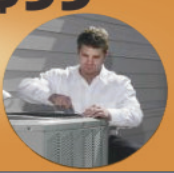
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Franklin board approves flurry of personnel moves

John Pilati

Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education approved more than 100 personnel moves at the board's July 21 meeting.

The personnel action sheet included the hiring of new teacher substitutes and new hires for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 TRACKS program.

The following personnel moves were approved at the recommendation of Superintendent Greg Hamilton:

Resignation: Ashley Burton, math teacher at Tharptown High School, Jaime Key, science/math teacher at THS, Brooklyn Clark, head softball coach/aide at THS, Rhonda Sliger, comprehensive social science teacher, Belgreen High School, Myra Frederick, part-time counselor at BHS, Valerie Hood, special education aide at THS and Marc Tracy, social studies teacher at THS.

Resignation in Supplement: Holly Kuykendall, girls varsity basketball coach at Red Bay High School, Chuck Simmons, head cross country coach and junior high boys basketball coach at Belgreen and Kellie Ballard Henson, assistant softball coach at Red Bay.

Volunteer Resignation: Dustin Welch, volunteer softball coach at Belgreen.

Retirement: Lance Mitchell, RBHS principal, Cathy Jarnigan, Red Bay Elementary teacher and Tracey Cook, Phil Campbell Elementary teacher.

Leave of Absence: Kellie Ballard Henson, Red Bay math teacher, from September 15 to December 15, 2020.

Employment: Emily Langston, band director/instructional aide at Vina High School,

Rachel Ingle, teacher at RBES, Kristin Oliver, Child Nutrition Program Assistant, Phil Campbell School, Stewart Ozbirn, custodian at Belgreen, Nathan Bohannon, custodian, Franklin County Schools, Kamri Sears, special education teacher, THS, Traci Nolen, Access Facilitator Aide, THS, Lynsi Bragwell, math teacher THS, Ariel McManus, math teacher PCHS, Devon Hester, general science teacher PCHS, Marla Kerby, science teacher, THS, Bailey Phillips, elementary teacher TES, Mary Anne Clement, full-time substitute at THS, Devyn Childers King, registered nurse, Franklin County Schools, Carmen Whitfield, history teacher and head softball coach, THS, Brandy Hollimon, full-time substitute TES, Heath Boyd, physical education/health teacher, THS, Jennifer May, custodian PCHS, Samantha Walker, comprehensive social science teacher THS, and Paul Humphres, principal, Red Bay High School.

Employment in Supplement: Colby Cox, head cross country boys and girls coach, BHS, and Jennifer Cooper, junior high boys basketball coach, Belgreen.

Transfers: Ryan Champion, transfer from social science teacher at THS to social science teacher at BHS, and Brooke Williams, transfer from elementary teacher at TES to Belgreen.

New Teacher Substitutes: James Arthur, Elizabeth Deaton, Kaitlyn Galowitch, Dana B. Hargett, Katie Howard, Kendra James, Allen Knott, Jennifer Pace, Caleb Ramey, Brittney S. Roccato, Heather Sibley, Bridget Tharp, Brittany Thomas, Lillian Torres, Julianna Blackburn and Heather Tompkins.

See 'MOVES,' Page 5

'HOWARD,' from page 1

leave next month for Recruit Training Command, more commonly known as boot camp, in Illinois. After that, he will be sent to Pensacola, Fla., for the first stages of training in aviation mechanics, his chosen path in the Navy.

And thanks to working hard, Howard will have some money in his pocket, although a recent purchase cut into his savings. Howard purchased a promise ring for his girlfriend, Haley White, and presented it to her at a going away party held in his honor last weekend.

A disrupted senior year, a full-time job, part-time job, girlfriend and family obligations and the beginning of a Naval career. That's a lot on the plate of an 18-year-old, but Howard seems ready for the challenge.

"It makes me kind of nervous, just thinking about being that far away from my family and girlfriend," Howard said. "I think that's what I'll miss the most—not being able to see the people I love every day."

While still working part-time, Howard has given up full-time employment the final month he's home, so he can spend that quality time with family and friends. But the maturity he's shown caught the eye of the person who knows him best, and she thinks her son will be ready for the challenges ahead.

"In the past few months since the quarantine, you have proved that you are on the right path," Pam Howard, Justin's mother, said to her son in a social media post. "Just remember how proud me and dad are for you in your accomplishments so far."

Howard is one of three children of Craig and Pam Howard. The family lives in the Churntown community in eastern Franklin County. Justin is the first child to enter the military, and it's no surprise his mother is a little nervous.

"I was a little scared when he told us. My daughter's husband is in the Army and that may have been a motivation for Justin," Pam said. "But with being nervous, I'm proud of him too. For him to want to go and do this, it gives me a lot of pride, but when your babies leave home, you never like it."

At RHS, Howard was a four-year member of the Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps, or JROTC, under the leadership of Lt. Col. (Retired) Norman Lier and 1st Sgt. Michael Connor. The positive influence of those two men is something Howard said prepared and motivated him to enter the Navy.

"They took a lot of time preparing us for the outside world and how it's going to be," Howard said. "We learned about resumes, job interviews and they also taught us first aid. It was a lot more than just classroom learning. We learned leadership skills and being part of a team and working together."

"They were so positive and were a big motivation to me. Also, my cousin is in the Navy right now and I've always liked the Navy. I want to do something working with planes, and the Navy offers that. Hopefully, it will give me something to base a career on after the Navy," he added.

Chances are good the physical challenges of boot camp won't overwhelm Howard. A member of the RHS cross country and track teams, Howard advanced to state two years in cross country and one in track, so a five-mile morning run won't phase him.

As he looks down the road of his life, Howard would like to return to Franklin County, but he knows that decision will be dictated by where he can find the best job in his chosen career.

"After I get out of the Navy, I'll see what is around here job wise," Howard said. "I'd like to come back home at some point."

For news updates throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net!

'RCS,' from page 1

with Russellville Elementary School fifth graders, Russellville Middle School 8th graders and seniors at Russellville High School.

Thursday, August 20 will see the start of classes for WES students with last names J-R and first graders, along with fourth graders at RES, seventh graders at RMS and sophomores and juniors at RHS.

Friday, August 21 will be the starting day for WES kindergarten students with last names S-Z, third graders at RES, sixth graders at RMS and freshmen at RHS.

Parents were presented with two learning model options, traditional face-to-face learning and virtual learning, which is a school-based distance learning program from home. Although devices are available to check out from the school, students are responsible for finding reliable internet connectivity under this option.

Free WiFi will be provided in the parking lots of all Russellville City Schools and Russellville Park and Recreation facilities.

While some aspects of on-campus, 'traditional' instruction will be the same as previous years, there will also be major changes as RCS officials implement policy from the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama High School Athletic Association and the State Department of Education.

Gone, at least for the 2020-21 school year, are traditional registration and parent nights. Students will not have field trips, outside visitors or public assemblies. Pep rallies, if they are held at all, will be outside with social distance measures in place.

Classroom parties will be closed to parent participation, and no outside food will be allowed at those events.

There will be sanitation stations in all classrooms or hallways that students will be asked to use before entering any classroom, lunchroom, library or other buildings. And water fountains will be shut off. Students may bring bottled water in original bottled water containers.

"I have been resolved we start school on time, and Russellville City Schools will start on August 19th," Grimes said. "We do not intend to go virtual. We have the virtual option in place, but with approximately 250 of 2,500 students choosing that option, I don't see why we would choose an all virtual option."

Grimes said students who begin the semester in the traditional schedule and later become ill or quarantined may then move to a 'blended' educational platform.

In the blended model, lessons from the student's classroom teacher will be made available to the student at home. They will be monitored and graded by the teacher, with feedback given via a virtual platform. Teachers will make regular contact with parents of any blended student to offer help or guidance.

As far as participation in extracurricular activities, students in both the traditional and virtual learning platforms will be allowed to take part.

Masks will be allowed for students to wear, but are not required, unless students are in a classroom where social distancing is not possible.

Bus routes have been altered to allow for half capacity each time they run, with a first and second route in place for all morning and afternoon bus routes. The first route morning dropoffs at school will be at 7:15 a.m., with the second route dropoff by 8:15 a.m. The first route afternoon school pickup will be at 2:40 p.m., and the second route pickup at 3:10 p.m.

Masks are required on all bus routes.

Students and teachers will be off Monday, September 7 for Labor Day, October 5-6 for fall break and students will be off on October 7 for a teacher only work day.

Thanksgiving break will be November 25-27, and Christmas Break will begin December 21. Students will return to class January 6, 2021, with teachers reporting January 4 for a work day.

November 23-24 are designated virtual days on campus.

For more information on Russellville City Schools' 'Roadmap for Reopening,' log onto www.rcs.k12.al.us.

'MOVES,' from page 4

New Hires for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 TRACKS: Sherry Smith, Amanda Oliver, Cindy Peppers, Amy Thomas, Briana Champion, Dalany Roberts, Deborah Townsend, Kristy Smith, Brittany Smallwood, Kristie Thorn and D'Andra Robinson, Site Coordinators, Wyatt Hutcheson, Walker Kennerly, Lorie Scott, Candace Cornelius, Leann Trapp, Miranda Hardy, Dalana Baker, Kim Jones, Suzanne Borden, Katina Petree, Christina Baker, Laura Stockton, Lorena Hernandez, Chastity West, Susie Stockton, Jessica Nichols, Tonyca Scott, Amber Pharr, Sonya Jackson, Jennifer Russell, Tracey Swinney, Pam Clement, Kristin Headlee, teachers, Melissa Stancil, substitute teacher, Shirley Rambo, Elisha Rambo, Wanda Hill, Micaela Guzman, Elisabeth Lerch, Stephanie Humphres, Lillian Torres, Joan Allen, Tom Barkley Scott, Robert Langley, Kaitlyn Robbins, Kim Whitten, LaShanda Wingo, Jordan Sharp, Betty Taylor, Denise Hester and Olivia Knight, Aides.

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 **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 Thornton.

 **Y**ou 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.

 **N**ew 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.

 **A**merican Legion Post #64 would like to announce that the July meetings have been cancelled due to COVID-19. August updates will follow. Meeting occur every second Thursday of the month.

 **F**ifth Thursday Food Giveaway - 2 p.m. July 30, 2020 - Russellville First United Methodist Church - downtown corner of Madison and Washington Ave. Groceries will given out while supplies last. All social distancing measures will be followed. Bring your ID and follow instructions given by staff.

Have an event we can help publicize? Call us at 256-332-0255.

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'MEMORIAL,' from page 3

make the saddest of days better," Oliver added.

Funds used to purchase and train Chill came from drug seizure money from crimes committed in Franklin County. When he was first paired with Chill, Seahorn went through training in North Carolina with his partner. After a six-year partnership, Seahorn transferred to Investigations and Weeks was chosen to become Chill's new handler.

Weeks' training with Chill came in Northwest Mississippi. The K9 was trained and certified in narcotics detection, criminal apprehension and search and rescue tracking.

Oliver said he plans to acquire a new K9 as soon as possible, as Chill's accomplishments have highlighted the benefits of having a K9 deputy.

"Deputy Chill will be greatly missed by our family and his faithful service to our community will never be forgotten," Oliver said.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Franklin County and Russellville Police Officers standing at attention in memory of Chill, the K9 deputy. Chill served with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department since 2012.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net.

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At CB&S Bank, we are so proud Mr. Cecil Batchelor is being honored for his many accomplishments as an outstanding businessman and member of his community.

CB&S Bank is so proud to have such great leadership for the bank and such a well-recognized and respected businessman within his community. Born June 3, 1925, Cecil was the youngest of seven children born to L.M. and Mary Batchelor. The family lived on a large farm outside the city limits of Haleyville, Alabama, where Cecil was able to learn the value of hard work, determination, and ingenuity. In the fourth grade, Cecil began attending school in Bear Creek, Alabama, in the height of the Great Depression. After graduating from high school, he joined the United States Navy. From there, he attended Florence State Teachers College, now the University of North Alabama. He then moved to Russellville, and bought into an auto and appliance business. He eventually bought out the appliance part of the business, which became Dependable Hardware and Service Center. He was at that time sought out to be the director of both the First National Bank of Russellville and the Citizens Bank of Russellville. He chose Citizens Bank, now known as CB&S Bank, and has been on its board for 56 years.

After more than 50 years of serving on the board for CB&S Bank and being an integral part of the bank's success, Cecil retired from his position as chairman in May 2016. During his tenure as chairman, the bank grew from having \$5 million in assets to more than \$2 billion in assets. The bank also grew from one branch in Russellville to an impressive 56 branches in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Cecil has remained on the board for CB&S Bank as a director and chairman emeritus and currently serves as chairman of CBS Banc-Corp, the official holding company for CB&S Bank. When reflecting on the success the bank has seen since he became chairman, Cecil credits this success to the more than 500 trained and dedicated employees of the bank, the members of the board of directors, the management teams, and the bank presidents during his tenure, which included C.W. James, Gene Pace, Dennis Upchurch, and current president Mike Ross.

We are so proud the Alabama Business Hall of Fame has honored Mr. Cecil Batchelor and inducted him into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame for his many accomplishments. He is so well deserving of this prestigious recognition.

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- 1964** - On January 14, 1964, Cecil Batchelor joined the Citizens Bank Board of Directors. At that time he was the successful owner of Dependable Hardware and Service Center located in Russellville, Alabama.
- 1965** - In July of 1965, Citizens Bank made a final move to its present location on South Jackson Avenue.
- 1972** - On January 16, 1972, Cecil Batchelor was named Chairman of the Board of Citizens Bank.
- 1980-1981** - New branches were added in Red Bay and Hodges.
- 1988** - The bank formed a holding company called CBS Banc Corp.
- 1989** - A new subsidiary company of Citizens Bank called Citigroup Financial Services, Inc. (currently CB&S Financial Services) was formed.
- 1990** - In May 1990, two branches of Phenix Federal Savings and Loan were acquired.
- 1993** - In April 1993, First State Bank of Franklin County was acquired.
- 1995** - In June 1995, the bank's first Lawrence County office was established in Moulton, Alabama.
- 1998** - A new 14,000 square foot Service Center was constructed directly behind the Russellville Main Office.
- 1999** - The eighth branch was added in Muscle Shoals in January 1999.
- 2000** - On September 30, 2000, Citizens Bank successfully assumed ownership of the insured deposits of the Bank of Falkner in Falkner, Mississippi. This included branches in Falkner, Ripley, Walnut and Corinth, Mississippi.
- 2003** - Bank of Bolivar was acquired, which expanded the bank's presence into Tennessee. The locations added at this time were Bolivar and Whitesville.
- 2005** - Certain branches of Colonial Bank were purchased, which added seven new locations in Northwest Alabama and Tennessee. The branches are located in Kilian (Center Sta.), Cherokee, Phil Campbell, and Town Creek, Alabama; Ardmore, Fayetteville and Pulaski, Tennessee. The first branch in Decatur was opened on Beltline Road.
- 2006** - Citizens Bank celebrated its 100th Birthday at all locations.
- 2006** - A new branch was added in Decatur, Alabama on 6th Avenue and Farmers Bank was acquired with locations in Comersville and Louisville, Tennessee.
- 2007** - In March 2007 the University Drive location was added in Huntsville, Alabama. Certain AyrSouth Bank branches were purchased with locations in Clarkdale, Eupora, Greenville, Greenwood, Starville and Sturgis, Mississippi. A new location was added in Huntsville, Alabama. On November 5, 2007 a location was added in Corinth, Mississippi on Harper Road. We entered the Tupelo Market.
- 2008** - As the bank grew and expanded throughout the region, other Citizens Banks were increasingly present in those areas. So, effective March 3, 2008, Citizens Bank officially changed its name to CB&S Bank. In April 2008, a Birmingham location was added. In June 2008, the Church Street location was added in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
- 2009** - Three additional locations were added in Florence, Madison and Huntsville, Alabama.
- 2013** - CB&S Bank successfully assumed ownership of all deposits of Community South Bank with locations in Selmer, Savannah, Adamsville, Parsons, Scotts Hill, and Hohenwald, Tennessee. In March 2013, the Highway 1 South location was added in Greenville, Mississippi.
- 2014** - Two Tupelo locations were added.
- 2014** - In March of 2014, John Harrison, Superintendent of Banking for the State of Alabama presented Mr. Batchelor with a commendation from Gov. Robert Bentley honoring his 42 years of service as board chairman. Scott Latham, President of the Alabama Bankers Association, presented Mr. Batchelor with a plaque recognizing him in the "Half Century Club" of the association.
- 2019** - In April 2019, a Coan Lane location was added in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In August 2019, PrimeSouth Bank was acquired with new locations in Birmingham, Pike Road, Tallapoosa and Wetumpka, Alabama.
- 2020** - Mr. Cecil Batchelor is still proudly serving on the CB&S Bank Board of Directors to this day.

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Eupora



Ripley



Walnut



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Corinth - Harper Road



Tupelo - Main Street



Tupelo - South Gloster



Clarksdale



Starkville



Sturgis



Greenville - Highway 1



Greenville - Downtown



Greenwood - Downtown



Greenwood - Park Avenue



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Savannah - Main Street



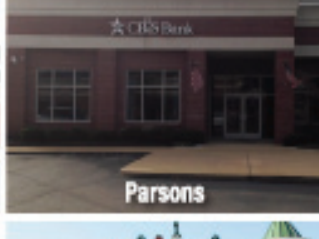
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Whitfield hired as new head softball coach at THS

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

THARP TOWN - Finding a coach that possesses championship-caliber experience oftentimes proves to be a difficult search. After all, there are only so many trophies handed out at the end of every season. Of course, once you have a coach with that level of experience, the thought of having to find another on the same level seems impossible.

However, for the Tharptown softball program, they will make the easy transition from one national championship winning coach to another as Carmen Whitfield was named the new head coach for the Lady Wildcats last week.

Whitfield, who starred at the University of North Alabama during their national title run in 2016, will be taking over for former teammate and fellow champion at UNA, alumna Brooklynn Clark who departed Tharptown in search of her next coaching job.

As Whitfield takes over a program left behind by her former teammate, she knows that she will be stepping into a good situation with the Wildcats.

"It's exciting because I know that Brooklynn did what she needed to do while she was there. I know she taught them the game and she taught them the skills that they need to be successful," Whitfield said. "We're still friends and we still communicate about players and certain things like that and she was giving me an idea of where things are and how things operate and being able to take

See 'WHITFIELD,' page 13



COURTESY PHOTO

After three years at the helm of the Shoals Christian softball program, Whitfield is now hoping to lead Tharptown to its first ever state title.

Driving towards a title

Russellville senior Eric Boutwell is making waves on the junior golfing circuit in Alabama and after competing in the Alabama State Junior Championship, he's ready to compete for a state title with the Golden Tigers

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - For most of us, when we are in a competition with 121 other people, the main objective more than likely is to simply not finish in last. Just get from point A to point B and be somewhat competitive.

That's not the mindset Russellville senior Eric Boutwell had when he stepped foot on the Goose Pond Colony Resort Lake Golf Course in Scottsboro last week as he competed for the 75th Alabama Boys State Junior Championship. Boutwell was determined to finish as high up in the standings as he possibly could and after finishing 19th out of a possible 122 spots, Boutwell has his sights set on climbing to the top of the golfing mountain in Alabama high school golf.

"I want to win a state championship. That's my number one goal for this year. I've been dreaming about winning state ever since my seventh grade year and that's just always been the goal and that's at the top of my list for this year," Boutwell said.

Boutwell has started off his senior year of golf on the right foot by impressing at the state junior championship. Across three rounds of golf Boutwell shot a 69 (3-under par) on rounds one and two while shooting a 74 (two-over par) on the third and final round for an average score of 74 (4-under par) for the week.

With 121 other high school golfers from across the state competing for the title just as he was, it was not lost on Boutwell the honor and privilege it was to be able to play in a tournament of its caliber.

"It's a big honor to be able to play at that level of golf with those guys. There were 122 of us there competing and they're all great players and it was just a real honor to be out there amongst golfers from all over the state and trying to compete for that championship," Boutwell said.

Going into the tournament, Boutwell knew what to expect from the course and says that the course played perfectly into the style of golf he does best.

"I've played that course a few times before and it's a pretty long golf course, which actually ended up working out well for me. I'm more confident off of the tee than anywhere else and I hit it pretty far, especially for my size," Boutwell said. "I just felt like the course was a really good fit for me because I can control my driver and I just knew I had to get it going everywhere else and in other aspects of my game in order to compete with those guys at that level."

While the first two days went by rather smoothly,

See 'TITLE,' page 12



COURTESY PHOTO

Boutwell shot a 69 on the first two rounds of the tournament, followed up with a 74 in the final round to finish 19th out of 122 participants.

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'TITLE,' from page 11

Boutwell got into a bit of a jam on the third day but was able to rebound and salvage the day and secure a top-20 finish for the Golden Tiger.

"The first two days I played really solid golf and I didn't really get into any trouble or anything. But the last day I made a double-bogey on the sixth hole. Just hit a bad tee ball into the water and had a bad second shot and had to try and make some birdies to get back from that," Boutwell said. "I try to just forget about it and move on from the mistakes. We were already late in the tournament and six holes into the last round and I knew I couldn't let that get to me and I just had to push forward and keep going."

Boutwell has always had a knack for golfing and doing it very well. However, in his opinion, his game has progressed tremendously over the past two or three years and he credits those years of development for getting him to where he is today.

"Really just the last two to three years I've picked up quite a bit of distance hitting off the tee. I'm hitting the ball 20 to 30 yards further than I was two summers ago and

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See 'TITLE,' on page 14

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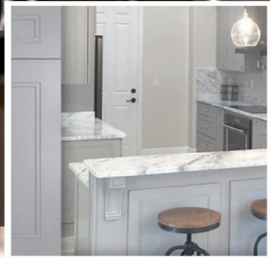
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'WHITFIELD,' from page 11

over right after her has definitely made this a smooth transition.”
When the UNA softball team made that championship run in 2016, Whitfield was an integral part of it as she drove in a key run in game two of the championship matchup against Humboldt State. After her time as a standout at UNA, Whitfield then became the head coach of the Shoals Christian softball program, where she has been for the past three years.

As she began the process of transitioning from private to public education, Whitfield says that while other schools had her attention, Tharptown was the place she knew she needed to be.

“I just felt like it was the right time to make the transition from private to public education for my career. I visited a few other schools during the summer and nothing else really felt like the right fit for me until I came to Tharptown,” Whitfield said. “It really just felt like a place where I was welcomed and it was just a place that I really wanted to be at.”

One of the things that comes with winning a national title at such a high level of competition, is the mindset that winning championships is the ultimate goal. And that mindset is something that Whitfield is hoping to instill even further in the Wildcat program.

“I just think that the championship mindset is somewhat instilled in us former players and we just want to achieve the best things that we possibly can in everything that we do and that’s what I want to teach our girls and show them,” Whitfield said. “I want to show them that whether it’s on the field or in the classroom, you have to give it your all every single day because you never know when your last chance will be.”

Whitfield has high expectations for a Wildcat program that, like the rest of the softball programs across the state, didn’t have an opportunity to chase that elusive title last season due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the season being cancelled.

Once the Lady Wildcats are able to step back on the field under Whitfield’s leadership for the first time, Carmen is hopeful that her squad will give maximum effort in pursuit of the school’s first state title.

“I have very high expectations this year. I hope they just give it their all everytime they step foot on the field. When they do step foot on the field, softball is the only thing on their mind and everything else gets left at the

See 'WHITFIELD,' page 14

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'WHITFIELD,' from page 13

gate," Whitfield said. "All I ask is that they give it their all and hope that we can make some strides to get to where we need to be to be successful."

Only being hired last week means that while Whitfield hasn't had the chance to connect with most, if any, of her players yet, she still has high expectations in her first year as the Wildcat head coach.

"I want to really play well in our area. First place in the area of course is the number one goal but at least we want to finish top two. I want us to compete and play a tough schedule so that we can see what we're up against," Whitfield said. "Our schedule for next season looks like it's going to be tough and we're just going to go out there and compete and try to improve every single day."

'TITLE,' from page 12

"I'm also in much more control over my drive as well," Boutwell said. "I know what the ball is going to do off the tee. I don't have to get up there and worry about it going offline or anything. I know where it's going as soon as it leaves the tee."

For the time being, Boutwell still has one more year as a Golden Tiger to try and bring home that state title he's been dreaming about for years. But once his time donning the gold and black is over and gone, Boutwell has plenty of options available for the next step in his golfing career.

"I'm definitely going to try and continue my golfing career once I graduate. I haven't fully decided yet as to what I wanted to do or how I want to go about doing it," Boutwell said. "But I do know that there is absolutely more golf in my future."



Letters to the Editor

We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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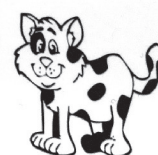
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Franklin County Fall Semester School Calendar



Teacher Work Days (Local Schools).....	Aug. 10-19, 2020
First Day of School for Students	Thursday, August 20, 2020
Labor Day Holiday.....	Monday, September 7, 2020
Traditional Students ½ Day (Dismiss @ 11:30).....	Friday, September 11, 2020
Remote Learning Testing/Benchmark at Local Schools (1:00 – 4:00).....	Friday, September 11, 2020
Mid Nine Weeks Report.....	Thursday, September 17, 2020
Traditional Students ½ Day (Dismiss @ 11:30).....	Friday, October 2, 2020
Remote Learning Testing/Benchmark at Local Schools (1:00 – 4:00).....	Friday, October 2, 2020
End of First Nine Week Grading Period.....	Thursday, October 15, 2020
Daylight Saving Time Ends.....	Sunday, November 1, 2020
Traditional Students ½ Day (Dismiss @ 11:30).....	Friday, November 6, 2020
Remote Learning Testing/Benchmark at Local Schools (1:00 – 4:00).....	Friday, November 6, 2020
Mid Nine Weeks Report.....	Thursday, November 12, 2020
Veterans Day Holiday.....	Wednesday, November 11, 2020
Thanksgiving Holidays (Students).....	Monday – Friday, November 23-27, 2020
Teacher Work Days.....	Monday – Tuesday, November 23-24, 2020
Traditional Students ½ Day (Dismiss @ 11:30).....	Friday, December 4, 2020
Remote Learning Testing/Benchmark at Local Schools (1:00 – 4:00).....	Friday, December 4, 2020
End of Second Nine Week Grading Period.....	Friday, December 18, 2020
Students and Teachers ½ Day (Dismiss @ 11:30 for Christmas Holidays).....	Friday, December 18, 2020

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