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Voter turnout remarkably high in Franklin County despite pandemic

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

In the year of the pandemic, nothing about Tuesday's election returns in Franklin County was normal.

There was no crowd gathered in the large courtroom of the Franklin County Courthouse. Nobody was reading election results as they came in box by box.

Instead, Franklin County Commissioners Jason Miller and David Hester spent their evening in the courthouse foyer, awaiting results.

Even without a crowd, though, the wait was worth it for Miller and Hester, as the two Republican

incumbents won lopsided victories in a day that saw a record number of straight party ballots cast in Franklin County.

Miller, Franklin County Commissioner for District Two, defeated Democratic challenger Mitchell Hamilton 9,905 to 2,228 to earn another term on the commission.

Hester defeated Democratic political veteran Judy Bullen 9,342 to 2,844.

These were the only contested races in Franklin County on the November 3, 2020, general election ballot.

Republican commissioners Chris

See 'TURNOUT,' page 5



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Scott tabbed as new West Elementary principal

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When Deanna Hollimon resigned as West Elementary School principal last month to accept a position with the University of North Alabama, Russellville City Schools Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes knew he needed to find someone who could address the unique challenges presented at WES.

With more than half of its students beginning their kindergarten year classified as English Language (EL) learners (meaning English is not their primary language at home and they are unable to communicate fluently in English), West is the one RCS school that deals with the most

EL students.

So Grimes turned to Ann Scott, a former Russellville City Schools teacher and student. Scott's administrative experience includes principal positions at Belgreen High School, Tharptown High School and Tharptown Elementary School, the county's second-largest EL school.

Scott was hired Friday morning as the Russellville City Schools Board of Education approved Grimes' recommendation. Her first day at West is expected to be Monday, November 9.

Scott leaves the principal post at Tharptown High School, a position she's held since 2019. She was principal at Belgreen two years and Tharptown Elementary four years.


See 'SCOTT,' page 4

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"In Memory of our loved ones..." brought to you by Atkins Marble and Granite Works and Franklin Memory Gardens

Darryl Eugene Green, 70, of Russellville, passed away on Wednesday, November 4th. Interment at Cherry Hill Cemetery.

Betty Ruth Griffus, 80, of Russellville, passed away on Saturday, October 31st. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

James "Buddy" Edward Jones, 73, of Russellville, passed away on Tuesday, November 3rd. Interment at Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

Molly Elene Miller, 91, passed away on Wednesday, November 4th. Interment at Littleville Cemetery.

Ronald Gene Sherrill, 66, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Tuesday, November 3rd. Interment at Liberty Hill Cemetery.

Sidney "Sid" Tate Willis, 23, of Russellville, passed away on Sunday, November 1st. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

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Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge holds 25-year pinning ceremony

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge 880 held its first-ever 25-year pinning ceremony last Thursday to honor members who have been a part of the Lodge for a quarter century.

Worshipful Master Cody Williams read the names of the Lodge members who qualified for the 25-year pin. District Lecturer Bro. J.O Taylor and past Grand Deputy Tyler Stanley Champion presented the pins to the five members who were present.

The Lodge presented Sue Jones with a shadow box filled with belongings of her husband, Bro. David Wayne Jones, who passed away recently during the preparation for this 25-year event.

Jones was an active member who played a large role in the preparation of the 25-year pinning ceremony.

Jones' son, J.J., had the honor of receiving his late father's 25-year pin.

Lodge members expressed their appreciation to everyone who helped make the ceremony a special night for Phil Campbell Lodge 880.

25-year pin recipients who attended Thursday's ceremony included Bro. Harry Rumble, Bro. Randy Bracken, Bro. Rodney Ergle, Bro. Donald Williams and Bro. Robert Hall.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge 880 presented five members their 25-year pins at a recent ceremony. The five men who were present to receive their pins included: (front row) Harry Rumble and Randy Bracken. Back row: Rodney Ergle, Donald Williams and Robert Hall. Congratulations to these men!

Visit us on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net!

Russellville Electric Board lends a helping hand to Sylacauga

Submitted to the FFP

The Russellville Electric Board dispatched 10 employees to Sylacauga, Alabama to provide Mutual-Aid as a result of damage caused by Hurricane Zeta.

The crews left October 29 at 9:15 am and arrived around noon.

REB dispatched one Digger Derrick, two Line Trucks, two Service Trucks and two Light Plants along with the employees.

"Sylacauga has approximately 7,482 electric customers with 212 miles of electric lines serving the city limits of Sylacauga", according to Charles Canida, General Manager.

"At this time, we don't know the extent of damage to Sylacauga. However, we will remain there as long as they need us", said Canida.

"We have enough remaining employees to cover our work here at home while our guys are away. However, REB has coordinated with the Muscle Shoals Electric Board in the event we need assistance while our employees are away" Canida also said.

Canida also asks that everyone "please keep our employees in your prayers while they are away and pray for their safe return".

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

Send your guest columns, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

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Correction Policy

The *Franklin Free Press* strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

Letters to the editor

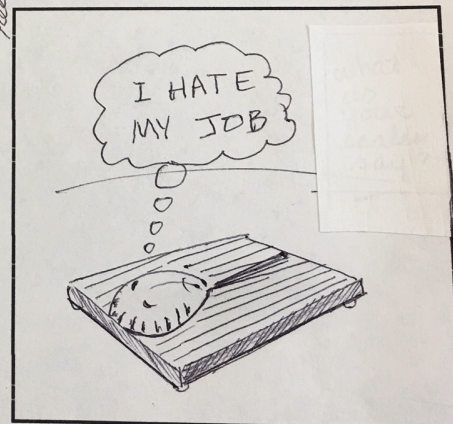
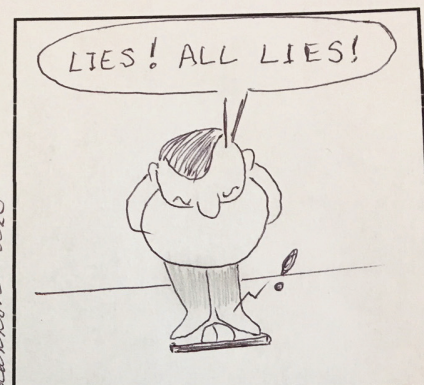
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OUR HOUSE

BY Ree Shannon



'SCOTT,' from page 1

Scott previously taught fifth grade at Russellville Elementary School eight years before her administrative career began. She has 36 years of educational experience.

"It's bittersweet to leave Tharptown but I'm very excited about the opportunity," Scott said. "I love Tharptown but I cannot wait to get back with those sweet elementary students and working with the teachers at West Elementary, who I think are awesome."

"There's a history of long-standing excellence in education at Russellville. That's just a reality and I'm excited to be a part of it," she added.

Scott knows the principal position at West brings some unique challenges, but she said her experience at Tharptown prepares her to meet those challenges.

"I have a love for the EL population. We had a large EL population at Tharptown Elementary. I'm very interested in the research and working with those students and parents, as well as working with all students and parents there," Scott said. "Everyone has their own unique abilities and needs and we will address the needs of everyone."

Scott was a student in the inaugural second-grade class at West Elementary. She continued as a student in Russellville City Schools until her family moved to Lawrence County after her sophomore year. She graduated from Mount Hope High School.

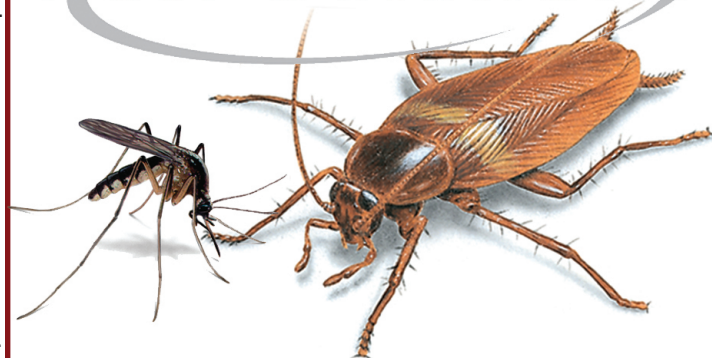
"I was in Mrs. Martha Pace's classroom. We went to school in the first year in the National Guard Armory," Scott said. "I'm

so excited to be returning to West Elementary."

Grimes said he had been hoping to hire Scott for an administrative position for several years and when the West position came up, she was his first choice.

"Mrs. Scott is a former Russellville City Schools student and teacher, and her administrative experience prepares her well for the challenges and demographics at West Elementary," Grimes said. "We are thrilled to have her back in our system."

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Sheriff's Sale

'TURNOUT,' from page 1

By virtue of an execution issued out of the Alabama Department of Revenue of Franklin County, Alabama, and to me directed whereby I am commanded to make the amount of a certain judgment recently obtained against Trevor H. Hardy in favor of Alabama Department of Revenue out of the goods, chattels, land and tenements of the said Trevor H. Hardy. I have levied on the following property, to wit:

One acre of land in the NW corner of the SW ¼ of NW ¼ to Section 29, Township 6, Range 10, said acre lying in a square block; Together with the appurtenances thereunto belonging.

Therefore, according to said command, I shall expose for sale at public auction, all the right, title and interest of the above named Trevor H. Hardy on the 30th day of November 2020, at 10:00 A.M. on the Franklin County Courthouse steps.

This property will be sold on the above date unless this civil case has been settled. For information regarding this sale you may call 256-332-8811.

Dated this October 28, 2020.

Shannon Oliver, Sheriff of Franklin County

Wallace and Joseph Baldwin did not face Democratic opposition. Of the 19,649 registered voters in Franklin County, 12,627 cast ballots Tuesday, for a 64 percent voter turnout.

Straight party voting constituted more than half of all votes. While 1,358 voters in Franklin County voted straight Democratic tickets, an astounding 6,288 voters cast straight party Republican ballots. That was good news for Republicans up and down the ballot.

In the Presidential election, Franklin County was overwhelmingly a Donald Trump county. Trump received 10,364 votes (82.5%) to Joe Biden's 2,085 votes (16.6%). Independent candidate Jo Jorgensen received 105 votes and there were 22 write-in ballots cast.

Tommy Tuberville had a big night statewide and in Franklin County. Tuberville received 9,844 votes to Doug Jones 2,602 in the race for United States Senator.

Rep. Robert Aderholt won another term, thank in large part to his convincing win in Franklin County. Aderholt received 10,241 votes to Democratic challenger Rick Neighbors' 2,125 votes.

Rep. Jamie Kiel's Amendment Five that would extend Alabama's 'Stand Your Ground' defense to church security teams received lopsided support in Franklin County, and statewide. Franklin voters supported the amendment with 9,731 voting yes and 1,207 voting no.

Kiel said those results showed this was an important issue to Franklin County voters.

"89 percent approved the amendment. The people of Franklin County overwhelmingly wanted this protection in their churches. Statewide, only five counties did not have a majority of people who approved of it," Kiel said. "We identified a far reaching issue that voters statewide are interested in beyond just the borders of Franklin County."

For Miller, Tuesday's results were a resounding statement from Franklin County voters that they are satisfied with the direction their county is heading.

"I do feel like the voters are generally satisfied with the job we are doing," Miller said. "I try to vote what the majority of people think is right when I make decisions. I vote my conscience and what I feel is fair and in the best interests of the county."

"I will always do and vote what I genuinely believe is best for the people of Franklin County. I want to thank the voters for the confidence they placed in me and let them know I will never take it for granted," he added.

Miller also expressed his appreciation to Hamilton for running a clean race without the negativity that plagues many campaigns and turns off many voters.

For Hamilton, a retired pipefitter, this was his first venture into politics. Hamilton wanted to get involved to help his community and serve as an example to his grandchildren. Although he lost, he had no regrets about his decision to run.

"I thank the Lord for the experience. I enjoyed it and was driven by wanting to help folks in Franklin County," Hamilton said. "I have no regrets and really enjoyed the campaign. And I want to thank the people who voted for me and those who voted for my opponent. I appreciate everyone getting involved."

Miller won 24 of the 25 precincts across Franklin County. Hamilton won the Chucky Mullins Center precinct by a margin of 224-126.

Hester also carried 24 of 25 boxes, with the Mullins Center, a heavy Democratic box, as the lone exception.

Hester did particularly well in the county's municipal boxes: 791-206 at Russellville High School, 1,021-359 in Red Bay, and 672-103 in Phil Campbell.

"I want to thank all the people who voted for me," Hester said. "I ask for prayer for me as we continue to do what the Lord has planned for our great Franklin County."

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Russellville Masonic Lodge is selling hams for Thanksgiving for \$30 each. Curbside pickup will be Wednesday, November 25th between 8-10 a.m. The Lodge is located on Coffee Avenue in downtown Russellville.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion announced that the annual Veterans Day Parade and the Veterans reception held immediately after the parade at the A.W. Todd Centre have been canceled this year to COVID-19 concerns. The VFW and American Legion announce this with deep regret but with the amount of preparation required for these events, it was not feasible this year. They invite everyone to attend the parade and reception in 2021.

There will be a Benefit Singing on Sunday, November 22, at 6 p.m., at The Church of God, 77 Mars Hill Road in Phil Campbell. The Believers will be the featured performers. This is a benefit event for Martha Hallman. Everyone is welcome.

The 2020 Annual Farm-City Banquet has been canceled. The event was scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2020, but due to COVID-19 has been canceled. The banquet committee is seeking other alternatives to recognize and honor award winners.

Enjoy a night with Jason Crabb on his 'Solo and Acoustic Tour,' and comedian Mickey Bell. The event will be Sunday, Nov. 22 at 3 p.m. Doors open 2 p.m., at the A.W. Todd Centre. Tickets available at www.itickets.com. Artist Circle seats are \$30, with a limited amount available. General seating is \$25. Day of Show \$30. Social distance seating. Mask required to enter. For more information, call 256-810-5746 or 256-366-1146.

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.

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.

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.

TOPs 0155 Russellville is now meeting at the Russellville Hospital Education Room at 4:30 p.m. every Monday. Everyone is welcome to drop in for a free meeting visit. Call 256-446-5962 or 256-412-2855 for more info.

The Newburg Masonic Lodge #388 meets the first Thursday of every month. The Russellville Masonic Lodge #371 meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. The Franklin County Shrine Club meets the second Tuesday of each month. The Order of the Eastern Star Chapter 256 meets every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Russellville Masonic Lodge. Spruce Pine Masonic Lodge #608 meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Phil Campbell Masonic Lodge #880 meets the first and third Thursday of each month. Burlson Lodge #143 meets the second and fourth Monday of each month. Belgreen Lodge #428 meets the first and third Monday of each month. All meetings start at 7 p.m.

Russellville Al-Anon is meeting at Russellville First Baptist Church at 6 p.m., each Thursday. We are wearing masks and social distancing.

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She is a member of the Beta Club, Math Club, and Is a Bulldog Branch Teller.



Kimberly Luna

Daughter of Hermez Luna and Marelia Luna.
Member of the Beta Club, FBLA, Track, and Cross Country.



Makayla Lane

Daughter of Amy Williams and Javier Ambrosio.
Makayla is a member of the FBLA and the Volleyball Team.



Sky Gargis

Daughter of Kristi Gargis.
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256-331-2092

Sheriff's Office arrests Phil Campbell man for drug trafficking

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A Phil Campbell man is out on bond after he was charged Friday with trafficking methamphetamine.

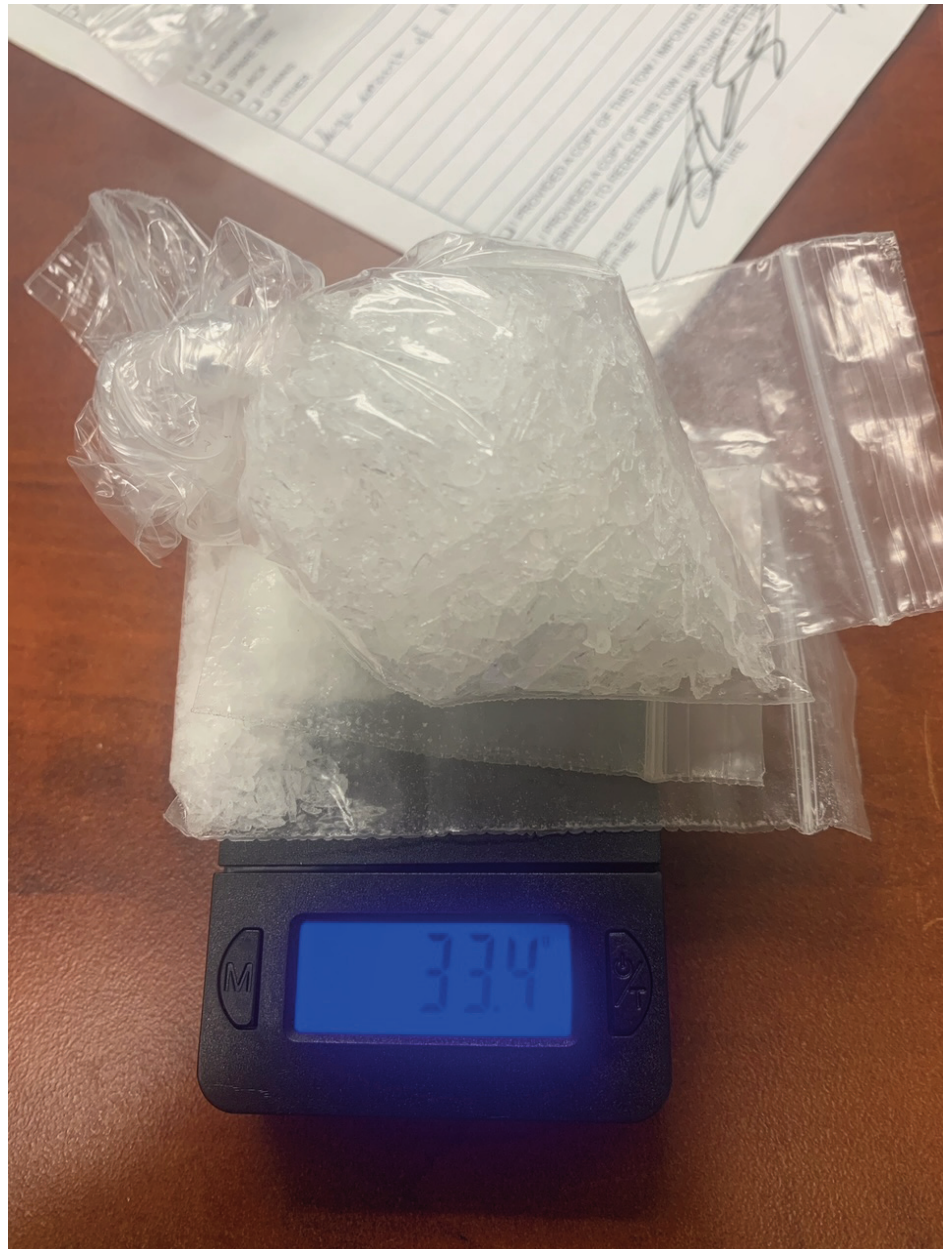
Stevie Motes, whose address is on Hawkins Circle in Phil Campbell, was released from the Franklin County Jail after posting a \$5,000 bond.

Motes is charged with possessing more than 33 grams of methamphetamine. Alabama law provides that anyone in possession of 28 grams of methamphetamine or more shall face drug trafficking charges. If convicted, Motes faces a mandatory minimum of three years in prison and up to a \$50,000 fine.

According to Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver, deputy Taylor Weclowski made a traffic stop on Motes' vehicle near the Cedar Creek bridge on Highway 43 South last Friday.

The Franklin County K9 deputy, Billy Burks and his dog Mambo were called to the scene. Deputies located a white plastic bag with more than 33 grams of 'ice,' the street name for methamphetamine.

The case will be presented to a Franklin County Grand Jury next year and, if indicted, Motes will face his charges in Franklin County Circuit Court.



COURTESY PHOTO

Motes was arrested with 33 grams of methamphetamine in his possession. By Alabama law, anyone possessing 28 grams or more of methamphetamine would face drug trafficking charges.

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

Sheriff's new K-9 makes immediate impact in drug arrest

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The newest deputy for the Franklin County Sheriff's Office hit the streets last month and he's already paying dividends from his training.

Mambo, a Belgian Malinois, is the newest K-9 deputy. Chill, the FCSO's previous K-9, died in July.

Mambo is partnered with deputy Billy Burks. Mambo completed a 60-day training program at the Little Rock K-9 Academy in Arkansas. After that 60 days, Burks and Mambo trained together for two weeks before the team started patrol duties in October.

The team has seized more than \$2,500 in illegal drugs in less than a month. Mambo also took part in tracking a missing juvenile.

Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver said Burks was teamed with Mambo because he volunteered to serve as the K-9 deputy.

"We want deputies interested in having a K-9 partner. He showed a lot of interest. It takes a special person to do that and we want to make sure it's someone really interested who wants to do it and will care for the dog properly," Oliver said.



COURTESY PHOTO

Burks and Mambo have already been extremely efficient for the Franklin County Sheriff's Office by seizing more than \$2,500 in illegal drugs as well as tracking a missing juvenile.

RCS receives high rankings from national website

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Heath Grimes sees Russellville City Schools as a standout system every day he comes to work.

Whether it's academics, teachers, facing the challenges of ethnic diversity in the student population or preparing students for the next phase of their education, what happens on the four campuses of RCS stands out to its superintendent.

And Russellville City Schools' recent ranking by www.niche.com shows others have noticed what's happening in the system too.

Niche.com recently ranked Russellville City Schools number 27 out of Alabama's 136 public school districts and gave the system an A-minus as its overall grade.

Niche.com is a ranking and review site of everything from schools to cities across the United States.

The 2021 Niche.com rankings find Russellville City Schools as the ninth-safest Alabama school district, 18th best place to teach and 21st of 136 school districts with the best teachers in Alabama.

RCS' overall A-minus included the following grades in subcategories: Academics-B; Teachers-A; Clubs and Activities-A; Diversity-A; College Preparation-B-plus; Health and Safety-A.

"This report is an overall ranking for our entire school system," Grimes said. "When you take into account all the factors, teachers, academics, facilities, athletics, etc., we are the 27th best school district in Alabama.

"For us, when we are matched up against those districts without taking into account our demographics, tax base or local school funding, we're really proud to be able to achieve a level in the top quarter of systems in Alabama," he added.

Niche.com's "A" ranking in diversity was particularly important for Russellville City Schools, a system with more than more than 50 percent of its kindergarten students classified as Hispanic, and a large percentage of those students starting school without being English proficient.

"This says something we already knew—our administrators, teachers and students are doing a whole lot and a really good job in spite of some disadvantages and without the resources other systems may have," Grimes said. "We have ranked especially high in standout school rankings, which takes into effect how you're doing with disadvantaged students. That's where we have ranked number one and number three in the past as a standout school."

Russellville City School's expenses per student for its 2,456 students is \$11,068 according to Niche.com, more than \$1,000 less per student than the national average.

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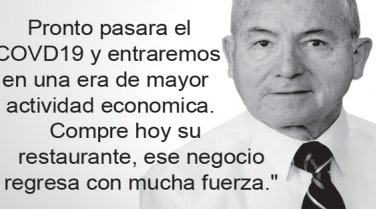
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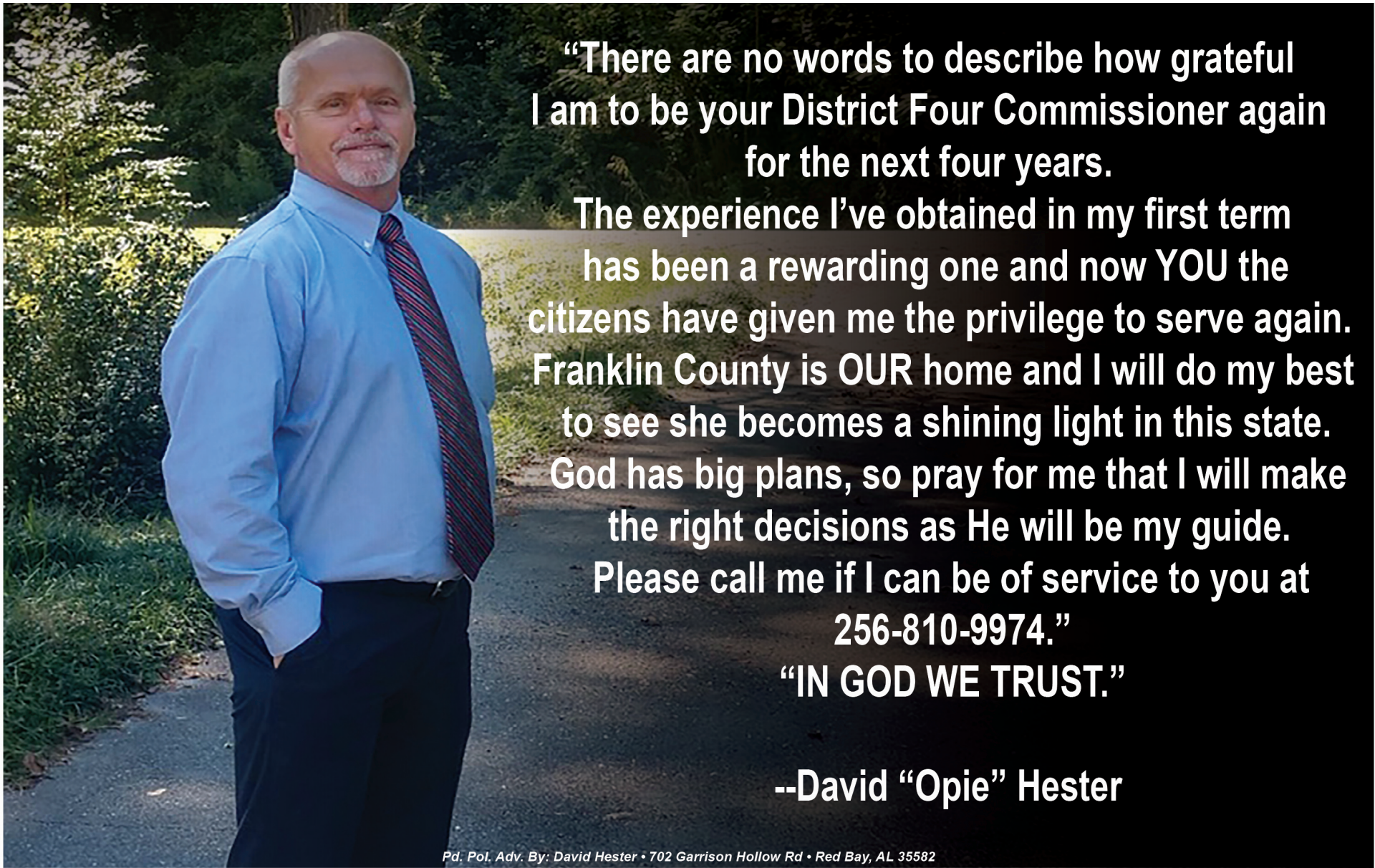
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Tigers cruise to 26-0 victory, advance to second round

SURVIVE AND ADVANCE

A touchdown in the final minute and excellent defense propel Russellville to the second round of the playoffs for the first time since 2016. Now the Golden Tigers are on the hunt and looking to continue their playoff run.

After throttling Winston County in their first round playoff matchup, Red Bay now turns their focus towards Spring Garden with hopes of advancing to the third round of the playoffs in back-to-back seasons.



Warhurst (6) celebrates after scoring from five yards out to extend the Golden Tigers season and advance Russellville to the second round of the playoffs.

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - The last time Red Bay and Winston County squared off against one another, we needed overtime to decide a winner. This time around, the Tigers put the pedal to the metal and didn't look back.

Things could not have gone much better for the Tigers last Friday night in their first round matchup against the Yellow Jackets.

The 2A region eight runner-up shutout Winston County to advance to the second round of the 2A AHSAA playoffs.

Holding the Yellow Jackets to just 227 yards of total offense combined with a shutout, the Tigers defense looks to be in midseason form in the midst of what head coach Michael Jackson hopes will be an extended run through the playoffs.

The key to holding Winston County to such a putrid offensive showing for a team that came into the game averaging 33.6 points per game, was to stop star running back William Owens.

"We played great defense all night. Our defen-

See 'TIGERS,' page 13



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

The Tigers were able to continue their impressive running game against Winstn County thanks to performances like Quinn's (11).

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - To say that Russellville's first round matchup against Fairfield was a nailbiter is a bit of an understatement.

Staring elimination in the face with under a minute left in their season, Russellville had to find something to put them over the top. The Golden Tigers' run game had been stifled for essentially the entire game, and were held to just six points through three and a half quarters while trailing Fairfield 7-6. An uncharacteristic performance from a Russellville squad that averaged 216 yards per game on the ground during the regular season, was held to just 135 yards on the night.

So to turn a corner and keep their season alive, head coach John Ritter turned to the duo of Gabe Amick and Conner Warhurst.

Needing ten yards on fourth down inside of Fairfield territory to extend not only their current drive, but their season as well, Amick would drop

See 'ADVANCE,' page 12

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'ADVANCE,' from page 11

back and find a wide-open Warhurst who would haul in the pass to set the Golden Tigers up on the Fairfield five-yard line. Warhurst would then punch it into the endzone just one play later to send Russellville to the second round of the 5A AHSAA playoffs.

"That whole last drive we had two fourth-down conversions and two second-down plays where we really felt like we were going to convert and we missed. Then we came back to a play we had run earlier when we just missed Matthews on a wheel route and Amick made a great throw in a really tight window and Conner made a heck of a catch to get us down to the five to have a chance to take the lead," Ritter said.

The most impressive aspect, that won't show up on the stat sheet, was the resiliency of the Golden Tigers to continue to chip away at the Fairfield defense after having multiple possessions inside Fairfield territory with under three minutes left to play, without coming away with a single point.

"I told them to just keep hammering. Fairfield was a good team and we knew that coming in. The four seed out of that region five was a very good team and so we expected to be in a war," Ritter said. "We missed some opportunities early and shot ourselves in the foot with some costly penalties but to our guys' credit, they just kept hammering and hammering to win it at the end."

The Golden Tigers started off hot as Caleb Matthews ran through a massive hole in the offensive-line to put Russellville on the board first from 34-yards out. But couldn't find a way to get the running game going. So Russellville had to rely on their defense to keep them in the game while their offense continued to find their footing.

The defense, which had been Russellville's calling card for most of the season, held steady despite being outmatched in terms of size. Holding the Tigers to negative six yards across the entire game allowed for the offense to remain steady and keep chipping away, looking for the right moment to break through.

Not only was the defensive line a force to be reckoned with for the Golden Tigers, but the offensive line also held their own against an athletic and albeit larger Fairfield defensive front.

"I really felt like we did a great job blocking their offensive linemen. The only problem is that their linebackers were so athletic and we just couldn't get up to the linebackers consistently. That's why we'd have a five-yard gain, then a 15-yard gain and a negative two-yard gain," Ritter said. "We talk all the time about being efficient in the passing game and we were eight for 20. Had we been 14 for 20 or connected on one of those deep passes, it's a completely different ballgame. We played hard and I don't think we executed at a real high level but they had a lot to do with that with their athletic ability and size but our guys held them and we were finally able to make something happen."

Being able to execute in the passing game is something that Ritter and his staff have been attempting to work on over the course of this season. And while there has been an uptick in performance in the aerial game for the Golden Tigers over the past few games, relying on a healthy dose of the run game is what has allowed for Russellville to be so efficient this year.

So the fact that the passing game, which was crucial to their victory on Friday night, was so efficient down the stretch, was thrilling to Ritter and his staff who had harped on that aspect the entire season.

"That was huge for us to be able to go 11 plays in the drive and score. We've talked all year long about needing to be able to throw the ball and we were able to complete the passes down the stretch when they knew that's where we were going," Ritter said. "Earlier in the game we were kind of hesitant to throw some deeper drop back stuff because they were blitzing two or three people at a time plus their five guys so they were bringing seven guys any given play. But hats off to Gabe and those other guys for stepping up

See 'ADVANCE,' page 14

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'TIGERS,' from page 11

sive staff did a great job in getting ready for this game. We held Owens to under 100 yards rushing which has happened only a few times in the past couple of years," Jackson said. "He's the best running back in North Alabama and the best I've seen in the past two years in North Alabama. No one has really stopped him all year and he's had multiple games where he eclipsed 250 yards rushing so I was very pleased that we were able to contain him and shut down their offense."

In a classification where one player can be a serious catalyst for a program and carry a team through the playoffs, the fact that the Tigers were able to shut down such a prolific running back such as Owens speaks volumes about where the Red Bay defense stands.

"He's the best running back in North Alabama and the best I've seen in the past two years in North Alabama. No one has really stopped him all year and he's had multiple games where he eclipsed 250 yards rushing so I was very pleased that we were able to contain him and shut down their offense," Jackson said.

Jackson and his staff are hoping that kind of performance extends a string of impressive defensive performance for the Tigers. "It's a great testament to playing team defense. Because we knew that we had to have more than one guy stop him and more than one guy had to do their job and so hopefully that will help us and benefit us as we move forward," Jackson said.

While Jalen Vinson, the dual-threat quarterback for the Tigers, might be known for his offensive prowess and lethal rushing ability, he also left his mark on the defensive side of things on Friday night. After rushing for two touchdowns earlier in the game, Vinson then snatched a Winston County pass out of the air and returned it 52 yards to the house to give him three scores on the night.

Not lost in the conversation was the stellar performance of the offensive line for Red Bay which enabled the Tigers to accumulate 226 yards rushing, just one yard shy of the total offensive output of their opponent.

"I think the offensive line continued to play better last week. We had a very

See 'TIGERS,' page 15



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--Sincerely, Eddie Britton, Chairman

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'ADVANCE,' from page 12

and making those plays when we needed them most.”
As Russellville attempts to turn the page after an emotional victory over Fairfield, the Golden Tigers will now turn their attention towards Leeds High School for their second round matchup this Friday.
The two schools have never met before and the Greenwave finished second in region six behind Alexandria High School.
“Leeds is a really good football team and they’re very well coached and they’re very athletic. They’ve got two defensive ends that will probably be two of the best players we’ve faced this year,” Ritter said. “Offensively their receivers and running backs are dynamic and I think the Fairfield game will help our guys prepare for that speed factor moving forward. We’ll have to execute at a high level and play hard. The ball is going to have to bounce our way like it did last week, but that’s every week in the playoff. We’re excited about being in round two but our focus now is to improve and beat Leeds and be in round three.”

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Sincerely, Jason Miller



'TIGERS,' from page 13

balanced attack with four different guys having around the same amount of yards and we ended up making some big plays in the running game and we took care of the football so we made some strides," Jackson said.

Now Jackson and his squad turn their attention towards Spring Garden who won 2A region six with a record of 9-1 and their only loss coming to 3A Hokes Bluff.

"Spring Garden is a very good football team. They're 21-3 over the last two years and we are 21-2. Over the last three years they're 32-5 and we are 30-5. These are two very similar programs. They've won a lot of football games over the years and their kids have a lot of confidence so it's going to be a great game," Jackson said.

Hunter King led the Tigers in rushing against Winston County with 13 carries for 83 yards while Aiden Quinn accumulated 12 carries for 72 yards and a touchdown.

Vinson finished his night with 11 carries for 71 yards and two offensive touchdowns and one defensive touchdown.



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Caden Watts Defensive Back Senior, Russellville

Coming up with an interception in a playoff game is incredible. Coming up with two interceptions? That's virtually unheard of. But Watts, the senior defensive back out of Russellville, did just that in Friday's 14-7 victory over Fairfield. Watts' two interceptions included one inside the Fairfield endzone and was a key part of the win for the Golden Tigers.



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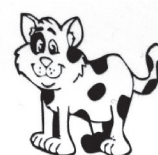
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