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Russellville Industrial Park businesses concerned about possible internet loss

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A cost-saving measure taken by the Franklin County Commission has resulted in an unintended consequence that leaves the future of internet service for six businesses in question.

When commissioners voted this summer to change internet service from ProVision Intelligent Solutions, LLC, to AT&T, the decision was based on saving the county money and simultaneously increasing band width from 20 megabits to 100 megabit speed, according to Franklin County Administrator Leah Mansell.

How this cost-saving measure

affects businesses in and near the Russellville Industrial Park dates back to 2006, when the county received a grant to run fiber-optic cable from the Franklin County Courthouse to the newly-built Franklin County Jail on Walnut Gate Road.

According to sources familiar with the grant, the 2006 commission (none of whom are presently on the Franklin County Commission) faced difficulty in finding a company willing to install the cable and provide service, so the county ended up purchasing and installing the cable on its own.

That presented a challenge in find-
See 'INTERNET,' page 3

Soaring to great heights: Falconry demonstration hosted by BCDA

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Anthony Cross describes the bond between himself and Peaches, his red-tailed hawk, as a "partnership."

In reality though, it's a one-sided relationship, with Peaches calling the shots.

Cross is one of less than 60 Alabama residents to have a falconry hunting permit. Although the sport is called falconry, most of the birds of prey used in Alabama are red-tailed hawks. Other hunters use Cooper's hawks, Harris's hawks, barred owls and a handful team with peregrine falcons.

While Cross and other licensed fal-

See 'FALCONRY,' page 5



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

An adult Harris's Hawk waits patiently for a squirrel during a recent hunt at Elliott's Branch.

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Betty L. Bianco, 83, of Russellville, passed
away on Friday, November 6th. Interment at
Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

Patricia Colleen Linder Dircio, 47, of
Russellville, passed away on Tuesday,
November 10th. A memorial service will be
held at a later date.

Agnes Lou Pounders, 89, formerly of Spruce
Pine, passed away on Sunday, November 8th.
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Bobby Joe Willis, 81, of Russellville, passed
away on Saturday, November 7th. Interment at
Franklin Memory Gardens.

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'INTERNET,' from page 1

ing an internet provider to light up cable it didn't install. Eventually, the county entered an agreement with ProVision, based in Langston, Ala., in 2011, to provide internet services.

But that agreement came with a condition that ProVision could offer internet to businesses in the Russellville Industrial Park, and a couple more located on Highway 243.

Those businesses include Warehouse Furniture, Distinctive Designs, Northwest Industries, B&B Roadway, Alaco Sales and the Northwest Alabama Livestock Auction, according to Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore.

When Sheriff Shannon Oliver changed internet service at the Franklin County Jail in 2018 to AT&T, there was no action taken by ProVision. But when the county ended its agreement with the company, ProVision sent each of the subscriber businesses notice that their internet service would be terminated on January 15, 2021.

"When we made the change (to AT&T) we had no idea of the consequence that it would affect those businesses," Moore said. "We would not have done it if we had known."

The fiber-optic cable running from the jail to the industrial park is owned by Franklin County, as are the circuits that are required for the businesses to access the internet.

A meeting was held Friday morning at the Franklin County Development Authority to address the situation. Those present at the meeting included FCDA Executive Director Sherye Price, Moore and commissioners Chris Wallace, Jason Miller and Joseph Baldwin, and representatives from the affected businesses.

Moore said he is confident that a solution will be worked out that will prevent interruption in internet services for the six businesses.

"I feel good we will be able to resolve this without any loss in internet services for these businesses," Moore said. "That certainly is our goal."

Moore said the issue of who would pay for the installation of any cable would be something to address at a later time.

"That is something we'll have to discuss once we get to that point," Moore said.

Moore expressed his appreciation to ProVision for its willingness to work with the county and the businesses as all parties work to find a long-term internet provider. The hope is that ProVision will agree to continue providing internet until a new long-term provider is found.

"We appreciate ProVision and we are working closely with them to work through these issues," Moore said.

David Mays, owner of Warehouse Furniture, said "99 percent" of the inventory he orders is done online.

"Everything we do is basically done on the internet. I know they're trying to figure out a way to get us some internet and get this resolved," Mays said.

Price said she is working on behalf of the six businesses to contact potential providers. Price said she's "optimistic" a solution will be worked out.

"We're talking with providers to see how much it will cost to bring their fiber to all those companies and see if we can get one lump sum cost. We'll try and get another grant to cover that cost so it won't cost the businesses so much," Price said.

"We've all come to rely on the internet over the years and with COVID-19 there's more than ever being done online. For any company even to be down one day would be a huge loss to some of them. We need to take care of that and that's why we're working with the county commission to help these companies stay online," Price said.

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County voter turnout highest in Pleasant Site, Union precincts

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Of Franklin County's 19,649 registered voters, 12,627 participated in the November 3, 2020, general election, for a whopping 64.26 percent.

But a closer look inside the numbers shows voter participation varied by as much as 24 percent among the 25 Franklin County precincts.

The highest voter turnout was 73.68% at the Pleasant Site precinct, where 168 of the 228 registered voters cast ballots.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Chucky Mullins Center had the county's lowest percentage, with only 46.12% of its 787 registered voters taking part. The Mullins Center is traditionally Franklin County's largest Democratic voting precinct, so the low number of Democratic candidates at the local and state level may have contributed to the low turnout.

The Mullins Center was the lone precinct won by local Democratic candidates Mitchell Hamilton and Judy Bullen.

Only one other precinct saw voter participation above 70%. That came at the Union Community Center, a Republican stronghold, where 449 of the 622 registered voters turned out, for 72.19%.

Union numbers were overwhelmingly Republican. For example, in the Franklin County Commission District Two race, Republican Jason Miller received 408 votes in Union to Democrat Mitchell Hamilton's 24. President Donald Trump outgained Democrat Joe Biden 420-21, as 256 of the 449 Union voters cast straight party Republican ballots.

The second precinct to see less than 50% voter turnout was at College Avenue School in Russellville. Only 544 of the 1,104 registered voters took

See 'TURNOUT,' page 9

Letter to the editor...

Submitted to the FFP

Dear Editor:

This Thanksgiving Day, as we gather with family and friends to count our blessings, let us give thanks for the bounty we enjoy not just on this holiday, but every day. The safe, plentiful food that is available to us and the products used to produce the clothing, housing, medicines, fuel and other products we use on a daily basis did not just appear in a store. They got there thanks to a tremendous partnership of farmers and ranchers, processors, brokers, truckers, shippers, advertisers, wholesalers and retailers.

Rural and urban residents are "Partners in Progress" who produce the products, consume the products, and make them readily available through and efficient production and marketing chain. Farmers and ranchers are just the beginning of that chain. Farm workers, researchers, processors, shippers, truck drivers, inspectors, wholesalers, agribusinesses, marketers, advertisers, retailers and consumers all play important roles in the incredible productivity that has made our nation's food and fiber system the envy of the world.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let us remember the vital farm-city partnerships that have done so much to improve the quality of our lives. Rural and urban communities working together have made the most of our rich agricultural resources, and have made significant contributions to our health and well-being and to the strength of our nation's economy. For this, we give thanks.

Sincerely,

The Franklin County Farm- City Committee
The Franklin County Extension Office

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

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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

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

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My take on this... a tribute to Ronald Sherrill

I've got a lot on my mind today. You know how memories are so special and become even more meaningful when someone we love is taken from us. A shock takes over and you feel numb and don't want to believe what you've just been told. That very thing happened to me and many others on November the third.



Gail Motes

A friend of sixty-five years was taken from this world suddenly. It was the "best" day of his life and one of the saddest for the rest of us.

It's hard to imagine no more pain and eternal happiness through human minds, but those of faith know it's true. "Through God all things are possible", that is all the proof that is needed.

What a happy life for him! He was a christian man with a caring soul. He was such an inspiration to many. He enjoyed playing his guitar and singing Hank Williams songs, but he became a humbled man with every gospel song he played and sang.

He left behind a wife, son, brothers and sisters. I don't even know how to write a number for the friends he had.

I continue to pray for the emptiness and loss you are feeling at this time and the strength to carry

on. Spruce Pine Day of this year will always be a cherished moment in time for those who sat around after picking up and putting away everything.

We talked about going to school there and the different teachers we had and then a few began talking about the things they got into. Wow! The things I learned that day!

BEfore some of you begin jumping to conclusions, there was no breaking into buildings or stealing things. There were fights and a few bluffs they were thankful for. All the fun stuff I would have enjoyed doing but knew I wouldn't have done it because the consequences would have hurt more than the few minutes of fun. It was still fun to hear all the stories... and the stories I heard!

That was the last time I got to see my friend and the last conversation we ever had.

Ronald Sherrill will be remembered for the special person he was by his wife, his son, his brothers and sisters and all his many friends. He loved his family and appreciated his friends.

He will be missed. To be missed is to be loved and to be loved is a blessing!

Upon that last remark, I have nothing else to add, so remember...

Until later...

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, 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 visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net!

Local agencies teaming up for survey to determine how COVID-19 pandemic has affected local businesses

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Development Authority and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce are teaming with the North Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) and the U.S. Economic Development Authority to learn about specific impacts faced by northwest Alabama businesses as a result of COVID-19.

Franklin County Development Authority Executive Director Sherye Price said business of all sizes are encouraged to complete the short survey on or before November 30, 2020.

The survey's purpose is to collect information about what COVID-19 issues are most affecting local and area businesses.

"This is a northwest Alabama survey and all this information will be aggregated to help see what are the top three issues affecting companies in our area," Price said. "That information will be used to create some programs to help ease those problems businesses are facing."

The link to the survey is <https://survey.nacolg.org/fceda>.

The survey will be conducted through NACOLG's five county region in an effort to assist businesses affected by the Coronavirus. With a high percentage of participation, more critical data will help identify potential funding sources and means to help northwest Alabama recover from the pandemic.

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

Sheriff's Sale

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

'FALCONRY,' from page 1

coners may keep their birds as long as they want, the bird never belongs to its handler. In fact, every time the bird is released, whether to hunt or exercise, it immediately becomes a wild bird that may fly away forever.

"Once we release them, they may decide not to come back," Cross said. "But that's okay. They are never not a wild animal. And you always have to have that mindset.

"Really what we do is form a partnership with them and that tends to work out very well. They take to it pretty well, but at the end of the day, they're always wild," Cross added.

Cross, whose mother Linda Holcomb recently retired as city clerk for the town of Red Bay, lives in the La Grange Mountain area. During the week he's a locomotive operator for Nucor in Decatur, but on weekends, Cross is all in on his passion for falconry.

A few weeks ago, Cross contacted Bear Creek Development Authority Director Shannon McKinney to see if there was a BCDA area where he and Peaches could squirrel hunt.

McKinney, who has a passion for hunting, had an interest in seeing Cross and Peaches in action, and Cross said he could ask some other licensed falconers to come, so a special hunt was set up for Saturday, November 7.

The parties met at the Elliott Branch pavilion and with an audience including several interested conservation officers, the hunts took place, with squirrels as the target.

"When Anthony contacted me, we immediately worked to set up this hunt," McKinney said. "We are all about the outdoors and promoting the BCDA. Any way we can expand on that, that's what we want to do."

Falconry is one of the world's oldest forms of hunting, and in Alabama a majority of falconers hunt squirrel with their red-tailed hawks. Falconers, as a rule, contact officials at the park they are interested in hunting and advise them of the specific date and time they want to come.

Cross is an apprentice level falconer. There are three classes of licenses: apprentice (where a sponsor is required), general class and master class, which takes at least five years to attain.

Cross's friend Rusty Carder, a Tuscumbia resident, serves as his sponsor. Carder, a master class falconer, is licensed to have multiple birds while an apprentice is limited to only one wild trapped bird, Cross said.

Cross, a lifetime hunter, said he most enjoys falconry or dog hunting because of his passion for working with the animals.

"It's not about the kill. It's about the relationship I build with these other animals," Cross said. "The last several years I've squirrel hunted with dogs, but I love having someone come with me and I let them shoot so I can work with the dogs, watch them and understand what they are doing."

In falconry, birds will sometimes fly together to hunt (Cooper's hawks) and other times they choose to hunt solo (red-tailed hawks). Either way, they make the choice to come back, and some stay with their handler for their lifetime.

Cross said wild red-tailed hawks have a 75 percent mortality rate in their first year, so juvenile birds in captivity have an advantage when they are released later in life.

"By us taking that juvenile out of the wild, hunting it and giving it all these experiences it may or may not have had staying in the wild on its own, it has a better chance of survival once released because of all the experience we give them while they are with us," Cross said.

Cross, Carder and the other hunters who visited Elliott Branch November 7th belong to the Alabama Hawking Association, which works to promote practices toward the conservation of raptors and the promotion of falconry as a sport.

Cross said when his bird makes a kill, the squirrels are stockpiled and used to feed the birds throughout the year. One squirrel can make several meals for Peaches.

Falconry developed as a sport out of necessity, not efficiency. There was a time when people depended on falconry to feed their families, but after the invention of guns, the sport went into decline.

"It's as natural as it gets when it comes to hunting," Cross said. "We do events like today's hunt because we want the public to see what we do. We want people to know this exists and we'd love for them to get involved."

"Also we want falconers to have an opportunity to get together where we can all learn from each other."

For more information on falconry, the Alabama Hawking Association and regulations for the field sport, log onto www.alabamafalconry.com.

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 **R**ussellville 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. Call (256)-810-1970 for more information.


 **T**here 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.


 **T**he 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.


 **E**njoy 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.


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


 **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.

 **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.

 **T**OPs 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.

 **T**he 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. Bursleson 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.

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

 **T**he Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee, a division of Alabama Farmers Federation is seeking donations for our annual "Cottons for Christmas". Donations requested are for new socks that will be distributed to residents in one of the county's nursing homes. Each year our committee picks a different nursing home in the county and we strive to provide all residents in that particular nursing home a gift of socks & lotion. Unfortunately, this may be the only gift some of our local residents receive and we want to let them know we care about them! Traditionally we have a donation/collection box at the annual Farm-City Banquet, however; due to COVID the banquet will not be held this year and donation boxes will be placed at 4 local businesses in Franklin County: Franklin County Extension Office (please leave your donations with one of the Courthouse security guards) ALFA Insurance Office-Russellville, ALFA Insurance Office-Red Bay & Kiel Equipment, Hwy. 43, Russellville Cottons for Christmas is one of the many community efforts the Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee works on each year to "give back" to the community. Please take your sock donations to one of the above locations by Friday, December 11, 2020. If you have any questions please call Carol Glass @ 256-810-5446 or Shannon Murray @ 256-668-3893.

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

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net. Send your letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

ALEA investigating death of Russellville City Jail inmate

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) is investigating the death of an inmate who was found unresponsive in the Russellville City Jail Sunday morning.

Russellville Police Chief Chris Hargett said Dylan Kyle Lane, 22, was one of two inmates being housed in the city jail. Lane was in a cell by himself, and the other inmate was on the other side of the jail.

When Lane was observed to be unresponsive in his cell, RPD personnel called 911 and notified Hargett.

Lane was pronounced dead at the jail, Hargett said, and ALEA was notified of the situation.

"Any time there is a death of someone in our custody, we contact an outside agency to come in and do the investigation," Hargett said. "And that's why we contacted ALEA. All records and information will be turned over to them and they will handle all phases of the investigation."

Hargett said it appeared Lane died of natural causes, but his body was transported to Huntsville for an autopsy to be performed by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences.

Hargett said Lane had not been in the city jail long, as he was arrested on a warrant last week. Court records indicated Lane had an address in Russellville on McGee Street.

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RFD makes generous donation to Russellville Hospital mammogram program

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

More women in Franklin County can receive a free screening mammogram thanks to a generous donation from the Russellville Fire Department.

The department donated \$1,320 to Russellville Hospital on November 13th to help uninsured women get screening mammograms.

Women who qualify for financial need will receive screening mammograms free of charge thanks to the Russellville Fire Department's donation. The department raised the funds through sales of breast cancer awareness t-shirts.

If you are uninsured, please call 256-332-8688 to see if you qualify for a free screening mammogram.

"This is just another way we serve our community," said RFD Captain Randy Seal. "We have had several department family members affected by breast cancer and it has become a cause dear to our hearts."

Stephen Proctor, Chief Executive Officer of Russellville Hospital, said the fire department has partnered with Russellville Hospital the past decade to create the Firemen's Fund.

"We are very thankful for the continued partnership with the Russellville Fire Department and their generous gift," Proctor said. "With the unprecedented times of 2020 we have seen roughly a 50 percent decrease in screening mammograms."

"We want to ensure the community that Russellville Hospital has appropriate protocols in place to provide a safe and secure environment to have your mammogram performed. Early detection of breast cancer is the greatest opportunity for successful treatment," Proctor added.



COURTESY PHOTO

Russellville Fire Department members presented a donation to Russellville Hospital to help fund mammograms for low-income uninsured women.

Accepting for the hospital were, from left: Alisia Welborn, Director of Nursing, Shannon Hughes, CFO and Stephen Proctor, Chief Executive Officer.

Letters to the Editor

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From Mickey Mouse to Nick Saban: Voters show creativity with write-in choices

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

What do Ralton Baker, Nick Saban, Bart Moss, Eddie Britton, Mickey Mouse, Mike Madden and Jesus have in common?

Each received at least one write-in vote for Franklin County Superintendent of Education in the November 3, 2020, Franklin County general election.

Unlike party primaries, the general election allows voters to cast write-in votes in all races. Superintendent, like many races, was unopposed as Greg Hamilton faced no opposition. But 82 write-in votes were cast in that race, a number consistent with write-in votes in all races.

The usual names were there: Nick Saban always receives a few votes in every race. Former superintendent candidates Bart Moss, Eddie Britton and Johnny Cleveland each received a vote, as did Jesus, Barack Obama and Bubba Gump.

Stratt Byars, the Republican candidate for Franklin County Revenue Commissioner, did not face an opponent on the November 3rd ballot, but several voters came up with creative names support in that race. Veronica Stancil, the incumbent who Byars defeated in July, received 18 write-in votes, surpassing Saban (1), Sen. Doug Jones (1), comic strip character Dilbert (1), Kanye West (1) and Sammy McCluskey (1). Former state senator Roger Bedford also received one vote in the Revenue Commissioner race.

Chris Wallace faced no Democratic opposition in his bid for another term as Franklin County Commissioner District One. While Wallace won easily, there were a few voters who went another direction with their choices.

Jacob Aycock led the way with four votes. Wrestler Ric Flair received one vote, as did basketball legend Michael Jordan. *Franklin Free Press* editor Brady Petree received two votes, as did former commissioner Jackie Bradford. Another voter had a Star Trek theme, casting a vote for Jean-Luc Picard.

District Two Commissioner Jason Miller had Democratic opposition from Mitchell Hamilton, so there were fewer write-in choices in the contested race. Those who received votes included Tanner Hall, Jimmy Landers, Carson Petree and Tarzan, who likely didn't meet the residency requirement to hold office in Franklin County.

District Three Commissioner Joseph Baldwin did not have an opponent, but he didn't receive every vote cast. Write-in choices included Doug Jones, Mickey Mouse, Homer Petree, Ike Rogers, Alec Baldwin, Roger Bedford, David Britton and Joel Bohannon.

In the commission race for District Four, another one with Republican and Democratic candidates, Doug Oliver received 11 votes. Oliver posted signs around the county asking voters to choose him as a write-in candidate for District Four.

Randy Schultz, Misty Holcombe, Harold Watson and Lee A. Berry also received votes.

Several years ago, local legislation was passed that required anyone running for Constable to have completed a course of study at the police academy and be in full compliance with peace officer standards and training.

That didn't stop Franklin County voters from casting some creative write-in votes in the constable races though.

At Russellville High School, Shane Khademi, Louis Monterroso, David Hester, Spiderman, Anna Kay Holland, Kanye and Donnie Franks all received votes.

Phil Campbell voters cast write-in ballots for Daniel Taylor (3), city councilman Jeremy Kastberg, Angela Malone, Rodney Belue, Mickey Mouse, William Riker and Douglas Hallman.

Rockwood voters wrote-in votes for Mason Murray, Gary Blackburn, Walter (no last name), Jake Tompkins, Milton Hutcheson and Pat Cochran.

Finally, Spruce Pine voters cast 26 write-in votes for Constable. They included: Billy Quinn, Tim Smith, Brown, Jerry Canida, Walter Evans, Shane Motes and one vote for "Dad."

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Bear Creek dams have lingering effects on crayfish population

Submitted to the FFP
Zanethia Choice Barnett

Alabama has the most diverse crayfish fauna in the world, with more than 90 native species found in the state. Crayfishes play an important role in stream ecosystems by breaking down plant materials, digging burrows that are sometimes used by other stream animals, and serving as predators of or prey for numerous animals, especially some game fishes such as bass and catfish.

However, crayfish populations are declining worldwide, with 48% of North American crayfish species imperiled. Despite their importance, no previous study has examined the impacts of large dams on crayfishes. Dams and their impoundments change stream habitats and block movements of stream organisms, which subsequently changes the species present within the stream and isolates stream populations.

Little Bear and Cedar Creek dams were built in 1975 and 1979, respectively, for flood control. While these dams provide services to humans living in these watersheds, we must understand how they impact stream animals so that we are able to use this valuable resource without losing the amazing stream diversity within the Bear Creek drainage.

USDA Forest Service and University of Mississippi researchers, led by Dr. Zanethia Barnett, compared crayfish diversity, density, and migration within three Bear Creek Drainage streams: Little Bear (with dam), Cedar (with dam), and Rock (without dam) creeks.

Scientists collected a total of seven crayfish species within the Bear Creek drainage: six species from Little Bear Creek, three species from Cedar Creek, and six species from Rock Creek. Two crayfish species (*Faxonius validus* [powerful crayfish] and *F. erichsonianus* [reticulate crayfish]) made up more than 95% of collections up and downstream of dams in Little Bear and Cedar creeks. While these two species were present within Rock Creek, they did not dominate every site. There was a gradual shift in species present with movement downstream. Species such as *Cambarus striatus* (ambiguous crayfish) and *F. compressus* (slender crayfish) were common in up- and downstream sections of Rock Creek, respectively. These species were rarely encountered in Little Bear and Cedar creeks.

A higher density of crayfishes were collected in Rock Creek than Little Bear and Cedar creeks. Six times as many crayfishes were collected in Rock than Cedar Creek, and three times as many in Rock than Little Bear Creek. Within Little Bear and Cedar Creeks, fewer crayfishes were collected down- than upstream of reservoirs. Half as many crayfishes were collected down- than upstream in Cedar Creek and 35% less crayfish were collected down- than upstream in Little Bear Creek.

Very few crayfishes and often only one crayfish species were collected right below dams. In Little Bear Creek, crayfish density and richness (number of species) increased with distance away from the dam, showing the crayfish assemblage recovered with distance from the dam.

Little Bear and Cedar Creeks had more stable flow and temperature regimes (lower maximum flows and temperatures and lower minimum flows and temperature) when compared to Rock Creek, which can decrease the diversity of crayfishes. Because the timing of extreme high and low flow events is normally seasonal, crayfishes have synchronized their life history events (e.g., timing of mating) with a stream's natural flow and temperature regimes. Thus, decreasing the variability of stream flow and temperature, as well as the timing of maximum and minimum events, can impact key life history events for crayfishes. This often decreases the abundance of crayfish

species that are adapted to natural conditions and sometimes eliminates specialized species. Managing streams to mimic natural flow regimes and releasing water at similar stream temperatures may help maintain diverse stream communities.

There was less vegetation in Cedar and Little Bear Creeks than in Rock Creek. Crayfish often use vegetation as refuge to protect them from predators. In addition, there were also more crayfish predators (e.g., basses) down- than upstream of dams, as well as more crayfish predators down- stream of dams than in Rock Creek, which was correlated to lower crayfish abundance and diversity.

Dams reduced crayfish movement throughout stream system, reducing gene flow (movement and mating of crayfishes) between up- and downstream populations. For one species (reticulate crayfish), crayfish down- stream of the dam were not able to migrate to upstream sections. This isolates crayfish populations upstream of the dam and increases their risk of local extinction.

Conversely, this species moved freely throughout undammed Rock Creek, with high gene flow between up- and downstream sections. Conservation strategies focused on connecting crayfish populations up- and downstream of dams – such as moving crayfish from downstream of dam to upstream or building fish ladders – may help prevent the reduction and loss of crayfish populations. There is still much to learn about the effects of dams on crayfishes, but it is clear that changes to stream ecosystems by dams have major consequences on crayfishes.

We would like to thank the many landowners in Franklin and Colbert counties for allowing us to access streams through their property. This study could not have been conducted without them!



COURTESY PHOTO

Crayfish populations are declining across the world . Crayfish are very important to ecosystems and dams are playing a role in the declining population .

'TURNOUT,' from page 4

part in the Nov. 3rd election.

228 of the 544 voters voted straight Republican tickets to 111 straight Democratic ballots.

The other Franklin County precincts in the top five highest voter percentages included Halltown Community Center (69.75%), Churntown (69.62%) and Russellville High School (69.08%).

The lowest voter percentage, after the Mullins Center and College Avenue

School, were the Courthouse Annex (51.18%), Russellville Electric Warehouse (52.26%) and Tharptown Baptist Church (54.70%).

The largest number of votes in Franklin County were cast at the Red Bay Senior Center, where 1,417 ballots were counted out of 2,364 eligible voters.

Russellville High School's 1,032 votes were a distant second, followed by 803 in Phil Campbell, 744 absentee votes and 644 at Churntown.

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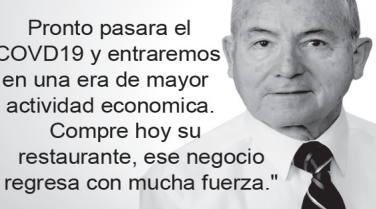
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Dempsey signs letter of intent with NEMCC

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

BELGREEN - If you have followed Emma Dempsey's athletic career at Belgreen, you've had no shortage of opportunities to watch her talent on display. If she wasn't on the volleyball court, she was on the softball field and if you can't find her there, she is probably in the gym prepping for basketball.

Regardless of the season, Dempsey is seemingly always looking to improve in one area or another. That dedication is only part of the reason that she was able to fulfill a lifelong dream of signing on to continue her athletic and academic career by signing to Northeast Mississippi Community College.

While there were no questions surrounding her talent, there was one question that did linger: which sport would she choose to play moving forward?

For the Bulldog senior, the choice was clear. "I just really like softball and I love playing it. I love basketball and volleyball as well and I love playing those sports, but I just love softball the most and I wanted to continue playing at the next level," Dempsey said.

Dempsey sports a .504 career batting average entering her senior season to go along with 208 hits, 30 doubles, nine triples and a home run. While her offensive state might be enough to garner a scholarship, it's her pitching that stands out more than anything else.

Across her four years as a member of the varsity-

See 'DEMPSEY,' page 14

On to the next round

After defeating Leeds 35-14 and advancing to the quarterfinals for the first time since 2015, the Golden Tigers now turn their attention to Ramsay High School in hopes of going places they haven't been in over a decade.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Caleb Mathews (pictured with ball) scampers into the end zone to cap off the scoring on the night for the Golden Tigers. Mathews finished with 51 yards on 13 carries on the night.

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - It took 45 and a half minutes for Russellville to score 14 points in their first round matchup against Fairfield. It took the Golden Tigers just 11 minutes to match that scoring total in their second round game against Leeds.

The Golden Tigers would finish their night with a 35-14 victory over Leeds to send Russellville to the third round of the 5A state playoffs for the first time since 2015.

While this season has been full of resounding victories and all-around performances for the Golden Tigers, head coach John Ritter believes that Friday night's victory over Leeds was one of the more impressive performances from his squad.

"I thought we played well in all three phases on Friday. You take out that punt return for a touch-down and we might have played the best we've played all year and that's what you want during the playoffs," Ritter said. "You want to be playing good football and to be very effective in everything you try to do and you want to be playing with some confidence. And I think we checked all three

See 'ROUND,' page 13



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Bulldogs off to hot start in 2020 basektball season with win over Sulligent

*Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press*

BELGREEN - It didn't take long for Belgreen to notch their first win of the 2020 season as the Bulldogs came away with a 58-42 victory over Sulligent in their first contest of the year.

The Bulldogs jumped out to an early 16-7 lead thanks in part to a nine-point first quarter from senior guard Will Bonner.

As with any first game of the season, there are going to be a few kinks that need ironing out and while the Bulldogs did enjoy a healthy lead after the first quarter, Sulligent then cut the Belgreen lead to just two points as the Bulldogs entered halftime up just 25-23.

Coming out of the half, the Bulldogs pulled away from Sulligent, outscoring the Blue Devils 33-19 in the second half.

"We jumped out on them early and got into some foul trouble and they started hitting some shots and got it close right before the half," Belgreen head coach Marty Cooper said. "Then in the second half we started playing better. Sulligent has a really good team and we did a good job of pulling away."

With the 2020 season being vastly different due to COVID-19, coaches and teams have to be prepared to stop on a dime and alter their game plans more than ever.

Belgreen, who was supposed to begin their season against New Site High School in Mississippi, were forced to alter their game plan due to New Site cancelling because of the virus and focus on the next team up on their schedule.

"You've got to be prepared to play but you've also got to be prepared in the event that a game gets cancelled because of the virus. It's hard to find another game that quick and what are you going to do with your guys while you're waiting to find another game to play?," Cooper said. "Our guys, we practiced for New Site (Mississippi) for an entire week and we did everything necessary to be ready to play and then we found out the day before that we couldn't play so it's mentally tough on the kids to put all that work in and then not play and have to turn your attention to another game."

Defensively for the Bulldogs, the start wasn't how Cooper envisioned the season getting underway. But the improvements made in the second half provided hope that the Bulldogs can right the ship on that end sooner rather than later.

"It was Sulligent's first game and they made a lot of unforced errors and there were some games last year where we held teams in the 40's and I'm not sure if we held Sulligent to 40 or if they held themselves in the 40's," Cooper said. "I thought we responded defensively in the second half energy-wise and being more physical. We gave effort but it's the first game and we've got a long way to go to get to where we want to be."

Bonner finished the night as the leading scorer for the Bulldogs with 30 points including going seven for 11 from the charity stripe. Scout Bragwell finished his night with 14 points including hitting three three-pointers for the Bulldogs. Collin Bonner came away with seven points while Isac Willingham scored four points for the Bulldogs and Alex Betts chipped in with two points of his own.

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'ROUND,' from page 11

boxes in that regard.”
The biggest difference between rounds one and two for Russellville? The run game.

Against Fairfield, the Golden Tigers were held to a season-low 135 rushing yards, their lowest total since the season-opener against Decatur which saw them rush for 148 yards.

This time around, Russellville would waste no time getting things going on the ground as Conner Warhurst would find the end zone from nine yards out halfway through the first quarter to give the Golden Tigers their first lead of the game and they would never look back.

Part of the reason Russellville is staring at their deepest playoff run in five years, has been the stellar play of the defense in the regular season, which has carried over into the playoffs.

Through eight games played this season, the Golden Tiger defense allowed a paltry ten and a half points per game and just 171.3 yards of total offense per game as well. During their playoff run, Russellville has continued that stretch of dominance, albeit against a much higher level of competition than they faced during the regular season. Matching their season total of just ten and a half points per game allowed, the overall defense has been even better through the first two rounds of the playoffs by allowing just 139.5 yards of total offense.

“I think our coaching staff does an outstanding job of preparing our players and I think our players have done a great job with their own preparation as well,” Ritter said. “Mentally there’s a lot that goes into our game plan and our kids watch a ton of film and they know what’s coming based off of what formation that Leeds was in. They know the tendencies that Leeds had and when you know their tendencies and you know the game plan as well as the defensive coaches do, that allows you to play fast and I think we played really fast and really well defensively.”

Russellville will travel to Legion Field this Friday night to take on the number one ranked school in class 5A, Ramsay High School. The Rams, who have cruised to a 12-0 record while winning their respective region (5), are no stranger to making deep runs in the playoffs having reached the third

See 'ROUND,' page 15

JOB OPPORTUNITY

GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT
CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE
STREET DEPARTMENT/FORMAN/DRIVER/OPERATOR, SOLID WASTE

FORMAN/DRIVER/OPERATOR

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Foreman Duties: Provides structure and organization for the Solid Waste division of the Street Department. Performs oversight of collection routes and accomplishing established objectives of the division.

Solid Waste Collection Truck Driver: Drives and operates heavy automated trash and roll-off trucks and equipment to collect and dispose of solid waste throughout the City.

Equipment Operation: Drives and operates equipment to accomplish a full range of assignments and tasks, including the most complex projects.

Department Operations. Supports the work of the department to contribute to the appearance and safety of the City streets and properties. Serves as an experienced, lead equipment operator.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Possess a High School Diploma or GED. Four years of work experience collecting and disposing of solid waste. Work within a city environment is preferred. Four years of work experience as a Heavy

Equipment Operator. Possess a current and valid CDL-Class B license is required; maintain insurability for the duration of employment. Possess and maintain a safe driving record. Previous work experience providing leadership, oversight of work of other employees, and managing collection routes is preferred. Work experience in road repair and maintenance is preferred. Experience interacting with general public is preferred. Ability to respond to emergencies 24/7. Ability to pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol test and random drug screening.

THE CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or any other non-merit factor.

Applications may be picked up at Russellville City Hall in the Office of the Mayor, 304 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, Alabama. Applications must be post-marked no later than November 30, 2020 by U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board
P. O. Box 308
Russellville, AL 35653

The average pay for this position is \$38,834.43 – 59,868.27

The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.

LET'S DECORATE THE FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE CHRISTMAS TREE!

Probate Judge Barry Moore is asking teachers and students across Franklin County to help decorate the 2020 Franklin County Courthouse Christmas Tree.

Ornament Theme: Essential Workers

Ornaments should be:

- **Sturdy, non-breakable
- **Approximately 4 to 6 inches in size
- **Use a color that will contrast well with the tree

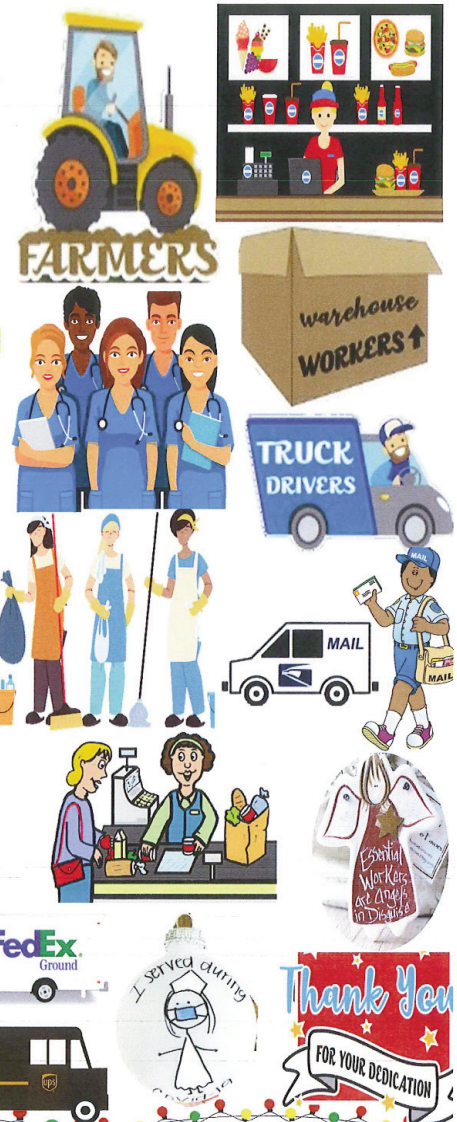
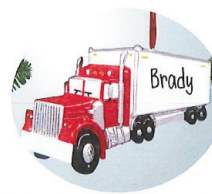
Ornaments are due: Friday, November 20, 2020

Deliver to the first floor of the Franklin County Courthouse.

Security guards will take your ornaments

The 2020 Courthouse Christmas Tree will be ready for public viewing on Thursday, December 3, 2020-Monday, January 4, 2021 from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Contact: Franklin County Extension Office (located in the basement of the Franklin County Courthouse) 256-332-8880



'DEMPSEY,' from page 11

ty squad with the Bulldogs, Dempsey holds a record of 53-16, 14 no-hitter, 27 shutouts, 431 strikeouts against just 89 walks to the tune of a 3.09 ERA. If that isn't impressive enough, Dempsey will also go into the AHSAA record books with the record for consecutive scoreless innings pitched with 14 straight innings without allowing a hit. That stretch of games lasted from April 27th, 2019, to May 9th, 2019.

For head softball coach Susie Tverberg, coaching a player of Dempsey's caliber has without a doubt been a dream. And while it might be easy to pinpoint a few other attributes of her game to spotlight, it's the aforementioned dedication that stands out to Tverberg.

"It's a blessing to coach her because Emma is an all-around great kid. She shows up, she never tries to get out of doing the little things that make her better and she's committed to the process of getting better," Tverberg said. "She's just very dedicated to whatever it is she's doing whether that be volleyball, softball or basketball. Softball is probably her passion because she is so successful in every aspect."

Of course, with being so successful and well-rounded as Dempsey is, narrowing down where the right place was to continue her career might have proved challenging at times.

However, the move to sign with NEMCC was a no-brainer for Dempsey. "I really loved all the coaches I spoke with at Northeast and that played a huge factor. They also have a new field that is really nice so I'm looking forward to getting to play there," Dempsey said. "I just love the environment and everything else that Northeast provides and I'm really looking forward to getting started with them."

Before she trades in the blue and grey for black and gold, Dempsey says

See 'DEMPSEY,' page 15



PHOTO BY BRADY PETREE

Surrounded by her family, Dempsey (seated in middle) put pen to paper to continue playing softball at Northeast Mississippi Community College.

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8-5



'ROUND,' from page 13

round four out of the last five seasons.

"They're really good, they're big, strong, and athletic and they've got a couple of division one players. But every team left is really good. There are only four teams left in the north and every one of those teams are really good and that includes us," Ritter said. "It's going to take a really great effort by our guys and it's going to take us playing mistake-free football. Just like in every game in the playoffs, the ball is going to have to bounce our way a time or two."

'DEMPSEY,' from page 14

she has some unfinished business in her upcoming senior season.

"I think I have the same expectations as we had last year. We lost a lot of starters last year but we still have the same expectations which is to go out and try to win a championship," Dempsey said.

Tverberg, who also coaches the Bulldog volleyball team, believes that based off of her volleyball season in which she passed the 1,000 kill mark for her career (setting another AHSAA record along the way), Dempsey could be in for a remarkable final high school softball campaign.

"I expect her to do as well in softball as she did in volleyball. She's always played with her older sisters and even though she had been one of the better players, she had kind of been overshadowed a little bit. But this year in volleyball she really got to step up and shine on her own," Tverberg said. "I think she has the ability to dominate and if she can continue to grow mentally as a pitcher and understand why we do what we do, I think she can be dominant and I honestly think that the sky's the limit for her."

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.

Congrats to Week 10 winner RAYMOND MCNATT, who correctly picked six out of the seven games that were played and also won the tiebreaker!



Sponsored by Bedford, Rogers, Bowling & McReynolds, P.C..

BEAT BAILEY IS BACK! Submit your picks to us each week in one of two ways: Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. **Picks sent in by mail for Week 10 must be postmarked by Friday, November 20th, and picks submitted by email for Week 10 must be received by Saturday, November 21st at 10 a.m.** Each week, the contestant who correctly picks the most games will win a free T-shirt and the chance to pick in the grand-prize final-week contest. If multiple contestants correctly pick the same number of games in a given week, the tiebreaker score will be used to determine a winner. Contestants are only eligible to win the weekly contest once. No multiple winners allowed. ONE entry per telephone number. Thanks for playing, and good luck!

Bedford, Rogers,
Bowling & McReynolds, P.C.

303 N. Jackson, Russellville
256.332.2880

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers



Conner Warhurst Sophomore, RB Russellville

Warhurst did everything within his power to ensure the Golden Tigers reached the quarterfinals for the first time since 2015 in Russellville's 35-14 victory over Leeds. Not only did Warhurst rush 22 times for 106 yards and two touchdowns, but the sophomore running back also blocked a punt which was returned for a touchdown by teammate Ashaad Williams.



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Franklin Free Press Football Picks Contest

Week 11: November 21st	Bailey's Pick	Your Pick
Indiana vs. Ohio State	Ohio State	_____
Wisconsin vs. Northwestern	Wisconsin	_____
Alabama vs. Kentucky	Alabama	_____
Tennessee vs. Auburn	Auburn	_____
Mississippi State vs. Georgia	Georgia	_____
Oklahoma State vs. Oklahoma	Oklahoma State	_____
USC vs. Utah	USC	_____
Appalachian State vs. Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina	_____
LSU vs. Arkansas	LSU	_____
Cincinnati vs. UCF	Cincinnati	_____
Tiebreaker Score:	Michigan St. _____	Maryland _____
Your Name:	_____	
Phone number:	_____	

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JOEY RUSHING
 Franklin County District Attorney
 256.332.8870 • 256.710.4713
 (daytime) (after hours)

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