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Community responds to pay for student's funeral expenses

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

After word spread Friday evening of the tragic death of a 9-year-old Russellville Elementary School student, the community stepped up Saturday and quickly raised \$10,000 to pay for her funeral expenses and the cost of transporting her body back to Guatemala for burial.

Yaritza Ramos Nolasco, a fourth grader at RES, died Friday evening from injuries sustained after she was hit by a car while attempting to cross Waterloo Road.

Yaritza and her family moved to Russellville approximately 18 months ago, as many families do, searching for better life opportunities in the United States.

See 'EXPENSES,' page 4



COURTESY PHOTO

The *Go Fund Me* that was set up for funeral expenses for a young Russellville student initially had a goal of \$10,000. That goal was eclipsed in just seven hours and raised a total of \$10,775.

Commission action preserves internet service for six businesses

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission took steps Monday to prevent the interruption of internet services for six local businesses.

At a special meeting, commissioners approved a contract with ProVision Intelligent Solutions, LLC, to continue internet services to six businesses in and around the Russellville Industrial Park. The county will pay ProVision \$1,355 per

month as a base fee to continue supplying internet to Warehouse Furniture, Distinctive Designs, Northwest Industries, B&B Roadway, Alaco Sales and the Northwest Alabama Livestock Auction.

The contract with ProVision, which was set to expire on January 15, 2021, was extended through June 15, 2021, with a 60-day grace period to terminate if another internet provider takes over service.

When commissioners voted this

See 'INTERNET,' page 7

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Vickie Lee King, 66, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Tuesday, December 15th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Charles Thomas McGuire, 64, of Russellville, passed away on Wednesday, December 16th. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Robert Carl Mitchell, 63, of Russellville, passed away on Sunday, December 13th. Interment at Franklin Memory Gardens.

Marilyn Kay Willis Nichols, 68, of Russellville, passed away on Monday, December 14th. Interment at Cherry Hill Cemetery.

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2020 rainfall sets record for Tennessee Valley

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

In a year of firsts, 2020 presented Tennessee Valley residents with another on December 13th.

That day's rainfall, .45 inches locally in Russellville, officially made 2020 the wettest year ever recorded in the Tennessee Valley, according to Tennessee Valley Authority officials.

As of December 13th, the year's rainfall totaled 67.43 inches on average across the Tennessee Valley. That surpassed the 2018 record of 67.01 inches.

2019 saw 66.47 inches on average across the Tennessee Valley, so TVA officials have managed three consecutive years of record rainfall.

"The last three years have been a remarkable stretch of above average rainfall," said James Everett, TVA River Forecast Center Senior Manager. "Before 2018, the previous record had stood for 45 years. Since 2018, we've either set a record or come close to it every year. And the 2020 record came with two weeks left in the calendar year, so it will likely increase."

A further breakdown of rainfall shows that between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, the Tennessee Valley recorded 75.74 inches of rainfall. This was by far the wettest fiscal year total in the 131-year period of record, Everett said.

While the year as a whole has seen heavy rainfall, November was actually one of the low months for rainfall, with only 2.34 inches. That's about 62 percent of normal monthly rainfall in the area, and November ended a streak of 13 straight months with above average rainfall, also a TVA record.

Tennessee Valley Authority officials have worked to avert more than \$1 billion in flood damages throughout the valley. On average, TVA's reservoir management, including the Bear Creek Lakes system in Franklin County, saves the region about \$300 million. Since it completed its first dam, Norris Dam, in Tennessee, TVA has averted more than \$9 billion in flood damages.

The TVA system includes 49 dams used to manage lake levels and river flows. Management of the TVA system provides a variety of benefits, including flood control, navigation, hydroelectric generation, recreation, water quality and water supply.

"Managing the Tennessee River system during this extended period of record rainfall continues to be a team effort of the River Management, Hydro Generation and Dam Safety staff at TVA," Everett said. "The sites and crews in the field have put in countless long days maintaining and operating equipment like sluice gates, spill gates, cranes and, of course, hydroelectric generators, all of which are necessary to control flow through TVA reservoirs."

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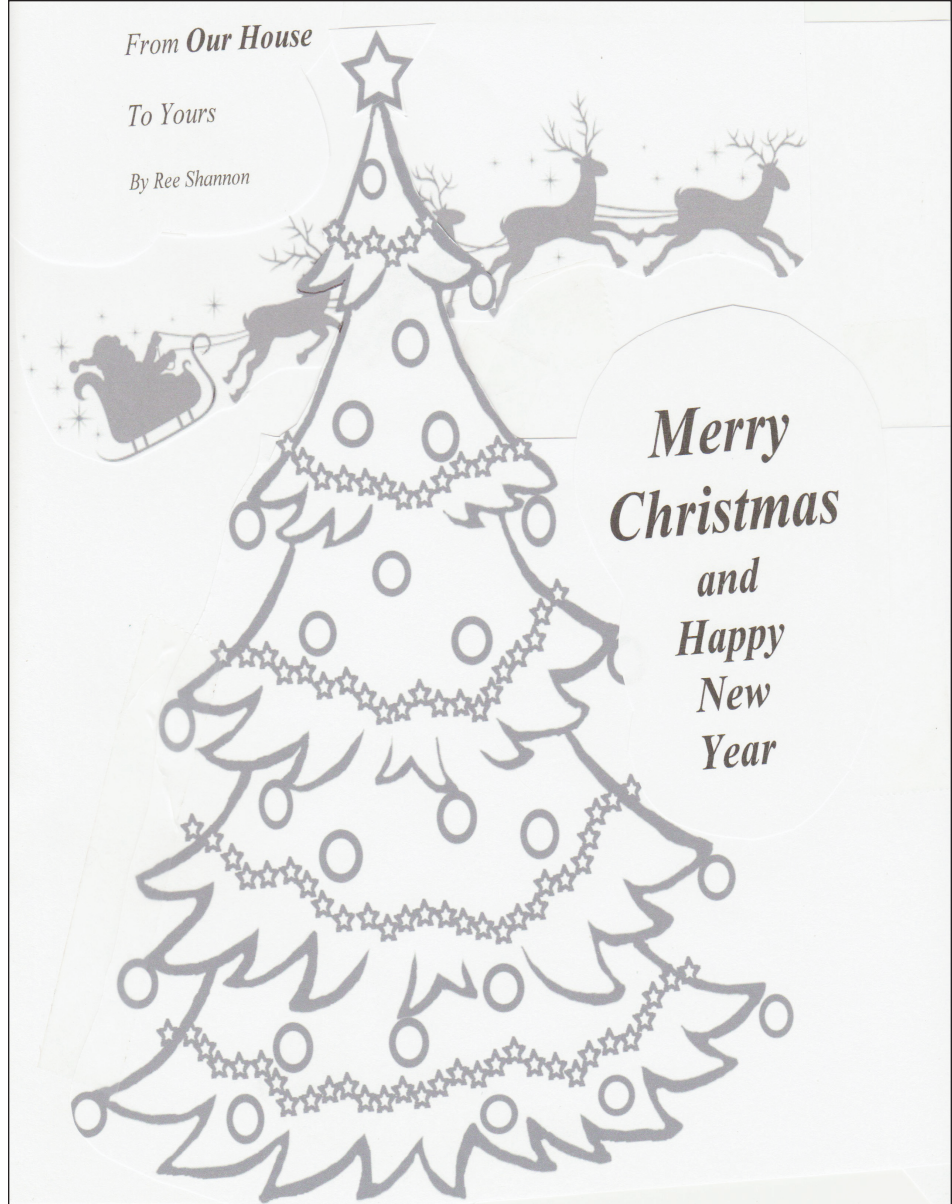


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The *Franklin Free Press* is published weekly by
Pilati Investments, Inc.
Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.

Publisher

John Pilati

Executive Editor

Brady Petree

E-mail: franklinfreepress@yahoo.com

Sales Representatives

John Pilati

Content Contributors

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

Graphic Design

Jason Hill

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'EXPENSES,' from page 1

According to a social media post from Russellville City Schools, RES Principal Kristie Ezzell said Yaritza was a good student who loved school and her teachers.

"Even though Yaritza had only been at RES for a year and a half, she was really thriving this year. She had the sweetest smile," Ezzell said. "We are so saddened by this horrible tragedy and the loss of our sweet girl. We will be there to support our students and faculty through this, and we also hope, with the help of our community, to be able to help the family as well."

The community did just that, and in quick fashion. A *Go Fund Me* account was set up Saturday with the goal of raising \$10,000 to pay for Yaritza's funeral expenses and return of her body to her native Guatemala.

It took less than seven hours for donations to exceed the \$10,000 goal, as the campaign ended with \$10,775 raised.

Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes, who visited with Yaritza's family Saturday, said he was overwhelmed with the support shown to her family.

"This is an amazing response by our community and just society as a whole. It makes me extremely proud of people. There is still a lot of good in this world," Grimes said.

News of the accident spread quickly Friday evening.

According to police reports, Yaritza was attempting to cross Waterloo Road near Yogi's Citgo when she was struck by a vehicle.

Preliminary investigation indicates the motorist was not in violation of any traffic laws and the incident was just a tragic accident.

Yaritza was pronounced dead a short time after being transported to Russellville Hospital, police said.

Yaritza's teacher, Cortney Green, said she will always remember her student as a joy to teach and an inspiration to other students.

"Yaritza was like a little sponge. She had been flourishing. She was learning multiplication and loved phonemic awareness," Green said. "She learned to write her name in cursive, and on the last day of school she hugged me and said 'I love you Mrs. Green.' This little class has been my greatest blessing this year. I have learned so much from them, especially Yaty."

Although the fund raising goal has been met, Grimes said the family still needs prayers for the difficult days ahead.

"My heart is absolutely broken for this family. I hope our community and others will rally around them during this devastating time," Grimes said.

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and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to
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Russellville BOE members pay tribute to Pounders

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As he sat side-by-side with fellow Russellville City Schools Board of Education member Judy Pounders, Jerry Groce was regularly amazed with her knowledge about, well, everyone.

"In our work sessions, no matter who was brought up, Judy remembered them and knew their name and family. She just knew everyone," Groce said. "She was a joy to work with and we greatly miss her."

"Not only did Russellville lose a great citizen, but our school system lost a great person. You talk about someone bleeding black and gold and it was her," he added.

Groce shared his memories of Pounders at the board's December 16th meeting, the first since Pounders died December 10th.

A retired teacher, guidance counselor and board of education member, Pounders, 71, passed away after a brief battle with cancer.

RCS Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes said he was contacted by one of Pounders' former students who made a generous donation to create an annual memorial scholarship in Pounders' name.

The short meeting saw the board approve several personnel moves, including:

—Volunteer: Jason Barnett, golf.

—Resignation in Position: Ronnie Ritter, part-time teacher at Russellville High School, effective Dec. 19, 2020.

—Employment in Position: Keith Wilson, bus driver, effective December 1, 2020, and Karly Cook, West Elementary teacher, effective January 1, 2021.

—Athletic Consultants: Matt Spurgeon for RHS junior varsity baseball. Maximum payment shall not exceed \$600 and shall be paid by the Baseball Booster Club, Tyrone Wilson and DeAndre Coleman to be pro-consult for the RHS football team, with maximum payment not to exceed \$1,380, to be paid by the Football Booster Club.

—Transfers: Sandra Kennedy, from custodian at Early Childhood Center to custodian for RCS system-wide, effective January 1, 2021, Michelle Murray, from RHS counselor to RMS counselor, effective January 1, 2021 and Jeremie L. Kinney, from RMS counselor to RHS counselor, effective January 1, 2021.

In other agenda items, the board:

—approved a facility use request for RHS baseball to use the baseball facilities and gym on January 18, 2021, for a youth baseball camp.

—approved RHS and RMS students to travel to Enterprise for the All-State Show Choir Festival, and approved spring athletic schedules and away game travel for athletes and cheerleaders.

—approved a contract with Sammy Washington, school resource officer, from October 1, 2020 through October 1, 2021.

—approved a professional development contract for English Language Learners services with ELL Made Simple.

—approved a service contract with LED Solutions.

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

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In accordance with the Alabama Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act, Alabama Code Sections 32-13-1 through 32-13-8, the following motor vehicle will be sold for cash at 10:30 a.m., on February 3rd, 2021, at M&N Wrecker & Service Center, 11833 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, Al, 35653. Seller reserves the right to reject any bid and the right to bid.

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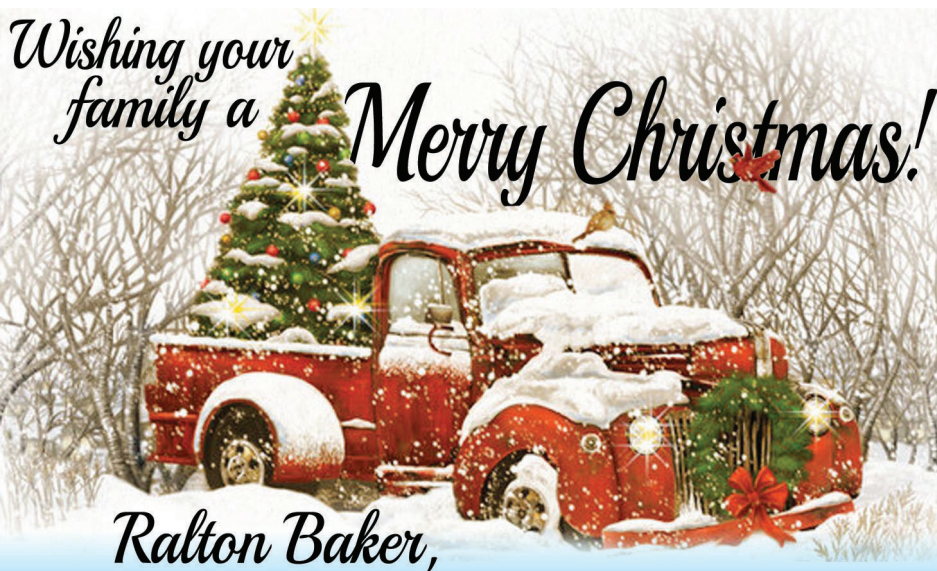
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 There will be a New Year's Eve service starting at 6 p.m., and continuing into the new year, at the Church of God, Phil Campbell, 77 Mars Hill Road. Hwy. Turn of Hwy. 13 just south of Phil Campbell. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend. For more information, call 256-324-5288.


 Fifth Thursday Food Giveaway - 2 p.m. December 31, 2020 - Russellville First United Methodist Church - downtown corner of Madison and Washington Ave. Groceries will given out while supplies last. All social distancing measures will be followed. Bring your ID and follow instructions given by staff.

 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.

 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. Burleson 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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'INTERNET,' from page 1

summer to change internet service from ProVision to AT&T, the decision was based on the county saving money and simultaneously increasing bandwidth from 20 megabits to 100 megabit speed.

When the county received a grant in 2006 to run fiber-optic cable from the Franklin County Courthouse to the newly-built Franklin County Jail, commissioners could not find 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 finding 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 the condition that ProVision could offer internet to businesses in the Russellville Industrial Park, and a couple more located on Highway 243.

Sheriff Shannon Oliver changed internet at the jail to AT&T in 2018. When the county notified ProVision it was switching to AT&T, ProVision sent each subscriber business notice their internet service would be terminated on January 15, 2021. That left business owners concerned their business operations would be interrupted with no internet service.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said county officials had no idea of that consequence when the decision was made to switch to AT&T.

Representatives from the impacted businesses met last month with Moore, Franklin County Development Authority Executive Director Sherye Price and commissioners Chris Wallace, Jason Miller and Joseph Baldwin, to voice their concerns about losing internet services.

Monday's agreement to extend ProVision's services, at an increased monthly rate for the county, means there will be no interruption in internet for the six businesses.

"We appreciate ProVision working with us to help these businesses continue to receive internet services," Moore said.

Price has met with Spectrum officials about providing internet to the Russellville Industrial Park and surrounding area.

Price said Spectrum (Charter) officials said the initial cost to install the fiber lines and set up internet services to the businesses would be approximately \$98,000. She added that Spectrum would contact other businesses in the area and if more sign up for internet service, that initial cost could be adjusted to \$63,000. Moore said the county is working with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to see if grant funding may be available for the \$63,000 cost.

Other options for providing service are AT&T and freedomFiber, the internet provider affiliate of the Tombigbee Electric Cooperative.

The commission also addressed another issue related to internet services around the Russellville Industrial Park. On November 21st, a Franklin Electric Cooperative power pole at 243/Walnut Gate Road was damaged, along with the power line and the county's fiber-optic line connected to the pole. The source of the damage is unknown, but officials believe a tall vehicle drove into the power line causing the damage.

Moore said the county placed an order with Danmark Communications to repair the fiber. But problems with shipping and supply have delayed the company's ability to make the repairs. The cable was expected to be replaced by the end of the week, though.

Three businesses, B&B Roadway, Northwest Industries and the sale bar, were affected. The cost of replacing the cable will be just under \$28,000, Moore said.

In other agenda items, the commission: —accepted the resignation of Probate Office clerk Renae Cochran, and approved the transfer of county employee Loretta Sikes to the clerk position.

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Congratulations to the Franklin Free Press Christmas Angel winners! Tina Wilbanks is our overall winner. Her entry and the other top five are printed below:

OVERALL WINNER AND THE 2020 FRANKLIN FREE PRESS CHRISTMAS ANGEL--TINA WILBANKS (nominated by Denise Steward): My sister Tina has worked as a nurse and caregiver her entire life. She took care of me as a child and then she took care of our mother before she passed away on Mother's Day this year. Tina also lost her husband of 41 years, Larry, in October. She took care of them both until they passed and never complained for one second. She is someone people know they can count on and she never hesitates to help other people. She is one of the most Godly, kind and generous women I've ever known and I'm so thankful she is my sister. 150 words are not even close enough to say what I want to about her. I could write a book about her kindness. She truly is an Angel on earth!

OUR OTHER WINNERS:

JANICE ROBINSON (nominated by Barbara Pounders): Janice is the Activities Director at Terrace Manor Nursing and Rehab. She always has a smile on her face. She love the residents and treats them like family. I know this from personal experience. My mother was a resident since 2011. My mother loved Janice! There are no words to describe this special lady. ALL the caregivers are deserving of recognition, from office management to the CNAs. But Janice holds a special place in everyone's heart!

MELANIE MALONE (nominated by Heather Taylor): Melanie is beyond amazing! She and Jean Stowe have worked tirelessly through the 2020 pandemic to serve the people of Franklin County. Melanie is so much more than a nurse practitioner to me. She is a counselor and a friend!

TRINA FRANKLIN (nominated by Addie Compton): When I heard about the opportunity to nominate a Christmas Angel, my former math teacher immediately came to mind. Her name is Trina Franklin and she teaches math at Tharptown High School. When you think of someone who is kind, selfless and willing to help to the best of their ability, your mind will automatically go to her. Mrs. Franklin finds the

best in people and always gives you a chance to succeed. She is definitely an amazing role model, friend, teacher and Christian. Mrs. Franklin loves the Lord with all her heart and shows it through her daily walk. If you're having a bad day, you can walk into her class and it feels as if you have left it all behind. She is the light I hope to be.

JERRY AND VERN CUMMINGS (nominated by John Chapman): As a child, I lived in Russellville for a short time in a housing project. My mother worked at the poultry processing plant and we were very poor. I remember two men who ran a store with a soda machine out front. The store was across from a lumber yard. (C&S Discount). My friends and I rode our bikes down to the store and we often didn't have money for a drink, but those men (Jerry and Vern Cummings) would always give us a drink even if we couldn't pay. They gave so many drinks away I don't know how they made money. We moved later that year, but I never forgot those men and there is no one more deserving to be a Christmas Angel because some of us would not have anything to drink in that scorching Alabama heat without them. I hope they are still with us and leading happy and healthy lives!

JANICE ALLRED (nominated by Jennifer Allred): My Christmas Angel is my grandma Janice. She is my heart and soul. She raised me for a big part of my life and she's had a rocky past of her own, with heart trouble and multiple surgeries. Once I lost her on the table for 10 minutes but the doctors believed in her and kept trying and she finally came back to us. That's how strong of a woman she is. She has several other health problems and wasn't given long to live but I know in my heart she will live forever. She doesn't want to be in the hospital. She wants to be at home around her family. I'm going to be by her side every single step of the way. I could write for hours on why she is my Christmas Angel and what she means to me and what she's taught me in life. I love her with all my heart and soul. I'll always remember her saying never take life or anyone for granted. Today is here, but tomorrow isn't promised. I love you, Grandma Janice. You're the strongest, most amazing woman I know!

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Jackson, Petrona Miguel, Mark Owen Lawler, September: Curtis Lee Brower, Ruth Jeanette Long, Ima Sue McLemore, Adrian Bautista Cruz, Doris E. Seal, Dorothy McCollum, Phillip G. Hardin, Jeri Lynn Burcham, George Billy Humphries, Eva Kirkley, Norma Presley, James Barnes O'Meara, Ollie Sue Hester, William Lynn Cole, Debra Britnell, Betty Joyce Harris, Sue Pace Bendall, Reece Horton, Betty Seal, Betty Stout Jackson, October: Marie H. Young, Nettie Faye Bendall, Betty Wilson, Wanda Patterson, Larry Wilbanks, Herman Gilbert Williams, Kathie Lindsey Smith, Heriberta Joselina Villada, Perry W. Whitlock, Virginia Fuller Jones, Rebecca A. Cartee, Shellie Sumnerel, November: Sidney Tate Willis, Kenneth Cameron, Bobby J. Willis, Agnes P. Lindsey, Patricia Dircio, Dylan Lane, James Cecil Langcuster, James Cecil, Sr., Gale Hoyt "Snuffy" Smith, Randall Eugene DeVaney, Deborah Garrison Dabbs, Micheal W. Myrick, Daryl Louis Rice, Charles Kenneth Rickard, Gloria Fluhart, Verdie Motes Hood, December: Brenda Howard, Kathleen McDonald

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I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but the sounds of music can't compare... with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring, for it's beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me, I see the pain inside your heart, but I am not so far away, we really aren't apart. So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you dear and be glad I'm spending Christmas

with Jesus Christ this year.

I sent each of you a special gift, from my heavenly home above... I sent you each a memory of my undying love. After all, love is the gift more precious than pure gold, it was always most important in the stories that Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other, as my Father said to do, for I can't count the blessings or love He has for each of you. So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away the tears. Remember, I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

Author Unknown

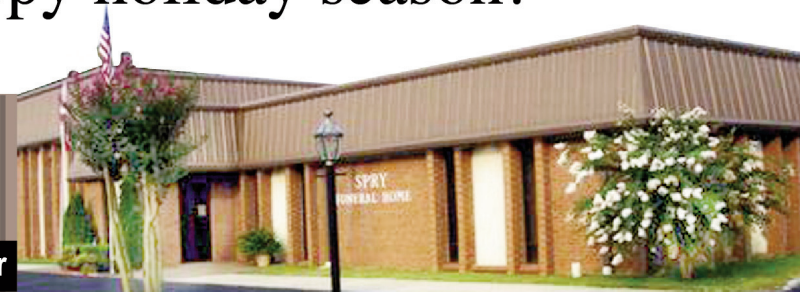


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Solid Waste Collection Truck Driver: Drives and operates heavy automated trash and roll-off trucks and equipment to collect and dispose of solid waste throughout the City.

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 postmarked no later than January 30, 2021 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.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE
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HEAVY EQUIPMENT DRIVER/OPERATOR
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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.

Heavy 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, heavy equipment operator.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Possess a High School Diploma or GED. Two 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. Work experience in general road and sidewalk 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 returned no later than January 30, 2021 by U.S. Mail to:

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

The average pay for this position is \$30,971.20 -47,746.09

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

Bobcats have 11 named to 3A region eight all-region team

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - It was quite the historic year for the Phil Campbell Bobcat football program. From having the first winning season for the program since 2001, to securing a playoff berth for the first time since 2015, the Bobcats are certainly trending in the right direction.

Now that the season has finally come to an end and schools have transitioned to focusing on basketball, the individual accolades are beginning to roll in and the Bobcats were well represented for the 3A region eight all-region team.

Once the votes were tallied, the Phil Campbell would walk away with 11 members named to either the first team for the all-region squad or garnered an honorable mention.

Quarterback Luke Barnwell secured a spot on the first team with his stellar play this season while fellow offensive teammate Bryant Hyde was named to the first team both as a running back and a safety.

Blain Goodson followed in Hyde's footsteps in being named to the all-region team as a dual-position player as a receiver and cornerback. Ridge Raper excelled in every position he suited up for head coach Kevin Barnwell this season and he was rightfully awarded for it. Raper was named to the first team as a linebacker, running back and as a receiver. In addition, Raper was also named the 3A region eight kicker of the year as well.

Gunner Hargett led the defensive representation on the first team for the Bobcats as his play at line-

See 'BOBCATS,' page 13

A sign of things to come

Edgar Amaya has long had dreams of playing football at the collegiate level and now he will get that chance after committing to Colorado. But the senior Golden Tiger has his sights set on something much bigger down the road.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Amaya, who recently played in the Alabama-Mississippi all-star game, finally closed out his recruitment process after announcing last Wednesday that he was committing to the University of Colorado.

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

RUSSELLVILLE - As soon as Edgar Amaya placed the University of Colorado hat on his head and made the decision official, a weight was lifted off of his shoulders. It was the culmination of years of hard work and living up to expectations that had been placed upon him for years.

"It was everything I've ever dreamt of. Ever since I was little, this was the ultimate goal. Everybody always told me that I had the potential, size and tools to play at the next level, I just had to

put the effort behind that and I think I did that," Amaya said.

Amaya's road to Colorado was a long, winding one. After committing to Kansas early on in his recruitment process, Amaya eventually elected to decommit from the Jayhawks and re-opened his recruitment. While the four-star, 6'4 320-pound offensive lineman didn't have any shortage of schools clamoring for his services, things quickly came into focus for Amaya late into his senior season.

Once he had weighed his options, Colorado was

See 'SIGN,' page 12

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'SIGN,' from page 11

the last school standing. Amaya says that he, for one, is glad that the hustle and bustle of the recruitment process has finally come to an end and that he finally has the next four years planned out.

"It's a relief because the recruiting process is very ruthless. One day you have coaches from a school talking to you and the next day they're not messing with you," Amaya said. "Then one day you're committed and the next you're de-committed and everything is just out in the open and it's wild. So to have a permanent place to call home now means everything and I'm just ready to get to work."

When athletes make the transition from high school athletics to college athletics there may be a change in the way a player approaches practices, workouts or even games. But Amaya says that he will be carrying the same mentality that led him to becoming one of the best offensive linemen in Russellville football history as he makes his way to Boulder, Colorado in the fall of 2021.

"I'm carrying the same mentality I've had at Russellville. I want to be the most physical player on that offensive line and I want to be one of the leaders and a focal point in that offense," Amaya said. "Offensive linemen may not get all of the attention but we for sure make our presence felt both on the field and inside the locker room and that's what I'm going to do when I get to Colorado."

Of course Amaya is hopeful that Colorado will just be a stepping stone as he hopes that one day he will hear his name called in the NFL draft once his days as a Buffaloe are finished. And Amaya has plenty of former members of the Colorado program to look up to and aspire to match one day. Former Buffaloe offensive lineman David Bakhitiari recently became the highest-paid offensive lineman in NFL history as a member of the Green Bay Packers.

Hoping to follow in players like Bakhitiari's footsteps, Amaya believes that in due time, he too can achieve his NFL aspirations.

"My decision to go to Colorado was based in part because of my dreams to play in the NFL. Colorado has a history of excellence with offensive linemen and I took that into consideration when I made my decision," Amaya said. "I am going to get to play early and the NFL is my ultimate goal and if I get in there and get to work immediately and do what I have to do, I will get to the NFL."

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In accordance with the Alabama Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act, Alabama Code Sections 32-13-1 through 32-13-8, the following motor vehicle will be sold for cash at 10:30 a.m., on March 10th, 2021, at M&N Wrecker & Service Center, 11833 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, Al, 35653. Seller reserves the right to reject any bid and the right to bid.

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'BOBCATS,' from page 11

backer was voted on to be selected.

When you have four-fifths of your offensive line represented on the all-region team, needless to say that says a lot about how your season finished out. Eli Smith led the way with his first team selection while fellow members on the offensive line in Johnathan Leeth, Isaiah Oliver and Grant Rollins each earned an honorable mention.

Andrew Green (receiver and defensive back) and Keith Traywick (line-backer) rounded out the rest of the Bobcats whose play this season was voted on as being good enough to be named to the all-region team.

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The perfect fit: Lindsey signs with UAH to continue baseball career

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

As Chris Heaps addressed the socially-distanced group of friends, family and teammates of Jackson Lindsey, the three-time state championship winning head coach for Russellville made one thing very clear: Lindsey has an extremely bright future on the diamond.

"Jackson's best days as a baseball player are in front of him," Heaps said. "He's a hard worker and has worked hard to get to this point and he's earned it."

Lindsey, the senior first baseman for the Golden Tigers, signed on to continue his baseball career at the University of Alabama in Huntsville last Thursday afternoon. And while Lindsey had multiple offers on the table, once UAH laid the foundation for making Lindsey a Charger for the next four years, it didn't take long for Lindsey to realize that it was the perfect place for him to be.

"Most of the offers I had were JUCO from around the state. It was a tough decision, but then coach (B.J.) Holloway called and asked me if I wanted to come on a visit and I said 'yes sir, I am more than happy to' and as soon as I went to their campus, I fell in love," Lindsey said. "It just felt like home to me. I got a chance to hang out with some of the players, tour the campus and everything and it didn't take very long for me to know that I loved it and that's where I needed to be."

Of course with having multiple offers means that the process can get fairly tedious over the course of recruitment for a potential college prospect. Tough decisions have to be made, schools have to be eliminated from the list and multiple aspects have to be taken into account before the final decision is made. And Lindsey says that the significance of the moment didn't

See 'LINDSEY,' page 15

Merry Christmas to You & Your Family!

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you!



From left: Commissioners Chris Wallace, Jason Miller, Joseph Baldwin and David Hester. Seated: Probate Judge Barry Moore.
~ The Franklin County Commission



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Lindsey will take his talents to UAH once his career as a Golden Tiger is finished. In the meantime, the senior left-handed hitting first baseman will look to bring home a state title.

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'LINDSEY,' from page 14

slip past him.
 "When you begin the recruitment process and you get that first offer, you feel like that school is where you want to be. But then when other schools come calling, you have more and more decisions to make and the final decision is one of the biggest decisions of your life so a lot of time and thought goes into it," Lindsey said.

Like thousands of athletes across America, Lindsey's junior season was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Couple the essentially lost season with the bitter taste of being eliminated earlier than he and the Golden Tigers had liked during his sophomore season, and Lindsey says he and his fellow group of seniors are aiming to come back this season with a vengeance and vying for a championship.

"Coming off the heels of that sophomore season where we got eliminated a lot sooner than we had hoped and then we try to come back for revenge our junior year just to have it cut short all of a sudden and have it stripped away from us seniors, we realize it's now or never," Lindsey said. "We're doing everything we can because our ultimate goal is to go to Montgomery and we want to be in the dogpile at the end of the year and bringing s title back home to Russellville."

With his senior season coming up and his college career right around the corner, Lindsey knows that now is the time to try and perfect his game while also helping those around him continue to progress as well.

"I want to improve everywhere and anywhere that I can. It's like coach Heaps said, my best baseball is in front of me and that's the way it should be. The best days of your career shouldn't be behind you until you're finished playing baseball," Lindsey said. "But I want to push myself in everything. From hitting, to running, to fielding, I just want to improve in every aspect. I want to be better so I can improve upon myself and also help my teammates get better as well."

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Congrats to Week 15 winner BOIS PORTER, who correctly picked the most games last week!

Bailey finished all of her picks and still had time to take a nap. Don't sleep on your chance to BEAT BAILEY!!

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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 15 must be postmarked by Friday, December 31st, and picks submitted by email for Week 15 must be also received by Friday, December 31st 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!

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Brooks Scott Senior Forward Russellville

The Golden Tigers are off to a hot start this season thanks in part to the success of a group of experienced seniors and Scott is a key part of that group. In a win over rival Deshler, Scott had his best scoring performance of the season, putting up 27 points. Then in a matchup against county foe Red Bay, Scott was the leading scorer once again for the Golden Tigers with 20 points.



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Oklahoma vs. Florida	Florida	_____
Cincinnati vs. Georgia	Georgia	_____
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