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No work, no problem: Pilgrim's pays employees for winter storm week

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With a severe winter weather outbreak that kept most Northwest Alabama residents at home for a week, there were plenty of folks concerned about not receiving a paycheck for the week their employers were closed.

For the more than 1,300 employees of Pilgrim's Russellville, though, that wasn't a problem, as every employee was paid for a 40-hour week regardless of how many days they couldn't get to the plant.

Kevin Touchstone, Pilgrim's Complex Manager, said his company asked for volunteers to come work over the weekend when the storm

hit, and employees who showed up were paid overtime for the hours they worked.

It's yet another way Franklin County's largest employer continues to build bonds and positive working relationships with its employees.

"Our company does some great things for people and that was one of the greatest things I've seen," Touchstone said. "There's nothing more valuable than our team members. We can't do what we do without them. And we want them to be secure and investing in them and their families is important."

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, employers are not obligated to pay hourly employees for hours not

See 'PILGRIMS,' page 7

Phil Campbell council approves moving forward with annual Hoedown

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The annual Phil Campbell Hoedown, a two-day event in June, will take place this year after the Phil Campbell City Council voted unanimously to go forward with the event at its March 2 meeting.

Last year's Hoedown was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but council members said they believe the numbers have improved sufficient to allow for the event this year.

Additionally, the council voted to reopen the Phil Campbell Community Center effective immedi-

ately. The council approved some changes in the rental process for the community center as well.

The facility is now available for half-day or full-day rental. Half-day rentals are from 7 a.m.-3 p.m., and/or 3 p.m.-11 p.m., at a cost of \$150. Full-day rentals, from 7 a.m.-11 p.m., are \$300.

Council members and Mayor Mike McQuary also discussed the return of the Friday night dance at the Community Center. Organizers of the dance have not been paying to rent the building. Instead, they pay \$1 per person to the city for each

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Rudolph Ralph Beckenbach, 99, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Saturday, March 6th. Interment at Mountain View Cemetery.

Daniel Gary Hand, 73, of Russellville, passed away on Monday, March 1st. Interment at Bethlehem Cemetery.

Barbara Ann Landers, 76, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, March 5th. Interment at Oakgrove Cemetery.

Latricia "Trish" Williams Thomas, 56, of Russellville, passed away on Friday, March 5th. Interment at Dempsey Cemetery.

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Franklin County Board of Education approves 2021-22 school calendar

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Students will begin the new school year on Tuesday, August 10th after the Franklin County Board of Education approved the 2021-22 calendar at the board's March 1st meeting.

Certified and support personnel will have two Institute Days on August 2nd and 3rd, and all Franklin County bus drivers will take part in an in-service day Wednesday, August 4th.

Fall break and Columbus Day mean a three-day mid semester break for students on October 7th, 8th and 11th.

Students and faculty will enjoy a week off for Thanksgiving, from November 22nd thru 26th, and classes will adjourn for Christmas break at 11:30 a.m., Friday, December 17th.

Students will return to class for the spring semester on Friday, January 14th, although teachers will have workdays all that week, from January 10th thru the 13th.

The last day of school for the 2021-22 academic year will be Thursday, May 26th, when school lets out at 11:30 a.m.

Senior graduations are scheduled for Thursday, May 26th and Friday, May 27th.

Teachers will have workdays from May 31st thru June 3rd before beginning their summer break.

In other agenda items from the March 1st meeting, the board:

—awarded the bid for new field lighting at the Vina softball field to S&G Waldrop Electric with a low bid of \$123,500, to be paid through PSCA Bond Funds.

—approved out-of-state trips for Red Bay softball to Belmont, Miss., March 15th and Mooreville, Miss., April 19th, and Vina softball to Belmont, Miss., March 10th and Tremont, Miss., April 5th.

—heard a report from Assistant Superintendent Johnny Cleveland about damage from the recent ice/snow severe weather outbreak. A large canopy at Tharptown collapsed as did a 65-foot canopy at Vina between the new science building/band hall and the gym. The Red Bay softball practice building sustained major damage and all losses have been filed with the school system's insurance carrier.

—approved the following personnel moves:

1. Resignation: Jennifer Fuller, full-time substitute teacher at Vina, retroactive to January 25th and Michelle Lane, Reading Specialist at Belgreen.

2. Employment: Cody Renfrow at full-time substitute teacher (temporary) at Vina High School.

3. Substitutes: Danny Vincent, substitute custodian at Tharptown, Carly Channell, Cade Pressnell, Allyson Taylor, Sander Tverberg and Alyssa Ward as new teacher substitutes.

4. Volunteers: Caden Parker, Assistant Baseball Coach Belgreen, Shane Mason, Assistant Softball Coach, Vina, and Andy Charles McAnally, Assistant Softball Coach, Vina.

5. New Hires for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 TRACKS: Brett Cotham, East Franklin Aide, Breanna Rikard, Belgreen Nurse, Carol Davis, Aide/Sub., Vina, Jessica Erica Cothrum, Aide/Sub., Phil Campbell, Olivia Gann, High School Aide, Tharptown, and Jessica Childers, Nurse, Vina.

The next regular meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education will be April 20, 2021, with work session at 5 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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

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RCS ranks within top-60 in total per student revenue

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When it comes to total per student revenue sources, Russellville City Schools ranks 58th among Alabama's 137 public school systems, according to a report released by the Alabama Association of School Boards.

Alabama's public school systems were ranked based on all federal, state and local revenue sources divided by the number of students enrolled in the system.

RCS' per-pupil expenditures, based on fiscal year 2019 data, came in at \$10,543 per student, above the Alabama average of \$10,092 per student. The highest per-pupil expenditure is in Lowndes County Schools, which finished above systems in affluent areas including Mountain Brook and Homewood.

The system's cost of one month's operation/general fund is \$1,853,458, and Russellville City Schools has 1.94 months in its reserve balance. Alabama law requires school systems to maintain a minimum of one-month's

See 'RCS,' page 5

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Russellville council approves garbage container purchase in preparation for collection take over

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council approved the purchase of approximately 3,500 plastic garbage containers from the Franklin County Solid Waste Department at the council's March 1st meeting.

The council unanimously approved the \$95,460 expense for the plastic trash bins in the possession of all City of Russellville customers. The city will take over trash collection starting April 5, 2021.

The purchase price was \$25 per used can. In addition to buying the used cans, the purchase also included a limited number of new cans.

The council also approved a low bid for solid waste disposal in the amount of \$36/ton from the Franklin County Solid Waste Department. The county department will transport the city's residential waste from the Franklin County Landfill to a transfer station at the per ton rate. That rate will be revisited in September when the county's contract at the transfer station is up for renewal, Russellville Mayor David Grissom said.

In other agenda items, the council:

—heard a report from Grissom about three possible locations on Highway 24 for the city's splash pad. City officials had to submit a letter to the State of Alabama asking for permission to locate the splash pad on Sloss Lake property. Grissom said the proposed sites are close to the ballfields on the west side of the lake and a second site on the east side of the lake.

Additionally, a site across Hwy. 24 on city-owned property is also being considered. State of Alabama officials gave approval to both sites adjacent to Sloss Lake.

—authorized the city clerk to close the 2013 Capital Improvement Fund "A" Series checking account.

—approved a motion by Councilman Jamie Harris to replace Hillary Hall on the Russellville Library Board with Connie Cole.

—approved a motion by Councilman Dexter Hamilton to replace Eva Diaz Key on the Russellville Library Board with Tammie West.

—approved a motion by Councilman David Palmer to reappoint Lela Ray to the Russellville Library Board.

—heard a request from Councilman Darren Woodruff to consider adding a sixth person to the Russellville Library Board. Woodruff said his District Two does not have a representative on the board and he would like to make an appointment from his district.

City Attorney Danny McDowell said he would research whether the Library Board is incorporated. If the board was formed as a corporation, the Articles of Incorporation would have to be amended to allow for a sixth member. Otherwise, the council could vote to add another member to the board.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Council will be March 15, 2021, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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'HOEDOWN,' from page 1

person who attends.

The council voted to change that arrangement and begin charging regular rental fees for the Friday night dance.

"If they rent it, they have to pay like anyone else. That's the fairest way to do it," McQuary said.

The council voted to participate in the March 27, 2021, Easter Egg Hunt organized by the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. The Phil Campbell hunt will begin promptly at 12 noon at the Phil Campbell Memorial Park.

In other agenda items, the council:

—tabled a request from Phil Campbell Police Chief Joe Fike for a raise in his hourly pay of \$17.48 in order to research salaries/wages of police chiefs in similarly sized communities.

—tabled a request from Town Clerk/Magistrate Virginia Burks for a raise in her hourly pay of \$16/hour. Burks asked for a \$1/hour raise that would see her earning what her predecessor received. Former Town Clerk Ann Bragwell retired last year after 16 years of service to Phil Campbell. Council members said they wanted to research salaries/hourly wages of city clerks and magistrates in other similarly-sized communities.

—voted to solicit bids for storm cleanup and/or equipment rental to clean debris from the recent ice/snow storm.

—heard an update on the Phil Campbell High School softball field, where Alabama Power has turned off power to the facility until needed safety repairs are made. The varsity softball team will move to the new field to play until the repairs are completed.

—heard a report from Phil Campbell Fire Chief Eric Rice that recommended city employees cut and clear roadways of fallen trees and limbs from the recent storm. The PCFD and other agencies responded to an accident on U.S. 43 recently where a tree sticking out into the road may have been a factor in the accident.

"We need to make sure trees are far enough off the road so as not to obstruct drivers where we end up with someone getting hurt," Rice said.

The next regular meeting of the Phil Campbell City Council is set for Tuesday, March 16, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting at 7 p.m.

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'RCS,' from page 4

operating expenses in its general fund reserves.

For FY 2019, the number of full-time employees was 294, with 163 teachers, 10 principals/assistant principals, five counselors, four librarians, six other certified employees and 106 support personnel.

When ranked by the amount of state revenue per student, RCS ranks 49th, with \$7,041 state funds per pupil. The system receives \$1,690 per pupil in federal funding, and ranks 33rd out of 137.

With local funding, which totaled \$2,330 per pupil, RCS ranks 82nd.

59 percent of all RCS funding is through the State of Alabama, with 26 percent locally funded and 14 percent through federal funds.

School systems are funded through local tax revenue based on mills. A mill equals one-thousandth of a dollar (\$1 for every \$1,000 of value) and is used to calculate property tax based on the assessed value of a property. Those assessed values differ significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, so what a mill may be equal to in Russellville may be significantly different than the value of a mill in Homewood, for example.

The value of 1-mill for Russellville City Schools is \$77,695. In Huntsville City Schools, the value of 1-mill is \$2,665,309, the highest of all municipal school systems.

Mobile County Schools' value of 1-mill is \$5,011,364, the highest in the state.

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The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and the Franklin County Development Authority are accepting nominations for the 2021 Partnership Banquet, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 25th. Nomination forms are available on the Chamber's website (www.franklincountychamber.org) or at the Chamber office (located at 103 Jackson Avenue North, Russellville). Deadline for nominations is February 5th. For more information or details, please contact the Franklin County Chamber at 256.332.1760 or director@franklincountychamber.org.

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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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'PILGRIMS,' from page 1

worked due to severe weather. But Touchstone said the company did so as an investment in its employees' safety and security so they could stay home and not be subject to dangerous driving conditions.

As local industries face shortages of employees, the pay and benefits offered have improved in order for these companies to remain competitive with prospective workers.

Pilgrim's is offering a \$2,000 sign-on bonus to new hires and a \$2,000 referral bonus for a current employee if they recommend someone who is hired and stays employed the required amount of time. Truck driver hires are eligible for a \$5,000 bonus.

Additionally, each Pilgrim's employee who provides proof of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine receives a \$100 bonus, Touchstone said.

After the COVID-19 outbreak began last year, Pilgrim's announced a \$20 million incentive called Hometown Strong that sees the company partner with leaders in communities with Pilgrim's facilities to support projects that strengthen these towns where their employees live and work.

Pilgrim's allocated \$1.6 million for Hometown Strong projects in Russellville, Guntersville and Enterprise, its three Alabama facilities.

The company announced a \$300,000 expense for a community splash pad in Russellville. The splash pad is expected to accommodate 175 children and will be the largest in Alabama.

Pilgrim's Russellville has also made a major investment in local schools, particularly in Franklin County schools that do not receive as much funding as municipal school systems.

The company recently spent \$13,000 to purchase Chromebooks for East Franklin Junior High School. A \$7,500 donation to Belgreen High School's varsity baseball team and \$10,000 donation to continue a learning program at Phil Campbell Elementary were also made this month.

Pilgrim's support of Russellville City Schools is also strong. The company donated \$10,000 to the RHS soccer program for uniforms. And Pilgrim's is paying for construction of pavilions for outdoor classrooms/cafeteria space at Russellville High School and Russellville Middle School. The pavilions are expected to cost around \$35,000 each.

The Belgreen baseball team also received the donation of 250 pounds of beef, valued at approximately \$2,000. The players sold raffle tickets for chances to win the meat, and turned that \$2,000 into approximately \$8,000, Touchstone said.

Supporting local schools is not only an investment in the community, it's a way to introduce the company to young people who will later be entering the work force.

"We want kids in our schools to see what opportunities are available and open their eyes up about Pilgrim's," Touchstone said. "Nationally, our company did 786 internal promotions last year. There are all kinds of opportunities with all the plants we have.

"We pay competitive hourly wages and have salaried team members as well. We hope that young people who might not have known our company was an avenue for them to realize Pilgrim's can help provide for their family to be a success," he added.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pilgrim's Complex Mgr. Kevin Touchstone presents a \$13,000 donation to East Franklin Junior High Principal Megean Berryman. Funds will be used to purchase Chromebooks for students.

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Russellville BOE approves temporary hires for new after-school program

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Board of Education approved the temporary employment of 43 teachers and aides for the 21st Century Community Learning Center program and a new after-school program at the board's March 4th meeting.

Most of those hires were already employed by Russellville City Schools in full-time capacities. The new after-school program will be a tutoring program designed for students with deficiencies in reading and math.

RCS Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes said funding for the temporary employees is coming from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES).

In addition to the 43 temporary hires, the board also approved the employment of nine new employees to work as math and reading intervention teachers or English Language aides. Those new hires include:

Inocencia Guarcas-Cua, EL Aide at Russellville Elementary, Jaden Peek, EL Aide at RES, Pam Hagedorn, Reading Intervention Teacher at RES (part-time retiree, using ESSER funds), Yesenia DeLaRosa, EL Aide at West Elementary, Elizabeth Alonso, EL Aide at WES, Tonya Alonzo, EL Aide at WES, Maria Baltazar, EL Aide at WES, Kimberly Crane, Math Coach/Intervention Teacher at WES (part-time retiree using ESSER funds) and Sara McDill, Instructional/Remediation Aide.

The system received approximately \$900,000 in the first round of ESSER funding. The second round was set up differently, where school systems must apply for reimbursement and demonstrate the funds were spent for qualifying expenses.

Russellville City Schools is allocated approximately \$2.8 million in the second round. The funds will be used for the new reading and math intervention after-school program. That program began March 8th and will run through the end of the 2022 school year.

Additionally, funds will be used for summer school for reading/math intervention the next two years and the hiring of additional teacher units and bilingual aides in order to reduce class size and aid in the language barrier for students whose native language is not English.

A third round of ESSER funding was approved by Congress March 6th. This round could inject up to \$6 million additional dollars into Russellville City Schools, Grimes said.

As with the second round, these funds must be spent for COVID-19 relat-

ed expenses to qualify.

The system will apply for reimbursement for these monies, and if not spent for allowable COVID-19 expenses, the funds would revert back to the federal government, he said.

"It is my goal to maximize these funds in a way that will benefit as many students in Russellville City Schools for many years to come,"

Grimes said. "After two years, our plan and goal is to demonstrate significant improvement in reading and math skills for our students in order to show the importance of continued funding for these programs and positions," he added.

While participation in the reading/math tutoring program is voluntary, Grimes said school administrators reached out to parents of students who may be deficient in those two areas. Through the tutoring program, the goal is for those students to advance to their next grade and alleviate the need for retention.

The after-school program includes students from kindergarten through sixth grade.

In an unrelated agenda item, board members also approved DeAndre Coleman to be a pro consult for RHS boys basketball, with maximum payment of \$825 to be paid by the Basketball Booster Club.



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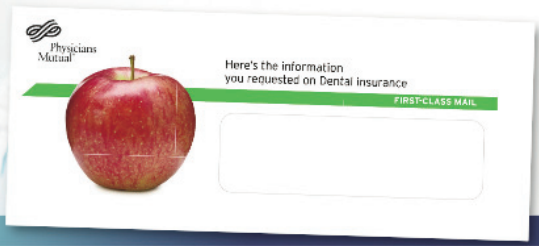
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NW-SCC College Scholars Bowl team competes in national tournament

Submitted to the FFP

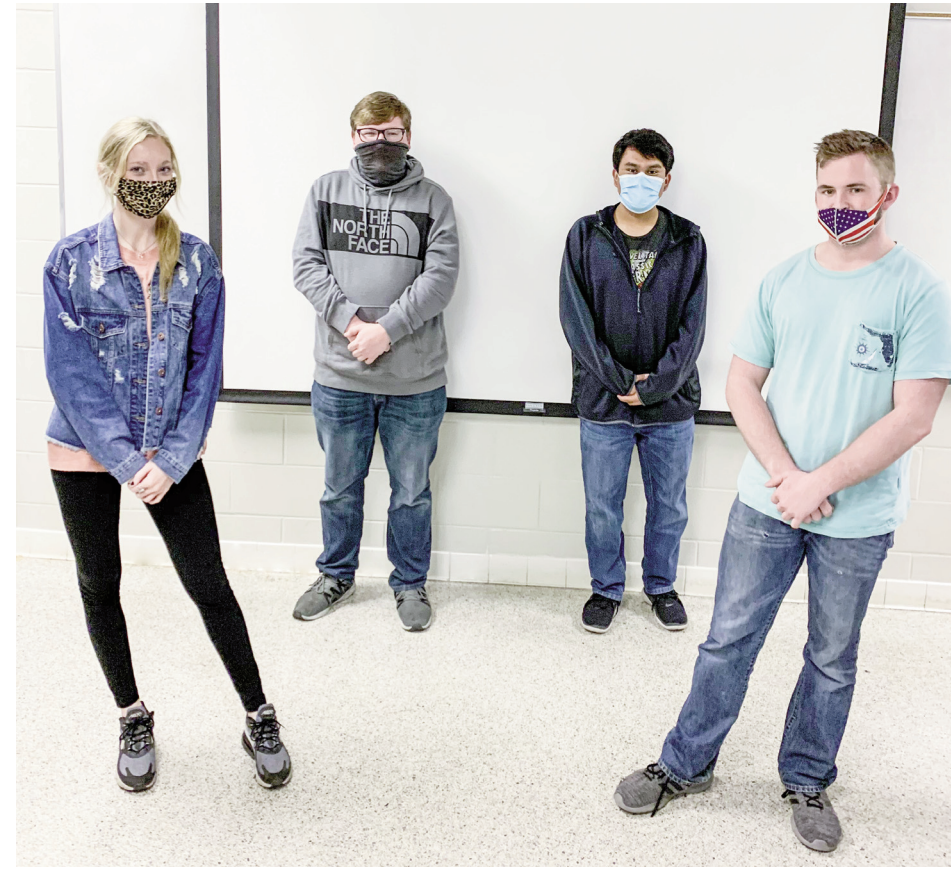
Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) competed on the national stage last Saturday (2/27) as Bryant Gillespie led the NW-SCC College Scholars Bowl team to a 13th place overall finish in the National Academic Quiz Tournaments' (NAQT) Community College Championship Tournament. Gillespie earned tournament All-Star ranking and finished fifth overall individually.

To qualify for the NAQT Community College Championship Tournament, community colleges were able to compete in an online sectional tournament. This year all of NAQT's championships have been conducted online using Zoom conference calls for each match. NW-SCC was the only team from Alabama to qualify and compete in the national tournament.

According to NW-SCC College Scholars Bowl Coach Brad Pool, the resiliency of the team was a major reason for their success this past weekend.

"Our team has not let virtual tournament format or other the necessary restrictions caused by the pandemic slow them down," Pool said. "They just love to compete and are willing to do whatever we ask of them. They are a really fun group to be around."

NW-SCC College Scholars Bowl team members are Lexi Crittenden (from Phil Campbell), Bryant Gillespie (from Moulton), Briley Mills (from Red Bay), and Christian Rodriguez (from Russellville).



COURTESY PHOTO

The NW-SCC Scholars Bowl team competed in the NAQT national tournament via ZOOM. Team members include Lexi Crittenden, Bryant Gillespie, Briley Mills and Christian Rodriguez.

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Red Bay's McKinney signs with Bethel University to continue football career

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

RED BAY - Cam McKinney has left quite a mark on the Red Bay High School football program. McKinney racked up over 400 tackles and received just about every award and honor an individual can during his time with the Tigers. And while that play will cause people to look back fondly on his career at the high school level, it also opened the door for McKinney to possibly continue his career at the next level.

However, in a season unlike any other in 2020, there were question marks surrounding McKinney and the recruiting process. Not about his play, that would sort itself out on its own. But rather *how* prospective college coaches would be able to get their eyes on him and perhaps offer McKinney a chance to play at the college level.

That's when the five-year starter for the Tigers resorted to social media to get the word out.

"When my recruiting process started in ninth grade, we started with Glen Jackson at Southeastern Recruiting and then over time just went more to social media on Twitter, and talked to coaches through places like that," McKinney said. "Then obviously with COVID put a damper on things and made it hard for coaches to keep up with how things were going. We obviously couldn't go on visits and things like that. But I'm glad and fortunate for the offers that I did receive and things worked out the way they did."

Once the dust finally settled on his recruiting process, McKinney had chosen Bethel University as the place to call home and continue his college

See 'MCKINNEY,' page 13

Coming up just short

Despite Belgreen's historic season falling short of bringing home their first boys state title in their 38-34 loss to Autaugaville, the Bulldogs figure to return next season as a frontrunner for next seasons 1A state championship as they return a strong core and experienced depth.



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

The Bulldogs maintained a lead over the undefeated Eagles for a majority of the game before being shutout in the games final quarter.

Brady Petree
 Franklin Free Press

BIRMINGHAM - If you had asked Belgreen head boys basketball coach Marty Cooper at the beginning of the season what his hopes were for the season, you would have gotten a simple answer: get to the end of the year with minimal interruption.

And while Cooper's hopes of finding the end of an *unusual* season came to fruition, what came along with the end of the season made things that much sweeter for the second-year head coach.

"Things just kind of went our way this season. If you had asked us at the start of the season that this is how our season would end we would have been very happy. But if you ask us at the end of the third quarter on Friday night we would've been disappointed. But overall we've been extremely blessed this season," Cooper said.

For those three quarters last Friday night at Bill Harris Arena that Cooper mentions, it seemed as though Belgreen's boys might be well on their way to the first state title in program history.

Clinging to a five point lead at the end of the third quarter, things appeared to be looking up for the

Bulldogs. They had managed to curb the obvious size disadvantage by creating open looks through fantastic spacing the entire night and things were clicking on all cylinders.

Then came the fourth quarter.

Over the final eight minutes, Autaugaville showed just why they had managed to remain undefeated over the course of the season and maintained their number one ranking in 1A throughout a majority of the season.

The Eagles managed to hold the Bulldogs scoreless over the final nine minutes of the game en route to a 38-34 final which made Autaugaville the first undefeated state champion in Alabama since 2012.

"To their credit, they went undefeated and were well coached and they just went to an entirely other gear on the defensive side in the last three or four minutes and we hadn't been faced with that the entire season," Cooper said. "They just physically manhandled us on defense over the final couple of minutes there."

While the fourth quarter looked bleak for the Bulldogs, as Will Bonner got into foul trouble down the stretch before ultimately fouling out deep into

See 'SHORT,' page 12

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'SHORT,' from page 11

the fourth quarter, they were able to get off a few good looks to break the scoreless streak. Two of those shots included a pair of three-point shots courtesy of Scout Bragwell (who had nailed a buzzer-beating three just before halftime) near the end of the fourth quarter.

And while those shots might not have gone down, the simple fact that the Bulldogs were able to remain competitive despite the odds stacked against that is a testament to the things that got them to this very point according to Cooper.

"For us to even be in position to win the game down the stretch just says so much about our kids. They (Autaugaville) were so much bigger, faster and longer than we were and you take into account that you're playing an undefeated team and you don't score in the fourth quarter but your best shooter has two really great looks to win the game, it just speaks to how gritty our guys are," Cooper said. "To be able to hold that kind of team to under 40 points with the size that we have is a tribute to our guys that they can hang in there and give us a chance to win down the stretch."

What got Belgreen to Birmingham, outside of their excellent shooting and disciplined style of play, was the fact that the Bulldogs had managed to play a relentless man-to-man defense the entire season that oftentimes overwhelmed their opponents. But once the Bulldogs made it to Hanceville, a change was in order.

Facing a higher quality of opponents, not to mention more athletic than anything the Bulldogs had seen to that point, required a different strategy the rest of the way.

"Our bread and butter this year was our man-to-man defense. And once we got to the game against Pickens County, we understood that we couldn't physically matchup man-to-man with those teams. So it's to our guys credit that they were able to adjust to that 1-2-2 zone defense and made it work to our advantage," Cooper said.

For coaches, it's never too early to begin looking ahead to next season and get a feel for what things may look like next year. But as Cooper and the Bulldogs will be looking to make another trip to Birmingham one year from now, while potentially bringing home that elusive blue map, the group of seniors that will be departing Belgreen this season has certainly left their mark.

In more ways than one too, as Cooper puts it.

"Isac and Scout were here before Marty and Jennifer Cooper were here.

Those guys have been battling for Belgreen since the seventh grade and after the game you could tell the hurt those guys had. And I know those guys are down and hurting now, but I think over time Scout and Isac will appreciate what they accomplished and I definitely know the community will appreciate what they were able to accomplish as well," Cooper said.

But as the Bulldogs begin to look forward to repeating as the Northwest Alabama regional champions, they should have a loaded arsenal to get the job done yet again.

"Our b-team won the county tournament and even though it might have only been one minute or four minutes, everyone that's coming back next year got to play in a state semifinal game. That cannot be underestimated for us," Cooper said. "Because even if you're just sitting on the bench, you can see how fast things move and how things operate at that level so hopefully that kind of thing kind of gives us a jumpstart next year. I think we'll be a deeper team next year because we're really going to have 11 or so guys that we can put in the game and really feel like we won't lose anything with them in there. We're in a good place for next year and we're looking forward to it."

Leading scorers Will and Collin Bonner will return alongside big man Austin James, giving Cooper three-fifths of his starting rotation coming back. Factor into the mix role players such as Canaan Stough, Adrian Reaves and others, and Belgreen figures to once again be a basketball juggernaut next year, even if their style of play may have to be tweaked just a bit.

"Birmingham is definitely the goal next season. But when you look at who we're going to have to replace and who we're replacing them with, it leads to a different style of play for us. When you pencil in Adrian Reaves for Isac, you have a better offensive team but you don't have that guy that's going to get seven rebounds a game and dives onto the floor after loose balls," Cooper said. "You can put Canaan Stough in for Scout and he's quicker and a little longer but he doesn't shoot like Scout. We're going to have a different kind of team than we had this year."

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'MCKINNEY,' from page 11

career as the linebacker signed a letter of intent last Friday morning with the Tennessee-based college.

When college coaches took a look at McKinney's resume before offering him a chance to continue his career at the next level, there was no shortage of highlights for them to marvel over.

A first team all-state member who had over 400 tackles during his career (including 102 tackles in his senior season) was a five-year starter for Tiger head coach Michael Jackson.

And while Jackson has done quite a bit of winning during his tenure with Red Bay, McKinney has essentially been right there with him for a majority of it.

"We're 63-17 the last seven years which is the most wins out of any team in Northwest Alabama. Cam has been involved in some kind of major role for 43 of those wins," Jackson said. "That just speaks well to what he's done for this program.

Jackson has seen his fair share of talent come through Red Bay during his time at the helm. And while there has been a plethora of offensive talent for Jackson and his staff to work with (and McKinney also played a part on the offensive side of things from time-to-time), it's the defensive aspect that has made Red Bay one of the more prominent programs in Northwest Alabama.

See 'MCKINNEY,' page 14



PHOTO BY BRADY PETREE

McKinney, above, accumulated over 400 tackles during his stellar career with Red Bay while being apart of over 40 wins as a five-year starter.

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'MCKINNEY,' from page 13

for nearly a decade. And right in the middle of that tenacious defense, was Cam McKinney. While Cam certainly had the talent to be a great player on the defensive side of the ball for Jackson and the Tigers, he didn't get where he is today without having to put in work. And Jackson knows exactly what went into McKinney's success.

"God gave Cam the ability to play, but he developed it. He put in a lot of work in the weight room and developed into the great player he ended up becoming," Jackson said. "He's won just about everything that a player can win in terms of individual awards. He's had a great high school career that anyone would be fortunate to have had."

When it came time for him to make a decision about where he would be continuing his athletic career, McKinney's choice was fairly easy thanks to a loaded coaching staff at Bethel.

"The program is just really special at Bethel. Everything they do up there just funnels right toward the program. They have a great group of experienced coaching, two or three of them actually played in the NFL, so they know what they're doing and they just have a great football program," McKinney said.

While McKinney might be one of the first ones from the historic group of talented seniors for Red Bay to sign on to play at the collegiate level, he certainly won't be the last. And for him to be a part of a group of seniors that has had as extensive of a winning career as they have had, McKinney is hopeful that the winning for the Tigers doesn't stop with his senior class and that the tradition will live on.

"Obviously we didn't make it to the state championship like everyone hopes and dreams for but I hope we made a positive impact for the younger guys coming through. Because the one thing we heard growing up was, 'Red Bay is a hard-hitting football team' and when you have that kind of label on you, you kinda want to keep that tradition going," McKinney said.

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Collin Bonner Junior, Forward Belgreen

Bonner managed to score 11 points in the Bulldogs 66-44 win over Notasulga to send Belgreen to their first state finals appearance in over 20 years. Then in the state championship game against Autaugaville, the junior forward led the Bulldogs in scoring with 16 points.



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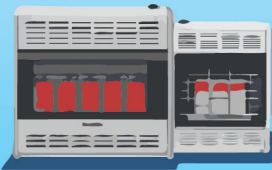
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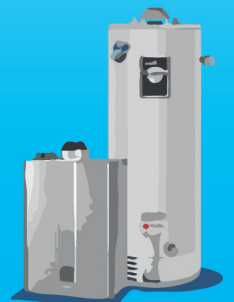
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The following information is the annual report of receipts and expenditures of the Franklin County Community Development Commission for the fiscal year ending 9-30-2020.

The information is "unaudited" and is reported to the citizens of Franklin County to document how these tax dollars are being expended. The Franklin County Community Development Commission is a 4 member board, whose membership for the previous year included: Brad Bolton as Senator Stutts's appointment, Jeremy Campbell, as Representative Kiel's appointment, Chris Wallace as Representative Robertson's appointment and the Chairman of the Commission, Mayor at Large- David Grissom. All grants approved must be within the charter of the development fund which is as follows:

In accordance with Act No. 2008-75 enacted by the Legislature of Alabama, grants may be awarded only for the following purposes:

1. To promote economic development, education, recreation, conservation, and fire protection.
2. To enhance the education of the citizenry through activities, expenditures for capital improvements or equipment, to promote literacy, learning, arts appreciation, public health, and mental health.
3. To promote activities that provide human and social services which reduce the hardships of old age, poor health, or poverty.
4. To promote the marketability, yield or quality of Alabama-produced agricultural commodities.
5. To promote the preservation, restoration, development and propagation of Alabama's natural resources, recreational facilities, environment, history, culture, transportation lanes, tourism, public safety, and historic landmarks and buildings.

BEGINNING BALANCE FCCDC FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING 10/01/2019		\$44,101.57
TOTAL IN LIEU OF TAXES DEPOSITS FCCDC		\$172,733.57
TOTAL INTEREST EARNED FCCDC		\$290.26
TRANSFERRED IN FROM FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		\$6,250.00
TOTAL BALANCE DEPOSITS AND INTEREST THIS FISCAL YEAR:		\$223,375.40
GRANTS AWARDED AS FOLLOWS:		
GRANT #	ENTITY:	GRANT AMT:
1931	Reedtown Back to Basics HVAC unit	\$4,000.00
1932	Franklin County Board of Education	\$393.95
1933	Vina High School Football	\$1,500.00
1934	Franklin Co Econ Dev-Franklin Structures	\$12,500.00
1935	Tharptown Elementary School	\$1,000.00
1936	Phil Campbell High School Scholars Bowl	\$150.00
1937	Phil Campbell High School PE	\$150.00
1938	The Healing Place	\$900.00
1939	City of Red Bay Education Foundation	\$1,050.00
1940	Franklin County Commission 2020 Census	\$1,000.00
1941	Belgreen High School	\$1,200.00
1942	Red Bay High School Tip Off Club	\$250.00
1943	KinderVision Foundation	\$1,500.00
1944	Red Bay High School FFA	\$750.00
1945	Postage	\$6.00
1946	Franklin County EMA Trailer	\$1,500.00
1947	The Franklin County Times (TN VALLEY MEDIA)	\$414.40
1948	The Red Bay News	\$356.40
1949	RMS Sound Equipment	\$1,000.00
1950	Town of Hoges - Planters for Beautification	\$750.00
1951	Tharptown Elementary Furniture for Spec Ed	\$1,000.00
1952	RBHS FFA Championship Rings	\$1,225.00
1953	BHS Purchase 2nd Grade Chromebooks	\$1,000.00
1954	BHS Purchase Multisensory Reading Program	\$1,000.00
1955	THS-Arrive Alive Tour Event (Check Returned)	\$250.00
1956	TES Purchase AED	\$1,000.00
1957	VHS Cheer National Comp	\$500.00
1958	THS Chromebooks	\$1,000.00
1959	Russellville Police Dept Desktop Computers	\$2,500.00
1960	Postage	\$5.50
1961	RMS-PE Equipment	\$500.00
1962	THS-Soccer Team Equipment	\$500.00
1963	RBHS-31 Chrome Books/Licenses	\$400.00
1964	RBHS-Sewing Machine/Foot Control Replace/Repair	\$250.00
1965	BES-Chromebooks for 3rd Grade	\$400.00
1966	RBHS-Laptop for workshops/trainings/meetings	\$250.00
1967	RBES-AL History State Cap Trip	\$150.00
1968	RBES-Scholastic Magazine	\$92.38
1969	RBES-Scholastic Magazine	\$96.38
1970	RB Baseball Diamond Club-Facility Materials	\$2,500.00
1971	RBHS SADD Club-Vaping Presentation	\$150.00
1972	RBHS HOSA Club-State Comp	\$150.00
1973	RBES-6th Grade Chattanooga Class Trip	\$150.00
1974	RCS-After School Program Materials	\$1,000.00
1975	TES-Chromebooks	\$400.00
1976	BHS-Walkway from Gym to workout facility	\$800.00
1977	EF Vol Fire Dept-10 Pagers	\$3,000.00
1978	RBHS Tip Off Club-Upgrade Gym Electronic Equip	\$5,000.00
1979	BHS Softball-Rep pitching mound, batters box	\$1,000.00
1980	THS-Baseball fence screen and overlay	\$400.00
1981	BES-Printer/Chromebook	\$400.00
1982	PCHS-Rocketry Team motors	\$250.00
1983	PCES-Printer Dyslexia/EL Intervention Classroom	\$400.00
1984	BHS-Cross Country Team Canopy	\$150.00
1985	BHS-Custodial Vacuum	\$150.00
1986	BHS-Desktop computer	\$400.00
1987	BES-Chromebooks for 1st Grade	\$400.00
1988	EFJHS-Score Table/Chairs for Gym	\$3,000.00
1989	PCHS-Baseball sponsorship	\$150.00
1990	BHS-Speech equipment, iPad	\$400.00
1991	BHS-chromebooks/printer	\$400.00
1992	Postage	\$14.50
1993	Franklin County Coroner Grant-Van	\$3,000.00
1994	PCES Flexible seating	\$1,000.00
1995	RB Police Dept Group Counseling	\$500.00
1996	Tharptown High Soccer Goals	\$3,300.00
1997	RBHS Health Science CPR Videos	\$200.00
1998	Big Brothers Big Sisters Franklin Co. Tshirts	\$500.00
1999	City of Red Bay Founders Day Car Show	\$250.00
2000	Tharptown VFD Pump Truck, Fittings, Hose	\$2,000.00
2001	RBHS Football Program Helmets	\$2,500.00
2002	RHS Purchase Chromebooks for ELL	\$1,000.00
2003	Union Community Center-Parking Lot Paving	\$5,000.00
2004	Belgreen Bass Fishing Team State Tournament	\$250.00
2005	City of Red Bay Founders Day Stage Sponsorship	\$1,000.00
2006	RBHS Smart Board	\$1,000.00
2007	Cultura Gardn Club- Purchase Plants/Supplies R'ville	\$2,000.00
2008	RBHS Basketball Program-New basketballs	\$1,500.00
2009	Franklin County Chamber of Commerce-Watermelon Festival	\$1,000.00
2010	Franklin County Arts & Humanities Council - Roxy HVAC	\$10,000.00
2011	Postage	\$8.00
2012	Vina High School -Science lab tables	\$3,750.00
2013	Red Bay News - Newspapers in Education	\$375.00
2014	PCHS Weight Equipment & Handheld sanitizer	\$5,000.00
2015	RMS Helmet Purchase	\$2,500.00
2016	Franklin Co. Sheriff Drone	\$2,500.00
2017	RHS short throw projectors	\$2,500.00
2018	Liberty Learning Foundation	\$4,000.00
2019	East Franklin Jr High Interactive Scoring Table/Chairs	\$2,500.00
2020	RBHS ACT Preparation Materials	\$250.00
2021	Belgreen Elementary Printer for K Classroom	\$800.00
2022	BHS History printer and supplies	\$800.00
2023	Blue Springs VFD Equipment & Radios	\$2,650.00
2024	RBHS Volleyball Equipment/Materials	\$2,500.00
2025	Red Bay Museum Caboose Project	\$4,000.00
2026	Franklin Co Schools Real Care Baby Simulator	\$810.00
2027	City of Russellville Bullet Proof Best/Recorder Sys	\$4,000.00
2028	Postage	\$8.00
	Transfer Future Economic Development	\$24,475.00
TOTAL OF ALL GRANTS AWARDED DURING FISCAL YEAR ENDING 9/30/2020:		\$162,330.51
TOTAL BALANCE REMAINING AS OF 9/30/2020:		\$61,044.89