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**A 'pawpular' pup: Peanut crowned FFP Mutt of the Year**

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When it comes to taking in abandoned, unwanted, injured or abused dogs, Tami Barnes has a heart of gold.

She and her husband Jeff started fostering dogs at their East Franklin home following the April 27, 2011, tornado. They've taken in hundreds of dogs since, finding homes for most while keeping a few.

But Barnes learned there comes a point when you have to say *No*. And that was a difficult lesson to learn.

"The hardest thing for me was to say we can't take anymore. At one time, we had 29 and my husband and I both work full-time jobs and it's

See 'PEANUT,' page 3



COURTESY PHOTO  
Peanut, owned by Tami Barnes, was named the Franklin Free Press' Mutt of the Year for 2021.

**WES repairs nearing completion as students return to school**

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Repairs and renovations at West Elementary School will be '95 percent plus' completed when students return to classes August 11, according to Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes.

After the *Franklin Free Press* was contacted by two local residents concerned about alleged conditions inside WES and delays in repairs, Grimes was asked to give a progress report on the WES project.

The school was damaged from fire in November 2019, with the computer lab receiving the majority of damage, along with significant damage to

the cafeteria.

The *FFP* has previously reported problems Russellville City Schools had with Risk Management, a state agency which serves as the insurance carrier for the system, about the valuation of damages resulting from the November 11, 2019 fire.

Another factor that delayed that process was the directive from the Alabama Building Commission as to what repairs/renovations had to be made. And the long delay made it more difficult to get the project contractors back on site to continue the work.

"When contractors pause their work because of an impasse, it's not

See 'WES,' page 7

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Lula "Elmo" Nix, 84, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Wednesday, July 28th. Interment at Shady Grove Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery.

Geraldine Sparks Spivey, 87, of Russellville, passed away on Sunday, July 25th. Interment at Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

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## 'PEANUT,' from page 1

hard to say no," Barnes said. "But it's one of those things I've had to learn through the years."

A decade ago, after finding a cardboard box filled with seven puppies, Barnes carried them home and began an online search for animal rescue facilities in Alabama. She contacted Rhonda Parker with the Alabama Voters for Responsible Animal Legislation, or AVRAL, and was told about Sweet Paws Rescue in Massachusetts.

Sweet Paws Rescue works with rural counties in Alabama and Mississippi to rescue dogs and cats that would not otherwise have a chance at life. It's a volunteer organization that's rescued more than 15,000 animals since 2011. And Barnes' relationship with Sweet Paws is as strong as ever in 2021.

When she takes in a dog, Barnes works with the agency to find a forever home for each animal. Most are already matched before they are transported to Massachusetts.

Barnes and her husband have 10 dogs of their own, most of which were 'foster fails' due to the animals having physical or emotional issues that make them unable to be placed for adoption.

Included among their pets is Peanut, a one-eyed Chihuahua mix who became the Barnes' first rescue dog after the 2011 tornado.

Peanut was crowned champion in the recent *Franklin Free Press* 'Mutt of the Year' contest. The event saw more than 150 dogs entered by their owners. The back stories of many of these rescued animals are harrowing. They have faced abuse, neglect or abandonment by careless or irresponsible owners.

Without big-hearted residents like the Barnes, these animals' stories would likely have ended in death.

It's not easy to take in a dog with physical or emotional problems. But the Barnes don't mind. They have dogs with one eye, three legs, anxiety and other mental health issues resulting from abuse or neglect.

It's these animals who need love the most, and in most cases, they reciprocate with more love back to their owners.

"They're grateful and know they are really wanted," Barnes said. "They realize they've been through Hell and back but now someone wants to train me, teach me, and trust me to learn to love again."

As a registered nurse at Lakeland Community Hospital, Barnes spends her days caring for her patients. When she gets home, she cares for her pets.

And most of the time, if someone has a dog needing adoption, Barnes will take the dog in and arrange placement with Sweet Paws.

You can contact her on Facebook with questions about animals needing forever homes.

Barnes isn't the only Franklin County resident who works with rescue animals. There are several more who open their homes to foster pets. Sadly, without more pet owners having their animals spayed or neutered, the problem will never go away.

But as long as Barnes and others don't give up on these animals, they'll continue to save as many as they can right here in Franklin County.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

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 September 15, 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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2006 Ford Escape XLS  
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2012 Toyota Yaris  
 JTDKTUD38CD501324



## Who Has Your Ear? A poem by Ann Hill

Rumors are stirring,  
They're spreading all around.  
A virus, they say,  
will bring us all down.

We all should take heed.  
We know it's contagious.  
But to shut the world down  
is totally outrageous.

Who has your ear?  
Is it network TV?  
Or is it propaganda  
From Washington, D.C.?

Our world has been shaken  
By agents of fear.

They're lying and deceiving.  
Who has your ear?

God's word says, 'fear not.'  
To these words we turn.  
There's no other way  
A Christian can discern.

Hold fast to convictions  
In life or in death.  
Our life's in God's hands  
Until the last breath.

Take reasonable precautions  
But don't bow in fear.  
Take heed how you listen.  
WHO HAS YOUR EAR?

## NWSCC to offer plumbing certificate program this fall

Submitted to the FFP

Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) will begin a Plumbing Technology Short-Term Certificate program this fall. The program plans to implement a work-based learning component in the near future.

"There is a growing demand in the plumbing industry nationwide, and we are excited to offer this training for our local workforce," said NW-SCC President Dr. Glenda Colagross. "We hope to take this program and grow it into a successful work-based learning opportunity with the help of our local business and industry."

The Plumbing Technology Short-Term Certificate program trains individuals to practice as licensed plumbers for residential and commercial environments. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters is projected to grow four percent from 2019 to 2029.

NW-SCC plans to develop a plumbing work-based learning model to mirror the Power5 HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Program. The Power5 HVAC is the first nationally-recognized competency-based HVAC apprenticeship program in Alabama. It combines an Associate of Occupational Technology Degree (AOT) in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology and two years of paid industry experience.

During the fall semester, NW-SCC will offer Introduction to Plumbing, PLB 111, and Plumbing Applications, PLB 112.

For more information or to register for plumbing classes, contact Randy Corsbie, NW-SCC HVAC instructor, at 256-331-5202 or email [rcorsbie@nwscce.edu](mailto:rcorsbie@nwscce.edu).

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to visit us online at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)!

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## FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

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### Correction Policy

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

### Letters to the editor

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... An opportunity of a new day!

Hi everyone!

Isn't life interesting? Some of you will agree with me that it is. We are the ones who appreciate waking up to another day of life! It doesn't matter if there is a lot to do or very little that needs done because we are the lucky ones. God has given us a new day.

If we decide to get out and run errands or visit the elderly or even drive to town, we will have signs to direct us to where we are going. In my case, it isn't always a road sign.

Oh no, I use objects or eating places. In other words, objects that could possibly move after giving directions.

Years ago, I gave a maintenance man directions to my house. I asked if he knew where the bootleg trailer used to be. Well, he didn't! Well, I did say off the four-lane.

I finally listed names of people who lived on the same road. He didn't know any of them either. Oh my goodness. This was going to be more complicated than I thought.

After only five minutes or a little more, I got him on the road to my house. Then all he needed to know was the big house with all the trees in the yard. That should have been simple enough. Oh no, he went and asked the left or right side of the road. My final direction was he couldn't miss it because a red Cavalier was sitting in the driveway. It had been there all week, but my son decided to



Gail Motes

go down the road and see a friend for a minute. Well, guess who showed up "after" the car was gone? I think you know.

Things like that would happen a lot until I learned the correct ways of giving directions. Road numbers did make it simpler for people who didn't know where the bootlegger lived and the house with the trees in the yard.

When I go to the same places quite often, I find myself using objects to park by. This was a mistake last Sunday. I had pulled into the church parking lot to park under a tree for shade.

Something looked different, but I couldn't figure it out. I kept driving in the half round circle drive and was almost back on the highway. I'd turned off on. Well, that was strange.

Then, I realized the problem. Of all things, the tree had been removed; stump and all. I had to back-up into the church driveway. Now, I was parked!

God gave me the opportunity to begin an interesting day. For that, I was very thankful!

If you are reading this article; then you are a lucky person. God has given you more time on this beautiful landscape and all the wonders of nature and beauty to appreciate.

Take advantage of every moment. You might not see tomorrow.

I'll catch you again next week if I'm blessed with another opportunity.

Enjoy today! As always, I will lay aside my pen — until later.

Email us at [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).





## ALEA hosting boating license class at Russellville fire station

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency will host an Alabama Boating License Class on August 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6-10 p.m., each night.

The free course will be held at the Russellville Fire Station #1, 1100 Jackson Ave. South. Participants must attend both nights in order to receive their boater education certificate. Earning that certificate is a prerequisite to obtaining a vessel license in Alabama.

The course will be taught by troopers Pat Weldon and Brad Lindsey. Any motorized boat operator age 12 or older must complete a boater safety course and carry his or her boater education card.

A vessel license, often called an Alabama boating license, serves as the required proof of boater education for the operator of a motorized boat.

In order to get a vessel license, you must bring proof of the completed boater certification course to the Department of Public Safety's Driver's License Examining Office, complete an application, pay the required fee and answer the medical questions.

Once that is complete, the applicant will take the completed form to the Probate Office to have the required "V" class placed on his or her driver's license.

Weldon said the class is open to anyone interested in obtaining a vessel license, as well as those who already have a vessel license but want a refresher course on boating safety.

"They are welcome to come and sit in the class. That's no problem at all," Weldon said.

Online boating license classes often come with a fee that can reach \$50, as compared to this course which is offered at no cost to participants.

For more information, email Trooper Lindsey at [bradley.lindsey@alea.gov](mailto:bradley.lindsey@alea.gov).

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# What's Happening

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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

Volunteers are needed with Kindred Hospice. Come and serve your community in a way that meets your goals and time availability. Contact: Kay Holt, LBSW, VC or Kimberly Mansfield, VC @ Kindred Hospice 256-764-0873.

You're invited to Mountain Valley Hee Haw, every Saturday evening from 6-10 p.m. Open mic with Hee Haw Band. Travis Wammack will perform July 17 and August 14. Supper Night is held every 3rd Saturday night. Bring a covered dish. Karaoke begins each Saturday night at 10 p.m. Hee Haw is located on Highway 79, just east of Hwy. 243. For more information, call 256-810-4840.

Russellville, First Baptist Church, 213 Jackson Avenue, North will celebrate 154 years with Homecoming Service on Sunday, August 15, 2021, at 10:30 a.m. Our speaker will be Dr. Rick Lance, Executive Director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; music by former RFBC member, Paul Lynch, Gainesville, Georgia. Bro. Chase Dowdy is Pastor, (256-332-2065).

The Association Ladies Conference will be held on Saturday, August 14, 2021, at McMurray Baptist Camp, 5315 Old Vina Road, Vina, AL., from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. This year's theme is "Bloom Where You Are Planted." Please join us for an inspirational and fun day with special speakers and music. Bring your favorite salad to share for lunch. Our mission project: Please bring diapers and wipes to be donated to Safeplace.

Registration for Phil Campbell Elementary School will begin Wednesday, July 28, with New Student Registration from 8-12 in the Counselor's office. Back to School Night will be Thursday, August 5, with Pre-K, K and 1st grade at 4 p.m., 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade at 5 p.m., and 5th and 6th grade at 6 p.m. Class lists will be posted on Friday, July 30.

Tharptown Elementary School will hold registration beginning July 28, 2021. New Student Registration (Grades 1-6) - Wednesday, July 28 - 12:00 - 3:00 (Only for students who are not currently enrolled in Tharptown Elementary) . Kindergarten Registration - Thursday, August 4 - 12:00 - 3:00 (Only for incoming kindergarten students who have not previously registered. Meet the Teacher - Thursday, August 5 - 5th & 6th grade at 3:00, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th grade at 4:00, and Pre-K, K, and 1st grade at 5:00.

Evangelist Roy Midgett of Norfolk, Va., will be at God Cares For You Worship Center in Russellville on August 6-8, with day and night services. Everyone is invited and come expecting a miracle. The church is located at 207 Marion St. SW in downtown Russellville.

A free Alabama Boating License Class will take place August 10 and 12, from 6-10 p.m., each night, at the Russellville Fire Station #1, 1100 Jackson Ave. S. The class is open to the public but you must be 12 or older to attend. Upon completion of the course, participants will receive a boater certification course certificate that is required to obtain a vessel license in Alabama. For more information, email Trooper Brad Lindsey at [bradley.lindsey@alea.gov](mailto:bradley.lindsey@alea.gov).

Red Bay School will hold Pre-Registration for lockers and parking decals on July 29, 2021 in the school auditorium. Locker fee is \$15 and Parking Decal \$10. Students who drive need to bring their drivers license to the Pre-Registration. 12th grade from 8-8:45 a.m. 11th grade from 8:45-9:30 a.m. 10th grade from 9:30-10:15 a.m. 9th grade from 10:15-11 a.m. 8th grade from 11-11:45 a.m. 7th grade from 11:45-12:30 p.m.

Belgreen School will host Back to School Night on August 5, 2021. First and Third Grades at 5 p.m. Fourth and Fifth Grades at 5:30 p.m., and Kindergarten, Second and Sixth Grades at 6 p.m.

Russellville Masonic Lodge 371 will be selling Boston Butts during the Watermelon Festival weekend. Butts are \$30 each and may be pre-ordered by calling 256-810-1970. Pickup will be Saturday, August 21, from 8-10 a.m., at the Masonic Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

Jonesboro Baptist Church will host Homecoming on Sunday, August 8. The church is located on Waterloo Road north of Russellville. Preaching at 11 a.m. Lunch at 12 and Singing by Pam Gardner at 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.

The Why Knot Diner in downtown Russellville will host a Car Show on Sunday, Sept. 12, from 12 p.m.-6 p.m. They have scheduled for Jackson Avenue between Lawrence and Montgomery Streets to be closed during the event. There is a \$10 entry fee for those who want their vehicle to be judged. (Best All Around Car, Truck/SUV, Bike will get trophies) and Race Car & RatRod will receive plaques. We will also have door prizes for those who enter their vehicles. But anyone who doesn't want to pay the entry fee can still bring their vehicles and show them off right along with the rest. Contact Dustin at 256-668-2585 for more info and follow @Why Knot Diner on FB to see posts and updates.

LifeSouth Community Blood Center will host a blood drive at Russellville Hospital on Thursday, August 12, 2021 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. LifeSouth is the primary supplier of blood products to Russellville Hospital. Please contact Deborah Lindsey to schedule an appointment at 256-332-8676 or by email at [deborah.lindsey@russellvillehospital.org](mailto:deborah.lindsey@russellvillehospital.org). Please be sure to bring your photo ID when you donate. Everyone who signs up to donate will receive a free T-shirt, an appetizer card from Texas Roadhouse, a free cookie dough card from Papa Murphy's and a free meal ticket from Russellville Hospital. All

donors will receive a free cholesterol screening. We will also be giving away DOOR PRIZES!

Old fashioned revival at THis Church of God at 77 Mars Hill Road in Phil Campbell. Starts August 15th. Sunday night service begins at 6 p.m. and weeknight services begin at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome!

McLomoe and Turner reunion will be on September 11th at 11 a.m. at Spruce Pine Community Center. Bring covered dishes. Call (256)-324-5288 for more information.

The VFW meeting originally scheduled for this Thursday has been cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic. A meeting at a later date will be scheduled.

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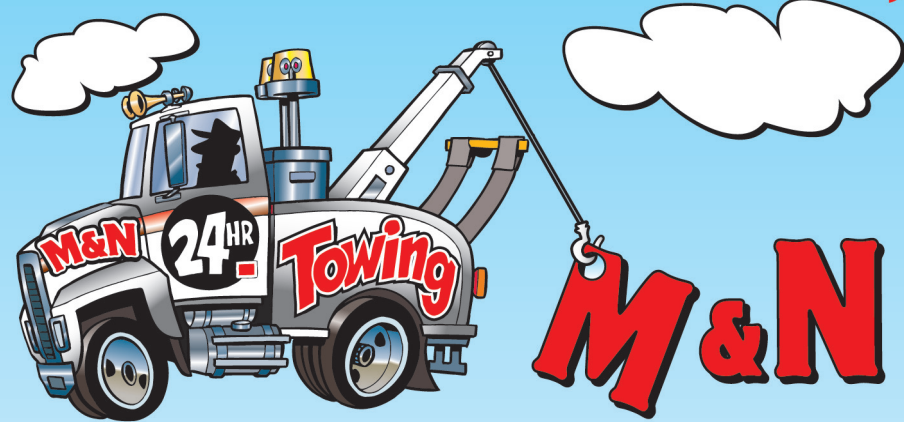


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## 'WES,' from page 1

easy to get back on their list," Grimes told the FFP last year.

Work was to include sealing the thermal envelope above the attic. The thermal envelope is the area where heat rises to and gets trapped. Sealing the envelope can lead to big savings in the cost of operating the HVAC unit.

"We hired an engineer to look at the humidity and condensation issue," Grimes said. "They immediately suggested we seal off the envelope that was above the ceiling grid but was open to outside air. This air during the last two weeks of July always seemed to cause an issue really only during that two to three week window."

Additionally, Grimes said when teachers came into their classrooms during the day and turned down the thermostats it created 'our own dew point.'

"It was fine for them to turn them down. However, they were leaving them set this low, so we created a protocol to set the thermostats in each class back to 74 when the rooms are unoccupied," Grimes said.

"We also added insulation to the roofing when we installed a new one. After implementing these changes, during the period in which we normally have an issue with moisture, we have monitored daily and found none," he added.

One parent, who asked to remain anonymous, expressed concern about mold in the classrooms, something Grimes said is not the case.

"We also are painting the pods as we can, a little at a time, because the older paint holds dust more. Many have confused dust on the vents and walls as mold. So for perception sake, we feel the new paint will improve dust build up high on the walls," Grimes said.

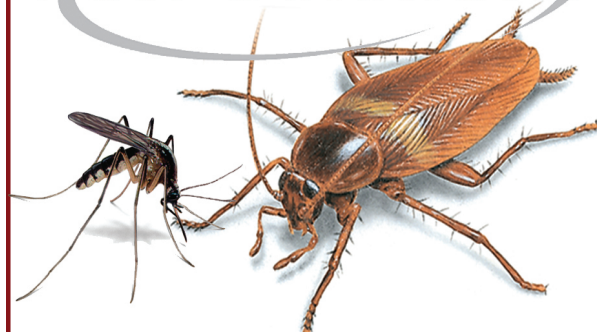
The new 40-ton HVAC unit installed for the cafeteria and many of the hallways has a built-in fresh air system, Grimes said, that became operational last week.

"If we have any more issues we will consider a fresh air installation in each pod (\$50,000) but based on the results we have seen so far we do not need to spend this money to do so," Grimes said.

Although it has been a long repair process at West, the end is finally in sight, the superintendent explained.

"The cafeteria has been a long repair process due to issues with insurance and the building commission as well as local contractors being able to finish the work. However, the repairs will be 95 percent plus completed by the time students return," Grimes said.

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## ISO rating of 2 means lower insurance premiums for Russellville residents

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Russellville residents should be able to enjoy lower home insurance rates as a result of the recent fire rating assigned to the City of Russellville by the Insurance Services Office, or ISO.

The ISO rating is designed to calculate how well equipped a fire department is to put out fires in its specific community. The score, from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best score, is provided to insurance companies and used in their formula to determine homeowners insurance rates.

The Russellville Fire Department, thanks to a team effort with the Russellville Water and Sewer Board and Franklin County 911, received an ISO rating of 2, the second best possible rating.

ISO ratings are the direct result of a fire department's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, which scores from 0 to 105.5. That rating is based on the following percentages:

- 50%: Quality of the local fire department in your area, including levels of staff, training of staff, and proximity of the fire station(s) to the community.
- 40%: Water availability in the area, including number of fire hydrants and how much water is available for extinguishing fires.
- 10%: Quality of the area's emergency communication systems. This includes 911 staffing and systems and how quickly information is dispatched to get a response to emergencies.
- 5.5%: Community outreach, including community education, education about fire prevention and safety, etc.

Scores from 80-89.99 are given Public Protection Classifications, or ISO scores, of 2. The Russellville Fire Department scored an 83.94, solidly in the Class 2 rating. Only 729 fire departments in the United States have a rating of 2, according to RFD Chief Joe Mansell.

"When (Russellville) Mayor David Grissom ran for office, he talked about the importance of teamwork," Mansell said. "This proves teamwork works. This rating results from the combined efforts of the Russellville Fire Department, the Russellville Water and Sewer Board and Franklin County 911."

The department's previous Fire Suppression Rating Schedule score was 81, still resulting in an ISO score of 2, but on the low end of the range.

With an improvement of almost three points from four years ago, Russellville Water and Sewer Board General Manager Eric Hill said this gives local industrial recruiters another way to sell Russellville to prospective companies.

"It's definitely an industrial recruiting tool for our city. We have more than 400 fire hydrants in our service area," Hill said. "We regularly test and flow them. That data is provided to insurance companies and is used to calculate rates.

"Every fire hydrant we have is color coded by its gallons per minute flow.

See 'RATING,' page 9

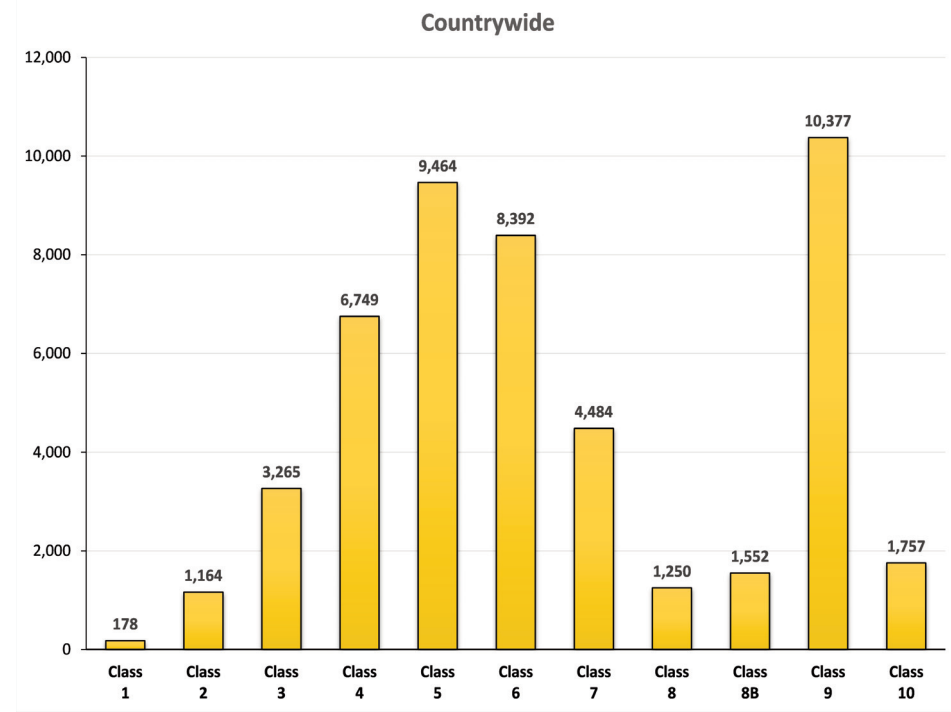


PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.ISOMITIGATION.COM

The Russellville Fire Department received an ISO rating of 2 which is the second-best possible rating on a scale of 1-10 with one being the best.



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## 'RATING,' from page 8

This is a great team effort, where we all came together. We have five or six fire departments touch our system and use our hydrants. When Russellville got a score of 2, it drew a lot of attention and other departments started to ask how they can get there," Hill added.

Franklin County 911 Director Brandon James said the ISO evaluator looks at how long it takes dispatch to answer an emergency call and get it paged out to the department.

"We've got a system now that runs reports specifically for that information. The communications part of this rating is how we come into it," James said. "Also having visible addresses is something we have stressed since we started 911. That's a big part of this."

Mansell, Hill and James gave credit to their employees and to former firefighter and 911 board member Doug Hatton for their efforts and hard work in making the department's ISO rating as low as possible.

Mansell also thanked Grissom and the Russellville City Council for supporting and funding the department in a way that allows for an outstanding ISO score.



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## Russellville, Red Bay get recognition in 2021 ASWA preseason polls

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

With fall right around the corner, that means that the Friday night lights will soon be illuminating skies across Alabama and the rest of the country as high school football will be returning for another season.

Last season saw a very successful campaign for football programs across Franklin County. From Red Bay, to Phil Campbell, to Russellville, multiple programs reached the postseason and other programs put together decent seasons of their own.

And of course with football season fast approaching, that means preview time and preseason polls are emerging and last week, the ASWA (Alabama Sports Writers Association) released their annual AHSAA preseason football rankings and Franklin County had a few schools represented.

Coming in at number ten on the 5A rankings is the Russellville Golden Tigers.

2020 was a very successful season for the Russellville Golden Tigers and head coach John Ritter, who enters his fourth season as the head coach for Russellville, as they managed to reach the 5A quarterfinals with a record of 10-3 before falling to Ramsay.

The Golden Tigers will once again play in the 5A region 8 with the likes of Mae Jemison, Brewer, Lawrence County, Ardmore, East Limestone and Lee Huntsville. Last season, the Golden Tigers

See 'ASWA,' page 13

## Signing up for the future



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

Barnwell, left, signed with Bevil State Community College while Baker, right, signed with Calhoun Community College.

Brady Petree  
 Franklin Free Press

PHIL CAMPBELL - Austen Baker and Luke Barnwell have accomplished just about everything there is to accomplish during their high school baseball careers. From setting records (both at the school and state levels), to winning a state championship, they have certainly done their part in leaving a lasting imprint on the Phil Campbell baseball program.

And as fall nears, it becomes time for them to

say goodbye to the black and gold uniforms that they've worn with pride for many years, and say hello to a new challenge in their careers in college.

Both Baker and Barnwell signed alongside one another on Sunday in the Phil Campbell High School library in front of teammates, coaches, family and friends to continue their careers on the diamond at the next level.

Barnwell, who signed with Bevil State Community College, made sure to give thanks to those that got him to this point while also pointing

See 'FUTURE,' page 12



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# 'FUTURE,' from page 11

out the personal significance of signing at the same table as his teammate and friend.

"It's very exciting. I'm thankful because I couldn't have made it here without all my teammates, coaches and family. I'm just ready to get to work," Barnwell said. "It's very special because Austen and I have been teammates since we were five years old and so for everything to come to an end in this way is pretty special."

When he looks back in a few years on his senior team that brought home the state title, while there will certainly be multiple aspects one could point to as memorable, Barnwell says there's one in particular that he'll always remain fond of.

"Obviously as a team you're going to have your ups and downs over the season. But the way we played together game in and game out just speaks to the chemistry this team had," Barnwell said. "We all complemented each other so well throughout with our styles of play that we just understood each other and that chemistry is what I'll remember most."

In his senior campaign, Barnwell slashed .356/.445/.450 with nine doubles and 36 RBI in the leadoff spot for the Bobcats, prior to the state championship game.

When it came time for his recruitment process to get underway, of course Barnwell was drawing a considerable amount of interest, especially as the starting shortstop for a state championship team. But what drove his commitment to Bevil was the fact that he felt as though the coaches and program wanted him most of all.

"It (Bevil) is really close to home and coach Garner just got the job down there and I was one of the first players that he reached out to when he took over," Barnwell said. "So I went down and he showed me around and it just felt like home to me. It felt really special that I was one of the first players he reached out to and you want to go somewhere where you feel wanted and I really felt that way there."

For Baker, who signed on with Calhoun Community College on Sunday, leaving his alma mater and his teammates while continuing his career is of course bittersweet.

But at the same time, Baker says he is excited for the challenges that await him in the next phase of his academic and athletic career.

"I'm a little sad leaving Phil Campbell because it's my hometown. But at the same time I'm also excited and I'm ready to go and see what real life is all about and get college life underway," Baker said.

Like Barnwell, the one thing Baker will take away from his time as a Bobcat revolves around the experiences and memories he made with his teammates.

And no matter what happens, they'll always be remembered as state champions.

"I'll always remember just going to practice everyday and grinding out every single day with my best friends. We made so many memories that will last forever and we were able to accomplish something that's never been done before here at Phil Campbell," Baker said. "When we come to our ten-year reunion, we'll still be state champions and we'll still have that banner hanging up and it's just something I'll never forget."

Part of a historically potent offense that scored over 500 runs (only the 4th team in AHSAA history to surpass that mark), Baker was a crucial part of that lineup often batting in the heart of it. Going into the state championship series against Bayside Academy, Baker slashed .415/.534/.711 with eight home runs and 59 runs driven in.

So safe to say that Baker is an offensive-minded guy. Something that played into his decision when it came time for him to decide on where to play in college.

"I really like the coaches and their philosophy. They really like to swing the bats there and I like to swing it so I kind of just felt like it was the perfect fit for me," Baker said.

Jonathan Raper, head coach of the Bobcats varsity baseball program, has worked with both Barnwell and Baker for years and the one thing that stands out is the work ethic that the both of them possess.

"Both of these guys are hard-workers and will give you everything they've got. You know they're both going to show up and you don't have to worry about them. They're just great young men and they both deserve it," Raper said.

"They both have been with us for a while now. Austen has been with us since the 7th grade and Luke since the 10th grade. They have put in a lot of hard work to get here and I'm glad it's paid off for both of them."

When it comes time for them to settle in at the college level, Raper has no doubt that the two of his most-recent signees will be able to adapt to any role thrown at them.

"Both of these guys are different players. Austen was a little bit of a utility guy that played multiple positions for us and I feel like he will be in college as well. Luke can play middle infield and even outfield for sure if needed," Raper said.

See 'FUTURE,' page 15



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**'ASWA', from page 11**

managed to outscore their regional opponents by a margin of 244-46. Russellville will undoubtedly try to replicate the start to this season from last year as the Golden Tigers managed to shut out their first three opponents on the schedule (not including the forfeit by Deshler) and outscoring them 128-0.

The Golden Tigers will kick off their 2021 season with three straight home games starting with Decatur (August 19th) followed by Deshler (August 27th) and Mae Jemison (September 3rd).

Non-region games for the Golden Tigers include Decatur, Deshler and Hartselle and Madison Academy.

Red Bay was the only other team in Franklin County to garner recognition on the preseason polls. While the Tigers didn't crack the top 10, they were right on the outside looking in as they received 33 points, just ten shy of tenth place Falkville.

Of course it is a new regime in place for the Tigers this season as former head coach Michael Jackson left to take over as the head coach at St. John Paul II High School.

Heath Childers takes over as the new head coach for the Tigers and will have a bit of work cut out for him in his first campaign as there figures to be a decent amount of turnover in the Tiger program after seeing a plethora of talent depart via graduation.

Nevertheless, Red Bay has boasted one of the top football programs in northwest Alabama over the past decade and figures to boast a solid squad again.

The Tigers open up their 2021 season with a road trip on August 20th to face the Hamilton Aggies followed by a bye week before opening up region play against Lexington on the road.

A tough region for the Tigers consisting of the aforementioned Lexington Golden Bears along with Sheffield, Hatton, Colbert County, Tharptown and the defending state champion Mars Hill, the Tigers will look to contend in one of the toughest high school football regions in Alabama.

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## 'FUTURE,' from page 12

Looking on in the crowd as a proud parent and coach, was Kevin Barnwell who is the head football coach at Phil Campbell as well as the father of Luke and coached both his son and Baker on the football team.

And as a father, Kevin Barnwell knew for a very long time that his son was destined to be on the diamond.

"I'm very proud because of his work ethic that he has. When he was a little kid, I was never one of those dads that pushed him. In the evenings, I would get home and he would meet me at the truck with his glove and my glove. And there was never a time I said no to him. And that's why it's so good to see him accomplishing things like this because it's always been his passion," Barnwell said.

"Of course he played football for me but at the same time, ever since he was a kid and I was a young man, he's always wanted to play baseball. I used to play slow-pitch softball and he would come with me to every tournament and he would sleep in the dugouts so he learned at an early age how to play the game."

Echoing Raper's sentiment, Kevin Barnwell knows that both Luke and Austen will carry over the work ethic and dedication that made them state champions as their college careers get underway.

"Both of these guys are unbelievable. The level of work ethic and dedication is amazing with these two. They never talk about it either, and that's one thing we're talking about with our program right now, "don't talk about it, be about it". And these guys don't talk about it, but I promise you that they'll be the two hardest workers on their teams," Barnwell said.

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Corrections Officer/Dispatcher

Custodian/Housekeeper/Groundskeeper at Courthouse

Solid Waste Technician

in the Franklin County Commission Office until 5:00 P.M. on Friday, July 30, 2021.

An application and job description(s) may be picked up faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N. Jackson Avenue, Monday - Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or applications are available at [www.franklincountyal.org](http://www.franklincountyal.org) under the careers tab.

Franklin County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in the employment or the provision of services.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

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 September 15, 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.

2010 Chevrolet Malibu  
VIN 1G1ZD5EB1AF122487

2021 Kia Forte GT  
vin 3KPF44AC3ME344823





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