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# NW-SCC announces \$30 million capital investment

#### John Pilati Franklin Free Press

When they scheduled a press conference to be held last Thursday, Northwest-Shoals Community College officials promised news of a 'major advancement' for the college.

They didn't disappoint, as NW-SCC Interim President Dr. Chris Cox announced a \$30 million capital project investment over the next 24 months for both the school's Phil Campbell and Muscle Shoals campuses.

Funding for the projects will come from NW-SCC and the Alabama Community College System, including funds from the Alabama Legislature through its recent Public School and College Authority bond

issue.

Cox and officials from ACCS did complete walk-throughs of both campuses and once final designs for renovations are made, they will be presented to the ACCS Board of Trustees for final approval.

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Cox told the *Franklin Free Press* last week that, upon final renovation, the Phil Campbell campus will 'look brand new, with modern, state-ofthe-art classrooms.'

The major capital investment will involve renovation of existing buildings rather than new construction, Cox said.

"Our students are our number one priority and these capital projects will ensure that every classroom offers NW-SCC students a state-of-the-art

See 'INVESTMENT,' page 3



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# Homeless coalition needs shifting to winter items

John Pilati Franklin Free Press

As Franklin County's homeless community continues to grow, the mission of the Russellville Coalition becomes more pronounced.

And with winter just around the corner, the needs of the local ministry are changing.

The Russellville Coalition is an effort of the local community, an outreach of Doug and Betsy Green's Free to Praise Ministry.

Betsy began working on September 1<sup>st</sup> to purchase and fill 30 'survival' backpacks with specialized items to help their recipients survive the winter months. "We are working on buying them, filling them and having them ready by November 1<sup>St</sup>," Green said. "I keep them in my car all winter long. If I ever see someone walking who I've not given a pack to and I can tell they're homeless, I can have one ready to give them."

In an April 2021 interview with the *Franklin Free Press*, Green said Russellville's homeless community is somewhere around 25-30 people, and that number is growing. Couple that with little to no available housing locally and it makes these packs a necessity.

"Last month I ran into so many homeless people and it's not even

See 'COALITION,' page 4





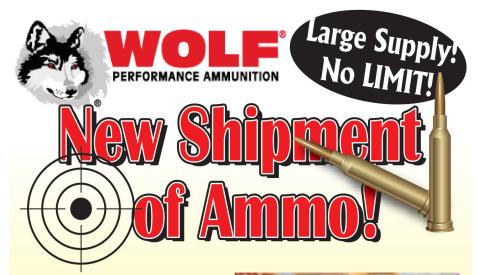
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Mary Ruth Prince Lindsey, 79, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Tuesday, September 21st. Interment at Jonesboro Cemetery.

Sammie James Stanaland Sr., 76, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Friday, September 24th. Interment at Colbert Memorial Gardens.

Luis Antonio Torres, 88, of Phil Campbell passed away on Tuesday, September 21st. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.



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## **'INVESTMENT,' from page 1**

PAGE 3

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

learning environment," Cox said. "It's not about me. It's not about our administrative staff. It's about what happens in our classrooms. That's where the rubber meets the road."

Cox said the capital project will benefit both campuses, with major improvements in Muscle Shoals and Phil Campbell.

"We're going to take care of everybody. We have one college, and we're evaluating every classroom to determine what needs to happen. We're going to make our best efforts to take care of all of it," Cox said.

Cox said repairs to the Phil Campbell campus gymnasium roof are underway, as well as a study to determine whether the floor needs to be replaced.

Last week, in a *FFP* exclusive, Cox announced the return of athletics to NW-SCC, starting with baseball and softball next year. The first step will be to hire an athletic director, followed by coaching hirings.

NW-SCC English instructor Michael McClung spoke at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> press conference, offering his perspective on plans for the major renovation.

"We need a modern, safe facility where our students are proud to go to college," McClung said. "Both campuses must offer state-of-the-art facilities that are as good as or better than students' facilities in high school."

NW-SCC student Jacob Davis, a 2020 Russellville High School graduate, is excited about what's coming for his college, even if it's not finished while he's a NW-SCC student.

"I look forward to what's coming for the next generation of NW-SCC students. I may not see it while I'm here, but I'll see it when the next generation of students graduate and do great things in our community," Davis said.

Cox did not give a specific timetable for the renovations to begin, but said NW-SCC officials have done an extensive evaluation of their budget and finances.

"We're at a place where we should move pretty quickly. We're evaluating the bond market for NW-SCC. Some of the \$30 million depends on what we can do in that market. We have existing debt of about \$3 million and we'll work that in going forward," Cox said.

Rep. Jamie Kiel, a former NW-SCC student and Student Government Association President, said the capital investment, along with the return of athletics, will help recreate a feeling of excitement and community on campus.

"I had a great college experience at Northwest. As the SGA President, I was very involved at the Phil Campbell campus," Kiel said. "At the time, there were a lot of students on campus during the day and our athletics program was great.

"It was more than a place that we went just to class. We learned a lot, but there was a feeling of community and excitement that is missing today. My goal is to see the campus return to what many of us from years ago experienced there," Kiel said.

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## **'COALITION,' from page 1**

cold yet. The thermal ponchos and blankets retain 90 percent of body heat and are water resistant," Green said. "I've had people tell me they had no place to go and in the woods in the middle of winter, and that poncho and blanket literally saved their lives.

"The blanket also shifts into a little tent, and with the poncho, it can get toasty in there, even in the middle of the woods," she added.

Green is often asked by residents how they can support the Russellville Coalition. Right now, the need is for backpacks and the items required to make it through winter. You can donate money for a backpack (the cost of one backpack with contents is around \$85) or donate supplies for the backpacks.

The coalition also supplies local 'trap' houses with toiletries and food, and the need for support and assistance for these monthly supplies is ongoing year round.

Green encourages anyone wanting to help to call her at 256-815-5249 and check which items are needed.

Each winter backpack contains the following: One boggin, two pairs of socks, thermal poncho, refillable plastic water bottle, small roll up blanket, a pair of gloves, a scarf, one thermal blanket, one bottle of water and face masks.

Toiletries that are contained in the backpacks include: Toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, wet wipes, lotion and tissues.

Food items in need include: Soft pouches of chicken and tuna, granola bars with chocolate, MP3 snack boxes and tuna/chicken crackers in the box with a spoon and mayonnaise.

But the Russellville Coalition is about much more than just handing out winter survival backpacks.

"We're more like a hub to facilitate where these people need to go, and provide them assistance and support to start the process of coming out of the situation where they currently are," Green said.

The Russellville Coalition does not give money directly to anyone. Instead, the ministry helps transition people into becoming a responsible, self-sufficient member of their community, regardless of where that may be.

And for those not ready for that transition, the backpacks are a way to help make sure they survive the winter months until they are ready.

The coalition partners with the Homeless Care Council of Northwest Alabama. And Green is working toward becoming certified to use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This is a system designed to specifically find and track the progress and assistance the homeless are receiving in a particular area.

Green said the use of HMIS serves as a way to help qualify for grant funding. Currently, with no system in place to confirm the presence of a homeless community in Franklin County, those funding pathways are very limited.

"If we can bring to light the actual number of homeless people in our area, then when we submit a plan with that number, it will open up to the community funding and grants that would provide tools for them to overcome homelessness, i.e. more houses, emergency services and a transition system," Green said.

Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff said the work of Green's ministry is important because it addresses a problem many residents don't even realize exists in their city.

"With extreme winter weather coming, these backpacks are so important and can help keep someone alive," Woodruff said. "We need our churches to come together in our community and support a 'Room at the Inn' type project."

Woodruff was referencing the Room at the Inn in Florence, a joint project of 46 Shoals churches who provide shelter for the homeless during harsh winter months.

The Russellville Coalition has also partnered with Pilgrim's, Franklin County's largest employer, with a program that helps get people off the street if they are willing to work.

"Through that program, we've already gotten several people off the street since its inception. It's moving right along and I'm real excited about it," Green said.

Donations, payable to the Russellville Coalition, may be mailed to P.O. Box 415, Russellville, Al., 35653. For more information about the Russellville Coalition, email free2praiseministries@yahoo.com.

100 percent of the proceeds go into the ministry. There are no administrative fees or costs taken out of donations.



#### Job Opening Russellville Gas Board (RGB)

Position: Helper (Full-Time) Responsible for: General labor to assist with any function of the operation and maintenance of the Board's facilities as assigned or required. Must have current Alabama Driver's License. Must be able to pass OPS drug test. Fluent English/Spanish speaking preferred. For all inquiries regarding this position or to apply for this position, please contact the Russellville Gas Board by phone at (256) 332-2020 or in person at 1296 Walnut Gate Rd, Russellville, AL 35654 (RGB Office).

Applications for this position will be accepted until Friday 10/15/2021 at 3 PM.

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**EVENTS OF INTEREST - FAMILY REUNIONS - PLAYS - CHURCH GATHERINGS - EDUCATIONAL - CLUB MEETINGS** Foster Parent Training Course will be offered by the Franklin County Department of Human Resources starting Sunday, Sept. 12. The Sunday classes will be from 2-5 p.m., and will end on Sunday, November 14. Foster parent licensing requirements include being 19 years or older, passing a criminal background check for all household members 19 or older, clearance of state central registry on child abuse and neglect for all household members 14 or older, family stability, regular source of income, if married the marriage must be at least one year in duration. For more information, contact Leilani Johnson at DHR at 256-331-5940.

The Russellville Fire Department has started its annual Breast Cancer Awareness T-Shirt Sale fundraiser. Order forms can be picked up at either Russellville Fire Department locations. They are \$15 for short sleeve and \$20 for long sleeve, with an added \$2 for XXL and an added \$3 for XXXL t-shirts. First order will be sent out September 17. But there will be an additional order after that. All proceeds will go to Russellville Hospital fund for those who can't afford to have mammograms done.

Annual yard sale at the Union Community Center at 5988 highway 93, Russellville, AL 35654. Part of a 15 mile sale including Pebble Community Center and highways 81, 93 and 79. October 1st and 2nd starting at 7 a.m. Huge assortment and great prices! A variety of craft items for sale also. 10X10 spaces available to rent. 1st space free, second spot \$10 per day. For more information or to donate items for sale, call Stanley Champion at (256)-436-5296 or Mac Harris at (205)-436-4387.

You are invited to the Holy Ghost Breath of Fresh Air Revival, at My Father's House Church, 104 E. Lawrence St., Russellville. October 6-8, 2021. 6:30 p.m., each evening. Different ministers each evening. Please come and join Pastor Pearl Shelton and Congregation. On Friday, October 8, there will be a Soup/Chili Dinner and a Bouncy House for children.

#### Job Opening Russellville Gas Board (RGB)

Position: Line Locator Responsible for: Identifies, locates, and marks the location of the Board's subsurface utilities in order to minimize accidental damage or disruption of service due to construction excavation activities. Strong computer and technical skills required. Must be able to read and interpret maps and engineering records. Must have current Alabama Driver's License. Must have high school diploma or equivalent. Must be able to pass OPS drug test. For all inquiries regarding this position or to apply for this position, please contact the Russellville Gas Board by phone at (256) 332-2020 or in person at 1296 Walnut Gate Rd, Russellville, AL 35654 (RGB Office). Applications for this position will be accepted until Friday 10/15/2021 at 3 PM.

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# Council approves steps toward bond refinancing

John Pilati Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Council gave preliminary approval authorizing Mayor David Grissom to enter into a bond purchase agreement with Joe Jolly & Company as the first step of a refinance of the city's 2016 general obligation warrants.

The 2016 bond issue, which was for approximately \$7.6 million, has been called, according to Jolly, who addressed the council at its September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

With interest rates at historically low levels, the city has the option to refinance and restructure the debt to spread it out over a longer period of time.

Jolly said the bonds have been called, meaning the issuer may redeem the bonds before they reach the stated maturity date. This, Jolly explained, would mean the city would face a large payment of around \$1 million per year.

With a refinance, the city can lock into a two percent average rate so now is the 'perfect time' to do this, Jolly explained.

The City of Russellville has an "A" rating from Standard & Poor's, so there should be no difficulty selling the warrants (bonds) on the open market, Jolly said.

Additionally, the council authorized the purchase of a bond insurance policy, which would provide for payments to be made in the event of a default by the city. Having such a policy strengthens the bond security on the market, which results in interest rate savings that 'save many times the cost of the policy,' Jolly said.

The council's action authorized Grissom to sign a bond resolution with Joe Jolly & Company, which allows the bonds to be sold subject to ratification by the council at its October meeting.

In other agenda items, the council:

—approved a 3.14% pay raise for full-time and part-time employees and tied the raise to the city's pay scale.

—approved a pay increase for EMTs/Paramedics of \$875/month and \$450/month for Advanced EMT 2s.

—authorized the city clerk to open a checking account at Valley State Bank for the American Rescue Plan Act and to transfer \$1,156.181.88 from the general fund into the account.

—authorized the Russellville Fire Department to apply for a grant from the Alabama Office of EMS Rural Provider for equipment. RFD Chief Joe Mansell said the grant could be up to \$170,000, and would be used to purchase monitors and possibly a new emergency vehicle. The grant is a 75/25 match, meaning the city must match 25 percent of any grant award.

—approved the application for a Retail Beer and Table Wine alcohol license and a Retail Liquor (off-premise consumption) license for Lineco, Inc., d/b/a Yogi's Ballpark, 27534 Highway 24 East.

—recognized Russellville Police Officer Chad Sheffield for his quick response and action responding to a call where a young child was choking on August 11, 2021. Sheffield was presented with the Life Saver Award by Mansell and Mayor Pro-Tempore Gary Cummings.

With RFD and paramedics on the way, Sheffield, who arrived at the child's house first, administered back blows to the child and the blockage was dislodged. Sheffield met emergency crews outside with the child, who was breathing again.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Council is October 4, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting to follow.



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#### Largest budget in city history approved by Russellville council

John Pilati

Franklin Free Press

With sales tax revenue of more than \$4.738 million anticipated for the coming year, the Russellville City Council approved the largest budget in city history at its September 20 meeting.

The council voted unanimously (with Councilman Jamie Harris abstaining) to approve a \$10.198 million budget for FY 2021-22.

Anticipated revenue for FY 2021-22 includes more than \$9.11 million in taxes and fees, \$371,000 in intergovernmental transfers, \$150,500 in fines and forfeitures from the city's municipal court system, \$160,864 in grant revenue, \$211,850 in alcohol tax revenue, \$62,400 in miscellaneous revenue and \$24,926 in library revenue.

The largest revenue source is sales tax, followed by \$1.236 million from the 7.8 Mill ad valorem tax. Revenues also include an estimated \$756,000 tax equivalent payment from Russellville Electric Board, \$200,000 from the Russellville Gas Board and \$295,830 from the Tennessee Valley Authority inlieu-of-taxes.

Privilege license revenue is expected to be \$700,000, and garbage billing revenue will bring in an additional \$672,000.

Russellville Mayor David Grissom expressed his appreciation to City Clerk Belinda Miller for her work preparing the budget.

"Belinda worked on this several months and we've undergone several changes. I also want to thank Shirley McSpadden for her work in preparing the payroll portion of the budget," Grissom said. "Our department heads do a good job being fiscally responsible with funds for their various departments and the efficiency and hard work of all city employees is the heartbeat of our city."

The largest budget by department is the Russellville Police Department, at more than \$2.272 million. Almost \$1.82 million of that amount is budgeted for payroll, overtime, FICA, FICA Medicare, retirement, unemployment payments and insurance for employees and retirees.

The Russellville Street Department is budgeted \$2.04 million, an increase from last year's \$1.91 million, due to the city's garbage collection having started this year under the Street Department umbrella.

The Russellville Fire Department's FY 21-22 budget is \$1.82 million.

Under the expenses of appropriations, the city budget is \$1.20 million, one million of which is the city's appropriation to Russellville City Schools.

The school appropriation decreased by \$112,500 from last year, something that Russellville City Schools Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes said was agreed to as a way to help the city financially this year in light of COVID-19 funding received by the school system.

Council member Darren Woodruff, who voted in favor of passing the budget, said he believes the city should consider increasing the school appropriation in future years.

"I understand the school system agreed to a reduced appropriation this year, but this is something we need to revisit next year and consider an increase in what we appropriate for Russellville City Schools," Woodruff said.

Woodruff also expressed concern about the amount of time council members had to review the budget, after they received it on Friday, September 17.

"I don't have a problem passing our budget but next year I would like to have it more than three days before the meeting in order to have time to adequately go over it," Woodruff said.



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#### Presenting the 2021 Russellville High School homecoming court



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(Left to Right): Leah Rushing, Katherine Sanchez, Nelly Valdez, Arely Mojica, Jayna Poss, Sophie Hill, Tori Tiffin, Madeline Cooper, Sofia Bahena, Ella Burcham, and Hannah Mills (not pictured Laci Beth Scott)





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The Russellville Housing Authority is now accepting bids for Lawncare Service for our 4 developments (Engle Drive, Washington Plaza, Eastside Plaza, and Westside Plaza). All companies considering this proposal are strongly encouraged to physically inspect the properties prior to submitting a bid. The successful bidder shall be required to provide proof of liability insurance and a State license. The Russellville Housing Authority reserves the right to reject any/or all bids if it deems this would be in the best interests of the Authority.

Bids in sealed envelopes clearly marked "Lawn Care Service Bids", should be mailed to the Russellville Housing Authority, P.O. Box 966, Russellville, Alabama 35653, or delivered to 73 Flippen Street, Russellville, Alabama 35653, in time to be opened and publicly read aloud at 10:00 a.m. on October 13, 2021. Bids received after this deadline will not be opened and shall not be considered. Any questions, comments, or requests to schedule a site inspection can contact Deborah Freeman at (256) 332-1561.

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

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## Football in Franklin County: week seven preview

Brady Petree Franklin Free Press

Last week saw all four teams in Franklin County that were playing go outside of their respective regions to square off on Friday night.

Going 1-3 with the lone win coming at the hands of a homecoming victory for the Tharptown Wildcats over Cherokee, county teams will look to right the ship for the most part as most teams resume region play this week.

#### Russellville vs. Ardmore

It's homecoming week at Russellville High School and the Golden Tigers will be hoping to take one step closer to another region championship as they welcome undefeated Ardmore to town as 5A region 8 play returns.

However, despite the undefeated record for the Tigers, three of their five wins have come against opponents at the class 3A level or lower, with only two region wins on their resumé so far.

Ardmore has shown the capability to put up points as they come into this week outscoring their opponents 198-67, which translates to a scoring average of 39.6 points per game. The opposing record for teams that Ardmore has squared off against so far is 18-38 on the season.

The Golden Tigers dropped last week's road game to Hartselle by a 58-21 final to move to 5-1 on the season with their region record still sitting at 3-0 on the season. In 2021, the Golden Tigers have outscored their opponents 232-120, good for a 38.7 points per game scoring average and

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Coming off of a loss to 6A Hartselle, the Golden Tigers are hoping to use the loss as something to build upon as they resume region play this week with sights of a region title getting closer and closer.

wards



The Golden Tigers accumulated more than 300 yards rushing against Hartselle and are looking to *potentially* take control of the lone spot on top of the 5A region 8 standings with a win over Ardmore this Friday night.

Brady Petree Franklin Free Press

Going into last Friday night, Russellville faced a bit of an uphill battle.

On the road against an undefeated perennial 6A powerhouse in Hartselle, the Golden Tigers needed everything to go right in order to pull off the win. And while things went a little south in the second half, the first half of play showed some significant bright spots for the Golden Tigers.

And while winning is always the number one of any team across sports, goal 1B would most-often times be working on things in preparation of a much larger goal.

For head coach John Ritter and his staff last Friday night, focusing on areas of improvement against a formidable opponent was on the forefront.

In the first half, with the Golden Tigers trailing by just a lone point, 17-16, things were looking up in all facets of the game.

"With the exception of a turnover on a kickoff return, we executed our offensive game plan very well. We no play checked every snap and let them tip their hand in terms of blitzes and made them play base defense and we were very successful," Ritter said. "We scored two out of three drives and we really had the game where we wanted it as far as being in the game because we were able to execute. We gave up some big plays early defensively but we settled in and forced an interception. Going into the half we executed to where we gave ourselves an opportunity to get in the second half and really have the game where we almost wanted them."

Coming out of the half, the Golden Tigers weren't able to get much going.

The struggles on offense combined with a few turnovers enabled Hartselle to jump out to a quick and commanding second half lead to seal the win for the Tigers.

"Turnovers killed us in the second half. They score coming straight out of the half and then we throw a pick-six on the second play and so we go from down three to down 17 and it got us out of our game plan and forced us to do some things that we didn't necessarily want to do," Ritter said. "We didn't want to play a fast-paced game against them. We wanted to slow things down like we did in the first half but unfortunately we weren't able to do that."

However, despite the loss, there were some positive things for the Golden Tigers through all four quarters.



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allowing 20 points per game on defense.

Russellville has done very well against Ardmore in albeit a smaller sample size. Across six games, the Golden Tigers have won every matchup dating back to 2014 (with the lone loss in the series coming all the way back in 1937) with the most-recent victory coming in 2020 by a 41-3 final. In the series, the Golden Tigers have also won very overwhelmingly, scoring 227 points (37.8 points per game) in the six matchups, while allowing a measly 48 points (eight points per game).

Phil Campbell at Colbert Heights

If you're looking for a matchup in Franklin County that will most-likely go down to the wire, look no further than Phil Campbell and Colbert Heights this Friday night.

The previous two matchups between the Bobcats and Wildcats have been decided by four points and three points in 2020 and 2019, with the 2019 matchup going into overtime to decide a winner which ended in favor of the Wildcats.

This year's game potentially holds the highest stakes in recent history of

the matchup for the two schools as it is a crucial 3A region 8 game that will most likely determine not only playoff seeding, but could also determine who is on the outside looking in at the end of the season.

Phil Campbell sits at 3-2 on the season following a narrow loss to Haleyville by a 13-12 final while being 2-0 in region

play. The Bobcats have been phenomenal on the defensive side of the ball, allowing just 42 total points on the season through five games for an average of 8.4 points per game.

On the offensive side of things, the Bobcats have

been solid as well. Across the five games to date, Phil Campbell has scored 131 points or a 26.2 points per game average.

Colbert Heights sits at .500 with a record of 3-3 (2-1 in region play) coming into this week after being shut out by Colbert County 25-0, with the only region loss for the Wildcats coming to Danville.

The numbers for the Wildcats don't appear favorable as they have scored an average of 16 points per game (96 total) and are allowing an average of 22.3 points per game (134 total) on the year.

The all-time series between Phil Campbell and Colbert Heights has been about as close to evenly-matched as one can get, as the Bobcats hold a slight series lead with 14 wins and 13 losses. Phil Campbell won last year's meeting 34-30 to give them the edge in the series.

#### Red Bay vs. Sheffield

Playing in one of the toughest regions in Alabama, Red Bay will look to go over .500 in terms of their region record as they square off with Sheffield this week.

Coming off a 21-0 loss to longtime rival Belmont (MS), Red Bay sits at 1-3 through the first six weeks of the season as they have had three bye weeks wedged between those six weeks.

The lone win on the season for the Tigers came against region opponent Tharptown on September 17th by a 54-7 final.

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For an offense that has been fairly balanced both in terms of the passing and rushing games, the Golden Tigers were able to utilize the run game to their advantage, amassing over 300 yards of rushing against a Hartselle team that as recently as September 24th was ranked in the top-5 6A teams in the state.

With the developments in the passing game this season, combined with the resurgence of the run game, the Golden Tigers offense is trending in a very good direction.

"On the positive side we rushed for 300 yards against a really good Hartselle team. They took T.J. away by guarding him with one guy underneath, one guy over the top and still had the cornerback covering him so they really gave us the run game," Ritter said. "So we really identified some things that we weren't sure that we would be able to do. The offensive line played a big part in that run game and that's very positive for us moving forward."

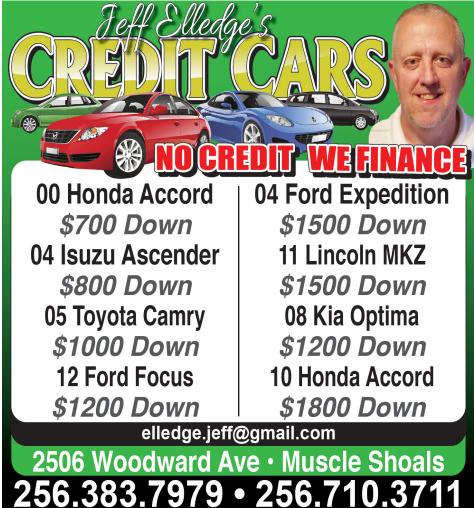
Of course it might be easy to let a big loss affect a team in a negative way. However, the good things that Ritter and his staff noticed in the game, both tangible and intangible alike, are things that Russellville is hoping will be something to build on as they continue on their quest for a second-straight region title.

"We identified things in all three phases of the game that we need to work on and that was really the goal of playing a high-caliber 6A school. But on the flip side, I thought our attitude, our effort and everything was phenomenal even though we were down 21 pretty much the entire second half," Ritter said. "Our kids didn't quit, they kept playing hard and trying to claw back into it but you can't get down 28 points to a really good 6A team."

With homecoming this Friday night, keeping his squad focused on the task at hand as an undefeated Ardmore team comes to town will be the primary concerns this week for Ritter and his staff.

And as mentioned above, the Golden Tigers aren't content with *just* making the playoffs. Winning every region game en route to a region title is of the utmost importance to the Golden Tigers and they can get one step closer to that goal with a win on Friday night.

"I hope this week is very focused. It's homecoming and there are a lot of distractions. We told our guys last week after the Hartselle game that the game is last for a reason. If the homecoming game wasn't the most important thing, we would play Monday at three and then have festivities all week long," Ritter said. "It's a very important game because it's the next one and it's a very important game because it's a region game. Our number one focus is repeating as region champs and in order for us to do that, we have to win all of our region games to where we don't have to depend on anyone else. It's a rebound game based on the standpoint that we've got to do some things better than we did against Hartselle and make sure that we take this week to prepare and put ourselves in a position to be successful."





#### Dawson Higgins Sophomore, Running Back Tharptown

Higgins carried the ball ten times for the Wildcats to led Tharptown to a homecoming victory over Cherokee by a 64-0 final. Those ten carries totaled 134 yards (13.4 yards per carry) to go along with four touchdowns on the night for the sophomore running back to help improve the Wildcats to .500 on the season.



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Across those four games played by the Tigers, they are averaging 21 points per game (84 total) while allowing 25.5 points per game (102 total).

Sheffield sits at 1-5 on the season and will be looking to notch their first region victory of the 2021 season. The 2021 season has not been kind to the Bulldogs as they are averaging just 12.2 points per game (73 total) on offense while allowing a staggering 35.3 points per game on defense (212 total).

Dating back to 2018, the Tigers have won every matchup against the Bulldogs including last year's 40-20 victory. All-time, the Tigers control the series at 7-4.

#### Vina at R.A. Hubbard

The Red Devils take on R.A. Hubbard this Friday night in a bout between 1A region 8 opponents. Vina comes into this week at 0-5 on the season while R.A. Hubbard sits at 3-2 on the year with a region record of 3-0.

Vina has been outscored on the season 174-22 while the Chiefs have outscored their opponents 118-97.

The all-time series has been largely in favor of the Chiefs as they hold the series record with 12 wins and one loss. The Red Devils most recent victory in the series came back in 2015 in which they won 16-6.

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## Franklin Free Press Football Ricks Contest

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Arkansas	Georgia	
Wisconsin vs. Michigan	Michigan	
Notre Dame vs. Cincinnati	Cincinnati	
Alabama vs. Ole Miss	Alabama	
Oklahoma St. vs. Baylor	Oklahoma St.	
LSU vs. Auburn	Auburn	
UCLA vs. Arizona St.	Arizona St.	
Missouri vs. Tennessee	Tennessee	
Texas A&M vs. Mississippi State	Texas A&M	
Kentucky vs. Florida	Florida	
Tiebreaker Score: Your Name:	Louisville	Wake Forest
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