

**CAROL MURPHREE**

Board of Education  
District 4  
November 8, 2022

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## Commission okays \$14.3M budget with employee raises

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission approved a \$14.377 million budget for fiscal year 2022-23 at a special called meeting Friday morning.

The county's annual budget falls into three parts: General Fund (which includes the Franklin County Sheriff's Office), Solid Waste Department and Highway Department.

The general fund is budgeted for \$8.422 million. All Franklin County employees will receive a \$1 per hour

raise as well as any step raises due in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Additionally, although there was a 6.4% increase in health insurance premiums for county employees, the county will absorb that increase in the upcoming budget.

Four jobs will be reclassified: Emergency Management Director, Assistant EMA Director, Maintenance Supervisor and Housekeeper/Groundskeeper/Custodian.

The Franklin County Solid Waste Department 2022-23 budget is \$2,684 million.

See 'BUDGET,' Page 5

## Amendment 2 on Nov. 8th ballot critical for broadband

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When the Franklin County Commission pledged \$5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds for broadband expansion in rural Franklin County, there was one big caveat: The funds would be allocated only after the commission received confirmation that broadband build out was a legal and authorized way to spend these COVID-19 federal funds.

An amendment on Alabama's November 8, 2022, ballot would give commissioners that confirmation if Alabama voters approve proposed Constitutional Amendment Number

2. Amendment 2 will be one of 10 amendments voters will consider on November 8th. Amendment 2 will be decided by all Alabama voters and if a majority vote 'yes,' it will be clear that the state, a county or a municipality may use federal funds or other state funds to any public or private organization to expand access to high-speed Internet (broadband).

The amendment reads as follows: Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to authorize the state, a county or a municipality to grant federal award funds or any other source of funding designated for broadband infrastructure by state law to public or private

See 'AMENDMENT,' Page 14

By Henry Marcus

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*Barbara E. Weeks, 69, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Saturday, September 24, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.*

*Philip Allen Cosby, 52, of Phil Campbell, passed away on Saturday, September 24, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.*

*Rebecca Ann Brasuell, 67, of Russellville, passed away on Monday, September 26, 2022. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.*

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The Franklin County Commission is accepting applications for the following position(s):

### **Corrections Officer/Dispatcher(s) for Franklin County Sheriff's Office and Jail**

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Friday, October 14, 2022.

### **Heavy Equipment Operator for Franklin County Solid Waste**

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Friday, October 14, 2022.

An application and job description 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 AM to 5:00 PM or applications are available at [www.franklincountyal.org](http://www.franklincountyal.org) under the Careers tab.

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## **Franklin Free Press**

113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653  
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## **Despite push for gambling legislation, Kiel remains steadfastly opposed**

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Since the United States Supreme Court overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act four years ago, legalized betting on sports has increased by more than 2000%.

After the decision, which opened the door to states legalizing sports betting, 30 states have moved forward with some form of sports wagering, and 10 more state governments have plans to do so.

But Alabama remains in the group of 15 states who have a ban on sports wagering and the Alabama Legislature seems unlikely to ever see a majority support specific legislation to allow state-sanctioned sports betting.

According to a study from the Consumer Choice Center, a consumer advocacy group supporting lifestyle freedom and consumer choice in government at all levels, the illegal sports betting market in states like Alabama remains strong, with an estimated \$50-\$200 billion in revenue two years ago.

CCC advocates contend the key to eliminating the massive illegal sports betting market is for states like Alabama to legalize sports wagering in an open and competitive market.

But Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville) doesn't share that opinion, as he remains opposed to legalizing state-operated sports wagering. And he doesn't expect to change his position in the future.

"I don't think the state needs to be in the gambling business," Kiel said. "You can make the same argument on gambling, legalizing marijuana, prostitution or any other illegal activity. But the question is does the state want to participate in those types of activities and the answer for me is 'No.'"

Kiel said any gambling proposal would have to be approved by Alabama voters, and he believes there's only one possible proposal that could see a majority of voters support it.

"I think a straight lottery bill would probably pass. Alabamians don't want casinos on every corner. Casino interests have not allowed the lottery to come up for a vote without full casino legislation attached and that remains the battle," Kiel said. "The battle is overcoming the casino interests to get a straight education lottery referendum on the ballot."

The CCC's argument is that legalization of sports betting would help 'stamp out' the presence of illegal sports wagering, which remains a strong presence in Alabama.

"Alabama should immediately legalize sports betting, and do so in a way that opens the market and encourages competition," said CCC North American Affairs Manager David Clement. "Through low taxation and healthy competition, the legal sports betting market has exploded in states like New Jersey, which has generated \$229,109,885 in state tax revenue and \$1,815,719,871 in sports book revenue since the legal market was launched. The reasons for New Jersey's success are simple: they keep taxes low on sports books, mobile sports betting has become a priority and while there is government oversight, most of the industry is run by commercial sports books. This could easily be replicated in Alabama," he added.

The CCC's new report ranks Alabama 50th in an evaluation of all states as to how consumer friendly their sports betting markets are. And that's a good, or bad, thing depending on who you ask.

"Generally, I think there's more harm than good in gambling when you look at the cost of the social issues it causes," Kiel said.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey appointed a panel two years ago to study how much the state could receive in revenue from legalized sports wagering. That panel found that an estimated 21% of Alabamians wager more than \$2 billion annually through illegal offshore betting sites or through local bookies. Most of that estimated \$2 billion comes through mobile betting sites or apps. The Governor's Study Group on Gambling Policy recommended the state create a legalized option to regulate mobile/online wagering and create a system to "capture tax revenue" for the state.

Kiel's comments about the power and influence of casino interests in Alabama, including the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, which operate under the name Wind Creek Hospitality.

With the tribe's already-existing powerful presence in Alabama casino gaming, it will continue to have a voice of influence in what direction Alabama's gambling future moves.

A bill introduced in 2021 cleared the Alabama Senate that would have allowed Alabamians to vote on a Constitutional Amendment to create a lottery and sports wagering legislation while authorizing up to nine sites to operate casino-style table games. The legislation would also have authorized the governor to enter into a compact with the tribe to "share" a portion of its revenue with the State of Alabama. Sen. Larry Stutts (R-Tuscumbia) was among nine senators who opposed the legislation.

The 2021 legislative session ended without a vote in the Alabama House of Representatives on that bill, SB 319.

The sponsor of that bill, Sen. Greg Albritton (R-Excel), told Alabama Public Television earlier this year "we have the votes in the House and Senate to pass these bills," but he was told by House leadership not to bring it up this year. Since any gambling bill would require a Constitutional Amendment and statewide vote, that bumps the prospect of sports wagering legislation back to at least 2024.

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letters to the editor and  
other creative submissions  
to  
[franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

# Dedication for Belgreen, Frankfort markers set for Friday, Oct. 7

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Russellville may be the largest and best-known city in Franklin County, as well as the county seat, but it wasn't always that way.

And two historical markers will soon be unveiled, with one celebrating the history of Belgreen and the other recognizing Frankfort.

The Franklin County Commission purchased the two markers after Franklin County Archives Director Chris Ozbirn handled the filing and paperwork with the State of Alabama in order to get the markers approved, and the wording that will appear on the plaques.

"The commissioners and I believe it's important for our citizens to know and appreciate local history," Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said. Both Frankfort and Belgreen played important roles in our county's history. "We also appreciate Chris doing all the work on this project to get this established," Moore added.

Both towns, Belgreen and Frankfort, served as the county seat for Franklin County in the 1800s. The two historical markers will be unveiled on Friday, October 7, starting at 10 a.m., in Belgreen. The marker will be placed at Belgreen School. The Frankfort ceremony to unveil its marker will be at 12 p.m. The public is invited to attend the dedications.

Franklin County was created on February 4, 1818. When the county came into existence, it was massive, spanning more than 1,200 square miles, from today's Franklin/Marion County line north to the Tennessee River, according to Ozbirn.

There were only two towns in Franklin County in 1818, Russellville and Big Springs, so Russellville was selected to be the first county seat. A log courthouse and jail were constructed. Russellville remained the county seat until 1849, when Franklin County voters approved a measure to move the county seat to a more central location.

That location was named Frankfort and it served as the county seat until 1879. A brick courthouse and jail were constructed.

There was an ongoing effort by residents in north Franklin County to separate and create a new county. On February 6, 1867, Colbert County was formally created through an act of the Alabama Constitutional Convention. Colbert County entailed a 570-square mile area.

But residents of the new Colbert County weren't pleased with the new county, so on November 29, 1867, Colbert County was abolished and returned to Franklin County.

Two years later, on December 9, 1869, it was once again organized into Colbert County.

Franklin County residents, who likely were fed up with their northern neighbors' indecision, voted to make Belgreen the new county, as it was considered the 'center of the county,' Ozbirn explained.

A wood frame courthouse was constructed by Mr. Dooley (no first name known) and the jail construction done by Mr. William M. Rollins.

Jesse Amos Bolton certified and laid out the town of Belgreen. His great, great, great grandson, John Starnes, will travel from his home in Texas to attend the October 7th dedication ceremonies.

On December 4, 1890, the Belgreen courthouse and its contents were destroyed by fire. This included the loss of all county records as well.

Another election saw voters choose between Russellville and Isbell for the location of the new county seat. The close race saw Russellville receive 1,228 votes to Isbell's 1,147.

A three-story brick courthouse was soon constructed under the supervision of contractor John Barrett. It was located at the corner of Limestone Street and Jackson Avenue.

A fire destroyed this courthouse on January 13, 1953, but the county records were saved.

A limestone courthouse was constructed with 52 rooms and five vaults. That building still stands today.

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## **'BUDGET,' from page 1**

The budget includes an increase from \$16 per ton to \$25 per ton for disposing of inert garbage (construction and debris) at the Franklin County Landfill.

This does not apply to household garbage, which is not deposited into the county's landfill. Instead, it's held in a transfer station and taken to Hillsboro to Morris Farms Landfill. That process will not change.

The \$25 per ton cost includes a \$1 fee to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Individuals who bring inert waste weighing 800 pounds or less will continue to pay a \$10 fee. Deposits of inert waste more than 800 pounds but less than 2000 pounds (one ton) will be charged on the tonnage rate.

Probate Judge Barry Moore expressed his appreciation to the Franklin County Commission, the commission office staff and county department heads for their work in preparing the 22-23 budget.

"I want to thank the county commission, our department heads and Leah Mansell, our Franklin County Administrator, for their hard work in recent weeks helping us get through the budgeting process," Moore said.

"We wanted to help our employees with a raise because of their hard work. And with inflation going up like it is, it's important to support our county employees now more than ever," Moore added.

The FY2022-23 Reappraisal budget is 1,025,040.75. That proposed budget, already approved by the commission, will be sent to the State of Alabama for final approval.

Capital outlay items for the Sheriff's Office will be purchased through the Sheriff's Office, and capital outlay items for the Highway Department and Solid Waste Department will run through each department in the budget.

In other agenda items, the commission:

--approved School Resource Officer agreements with the Franklin County School system for Regina Cantrell, Sammie Washington and Brent Wells.

--approved the resignation of Solid Waste Technician Clint Sikes, transfer of Matt Miller from Heavy Equipment Operator and agreed to advertise for the vacant Heavy Equipment Operator position.

--approved the resignation of Corrections Officer/Dispatcher Madison Kimbrough, the hiring of temporary Corrections Officers/Dispatchers Michael Harris and David Lang and to advertise for a vacant Corrections Officer/Dispatcher position.

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


 The Russellville Book Lovers will host a "Walk to Wellness" on Saturday, October 29th at 9 a.m., at the Russellville High School Field House and Track. There will be refreshments and information booths. Registration is \$25 and comes with a t-shirt. The annual event raises funds for breast cancer awareness. Funds will be used to benefit women with breast cancer who are on their "walk to wellness." More than \$2,400 has been donated to the Russellville Hospital Cancer Fund and cancer survivors. This year is dedicated to Maudie Bedford who recently passed away after an extended bout with cancer. She is the person who sponsored the Book Lovers' first year of Walk to Wellness. Please make plans to take part if you can!


 Back to Basics will host a White Beans and Ham Lunch Fundraiser on October 7, 2022, begin at 11:00 am. The lunch consists of white beans and ham, cole slaw, cornbread, dessert and a drink. Donations: lunch plate \$8.00, quart of white beans and ham \$5.00 and a pint \$3.00. Location 129 Winfield Street, Russellville, Alabama 35653, contact Mr. Joe Graham to pick up your advance ticket (256) 668-2228. Point of contact for this event is Lanny Hillman, (305) 610-1097.


 The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt Col John W Harris Jr, Camp #1833 will meet Thursday, October 6th, at 6:00PM at Russellville Rec Center on Ash Ave in Russellville. Camp #1833 meets the 1st Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. For more info call 256-324-2317. Everyone welcome!


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 The Phil Campbell Arts & Historical Society will host its Second Annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 5th from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Phil Campbell Community Center, 132 Sherry Bryce Rd., in Phil Campbell. For booth information, please call 256-810-4572. There will be Arts & Crafts, Homemade Treasures, Scentsy, Christmas Decor, Unique Gifts, Bake Sale and Food Truck on site. Proceeds will be applied toward the purchase of a building in Phil Campbell.

 Hop on board the Haunted Hay Ride, Friday, Oct. 28, Saturday, Oct. 29, Sunday, Oct. 30 and Monday, Oct. 31, starting at 7 p.m., each night. Location is the end of Maddox Road in Phil Campbell. All proceeds go to the Ashridge Volunteer Fire Department in Haleyville. Admission is \$10 per person.

 The Spirit of Hodges Festival will take place October 7-8 at Hodges Town Park in Hodges, Al. For more information on entertainment lineup, visit Facebook 'Spirit of Hodges Festival.' The annual event includes an all day lineup of bands, pony rides, fish fry and chicken supper, crafts, miniature train rides and vendors.

 Spruce Pine Day is set for Saturday, October 15 in downtown Spruce Pine! There will be live entertainment, activities for kids and vendors. Visit the Spruce Pine Museum while you're there to learn some history on the community.

 Greenhill-Ezell Cemetery Board Meeting will be held Saturday, October 8 at 9 a.m. The meeting will be held at Rustic Youth Camp. All friends of the cemetery are invited and encouraged to attend. The practice of safe Covid protocol is encouraged.

 American Legion Post 64 will meet Thursday, October 13, at 6:30 p.m., at the North Highlands Church of Christ Fellowship Hall.



We love to hear from you! Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoons, 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 check us out online at [franklinfreepress.net](http://franklinfreepress.net)!

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# Russellville Book Lovers Club makes donation to Russellville Hospital Cancer Fund

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When you're dealing with cancer, there's enough on your mind without having to worry about the costs associated with treatment.

Those can include travel expenses to and from the hospital, as well as medical bills.

While the Russellville Hospital Cancer Fund can't pay all those costs, it does assist a number of cancer patients in easing the burden of meeting the financial challenges the disease can present.

And a recent donation from the Russellville Book Lovers Club to that fund will help local cancer patients on their 'Walk to Wellness.'

Gayle McAlister, Sheila Upchurch and Michelle Sibley presented a \$1,000 donation to Russellville Hospital's Cancer Fund Monday. Russellville Hospital surgeon Jeffrey Manord, M.D., accepted the donation on behalf of the hospital.

The Book Lovers Club will hold the fifth annual Walk to Wellness on Saturday, October 29th at the Russellville High School Fieldhouse and track.

This year's Walk to Wellness will be held in memory of Maudie Darby Bedford, who died March 20, 2022, after an extended battle with cancer.

"She introduced us to the idea for this event after seeing one in Birmingham while she was being treated there," Sibley said.

Although Bedford was not a member of the Book Lovers Club, she was close friends with many of its members and her passing was a reminder of how cancer impacts almost everyone, whether you're a patient or not.

Russellville Hospital also offers free or discounted mammograms for patients who don't have insurance and can't afford private pay.

If you're interested in applying to receive a free mammogram, call the hospital's Diagnostic Center at 256-332-1996.

Manord said the hospital's Cancer Fund has helped so many patients whose 'walks to wellness' were strengthened by the additional support.

"You might not see the results of your donations, but what you're doing has long term benefits and has helped so many patients," Manord told the Book Lovers Club members.

To participate in this year's Walk to Wellness, there is a \$25 entry fee (which includes a t-shirt). There will be a reception area with refreshments inside the fieldhouse.

The Book Lovers Club has donated more than \$2,500 to the Russellville Hospital Cancer Fund since the 'Walk to Wellness' began.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

From left: Michelle Sibley, Dr. Jeff Manord, Sheila Upchurch and Gayle McAlister

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## Falkville next for 5-1 Red Bay

Michael Rice  
 Franklin Free Press

The Red Bay Tigers didn't have to travel far to earn their fifth win, as Coach Heath Childers' team rolled past Tharptown 54-14.

While Tharptown celebrated its 20th homecoming Friday night, the Tigers were all business as they improved to 5-1.

In the first quarter, the Wildcats played the Tigers close. After Red Bay went ahead 8-0, Tharptown countered with a rushing touchdown by Jeremy Vasquez (who scored both Wildcats touchdowns). A two-point conversion made it 8-8.

That's when the Tigers took control and went on a 46-point scoring binge that saw five Red Bay players find the end zone.

Afer Brady Hardin punched in the Tigers' next touchdown, head coach Heath Childers thought they could get away with an onside kick.

"We thought we had an opportunity to swing the game in our direction so we went for the onside kick," Childers said.

The onside kick worked and the Wildcats couldn't find an answer for the Tigers the rest of the game.

Hardin finished the game with 128 yard rushing on 14 carries with two touchdowns.

Cody Carnes had 74 yards on seven carries with two TDs.

Keaton Lanphear, Brady Bolton and Caden Keeton also found the end zone for the Tigers.

Defensively for the night, Carnes led the team with nine tackles.

The Tigers travel this week for an important Class 2A Region 8 game with the Falkville Blue Devils, whose 3-3 record does not reflect their abilities, Childers said

"They're a stout team who is coached very well, but we'll approach this game the same as we approach every other week. We'll work on ourselves more than anything," Childers said.

## RHS enters bye week 4-0 in region play

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Facing a 21-0 deficit less than four minutes into the game on Homecoming night in Russellville, the Brewer Patriots must have thought their night couldn't get much worse.

Unfortunately, they were wrong.

When the Patriot returner fumbled the ensuing kickoff, the Golden Tigers soon scored a fourth time, with offensive lineman Weston Jackson falling on a Conner Warhurst fumble in the end zone. Jackson was credited with the touchdown and Russellville was on its way to a 35-0 lead after the first quarter.



BY CHRISTIAN MEDINA

TJ King had 124 yards receiving and 3 TDs against Brewer.

On a night when Brewer's initial first down came on its final possession of the first half, Russellville posted a completely dominant performance both on

defense and offense en route to a 58-0 Homecoming win.

The Golden Tigers improved to 4-3, 4-0 in Class

5A, Region 8 play. Brewer fell to 3-4, 2-2 in Region 8.

Russellville has a bye next Friday before traveling to Ardmore the following week. The Golden Tigers close out the regular season with a road trip to Fairview and a home game against Athens.

RHS Coach John Ritter said the bye week comes at a time when several key players are 'a little banged up.'

"We've got some tough region games coming up with

See, 'RHS' page 14

## RMS looks for 4th consecutive championship

Michael Rice  
 Franklin Free Press

The Russellville Middle School Golden Tigers hosted the semi-final football conference championship Thursday and it looked like they might make quick work of Priceville.

The Golden Tigers shot out front and by halftime had a 22-0 lead.

The Priceville Bulldogs turned the game around in the second half, scoring on several long outside runs.

In the fourth quarter, the Golden Tigers led 30-22 when Karson Fletcher made a huge fourth down stop to allow the Golden Tigers to line up in victory formation and secure the win.

"That dude is pound for pound the heart and soul of our team," RMS coach Corey Flanagan said, "He's a hard nosed kid who gives it his all every play."

Fletcher also scored the Golden Tigers' first touchdown of the night on a 28-yard reception from Tripp Cleveland.

The second score of the night was a rushing touchdown by Tarus Davis.

Chase Phifer also cashed in a touchdown reception. During the second half of the game, Flanagan said two missed assignments allowed the Bulldogs to score on outside runs.

"I was proud of my defensive staff for making adjustments and not allowing those outside runs to continue," Flanagan said.

Defensively, Uriel Alonzo was in the Bulldogs' backfield all night making tackle for a loss.

Dakota Little made several plays where he was able

to come down and play physical in the run game.

"The big thing for me was collectively when we needed a stop on Defense our guys found a way to get one," Flanagan said.

The Golden Tigers move to the championship game where they will represent the East division in their conference and take on the Ardmore Tigers.

"Ardmore is a good team. It'll be a challenge for us that we look forward to. I'm glad our kids get to compete for another championship," Flanagan said.

The championship game was set for October 4th as the Golden Tigers will look for their fourth straight conference championship.

**Friday Night Football Schedule**  
**October 7th, 2022**

Russellville - BYE

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Tharptown - BYE

Vina @ Cherokee

Red Bay @ Falkville

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# 'RHS,' from Page 11

Ardmore and Fairview, who's obviously very good again, so from a health standpoint, it comes at the perfect time," Ritter said.

"In a bye week, no matter when it is, its success is determined by how the kids handle it. Do we go and get better those next three days of practice, or do we waste it? One thing I've learned about this group the last seven weeks is they are very even keeled. They come to work every day and I'm very proud of the way they responded Friday night after an intense game like Mars Hill," Ritter added.

With a halftime lead of 35-0, Russellville was seemingly content to play the second half with reserves seeing extensive action.

After Brewer attempted an onside kick, though, the Golden Tiger starting offense took the field for a short drive, one play in fact, as Harrison Burch hit TJ King for a 43-yard touchdown on the first play. Russellville led 52-0 seven seconds into the third quarter.

Scoring came early and often for Russellville. Warhurst opened the scoring with a 16-yard touchdown on the first drive. Manny Martinez made the first of his six first half extra points and Russellville led 7-0 with 10:24 left in the first quarter.

After the first of three Patriot turnovers, King scored from five yards out for Russellville's second TD.

When Brewer punted four plays later, Burch connected with Randall Johnson for a 79-yard touchdown pass. The Golden Tigers led 21-0 with 8:20 remaining in the first.

Freshman back Cam Phinizee added a 13-yard score late in the quarter, and Martinez' 25-yard field goal and a Burch-to-King 38-yard TD capped off the first half scoring.

Coach John Ritter's team carried a 45-0 lead into halftime.

Of Brewer's three turnovers, two were on special teams, an area of emphasis the past week after some special teams breakdowns against Mars Hill.

"We adjusted some things on special teams. We put (freshman) Ben Pounders out there and he had three tackles on kickoffs. Malachi Duncan and Taylor Crumpton also did a good job on special teams," Ritter said. "Mars Hill exposed some things and those kids took ownership of being on special teams and creating two turnovers on kickoffs."

The Golden Tigers' final touchdown came from a Zaye Egglestone run to make it 58-0 early in the fourth.

The fans who stayed until the end saw a healthy dose of younger Golden Tigers take the field throughout the second half.

With no game to prepare for this Friday, Ritter said his weekend plans were to enjoy some family time with his wife and kids. Golden Tigers coaches will use Friday night to watch both Ardmore and Fairview in person.

"We want this chance to see these teams in person. Sometimes, film can be a little deceptive. Plus film quality can be hit and miss, so it's always an advantage to see a team play live," Ritter said.

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# 'AMENDMENT,' from Page 1

entities for providing or expanding broadband infrastructure.

Amendments appear on the ballot after all federal, state and local races, so voters will have to read the back of their ballots to see all amendments they are being asked to consider.

Broadband connectivity for rural Franklin County has been on just about every local official's wish list since 2014, when Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow organized the Franklin County Broadband Task Force.

Everyone agreed the need was there, particularly in the rural portions of Franklin County, where two-thirds of residents have no access to reliable, affordable last-mile internet. The problem was, and remains, funding, although there is an ongoing plan to make last-mile broadband a reality all across Franklin County.

That plan has at its center Freedom Fiber, a subsidiary of Tombigbee Electric Cooperative. The company's business plan is to build out fiber-optic cable broadband access across rural, unserved or underserved areas.

The company has seen success in Marion and Winston Counties, and they are currently working in Franklin County as part of a \$3.87 million grant to light up the portion of Franklin County served by Alabama Power with high-speed fiber optic cable. Rep. Jamie Kiel announced that grant in 2021.

To complete the build out in the area of Franklin County served by Franklin Electric Cooperative, the \$5 million in funding from the Franklin County Commission will be necessary.

Franklin Electric and Freedom Fiber signed a memorandum of understanding whereby Franklin Electric will rent its utility poles and allow the fiber-optic cable to be installed on them.

The Franklin County Water Service Authority has statutory authority over broadband in the county. Water Authority members have been in discussions with commissioners for some time about using ARPA funds to complete the broadband build out.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore and the commission expressed their intentions to allocate approximately \$5 million subject to receiving guidance as to how the funds must be administered.

Similar questions about how ARPA funds may be used have arisen across Alabama, with broadband a common issue.

asdfas

# Commission asking public to complete short broadband survey

Submitted

The Franklin County Commission is asking residents to complete a short survey about their experience with the coverage and quality of broadband services in the county. Businesses and residents who complete the survey will provide valuable information about broadband access and needs in all areas of Franklin County. The survey can be accessed here <https://arcg.is/0mTnvS0>.

The information gathered will also be used to cross-check FCC and broadband service provider data to determine where gaps in broadband service exist and how the county can improve its broadband infrastructure. The survey is hosted by GIS consultants Sain Associates and is provided as a service through Franklin County's participation in the Investing in Alabama Counties program.

"Firsthand information from our residents is vital to creating an accurate picture of broadband needs in all areas of Franklin County. Your participation in this survey will help the Franklin County Commission to identify areas in need of broadband infrastructure and expansion." Barry Moore, Chairman of the Commission

The Franklin County Commission is a member of the Investing in Alabama Counties (IAC) program established by the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. IAC provides customized assistance, expertise, guidance, and implementation resources to ensure the county's federally restricted funds allocated under the American Rescue Plan Act are utilized within the requirements provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Enacted in March of 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act provides fiscal recovery funds to address the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local governments, the economy, and public health. Each county has until December 31, 2024, to obligate its ARPA funding for eligible projects.



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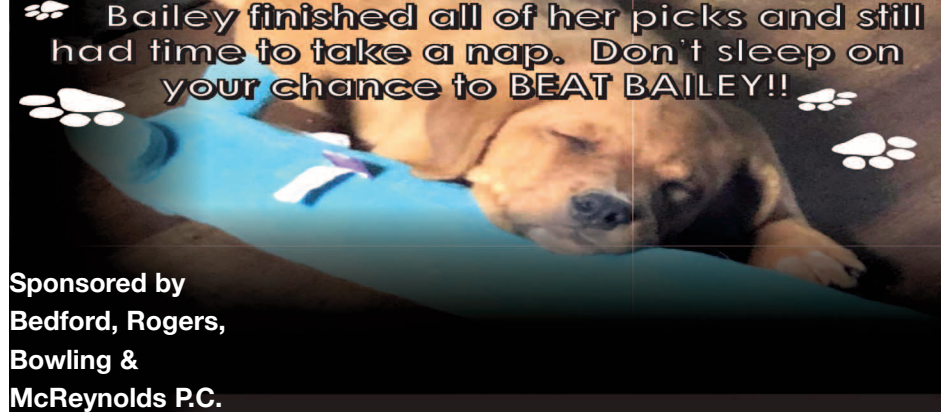


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Bailey is on fire, as she picked 9 of 10 games last week. No entry matched that, but Rickey Smith, this week's winner, came closest, going 8-2, and winning the tiebreaker.

Submit your picks to us each week in one of two ways: Fill out the entry form on this page and mail it to us at 113 Washington Ave. NW, Russellville, AL 35653, or email your picks to us along with your name and number at franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. Picks sent in by mail for Week 5 must be postmarked by Friday, October 7th and picks submitted by email for Week 5 must be received by Saturday, October 8th, at 10 a.m. Each week, the contestant who correctly picks the most games will win a free T-shirt and the chance to pick in the grand-prize final-week contest. If multiple contestants correctly pick the same number of games in a given week, the tiebreaker score will be used to determine a winner. Contestants are only eligible to win the weekly contest once. No multiple winners allowed. ONE entry per telephone number.

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| North Carolina at Miami    | UNC         |     |
| Wash. State at USC         | USC         |     |
| BYU at Notre Dame          | Notre Dame  |     |
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