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Stutts, Kiel see leadership roles grow in new legislative term

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As he enters his third term representing District Six in the Alabama Senate, Sen. Larry Stutts (R-Tuscumbia) has seen his leadership role on committee assignments grow along with his tenure.

Stutts, a physician specializing in OB/Gyn practice, will chair the Senate Committee on Children and Youth Healthcare. He will also serve as Vice-Chair of the Senate's Committee on Healthcare.

Stutts' other committee assign-

ments include the Committee on Finance and Taxation General Fund, Committee on Confirmations, Committee on Judiciary, Committee on Education Policy and the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

Stutts, who was first elected in 2014, was reelected in 2018 and again in 2022 with no opposition.

With changes in legislative districting lines, Franklin County returned in 2023 to a one-House District (District 18). Rep. Jamie Kiel (R-Russellville) is in his second term, and also sees his leadership

See 'COMMITTEE,' Page 7

A new path: Merrill joins Mississippi-based Waggoner Engineering

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

When John Merrill went to work Monday morning, it was the first time in 12 years he wasn't serving the people of Alabama in elected office.

Merrill, whose second term as Alabama Secretary of State ended last week, began his new position as Waggoner Engineering's Director of Public Policy and Strategic Markets for Alabama. Prior to becoming Secretary of State, Merrill represented District 62 in the Alabama House of Representatives.

As Waggoner officials look to grow their presence in Alabama, Merrill will be called upon to use his vast network of contacts in Montgomery

to open up opportunities for his new employer.



"My networking and experience will help them to be introduced to new opportunities in each of our 464 municipalities and 67 counties in Alabama," Merrill said.

"They are looking to expand their business

and their footprint in Alabama and we're excited about the opportunity to do that."

Merrill will be based in Birmingham,

See 'MERRILL' Page 8

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**Francisco "Chico" Sanchez, 33, of
Russellville, passed away Thursday, January
12, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the
family.**

**Laguania Delorese Weems, 71, of Russellville,
passed away on January 10, 2023. Pinkard
Funeral Home of Russellville assisted the
family.**

**Michael "Hash" Hasheider, 59, of Phil
Campbell, passed away January 10, 2023.
Pinkard Funeral Home of Russellville
assisted the family.**

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Letter to Editor: Holiday sock drive a success

Dear Editor:

The Franklin County Farmers Federation Women's Committee would like to thank everyone who donated to the "Cottons for Christmas Sock Drive".

We collected over 300 pairs of socks and were able to provide each resident of Terrace Manor Nursing Home a nice gift bag which included lotion and multiple pairs of socks.

We appreciate your generosity and will continue this effort for our local nursing home residents for years to come.

Again, thank you!
Franklin County Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Committee

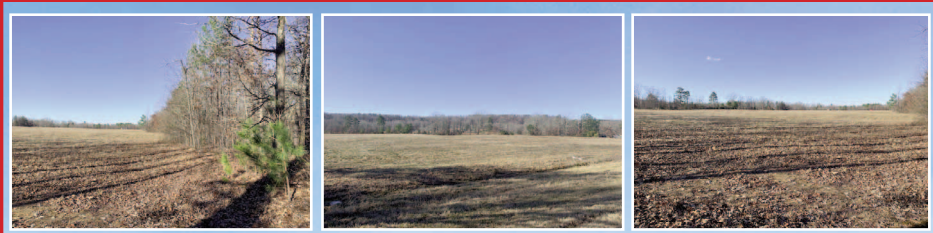


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The Franklin Free Press strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

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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Lee Greenwood set for Jan. 19th Decatur concert

*John Pilati
Franklin Free Press*

When you skip your own high school graduation ceremony for a singing gig at a casino, odds are you're a dedicated musician.

That's exactly what country legend Lee Greenwood did in 1978, as he skipped out on his graduation to play with his band, the Apollos, in Reno, Nevada.

It would be one year later when Larry McFaden, bass player and band leader for Mel Tillis, saw Greenwood performing in Reno. McFaden took Greenwood to Nashville and got him signed with the Halsey Agency, who managed the Oak Ridge Boys. Greenwood began working with producer Jerry Crutchfield, and the two worked together for more than 20 years.

With Greenwood's seven Number One songs and 25 charted country singles, McFaden's eye for talent was accurate. Greenwood was named Male Vocalist of the Year by the Academy of Country Music in 1983, and Male Vocalist of the Year in 1983 and 1984 by the Country Music Association.

45 years after his breakthrough, Greenwood will bring his legendary repertoire to Decatur's Princess Theatre on Thursday, January 19th at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$65, \$60 and \$55 and available through the Princess Theatre website, www.princess theatre.org.

God Bless the U.S.A., Greenwood's signature song, was penned by



the singer in the back of his tour bus in 1983. The song has been in the top five Country singles charts three times, in 1991, 2001 and 2003. It's the only song in any musical genre to achieve that feat.

Greenwood's other Number Ones include It Turns Me Inside Out, Ring on Her Finger, Time on Her Hands, I Don't Mind the Thorns If You're the Rose, Dixie Road, Fools Gold and more.

In 2021, Greenwood was the guest of honor at a special event in Huntsville honoring his 40 years in Country Music. The all-star list of performers who honored Greenwood included the Oak Ridge Boys, Crystal Gayle, Gavin DeGraw, the Gatlin Brothers, Michael W. Smith, Lee Brice and many more.

Greenwood and his wife Kimberly, a former Miss Tennessee, met on his 1989 USO/DOD Tour. They were married in Nashville in 1992 and have two sons.

Greenwood's talents extend beyond writing and performing great songs. In 2012, he published a children's illustrated book, Does God Still Bless the U.S.A.?

He continues to entertain audiences with his music, now well into his sixth decade of performing.

Greenwood turned down a track and music scholarship to the College of the Pacific to dedicate himself full-time into the music industry. Turns out skipping his own high school graduation may be the best career move Greenwood ever made.

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Franklin County ranks 15th among Alabama county traffic fatalities

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A report released this month sees Franklin County with the 15th highest per capita number of traffic fatalities among Alabama's 67 counties for the year 2020.

The study, released by www.stacker.com, uses data compiled from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to rank Alabama counties on the number of deaths per 100,000 people, with the raw number functioning as a tiebreaker. The analysis only considered counties with at least five deaths during 2020.

With nine traffic fatalities in 2020, Franklin County would have 28.1 fatalities per 100,000 people, the 15th highest per capita rate in the state.

But a deeper look at the numbers shows Franklin County over the past 26 years to rank in the lower end of Alabama counties, according to former Franklin County Engineer David Palmer.

"If you look at Franklin County over the last 26 years, we've got one of the lowest fatality rates per capita of any county in Alabama," Palmer said. "There are always some years where, for whatever reason, it spikes. Franklin County may be high that one year, but then it's followed by several years in a row where we're pretty low," he added.

Even with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was one of the highest recorded years for traffic fatalities across the country, with almost 39,000, the largest total since 2007. This came even with an estimated 430,000,000-mile drop in the number of miles people traveled across the course of the year.

Of Franklin County's nine traffic fatalities in 2020, four involved an intoxicated or impaired driver.

Palmer said most instances of traffic fatalities involve excessive speed, and the numbers support his statement.

"As for why there was a spike in (2020) I can't say, but I can say that almost every accident, especially those with serious injuries or fatalities, are generally related to speed," Palmer said.

Alabama Department of Transportation statistics show excessive

speed to be the largest single identifying factor in 2020 crashes that involved a fatality. Speed contributed to more fatal accidents than alcohol, failure to yield or distracted driving.

Franklin County's traffic fatalities from 1994-2020 total 218, for an average of 6.91 fatalities per 1,000 residents over that 26-year period. That average places Franklin County 27th among Alabama counties.

The highest one-year total came in 1995, when 18 died on Franklin County roadways. A year-by-year breakdown of traffic fatalities in Franklin County since 1994 shows:

1994-9, 1995-18, 1996-5, 1997-3, 1998-9, 1999-13, 2000-10, 2001-13, 2002-10, 2003-11, 2004-10, 2005-7, 2006-4, 2007-6, 2008-14, 2009-7, 2010-4, 2011-6, 2012-4, 2013-3, 2014-8, 2015-5, 2016-4, 2017-8, 2018-10, 2019-8 and 2020-9.

"If you look at Franklin County over the last 26 years, we've got one of the lowest fatality rates per capita of any county in Alabama."

— David Palmer



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 **T**he Senior Center at Phil Campbell is under new management. The Town of Phil Campbell would like to invite and encourage everyone in our area that is 60 years and older to come be a part of the group. This is for men and women. They meet at the Phil Campbell Community Center Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00. A delicious lunch is served around 11:00 a.m. Come on out and join in on the games or just sit and have a cup of coffee and socialize!! So if you, your parents, grandparents or your neighbor is 60 or older, pass the word and come out and enjoy a morning of f

 **T**he Church of God in Phil Campbell invites you to Revival, beginning February 6, 2023, at 6 p.m., with Mary Shalton and Bro. Billy Barlty. The church is located at 77 Mars Hill Road in Phil Campbell. For more information, please call 256-324-5288.

 **T**he Cowboy Church of Franklin County will host a "I Promise" Ladies Conference, free for ladies of all ages, March 10, 2023, from 6-9 p.m., and March 11, 2023, from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Come for a meal, music and a message! Church is located at 25100 Highway 24, Russellville.

 **T**he Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Committee of Franklin County is selling MLK shirts to help support its cause of helping Franklin County students continue their education. The committee is a non-profit that provides scholarships to high school seniors in Franklin County. Hoodies are \$25. Sweatshirts are \$20. Long sleeve t-shirts are \$15. For sizes 2X and above, please add \$2.

 **T**he Cowboy Church of Franklin County is hosting "Love Month" all through February. Their speaker for every Sunday in February will be Jennifer Welch. She will be speaking about love. You won't want to miss this! The church is located at 25100 Highway 24 West in Russellville. Everyone invited!

 **P**urpose will be singing at Gateway Church of God on January 29, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. They will be debuting their new project. Everyone is invited.

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'COMMITTEE,' from Page 1

role growing.

Kiel was named Vice-Chair of the House Ways and Means Education Committee, one of the most important, and influential, of all House committees.

That committee is responsible for allocating more than \$8 billion each year to Alabama's public schools, junior colleges and four-year universities. That's almost three times the state's annual general fund budget.

Over the next month, Kiel will meet with representatives from the Alabama Education Association, and representatives from schools and school systems in House District 18.

"Alabama is receiving unprecedented revenues earmarked for education, and we are putting record amounts of dollars directly into public schools and college classrooms across the state," Kiel said. "It is important we allocate those dollars so Alabama gets the best return on its public education investment, and I appreciate the opportunity to help make those important decisions."

Kiel requested and was appointed to serve on the new House Ports, Waterways and Intermodal Transit Committee. That committee will oversee and regulate Alabama's expanding ports, waterways, rail system and airports.

Kiel said he's particularly interested in the Tennessee River ports, along with railways, that House District 18 farmers use to ship crops.

"Our interest will be to make sure the ports are utilized to their potential and are up to date," Kiel said.

Last year, the Alabama Port Authority purchased 272 acres in Montgomery County to construct an inland container intermodal transfer facility that will extend intermodal rail service from the Port of Mobile, a move expected to significantly expand the state's economic development landscape and lead to growth throughout Alabama.

An ongoing project at the Port of Mobile will see deepening and widening of the Mobile Ship Channel, which will allow massive cargo ships up to 14,000 TEU (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units) to load and unload in port, rather than offshore as is currently done due to a lack of infrastructure to allow transit of these ships.

Kiel's other committee assignments include the House Insurance Committee and the House State Government Committee, both of which he served on in his first term.



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'MERRILL,' from Page 1

but his job will call for a lot of traveling across the state, something he should be used to by now.

As Secretary of State, Merrill visited all 67 Alabama counties each year. His tenure as Secretary of State saw record growth in voter registration (2.2 million new voters registered and 3.7 million voters total).

Additionally, Alabama's elections were free from the cloud of controversy about election integrity brought up in many neighboring states.

"We have broken every record in voter registration and voter participation in Alabama. We have made it easier to vote and harder to cheat in Alabama," Merrill said.

Waggoner Engineering is headquartered in Jackson, Miss., and has offices in six states and Washington, D.C. The company provides engineering planning and development services for both private and governmental entities.

Merrill's wife, Cindy Benford Merrill, is a Phil Campbell native. The couple travel often to Franklin County for family events. Merrill was far and away Alabama's most visible, and accessible, elected official.

Most of the time he answered his phone on the first few rings. If he wasn't able to talk right away, Merrill would send a message promising to return the call, which he would do promptly.

His openness and candor with the media helped Merrill weather multiple political storms in the aftermath of two extramarital affairs. In 2015, when news of Merrill's first affair broke, he granted a no-holds barred interview request with www.al.com, where he answered all questions about the matter.

When news came in 2020 of a second indiscretion just days (even hours) before he planned to announce his candidacy for United States Senate, the turmoil was sufficient to curtail another political run for the two-time Secretary of State.

But Merrill's professional tenure saw Alabama become a national example of election integrity. While other states engaged in dubious election practices, Alabama has no such issues, thanks in large part to the job done by Merrill and his staff to ensure election integrity.

Merrill remains close with former President Donald Trump, and has visited Trump several times at his Mar-a-Lago residence. Should Trump win a second Presidential term in 2024, it would seem likely Merrill would have a role in the Trump Administration.

"The President would be the one to determine that," Merrill said. "It's obvious I have a good relationship with the President and want to continue having that good relationship, and remain supportive and encouraging to him while being helpful when I can.

"I believe he will be a very formidable candidate in 2024. In less than one year, we'll have the Iowa caucuses and by April of next year, just 14 months from now, we'll likely know who the nominees will be," Merrill added.

Merrill believes Trump respects him because of Merrill's willingness to be candid with the former President.

"The thing that helps me have a stronger relationship with President Trump than others in our state is that he seeks advice and counsel from me on issues important to him, especially those that are relevant to our state," Merrill said. "I've always been forthright, open and transparent with him and encouraged him to make the best choice, not necessarily the best political choice, and he respects me for that in spite of the fact he doesn't always follow my guidance or counsel," he added.

Merrill deflected on the question of whether he'd be part of a second Trump administration, but says he'd be willing to serve should there be a role for him in a Trump presidency.

For now, though, Merrill's focus will be on serving his new employer, Waggoner Engineering.

"I just want to make sure I'm doing what I need to do to be in the best position to provide for my family and make sure the people who hired me to work for them are getting more than what they invested in me, which is what I tried to give the people of Alabama," Merrill said.

"I'll be all I can be for Waggoner, help them grow their business and be more successful than they ever envisioned in Alabama," he added.

Willodean's on WGOL

Tune in to WGOL 100.7 FM to hear "Real Estate Tips with Willodean" weekdays at 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. Davis is the owner/broker of Davis Realty & Associates in Russellville.

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SPORTS

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PC Girls, RB Boys County Champs

Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press

The annual Franklin County Basketball Tournament was hosted by Belgreen High School this year and fans who packed the gym saw an entertaining game in the girls varsity championship Saturday evening, as Phil Campbell pulled away at the very end to edge the Tharptown Wildcats 32-29.

The Bobcats have now won five of the last six girls varsity Franklin County Tournaments. Tharptown's girls won the 2022 county championship to interrupt the Phil Campbell streak.

"Our girls fought hard. We didn't play the best game we had played all year, but our girls battled and found a way to come out on top," Thomas said.

The Bobcats led after the first quarter 12-3. At half, the Bobcats were ahead 18-12.

The Wildcats' defense took over in the third quarter and Tharptown trailed by only one point, 24-23, after three. With 20 seconds left, The Bobcats took a rebound down court and hit a shot to make the final score 32-29.

Madison Branch led the Bobcats with 13 points in the championship game.

Branch was an asset to the Bobcats the whole tournament, as she scored 23 points in the semifinals.

Thomas credited his team's defensive effort, particularly in the fourth quarter.

"On defense, we relied on Allie Herring," Thomas said. "Herring helped us get turnovers against the Wildcats," Thomas added.

The Bobcats are 12-7 overall and 3-1 in their area.

Boys Varsity Finals: Red Bay 47, Phil Campbell 33

In the finals of the varsity boys tournament, the Red Bay Tigers played the Phil Campbell Bobcats close before pulling away late to earn their 15th county championship in the past 42 years, by a score of 47-33.

The Bobcats came out strong and held an 11-9 lead after the first quarter. The Tigers stepped up their defense, holding the Bobcats to four points in the second and five points in the third quarter.

Lawson Glover led the Tigers with 13 points. Holden Inmon added 11 and Ethan McCoy had nine, as Red Bay improved to 14-4.

Phil Campbell was led by Quintin Hyde's 10 points. The Bobcats are 11-8 on the season.

Coach John Torisky's Tigers returned home January 17th to host the first of three consecutive home games. The Tigers will host Sulligent January 20th and Phil Campbell on January 21st.

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White named RHS volleyball coach

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Moments after the Russellville City Board of Education approved his hiring Wednesday morning, new Russellville High School varsity volleyball coach Will White was asked how he'll promote volleyball in Russellville.

His answer? Start with the sport itself.

"Once kids start playing volleyball they fall in love with it and often end up being in it for life," White said. "Volleyball is the number one indoor sport in America for girls in high school and college (according to a study done by usavolleyball.org). That's something



COURTESY PHOTO

New RHS Volleyball coach Will White.

people don't realize.

"As far as what I'll do, it's just building the culture. Love the kids, show them

the way through volleyball to help them deal with things they want to succeed in in their lives,"

White added.

White follows former RHS varsity coach Anna Lisa Jackson, who resigned from the position last month. White will teach intervention at RHS.

White comes to Russellville from Big 12 volleyball power Baylor University, where he served as Technical Coordinator. His duties included statistics and preparing scouting reports for the Bears.

He has served as head volleyball coach of Ohio Valley University in 2020, and has been an assistant coach at the University of North Alabama and Blue Mountain College in Mississippi. He

See, 'WHITE,' page 12

RHS girls fall in overtime to Lawrence County

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville girls varsity basketball team went 1-1 last week, and the Golden Tigers were eight minutes away from making it a perfect sweep against two 5A Area 15 opponents.

On Tuesday, Coach Jermaine Groce's team rolled over Brewer 55-31. Russellville saw a balanced scoring attack, with five players scoring eight or more against the Patriots.

Ella Copeland led the way with 13. Jacey Moore had 11, Avery Watts scored 10 and Jenna Whitfield and Laila Hill had eight apiece.

Russellville raced out to a 27-6 lead after one quarter and led 39-13 at halftime.

The Golden Tigers traveled to Lawrence County High School Friday evening and for 24 minutes the team put together its best effort of

the season.

Russellville built a 17-10 lead after one quarter. The hot shooting and pressure defense continued in the second quarter, and the Golden Tigers carried a 31-23 lead into half-time.

After outscoring the Red Devils 12-6 in the third, Russellville led 43-29 going into the fourth quarter. But the home team came alive, forcing Golden Tiger turnovers that contributed to a 22-8 fourth quarter run that sent the game into overtime.

In overtime, Lawrence County carried over that momentum and came away with a 63-56 win.

Copeland led the Golden Tigers with 14. Hill had 13, Anna Beth Oliver 12, Moore 11 and Whitfield added six.

The Golden Tigers are now 8-11, 1-3 in Area

See, 'RHS GIRLS,' page 12



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'WHITE,' from Page 11

also served as Director of Player Development at SWAT Volleyball Club for five years, where he trained coaches and players in the processes of the club.

White earned his Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts from Blue Mountain College last year.

White and his wife Lanice have two children, Michael and Zella. They live in Marion County, where Lanice is from, on a farm south of Hamilton. White said they will establish a residence in Russellville as well once he is situated into his new position.

Russellville City Schools Athletic Director John Ritter said he was impressed with White's coaching experience and what he brings to the Golden Tiger program.

"Coach White has an extensive background in volleyball and brings a high level of experience to our program," Ritter said. "He has been part of volleyball at the highest level and brings a vast knowledge of the game to Russellville. I'm proud we could bring in a very knowledgeable, former college coach to work with our girls."

White said a successful high school program begins at the Park and Recreation level, where a 'culture of success' can be build from the start.

"We plan to have that uniformity from the Park and Rec through middle school and into our varsity program, to build something here that will last not only the next couple years but will become the foundation of a long standing tradition," White said.

"Volleyball in Russellville has a positive history. I remember coaching against Russellville kids and having some Russellville players in my club program. It's a great volleyball town, from what I remember. It just needs a fire lit under it, and that's what I plan to do," he added.

White will meet with players and coaches this week before getting started on spring strength and conditioning work.

The new Golden Tiger coach lives and breathes volleyball—it's not just a side sport to him.

"It's been amazing to see so many lives impacted and changed in my 15 years of coaching just through a simple sport. To watch the growth in confidence and maturity of our players develop through volleyball—that's my goal—to give them the opportunity to be invested in something where they see their own worth grow," White said.

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Phil Campbell educator Wells tabbed as NW-SCC Cross Country coach

Submitted

Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) Patriots Athletic Director Taylor Franks announced today (1/10) that the college has hired Mark Wells as the new coach for the men and women's cross country teams.

"Coach Wells is a great fit for what we are trying to build in the Patriot athletics program," said Franks. "We want to see the cross country team based on the Phil Campbell campus, and Coach Wells is a fabric of the community. He lives there, works for Phil Campbell High School, and attended the Phil Campbell campus at Northwest-Shoals. He knows our community.

He works with youth and high school track and field athletes and knows how important it is for our area athletes to have an opportunity to compete collegiately without having to leave home."

Wells is a native of Phil Campbell and current varsity boys track and field coach and junior high boys basketball coach for Phil Campbell High School. He also teaches seventh and eighth grade special education. He is a 2005 alum of Phil Campbell High School. He then attended the Phil Campbell campus of Northwest-Shoals prior to graduating from the University of North Alabama with a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and a Master's degree from the University of West Alabama



COURTESY PHOTO

Mark Wells announced as NWSCC Cross-Country coach

in Special Education.

According to Wells, he has a huge passion for running and the Northwest Alabama community.

"Northwest-Shoals has a special place in my heart from my time there as a student on the Phil Campbell campus," stated Wells. "I am very excited to be a part of bringing athletics back to the Phil Campbell campus. I want to recruit and help develop some very good runners from the local area, but more importantly mentor them into good students and good community members."

His love for running and has led to establishing a running club for Phil Campbell Elementary School students.

"I started the running club a couple years ago to help encourage young students to stay active," said Wells. "It started with a little over 30, and we are now well over 100. It is really exciting to see our kids start to develop the same passion for running that I have."

Patriots cross country teams will join other Alabama Community College schools in competing under the umbrella of the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC). Northwest-Shoals cross country will begin competition in August.

Each cross country team will have five scholarships available as well as walk-on opportunities. If you are interested in being a part of the Northwest-Shoals Cross Country teams, visit nwscce.edu/athletics or email Coach Wells at mark.wells@nwscce.edu.

Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor, photos and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com. And don't forget to visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net for updates on news and sports all throughout the week!

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32 apply for Belgreen football coaching job

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

If the new football program at Belgreen High School draws as much interest from students as the head coaching position did from applicants, the Bulldogs will be off to a good start.

32 candidates submitted applications for the head football coaching position. Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton said he's been busy conducting interviews and he expects to have a hiring recommendation for the Franklin County Board of Education at its January 19th meeting.

"We were very pleased with the number and quality of applicants for this position," Hamilton said. "While there are unique challenges in starting a new athletic program, it also presents the opportunity to be part of building that program from the ground up."

With the addition of football at Belgreen, the sport will have a presence on each of the county's five high schools.

The Alabama High School Athletic Association was notified last year by Franklin County Schools officials of their intent to begin a football program in Fall 2023. Belgreen will start with the required two years of non-varsity competition before playing a region schedule starting in 2025.

Last year, the Franklin County Board of Education approved a \$1.5 million private donation to be used for construction of a stadium with track and field facilities along with football.

Florence-based Eagle Golf and Athletics, Inc., received the contract to construct the facility. The first phase will be completion of a track and practice field. Bleachers, a press box and field house will come in later phases, Hamilton said.

Work is underway on the project, with hopes of having it ready for use in the Fall of 2023.

The Belgreen stadium will benefit all county schools by providing a track and field facility capable of hosting track meets either for individual schools or regional or county events.

"This presents another opportunity for students to have additional extracurricular activities at our schools," Hamilton said. "In recent years, we've added the soccer program at Tharptown High School and volleyball programs at Red Bay and Phil Campbell."

Belgreen is classified as a 1A school by the AHSAA. With last year's enrollment of 159 students from 9-12 grade, the school is the second smallest Franklin County high school, ahead of only Vina, with 94 students.

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"Keeping the Dream Alive"



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

The Franklin County Branch of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Scholarship Committee hosted the annual MLK Day march and banquet Monday at the A.W. Todd Centre.

This year's theme was "keeping the dream alive from one generation to another." There were speakers with messages for young people to understand and preserve Dr. King's dream. The keynote speaker was Rev. Timothy L. Perryman with Freeman Tabernacle Baptist Church in Moulton.

74 of 76 Franklin businesses receive 'satisfactory' health ratings

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

74 of the 76 Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the period of November 7, 2022 through December 30, 2022, had scores that fell into the "satisfactory compliance" range.

Health ratings are required to be prominently posted in all food/lodging establishments. Scores are graded by the Alabama Department of Public Health inspectors on a 100-point scale.

Establishments with scores of 85 to 100 are considered to be in "satisfactory compliance" and are routinely inspected. Establishments scoring between 70 and 84 will be inspected again in 60 days, and those scoring between 60 and 69 will have another follow-up within 48 hours. Any establishment scoring below 60 will be immediately closed.

Areas of inspection by ADPH include management and personnel; food storage, preparation and service; equipment; utensils; linen cleanliness; plumbing and waste; poisonous or toxic material storage and an inspection of the physical facility or property.

74 of the 76 Franklin County establishments listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The high score was 100, shared by Tropical Nutrition, 15480 Hwy. 43 Ste. C, Russellville, Bulldog Nutrition, LLC, 15485 Hwy. 24, Russellville and Red Bay Hospital, 211 Hospital Road, Red Bay.

The businesses who received scores below 'satisfactory compliance' were Mamita's Mexican Restaurant, 17901 Hwy. 43, Russellville, with a score of 79 and Cedar Creek Chevron, 11477 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, with a score of 81.

Other inspection scores of Franklin County businesses, in alphabetical order, included:

- Bay City Nutrition, 910 4th Street, Red Bay, 87.
- Best Western Breakfast, 13770 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Big Star #345 Deli, 406 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 88.
- Big Star of Russellville, 314 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 99.
- Bojangles Famous Chicken & Biscuit, 13810 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 91.
- Burger King, 15455 Hwy. 43, Russellville.
- Cano's Tienda Y Taqueria, 10047 Hwy. 75, Russellville, 90.
- Captain D's, 15434 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 96.
- Cardinal Drive In, 602 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 93.
- Coco Michocana 2, 318 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 91.

- Daily Bread BBQ, 305 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 92.
- Dollar General, 3621 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 96.
- El Buen Sabor, 104 Montgomery St., Russellville, 85.
- El Quetzal Buena Vista, 118 East Franklin St., Russellville, 89.
- El Quetzal Buena Vista Bakery/Rest., 118 East Franklin St., Russellville, 94.
- Frosty Inn, 12805 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, 92.
- Gas Mart North, 17060 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 94.
- Harold's Gas and Grocery, 1425 Hwy. 172 East, Hodges, 99.
- Hilltop Diner, 808 Ronnie McDowell Ave., Russellville, 95.
- Huddle House, 15477 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 89.
- Jack's, 521 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 92.
- Jack's Family Restaurant, 13640 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 86.
- Kidz Korner, 14131 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- La Nina Mexican Food, 113 North Jackson Ave., Russellville, 88.
- Las Palmas Taqueria, 14204 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 95.
- Little Caesar's Pizza, 13655 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 90.
- Little Divas and Dudes Daycare, 1100 4th St. NE, Red Bay, 94.
- Los Dos Hermanos, 409 Madison St. NE, Russellville, 94.
- Los Primos, 105/107 Marion St., Russellville, 96.
- M&H Food Mart, 9224 Hwy. 243, Phil Campbell, 87.
- Mama Cortez, d/b/a Rancho Viejo, 11797 Hwy. 43 S., Russellville, 95.
- McDonald's, 15254 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92.
- Mexico Bakery, 111 Franklin St. SW, Russellville, 93.
- Mountain Top Nutrition, 6595 Hwy. 43, Ste. A, Spruce Pine, 90.
- Panaderia Adonai, 311 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 94.
- Papa John's Pizza, 14520 Hwy. 43 Ste. 1, Russellville, 94.
- Phil Campbell Deli Mart, 3515 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 95.
- Phil Campbell Nutrition, 3415 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 98.
- Phil Campbell Senior Center, 135 Sherry Brice Dr., Phil Campbell, 99.
- Piggly Wiggly, 3625 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 95.
- Piggly Wiggly Deli, 3625 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 95.
- Pilgrim's Place, 1314 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 92.
- Pizza Hut, 13450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 93.
- Pollo Lo Quillo, 115 Franklin St., Russellville, 85.
- Priceless Food-Deli, 14001 Hwy 43, Ste. 11, Russellville, 96.
- Pupuseria y Taqueria Las 3 Fronteras, 519 St. Clair St., Russellville, 87.
- Quick Stop No. 7, 606 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 94.
- Red Bay Nutrition, 102 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 95.
- Red Bay Tobacco Mart, Inc., 908 4th St. NW, Red Bay, 90.
- Russellville Hospital, 15155 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Russellville Nutrition, 14130 Hwy 43, Russellville, 95.
- Russellville Senior Center, 238-260 Montgomery Street, Russellville, 97.
- Sonic Drive In, 15376 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 88.
- Southside Quick Mart, LLC, 12301 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, 90.
- Steak Ops Russ, LLC Doe's East Place, 114 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 94.
- Stockyard Cafe, 14330 Hwy. 243, Russellville, 93.
- Subway, 504 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 94.
- Subway 13675 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 97.
- Swamp John's Country Store, 5181 Hwy. 24, Red Bay, 91.
- Taco Bell, 13831 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92.
- The Grind Cafe and Coffee Shop, 13760 Hwy. 43 Ste. 1, Russellville, 89.
- The Ville Nutrition, 112 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 99.
- Tienda Latina Mi Refugio, 412 Madison St., NE, Russellville, 99.
- Vina High School Cafeteria, 8250 Cty. Road 23, Vina, 99.
- Vulcan Food Mart, 28485 Hwy. 24, Russellville, 92.
- Walmart Market, 13675 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Walmart Bakery, 13675 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Walmart Deli, 13675 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 97.
- Willi's, 5680 Hwy. 243, Phil Campbell, 98.
- Yogi's, 27534 Hwy. 24 East, Russellville, 90.
- Yogi's Food Co., 501 Waterloo Road, Russellville, 89.

Health ratings are available at www.foodscores.state.al.us and may be viewed by city or county.

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