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Commission awards \$5 million broadband grant to Freedom Fiber

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission unanimously approved a resolution that incorporates a bid from Freedom Fiber to complete broadband build out across the county's unserved and underserved areas at the commission's July 17th meeting.

Freedom Fiber, a subsidiary of Tombigbee Electric Cooperative, is already heavily involved in broadband build out to rural Franklin County. The \$5 million grant allocated by the Franklin County

Commission comes from funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act, a federal COVID-19 grant program that injected billions into local and state governments.

The commission followed the recommendation of a review team, comprised of Commissioners Chris Wallace, Joseph Baldwin, County Administrator Leah Mansell and Franklin County IT Director Jim Hill.

Moore thanked the members of the review team, along with Investing in Alabama Counties, a subsidiary of the Association of County

See 'COMMISSION,' Page 7

County coaching changes aplenty for new school year

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

With four resignations recently from varsity head coaches at Franklin County Schools, Superintendent Greg Hamilton and the principals at the system's high schools have been busy conducting interviews to fill the vacancies as the school year approaches.

Phil Campbell coaches Greg Winstead (softball) and Kevin Barnwell (football), along with Vina's Luke Childers (football) and Tharptown's Jacob Hamilton (football) all had their resignations approved by the Franklin County Board of Education at its July 11th meeting.

While Jacob Hamilton's resignation and transfer to a teaching position at Phil Campbell High School was a precursor to his being named the Bobcats' new varsity football coach, both Childers' and Barnwell's resignations were unexpected according to Hamilton.

"Any time you get a resignation in July, especially for a football coach, it's unexpected," Hamilton said. "We'll have someone in place next week in both positions at Vina and Phil Campbell, subject to board approval."

Hamilton said he expected to have 'several qualified candidates' for the three positions, with a priority on promoting from within Franklin County Schools faculty.

See 'COACHES,' Page 5

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Barry Eugene Cummings, age 57, of Tuscumbia, passed away on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Evelyn Williams, age 76, of Muscle Shoals, passed away on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

Minnie Jean Bean, age 80, of Russellville, passed away July 15, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

James D. Johnson, 99, passed away on July 14, 2023. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

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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.

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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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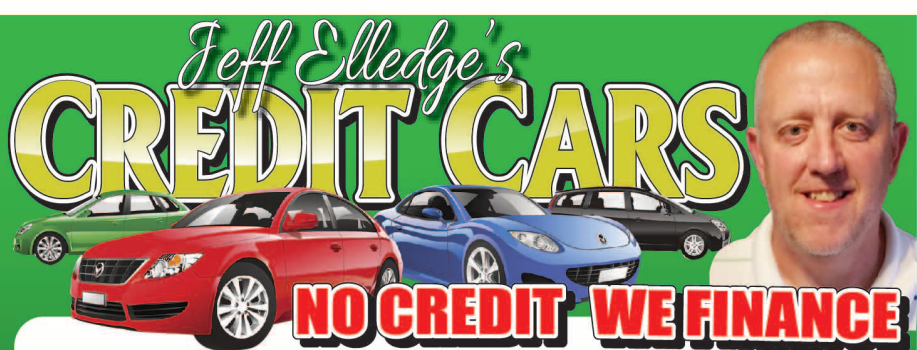
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--(25) Shelia Bean

--(26) Cinderella Borden

Units located at 900 Scotty Moore Drive:

--(27) Judy Taylor

--(8) Alfred Vigil

'COACHES,' From Page 1

"In today's climate, you just try to find the best leader you can for your program. It's always good to promote from within if you can," Hamilton said.

Hamilton disputed a statement published in the July 12th Franklin Free Press from Barnwell saying he told Hamilton of his intention to resign at the end of the spring 2023 semester. But the focus now is to fill the vacancies vacancies with qualified candidates who want to be there.

On Monday, Hamilton was named varsity football coach at Phil Campbell. Hamilton will also serve as the school's strength and conditioning coach across all athletic programs.

His coaching experience includes football and track and field coach at Tharptown, and he was an assistant football coach at Phil Campbell, Deshler and Carbon Hill High Schools. He is a Phil Campbell native.

After the vacant Phil Campbell softball position was posted for the required period, the board hired Jason Lindsey to lead the program. Lindsey, a sixth grade math teacher at Phil Campbell Elementary School, also coaches junior high boys basketball.

He previously coached softball at Cherokee High School and has experience coaching travel softball with the Kraze/Vexus organization, according to PCHS Principal Bart Moss.

Lindsey and his wife Heather have two children, Jaci and Judson.

Phil Campbell special education teacher and former assistant baseball coach Griffin Harris was hired to lead the Bobcat varsity baseball team. He succeeds Jonathan Raper, who resigned last month and was tabbed as Belgreen High School's first varsity football coach.

As a dominant pitcher at Phil Campbell, Harris was an integral part of a team that reached consecutive Class 3A state championships, finishing both as runner-up.

Harris previously served as varsity baseball coach at Tharptown High School, where he led the Wildcats to a Franklin County Championship. He served as assistant coach to Raper and was part of the coaching staff of the 2021 Class 3A state championship team that has four consecutive trips to the Final Four.

Harris also played baseball at the collegiate level for Northwest-Shoals Community College.

Several Franklin County varsity baseball coaches, Donovan Hand (Red Bay) and Nathan Vincent (Belgreen) and Harris continued their playing careers beyond the high school level.

"If you look at our baseball coaches across the country, the pedigree is pretty high. Several played college baseball, with one playing professionally," Hamilton said.

Red Bay's new varsity softball coach is Gary Blackburn. Julianna Potts takes over the Belgreen varsity volleyball program. Joseph Brown is the new varsity boys and girls soccer coach at Tharptown, where the soccer program is fast building a winning tradition.

Julianna Taylor is the new Phil Campbell varsity volleyball coach and assistant softball coach. She will teach Physical Education at Phil Campbell High School.

Taylor comes to Phil Campbell from Class 7A Austin High School, where she was head middle school volleyball coach and assistant varsity volleyball coach. She's also coached travel softball in the Huntsville/Decatur area.

She played college volleyball at Blue Mountain College in Mississippi. She's a graduate of Phillips High School where she was a standout athlete and cheerleader.

Taylor's grandfather, the late Kenneth Taylor, was a former PCHS principal, according to Moss.

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RHS grad advancing her Naval career

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

A Russellville High School graduate continues to serve her country as a sailor in the United States Navy while also advancing her naval career as she works toward a specialist qualification on board the USS Boxer.

Nelda Otzoy, RHS Class of 2015, serves as an Operations Specialist 2nd Class aboard the Boxer, a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship homeported in San Diego, Ca.

Otzoy has been preparing and studying for the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist test while continuing her daily work schedule on the ship. The ESWS is a qualification program that emphasizes general competency of knowledge in all facets of the ship.

After graduating from RHS, Otzoy received an ambassador scholarship from Northwest-Shoals Community College.

In high school, she was a member of Franklin County Junior Leadership, Educational Talent Search, Spanish Club, Future Business Leaders of America, Student Council, the Marching One Hundred, Christian Students United and the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

She is the daughter of Jorge Otzoy. Her grandparents are Antonio Otzoy and Nicolasa Otzoy.



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 The Foster Grandparent Program is seeking volunteers ages 55 and older to help tutor and mentor children in day care, head start and schools. Volunteers will receive a tax-free stipend and travel reimbursement. We have openings for several schools for the coming school year. Please call 256-332-6800 for an application.


 AshaKiran serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking across Alabama. Their vision is to be a 'ray of hope' by bridging the gap between service providers and culturally diverse communities. Their 24-hour crisis line number is 1-800-793-3010. Learn more about AshaKiran by visiting www.ashakiranonline.org. Consultations are free and confidential, and available in 45 different languages.


 The Senior Center at Phil Campbell is under new management. The Town of Phil Campbell would like to invite and encourage everyone in their area 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 a.m.-noon. A delicious lunch is served around 11 a.m. Come on out and join in on the games or just sit and have a cup of coffee and socialize!


 My Father's House Ministries will host Kids' Crusade, July 26-28, 2023, from 6-8 p.m., nightly at the church located at 104 East Lawrence St. in Russellville. There will be food, games, teaching and singing, with a Bouncy House Friday night. For more information or a ride, call 256-460-1376.

 North Russellville Baptist Church invites you to a night of worship with Ascension, on Sunday, July 23, 2023, at 5 p.m. The church is located at 1401 Waterloo Road, Russellville.

 Christmas in July: The residents of Terrace Manor Nursing Home Care asking for toy donations for Christmas in July! These toys will be donated to the Dream Center in Russellville for their annual Christmas give away in December. Please donate your unwrapped gift for a boy or girl by August 1st. The drop box is located in the front lobby of Terrace Manor Nursing Home, 390 Underwood Road, Russellville. Thank you so much!

 The Long Term Care Ombudsman's job is to protect the rights of Residents of long term care facilities, including Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, and Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities. The Ombudsman works to ensure that the Residents receive fair treatment and quality care. Anyone can contact the Ombudsman to report long term care problems or to request information about long term care facilities in Franklin, Colbert, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston Counties. For more information please contact Tina Pitt, local Ombudsman, at 256-389-0533.

 LifeSouth Community Blood Center will host a blood drive at Russellville Hospital on THURSDAY, AUGUST 10TH, 2023 from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.. LifeSouth is the primary supplier of blood products to Russellville Hospital. Please contact Deborah Lindsey to schedule an appointment at 256-332-8676 or by email at deborah.lindsey@russellville-hospital.org. Please be sure to bring your photo ID when you donate. Everyone who signs up to donate will receive a free T-shirt, an appetizer card from Texas Roadhouse, a free cookie dough card from Papa Murphy's and a free meal ticket from Russellville Hospital. All donors will receive a free cholesterol screening. We will also be giving away DOOR PRIZES!

 Homecoming, Singing and Revival at Siloam Missionary Baptist Church, 1657 Hwy. 60, Russellville, Alabama. Homecoming and dinner on Sunday, July 23. Dinner right after morning service with singing following at 1:30 p.m. with the Harville Family from Moulton, Alabama. No services that night. Revival begins Monday night, July 24 through Friday, July 28 at 7:00 p.m. each night with Bro. Redmond Talley. Everyone invited.

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For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at www.franklin-freepress.net. Send your letters to the editor and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

'COMMISSION,' From Page 1

Commissions of Alabama, and Sain & Associates, a consulting firm hired to work with the IAC to help county commissions navigate the use of federal grant funds for broadband.

When the application period for internet service providers to submit bids for the ARPA funds ended, the only bid received was from Freedom Fiber.

Commissioners voted last year to commit \$5 million to broadband expansion in Franklin County. The commission was guided through the process of spending ARPA funds on broadband by the Investing in Alabama Counties, or IAC, formed by the Association of County Commissions of Alabama.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said the bid process was consistent with the way other services are bid out.

"This matter was handled like any other competitive process performed by the county," Moore said last week.

Freedom Fiber's unique business model includes last-mile, reliable, affordable broadband internet. What separates the company from other ISPs is its willingness to build infrastructure to supply even the most remote addresses in its service area.

"The county commission has had the goal of broadband coverage across Franklin County for a long time," Moore said. "Today, we are getting closer to that goal. This will benefit our citizens for many years to come. This is an investment for the future of Franklin County."

Freedom Fiber Operations Manager, Nick Tucker, attended Monday's meeting along with Tombigbee CFO Matilda Harrison. With the \$5 million grant award, Tucker said his company will complete its broadband build out to all of Franklin County with the exception of the City of Russellville and a small area of northwest Franklin County, including Pleasant Site, although there is a grant application pending that would take care of that northwest section if awarded.

Tucker said Freedom Fiber has the 'vision and desire' to come to the City of Russellville, the most densely populated part of Franklin County, but there would have to be 'some discussions' before that can be done.

The company is averaging 600-650 new Franklin County customers per month. All other municipalities (Phil Campbell, Red Bay, Hodges and Vina) are or will soon be serviced by Freedom Fiber.

The commission's resolution calls for a funding agreement to be drafted that will stagger payments as additional parts of the county broadband build out are completed. That funding agreement will be presented at a later meeting to the commission for its consideration.

In other agenda items, the commission:

--reappointed Commissioner Joseph Baldwin to be the county's ACCA legislative committee member.

--approved a quote for a loan from Valley State Bank for the purchase of two dump trucks for the Franklin County Solid Waste Department. The loan amount is \$427,000, at 4.04% interest over 60 months.

--tabled the hiring of a Corrections Officer/Dispatcher with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

--heard a report that the Franklin County Solid Waste Management Plan, after a legal review, is in compliance with state law. The review was made by the law firm of Balch and Bingham.

--submitted the name of Brent Jeffreys to serve on the Franklin County Board of Equalization.

--heard a presentation from Passion Human Resources Consulting regarding a compensation study, including job descriptions and updated personnel policies. The matter was tabled due to there being other proposals for the commission to consider.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net.

Franklin schools announce registration dates for 2023-24 school year

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With the start of a new school year fast approaching for Franklin County students, several schools have announced registration dates and times for students.

The new school year begins Tuesday, August 8th for Franklin County Schools.

Registration information and other important dates for Belgreen High School, Tharptown Elementary School and Phil Campbell High School are as follows:

--Phil Campbell High School: Wednesday, July 26, 2023. 12th grade at 8 a.m., 11th grade at 9 a.m., 10th grade at 10 a.m., 9th grade at 11 a.m., 8th grade at 1 p.m., and 7th grade at 2 p.m.

Students will not be allowed to register earlier than these allotted times.

Lockers are \$15 and parking permits \$20. No student will be allowed to park on campus without a permit. Students must bring their driver's license and proof of insurance in order to purchase a parking permit.

Parking spots and locker locations will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.

--Belgreen High School: Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Seniors 8-9 a.m., Juniors 9-10 a.m., Sophomores 10-11 a.m., Freshmen 11a.m.-Noon, 1-2 p.m., 8th grade and 2-3 p.m., 7th grade.

Parking decals are \$20 and student must have a copy of his or her driver's license and a copy of a current insurance card. Locker cost is \$15.

On July 27th, new students who have enrolled this summer may pick up their schedules from 9 a.m.-Noon.

Back to School Night is August 3, 2023, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. More information will be sent later.

--Tharptown Elementary School: Registration for kindergarten and first grade will be Monday, July 24th. Kindergarten from 8-11 a.m., and first grade from Noon-3 p.m.

Registration for second, third and fourth grade will be Tuesday, July 25th. Second grade from 8-11 a.m., and third/fourth grade from Noon-3 p.m.

Fifth and sixth grade registration is set for July 26th, from 8-11 for both grades.

Meet the Teacher Night and Parent Meetings will take place Thursday, August 3 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

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Moore announces intent to seek another term as Probate Judge

Submitted

My name is Barry Moore and I am seeking re-election to the office of Franklin County Probate Judge, a position I have truly come to respect and enjoy over the past 17 years because of my ability to help my fellow citizens as a member of our local government.

Because I have lived in Franklin County all my life and my roots run deep in this area, I have the honor of knowing many of you personally. And during my time serving as Probate Judge, I have had the opportunity to meet those I didn't already know. But for those out there who may not know me or why I am seeking re-election for this position, let me tell you a little more about what I do and why this is more than just a "job" for me.

As Chairman of the Franklin County Commission, one of the most rewarding projects I have worked on since I was last re-elected was to bring reliable broadband internet service to our county. In the times we live in, internet connectivity is essential to our daily lives. Many people need the internet for work, school, and for personal daily use in order to connect with their friends, family, and loved ones. And we saw even more clearly during the global pandemic how vital reliable internet service is with so many businesses and services going virtual and many still maintaining some of these virtual practices even today. I didn't want any of our citizens to miss out on opportunities because of where they lived, so much time has been dedicated to this broadband project. Franklin County received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds as a result of the pandemic and \$5 million was pledged to invest in Broadband for Franklin County. We have been working diligently with Investing in Alabama Counties (IAC) to ensure that the use of these funds complied with all federal and state requirements. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, we were able to preserve our citizens' taxpayer funds so that they can be used in other areas of county management. It will be exciting to see the positive benefits of Broadband in the coming months.

But broadband service isn't the only project I have worked on. I have worked with federal and state officials to secure funds for the county roads and bridges, not because it's my job but because I have seen the real-life impact these projects can have. Hearing from citizens whose roads have been paved or have seen long-time problems addressed is always rewarding, and it has been a pleasure to work with our commissioners to make these types of projects a reality. Other projects were completed through ARC and Community Development Block grants that we worked hard to secure, and it's been great seeing how much these grants have helped our citizens as well. Seeking re-election will allow me more time to continue and complete many of these projects that have already been started and embark on new projects as well.

In the area of law enforcement, it has been an honor to support funding to ensure our hardworking men and women will be able to operate efficiently to protect the law

abiding citizens of our county, not just because it's the right thing to do but because I genuinely care about the safety of our citizens and I believe in our law enforcement and appreciate what they do. I will always support these men and women as chairman of the Franklin County Commission.

When it comes to economic development, seeking re-election will allow me to continue working hard to support our existing businesses and industries while actively pursuing new opportunities that will benefit our citizens. There is more work to do in the creation of jobs and I want to continue to be part of that so our citizens can support and raise their families here and truly make Franklin County their home.

Under my direction, the Probate Office and County Commission Office will continue to provide friendly, fast and efficient service to our customers because I believe it is important to treat those who come in our office the way we would want to be treated if we were in the same position. We have wonderful staff, and I am thankful for the jobs each of them do. And as Probate Judge, I will always make fair and unbiased decisions within the statutes of the law to protect the rights and estates of the citizens of Franklin County. I believe it's important for our citizens to have someone fair, knowledgeable, and experienced to preside over these situations, and I am certain my tenure over the past 17 years reflects this.

I continue to be involved in groups and associations outside of the commission, such as serving on the Budget and Personnel Committee of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG), serving as an Executive Board Member of the Northwest Alabama RC&D, serving on the Northwest Shoals Community College Foundation Board, and serving as a board member of the Bear Creek Development Authority. I have found that my participating in groups like these has given me access to important contacts within our state and local governments and has also provided me with valuable knowledge and experience I can utilize in my own position, which ultimately benefits our county and citizens.

As has been the case for almost two decades, I will continue to use conservative values, common sense principles, and my invaluable experience while executing my duties and responsibilities in this position. I will continue to be a dependable, honest, and diligent official, and I will continue to make it a priority to represent the working men and women of Franklin County by listening to their concerns and trying my best to resolve any issues when possible.

In my personal life, I have been married to Deedra Seale for 31 years and we have a 23-year-old daughter, Ashton. I graduated from the University of North Alabama in 1990 with a degree in Business Management. I served in the Alabama National Guard for 23 years, served one year on active duty in Iraq and have been a lifelong Republican. I have been Probate Judge in Franklin County since 2007, and it has been such a fulfilling and rewarding role.

Being Probate Judge is more than just a job for me – it's a way to give back to a community I've been part of my whole life, and I would very much appreciate your support for the Republican nomination during the March 5, 2024 primary.



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Inaugural Belgreen FB schedule has six games, with possibility of more

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

The inaugural season of Belgreen High School football features a schedule with six games, and the possibility of two additional ones.

Coach Jonathan Raper's Bulldogs are currently involved in summer workouts, with an average of 16-20 players participating in the voluntary workouts.

With a team consisting primarily of 7th, 8th and 9th graders, Raper hopes an additional 10-15 players will come out for football once the school year begins on August 8th.

"Most of our kids are not yet at the age where they drive. And you have parents who work, so it's difficult for them to get here for summer workouts in the morning or evening," Raper said.

As a new football program, Belgreen's first two seasons are mandated to be non-varsity. Region realignment will be announced later this year for the 2024 and 2025 seasons, but Belgreen will play a schedule primarily consisting of junior high games.

Raper said his junior varsity games would include a portion of the Shoals Christian Jamboree and the Vina game. But with Shoals Christian hiring a new football coach last week, Raper isn't sure if that will change.

"We're looking at possibly adding two games to this year's schedule, and I really

See, 'SCHEDULE,' page 12



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Harris an 'obvious and easy' choice to lead Phil Campbell baseball program

Michael Rice
 Franklin Free Press

Griffin Harris, former assistant coach to Jonathan Raper has now been hired as the new varsity baseball coach at Phil Campbell High School.

The hiring was approved at the July 11th Franklin County Board of Education meeting.

Harris is a Phil Campbell graduate and was a standout athlete for the Bobcats.

"I grew up here and I'm thankful to be back and have the opportunity to hold the reins to the program," Harris said.

Harris began his career in 2013 as an assistant coach in 2013 at Tharptown High School. In 2014, Harris was named Tharptown varsity baseball coach and held that position for another year.

Harris then went to work at Phil Campbell where he assisted Raper for eight seasons. Harris was part of a coaching staff that led the Bobcats to a Class 3A state title in 2021, four straight final four appearances and multiple consecutive area and Franklin County championships.



COURTESY PHOTO

Griffin Harris with wife Aleah and sons Beau and Brody.

See, 'HARRIS,' Page 13

Hamilton named varsity football coach at Phil Campbell

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

The July 11th Franklin County Board of Education meeting proved to be a personnel bonanza full of new hires and moves. One of those moves involved former Tharptown varsity football coach Jacob Hamilton, who was transferred to Phil Campbell High School.

Hamilton was Tharptown's varsity football coach last season. Hamilton has now taken over as the head football coaching job at Phil Campbell High School, a move that was formally announced Monday evening.

"It's always hard leaving a place because you develop so many relationships with kids and you really start to get things going your way. I always try to work as hard as I can," Hamilton said.

"It's hard to leave a place that you're trying to build up, but at the end of the day you have to

do what's best for you," Hamilton added.

Hamilton's coaching tenure at Tharptown started with him taking the job just one month before the season started.

"I'm excited to take over as Phil Campbell head coach. I was an assistant to (Coach Kevin) Barnwell when these juniors and seniors were 7th and 8th graders. I know these kids well and I know what to expect. They know my process," Hamilton said.

Hamilton is entering his fifth year of coaching. He inherits a team that has a history of a winning mindset. Phil Campbell has reached the Class 3A playoffs three consecutive years.

"We're gonna outwork everyone. We are going to practice for perfection," Hamilton said.

Hamilton has served as an assistant football coach at Phil Campbell, Deshler and Carbon Hill High Schools. He's a Phil Campbell native and he attended Phil Campbell High School.

Hamilton was recommended by Phil

See, 'HAMILTON,' page 13



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'SCHEDULE,' From Page 11

think we might pick up at least one of those," Raper said. "We've got two schools saying they'll try to work us in for a JV game, so we could have up to four, but I'm just not sure at this point."

Raper said he expects scheduling for the 2024 season to be easier, as teams will be realigned by the AHSAA so everyone will be looking to schedule games for the next two years.

Raper's coaching staff will include Colby Cox, Dustan King, Collier Cantrell, Nathan Vincent and volunteer assistant Tynes Channell.

While this year's schedule calls for all road games, Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton said Belgreen's stadium would be ready in advance of the 2024 school year. Hamilton said he expects the state-of-the-art turf to be delivered and installed this month.

Belgreen's schedule so far includes.
August 17: 7 p.m. (Jamboree) at Shoals Christian
August 29: 7 p.m. At Cherokee
September 5: 7 p.m. At luka
September 11/12: Open

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'HARRIS,' From Page 11

"I've been coaching these kids so they know the process that I expect," Harris said.

The hiring was recommended to the board by PCHS Principal Bart Moss.

"Harris was an obvious and easy choice for me. Harris's resume was second to none.

He has had championship experience as a player and championship experience as an assistant coach and as a head coach.

He won the county championship at Tharptown as the head coach. He has exactly what Phil Campbell needed. He is also a teacher and that means a lot to me. He knows the kids and he knows how they act in class and the hallways and can hold them accountable," Moss said.

Harris inherits a squad that graduated 12 seniors last season. He will be playing with a young team.

"Our team is young, but these guys have seen some of the most successful teams come through and I think all of them are ready to step up and contribute," Harris said.

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'HAMILTON,' From Page 11

Campbell principal Bart Moss after the interview process last week. "I knew he would get the kids motivated. Hamilton is a football guy. He knows the game and one of the things I was most impressed by was his knowledge of strength and conditioning. He prepares the kids for the season well," Moss said.

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Franklin County BOE fills six varsity coaching positions

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education had a jam-packed agenda at its July 11th meeting, which saw the board approve 43 personnel moves, including accepting the resignations of four varsity head coaches.

Greg Winstead, varsity softball coach at Phil Campbell High School, Luke Childers, varsity football coach at Vina High School, Jacob Hamilton, varsity football coach at Tharptown High School and Kevin Barnwell, varsity football coach at Phil Campbell, each saw their resignation letters approved by the board.

Six coaching positions were filled at the July 11th meeting. They included: Gary Blackburn, Red Bay varsity softball coach, Julianna Potts, varsity volleyball coach, Belgreen, Joseph Brown, varsity boys and girls soccer coach, Tharptown, Jason Lindsey, varsity softball coach Phil Campbell and Griffin Harris, varsity baseball coach Phil Campbell.

Other personnel moves approved by the board included:

--Resignation: Rosanne Hogan, PCES teacher.

--Employment: Mallorie Simmons, Child Nutrition Program Assistant Belgreen, Tiffany Posey, Child Nutrition Program Assistant PCES, Christian Presley, Child Nutrition Program Assistant, Tharptown, Julianna Potts, English Language Arts Teacher, Belgreen, John Johnson, History Teacher, Tharptown, Ryan Champion, Billy Fell, Regina McKinney, Deedra Raper, Bus Drivers, Franklin County Schools, Cody Renfrow, Special Education Teacher, Vina, Julianna Taylor, PE Teacher, PCHS, Stephanie Phillips, Elementary Teacher, PCES, Stacy Gallos, Elementary Teacher, PCES, Caitlin Majjala, Pre-K Auxiliary Teacher, Tharptown, Brooks Harris, Assistant Principal, TES and Kylie Dippenworth, Elementary Teacher, TES.

--Transfers: Jonathan Jones, from Teacher at Vina High School to

Driver's Education/Health/Physical Education Teacher at Tharptown to Physical Education/Intervention Teacher at Phil Campbell, Jill Hester, from

Elementary Teacher at Red Bay to Pre-K Lead Teacher at Red Bay, Julianna Blackburn, from Intervention Aide at Red Bay to Pre-K Auxiliary Teacher at Red Bay, Skye McGee, from

Elementary Teacher at PCES to Pre-K Lead Teacher at PCES and Carly Channel, from Elementary Teacher at Tharptown to Pre-K Lead Teacher at Tharptown.

--Principal Contracts: Tyler Berryman, Tharptown High School, Probationary Principal, July 1, 2023 through June 20, 2024, Teddy Humphres, Vina High School, Probationary Principal, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 and Molly King, Tharptown Elementary School,

See 'BOE,' Page 15



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Tharptown's Rocketry Team was honored by the Franklin County BOE at its recent meeting.

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Contract Principal, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026.

--Personal Leave of Absence: Sheena Johnson, Teacher, Belgreen High School, August 1, 2023 through August 25, 2023.

--FMLA Request: Teresa Simmons, Child Nutrition Assistant, Belgreen High School, August 1, 2023 through October 25, 2023.

--New Teacher Substitutes: Kara Barton, Jacqueline Ergle, Glenda Little, Alexis Patterson and Jordan Shelton.

--Child Nutrition Program Substitutes: Heather Sharp.

In other agenda items, the board:

--recognized the Tharptown High School Rocketry Team for its second-place finish at the American Rocketry Challenge in May.

--approved a Student Code of Conduct/Handbook for the 2023-24 school year.

--approved a policy change in the Admittance Enrollment Requirements for the Franklin County Board of Education to require TWO proofs of residency before a child may be enrolled into Franklin County Schools. These may include copies of a power bill, water bill, official rent receipt/deed in the name of parents, legal custodian or legal guardian. Franklin County Schools' enrollment policy is governed by school bus transportation. Franklin County Schools does not have open enrollment unless deemed necessary by the Superintendent.

The Alabama State Department of Education pays foundation units to schools based on enrollment. District lines prevent schools from being underfunded by preventing enrollment of students not zoned for that school.

--heard a report from Lori Hardin, Federal Programs Director, Title IV, about how the system's Title IV funds were spent last year. Those expenditures included two college tours per school juniors and seniors (\$3,500), music instruments and art supplies (\$9,600), social emotional learning supplies (\$7,986.74), school safety supplementary salary and benefits for a School Resource Officer (\$49,000), six Aiphone keypad access door entry stations for Belgreen, Red Bay Elementary, Tharptown Elementary, Tharptown High School and Vina High School (\$15,747) and purchase of STEM Robotic Kits, STEM Classroom set of drones, Chromebooks and IPADS (\$15,000).

--approved School Incident Reports for the period of August 8, 2022 through May 26, 2023.

--approved a rollover bid for bread for the 2023-24 school year to Flowers Bread/Baking Company and milk and ice cream to Purity Dairy.

--approved increase in Visitor Meal Price and A la Carte Prices for the 2023-24 school year. Employee lunches will be \$4.25, visitor lunches \$5 and holiday meals/guests \$6.

--approved compensation agreement paying Ashley Grimes, Yearbook Sponsor at Phil Campbell Elementary School, \$500 in compensation for yearbook supplement for 2022-23 year, per recommendation by PCES Principal Dawn Rogers. The school will reimburse the Franklin County BOE the \$500 plus applicable benefits.

The next board meeting is scheduled for August 1, 2023, with work session at 5 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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Britton asks commission to pave Jacinto Road

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The owner of a residential community on Cedar Creek Lake is asking the Franklin County Commission to pave a two-mile dirt road that provides the only access to the property.

Eddie Britton addressed the commission at its July 10th work session to ask commissioners to consider paving one mile of Jacinto Road this year and the other mile the following year. He appeared with Cade Boyd, a property owner in Cedar Cove, Britton's lakeside development.

Most of Cedar Cove's 11 lots border the lake. Britton continues to work with the Tennessee Valley Authority to obtain pier permits for individual boat houses.

"I'm asking you to do the first half of (Jacinto Road) one year because of the costs and finish up in the successive year," Britton told commissioners. "We have permission from all landowners along Jacinto Road to access their properties to pave the road."

There are eight homes along Jacinto Road on the way to Cedar Cove. Britton said there's one home built and construction is about to begin on a second. He's sold seven of the 11 available lots. He describes this project the 'first phase' of the subdivision.

Subdivision covenants call for a minimum of 1,500-square foot homes. This is not the first time Britton has appeared before the commission. His argument to commissioners to justify paving the road is the increased value the land will have and the additional lots that will be purchased where homes will be constructed, all increasing ad valorem tax revenue for Franklin County. Britton has also met with Franklin County Engineer Jason Baggett to discuss the possibility of paving Jacinto Road.



COURTESY PHOTO
The two-mile Jacinto Road ends in Eddie Britton's Cedar Cove subdivision.

"When we met with Mr. Baggett, nothing personal, but he did not seem real encouraging," Britton said.

Boyd said the unpaved road causes significant wear and tear on vehicles as well as being a hazard.

"You fight the dust every day. We just want the same thing everyone else wants and if you've ever met another vehicle on a dirt road, it's not pleasant," Boyd said.

Baggett said work will soon begin on Franklin County's Rebuild Alabama Grant road project, which will see 4.71 miles of road paved at a cost of \$778,435.26. That's a cost of \$165,272.88 per mile. That per mile cost includes additional improvements, including striping and traffic control signage.

He added that a just 20-foot wide road, with a 1.5 inch overlay, would cost approximately \$110,000 to pave one mile. Baggett said he planned to do some measurements on Jacinto Road to estimate the cost of paving it.

Boyd said if commissioners committed to paving Jacinto Road, he would cut down trees and move fences needed to have the requisite space for shoulders. He estimated approximately 50 trees would need to be cut down, and both Boyd and Britton said they 'were willing to do our part' to get the paving done.

To find Jacinto Road, take Hwy. 24 west to Belgreen, turn right onto 187, then turn right at the stop sign and after one block, turn left onto Hwy. 49 for half a mile. Turn right onto Jacinto Road and you'll travel two miles to the entrance of Cedar Cove.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said the commission would soon be conducting budget meetings and would meet with Baggett to see if paving a portion of Jacinto Road 'is feasible.'

Commissioner Chris Wallace mentioned the possibility of calcium chloride being applied to the road as a less expensive alternative.

Calcium chloride is a hygroscopic salt that draws moisture from the air to keep gravel roads damp, even in hot weather conditions. This helps the gravel create a hard and compact road surface.

With a limited budget and no shortage of roads needing to be paved or repaired, a commitment to pave a two-mile road not classified as a major collector seems unlikely.

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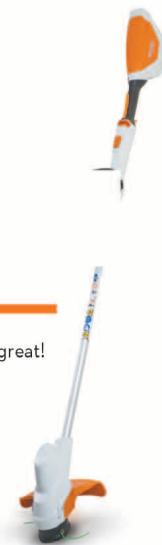
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