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Freedom Fiber CEO hopes to see county build out completed soon, considering Russellville as next step

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Freedom Fiber's plans to complete its broadband expansion to Franklin County's unserved and underserved internet areas continue to take shape, with the latest news revolving around contingency plans for the company to expand its service into the City of Russellville. At its July 17th meeting, the Franklin County Commission voted to use its American Relief Plan Act funds, in the amount of \$5 million, to pay Freedom Fiber's bid to provide

internet service in the remaining areas of the county currently not served by any provider. Freedom Fiber officials, along with representatives from Franklin County and Investing in Alabama Counties, met by telephone last week to work toward finalizing their agreement. Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said Freedom Fiber submitted information requested by IAC and that led to some follow-up questions back to Freedom Fiber. Moore said he expects another conference call this week that he hopes will answer any remaining

See 'FIBER,' Page 8


PCHS teacher charged with sending obscene materials to student

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Just days after a former Phil Campbell High School teacher was sentenced to 18 months in jail after pleading guilty to engaging in a sex act with a student, another PCHS teacher posted bond on two charges alleging that he distributed obscene material to a student. Mark Wells, 36, was arrested on August 11th on charges of distributing obscene material to a minor and a school employee distributing obscene material. Wells has been placed on administrative leave according to Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton. Further considera-




tion of Wells' employment status will be addressed at a later board meeting. Wells teaches special education at PCHS. He also serves as varsity boys' track and field coach and he coached junior high basketball. Northwest Shoals Community College hired Wells in January to coach its new men's and women's cross-country teams. As of Thursday, the school's website did not include Wells as a coach and the press release announcing his hiring was also taken down. A 2005 graduate of PCHS, Wells attended Northwest Shoals before going on to earn his degree from the University of North Alabama, and a Master's Degree in Special

See 'TEACHER,' Page 5

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 **Jason Miller**
Franklin County Probate Judge
Republican Primary 2024
PO Pol. Adv. By Jason Miller • 605 Elm Circle, Russellville, AL 35663

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Have an opinion? Story idea?

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Amy Michelle Cox Rollins, age 48, of Spruce Pine, passed away Sunday, August 20, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

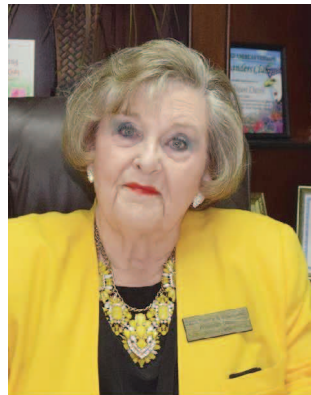
Edwin Wade Martin, age 72, of Russellville, passed away on August 20, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

Dorothy Trapp Taylor, age 87, of Russellville, passed away August 18, 2023. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

Judy Ann Gardner, 74 of Mt. Hope, Alabama passed away on August 18, 2023. Akins Funeral Home assisted the family.

Joedy Jason Lognion, age 63, of Montgomery, passed away on Tuesday, August 15, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assted the family.

Carolyn Sue Webb, age 67, of Hamilton, AL passed away on Tuesday, August 15, 2023. Spry Memorial Chapel assted the family.



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Franklin Free Press

**113 Washington Ave. NW
Russellville, AL 35653
256-332-0255**

**The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc.
Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.**

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Correction Policy

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

Letters to the editor

The Franklin Free Press is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The Franklin Free Press reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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GENERAL NOTICE

CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE

PATROL OFFICER – POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEFINITION OF JOB: Patrols a designated sector of the city of Russellville and responds to complaints. Serves warrants and subpoenas and testifies in court. Provides traffic control assistance. Performs dispatching duties. Performs other police related duties as required.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge of: the city buildings and street system of Russellville; city, state and federal laws; court procedures; department rules, regulations and procedures; maintenance and use of weapons; radio codes, surveillance equipment and legal procedures involved with illegal drug cases.

Ability to: operate a motor vehicle; read; safely fire a weapon; communicate on telephone and radio; generate written documents such as reports and tickets; bend, crouch; stretch; stretch; walk; run; respond to emergency situations on short notice when off-duty; and do the essential functions of the job as directed in this description.

Willingness to: work overtime, irregular hours, weekends and holidays; travel and attend seminars and workshops.

QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED
Minimum of 21 years of age

Must meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the State of Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission

Possession of a valid Alabama Drivers License

Possess the ability to obtain an Alabama Police Academy diploma or its equivalent

THE CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. ALL QUALIFIED APPLICANTS WILL RECEIVE CONSIDERATION WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, RELIGION, COLOR, SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, DISABILITY, OR ANY OTHER NON-MERIT FACTOR. THE CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE ENCOURAGES APPLICATIONS FOR POSITIONS IN ALL PROTECTIVE SERVICE DEPARTMENTS FROM WOMEN IN AN ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THEIR REPRESENTATION IN PROTECTIVE SERVICE DEPARTMENTS.

Pay Range is from \$36,150.40 – 55,735.68.

Applications and copies of the Job Descriptions may be obtained at the Russellville City Hall, Office of the Mayor, 304 North Jackson Avenue. Applications submitted to the Russellville Civil Service Board less than one year ago remain active. Those individuals need not reapply in order to receive consideration for this appointment. Applications must be returned no later than August 28, 2023 by

U.S. Mail to:

The Russellville Civil Service Board
P. O. Box 308
Russellville, AL 35653

The appointees will be required to successfully complete a physical examination including drug and alcohol screening prior to employment.

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**Mon-Thur
8-5**

RCS Board approves \$6.28 million Career Tech renovations, additions

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Board of Education approved a bid from an Athens contractor for major renovations to the Russellville High School Career Tech building at the board's August 15th meeting.

The lowest bid, \$6,281,069, was accepted from Martin & Cobey Construction Company. The extensive renovation includes the addition of a thermoplastic polyolefin roof.

Three bids were received, including Martin & Cobey's. Russellville City Schools

Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes said the project will be focused on three areas—space, technology and electrical.

"There will be more space for our Career Tech programs, including the addition of four new classrooms," Grimes said. "We will have more clean space for our programs. We'll improve our technological abilities and do an electrical upgrade."

Career tech classes for the 2023-24 school year have been relocated primarily to other on-campus locations, as well as the Franklin County Career Tech Center, in advance of the October 2023 project start date, Grimes said.

The Career Tech renovations are the 'Part B' of the new addition and renovations for Russellville High School that began with the construction of the school's new building that opened last year.

In other agenda items, the board:

--approved up to a \$15,000 expense to Russellville City Schools' Child Nutrition Program to pay the costs of the SPAN Program's student breakfast and lunch for the 2023-24 school year, or until other funding can be secured.

--approved a Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) contract for Zach Bruce.

--contracted with Rick Itter and Rodney Belue, and the City of Russellville, for School Resource Officer positions.

--approved personnel moves including:

Resignation in Position: Arlene Patino, EL Aide at RHS, Andrea Mazate-Cruz, EL Aide at RMS.

Temporary Employment in Position: Magda Lopez, EL Aide, Ella Burcham, Ashlee Moon and Haley Scott Hargett, 21st CCLC Aide, part-time and as needed, Emily Rush as 21st CCLC Teacher.

Employment in Position: Gage Brewer, Adjunct Health Science Teacher at RHS.

--Athletic Volunteers for 2023-24: Flip Graham, Gary Odom and Jeff Mixon, basketball.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Board of Education will be Tuesday, September 12 at 8 a.m. There will be a budget hearing Monday, September 11 at 3 p.m.

Alabamian Updating Citizenship Status

Under the Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act, a request was submitted to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security via U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services National Records Center, file number NR C202314936 on May 10, 2023, regarding the birth certificate of Charles E. Hosea, Jr., I-94, and citizenship status of Charles E. Hosea Jr., Hosea Jr., Charles E., Charles Hosea Jr. and all other derivatives. A completed search of Person-Centric Identity Services was conducted and there were no records responsive to the request.

Section 302 of Public Law 94-241: I Charles E. Hosea Jr., being duly sworn, hereby declare my intention to be a national but not a citizen of the United States. "Non citizen National."

John Almirol, M.D.
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'TEACHER,' From Page 1

Education from the University of West Alabama.

According to Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver, Wells posted a \$5,000 cash bond and was released the same day he was arrested.

A passionate runner, Wells established a running club for Phil Campbell Elementary students. That program grew to more than 100 kids last year.

He is accused of sending a sexually explicit video to a student, which, according to sheriff's investigators, he admitted to in an interview.

Hamilton said he was 'shocked' to learn of Wells' arrest. He confirmed Wells having been placed on administrative leave but declined further comment due to the matter pending in court.

Both of Wells' charges are Class A misdemeanors that carry up to one year in jail each upon conviction.

On August 1, 2023, former PCHS teacher Jordan Benford was sentenced by Circuit Judge Glenn E. Thompson to a 10-year prison sentence upon his guilty plea to engaging in a sex act with a student.

Benford's sentence was split to serve 18 months in confinement, followed by six months in Franklin County Community Corrections. If Benford successfully completes the Community Corrections program, he would be placed on state probation for 48 months according to the court's sentencing order.

He was arrested in March 2021 after a sheriff's investigation revealed he was engaged in a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old PCHS student and had also sent the student nude photos/videos of himself.

He was employed at the time as a science teacher and assistant football coach at Phil Campbell.

Benford entered a guilty plea to engaging in a sex act with a student on September 27, 2022, but sentencing was deferred until a later date.

Benford turned himself in to the Franklin County Jail on October 19, 2022, and has remained in jail since. The court order gave Benford jail credit of 289 days time served toward his 18-month confinement.

Additionally, Judge Thompson ordered the remainder of Benford's sentence be served in the Franklin County Jail, which will keep the for-

mer teacher out of Alabama Department of Corrections custody.

Benford, as of his sentencing date, has approximately 250 days remaining to complete his split sentence.

Further conditions of his sentence include no contact with the victim or the victim's family, dismissal of his other three charges, and registration as a sex offender as required by Alabama law.

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ALABAMA ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLE ACT, ALABAMA CODE SECTIONS 32-13-1 THROUGH 32-13-8, THE FOLLOWING MOTOR VEHICLE WILL BE SOLD FOR CASH AT 10:30 A.M., ON OCTOBER 4, 2023, AT M&N WRECKER & SERVICE CENTER, 11833 HWY. 43 SOUTH, RUSSELLVILLE, AL, 35653. SELLER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY BID AND THE RIGHT TO BID. SELLER WILL ACCEPT SEALED BIDS THROUGH 5 P.M., OCTOBER 3, 2022, AT THE LOCATION DESCRIBED ABOVE. BIDS WILL BE OPENED ONSITE AT M&N WRECKER & SERVICE CENTER ON OCTOBER 4, 2020 AT 10:30 A.M.

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Saturday - August 26, 2023 - 2 Auctions

9:00am - FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION

On Site: 2825 Cook Creek Road, Littleville

Trucks—Tractors—Trailers—Implements



2012 Dodge Truck, 2640 John Deere Tractor, 20' Stock Trailer with Good Floor, 1997 F150 4X4, 4020 John Deere Tractor, 265 Massey, Gooseneck Flatbed Trailer, Cutters, Hay Rings, Hay Forks, Boom Poles, Harrow, Metal Single Carport, Smoker, Miscellaneous Tools, 8' x 16' Outbuilding, and More. **DIRECTIONS:** From Hwy 43 in Littleville, turn west on Ligon Springs Road, go to stop sign at Cook Creek Road, turn right, sale sight approx. 1/2 mile on left. Signs up.

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TRACT 2: 3 Bd/2 Ba House, 1+/- Acre, 1585 George Wallace Hwy, Littleville

TRACT 3: 2 Bd/1 Ba House, .6+/- Acre, 1620 George Wallace Hwy, Littleville

TRACT 4: 85' x 210' Lot Only, 1660 George Wallace Hwy, Littleville

TRACT 5: 141' x 100' Corner Lot Only, 1880 Elm Lane and George Wallace Hwy

TRACT 6: 2.5+/- Acre Lot on Lakeview Drive, Hyde Lake, Russellville

DIRECTIONS TO AUCTION SITE: From intersection of Hwy 43 & 72, go south on Hwy 43 to Littleville on left. Signs up.

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For more information, an inventory list and more pictures, please visit [#10125](http://www.auctionzip.com) or find us on facebook.

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

THE NACOLG SENIORx MEDICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SUPPLIES FREE AND LOW COST MEDICATIONS FOR ANYONE IN ALABAMA WITH A DISABILITY OR A CHRONIC ILLNESS REGARDLESS OF AGE THAT REQUIRES DAILY MEDICATION. MEDICARE RECIPIENTS MAY ALSO BE ELIGIBLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT NACOLG SENIORx TODAY. THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS SERVICE. 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) 256-389-0530 PAULA PARDUE 256-389-0529 THIS PROGRAM IS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE OF ALABAMA AND ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR

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 of Phil Campbell is under new management. Everyone age 60 and over are invited to come join us and be part of the group. This is for men and women. We meet at the Phil Campbell Community Center Monday thru Friday from 8-noon. A delicious lunch is served at 11 a.m. Meals are \$1 donation. Some come and play Rook. We also do Bingo when we have enough people. There are several games to play or just sit and socialize with other seniors.

Pastor Bro. Eric McKinney and the congregation of Crestview Missionary Baptist Church, 24131 Hwy. 24, Russellville, invite you to worship with them. Sunday morning Bible Study is from 10-Noon and Sunday morning worship from 11-Noon. All are welcome to our services! Call 256-324-0179 for more information.

Russellville First Methodist Church will host a Food Giveaway - Groceries will be given out while supplies last! The event will be Thursday, August 31, 2023, at 1:00 pm. Please stay in your vehicle, have an ID handy and allow our volunteers to serve you! Russellville First Methodist Church is located at the corner of Madison and Washington.

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.

The Clarion Hotel, in collaboration with Knox Media Group and Pilgrim's Pride, is thrilled to present an exhilarating and electrifying event - Free Mix Mingle Money and Music Job Fair. Mark your calendars for Friday, September 1, 2023, from 4-7pm as this evening promises to be an absolute blast. With over 20 exceptional businesses participating, this job fair is not to be missed. The atmosphere will be filled with the infectious beats of good music, creating an energetic ambiance that will surely uplift your spirits. So, come on out, grab something to eat, and get ready to network, groove to the music, and explore new job opportunities in this area. Don't let this exciting event pass you by!

The Cowboy Church of Franklin County will host a Bazaar Roundup on Saturday, August 26th, starting at 6 a.m. Don't miss this HUGE sale. Yard Sale will be inside and proceeds benefit the church mission fund. Outside there will be a variety of vendors with new, used, handmade crafts and drinks and desserts, etc. 25100 Hwy. 24 West in Russellville.

There will be a blood drive in memory of Jagger Mills at Boutique 72 on Saturday, August 26th, from 10 am-4 pm. Boutique 72 is located at 1408 Avenue E in Tuscumbia. All donors will receive a free appetizer card courtesy of Texas Roadhouse and a pound of cookie dough from Papa Murphy's. All donors will receive a recognition item and a free cholesterol screening.

The state beef checkoff is important because it's the major source of funding for programs to promote beef, educate influencers and consumers, respond to negative media, protect the reputation of cattle farmers, fund producer education, promote beef exports, support youth programs, and provide research for producers on cattle production. All cattle owners in Alabama are eligible to vote with no age restriction and must vote in person. You do not have to vote in the county your cattle are located. The ballot includes one question: "Do you vote 'yes' or 'no' for the continuation of the state beef check-off program with a deduction of \$1 per head from the sale of all cattle and calves? Voting will be held at the Franklin County Extension Office (located in the Franklin County Courthouse basement) on August 28, 2023, from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more information, call 256-332-8880.

Have an event we can help publicize?

Call us at 256-332-0255.

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

Russellville City Schools policy bans cell phone usage during class

Education from the University of West Alabama.

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LIVE-IN NANNY NEEDED:

Family of three (mom, dad and newborn baby), one golden doodle and one cat, living in Muscle Shoals. Mom and dad are working parents. We are looking for a full-time, live-in Nanny to work 10-12 hours per day. Payment is \$8/hour, with housing and food included.

Work to include: Babysitting, cooking meals, laundry, ironing, preparing child's meals, occasional cleaning (vacuuming, mopping, etc.).

We prefer prior experience, and prefer applicants have valid driver's license.

Please email resume to sapkotarps@gmail.com.

Thank you.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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

Corrections Officer/Dispatcher, Franklin County Jail

Deputy, Franklin County Sheriff's Office

Heavy Equipment Operator, Franklin County Solid Waste

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Friday, September 1, 2023.

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, by calling (256) 332-8850 or applications are available at www.franklincountyal.org under the Careers tab.

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

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2010 CHRYSLER 300
VIN 2C3CA5CV6AH325767

2003 HONDA CBR600
VIN JH2PC37033M007347

'FIBER,' From Page 1

questions.

Investing in Alabama Counties was formed by the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama to assist counties in properly spending ARPA funds in accordance with federal guidelines.

Freedom Fiber, owned by Tombigbee Electric Cooperative, Inc., has already completed extensive broadband build out in Franklin County.

At the August 15th meeting of the Russellville Electric Board, Manager Charles Canida told board members he had been in discussions with Freedom Fiber regarding the company's proposed build out into the City of Russellville.

Canida described it as a 'very productive meeting' and said Freedom Fiber is already paying REB pole attachment fees for using electric poles to carry fiber-optic cables through the city for use in rural portions of Franklin County.

"We support the build out. The only thing that has to be done is to revise that contract to include this or just add those to the current contract," Canida said. "I gave (Freedom Fiber CEO Britton Lightsey) a copy of the current contract to go back and review and he'll get back in touch with me. If they attach to our poles they would have to pay the Tennessee Valley Authority rate for each one of the poles they attach to," he added.

In 2016, TVA's Board of Directors approved a methodology to regulate pole attachment rates to ensure consistency among its local power suppliers.

TVA's formula for pole attachment rates is as follows: (Space Allocation) x (Net Cost of Bare Pole) x (Carrying Cost).

Those criteria vary among LPCs but the formula used to calculate the usage rates is consistent among all TVA's local power providers.

Freedom Fiber officials hope to have their Franklin County build out completed in the near future.

"There are a lot of moving parts there. I don't like giving timelines but we haven't stopped working in Franklin County and we continue to work every day to serve people and we will have 100 percent of Franklin County served in the near future, including Red Bay, Phil Campbell and all areas of the county except the City of Russellville," said Britton Lightsey, Tombigbee Electric Cooperative CEO.

Once the county build out is complete, Lightsey said they are considering coming to Russellville, but as far as a commitment to that, "there are still a lot of details we have to work out, but we are definitely looking into that possibility."

Freedom Fiber is averaging between 600-650 new subscribers each month in Fayette and Franklin County, with a majority of those coming from Franklin County, Lightsey said

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Belgreen gets first live competition in jamboree at Shoals Christian

*Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press*

After Coach Jonathan Raper took over the Belgreen Bulldogs football team just two short months ago, the Bulldogs finally lined up against some competition in Friday's jamboree at Shoals Christian High School. Belgreen's junior varsity played the first two quarters, which ended in a 32-8 Bulldog loss. The Bulldogs were playing a varsity Shoals Christian team that started nine seniors.

"I started fourth eighth graders and after the excitement wore off, they played well against the older kids," Raper said. "I thought our quarterback Landon Cox played well. For most of the kids, this was the first time that had ever put on pads and hit someone other than their friends," Raper said. Further into the game, Belgreen played better after the first-game jitters eased. "The kids were very emotional before the game. They played much better and made fewer mistakes as the game went on. Will King was one of those whose performance stood out to his coach. King is the Bulldogs' starting linebacker. "We have several young lineman that played well also," Raper said. The Bulldogs next face the Cherokee Indians Tuesday, August 29th at 5:30 p.m. Belgreen will play a junior high schedule this season, with a few games including an opportunity for the junior varsity to play together. Other games are scheduled at luka (September 5th), Vina (September 18th), Tharptown (September 25th) and Tishomingo, Ms. (October 6th).

"I'm thankful we were able to play Shoals Christian. It gave our kids game experience and that's something you can't coach," Raper said.

Golden Tigers open with revenge opportunity hosting 7A Grissom

*Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press*

The Russellville Golden Tigers kicked off their 2023 season with a jamboree game against Itawamba Agricultural High School Friday night.

There were a few surprises at Friday night's game including the offensive line showing signs of what could be a dominant season.

"Up front was a concern leading into the season. A couple of guys had zero game experience, but the o-line played well as a unit. The guys showed things we can build off of this year," head coach John Ritter said.

Eric Hernandez is one of those offensive lineman who is coming off of an ACL tear last year.

"Hernandez did great things at the guard position and he is on track to have a great season," Ritter said.

The Golden Tigers featured Cam Phinzee and Zaye Eggleston at running back. Malachi Duncan will also get reps in the backfield this season.

Although Eggleston is a smaller back, he hits the holes hard.



RHS Coach John Ritter

See, 'TIGERS,' Page 12

Bobcats impressive in jamboree against Tharptown

*Michael Rice
Franklin Free Press*

Jacob Hamilton's first game as the Phil Campbell Bobcats varsity football coach ended in a 59-7 win over the Tharptown Wildcats. Although Friday's game was a pre-season jamboree, the Bobcats had been looking forward to some friendly contact under the lights.



"In Hailton we trust" PC players show support of their new coach.

"We're all excited and the kids are really looking forward to hitting someone other than each other," Hamilton said before the game.

The Bobcats amassed 637 total yards on the night.

547 of the total yards were on the ground.

The Wildcats closed out the night with 152 total yards.

Phil Campbell senior running back Gage Baker had 71 yards rushing with two touchdowns on the books.

The Bobcats' freshman quarterback Hayston Scott threw for 90 yards and added 158 yards rushing and three touchdowns.

The Bobcats will face the Hackleburg Panthers at home Friday night beginning regular season play.

"I'm proud of our team competing well. I'm glad we made some mistakes full speed. I couldn't ask for a better effort from my guys," Hamilton said.

See, 'BOBCATS,' page 12

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'TIGERS,' From Page 11

"We can also run Eggleston on routes and throw to him," Ritter said.

The Golden Tigers start regular season play this Friday as they host 7A Grissom High School.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at www.franklinfreepress.net!

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'BOBCATS,' From Page 11

"I wish we could get a few more games experience in before the season starts, but we're ready for it," Hamilton added.

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Jackson father & son team sweep largest locally-grown melon contest

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

You'll find the office of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce closed this week, with plans to reopen on Monday, August 28th.

It's a well-deserved vacation week for Franklin County Chamber Executive Director Cassie Medley and her staff after a busy weekend at the 42nd annual Franklin County Watermelon Festival.

The weather beautiful, unlike some recent years, and the crowds for both nights of music were massive.

From the chamber staff and directors to the vendors, sponsors and community support, the festival was an overwhelming success.

As always, there were Watermelon Festival contests, and here are the winners of those:

Largest Melon Overall: Billy Roberts, 193 pounds, first place. Blake Roberts, 165 pounds, second place.

Largest Franklin County grown Melon: Rhett Jackson, 106 pounds, first place. Steven Jackson, 100 pounds, second place.

Best Tasting Melon: Tony Hudson, first place. Maria King, second

place. Josh Vigliette, third place.

Best Dressed Melon: Damaris Bonilla, first place. Aymar Bonilla, second place.

Mary Jane McDill, third place.

Youth Seed Spitting: Zedaki Wilson, 18', first place.

Xander Cantrell, 13'4", second place. Aaliyah Francisco, 12'7", third place.

Adult

Seed Spitting: Joel Davis, 23'3", first place. Damaris Bonilla, 23', second place. Kevin Strickland, 21'7", third place.

And it's never too early to mark your calendar for the 43rd annual Franklin County Watermelon Festival, August 16-17, 2024.



Courtesy Photo from Cortney Green

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ANNOUNCEMENT From the Family of Hosea!

All of God's grace in one little face. Happy to announce the birth of a little baby boy. He arrived on May 12, 2023, at 1:07 p.m., Central Standard Time, in Madison, Alabama, to the parents of Charles Jr. Bey and O'Rissa. He weighed seven (7) pounds exactly, length nineteen and a half inches (19.5").

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RMS students embark on American Character Program

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With the help of local and state sponsors, 7th grade students from Russellville Middle School are beginning the American Character Program this year.

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The lessons are in comic book format and expand into class exercises and activities that have serious impact. After studying the character and impact of historical American figures, they are then challenged to put their own character in action.

At the kickoff event, students were introduced to the program and the service learning component that will empower them to make a difference in their community and beyond.

These "GoodCharacters" projects will see students, along with local mentors, working to solve real issues. And, in the program's conclusion, they'll hold a "GoodCharacters" Expo where they show off their bright ideas and the big deeds they accomplished.

The middle school program is a continuation of the Super Citizen Program.



COURTESY PHOTO

Community leaders and school officials joined RMS students at their 'Good Character' Program kickoff.



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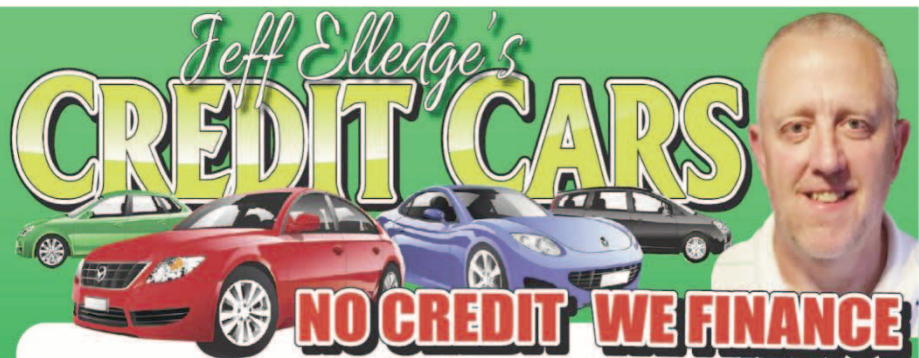


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