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## Financial uncertainties loom for local school systems with end of COVID-19 ESSER funding

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

A crowd of approximately 200 heard Franklin County's two school superintendents and the Dean of Academic Affairs for Northwest Shoals Community College discuss the state of their school systems at the Phil Campbell High School auditorium Thursday evening.

The annual event, sponsored by the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, provides the public an update on the state of the two public

school systems and the county's only community college.

After a welcome from Chamber of Commerce Board President Matt Uptain and PCHS Principal Bart Moss, PCHS student Macey Welborn did the invocation, Jackson Clark led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and NWSCC student Eli Cooper performed the National Anthem.

The evening ended with the recognition of 17 educators named as Outstanding Employees for 2023.

Russellville City Schools

See 'SCHOOLS,' Page 3

## 14 Franklin County schools, agencies receive combined \$96,700 in RC&D grants

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

On the same day officials from the Northwest Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Council (Northwest RC&D) announced a \$25,000 grant used to purchase new bleachers at Tharptown Elementary School, representatives from several Franklin County non-profit and governmental agencies shared how last year's RC&D grants helped their organizations.

The annual announcement of completed projects from the previous fiscal year, 2022-23, was held at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex the afternoon of November 1st.

More than \$96,700 in grants were awarded to 14 agencies last year.


The \$25,000 Community Development grant at Tharptown, first of the FY 2023-24 awards, will allow TES to have a central meeting place for students, parents and the community in the gymnasium.

Northwest Alabama RC&D is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports educational and community development projects in a five county area including Franklin, Colbert, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston counties.




RC&D councils are funded by the Alabama Legislature. Rep. Jamie Kiel attended Wednesday's event and discussed the impact made by RC&D in Northwest Alabama.

See 'GRANTS,' Page 4

**CURTIS BAKER**  
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**Christie Micheal Plott, age 44, of Russellville,**  
passed away November 5, 2023.  
Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

**Reba Sue Seay Smith, age 77, of Russellville,**  
passed away on Saturday, November 04, 2023. Spry  
Memorial Chapel assisted the family.

**Robbie Kenneth Hawkins, age 84, of Phil Campbell,**  
passed away on Friday, November 03, 2023. Spry  
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# 'SCHOOLS,' From Page 1

Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes went first and delivered what will be his final 'State of the Schools' speech as Grimes will retire from RCS next June.

In his ninth year as superintendent, Grimes talked about the changes in the system over his tenure. Russellville's Hispanic enrollment continues to increase, up to 1,500 students from 1,300 a few years ago.

Russellville High School was ranked 18th among all Alabama public high schools earlier this year in an annual ranking from U.S. News & World Report. A significant reason for the high ranking, as well as RHS' 'A' score on the annual Alabama report card comes from its success in helping non-English speaking students become English proficient.

"We were the only school system with a Majority Minority District to earn an 'A' on the state report card," Grimes said. "And we also had the Alabama Middle School Principal of the Year in Tony Bonds."

West Elementary, Russellville Middle School and Russellville Elementary Schools were each named Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence this year.

But there's a potential cloud on the horizon when it comes to maintaining the teachers and aides who have been a big reason for the system's success with its Hispanic students.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER), part of the massive American Relief Plan COVID 19 stimulus package, are going to end after the current school year.

"We are spending \$1.8 million in ESSER funding for retired teachers (doing part-time work), a social worker, staff accountant and 17 teachers and six English Language aides," Grimes said. "That money runs out after this year and it accounts for five teachers at Russellville Elementary, six at West Elementary, three at Russellville High School and three at the middle school.

"That's some significant revenue we need to fill next year. It will be a big challenge but we've talked about it for a couple years knowing this was coming," Grimes added.

RHS students took 492 AP exams with 130 qualifying scores last year. RHS had 25 AP Scholars, three AP Scholars with Honors, five AP Scholars with Distinction and one AP Capstone Diploma.

61% of RHS seniors took at least one AP exam during high school, with 30% of seniors scoring a three or higher on at least one AP exam. This is

another area the school scored well in as part of the high school rankings.

The RHS Class of 2022 had 70 different seniors receive 304 scholarships totaling more than \$2.558 million. And RHS was named the Number One high school in North Alabama for student academic and Career Technical dual enrollment with NWSCC.

"The state of Russellville City Schools is strong thanks to the people we have working here and the dedication of the faculty, administration, staff and our outstanding students," Grimes said. Franklin County Schools Superintendent Greg Hamilton is in his seventh year as the head of the county's school system.

Hamilton began by expressing his appreciation for the working relationship his school system has with Russellville City Schools.

Franklin County Schools has 10 schools over six campuses. The system owns 71 buses, with 52 traditional routes, five technical routes and four special needs routes.

This year's enrollment is 3,473 students, a number consistent since 2020.

"We need to stay where we're at based on our schools and the limited availability of space," Hamilton said.

Franklin County Schools' enrollment includes 20% Hispanic students, 70% White, 1.75% African American and eight percent classified as other.

The system's budget for FY2023-24 is \$55 million, an increase of more than \$14 million since FY2020-21.

The State Department of Education requires all public school systems to carry at least a one-month fund balance and Franklin County Schools and Russellville City Schools each have a carryover of significantly more than the minimum required.

But Hamilton said there are budget obstacles coming as a result of the end of ESSER funding.

"There is a \$2 million shortfall we have to come up with in Franklin County Schools," Hamilton said. "It's a very difficult situation."

Those shortfalls are in the area of special education (\$1.6 million) and funding for the system's 11 school nurses (\$500,000 shortfall).

There has been more than \$22 million in capital projects completed in Franklin County Schools since 2017. Current projects include the Belgreen High School stadium, the East Franklin Junior High gym and several others.

Hamilton said Tharptown High School saw an increase of 10 points on its school report card from the previous year.

He anticipates the county will have 259 seniors graduating next spring. A Red Bay students earned a 34 on the ACT, the highest in the county.

He also mentioned student community projects including Vina High School Ambassadors distributing 4,500 food bags last Christmas.

"I'm very proud of what's going on in Franklin County Schools. We're in good financial shape right now but we're facing some challenges and have to adjust to it this year. It's not fun but that's the reality of where we are," Hamilton said.

Outstanding Employee of the Year honorees included: Jason Oliver, Belgreen High School, Elisha Rambo, East Franklin Junior High School, Pam Watts, Franklin County Career Technical School, Brian Fuller, NWSCC-Phil Campbell, Tonya Bostick, Phil Campbell Elementary School, Amy Hodge, Phil. Campbell High School, Paula Jackson, Red Bay Elementary School, Judy Moses, Red Bay High School, Blair Johnson, Russellville Elementary School, Larsen Plyler, Russellville High School, Teresa Hubbard, Russellville Middle School, Cheri Wallace, West Elementary School, Lisa Butler, Tharptown Elementary School, Mallory Sutton, Tharptown High School, Kevin Scott, Vina High School, Jamie Shewbart, Franklin County Central Office and Vickie Hester, Russellville Central Office.



COURTESY PHOTO  
RCS Superintendent Heath Grimes addresses the crowd at Thursday's State of the Schools event.

## 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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# 'GRANTS,' From Page 1

"RC&D does a great job making sure you guys get money for your important projects," Kiel said. "We are super happy to make sure these dollars are available to come back to Franklin County."

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The 14 grant awards presented to Franklin County organizations in FY23-24 included:

—Franklin County Cattlemen's Association, \$9,177.82 for 'Grilling up Scholarships.' The mobile propane grill will be used to raise money for scholarships presented by the Cattlemen's Association each year to local high school seniors. Cattlemen's Association representative Michael Pounders said the organization receives requests for smaller cookings and this

new grill will make it easier to cook at these events.

—Phil Campbell Rescue Squad, \$5,000 for a rescue truck light tower.

"We installed this on our rapid response vehicle and it will allow us to see what's going on when we are called out to the woods at 3 a.m., for example," said PCRS's Barry Pounders.

—Belgreen High School, \$6,000 for girls' athletics upgrades. These include a tarp for the softball field, protecting it from winter and inclement weather.

—Franklin County Sheriff's Office, \$8,000 for safety equipment upgrades. These funds allowed the purchase of K9 equipment to ensure safe transportation for the K9 officer and safety equipment to make sure the K9 is in a safe environment when not with his deputy.

Also, a camera was purchased to use during high stress situations to deploy and minimize otherwise dangerous situations where a weapon could be involved.

—Franklin County Emergency Management Agency, \$8,400 for handheld thermal heat sensors.

"We needed infra-red cameras for our volunteer fire departments," said EMA Director Mary Hallman-Glass. "In a house fire

where the home is full of smoke sometimes you can't find the fire. We'll use these cameras to find hot spots in the wall where a little cut can be made and hopefully you can put the fire out and save the house."

Each of the county's 14 fire departments received a camera. Additionally, a \$6,000 RC&D grant allowed Hallman-Glass to purchase 230 programmed weather radios that were distributed to residents in the East Franklin community.

—Russellville High School, \$10,000 for HVAC Program development. The grant was used for the purchase of training equipment for the new HVAC Career Tech program. This funded the purchase of refrigerant recovery and charging trainers that are instrumental to the program.

—Russellville High School, \$5,000 for Outdoor Learning Program. These funds were used to purchase seating and tables for the outdoor classroom at RHS.

—East Franklin Junior High School, \$14,931.52 for Chromebooks, tables, lockers and more equipment. Lockers were updated to allow students to get more out of their school day. Students will use the Chromebooks to enhance the quality of their education each day, officials said.

—ARTAG Robotics K-12 Teaching, \$5,000 for electrical safety testing to detect overloaded circuits and low conductivity electrical grounds. This equipment led to the discovery of 22 breakers that were warm to hot and nine electrical grounds in need of maintenance. ARTAG is a non-profit with four retired Tennessee Valley Authority engineers who check for hazards in wiring and to make sure the buildings are up to code standards.

—Phil Campbell FFA, \$5,000 for greenhouse irrigation system.

—Bear Creek Collaborative, \$5,000 for creating accessible outdoor learning. Funds were used to purchase computer hardware and software, t-shirts, printed materials, fishing gear, certifications and website hosting, allowing Bear Creek Collaborative to operate as an organization and reach more school systems and agencies to let them know about the redeveloped education center.

—ACES (4H Robotics and Promotion), \$5,880.13 for equipment and supplies needed to host robotics workshops and a club, along with purchasing equipment and supplies.

—NASANA (Spay & Neuter Assistance and Vaccinations), \$2,333.33 to fund cost of rabies vaccinations for animals in the program to help with prevention of unwanted animals and to help with veterinary costs.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Grant recipients met with Northwest Alabama RC&D officials last week to share the impact of RC&D grant monies they received.

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# Parade, school program highlight week of Veterans Day activities

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Veterans are invited to attend a special Veterans Day celebration on Thursday, November 9th, hosted by Russellville Elementary School and West Elementary School.

The schools will honor veterans, active duty service men and women and their families at Thursday's event.

The program begins at 8:30 with a Salute to Veterans presentation at the Russellville High School Auditorium.

A Veterans Parade will follow at 9:30 a.m. The parade route will be the road between the RES and WES parking lots.

The program will include choral performances by RES and WES students and will feature guest speaker Lt. Col. Norman Lier.

Veterans Day is Saturday, November 11th. The day is special for many veterans and the families they may have left behind.

Russellville resident Janet Kinzer shared the story of her father, John H. Matlock, a Captain in the United States Army during World War II.

Matlock joined the Army as a Lieutenant in 1940.

During wartime he headed a tank division in Europe, under the command of Gen. George Patton.

Matlock was involved in the liberation of American Prisoners of War, Stalag 9B, Germany, on Easter Sunday, 1945.

When the war ended, he was selected to help in the cleanup of London, England.

Matlock was honorably discharged in 1947.

Matlock died in 1988 but his widow, Nell Matlock, is still living and is a Russellville resident.

The annual Franklin County Veterans Day Parade will be Saturday, November 11th, at 12 p.m., in downtown Russellville. Veterans are invited to gather at the Franklin County Courthouse at 11 a.m., to lay flowers for the memorial in front of the courthouse.

The Franklin Free Press salutes Captain John H. Matlock and all the men and women who have made and continue to make America the greatest place to live in the world.

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**T**he 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.

**A**shaKiran 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.

**T**he 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.

**P**astor 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.

**T**ennessee River Bass Club is seeking members for our 23/24 season. Club fishes monthly on Tennessee river and Bear Creek lakes. We welcome boaters or non-boaters 16 or older of all experience levels to join. Club is based in Sheffield. For more information, contact Tommy 256-627-5662.

**A** Veterans' Appreciation Event will be held at the Hamilton Career Center on Nov. 11, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. All veterans are invited. Location is 1481 Military Street South, Hamilton, Al., 35570.

**R**ussellville Masonic Lodge #371 is selling Hams For Thanksgiving. Hams are \$35 each and may be pre-ordered by dialing (256) 810-1970. Pickup is Wednesday November 22nd, between 8-10am at the Lodge on Coffee Avenue.

**T**he annual Franklin County Veterans Day Parade will be held Saturday, November 11th, at 12 p.m., in downtown Russellville. Local veterans are invited to gather at the Franklin County Courthouse at 11 a.m., to lay flowers for the memorial in front of the courthouse. They will then move to the A.W. Todd Centre at 11:30 a.m., to assemble for the parade. The parade will take its usual route and will include Army trucks, antique cars, motorcycles and more. Any person or organization wanting to participate in the parade should be at the Todd Centre by 11:30 a.m. The parade is sponsored by the American Legion Post 64.

**A**claimed acoustic band Act of Congress will perform their unique blend of American roots music mixed with traditional Christmas music at the Ritz Theatre on Friday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. An Act of Congress Christmas is made possible by presenting sponsor Colbert County Tourism. Tickets range from \$40 - \$30 and are available now at tennesseevalleyarts.org or by calling 256-383-0533. The Birmingham-based band has released multiple albums and has toured the world as Cultural Ambassadors for the U.S. State Department. Act of Congress regularly performs with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and has played for the likes of Disney, SXSW, NPR, Paste, and Billboard. Their modern mixes of traditionally popular Christmas songs demonstrate their skillful musical talent while enticing audiences to sing along. For more information about the Tennessee Valley Art Association, which runs the Ritz Theatre and the Tennessee Valley Museum of Art, visit tennesseevalleyarts.org or call 256-383-0533.

**T**he Tharptown High School chapter of National Honor Society will hold a LifeSouth blood drive, Wednesday, November 8, 2023, in front of the THS gymnasium from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Please support this event by donating blood and helping to save lives.



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## NWSCC to hold *Falling into Christmas* concert

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Northwest Shoals Community College Music Department will perform its 'Falling into Winter' Christmas concert on Friday, November 17th, at 7 p.m., in the Lou B. Beville Center on the college's Phil Campbell campus.

The concert will feature the NWSCC Show Choir, Vocal Point, directed by Jonathon Romero and the NWSCC Jazz Band directed by George Crummie.

Admission to the concert is free.

Show Choir members from the Franklin Free Press readership area include: Katelyn Marie's, Acy Davis, Antonio Santamaria, Eli Cooper and The NWSCC Jazz Band performing at the Bailey Palmer, Russellville, Makenzie Galloway and DaKota Galloway, Phil Campbell, Josie Jones and Abby Brewer, Moulton.

Jazz Band members from the Franklin Free Press readership area include: Pedro Lopez-Andres, Luis Lucas, Eduardo Lucas, Nathan Medley, Bailey Palmer and Jorge Pineda, Russellville.



COURTESY PHOTO

## Doublewide Texas Christmas the latest show from Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts

Submitted

The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts presents its first production of the 2023-24 season, Doublewide, Texas Christmas by Jones, Hope and Wooten and directed by Scotty Kennedy.

The performance dates are November 9-11, 2023, at 7:00 PM and Sunday November 12, 2023, at 2:00 PM at the Weatherford Centre in Red Bay, AL. Tickets are on sale now and you can go or call between the hours of 2:00-4:00 PM to purchase or reserve your tickets. For group sales you may contact Beth Hammock at 256-668-0045 for more information.

The cast includes Holly McKinney, Emily Edmonson, Brittany Faris, Chris Perea, Hannan Haddock, Dominic Rogers, Anna Carol Porter, Jerri Mayo and Clint Sikes. Stage manager Morgan Miller and sound and lights by Theron Struzik. This play is a follow-up to the last play Doublewide, Texas and includes most of the cast from that play, with new characters added. Thanks to Community Spirit Bank in Red Bay, AL for providing us with a wonderful facility that we are able to charge only 10.00 per ticket.

In this outrageously funny comedy, it's Christmas-time in the newest—and tiniest—town in Texas. And it's beginning to look a lot like trouble in Doublewide. Not only are the trailer park residents dealing with the stress of the holiday season, but they've just discovered that Doublewide is being double-crossed by the County. With their official incorporation papers in jeopardy, this band of eccentric Texans throw themselves into taking on the "Big Guys." Determined to bolster their legitimacy, they first set their sights on the County-wide "Battle of The Mangers" competition. They conspire to win this smackdown with their "Nativity At The Alamo" entry...by any means possible.

In addition to that shaky undertaking and trying almost single-handedly to keep the new town afloat, Mayor Joveeta Crumpler has to wrangle her celebrity-obsessed mother, her beleaguered brother who's being bullied by a pack of vengeful raccoons, and her demoralized best friend who's at the end of her rope from dating every loser this side of the Rio Grande. To make matters worse, Joveeta finds herself increasingly wary of the newest resident, Patsy Price. Patsy, fresh out of the local mental institution, clearly has her own devious agenda and the County competition over in Fayro is just the place for her to settle an old score.

By the time this full-tilt rocket ride of lunacy climaxes in a what-else-can-go-wrong live television presentation, you'll have doubled your Christmas spirit. So spend the Yuletide in Doublewide and let this hilarious Jones Hope Wooten Comedy make your Christmas merry and bright...because there's no place like a good ol' Texas-sized mobile home for the holidays!



The cast includes, L-R seated: Jeri Mayo, Emily Edmonson, Anna Carol Porter, Brittany Faris and Morgan Miller (Stage manager). Back row standing: Hannah Haddock, Chris Perea, Dominic Rogers, Clint Sikes and Holly McKinney.





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# Sock donations needed for Cottons for Christmas, an outreach of the Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee

Submitted

The Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee, a division of Alabama Farmers Federation, is seeking donations for our annual "Cottons for Christmas".

Donations requested are for new socks that will be distributed to residents in one of Franklin County's nursing homes. Each year our committee picks a different nursing home in the county and we strive to provide all residents in that particular nursing home a gift of socks & lotion.



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of the Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee with bags presented during last year's Cottons for Christmas.

These items are something all residents can use and while it is a small gift we hope this brings a little joy to them and lets them know we care about them! We will have a donation/collection box at the annual Farm-City Banquet, Monday, November 13, 2023.

Boxes will also be placed at 3 local businesses in Franklin County: Franklin County Courthouse/Extension Office (please leave your donations with one of the Courthouse security guards), ALFA Insurance Office-Russellville, ALFA Insurance Office-Red Bay.

Cottons for Christmas is one of the many community efforts the Franklin County Women's Leadership Committee works on each year to "give back" to the community. Please take your sock donations to one of the above locations by Wednesday, December 1, 2023.

Your help is very much appreciated!



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**SPORTS**

**11.8.23**

**Red Bay cruises past Bobcats, 52-20, in playoff tuneup for both teams**

Hayden Moss  
Franklin Free Press

The Red Bay Tigers dominated the Phil Campbell Bobcats 52-20 in a playoff tuneup for both teams last Friday night.

The cold night of football started with the Tigers striking first on a four yard touchdown run by Cody Carnes. A Gage Edgmon pass to Holden Inman scored the two-point try, making the score 8-0.

The Bobcats didn't waste any time, they drove the field and scored on a one yard touchdown run by Braxton Mayfield, set up by Mayfield's 70-year run, making the score 8-6 after a failed two-point try.

Phil Campbell picked off a Red Bay pass and drove the field and scored on a nine yard touchdown run by Hayston Scott, giving the Bobcats the lead at 12-8.

The Tigers drove the field and scored on a five-yard touchdown run by Jaxon Vinson, taking back the lead.

The Tigers' defense came up with a fumble recovery and Inman returned it 64 yards for a touchdown, making the score 20-12 after a failed two-point try.

Red Bay head coach Heath Childers was asked about his team's defensive effort, including a defensive touchdown.

"Coach Hamilton over there coaches a good group of kids. We expected them to come at us hard. They run a well run offense that we knew coming in and we needed to slow them down. Our defense stepped up and made plays for us which helped build our momentum and I'm really proud of our boys," Childers said.

Red Bay scored just before halftime on a seven yard touchdown run by Vinson, making the halftime score 28-12. Vinson finished with four touchdowns and 203 rushing yards on 22 carries. Carnes had 73 yards on 14 carries for Red Bay.

See, 'PLAYOFFS,' Page 13

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**Tharptown boys to run for state title on Saturday**

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

In his first season as Tharptown High School cross-country coach, Darrel Baker has seen his young athletes get better every week, every competition.

That continued improvement resulted in Tharptown's boys cross-country team qualifying for the AHSAA State Cross-Country Championships, set for November 11th at Oakville Indian Mounds Course.

Two Wildcat girls also qualified individually for the state championship. Addison Compton and Abby Wilson ran fast enough times at Sectionals to earn spots in the state meet.

"I'm proud of both of them," Baker said. "Addie has come off surgery and managed it really

See, 'STATE,' page 14



COURTESY PHOTO

Tharptown's boys cross country team will compete for a state title Saturday.

**Golden Tigers begin playoffs hosting Fairfield after 41-14 road loss at Athens**

Michael Rice  
Franklin Free Press

Last Friday, November 3rd, the Russellville Golden Tigers fell to the Athens Golden Eagles, 41-14, for the second year in a row.

The Golden Eagles are a 6A non region opponent. The teams used to be 5A rivals but with an increase in enrollment, Athens moved to 6A more than a decade ago. The Golden Eagles finished 8-2 after the win over Russellville. Russellville completed its regular season 8-2 and 6-0 in Region 8 play.

The game meant nothing as far as playoff implications, as the Golden Tigers will host Fairfield this Friday, November 10th, in round one of the Class 5A playoffs.

The Golden Tigers took a first quarter lead on a 29-yard pass from Harrison Burch to Michael Scofield. But Athens would score on three consecutive drives to build a 21-7 second quarter advantage.

Cam Phinizee ran in a six-yard score in the second quarter. Manny Martinez went 2-2 on PATs as Russellville went to halftime trailing 21-14.

Russellville coach John Ritter said the

Golden Tigers will use the Athens loss as a stepping stone for this Friday's game against Fairfield.

"We're not going to forget about this game. We'll use it as a building block to learn from our mistakes. Everyone in 5A is good now past this point. We can't have missed assignments," Ritter said. The

Golden Tigers will depend on their senior quarterback, Burch, who is 100 for 172 this season for 1,552 yards and 14 touchdowns with two touchdowns. Cash Crumpton leads the receiving corps with 31 receptions for 508 yards and six touchdowns. Bralynn Vincent's five touchdowns came in his 18 receptions for 313

See, 'TIGERS,' Page 14

**Friday Night High School Football Schedule 11/10**

Russellville vs. Fairfield  
Phil Campbell @ Gordo  
Red Bay @ Tuscaloosa Academy





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## 'PLAYOFFS,' From Page 11

The Tigers scored first out of halftime on a 25-yard touchdown run by Vinson again, extending the lead to 36-12. Vinson's hot night didn't stop there, as he scored another touchdown on a 46-yard run to extend his team's lead to 44-12.

The Tigers scored their last touchdown on a four-yard touchdown run by Braden Tabbs, making the score 52-12.

In the final moments of the game, the Bobcats scored on an eight-yard touchdown run by Scott, making the final score 52-20 after a two-point conversion.

Red Bay improved to 6-4. After enjoying the win Friday night, Childers and his team began preparation for Friday's playoff game at 8-2 Tuscaloosa Academy.

"We've had a few tough games the past few weeks which showed us the things we need to work on," Childers said. "Adding a 'W' to the win column tonight is good and helps us, but we know we are about to play a whole new animal with Tuscaloosa Academy."

Phil Campbell, 4-6, will open the Class 3A playoffs at Gordo High School. The Green Wave finished 9-1 this season.

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# 'STATE,' From Page 11

well. She's a senior and has received a scholarship offer from Northwest Shoals Community College to run cross-country. They both have worked very hard to earn this opportunity."

Tharptown runners will again compete against 1A and 2A schools at the state championships. Most of these schools have enrollments significantly larger than THS.

But the Wildcats finished in second place at the team competition at sectionals to earn a spot at the state meet. Sectionals were held at James Clements Palmer Park in Madison.

10 boys ran for the Wildcats with the top five times used to calculate team totals.

Those top five times came from Jessie Mitchell, Alex Quintero, Angel Garcia, Edwin Vela and Ricardo Hernandez. Additionally, Frank Gutierrez, Daniel Jimenez, Cody McCluskey, Zach Riley and Ricky Santibanez will take part in the state team championships.

"Every week they get better," Baker said.

And it's not just his top runner, Mitchell, who continues to break school and county records in the 5K.

"Alex was running (at sectionals) and he's never broke into the 17-minute mark. I could tell he was real close to his personal record. So I told him if you pass three guys, you'll break into the 17s and break your record, and that's just what he did," Baker said.

Baker said the Oakville course is the best course available in the area, with no extreme hills, but not all flat space either.

"Everything on that course is just about right, which is why they hold state here," Baker said.

Mitchell, a senior who holds the THS record in the 5K as well as the Franklin County record, continues to impress his coach. His success has earned him multiple scholarship offers, including one from NWSCC.

"He works extremely hard and shows constant improvement," Baker said.

For Wilson, whose sister Aalivia is also on the Wildcat cross-country team, she will draw motivation from both of her sisters (Aalivia and Aaliyah) and her mother when she runs for a state championship next week.

Abby has run at state before, so the sophomore won't be intimidated by the setting.

"I'll think about my sisters and my mom is a big part of this, too," Abby said. "Both my parents were big on sports, so when we moved here my sister ran cross-country first, then I joined.

"And I'm very happy to see Addie doing so well in her senior year," Abby added.

Her strategy for cross-country success?

"You just want to run a good race and do better as an individual and improve each time you go out," Abby said.

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# 'TIGERS,' From Page 11

yards.

Starting running back Cam Phinizee will also play a big role carrying the rock against Fairfield. This season Phinizee has amassed 1,947 yards on 210 carries with 34 touchdowns.

On defense, Malachi Duncan has 53 solo tackles and 12 assists. Braxten Goodsen has 49 solo tackles and 22 assists.

Devin Green has 47 solo and 23 assisted tackles. Matthew James has 47 solos with 21 assists and Reece Carson 46 solo with 21 assists.

The Fairfield game kicks off Friday evening at 7 p.m., and will be broadcast locally on WGOL-FM 100.7 Ritter's theme to his team this week is pretty straightforward.

"If we execute on both sides of the ball, we have the ability to win, if we don't, we will not win," Ritter said.

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# Franklin Free Press Football Picks Contest

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Submit your picks by email to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com) by Saturday morning, November 4th, at 10 a.m. Include your name, phone number and game selections, including tiebreaker.

Alabama	Kentucky
Michigan	Penn State
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