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## Commission hires architect to design new county animal shelter

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Commission approved an expense for architectural services related to the design of a new animal shelter for the county at the commission's January 29th meeting.

Commissions unanimously approved the hiring of Robert W. Whitten, a Florence architect, to

work with county officials in designing a new animal shelter next to the Franklin County Jail off Walnut Gate Road.

This preliminary step does not mean construction of a new shelter is imminent. Rather, it's an important beginning step toward solving the ongoing problem of housing stray animals in the county.

For the past several years, animal rescue advocates and groups have

See 'SHELTER,' Page 9

## Ritter taking over Decatur football program as Russellville coaching search will begin immediately

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

From a Golden Tiger to a Red Raider...

After six seasons serving as Russellville High School varsity football coach, John Ritter has accepted the same position at Decatur High School.

The move became official last Tuesday morning after the Decatur City Schools Board of Education approved the hiring at its January meeting.

Decatur becomes the fourth head coaching stop for Ritter, who also

had head coaching stints at Red Bay and West Morgan High Schools.

The Russellville City Board of Education met Monday, January 22nd for its monthly business meeting but Ritter was not among the personnel moves approved by the board. Ritter and his wife Lauren, a music teacher at Russellville Elementary School, will both have teaching positions at Decatur, according to Russellville City Schools Superintendent Heath Grimes.


Ritter said he will begin his new job at Decatur on February 1st, but

See 'RITTER,' Page 4

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**Danny Wayne Higgins, age 47, of  
Russellville, passed away on Sunday,  
January 28, 2024. Spry Memorial Chapel  
assisted the family.**

**Stevie Tidwell, age 63, of Russellville,  
passed away on Thursday, January 25,  
2024. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the  
family.**

**Timmy "Tim" Clyde Smith, age 56, of  
Odenville, AL (formerly of Russellville)  
passed away on Wednesday, January 24,  
2024. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the  
family.**

# Letter to Editor: Forgiving does not mean forgetting

Dear Editor:

Our country has faced a lot of adversity in our history. The wars of the past that have filled our cemeteries with young Americans who lost their lives, and the horror of the day on September 11, when four airlines went down on American soil. January 6, 2021, will go down in history as one of the most horrible times in our country. What makes it so much worse is that this attack was not by our enemies, but by Americans from all walks of life. The common tragedy of it is that it all started from the mouth of our very own president. It was among the worst dereliction of duty by a president in American history. How the insurrection is viewed remains a bitter point of contention that has divided our nation largely along partisan lines. We all watched in real time while Trump sat idly by for four hours and made no effort to stop the destruction that was taking place at our Capital.

Prior to the violent rage that took place that day, Trump stood on a stage and incited the violence, encouraged it and when it was over, even praised the insurgents for their violent acts. This is something that cannot be denied.

We watched as the hallowed halls of the Capital of the United States of America where presidents, heads of state, and dignitaries walked were degraded with feces, broken glass, and busted wood. The rioters even used our American flag as a weapon. One hundred and forty police officers were seriously injured and one Capital police officer lost his life. The Department of Justice released a recent report of criminal charges against more than 1,237 people. Over 700 Defendants pleaded guilty and 450 have been sentenced to prison. Trump has promised that if he is elected in 2024, that he will pardon every one of them. As shocking and disgraceful as this was, eight in 10 Trump voters and 72 percent of Republicans overall said they believed too much was made of the riot and it is "time to move on".

What has the conscience of American people become when we chose party politics over the truth of right and wrong?

All of a sudden, the Republican Congress takes a turn on the events of that day and claims that it was not violent but merely a curious bunch of citizens who were unhappy with our government. They know the truth. They heard the threats to our Congress and saw the gallows erected on the lawn to hang the Vice President. They saw the breach of chambers, looting of offices, busting out windows and destroying the woodwork. The most important thing is, so did you. We have reached an entirely new level of delusion of late, that has completely transformed the ability of the average conservative to experience any reality or acknowledge any fact that doesn't fit within their narrowly defined personal beliefs.

Trump faces four criminal counts as part of the indictment: conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy against rights, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and obstructing an official proceeding. So far, the most serious riot-related charge has been seditious conspiracy. This is a rare charge dating back to the Civil War. Seditious conspiracy is used to prosecute two or more Defendants accused of plotting to overthrow the US government, launch a war against it or hinder its authority, including the execution of its laws.

Trump has continued to claim that the election he lost by 7 million votes was "rigged." It has been proven over and over in several courts and Republican led efforts to these claims that there is no evidence of this. For the first time in American history, a U.S. president refused to leave office, and tried everything he could think of to undermine a fair election and peaceful transition of power. Where does that leave us as a nation as we begin an election year where this man who incited a bloody riot on our democracy is the Republican forefront nominee?

The Republicans seem to be determined to re-elect this poison back in office, even after seeing this in real time, hearing Trump's own words as he has vowed revenge and knowing his many crimes against our democracy. He has promised to destroy our Constitution and push our nation into a country of dictatorship. He is telling us what he is going to do and yet, this cult of supporters blows it off because it has never been done before. This is not hypothetical. Whether democracy is still America's sacred cause is the most urgent question of our time, and it's what the 2024 election is all about.

We may find it in our own conscience to forgive the crimes and misgivings of this former president, but we must never forget. This is how democracy dies.

Lynda Kirkpatrick  
Marion County Democratic Party Chair  
SDEC District 17 Representative Alabama Democratic Party

**Franklin  
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in the  
March 5, 2024 Republican Primary**

# 'RITTER,' From Page 1

his wife and children will finish the school year at Russellville.

Ritter said he wasn't actively looking to leave Russellville, but the timing of the Decatur job opening was right to make a move.

"That's the hard part of this business, timing is everything. There are differing opinions on what good timing is but I felt like it was a good time," Ritter said. "Decatur was going through a transition that didn't go very well. I met with their leadership and saw the vision they have for Decatur athletics, long and short term. And it was a great opportunity for me and my family."

Since he was hired prior to the 2018 football season, Ritter's teams have seen tremendous success in 5A Region play. This year's senior class will graduate with a 24-0 record and four consecutive championships in Region 8 and Ritter's overall region record at RHS is 35-3.

He finishes his Russellville career with a 52-19 overall record, and playoff appearances each of his six seasons. In 2020, the Golden Tigers finished 10-3 and reached the quarterfinals of the 5A state playoffs, Russellville's best season under Ritter.

For Grimes, who is a close friend with Ritter, the news about his football coach leaving is something he's known for a week or so, but it was still a difficult day once Decatur's school board made the hire official.

"John is a good friend and a great football coach. He's been successful everywhere he's coached and while we hate to see him leave Russellville, it's a decision he believes best for his family and career and we wish him the best moving forward," Grimes said.

While Ritter didn't attribute his leaving to Grimes' leaving Russellville City Schools in June, he acknowledged it was a factor.

"I'd be lying if I said the uncertainty of not just the top leadership but if Dr. (Jeremy) Madden is hired as the new superintendent, that means a new principal and the uncertainty of the direction and leadership was in the back of my mind, but at the end of the day the overwhelming factor was it's a great opportunity for me and my family. This isn't just a decision that personally affects me. It affects all four of us. And all the circumstances and influences meshed together and we felt like it was too good an opportunity to pass up," Ritter said.

Grimes said he told the Russellville board about Ritter accepting the Decatur job at the board's January 22nd meeting. But Ritter's resignation was not on the agenda because the job didn't become official until the Decatur BOE approved it Tuesday morning.

RCS Board President Greg Trapp said Ritter let the board know he was 'entertaining the idea' of leaving Russellville.

"It wasn't something he kept a secret. We've known this for a couple weeks and when the Decatur coach left, it opened up a 6A job and what I'm assuming was a better opportunity for him," Trapp said.

"He wasn't on our radar to get rid of him or anything like that. We had no plan toward making a change and I told him we had not talked about that. I talked with him at length a week and a half ago,

and told him we wanted to keep him if that's what he wanted to do, but if he felt there was a better place for him, his family and his place in life, you can't blame anyone for doing that," Trapp added.

Trapp said the search for Russellville's new varsity football coach will begin immediately and the job will be posted within a few days.

The interview process will be handled, as is normal protocol, by the superintendent and the school's principal, Jeremy Madden, who will make a hiring recommendation to the board once the interview process is complete.

"Coach Ritter served as head football coach at

Russellville High School the past six seasons. His overall record was 52 wins and 19 losses. In region play he won 35 games and lost only three. He won four region titles. RHS was in the AHSAA football playoffs every year of his tenure," Madden said.

"Coach Ritter put in many long hours with our football program and served as athletic director the last few years. Since I came to RHS, John also helped me with many other school functions that often went unnoticed by the public.

On behalf of RHS, I would like to thank him for everything he has meant to us as a teacher, athletic director, and head football coach. We wish him the best in all his future endeavors," Madden added.

As West Morgan head coach, Ritter's three-year record was 17-16. His two years at Red Bay saw his teams post a 16-7 mark, making his overall head coaching record in 11 years 85-42.

Ritter's winning percentage in Region 8 football games was the highest in Russellville High School's history.

Ritter was present for the Decatur City Schools Board of Education meeting on January 23rd when he was hired.

Ritter is a graduate of the University of Alabama, with a degree in Social Sciences. He holds a Master's Degree in Instructional Leadership from West Alabama.

Ritter was also a three-sport high school letterman and he played quarterback at the University of North Alabama from 2003-2004.

He and Lauren have two children, Lillian, 9, and Lincoln, 5.



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**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.

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# Franklin County graduates excel at Mississippi State, Alabama

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

12 students from Franklin County have been named to Mississippi State University's fall 2023 President's and Dean's List, and another is participating in

an elite Cooperative Education Program at the University of Alabama.

To earn President's List honors, a MSU student must earn a grade point average of 3.80 or better, based on a 4.0 scale, while completing at least 12 semester hours of coursework.

President's List recipients

include: Angelia Mims, Phil Campbell, Dylan Hester and Lydia Morphis, Vina, Levi Gist, Samuel Scott and Madelynn Green, Russellville, and Bailey Bolton and Alexis Tabbs of Red Bay.

To earn Dean's List honors, a MSU student must earn at least a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.79, based on a 4.0 scale, while completing at least 12 semester hours of coursework.

Franklin County students who were named to the Dean's List include:

Julia Bonner and Jillian Gillum, Phil Campbell, Macy White and Carrie Jackson, Russellville.

2020 Russellville High School graduate Simon Colburn is participating in the University of Alabama's Cooperative Education Program for the spring 2024 semester.

Colburn, an engineering student, is working for ADTRAN, Inc., of Huntsville.

In the Cooperative Education Program, students alternate periods of full-time study with periods of full-time employment. This program offers work related to the student's academic major or career interests.

Colburn carries a regular course schedule while in school. While in co-op, he works with professionals at ADTRAN, Inc., who supervise his training and work.

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## 18 Franklin County students named to Alabama President's, Dean's List for fall 2023

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

When the University of Alabama released its President's and Dean's Lists for the fall 2023 semester, Franklin County was well represented.

Nine Franklin County students earned President's List honors, meaning they had grade point average for the semester of 4.0 as full-time students. Nine local students were named to the Dean's List, which recognizes full-time students with a GPA of at least 3.5.

The lists do not apply to graduate students or undergraduates who take less than a full course load of at least 12 semester hours.

Franklin County students earning President's List honors for the fall 2023 semester included: Chloe Brown, Grace-lyn Habada and Benjamin Williams, Phil Campbell, Abbey Colley, Red Bay, Kaitlyn Balding, Jonah Fisher, Maxim Moussad, Callie Palmer and Mary Willingham of Russellville.

Franklin County students earning Dean's List honors for the fall 2023 semester included: Emma Ergle, Phil Campbell, Luke Barnwell, Tristen Bickerstaff, Autumn Bragwell, Anna Byars, Lisette Gonzalez and John McReynolds, Russellville, Gretchen Davis, Vina.

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# 'SHELTER,' From Page 1

pressed the Franklin County Commission to approve plans to construct a new animal shelter.

Franklin County Engineer Jason Baggett met with several architects to see if they had experience in designing animal shelters and/or similar buildings, and to obtain fee quotes from them. Based on his experience, availability and familiarity with the design of similar buildings,

Whitten will be paid between 6.9-7% of the cost of the building, according to Franklin County Commissioner David Hester. Construction and design of the new shelter will have to be approved by the commission, The project will be paid for by American Rescue Plan Act funds.

In other agenda items, the commission:

--accepted the resignation of Lila Duncan as Roadway Maintenance Technician I and approved advertising for the vacancy.

--approved the hiring of Walter Wade Chamblee as Roadway Maintenance Technician I, approved Family Medical Leave Act leave for Highway Department employee Jason Devaney, through February 26, 2024, and the retirement of Wade Hacker. The commission also approved advertising for an Equipment Maintenance Technician II.

--approved the termination of Lucas Stonecipher as Corrections Officer/Dispatcher in the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and advertising for the same.

--approved hiring Jaret Yancey as a temporary Corrections Officer/Dispatcher and Abby Poore as temporary, part-time Office Clerk.

--approved hiring Keith Slatton as Heavy Equipment Operator with the Solid Waste Department.

--approved an increase in the mileage reimbursement rate to \$.67/mile.

--approved a resolution not to accept the 3% administrative fee on Fire Protection Service annual payments, to continue allowing the county volunteer fire departments that approved the \$36 annual fee to receive 100% of the funds.



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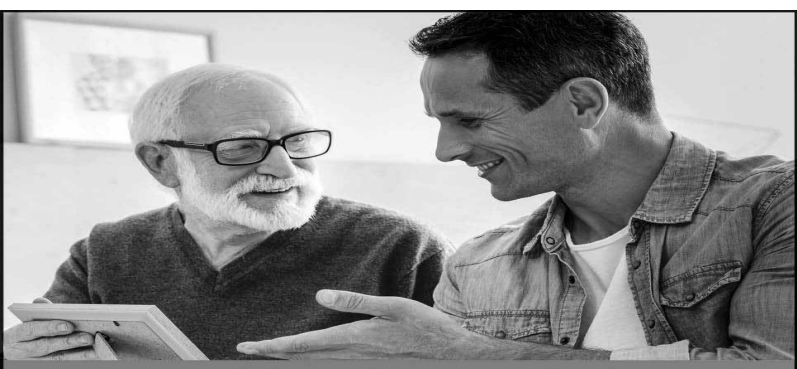
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## Lady Bobcats now 16-10 as area tournament approaches

Michael Rice  
 Franklin Free Press

The Phil Campbell varsity girls basketball team fell to rival Colbert County last Friday, January 26th, 45-43.

Phil Campbell had a chance to tie it in the final seconds, but a Colbert County defender blocked the shot as the Indians preserved the two-point win.

Hannah Welborn and Macy Hardy had 11 apiece to lead the Lady Bobcats' scoring.

The Lady Bobcats did come off of a win into the Colbert County game after defeating Colbert Heights, 44-25. Hardy's 19 points paced Phil Campbell, which won its 16th game of the season.

On Monday, January 29th, the Lady Bobcats hosted the Phillips She Bears. Phillips went home with a 51-34 win.

The Bobcats, now 16-10, will wind down the regular season when they host Hackleburg Tuesday, January 30th.

## Golden Tiger boys varsity snags 5A Area 15 regular season championship

### Girls varsity ends week with back to back wins

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Peaking at the right time...  
 That's what playoff basketball is all about. And that's exactly what the Russellville Golden Tigers boys varsity is doing, as the team won its sixth straight game Friday to clinch the 5A Area 15 regular season championship.

Coach Patrick Odom's team trailed after one quarter against the visiting Lawrence County Red Devils, but a 22-16 advantage in the second quarter gave the Golden Tigers a halftime lead they would never relinquish.

The 74-65 win improved Russellville's record to 13-5, 5-0 in Area 15 play. The Golden Tigers were set to host West Point Tuesday in the area finale, but Russellville will host the area tournament regardless of the outcome of Tuesday's game.

On January 26th, Russellville also trailed after one quarter to Hamilton, 21-20, but took a four point lead into halftime at 41-37.

The fast-paced game ended with the Golden Tigers sending the Aggies home with a 83-62 loss.

Malachi Duncan and EJ King had 25 apiece to lead Russellville. Mike Young added 13, KJ Murray 11 and Gavin Hyde 5.



COURTESY PHOTO  
 Ella Copeland led Russellville in scoring in each of last week's games.

See, 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' page 12

## Belgreen Lady Bulldogs finish 2-1 week with loss to Danville

Michael Rice  
 Franklin Free Press

The Belgreen Lady Bulldogs defeated the Vina Lady Red Devils on the road, 53-33, last Tuesday, January 23rd.

The Bulldogs extended their area record to 5-0 with this road win and improved to 16-5 overall.

The Lady Red Devils were without their leading scorer, junior Sara Harper, who tore her ACL in the road loss against the Phil Campbell Bobcats January 12th.

The first period of the game showed the Red Devils needed some adjusting without their leading scorer, scoring only four to the Bulldogs' 12.

The Red Devils gained momentum in the second period scoring 10 points.

At the half, the Lady Bulldogs had extended their lead to 25-14

Belgreen pulled away in the second half outscoring Vina 31 to 17.

The Lady Bulldogs were led by leading scorer Dakota Green, who scored 14. Morgan Lauderdale finished the night with 12 and Mackinley Hogan scored eight.

The Lady Red Devils were led by freshman Kyle Brooks with nine points. Layla Hester scored eight on the night and Kayla Attaway finished with six.

The Lady Bulldogs hosted the Hackleburg Panthers last Thursday, January 25th and defeated them 58-47.

See, 'BELGREEN,' Page 13

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## 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' From Page 11

The Hamilton game came after more than a week layoff due to severe winter weather. Odom was pleased with his team, particularly considering that long delay.

"I'm proud of our guys. All of us have experienced as crazy an 8-9 days as a basketball season can have," Odom said. "Hamilton is a good team. We made some second half adjustments and it's a good win.

"This group is so unselfish. The ball really moves and always seems to find the open man. When we're moving the ball like that, we can be a really good team and fun to watch," he added.

Coach Jermaine Groce's Lady Golden Tigers ended their week finished last week with consecutive wins over Lawrence County and Brooks.

On Saturday, Russellville handed the Lady Lions a 56-38 defeat, to improve to 10-11, 3-2 in Area 15 play.

Brooks led 16-9 after one quarter, but Russellville had a massive second quarter to take a 31-26 lead into halftime. Ella Copeland led Russellville with 21 points. Avery Watts had 14 and Laila Hill 11.

On Friday, Russellville stormed past Lawrence County 57-28.

The Lady Golden Tigers led 34-15 at halftime and 48-20 after three quarters. Copeland led Russellville with 19,

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whiel Watts added 11 and Hill eight. Jacey Moore had seven, Sadie Odom six, Desiree Medina five and Alexia Groce one point.

On January 23rd, the Lady Golden Tigers lost a close one at home, 51-47, to Hamilton.

A 16-11 RHS advantage in the fourth quarter wasn't quite enough to overcome a large deficit.

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# FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSION

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Joseph Baldwin, District III  
David Hester, District IV  
Leah Mansell, Administrator

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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

**Roadway Maintenance Technician I, Franklin County Highway Department**

**Equipment Maintenance Technician II, Franklin County Highway Department**

**Corrections Officer/Dispatcher, Franklin County Sheriff's Office**

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Wednesday, January 31, 2024.

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.franklincounty.org](http://www.franklincounty.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.

# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

The Lady Bulldogs defeated Hackleburg earlier in the season, 41-32, on December 5th.

Once again, Green was the leading scorer with 26 points.

The Lady Bulldogs also traveled to Danville last Saturday, January 27th, and lost 52-38. Belgreen's record entering this week was 17-6.



COURTESY PHOTO

Vina's Kaley Attaway jumps for a rebound against Belgreen.




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# All Franklin County establishments receive satisfactory health ratings

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Each of the 45 Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the period of December 1, 2023 through January 24, 2024, had scores that fell into the "satisfactory compliance" range.

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

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

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

45 of 45 Franklin County establishments listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The high score was 100, received by Bel Haven Heights, 107 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay.

The lowest score among the 45 establishments was an 85, received by Traditions Sports Deli, 114 Jackson Avenue North, Russellville, although this score was within the 'satisfactory compliance' range.

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

--306 BBQ, 13670 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92.

- 43 Grill, 15110 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92
- Best Life Nutrition, 15485 Al. 24, Russellville, 96.
- Best Western Breakfast, 13770 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Big Star Deli of Russellville, 314 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 96.
- Black & Gold Nutrition, 700 Waterloo Road, Russellville, 93.
- Bobcat Express Inc., 3075 Hwy. 237, Phil Campbell, 94.
- Cano's Tienda y Taqueria, 10047 Hwy. 75, Russellville, 88.
- Cardinal Drive In, 602 4th St. SW, Red Bay, 95.
- Coco Michocana 2, 318 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 92.
- Daily Bread BBQ, 305 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 94.
- El Patron Tex-Mex LLC, 13665 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 90.
- Farmhouse Table, 116 Jackson Ave. N, Russellville, 94.
- Frosty Inn, 12805 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, 95.
- Gas Mart North, 17060 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 91.
- Halligan's Pizza, 912 4th St. West, Red Bay, 93.
- Huddle House, 15485 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 90.
- Jack's #136, 521 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 88.
- Jack's Family Restaurant, 13640 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 87.
- Jay Raja Inc., 109 Madison St., NE, Russellville, 90.
- Las Tres Fronteras, 519 St. Clair St., SE, Russellville, 90.
- Legacy Chevron, 13518 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, 96.
- Little Divas and Dudes Daycare LLC, 1100 4th St. NE, Red Bay, 98.
- Little Tigers Preschool, 1003 East Lawrence St., Russellville, 99.
- Oliver Creamery Commissary, 1121 Hwy. 46, Russellville, 98.
- Panda Buffet, 14633 US 43, Russellville, 90.
- Papa John's Pizza, 14520 Hwy. 43, Ste. 1, Russellville, 91.
- Phil Campbell Deli Mart, 3515 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 88.
- Phil Campbell Nutrition, 3415 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 97.
- Piggly Wiggly Deli, 518 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 92.
- Pilgrim's Place, 1314 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 97.
- Pizza Hut, 13450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 94.
- Pollo Lo-Quillo, 115 Franklin St., Russellville, 91.
- Priceless Food-Deli, 14001 Hwy 43, Ste. 11, Russellville, 96.
- Priceless Foods #493, 14001 Hwy. 43, Suite 11, Russellville, 96.
- Red Bay Hospital, 211 Hospital Road, Red Bay, 98.
- Red Bay Tiger Mart, Inc., 211 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 96
- Russellville Hospital, 15155 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 94.
- Russellville Nutrition, 14130 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 92.
- Southside Quick Mart, LLC, 12301 Hwy. 43S, Russellville, 91.
- Taco Bell, 13831 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 93.
- The Hang Out Nutrition, 13684 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- The Ville Nutrition, 112 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 94.
- Wendy's, 13679 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 89.

Health ratings are available at [www.foodscores.state.al.us](http://www.foodscores.state.al.us) and may be viewed by city or county.

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# Local residents among those passionate about vinyl records

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Everything old shall become new.

That adage certainly holds true when it comes to vinyl records.

A musical staple through the 1970s, vinyl records soon died out and could be found alongside 8-track tapes and cassettes at yard sales across the country.

But vinyl has seen a major resurgence, and an upcoming event hosted by the Alabama Record Collectors Association (ARCA) is an indicator of how strong that resurgence is.

ARCA's Annual Record & CD Show will take place Friday, March 1 and Saturday, March 2 at the Gardendale Civic Center Main Exhibition Hall in Gardendale, a suburb just north of Birmingham.

The annual event sees fans coming from not only all of Alabama, but throughout the Southeast as well. The show features vinyl record dealers from across the country.

The Alabama Record Collectors Association was formed in 1980 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the memory and preservation of recorded music.

The show will feature thousands of records and CDs brought to Gardendale with music from the 1940s through today in all genres. Many out-of-print items will be available.

Record collecting has once again become big business. For Russellville resident Kyle Glasgow, his interest in vinyl records began when his great aunt left him her collection after she passed away 13 years ago.

Glasgow's collection includes several 45s with Elvis Presley songs, and hundreds of vinyls in various musical genres.

At one time, Spruce Pine resident Gary Hendren's record collection was in the tens of thousands. That changed when a fire ravaged his former home in Warrior eight years ago and more than 30,000 records were destroyed.

"After that, I didn't even want to think about getting another records," Hendren said. "But I heard a song on the radio and it took me back to the day and I said 'I need to get a copy of that record.'" The song was In the Still of the Night by the Five Satins.

"So I started to build my collection back but decided only to collect my favorites—blues and doo-wop. I really don't concentrate on records that have a value less than \$100. Most of mine are rare, very clean and from the 1950s," he added.

Hendren, 80, said the appeal of vinyl records is primarily about the music itself.

"I was a teenager in the 1950s, so that's the music I like. I'm mainly a 45 guy and love owning the original records as produced in the 50s," he said. "That was the only music choice I had back when I was growing up—records and the radio. That was it."

His rebuilt collection of vocal harmony records is considered to be one of the biggest in the southeast United States. And he still enjoys listening to them on his portable, battery-operated turntable with a built-in speaker.

"These 45s were put out in the early 1950s and 1960s and they didn't have stereo sound. They were mono all the way, so that's what makes a record good to me," Hendren said.

Show hours are 1 p.m.-7 p.m., on Friday, March 1 and 9 a.m.-5 p.m., on Saturday, March 2. Admission is \$5 per day. A special \$10 Early-Bird admission is available on Friday beginning at 10 a.m.

You can learn more about ARCA and the show by visiting [www.alabamarecordcollectors.org](http://www.alabamarecordcollectors.org) or on the Facebook page of Alabama Record Collectors.



**COURTESY PHOTO**  
The Five Satins' 'In the Still of the Night' motivated Gary Hendren to rebuild his record collection.

We love to hear from you! Please send your guest columns, cartoon panels, letters to the editor, recipes and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

# Board approves declaration of emergency for Phil Campbell High School

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Franklin County Board of Education approved a declaration of emergency for Phil Campbell High School at the board's January 25th meeting.

The action came one week after the water line for the school's sprinkler system broke and more than 330,000 gallons of water spilled onto the first floor of the building. The initial break came in the line above the concession stand.

The gym floor and other parts of the school received extensive water damage even though the school custodian responded and cut off the water approximately 15 minutes after the alarm went off.

Board member Terry Welborn said there was standing water more than four inches deep when he arrived Thursday morning.

Although first responders and a professional cleanup company were on sight the same day, the damage was extensive enough for a 150-day contingency plan to be put in place as it's unknown how long repairs will take.

Franklin County Superintendent of Education Greg Hamilton said an adjuster from Risk Management Services, which insures Alabama's public schools, have inspected the damage and two companies will bid on removal of the gym floor.

Approving the declaration of emergency allows school officials to circumvent the normally required bidding process where they can go directly to contractors who have done work for them previously or who can complete repairs in an expedited time frame.

Phil Campbell basketball teams are practicing in the Tharptown High School gym and Phil Campbell home games will be played at Tharptown, including the area basketball tournament if the Bobcat girls win their area.

Hamilton said state design regulations require sprinkler lines to be installed in the ceiling, below the insulation, so it's essentially a water line in the air.

"For what we dealt with, and a volume of water strong enough to move a full-size refrigerator across a room, it's a serious situation but could have been worse," Hamilton said. "But it will take some time to fix it, so the contingency plan is in place."

In other agenda items, the board:

--approved an increase in the mileage rate reimbursement from 65.5 cents to 67 cents per mile, effective January 1, 2024.

--approved out-of-state trips including Belgreen varsity and junior varsity softball teams to Belmont, Miss., April 16, 2024, Vina High School 9th and 11th grade to Shiloh Battleground, March 22, 2024, Tharptown High School varsity softball team to Belmont, Miss., February 17, 2024, Tharptown varsity baseball team to Wheeler High School, Booneville, Miss., March 2, 2024, Red Bay FFA to National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Ky., February 15-17, 2024 and Phil Campbell Senior Class to New York City, March 25-29.

--was honored by students from Belgreen High School, Phil Campbell Elementary, Tharptown Elementary, Tharptown High School and Red Bay Elementary and High Schools as part of National School Board Recognition Month.

--approved plans to attend the Legislative School Performance Recognition Program in Montgomery on February 8th. The event recognizes the state's top 25 schools who showed improvement in their annual State Report Card from the previous year.

Two Franklin County Schools, Vina High School and Tharptown Elementary School, are among those 25 schools. Each school will receive \$8,000 from the state as a result of the improvements.

--approved personnel moves including: Resignation: Hanna Tess Harbour, Speech Therapist and Delana Hubbard, Child Nutrition Assistant, Red Bay High School. Employment: Jade Hallmark, Special Education Aide RBES and Cassidy Mason, Special Education Teacher PCES. Personal Leave of Absence for Angela Gilliland, Child Nutrition Program Assistant at RBHS through May 24, 2024, and new teacher substitutes Samantha Marcum, Angelia Mims and Rickey Murrell.



COURTESY PHOTO

**PCES students honored the Franklin County Board of Education at its January 25th meeting as part of National School Board Recognition Month.**