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## City council, school system approve new five-year agreement for management of Parks and Recreation Department to remain with RCS

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Operation and management of the Russellville Parks and Recreation Department will remain with Russellville City Schools after both the Russellville City Council and the Russellville City Schools Board of Education approved a five-year agreement at successive meetings held August 5th at Russellville City Hall.

tion of the Parks and Recreation Department to the school system.

That agreement provided that the city would appropriate an annual amount of \$775,000 to Russellville City Schools, to be paid out on a monthly basis. In the new agreement, that annual amount was increased to \$900,000.

The agreement will run from August 5, 2024 through August 6, 2029.

Additionally, the City of Russellville will continue to pay utility bills and existing land line telephone bills on Parks and Recreation properties. The city will also maintain property and liability insurance on all Parks and Recreation facilities.

In August of 2019, the parties entered into a five-year agreement to turn over management and opera-

The properties operated and maintained by Russellville City Schools

See 'PARKS,' Page 4



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## A lifetime of dedication to the Black and Gold: Moon named RMS Principal

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

From her first day of kindergarten through her walk across the stage as part of Russellville High School's Class of 1999, Monica Moon has a long-time connection with Russellville City Schools.

From teaching first grade, Computer/Tech and serving as assistant principal at West Elementary School and Russellville Middle School, Moon has steadily advanced through the system she loves.

With the exception of one year teaching pre-kindergarten when she was pregnant with her first daughter, Moon's entire professional journey has been with Russellville City Schools.

Now, she'll take the next step as a principal for the first time, again in the system she's called home for a lifetime.

The Russellville City Board of Education approved Moon's hiring as contract probationary principal at Russellville Middle School at a brief

See 'MOON,' Page 5



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**Mary Ann "Sis" Sparks Fulmer, age 81, of Russellville passed away on Monday, August 12, 2024. The visitation will be 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at Spry Memorial Chapel. The funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024.**

**John Paul Strickland, age 70, of Winston, Georgia passed away August 9, 2024. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.**



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# Russellville City Council approved zoning amendment that reduces maximum number of residents allowed in single-family dwelling units

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

At its August 5th meeting, the Russellville City Council approved a change to its zoning ordinance that reduces the number of non-family members who can live together in a single dwelling unit.

The amendment changes the maximum number of persons who may reside in a single dwelling unit from five to three.

The amendment was to the definition of FAMILY in the City of Russellville's Zoning Ordinance, Section 31.23 of ordinance 2003-105. It was changed to the following: (with the amended language in bold): An individual, or two (2) or more persons residing in a single dwelling unit where all members are related by blood, marriage, adoption or guardianship up to the second degree of consanguinity; or a group of no more than three (3) persons living as a single housekeeping unit. For the purpose of this definition "second degree of consanguinity" means husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters and grandparents and grandchildren.

Russellville Fire Department Fire Marshal Justin Green said he researched zoning ordinances of Alabama municipalities with universities and most have a defined 'university district' where up to five non-related persons may reside in a single dwelling unit, but outside of those districts, three was the limit in most cases, with one town allowing up to four.

There have been previous concerns, as one example, where a parent or guardian attempts to enroll a child in Russellville City Schools and the reported address in the city sometimes has 10 or more non-family members living under one roof.

This can also cause safety concerns, Green said.

"There can be fire and life safety issues in these cases. We've gone to some calls and found four or five families living in a 1200-square foot house. There were holes in the ceiling where an additional family would use a ladder to access the attic as a living residence," Green said.

Another change approved by the council in the zoning ordinance relates to who may enforce provisions of the ordinance. Authority remains with the Municipal Building Inspector but the amendment now allows officer of the Russellville Police Department to have enforcement authority as well.

Russellville City Attorney Danny McDowell said the change from five to three persons would not apply retroactively to residences with four or five persons already living together, but when a resident moves out, another person may not move in if there are already three people in the dwelling unit.

In other agenda items, the council:

--accepted a \$3,900 grant from the Alabama Tourism Department for expenses related to the City of Russellville's annual July 4th Jam on Sloss Lake.

--Accept the quote received from Danmark Technologies in the one-time amount of \$15,405.35 for the purchase of a new server, new workstations and IT services for the Russellville City Hall and authorize the submission of the grant application to FCCDC. Additionally, the council approved a quote from Danmark for \$235/month for IT services and \$1,700 for purchase of a Wildix Communication Platform with Classound and \$1,033.85 for monthly fees and licensing. The system will be installed at City Hall, both fire stations, the Russellville Police Department, the Parks and Recreation Department's four locations, Russellville Municipal Court, the Russellville Street Department, the Russellville Senior Center and the Russellville Public Library.

--approved moving Russellville Street Department employees Dallas Hopkins and Marty Corbell to Step 7 due to increased duties each has assumed.

--approved a bid for the contract portion of the 2024-25 Russellville Paving Project to the lowest responsible bidder, Grayson Carter & Son Contracting, Inc., in the amount of \$1,655,772.42.

--declared a vacancy for Heavy Equipment Operator II in the Russellville Street Department and Heavy Equipment Driver/Operator in the Street Department's Solid Waste Division and authorized advertising for the positions.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville City Council will be Monday, August 19 with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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## Franklin Free Press

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## 'PARKS,' From Page 1

include the following: The Ralph Bishop Recreation Center, the Chucky Mullins Center, Hal Kirby Park, Tom Strange Park, Eastside Park, Old High School Football Field, Reedtown Soccer Field, John Blackwell Sports Complex, Sloss Lake Pavilion & Walking Trail, Swimming Pool, Russellville High School Tennis Courts, A.W. Todd Centre and adjacent Farmer's Market Pavilion, the Canteen, the Splash Pad at Sloss Lake, the Gary Cummings Stage at Sloss Lake and a metal storage building on the former National Guard Armory property.

Any contracts for services, labor and materials for the construction of any improvements on Parks and Recreation Department properties will be the responsibility of the school system, as well as repair and maintenance of each.

The agreement contains a clause whereby either party may terminate it by giving the other party at least a 90 days notice in advance of the termination date. The Russellville BOE may not terminate the agreement inside the first two years of the agreement though.

As with the original agreement, if Russellville City Schools operates the department for less than the \$900,000 annual appropriation from the city, the school system will retain any unused funds as part of the agreement.

Ownership of all properties in the agreement remains with the City of Russellville. And the school system will provide the services the Parks and Recreation Department provides to the general public, as well as making all personnel decisions.

Russellville Mayor David Grissom said the partnership has been a success and teamwork between the city and schools has transformed the Parks and Recreation Department. He also credited the work of Parks and Rec employees.

"I want to commend Parks and Rec Director Donnie Flanagan for his leadership and the many hours he and his team have invested in making this department truly top notch," Grissom said. "His dedication to excellence in both maintenance and management has helped bring in additional revenue through the tournaments we have hosted now that we have such wonderfully maintained facilities.

"I have heard so many positive things from community members and out-of-town guests about the enjoyable experience coming to events in Russellville, and I'm thankful for his hard work and the hard work of his employees," Grissom added.

When the agreement was made in 2019, a new class at Russellville High School was created in the Career and Technical Education Department—turf, grass and field management. RCS Superintendent of Education Tim Guinn said students can use the skills they're learning as they work on Parks and Recreation Department fields.

"This class has been very beneficial to our students looking to have a career in this field or who just want to learn more about grass maintenance and management," Guinn said.

"In turn, these students are able to practice the skills they learn at the park and rec facilities and provide necessary services. It has worked out well for everyone and it's something we're glad to see continue," he added.

**Send your guest columns, recipes, cartoon panels, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to  
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# 'MOON,' From Page 1

special called meeting held August 7th.

Moon succeeds Tony Bonds, who resigned last month as RMS principal to take the principal's job at Hazel Green Elementary School.

RCS Superintendent Tim Guinn announced Moon's hiring to a group of RMS faculty gathered in the school cafeteria after a faculty meeting Wednesday morning.

"We are very happy today to introduce Dr. Moon as the new principal at Russellville Middle School," Guinn said. "She has been a committed leader in our system for many years and we look forward to great things from Dr. Moon."



COURTESY PHOTO

**New RMS Principal Monica Moon is congratulated by faculty and staff.**

take a deep breath and just take in the moment.

"You get those first day jitters, wanting everything to be in tip top shape for when the students start back," Moon said. "But there will be a time to step back and appreciate the opportunity God has given me and to be thankful for Him blessing me and my family."

Other agenda items approved by the board included:

—Termination: Courtney Harden, Instructional Aide, RMS.

—Employment: Anna Wilds, Teacher, RMS.

—Transfers: Anayeli Ruiz, Pre-K Auxiliary Teacher to EL Aide at WES.

—Temporary Employment in Position (Part-Time and as needed): Caylin Pinkard, Teacher RES/WES, 21st CCLC at RES and Afterschool Program WES, Jenny Wynn, Pre K Teacher, Extended

X and After Care, Ashley Inmon, Pre K Aide, Extended and After Care.

Some congratulatory hugs followed, but after a few minutes of celebration, it was back to business for Moon, who was hired less than 24 hours before students returned to campus Thursday morning.

That transition was eased somewhat as Bonds, once he decided to resign, worked with Moon to help her start the process of getting ready for the new school year.

"We had already done some of those things so that makes this transition smoother," Moon said. "And I have such a great faculty who have helped fill in the gaps over the summer. They've been a godsend."

Moon's pathway into administration was the result, she explained, of being blessed with supportive administrators who encouraged her every step of the way.

"Ramona Robinson was my first hiring principal and we always did a post-observation interview. She saw some leadership qualities in me and encouraged me to pursue that route, and I'll always be grateful for that," Moon said.

Moon earned her Master of Education in Elementary Education from the University of North Alabama, her Education Specialist in Administration and Supervision from Delta State University, her Instructional Leadership Certification from UNA and her Doctorate of Rural Education, Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of West Alabama.

Moon and her husband Chris have two daughters, Morgan and Ashlee, both RHS graduates. She's the daughter of Rodney and Charlotte Smallwood. Both of Moon's sisters are also educators.

"I've been fortunate to have a lot of great leadership poured into me, starting with Mrs. Robinson, Dr. (Chris) James, Deanna Hollimon. They planted those seeds that shaped me into a leader and I hope to make them proud by continuing the rich tradition we have at Russellville City Schools," Moon said.

One of Moon's first duties will be to interview candidates to fill the assistant principal position she vacated. Again, she'll have a wealth of experience with Guinn, James and (assistant superintendent) Claudia Askew to call on.

It's a whirlwind schedule right now with the return of students to RMS, but Moon knows there will be a time when she can

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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.

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**T**he 2024 Franklin County Watermelon Festival Car Show will take place on Saturday, August 17, from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Prizes will be awarded throughout the day. 50/50 raffle. Winner drawn at 1 p.m. Must be present to win. Entry fee \$25 for first car and additional cars \$15. Call 256-443-5919 for more information. The event is sponsored by the Russellville High School Marching Hundred Band Parents.

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# NWSCC to launch medical laboratory technology program next spring

Submitted

Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC) will offer a new Medical Laboratory Technology associate degree program starting with the 2025 spring semester. An information session will be held Thursday, August 15, at 5:00 PM in the Bevill Center, room 141 on the Shoals campus.

According to John McIntosh, NWSCC Dean of Workforce Development, Institutional Effectiveness, and Advancement, NWSCC works closely with our area hospitals and the healthcare industry to make sure the College trains students for the current and future workforce needs.

“Healthcare is constantly growing and evolving, and we (Northwest Shoals Community College) want to make sure we are training and graduating qualified workers for our healthcare partners in the areas that are needed,” stated McIntosh. “We recently hired Michelle Hayes as the program director, and she is doing a great job preparing the program to welcome students in the spring.”

Medical laboratory technicians work in medical labs and run tests for hospitals and medical offices. NWSCC plans to accept up to 10 students during the first year. The program website and application are currently available.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics, employment of medical laboratory technicians is projected to grow five percent through 2032, faster than the average for all occupations.



COURTESY PHOTO

NWSCC will begin the fall semester Thursday, August 15. Students may still register at <https://nwsc.edu/registration/>.

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# Pilgrim's

# Franklin County Board of Education approves agreement between Franklin County Commission and Sherriff's Office

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Tharptown High School and Tharptown Elementary School will now have a school resource officer after the Franklin County Board of Education approved an agreement with the Franklin County Commission and the Franklin County Sheriff's Office to employ Charles Hamby at the two schools.

The board approved Hamby's hiring at its August 6th meeting.

Hamby comes to Franklin County from Trinity, where he served as a SRO. Franklin County Superintendent Greg Hamilton said Hamby is bilingual, an asset particularly beneficial at Tharptown, which has the county's largest Hispanic enrollment.

The board approved a large slate of personnel moves before the start of the school year on August 7th. They included:

—Resignation: Andrea Henry, Library Media Specialist, PCES, Kaitlyn Bragwell, Sarah Fretwell, Child Nutrition Assistants, Brody Nix, Custodian, EFJH, Whitney Hutcheson, Junior High Cheerleader Coach, PCHS and Scott Vance, Business Teacher, THS.

—Employment: Rachel Sullivan, Agri-Science Teacher, Vina High School, Destiny Deaton, Elementary Teacher, Belgreen, Greg Pace, Custodian, 12 months, Belgreen, Isabel Makepeace, ELL Aide, Belgreen, Dickey Blansett, English Language Arts Teacher, RBHS, Brooke Ford, Rebecca (Nikki) Wilson, Sheila Crown, Child Nutrition Assistants, Garrett Dean, Social Worker, Franklin County Schools, Lucas Craft, Varsity Baseball Coach, Tharptown High School, Jeannette Pearson, Part-Time Special Education Aide, RBES, Maggie Fowler, Elementary Teacher, PCES, Jessica McSpadden, Elementary Teacher, PCES and John Torisky, Varsity Girls Basketball Coach, RBHS.

—Transfers: Dana McGuire, from Special Education Aide for Franklin County Schools to Custodian Nine Months EFJH.

—New Teacher Substitutes: Natalie Hammond, Amara Qualls, Amy Vanhorn, Ciara Whitten and Jennifer Ashley Hill.

—Volunteers: Devon Hill, Brooks Higginbotham, Assistant Football Coaches, PCHS, Abram Thorn, Assistant Boys Basketball Coach, Belgreen, Caden Parker, Tynes Channel, Assistant Football Coaches, Belgreen, Chris Fretwell, Tyler Cagle, Dave Fischer, Assistant Football Coaches, Tharptown High School, Dixie Chavez, Assistant Soccer Coach, Tharptown and Winston Nolan, Assistant Basketball Coach, Tharptown.

Other agenda items approved by the board included:

—approval of the following participants in the School Leadership Principal and Mentoring Act for the 2024-25 school year: Megean Berryman, Tracie Sutton, Leann Trapp, Bart Moss, Kelby Daniel, Dawn Rogers, Trisha Humphrey, Brady Ramey, Brandi Miller, Leigh Burks, Molly King, Brooke Harris, Tyler Berryman, Sherry Parker, Teddy Humphrey, Jake Ward and Jonathan King.

—approved the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) contracts for Amber Thorn, Red Bay School (Advanced Contract—Three Years), and Collier Campbell, Belgreen School, Walker Kennelly, Phil Campbell School, Jamie Duboise, East Franklin Junior High School and Shauna Humphries, Red Bay School (Preliminary Contracts—One Year).

This brings the total to 33 teachers on TEAMS contracts in Franklin County Schools.

The next meeting of the Franklin County Board of Education will be a board meeting/budget hearing on Monday, September 9, 2024, at 4 p.m., and board meeting/budget hearing Tuesday, September 10, 2024, with work session at 4 p.m., and meeting to follow.

—heard an update from Hamilton that the Tharptown Rocketry Team will be invited to the Alabama State Board of Education meeting in September to be honored for the team's national championship and second place international finish.

—approved a Distribution of Explicit Images Policy pursuant to a requirement from the Alabama State Board of Education after the Alabama Legislature passed legislation requiring the same. The policy will be distributed to teachers, staff, parents and students.



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# Three years and counting..Alabama's medical cannabis rollout rife with delays, allegations of impropriety

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

If you're looking for something to compare the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission's (AMCC's) licensing rollout to, consider the 1985 ill-fated debut of New Coke.

When the Coca-Cola Company announced it was changing the recipe for America's favorite soft drink, the backlash was immediate and the new recipe was shelved 77 days after its debut.

The difference with medical marijuana is that after three years, not a single Alabamian has been prescribed a dose as the AMCC continues to face lawsuits and restraining orders as a result of legal challenges to the licensing process.

In 2021, the Alabama legislature passed the Darren Wesley 'Ato' Hall Compassion Act, creating a law to allow the use of medical cannabis for those who meet one of 15 qualifying medical condition.

The bill created the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission as the entity to oversee the process of licensing, registering and regulating the state's medical cannabis rollout.

There have been three attempts by the AMCC to issue licenses, with each effort having been challenged in the state's court system. A pending civil suit results from the AMCC's December 2023 award of five integrated facility licenses, the most lucrative and coveted licenses available under the law.

Among the 28 applicants going through the third attempt at licensing was Natural Relief Cultivation, LLC, a company wanting to make more than a \$25 million investment in the City of Russellville if it had received a license. The company did not receive a license in any of the three rounds.

The first two licensing rounds were invalidated due to what the AMCC called 'scoring inconsistencies' in round one and legal filings alleging illegal secret meetings and conflicts of interest of AMCC members after round two.

The third round of licensing was immediately challenged by a group of integrated facility applicants who were denied licenses. And a Montgomery County

Circuit Court has entered a temporary restraining order to allow the AMCC and the denied license applicants to agree on a proposal to allow investigative hearings to move forward.

Natural Relief Cultivation, LLC, is not a party to that lawsuit. But if there is another round of hearings for integrated facility licenses, company founder Brian Faught said he would apply again.

A license granted to Faught's company would be a massive economic splash for Russellville. Natural Relief Cultivation has an agreement with the city to purchase 28 acres on Alabama 24 if it receives a license. The company would construct a cultivation and processing facility in Russellville and would open a dispensary in Russellville, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Owens Cross Roads and Gadsden.

Whether in Russellville or elsewhere, medical cannabis should already be a reality in Alabama. Instead, the process may be headed for a fourth round of licensing hearings with no timetable in sight.

An advocacy group for those who would be medical cannabis patients in Alabama was formed to put pressure on moving the process forward. Its unique position is to blame the parties filing the legal challenges for grinding the application process to a halt. But those lawsuits wouldn't be around if there wasn't at least some legal merit to their arguments.

If medical marijuana actually starts being dispensed in Alabama, it would be available to patients who obtain a medical cannabis card from a licensed dispenser. That would require the patient to have a letter from a physician certifying his or her qualifying condition.

Medical cannabis would be dispensed in non-food forms, like tablets, creams, oils, transdermal patches and gummies.

The failed rollout of Alabama's medical cannabis law comes as no surprise to Sen. Larry Stutts, who represents Franklin County in the Alabama Senate and was a vocal opponent of the 2021 legislation.

"You have a few people selecting a few applicants and to get selected is worth millions of dollars," Stutts said. "That opens up the floodgates for corruption."



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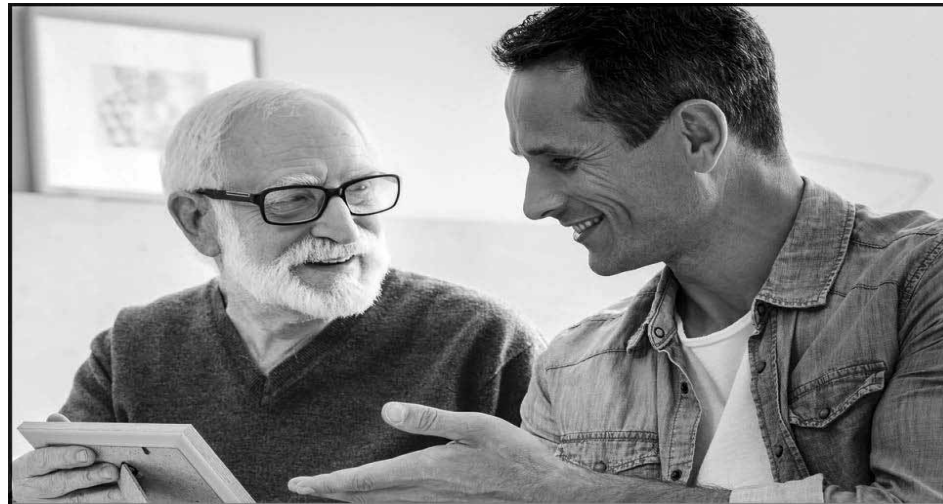
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## New school year, new volleyball program at Vina

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The start of a brand new academic school year at Vina High School has also brought the beginning of a new athletic program. For the first time, Vina will have a volleyball program and the Lady Red Devils will start competition at the junior high and junior varsity level this season.

"We're really excited about it," head coach Brittany Pannell said. "I've been wanting to do volleyball for several years, but we're such a small school that it's hard to have several sports competing in the same season. We already had cross country and that was kind of conflicting.

"We were the only school in the county that didn't have a volleyball program," she added. "It's a growing sport and everyone is getting involved. It's right for us to get involved, too."

Pannell, who has been a teacher at Vina for seven years and formerly coached the cheerleaders, said establishing the program was a long time in the making. Several years ago she said she asked about starting up the program, but at that time it wasn't in the cards. This time around she said the excitement and enthusiasm was there for it.

"I had so many girls begging me to get volleyball going, so I asked again if we could have it. I got a petition going to see how many

See, 'VINA,' Page 14

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## Early exit from '23 tourney a motivator for this year's RBHS volleyball team

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

With less than two weeks remaining until the start of the new season, the Red Bay High School varsity volleyball team is looking to serve up higher expectations this fall. Coming off a 2023 season that ended early in the area tournament last season, the Lady Tigers are aiming to clear that hurdle and push farther in the 2024 campaign.

"I went into my first season with high hopes, being that we had six seniors and a lot of volleyball knowledge on the roster. We ended our season with a loss to Winston County in the first round of the area tournament," second-year Red Bay head coach Elizabeth Scott said. "Our goals this season are to win the area tournament and then work towards a new goal."

Despite the loss of a half-dozen players from last year's squad, Scott said her team still has some experience and is optimistic about some younger

COURTESY PHOTO

2024 Lady Red Bay Tigers



See, 'RED BAY,' page 12

## Belgreen cross country looks to continue success under new coach

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

Belgreen High School has a new man to lead the pack with Talon Thomas tapped to head up the Bulldogs cross country program. Thomas, a teacher and golf coach at Belgreen, was hired after the position opened up earlier in the summer, and he's looking forward to the chance to coach the team.

"I'm pretty excited about it and excited about having the opportunity to do it," Thomas said. "We've got some talented athletes that are going to help us compete and get good times.

"I think it's going to be a cool experience, and I think the kids are going to enjoy it," he added. Thomas, who has also coached basketball in the past, said there's something special about the sport of cross country.

"One of the reasons I'm glad to have the opportunity to do this is because I think it's something that's unique and special," he said. "At every one of these meets there are a lot of people—huge crowds of people—and these kids give everything they've got doing something mind blowing, running 5Ks in the some of the times they're able to run them. It's phenomenal to see some of the athleticism of these student-athletes able perform those kinds of feats."

As the cross country season draws closer, Thomas said his priority right now is working to get the runners up to peak fitness.

"We're getting these kids ready and working on building up our endurance right now," he said. "We just started practicing and we're just trying to get our lungs about us right now.

"It's extremely hot outside right now. We've got a trail here on campus that we utilize that goes

See, 'BELGREEN,' Page 13

**GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE**

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**Department Operations.** Supports the work of the department to contribute to the appearance and safety of the City streets and properties. Serves as an experienced, heavy equipment operator.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Possess a High School Diploma or GED. Two years of work experience collecting and disposing of solid waste. Work within a city environment is preferred. Four years of work experience as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Possess a current and valid CDL-Class B license is required; maintain insurability for the duration of employment. Possess and maintain a safe driving record. Work experience in general road and sidewalk repair and maintenance is preferred. Experience interacting with general public is preferred. Ability to respond to emergencies 24/7. Ability to pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol test and random drug screening.**

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All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or any other non-merit factor.

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

The average pay for this position is \$44,865.60 – 69,160.00  
The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.

# 'RED BAY,' From Page 11

players who have moved up from junior varsity to varsity. "Although we lost six seniors, our team is made up of returning players. A few of my starters are coming into varsity from junior varsity," she said.

Scott went on to describe some of the players she believes will play important roles for the Lady Tigers this season.

"Gracie Weatherford is our outside hitter. She has a lengthy volleyball history and is one of our leaders on the court. Gracie has been out, healing from an ankle injury, most of the summer. She is back on the court and working hard to improve physically and mentally," Scott said. "My starting setter, Addyson Blackburn, is a 10th grader. She has a high volleyball IQ and puts in the hours to improve each game.

"Our middles are Raegan Gordon and Haidyn Emerson, both returning from last season. Anna Kate Burks is coming back as a hitter and has experience playing multiple positions on the court," she added. "A player we will heavily rely on this season is our libero, Kyla Blackburn. She is coming to varsity from junior varsity. Kyla doesn't lack hustle. She is gritty and gets after the ball. She isn't afraid to work hard and play harder.

"My seniors, Gracie Weatherford, Anna Richardson, and Raegan Gordon will be team captains and set the standard for team spirit, dedication, and sportsmanship," Scott said.

With her players this offseason Scott said she has keyed in on a few areas where the Lady Tigers need to improve in order to have success.

"The focus for our team during the off season was to get stronger," she said. "At Red Bay, we incorporated an all-girl athletes workout program this summer and each player was encouraged to attend a certain number. Most of my girls had no problem making all of them. That means a lot for our program.

"There's always room for improvement in our communication on the court. Our mistakes during summer play, even last season, were from lack of communication," Scott added. "Our bad serves hurt us last season, so that was an area of focus during practice last season and now. I have seen a lot of improvement in them."

Scott said Red Bay's first goal is to win the area tournament this year and go from there, but no matter what she wants her team to give it their best and make the community proud.

"I expect my girls to practice hard, give their full hearts and minds to our team and make a difference for our program and school," she said.

Red Bay will begin its 2024 season at home on August 22nd with matches against Itawamba and Tharptown.

**For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us on the web at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)! Send your guest columns, letters to the editor and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).**

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Second Sunday each month: 2 p.m., Andy Gasque, Ligon Springs Baptist Church. 2:30 p.m., Trevor Hallmark, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church. 3:30 p.m., Preston Terry, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

Fourth Sunday each month: 4 p.m., Greg Thorn, Shiloh Baptist Church.

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# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

back and forth between our campus and our new facilities and new track, so we're getting the opportunity to run off-road a little bit," Thomas added.

Thomas said building a competitive schedule is also an objective of his in his first year in charge.

"I want to make sure our schedule aligns with where we can make these meets and be able to compete, locally especially, but we've also got several meets almost in Birmingham and Adamsville and places like that," he said. "We've got pressure on us to perform so we want to make sure we're getting out every day and doing some kind of conditioning and stretching and making sure we're in top shape to compete."

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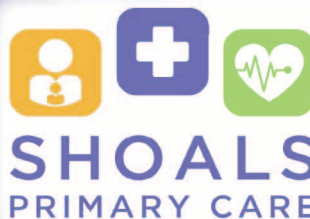
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CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE  
PATROL OFFICER – POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**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

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Pay Range is from \$44,865.60 – 69,160.00.

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 9, 2024 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.

# 'VINA,' From Page 11

girls were interested in it," she said. "It had been awhile since I asked. We got a new principal this year, and I asked him and he went straight to Greg Hamilton, the superintendent, and he let me start the petition for it. He saw that we had a lot of interest in it.

"I think we had about 50 to sign up and then we wound up having around 30-something that ended up trying out for it. I took 10 for junior high and 10 for the JV team."

Vina will not play a varsity schedule for another two seasons but will be eligible for championship play when it does. Pannell said the next couple seasons at the junior high and junior varsity levels will be a good two years of practice for players that are largely inexperienced.

"We're not going to start varsity for another two years...so we get pretty much two years of practice games," Pannell said. "One of the biggest challenges has just getting the basics down. None of these girls have really played before, so it's just getting the basic drills and things like that down."

Despite that inexperience, Pannell said the girls on the team are putting in the time and the effort.

"They're hustlers," she said. "I've got a good group of girls and they're good athletes. I think over time they're going to be really, really good, it's just getting them use to everything. It's a completely different sport.

"They're a good group. They're really nervous about our first game next week, but I think once they get a couple of games under their belt they'll be fine," Pannell added.

The Lady Red Devils will face Tharptown in the program's inaugural match on Thursday, August 22nd.

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**The successful candidate will be required to successfully complete a complete physical examination including drug screening prior to employment.**

# Red Bay girls basketball, Tharptown baseball latest teams to get new coaches

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

Two new head coaches were hired at the latest Franklin County Board of Education meeting on August 6th, filling roles at Red Bay High School and Tharptown High School. At Red Bay, John Torisky was hired as the head coach of the girls' basketball program, while Lucas Craft was named head baseball coach at Tharptown.

Torisky, a physical education teacher at Red Bay, was hired to replace Brady Ramey, who resigned the position to take over as principal at RBHS.

"For a short period of time I was the head coach of the team, so I had a real connection to the team and wanted to find someone who I thought could help continue getting the girls' basketball program going in the right direction," Ramey said. "I know John has a work ethic like none other. I'm super excited about him leading that program, and I know he's going to put in the time it takes to get the girls on the right track."

Torisky, who has been coaching at Red Bay in some capacity for 14 years, has intimate knowledge of the basketball programs, and he felt this chance to help the girls' basketball program was something he couldn't refuse.

"This is my 10th year with the boys and first with the girls, so I've been around both programs for a while," Torisky said. "It was unexpected, but after looking at the opportunity to help the program out I thought that it was something I needed to do."

"I'd been in that situation before with the boys. When I took that job we were really struggling, but there were some good young players in the program. I saw that and we ran with it and the program has turned around," he added. "With the girls there are a lot of similarities, so I think if I can work with the younger girls and get everyone excited about basketball again, you never know; we can get this program turned around again."

Though the basketball season is still a couple months away, Torisky said the job of establishing priorities and expectations for his new team begins right away.

"The main thing I think to start with will be showing the girls and the program the expectations I have for them, what I'm used to, and what the standards at Red Bay have been in the past and bringing them back to that," he said. "Getting back to working hard in the gym, conditioning, lifting weight—doing all the things that I know have worked in the past for us."

"I'm very familiar with the tradition and history of Red Bay and it's my goal to get it back to where it was," Torisky added.

At Belgreen, Lucas Craft replaced Thomas Horton, who resigned as the head coach of the Wildcats earlier this summer.

"We're really excited about Lucas Craft taking over as our new baseball coach here," Tharptown principal Tyler Berryman said. "Lucas comes from a great baseball family and great baseball tradition at Colbert County. We're pleased to have him."

Craft, who also serves as a teacher and the offensive coordinator for the Tharptown football team, was an Alabama Sports Writers Association Class 2A All-State Honorable Mention infielder as a senior at Colbert County in 2019.

"I just want to say that I'm really grateful for the opportunity," Craft said. "This is my first head coaching job in baseball. I really enjoy baseball, I've been around it my whole life, played it my whole life, and coached it for a few years at Colbert County. I'm excited about the chance to lead this program."

Taking a look at the program and his players, Craft said he thinks Tharptown can accomplish big things.

"Walking down the hallway and seeing the guys here that play baseball, I think we can do things that haven't been done at Tharptown," he said. "My goal is to make the playoffs, but I think something we need to establish is just doing the small things. If you take care of the small things first, the big things fall into place."



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