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## Bid period for new animal control facility construction ends Tuesday

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

After a meeting with contractors interested in submitting bids to construct a new animal control facility for Franklin County was held last week, the Franklin County Commission approved an extension of the deadline to submit bids for the project at a special called meeting held October 1st.

Commissioners approved extending the deadline to submit bids from October 3rd at 2 p.m., to October 8th at 2 p.m., at the request of contractors who attended the mandatory bid meeting held September 25th.

Franklin County Administrator Leah Mansell said the additional days were requested by contractors based on information they received at the meeting, including architectural drawings of the building commissioners want to have constructed.

The location for the new Franklin County Animal Control Facility will be on county-owned land behind the Franklin County Jail on Walnut Gate Road. Architectural drawings call for 26 indoor kennels and six outdoor kennels in the one-story building. Estimated square footage will be 3,030 square feet.

The commission approved advertising for bids last month. A condition

See 'FACILITY,' Page 4

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## Local legislator, law enforcement officers tour U.S.-Mexico border as part of 'Border School'

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

We hear every day about the United States' border crisis, but with Alabama 1,375 miles from the closest Mexican border, it can seem as if we're far removed from this important national issue.

That's why Franklin County Sheriff Shannon Oliver, Rep. Jamie Kiel and Russellville Police Department Chief Chris Hargett took part in the annual

Federation for American Immigration Reform's (FAIR) Border School held September 23rd-25th in McAllen, Texas.

The annual event offers state legislators and law enforcement officers to see first-hand what's happening at the U.S.-Mexico border and to receive training to help mitigate the impact of illegal immigration in their home states.

Based on 2020 Census data, Russellville has the highest percent-

See 'BORDER,' Page 9

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**Wyvonia Baccus Welborn Borden, age 87, of Phil Campbell, Alabama passed away on Saturday, October 5, 2024. Visitation will be Wednesday, October 9, 2024 from 12:00 pm until 2:00 p.m. at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville, Alabama, with a service to follow at 2:00 p.m. in the chapel.**

**Kenny Max White, age 54, of Russellville, passed away on Thursday, October 03, 2024. Spry Memorial Chapel assisted the family.**

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# Proposed Alabama law would prevent changes in election laws within six months of general election

John Merrill  
Special to the Franklin Free Press

Numerous new election laws have been passed across the nation since the 2020 presidential election. Advocates have had close to four years to push for reforms to make elections safer, more transparent, and more secure.

Now, with less than two months until the general election, it's essential that we work together to build confidence in our election systems rather than perpetuating unrest, disharmony, and potential failure by continuing to make changes to the election process. Election security can and should be a non-partisan issue.

For example, in recent weeks, local election officials have requested Georgia's State Election Board to stop making further changes to the state's voting procedures. This request follows a number of last-minute rule changes, including some that were pushed through at an unauthorized hearing without several key legislators present. (Those changes were ultimately reversed, and a new hearing held.)

Alabama's Amendment 4 prohibits changes to election conduct laws within six months of general elections.

At this late stage, any further changes will only serve to undermine confidence in the voting systems. Elections are important; they are the bedrock of our democratic system. How they are administered is of immense public concern and should always be a matter up for debate. We need to discuss all policy matters publicly and enthusiastically with facts and data supporting our positions.

However, there needs to be a time to end the discussion, adopt the measures of change, and administer the election in this particular cycle. This time is now.

Surveys show that people — Democrats, Republicans, independents, liberals, and conservatives — trust their election officials to methodically and securely administer their elections with integrity and credibility. This includes accurately counting votes and reporting the results of all contests in a free and fair manner.

This is in agreement with many state and federal leaders discussing the election process in their states and around the country, who have stated that their elections are secure, accessible, and fair.

Even though dozens of audits and recounts have been conducted nationwide, and the results have not indicated that any election results should have been reversed from the 2020 cycle, it should be acknowledged that many Americans have their own opinions and have reached their own conclusions about the election, and those opinions are not likely to change in the next two months.

There have been some instances related to election administration in which certain vulnerabilities and administrative errors have been documented and reported. Many of those have been legally evaluated and assessed, resulting in convictions dealing with election fraud. In response, certain weaknesses have been addressed by those jurisdictions and should be closely monitored in the 2024 cycle, as all election activities should be.

While serving as Alabama's Secretary of State, I was responsible for administering more than 48 elections. That experience taught me the importance of balancing security concerns with access to the polls. I believe that each and every eligible U.S. citizen who is a resident of the State of Alabama should be given the opportunity to become a registered voter, obtain a government-issued photo ID, and exercise his or her right to vote for the candidate of their choice.

Under my administration, we investigated more than one thousand reports of voter fraud and helped modernize and strengthen security around election infrastructure. Seven of these reports actually resulted in voter fraud convictions. These experiences led me to the conclusion that each and every state should be responsible for making it easy to vote and hard to cheat in their jurisdiction.

John H. Merrill served in the Alabama House of Representatives from 2010-2014 and as Alabama's 53rd Secretary of State from 2015-2023.

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# 'FACILITY,' From Page 1

of any bid was the September 25th required meeting. Franklin County Engineer Jason Baggett, Animal Control Officer Joey Wingo and Mansell looked at animal control facilities in neighboring counties and prepared the bid specs based on their research.

The schedule of architectural drawings was prepared by Robert W. Whitten, Architect, LLC, in Florence. The commission approved hiring Whitten as the project architect at a meeting in August.

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore said the facility will be paid for out of funds the county received through the American Relief Plan Act, a pandemic-related program that brought millions of dollars to state, county and local governments to help jump-start the economy.

Issues with stray, abandoned and loose animals, particularly dogs, has become a rampant problem in Franklin County. Commissioners have received a steady diet of citizen and animal advocacy groups attending work sessions to voice concerns about this problem.

With a bid deadline of October 8th, commissioners should be able to vote on the low bid at their October 21st business meeting.

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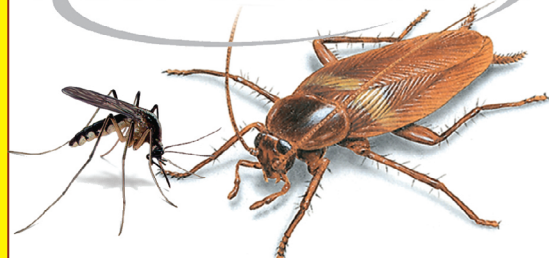
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 **T**he Cowboy Church of Franklin County will host its annual Fall Fest, Thursday, October 31st, at 6 pm. Join them for this fun event with a Chili Cookoff. Have your chili at the church by 5:30 pm. Fall Fest starts at 6 p.m., and ends at 8 p.m. Free hot dogs and chili until gone. Games, candy and cake walk. Everyone is welcome! Church is located at 25100 Highway 24, Russellville.

 **T**he annual Russellville Veteran's Day Parade, sponsored by American Legion Post 64, will take place on Saturday, November 9th, at 12 p.m. Veterans are invited to gather at the Franklin County Courthouse at 11 a.m., to place flowers on the memorial. Parade will assemble at the Farmer's Market behind the A.W. Todd Centre at 11:15. Parade procession will be north on Jackson Avenue. The Antique Car Club will participate. Horse or mule drawn wagons are welcome as well as any other participants. This year's Grand Marshal will be all Veterans from the Vietnam War and earlier. Vehicles will be provided to carry Veterans through the parade route. Veterans' families are also welcome to drive their own vehicle with their Veteran family member if they wish. Please have identifying signs on vehicles carrying Veterans. For more information, contact Grant Atkins at 256-627-2866.



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# Who will succeed Ivey into Governor's Mansion? Bonner has some ideas...

James Bonner  
Special to the Franklin Free Press

*(The following is a contributed column from Franklin County resident James Bonner, a veteran of state and local politics. He will be an occasional contributor to the FFP to share his unique, and often controversial, thoughts on politics. Your opinions and responses are welcome.)*

The Earth is flat, Pi is 3 and the metric system is what Genesis 11 is about.  
Any attempt to convince me otherwise is simply virtue signaling your education in my face.  
On July 7, 1962, I saw a nuclear explosion over one of the Hawaiian islands. Nothing odd about that--except I was in Spruce Pine. Pretty damn flat if you ask me.  
Any well digger can tell you that if you use any number bigger than three your lining won't go in the hole.  
And as to the metric system, the Lord said, Behold, the people are one, and they have all one language. Let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another. And thus the metric system was born."  
The entrance to the great pyramid, the cabin of the Boeing Starliner (rest her soul) and a 2x4 from Lowe's are the same for a reason.  
A man with his outstretched arm is eight feet and a foot is twelve of the width of the eye. Three cubits on the front and four on the side are square if the diagonal is five. 3x5 measures of the Eye of Ra ( the sun at arm's length) is the perfect ratio. This is ancient knowledge.  
Before I give away any more Masonic secrets, let me say Governor Kay Ivey is the best governor we have had since George (Patterson). She has built the city of Mobile like raising the Phoenix from the ashes. She put Amazon in Huntsville, triggering the greatest development in Alabama since Sloss Furnace closed.  
And B'gd she sent the National Guard to North Carolina when President Joe Biden was gone for ice cream. But don't misunderstand me. Under that meemaw hair and demeanor lies (Yellowstone's) Beth Dutton.  
She is always at least two moves ahead.. I got more votes than she did in an election once and she demanded a recount. She had already won her seat and we weren't even running for the same office but the optics of anybody getting more votes than her for anything did not fit into her plans of chairing the delegation to the Republican National Convention.  
It occurs to me that there are students out there with diplomas signed by Ivey for high school and associate degrees, Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees.  
By 2026, it will literally be easier to get a Doctorate than it has been to get Governor Ivey out of office. But she has been good for Alabama and if she has ever stolen anything except glory I don't know about it.  
Which is why there may or may not be an exploratory committee for the next Governor meeting at Jack's at 6:30 am. No, I am not stupid enough to run against Kay Ivey. But I might give (Alabama Lt. Governor Will) Ainsworth a little scare .

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# Martinez offering 'fresh choice, ideas' in 2025 bid for Russellville Mayor

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After being raised in Russellville from the age of four, it wasn't his choice when Guadalupe Martinez' family moved to Florence before his junior year of high school.

Five years ago, it was Martinez' choice to move back to the town he's called home since he was four years old. And now, the 30-year-old wants to represent the people in his hometown. That's why Martinez has decided to run for mayor. And he made his announcement well in advance of the August 26, 2025, Russellville municipal election.

"Moving from Russellville was a decision out of my control at the time, but I decided to come back," Martinez said. "I grew up here. This is my home, so I saw myself being settled here and starting my own family and raising my children here.

"I love this community and its school system. I want my kids to experience what I experienced as a child growing up in Russellville. There's a lot of opportunity in Russellville that hasn't been tapped into yet and I would love the chance to work on that," he added.

Martinez, who goes by 'Lupe,' attended Northwest Shoals Community College then transferred to the University of North Alabama, where he's majoring in Political Science. He is employed by CB&S Bank, where he's worked for two years.

While Martinez embraces the fact he's the first Hispanic resident to seek local elected office, he doesn't describe himself as a Hispanic candidate. Instead, Martinez said he's a young candidate who'll offer a fresh face with new ideas on how to move Russellville forward.

"I understand my being a Hispanic candidate will be brought up," Martinez said. "People are not big fans of identity politics. I hope the voters will make their choice on merit, not based on who you are or what you look like."

But that doesn't mean Martinez doesn't have a message for Hispanic voters as well.

"We have a lot of young Hispanics who have already graduated from high school and more about to graduate and they haven't registered to vote because they haven't found a candidate to resonate with," Martinez said. "So this is a great opportunity to reach out to Hispanic voters and young voters to let them know there's someone young with a fresh face who they can invest in at the ballot box."

Martinez believes the values instilled within Russellville's Hispanic community are the same for most residents.

"Within the Hispanic community, those values include hard work and a love for God. Those are hallmarks of the Hispanic community and I see those resonate across the entire city, not just one segment," Martinez said.

"And we need someone outside the same political circles in this city who can solve problems through an objective lens," he added.

Those problems include a 'fragmented' trust between residents and local leaders with a lack of what he describes as 'sincere discourse.'

"This campaign has a real chance at creating a new voting block comprised of younger voters who struggle to find a candidate they can relate to and to help Hispanic voters find a candidate they can trust," Martinez said.

Martinez, who said he attends Russellville First Baptist Church, is concerned about diminishing of faith among Americans.

"We can't allow the erosion of faith in our families, regardless of who you are," Martinez said. "If we lose that, we lose ourselves. Faith alone send a very powerful character message about who we are. Faith reinforces the fact that family is the most important institution in our society."

A foundation of Martinez' campaign is his pledge to encourage growth of small businesses in Russellville, as well as bringing some chain restaurants to town. His father Juan owned and operated Tortilleria Daisy in downtown Russellville for many years, so Martinez was raised understanding what it takes to maintain a small business.

"Any new addition to the city is an addition for its residents. Where are the restaurants we were told about but haven't seen yet?," Martinez said. "When we see growth in business, it generates excitement and people see their city is growing."

"Over time, with the right people and right leadership and encouragement, you will actually see progress in Russellville you probably haven't seen in a while."

Martinez isn't shy about calling out what he believes to be a lack of transparency between Russellville's leaders and its residents.

"We need new leadership and something different here. That's a common message among a lot of voters I've spoken with," Martinez said. "They want to see progress. They see our city having plateaued in the last few years. I believe we haven't tapped into our potential yet. We need to rebuild a transparent relationship that's missing between city leaders and the citizens they represent."

Martinez wants to interact with as many voters as possible in the next 10 months. He invites any resident to call him at 256-284-5155 with questions, comments or concerns.

You can learn more about Martinez' campaign for Mayor of Russellville by following his political and/or personal Facebook page, or by following 'LupeMartinez2025' on Instagram.

"I welcome hearing you share your thoughts and concerns. I will return a message as soon as I can, and I'll take time to talk with anyone who contacts me. Whether it's face-to-face or through social media, communication is so important for city leaders who forget they are serving the public, not the other way around," Martinez said.

"I don't come from a wealthy family nor do I have a municipal apparatus backing me. My choice to run for office is not due to an inflated ego of myself to enrich my name. This won't just be another job for me, nor his this election about my future. It's about yours," Martinez added.



COURTESY PHOTO  
Guadalupe Martinez



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# 'BORDER,' From Page 1

age of Hispanic/Latino residents, at 39.3%. Compare that to the statewide Hispanic/Latino percentage of 4.6.

By no means are all those residents here illegally. And regardless of their parents' immigration status, children born in the United States are citizens from the day they're born. And Russellville City Schools near 60% Hispanic/Latino enrollment shows the young Hispanic/Latino population is growing rapidly.

According to its website, [www.fairus.org](http://www.fairus.org), FAIR is a 'non-partisan, public interest organization with a support base comprising nearly 50 private foundations and over three million diverse members and supporters...free of political party loyalties and special interest connections.

By its nature, though, an issue defined as a crisis is clearly political. FAIR policy is based on 'reducing the negative impact of uncontrolled immigration on the nation's security, economy, workforce, education, healthcare and environment.'

Much of the Franklin County trio's interaction at the FAIR Border School was with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, and those agents said they've seen a significant difference in illegal border crossings from 2017-2020 (Donald Trump's Presidency) as compared to 2021-2024 under President Joe Biden.

"The numbers have not only increased, we learned, but they've increased to record levels. That's what these officers working our borders told us," Hargett said.

In 2022, illegal crossings, according to the U.S. Office of Homeland Security, surpassed 2.2 million, an all-time high, as Biden rescinded many of Trump's restrictions.

Hargett said he learned that, under current policy, if someone crossing the border illegally doesn't have a criminal record either in the United States or their home country, they are allowed to go through into the country.

"And some of the countries they are coming from don't share criminal histories with the United States," Hargett said.

Hargett learned that law enforcement officers in Texas are enforcing a new 2024 law that allows anyone caught illegally crossing the border into Texas to be charged with trespassing. With that pending criminal charge, ICE agents have to take those individuals into custody and vests Texas judges authority to order them deported.

That policy has led to reduced border crossings into Texas, but increased crossings into New Mexico, Arizona and California, Hargett said.

Constitutional challenges have been filed alleging the Texas law is an example of a state unlawfully interfering in federal policy. But from what Hargett saw at the border, the policy is working for Texas.

Although Biden left in place Title 42, a policy began during the COVID-19 pandemic that allowed border agents to quickly deport those caught crossing the border illegally, his administration also declined to enforce Title 42 as it relates to unaccompanied minors arriving without parent or guardian. Predictably, those numbers have soared in recent years.

Hargett said the countries from which migrants enter the United States have also increased. While most used to come from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras, migrants from Columbia, Venezuela and even some African and Asian nations have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in growing number.

And the number of deportations grew to almost 750,000, more than any Trump Presidency year. But customs officials attribute that to the record number of illegal crossings under Biden's administration.

Hargett, Oliver and Kiel visited the border and met with Texas and federal officers near the high-impact border areas.

Hargett's takeaway from the Border School reiterated something he sees in his law enforcement job every day—illegal entry into the United States isn't just a federal problem. It's not just a border state problem. It's creating unprecedented issues for law enforcement across the country.

"When you see the border first-hand and hear from the men and women enforcing border security, it's much more of an issue that most people realize. And we can use what we learned this week to address the issues we face with illegal immigration in Franklin County," Hargett said.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Sheriff Shannon Oliver, Rep. Jamie Kiel and RPD Chief Chris Hargett at the U.S./Mexico border last month.**

**For updates on news and sports throughout the week, visit us online at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net).**



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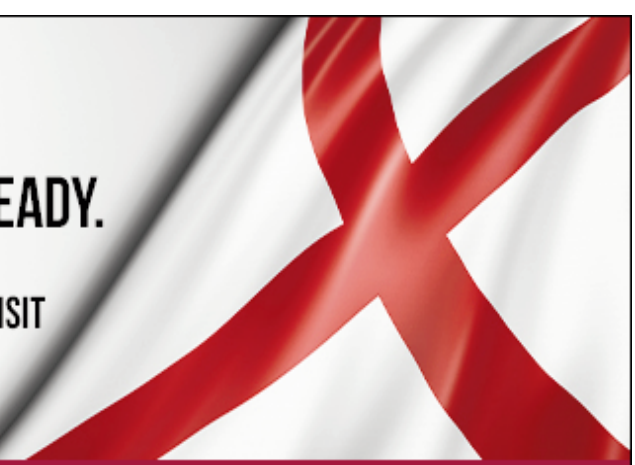
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## NWSCC enrollment near all-time high with 4,749 students

*Submitted*

Every year the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association (FCCA) participates in the Cowboys in the Classroom program during the month of October.

This program is where members of the FCCA go to the local schools and read books related to agriculture to third grade students.

This year the FCCA has partnered with Madeline Cooper, a graduate of Russellville High School, who has written a children's book, Just a Girl and Her Cow. The FCCA has purchased hardback copies of this book to give to the local schools.

Madeline met with some of the FCCA board members and signed the books.

The FCCA will be hosting a meet and greet for Madeline at the Russellville Public Library on Thursday, October 24th, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 p.m.

This event is for anyone who would like to come meet Madeline and hear about her wonderful book.

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## Vina seeking 5th win featured game of week seven local slate

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

Belgreen (2-3)  
 BYE

Last week: BYE

Next week: BYE

Phil Campbell (1-5, 1-3)  
 vs. Carbon Hill (1-5, 0-4)

Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024  
 Time: 7 p.m.  
 Location: Parrish Stadium

Last week: Phil Campbell was beaten 44-6 on the road at region foe Midfield.

What to watch: The Bobcats head into their final home game of the regular season on a four-game losing skid to face another region team, Carbon Hill, which is on a five-game losing spell itself. It's not only the Bobcats' last home game this season, it's also Homecoming week, so the hosts should come into it with added motivation to earn a second win.

See, 'WEEK 7,' Page 14

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## Belgreen wins Franklin County Volleyball Tournament

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Belgreen High School varsity volleyball team won the Franklin County Tournament title on Saturday afternoon, defeating Phil Campbell in three sets to capture the county crown. After falling to the Lady Bobcats 2-0 in their first match of the day at 9 A.M., the Lady Bulldogs went on a three-game run to beat Red Bay, Tharptown, and then Phil Campbell in a rematch in the championship round.

"I was really proud of the way the girls responded and the way they played in the championship game against Phil Campbell," first-year Belgreen head coach Alison Terry said. "We were tired because we had been playing all day, and we had lost to Phil Campbell that morning, so I was worried about how they would come out and play in that game, but they really showed up and played hard and played really well. I was extremely proud of them and how hard they played."

The Lady Bulldogs were swept by the Lady Bobcats to start the tournament, falling 25-19 and

See, 'BELGREEN,' page 13

## Fairview clips Russellville 50-49 in three overtime thriller

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

In a dramatic and thrilling overtime game against the No. 5 ranked team in Class 5A football, the Russellville Golden Tigers came up just short against the Fairview Aggies, losing 50-49 after a successful two-point conversion by the visitors in the third overtime period sealed their defeat.

A back-and-forth affair billed as the de facto Region 7 title bout, Russellville (4-2, 3-1) and Fairview (5-0, 4-0) traded touchdowns throughout the game, eventually sending it to overtime where the visitors were ultimately able to come out on top after a gutsy decision to go for two.

"I thought both teams played really hard, gave it everything they had, but for us there were too many missed opportunities offensively, defensively, and even in the kicking game," first-year Russellville head coach Dustin Goodwin said. "All in all, the game comes down to three or four plays and if you make the plays we win and if you don't then you get the result like we got tonight."

"I'm proud of the effort we played with but, you know, we gotta find a way to learn from it and get better," he added.

In the first half the Aggies drew first blood with a two-yard touchdown pass after a time-consuming drive, but the Golden Tigers answered almost immediately with a 72-yard touchdown rush by junior running back Cameron Phinizee to tie it up before the end of the first period.

The second quarter played out almost the same way as the first with Fairview taking the lead and Russellville answering.

Russellville's second touchdown of the night came following a defensive stop. After a missed 36-yard field goal by Manny Martinez, a result the officials under the goal posts took an unusually

See, 'RUSSELLVILLE,' Page 12



COURTESY PHOTO

The 2024 Franklin County Volleyball Tournament champion Belgreen Lady Bulldogs.

## GENERAL NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT

### CITY OF RUSSELLVILLE

#### PATROL OFFICER – POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

#### REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

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

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

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

#### QUALIFICATIONS and SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a high school diploma or GED

Minimum of 21 years of age

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

Possession of a valid Alabama Drivers License

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

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

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 October 25, 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.

long time to determine, the Aggies got the ball back. The Golden Tigers sent on the field goal unit after a Cameron Phinizee touchdown run during the drive was called back because of a penalty, something that has plagued Russellville all season. (The Golden Tigers have had eight Phinizee touchdowns called back this season.)

"We just ask our kids to play by the rules and play hard. That's all we can control," Goodwin said.

After the missed field goal, the Golden Tiger defense forced a punt—a bad one—giving the hosts good field position. Whit Goodwin, later on in the drive, was able to run it in from a yard out to make it 14-14 at halftime.

Russellville's deferral after winning the coin toss gave the Golden Tigers the ball to start the second half, and the hosts took advantage. Russellville avoided a near-disastrous turnover when an interception by Whit Goodwin was overturned by a Fairview penalty. On the next play, Phinizee took the handoff up the middle and hustled for 50 yards for the score to make it 21-14.

The Aggies tied it up again on their next possession, scoring on a one-yard touchdown run with 7:50 to go in the third, but the Golden Tigers were able to retake the lead with an eight-yard touchdown run by Goodwin who, after faking the handoff to Phinizee—a move the defense had to respect—took it in himself.

Russellville's head coach said the threat from Phinizee's rushing attack allowed the Golden Tigers to utilize the quarterback's rushing ability, as well.

"Cam's Cam. We know we've gotta run the ball to win, but I think it's important to make the defense defend 11 players," Goodwin said. "Whether that means reading things with the quarterback or getting it out on the perimeter or taking shots downfield, ultimately we want them defending 11 (players), not 10."

Going into the fourth quarter, the visitors put together another drive to even the score up once again. A 15-yard touchdown run by the Aggie offense made it 28-28, and then their defense came up with a big fourth down stop near midfield to give them the ball back. Fairview, in crunch time and with good field position, took the lead, running the ball in from three yards to take a 35-28 advantage with just over two minutes remaining.

Throughout the game, with its many highs and lows, Goodwin said he felt his team did a good job of responding to the situations they were in and staying focused.

"We try to keep them in it and stay as calm as you can. You try not to be a roller coaster and you don't push the panic button," he said. "Hopefully (the players) respond to it and rebound from it well. For the most part I thought we were able to do that tonight."

"It's an emotional game but you want to control your emotions as much as possible and attack as best you can," Goodwin added.

With the game on the line, the Golden Tigers were able to keep their composure. The hosts executed an excellent two-minute drill to drive the ball down the field and score the game-tying touchdown with 18 seconds left in regulation. Goodwin connected with his favorite receiver, Gunner Sappington, who finished with double-digit receptions on the night; the senior broke multiple tackles to fight his way into the endzone and keep his team in the contest.

"I thought (Sappington) played really well—a really gutsy performance from him tonight," Goodwin said. "He came in clutch at times when we needed him, and I'm proud and happy to see that, for sure."

Sappington's touchdown sent the contest into overtime, Russellville's first overtime game since 2019.

Winning the coin toss, Russellville went on defense to start the first overtime period. Fairview ended up scoring from a yard out to take the lead, but the Golden Tigers only needed one play to equalize. Phinizee ran in his third touchdown of the night from 10-yards out to send the game into the second overtime period.

The second OT is when things really got wild. Starting on offense in the second overtime, the Golden Tigers were eventually stuffed on fourth and goal at the one-yard line after a read option by Goodwin didn't pan out. Just needing any kind of points to win the game after that, Fairview was unable to reach the endzone, so instead sent out its kicking unit for a chip shot field goal. With the game on the line, Russellville's special teams unit heroically blocked the attempt to send it into a third overtime.

The block, Goodwin said, had his team fired up for the ensuing offensive drive.

"That's a huge momentum shift and hopefully it would springboard us into the next possession," he said.

That it did. Phinizee, who finished with over 230 yards rushing, scored his fourth rushing touchdown of the night soon after—this one from five yards out—giving the Golden Tigers a 49-42 advantage to start the third overtime. However, heartbreak was unfortunately to follow. The Russellville defense was unable to stop the Fairview offense and the Aggies scored to make it 49-48; but instead of taking the safe option, the extra point, the Aggies decided to go for the win. The visitors converted from a few yards out to secure the victory 50-49, a heartbreaker for the Golden Tigers.

It was the first overtime loss for Russellville since 2007 and the three OT periods were the most the Golden Tigers have played since 1980. The loss halted Russellville's region winning streak at 27 games.

After the disappointing result against a top five team, Goodwin said he was proud of his squad's performance and told them they still have a lot to fight for after the defeat. The loss, more than likely, barring major upsets in region play from here on out, means Fairview will be the region champion, but the Golden Tigers are still in the driver's seat for good playoff positioning.

"You just tell them to keep fighting," he said. "They have a choice to make. They can learn from our mistakes and hammer down for the second half of the season. We've got a good shot at having a decent draw in the playoffs still and getting in. Their destiny is in their hands."

"We've still got a really good shot to be in the playoffs and to be a one- or two-seed," he added. "You never know what's going to happen; that's why we play the games—they're not played on paper."

"We've gotta get back together, study this film and figure out what our mistakes were and try to address them next week and get ready for the next one."

Russellville hosts Class 4A Hatton at Golden Tiger Stadium in its next game on October 11th. The Golden Tigers' next region game will be on the road at West Point on October 18th.

# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

25-18 in the two sets. Belgreen turned it around in the next two matches, though, sweeping the Lady Tigers of Red Bay and the Tharptown Lady Wildcats to make it to the championship round. Despite the two wins, Terry said she didn't feel her team was playing up to their full potential to that point.

"We lost to Phil Campbell pretty easily in that first game, and I don't think we played to the best of our ability against Red Bay and Tharptown," she said.

Terry did get the best possible effort out of her team in the most important match of the day, however. The Lady Bulldogs, facing Phil Campbell for the second time that day in the county championship, took the first set 25-23, but the Lady Bobcats responded by rolling to a 25-17 victory in set two to tie it up and send it to a decisive third set. In the final, title-deciding set, Phil Campbell jumped out to a 12-8 lead over the Lady Bulldogs, but, with Belgreen seniors **Dacota Green (33)** and junior **Alayna Tate** behind the service line, Belgreen went on a 7-0 run to win the set 15-12 and the match 2-1.

"We were down 12-8 and then Alayna Tate served out the rest of our points," Terry said. "Alayna served and then a Phil Campbell player received the service and it went over the net and (sophomore) Lilliana Willingham just smashed it down for us to score the final point. I've gone back and watched that video about 100 times.

"You know, we had not beaten Phil Campbell up to that point this season," she added. "They had already beaten us once earlier in the season at Phil Campbell and then they'd beaten us in the tournament. I was proud of how they were mentally able to get that out of their head and just go out there and



COURTESY PHOTO

play and win." Terry said her team displayed in the win over the Lady Bobcats the type of aggressive mindset she's been preaching to them all season long.

"You've got to go out there ready to play. You've gotta have the mentality where, I don't care if you've beaten me all season long. You've gotta go out there with confidence and ready to play" she said. "One thing I've tried to get across to our varsity players is we're going to earn every point. We're not waiting for the other team to give us a point or make a mistake and give us a point.

"I don't want us playing passive, I want us playing aggressive and earning our points," Terry added. "In the championship, we earned our points." The county championship victory capped an up-and-down week for Belgreen, in terms of wins and losses. The Lady Bulldogs started the week on Monday, September 30th with a 3-1 victory over Red Bay, prior to which Belgreen honored its two seniors, Dacota Green and Morgan Lauderdale.

Terry lauded the coachability and leadership abilities of both student-athletes. "Dacota, this is her first year playing volleyball, but I had seen her before I came here play basketball. What I love about her is her leadership. All the girls look up to her, and she's a natural-born leader," Terry said. "She's coachable and she wants to learn. She's always asking questions and she always wants to know what she can do better. She earned her spot in the rotation throughout the year. She wasn't in the rotation at the beginning of the year because of her lack of experience, but she's really grown and she's earned her spot.

"Morgan Lauderdale is a go-getter," Terry added. "She's got a great swing and a good serve and she's very smart and knowledgeable. When something isn't working, I don't have to tell her to change it. She knows what to do to change it and to make it better. "(Lauderdale)'s more of a quiet leader, but I've told her that the younger players really look up to her because of how she plays and how she practices and how she handles herself. Just because you're not a vocal leader doesn't mean you can't be a leader in the things that you do."

After Senior Night, Belgreen suffered two straight 2-0 losses against Covenant Christian and Russellville on Tuesday, October 1st and then a 3-0 victory over Phillips on October 3rd before participating in the Franklin County Tournament.

The Lady Bulldogs have just two matches remaining in the regular season—a match against Red Bay on October 7th and the finale vs. Mars Hill on October 8th. Terry said Belgreen will look to continue improving before the start of the Class 2A Area 14 tournament, in which it will likely be paired with Covenant Christian.

"It doesn't matter what you do or who you beat in the regular season. You've got to continue to get better and play smarter and play tougher if we're going to be able to compete," Terry said.

"When we played Covenant Christian the first time we won the first two sets; well they came back and won 3-2, and that was very heartbreaking and discouraging for the girls. But like I told them, everything you do matters.

"Most everything you do in sports is mental, and that's what I tell them: You've got to mentally get over your mistakes and you've got to mentally know what's going on on the court," she added. "You've got to have the confidence on the court and you've got to intimidate the other team with that. So, that's what we're focusing on the rest of the season is going out there knowing we can do it, knowing we can win, and not allowing ourselves to be beaten mentally before we step out on the court."

Whatever does end up happening with the Lady Bulldogs before the end of the campaign, Terry said she's encouraged by the attitude this team has taken towards improvement in her first year in charge.

"They never give us any trouble and they're constantly wanting to learn and ask questions," she said. "They do everything that we ask of them, even if it's something they're not used to or done in the past. Sometimes you've got to change things when they're not working, you know, and the girls have really been good about that and doing whatever I tell them.

"Their attitudes have been great. They're a great bunch of girls, you know, and I couldn't ask for a better group of girls. They deserve the best," Terry added.



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# 'WEEK 7,' From Page 11

Series history: This is the third straight year Phil Campbell has played Carbon Hill, but it's the first time these two have been in the same region since 2003. In the last two meetings, which includes a 52-13 rout last season, the Bobcats have beaten the Bulldogs by an average of 33 points.

Next week: Phil Campbell hits the road for a region contest at Gordo, a top 10 ranked team in Class 3A.

Red Bay (0-5, 0-2)  
at Tharptown (0-6, 0-2)

Date: Friday, October 11, 2024  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Tharptown Stadium

Last week: Red Bay was on a bye week. Tharptown suffered a 39-6 region loss on the road at Tanner.

What to watch: One of these two winless teams is going to get its first victory of the season—and a region win at that. Even though the Tigers are on the road, a glance at the results of both teams' games gives one the impression that Red Bay is the favorite here—AHSFHS.org has the Tigers listed as a 29-point favorite, in fact. Red Bay has scored in all of its losses and though it gives up a ton of points per game, it's averaging a little over 18 points offense, 4.5 times more points than Tharptown.

Series history: Red Bay has won all 10 matchups against Tharptown. The two teams have faced each other every year since 2014, with only two being out of region contests. The Tigers average

margin of victory in those 10 wins has been a whopping 49 points.

Next week: Tharptown hosts region rival Winston County in its final home game of the season. Red Bay will take on one of Class 2A's top 10 teams, Decatur Heritage, in a region game at Tiger Stadium.

Russellville (4-2, 3-1)  
vs. Hatton (4-2, 3-2)

Date: Friday, October 11, 2024  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Golden Tiger Stadium

Last week: Russellville battled No. 5 Fairview in an instant classic. The back-and-forth de facto Region 7 title game ended in a heart-breaker for the Golden Tigers when, after three overtime periods, the Aggies converted on a two-point conversion to win 50-49.

What to watch: After an emotional game against Fairview, a contest that put cold water on the Golden Tigers' hopes of a region championship, will there be any kind of letdown for Russellville against Class 4A Hatton? Russellville and Hatton both have wins over a shared opponent, Deshler, which each beat in their season-openers. No doubt the Hornets, who jumped up two classifications this past year, will be motivated to get one over on the Golden Tigers in their first meeting. Can Russellville rebound and refocus after the Fairview loss like it did after the Mars Hill defeat when they torched Lawrence County 42-13?

Series history: This is the first meeting between Russellville and Hatton.

Next week: The Golden Tigers hit the road and return to region play against West Point.

Vina (4-2, 2-2)  
vs. Waterloo (1-5, 0-4)

Date: Friday, October 11, 2024  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Location: Franklin-Hester Stadium

Last week: Vina was shutout for the first time this season, losing to region rival Hackleburg 46-0.

What to watch: The Red Devils' 42-32 season finale win over Waterloo last season, by head coach Cody Renfrow and a few of the players' own admission, is what launched Vina into this season with renewed confidence and belief. It was the first in what would turn into a four-game winning streak. Coming off a big loss against Hackleburg, can this campaign's contest against the Cougars serve a similar purpose? Waterloo is on a five-game losing skid after beating Tharptown in its season opener, so Vina at home are and should be favorites to pick up a third region victory, which would be its most since 2019.

Series history: Vina is 28-20 all-time against the Cougars. The two have been in the same region since 2008 and although Waterloo holds a 10-7 advantage during that span, the Red Devils beat the Cougars 42-32 last season.

Next week: Vina travels to Addison in Class 1A Region 7 play.



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**Cattlemen's Association to host meet and greet for local author of children's book**

*Submitted*

Every year the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association (FCCA) participates in the Cowboys in the Classroom program during the month of October.

This program is where members of the FCCA go to the local schools and read books related to agriculture to third grade students.

This year the FCCA has partnered with Madeline Cooper, a graduate of Russellville High School, who has written a children's book, Just a Girl and Her Cow. The FCCA has purchased hardback copies of this book to give to the local schools.

Madeline met with some of the FCCA board members and signed the books.

The FCCA will be hosting a meet and greet for Madeline at the Russellville Public Library on Thursday, October 24th, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 p.m.

This event is for anyone who would like to come meet Madeline and hear about her wonderful book.



**COURTESY PHOTO**  
Madeline Cooper with members of the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association.



**DEVILS**

Lane Easterling

**ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**

Lane Easterling - Vina football

@FCgoodnews

# "Flip it" for Franklin County Schools!

If approved by Alabama voters, Amendment One on the November 5, 2024 ballot would allow the Franklin County Board of Education to sell or otherwise utilize land in Walker and Fayette Counties owned by Franklin County Schools.

All revenue from these lands will support education in Franklin County for decades to come! Amendment One will be on the back side of your ballot! So please "Flip it" for Franklin County Schools.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO  
APPEAR ON THE BALLOT STATEWIDE

STATEWIDE AMENDMENT 1

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 2022, to grant certain sixteenth section and indemnity school land that is owned in fee simple by the Franklin County school system, is located in Fayette County and Walker County, and is for the exclusive use of schools in the Franklin County School System to the Franklin County Board of Education; and to provide for the distribution of any proceeds and interest generated by this land to the Franklin County Board of Education. (Proposed by Act 2024-301)

YES

NO

**Vote *Yes* on Amendment One!**