



**Modern Woodmen**  
FRATERNAL FINANCIAL



**JJ McCormick**  
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Suite 112  
Florence, AL 35630  
256-668-7803  
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## Lots of questions, few answers, in case of missing Gravel Hill man

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Not a day goes by that Robbi Lindsey Head doesn't make a Facebook post about her missing nephew Timothy Campbell.

And until 'TO,' as he's called by most who know him, is found, she'll continue to keep her nephew's name in the public eye.

"Someone's got to keep up and get his name out there," Head said. "Someone has to do something so this case doesn't slip through the cracks and turn cold. We all have our opinions about what happened.

"Timothy is the type of guy who

always came home no matter what. If he was in trouble, he'd come home. If something was going on in his life, he would be there. Even though he had some issues in the past with addiction, things were going well in his life and he'd always come home," she added.

It was Thursday, October 24th around 11:15 a.m., when the 28-year-old Campbell left his father's Gravel Hill home to ride his four-wheeler before his brother Josh was scheduled to pick him up for work later that afternoon.

Campbell is seen in a video from a neighbor's home at 11:18 a.m., riding his four-wheeler a short way from the


See 'MISSING,' Page 4

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## Modern Woodmen honor Russellville Coalition for the Homeless as 'Hometown Hero'

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Five years and counting. 325 people served and counting. 103 people relocated off the streets or woods of Russellville...and still counting.

Those numbers represent the impact of the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless since its inception in November 2019. And the men and women who serve the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless all volun-

teer their time in an effort to meet what, for many, remains a 'hidden need' in the community.

Their ministry has not gone completely unnoticed, though. That's why Modern Woodmen of America recently recognized the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless as a Modern Woodmen of America Hometown Hero.

The Hometown Hero program is a recognition program honoring people who 'selflessly give their time to

See 'HEROS,' Page 8




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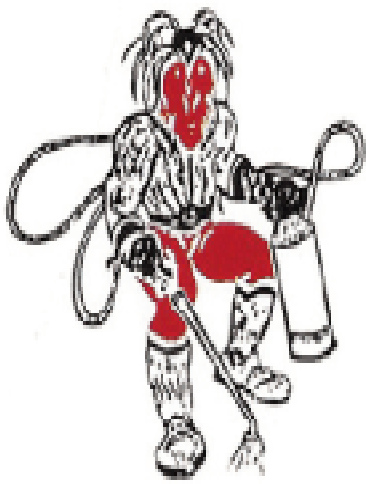


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**Jenna "Paislynn" Norris, age 22, passed away on December 2, 2024. Visitation will be Sunday, December 8, 2024 at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville, AL from 1:00 PM- 2:00 PM with a Memorial Service to immediately follow at 2:00 PM.**

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### Franklin Free Press

113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653  
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The Franklin Free Press strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

#### Letters to the editor

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

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## Christmas at City Lake lighting ceremony set for Thursday at 7:30 pm

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

In what organizers hope will become a holiday tradition in Russellville, the fourth annual Christmas at City Lake 2024 lighting ceremony will take place Thursday, December 5th after the Russellville Christmas Parade.

The annual Christmas at City Lake is a fund-raiser for the Russellville Hospital Foundation and co-sponsored with the Russellville Parks and Recreation Department.

Its mission is to build long-term partnerships between Russellville Hospital and local communities to promote the advancement of healthcare, enhance the services offered by the hospital and meet the needs of the local community.

Proceeds of this year's Christmas at City Lake will go towards a future emergency room renovation at Russellville Hospital.

Tree selection at City Lake Park ended December 4th. Each sponsor selects a tree and decorates it as they choose. The tree is identified with a personalized sign to identify the sponsor. There is no admission for visitors to enjoy the tree trail, which will be open through January 1, 2025. Trees will be lit each night for the community to enjoy.

Thursday's lighting ceremony will include a special countdown ceremony along with entertainment and some special surprises, organizers say and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Special 'selfie stations' along the trail will be marked for visitors to enjoy. These are also sponsored by local businesses or individuals.

Some additional Christmas-themed events for you to enjoy this holiday season include:

--Shoals Holiday Concert featuring Mark Narmore, Bobby Tomberlin and Tess Frizzell. December 17, 2024. Doors open at 6 p.m. Show starts at 6:30 p.m., at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, 617 US-72 West in Tuscumbia. Tickets are \$15 and are available at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, Colbert County Tourism and Convention Bureau, or by calling 256-383-0783.

--Dolores Hydock presents 'No Humbug! The Surprising True Story of A Christmas Carol,' December 14, 2024, at 11 a.m., at Locust Hill. The event will include storyteller Dolores Hydock. Locust Hill is located at 209 S. Cave Street, Tuscumbia, with admission of \$5 per person. The story of how Dickens created his 'little Carol' and its lasting impact on Christmas traditions will be featured. Tickets are available at the Colbert County Tourism office, or at [www.colbertcountytourism.org](http://www.colbertcountytourism.org).

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# 'MISSING,' From Page 1

make the world a better place,' according to Modern Woodmen of America's website.

Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal financial organization that strives to give back to the community it serves. Local Modern Woodmen agent JJ McCormick nominated the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless for the honor, and presented its board of directors a plaque and certificate of appreciation last month. On hand to receive the plaque were coalition board members Doug and Betsy Green, Maegan Burks, Tonya Taylor and Jamie Reeves.

New board member Chad Sheffield was unable to attend due to a prior commitment.

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The coalition helps provide homeless people with tools they need to turn their lives around, if they're willing to do so. That assistance can help those who are homeless obtain housing and/or employment as they work to become self-sufficient once again.

The Russellville Coalition for the Homeless is a non-profit organization that operates on support from businesses, individuals and churches. These services include providing emergency food, clothing or blankets and, once a year, a backpack containing supplies to help them survive in the woods, trap houses or on the streets. Those backpacks include blankets, rain and thermal ponchos, toiletries, clothing, bottled water and/or non-perishable foods and a pocket sized Bible.

Backpacks are given annually to any person in need, even if he or she is considered 'chronically homeless,' meaning someone who refuses to work, seek treatment for addiction, obtain mental health counseling or

take steps necessary to get off the streets. But if someone refuses help, they get a backpack but are not eligible for assistance from the coalition for at least one year, Green said.

Betsy Green said less than five percent of Russellville's homeless are classified as chronic homeless, something she often shares when someone asks her 'why these people are too lazy to work?'

"That's just not the situation. Last year, out of all the people we helped, less than five percent were in addiction," Green said. "Less than five percent are chronic homeless. They become homeless through a sequence of events that leave them no place to go. Some have children. Some are husbands and wives. There is some elderly abuse. And we have some people who come into Russellville and get stranded with no means to get home.

"They may have gotten sick and lost everything. There are all different reasons someone may end up in the woods, but only a very small percentage just refuse to work or are addicts," she added.

It's the time of year now when the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless is stocking up on everything needed for the backpacks to be distributed in 2025. Donations are needed for large items including blankets, coats and shoes. The coalition partners with two Russellville businesses, the Pink Panda and Sharon Sells (Cotton State Barns), which serve as drop-off location for these larger items, since the coalition has no building or location to store items.

In return for accepting these larger items, the Pink Panda and Sharon Sells are locations where homeless persons can go to get what they need in the way of clothing, jackets, blankets, etc.

And if someone who was recently homeless obtains housing, the thrift stores have furnishings available to help set up their home. The stores donate some of these items, and the coalition pays for others.

Green expects to give away between 30-40 backpacks next year, consistent with previous years.

Additionally, Green keeps a collection of fast food gift cards that are 'invaluable' to the ministry. Donations of \$15-\$20 gift cards are also needed. They can be mailed to the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless, P.O. Box 415, Russellville, AL., 35653, or cash donations may be made through Venmo or Cash App. For more information on the coalition, call 256-815-5249.

"As a 100 percent non-profit, we need money to facilitate what this area needs. It takes money. We have donation jars at businesses around town. You can mail donated gift cards or use Venmo and/or Cash App," Green said.

Not one to be shy, Green does not hesitate to ask for assistance from the community. And when she meets with a homeless person seeking assistance, Green must determine whether that person is committed to being 'all-in' to doing what is needed to turn his or her life around.

Two years ago, the coalition began a temporary transitional shelter program that allows criteria-specific homeless to immediately get off the street and go to a hotel for a few nights before they are relocated.

The program is available only if the person is awaiting a bed in a recovery facility or to return home out of area.

"It's a way to get them immediately out of the woods or off the streets until they're relocated. But it costs \$200-\$300 just to get one person into a transitional shelter," Green said.

Phil Campbell Water & Sewer Board will be taking sealed bids on a:



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Bids will be taken thru 4:00 p.m. January 6<sup>th</sup>.  
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# TVA releases data showing impact of Helene on Appalachian region

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Friday, September 27, 2024, began a seven day reign of damage and destruction from Tropical Storm Helene, which ravaged the Appalachian region of the southeastern United States.

From power outages to severe flooding, Helene's magnitude impacted an

area of the country primarily served by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Last month, TVA released data specific to Helene and it ratifies the storm's level of severity.

Communities throughout the Tennessee River Watershed were

drenched with what would ordinarily be two months' worth of rainfall in just three days. Most of the catastrophic damage came in the northeast Tennessee and western North Carolina areas, TVA reported. In those areas, the massive amount rainfall created floodwater that started flowing into the Tennessee River watershed but TVA's employees had prepared the network of dams in advance of the water surge.

Greene County, Tenn., Mayor Kevin Morrison expressed his appreciation to TVA officials for their help in mitigating damage to his community from Helene.

"Greene County was aided immeasurably by engineer representatives from TVA from the very early stages of the storm and flooding affecting Greene County," Morrison said. "TVA's timely, accurate and wise forecasting professional advice to our leadership team on the conditions of the Nolichucky River and the Nolichucky Dam saved lives. We are grateful to the TVA team for standing side-by-side with us throughout this disaster," he added.

TVA officials use computer-aided technology to calculate the extent of damage without dams and flood mitigation as a way to determine how well its system is working.

Data from Helene shows flood mitigation strategies prevented an additional \$406 million in damages in the Appalachian region, including an estimated \$186,000,000 in damage averted in Chattanooga alone.

The 10 large tributary reservoirs TVA has stored more than 400 billion gallons of water during Helene. That's two months of normal rainfall in a 72-hour period.

Between September 29th and October 5th, TVA's hydro units generated a daily average of 2,869 megawatts of clean energy per day, 1,600 megawatts more than the average over the same dates last year.

The seven day rainfall average in the eastern Tennessee River Valley was 7.67 inches, approximately 10 times the normal rainfall amount for a week in late September.

TVA is the country's largest public power supplier, delivering energy to 10 million people across seven states. TVA supplies electricity to both the Franklin Electric Cooperative and the Russellville Electric Board.



COURTESY PHOTO

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# What's Happening


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 **T**he Foster Grandparent Program is seeking volunteers ages 55 and older to help tutor and mentor children in day care, head start and schools. Volunteers will receive a tax-free stipend and travel reimbursement. We have openings for several schools for the coming school year. Please call 256-332-6800 for an application.


 **A**shaKiran serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking across Alabama. Their vision is to be a 'ray of hope' by bridging the gap between service providers and culturally diverse communities. Their 24-hour crisis line number is 1-800-793-3010. Learn more about AshaKiran by visiting [www.ashakiranonline.org](http://www.ashakiranonline.org). Consultations are free and confidential, and available in 45 different languages.


 **N**orthwest Regional Library is proud to announce audiobooks are now available through our Books-By-Mail program. This program is completely free to those that are medically homebound, live more than 10 miles from a town with a public library, or require large print or audiobooks only. Must be a resident of Marion, Franklin, or Lamar counties. Contact us today at 205-487-2330 or visit our website at [northwestregional.net](http://northwestregional.net) to find out more information about the program! We are accepting donations of new or gently used CD audiobooks. Donations can be dropped off at any member library. Contact us for more information."

 **C**ommunity Action Partnership of North Alabama, also known as Russellville Head Start and Early Head Start, is a non-profit agency serving 3, 4 and 5 year old children absolutely free. We are located at 976 Ronnie McDowell Avenue in Russellville. Our hours are from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Call for an appointment today at 256-331-0162. Give your child a Head Start on school readiness! We offer top-quality, comprehensive early childhood educational services provided at no cost to your family. To learn more, visit [www.capna.org/children-services](http://www.capna.org/children-services).

 **N**orth Russellville Baptist Church will host Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 14, from 8:30-11 a.m. The event includes a pancake breakfast and all the pictures you want with Santa. (Please bring your own camera). \$10 for adults. \$7 12 and under. Proceeds benefit the NRBC Youth Group. Church is located at 1401 Waterloo Road, Russellville.

 **C**ARINGPLACE of the Shoals will host a fund raiser Enchanted Tour of Homes on Friday, December 6th from 5-9 p.m., and Saturday, December 7th from 2-7 p.m. 11 homeowners in the Shoals will open their homes to the community. The homes are located in Florence, Sheffield and Tusculmbia. Tickets are \$50 and available for purchase at Kennedy Douglass Art Center, Sheffield Library, First United Methodist Church of Florence and Colbert County Tourism Association. All proceeds benefit CARINGPLACE of the Shoals. For more information, call 256-335-5245.

 **M**ark your calendars! We hope you can join us again for our annual "A Night in Bethlehem" drive thru nativity. It will begin on Sunday, December 8 - Tuesday, December 10. It will last from 6pm-8pm each night. This is a free event. You and your whole family will be able to drive through in the comfort of your own vehicle and experience 11 narrated scenes, describing the birth of our Lord, His earthly ministry, His death, burial, and resurrection. This is our gift to our community as we share the true meaning of the Christmas season. For more information, please visit our Facebook page or call the church at 205-993-4610. The church address is 2110 Highway 81, Phil Campbell, AL 35581.

 **T**he Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay, AL announces Auditions for its second production for the 2024-2025 season, Moon Over Buffalo by Ken Ludwig and directed by Mark Richardson. Auditions will be held at the Weatherford Centre in Red Bay, AL on Sunday December 8, 2024, at 2:00 PM and Monday December 9, 2024, at 7:00 PM. Please enter the theater through the dressing room door at the back of the building on Sunday December 8. The performance dates will be February 13-16, 2025, with dinner available at each performance. The dinner must be reserved in advance and groups can contact Beth Hammock at 256-668-0045 for advance sales. This is a perfect opportunity for groups to have a night out with a great meal and a wonderful comedy performance that is family friendly. The cast consists of four male roles and four female roles, with older teens that can play young adults. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the book. An acting couple are on tour in Buffalo with a repertory consisting of Cyrano de Bergerac revised one nostril version and Noel Coward's Private Lives. Fate has given these actors one more shot at starring roles in The Scarlet Pimpernel epic and director Frank Capra himself is enroute to buffalo to catch their matinee performance. Will Charlotte Hay appear to run off with their agent? Will George Hay be sober enough to emote? Will Capra see Cyrano, Private Lives or a disturbing mixture of the two? Hilarious misunderstandings pile on a madcap misadventure, all of which are magnified by Charlotte's deaf mother who manages the theater. One critic says, "This plan is nothing less than a love letter to live theater."

Email us at [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).

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## **Russellville City Council approves resolution encouraging residents to 'Spend \$20 on December 20' to bolster local business**

*John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press*

The Russellville City Council approved a resolution Monday encouraging residents to shop local during this holiday season.

Mayor David Grissom signed a resolution declaring December 20, 2024, to be "Spend at Least \$20 in Russellville Day" as part of a campaign to promote shopping locally.

The resolution, approved by the council at its December 2nd meeting, cites a study that shows if each city resident spent only \$20 at a City of Russellville business on December 20th, revenue could increase by as much as 60% that day, something that would not only benefit local businesses but also the city through the additional tax revenue.

In other agenda items, the council:

--approved a contract with retired police officer Reece Coan to work as a School Resource Officer within the Russellville City Schools system. The contract begins January 1, 2025, and runs through September 30, 2025, at a compensation amount of \$22,000 payable in 12 equal monthly payments. Additionally, the city will provide a police vehicle for Coan's use during his hours of employment and a clothing allowance of \$500 per school year. Russellville City Schools will reimburse the City of Russellville for all funds paid to Coan under the contract.

--approved renewal of a contract with Bobby Brown to serve as Chaplain for the City of Russellville at a rate of \$1,500 per month. Job duties for the Chaplain include providing counseling and/or emotional support for city employees, assisting with notification to families in the event of a death and other assistance as needed. The contract shall run December 1, 2024, through November 30, 2025.

--approved the temporary appointment of Brian Sutton to Lieutenant and Michael Hall to Sergeant in the Russellville Fire Department, said appointments to run through February 15, 2025 for Hall and February 15, 2025 for Sutton.

The next meeting of the Russellville City Council will be December 16, 2024, with work session at 6 p.m., and meeting to follow.

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**Pilgrim's**

# 'HEROS,' From Page 1

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## MEDICAL OFFICE WORKER/ MEDICAL ASSISTANT NEEDED

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"They may have gotten sick and lost everything. There are all different reasons someone may end up in the woods, but only a very small percentage just refuse to work or are addicts," she added.

It's the time of year now when the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless is stocking up on everything needed for the backpacks to be distributed in 2025. Donations are needed for large items including blankets, coats and shoes. The coalition partners with two Russellville businesses, the Pink Panda and Sharon Sells (Cotton State Barns), which serve as drop-off location for these larger items, since the coalition has no building or location to store items.

In return for accepting these larger items, the Pink Panda and Sharon Sells are locations where homeless persons can go to get what they need in the way of clothing, jackets, blankets, etc.

And if someone who was recently homeless obtains housing, the thrift stores have furnishings available to help set up their home. The stores donate some of these items, and the coalition pays for others.

Green expects to give away between 30-40 backpacks next year, consistent with previous years.

Additionally, Green keeps a collection of fast food gift cards that are 'invaluable' to the ministry. Donations of \$15-\$20 gift cards are also needed. They can be mailed to the Russellville Coalition for the Homeless, P.O. Box 415, Russellville, Al., 35653, or cash donations may be made through Venmo or Cash App. For more information on the coalition, call 256-815-5249.

"As a 100 percent non-profit, we need money to facilitate what this area needs. It takes money. We have donation jars at businesses around town. You can mail donated gift cards or use Venmo and/or Cash App," Green said.

Not one to be shy, Green does not hesitate to ask for assistance from the community. And when she meets with a homeless person seeking assistance, Green must determine whether that person is committed to being 'all-in' to doing what is needed to turn his or her life around.

Two years ago, the coalition began a temporary transitional shelter program that allows criteria-specific homeless to immediately get off the street and go to a hotel for a few nights before they are relocated.

The program is available only if the person is awaiting a bed in a recovery facility or to return home out of area.

"It's a way to get them immediately out of the woods or off the streets until they're relocated. But it costs \$200-\$300 just to get one person into a transitional shelter," Green said.

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## NAMC receives go ahead for behavioral health expansion project

Submitted

North Alabama Shoals Hospital leaders received approval from the State Health Planning and Development Agency's Certificate of Need Review Board this past Wednesday to move forward with their behavioral health expansion project. The initiative will include the creation of a 16-bed adolescent psychiatry unit and the addition of eight (8) adult psychiatric beds, enhancing services for patients in the Shoals and surrounding communities.

The new program will provide specialized psychiatric care for adolescents and will increase access to adult psychiatric services in the region.

"This expansion will have a meaningful impact on the patients and communities we serve in northwest Alabama, furthering our mission to make our community healthier," said Braxton Holloway, Chief Operating Officer of North Alabama Shoals Hospital.

In June, North Alabama Shoals Hospital officially submitted a Certificate of Need (CON) application to proceed with a planned renovation, which is expected to be completed and operational by late 2025. The project will involve construction improvements in three areas, including the relocation of the hospital's two existing psychiatric units, while ensuring continuous patient care operations throughout the process.

The new psychiatric units are designed to meet the growing demand for mental health services in the region. These units will provide beds for local patients as well as transfer requests from hospitals across Alabama and neighboring states. With the expansion, the hospital will be able to better serve a broader range of patients through a comprehensive behavioral health service line that includes geriatric, adult, and soon, adolescent psychiatric units.

"This new program is an important addition to our healthcare offerings," said Mike Howard, market president and chief executive officer at North Alabama Medical Center and North Alabama Shoals Hospital. "It will complement our existing geriatric and acute psychiatric programs, providing essential mental health services to a broader population in the region."

Currently, the nearest facility offering adolescent psychiatric beds is located in Decatur, Alabama, but that program is often at capacity and unable to meet the increasing demand for services. The addition of the adolescent psychiatric unit at North Alabama Shoals Hospital will provide much-needed resources and support for patients and their families, helping to address the gap in mental health care for adolescents in the region.

The new unit will enhance the hospital's ability to deliver high-quality, compassionate care to individuals facing behavioral health challenges.

North Alabama Shoals Hospital remains committed to expanding its services to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

For more information about North Alabama Shoals Hospital's mental health services, visit [www.ShoalsHospital.com](http://www.ShoalsHospital.com).

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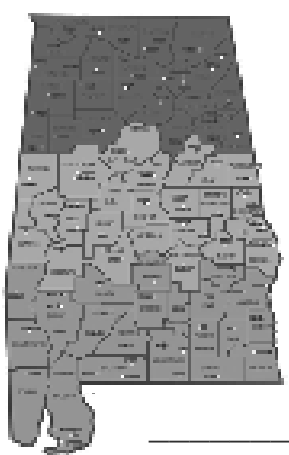
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## Belgreen girls improve to 5-2 with win over Russellville

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Belgreen High School varsity girls' basketball team improved to 5-2 on the year after knocking off the Russellville Lady Golden Tigers (2-3) 55-44 last Tuesday night. It wasn't the cleanest game ever played with both teams committing a lot of turnovers, but the Lady Bulldogs were able to get the job done at home for their second win against a Franklin County opponent.

Though happy with the win, Belgreen head coach Chad Green admits it wasn't the cleanest of performances from his team. It's an issue he believes will fix itself as the campaign goes on.

"I think we're still kind of gelling together. It's going to take a little time to get it all together, you know?" Green told the Franklin Free Press following the game. "We graduated nobody last year, so the majority of the team came back and has been with us for a while, but it's just one of those things. It's early in the season. Do I think we're in mid-season form? No, not at all. It just takes some time."

The Lady Bulldogs jumped out to an early 21-11 lead at the end of the first period of play, but the visitors went on an 18-13 run in the second. Led by a nine-point period by

See, 'BELGREEN,' Page 14

## 7A Austin hands Golden Tiger varsity girls, boys home losses

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Russellville High School varsity girls' and boys' basketball teams were both defeated at home at the hands of Austin High School on Monday night. The Class 7A Bears ran away with a wide margin of victory in each contest, dropping the Lady Golden Tigers to 2-4 and the Golden Tigers to 2-1 this season.

The RHS girls' basketball team started the evening at the Russellville Middle School gymnasium with a 64-34 defeat. The visiting Lady Bears controlled the game from start to finish, outscoring the Lady Golden Tigers in every period.

"One thing we can't replicate in practice is the speed of Austin's team," Russellville head coach Jermaine Groce said after the game.

"We struggle a lot with halfcourt pressure—when somebody's super aggressive in the half-court and pushes us out of our offense, and that happened a lot tonight."

See, 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' Page 13



COURTESY PHOTO

Russellville's Angeleah Smith at the free throw line against Austin.

## Vina lands two on first-team All-County Football and Renfrow named Coach of the Year

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Franklin Free Press has announced its 2024 All-Franklin County Football Team. The players selected for each team were chosen by the FFP sports editor based on nominations by each head coach. (Due to Belgreen's varsity football status with the AHSAA, BHS did not nominate for the All-County Team; the FFP made the late decision to include a few BHS players as honorable mentions based on on-field performance.)

Class 5A Region 7 runner-up Russellville led the way with nine selections on the First Team offense and defense. Junior running back Cameron Phinizee, who rushed for 2,331 yards, averaged over 10 yards per carry, and scored 28 touchdowns, led the way for the Golden Tigers on offense. Wide receiver Gunner Sappington, who ended his senior season with 601 yards receiving and four touchdowns was joined by another senior wide receiver, Ty Willis, who had 158 yards and two touchdowns. RHS had two offensive lineman garner First Team nods: seniors Neyland Baker and Eddi Velasquez, neither of which allowed a sack, graded 90 percent or higher all season, and paved the way for 3,149 rushing yards.

On defense, sophomore linebacker Keifer Hallmark and senior defensive back Zaye Hubbard were Russellville's two leading tacklers with 133 and 126 tackles, respectively. Both were ball-hawks, as well, with nine interceptions, two blocked kicks and three caused fumbles between them. Senior linebacker Richard Scott, who had 100 tackles and a caused fumble, joined them along with defensive back Jah Williams, who finished with 63 tackles and three INTs.

The Golden Tigers, who closed their campaign with a 7-4 overall record, also swept the two First Team special teams positions going to senior kicker and punter Manny Martinez and punt and kick returner Jah Williams. Martinez, who hit 48 of 49 extra point attempts, knocked through four field goals with a long of 40 yards. Punting the ball, Martinez had a long of 50 yards and

See, 'VINA,' Page 12

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# 'VINA,' From Page 11

pinned opposing offenses inside the 20-yard line five times. Williams had 12 kickoff returns for an average of 17 yards per return and had one kickoff return for a touchdown.

Phil Campbell had eight First Team selections. The Bobcats, offensively, were led by sophomore quarterback Hayston Scott, who did it with both his arm and his legs. Scott threw for 605 yards and seven touchdowns while rushing for over 1,000 yards and scoring 12 rushing touchdowns. Scott was preceded in the 1,000-yard rushing club by fellow First Team selection, senior running back Hayden Wingo, who eclipsed 1,300 yards for the campaign, averaged nearly 12 yards per carry, and tallied 15 rushing touchdowns. Senior linemen Logan Wright and Johan Vasquez, who was named the team MVP, paved the way for Scott and Wingo's thousand-yard rushing seasons and join them on the First Team. Rounding out the Bobcats' offensive First Team picks is junior tight end Hagen Raper, who had four touchdowns on 172 yards receiving and did his part in the run game, too, with his blocking ability.

On the defensive side for PCHS, the Bobcats had three First Team nods. Senior defensive lineman Jon Isaac Wilson, despite drawing double teams all year as the Bobcats' nose guard, still recorded 25 tackles, while the flexible junior Logan Cooper recorded 60 total tackles and a team-high 13 tackles-for-loss and two sacks. Senior linebacker Mason Weeks, PCHS' final First Team selection, was the team leader in tackles with 92 and, as a four-year starter and two-time defensive MVP for the Bobcats, provided valuable experience on that side of the ball.

Vina finishes off the First Team with four selections—two on offense and two on defense. Red Devil wide receiver Branson Vick had the distinction of being the only freshman player selected to the First Team. Vick was Vina's go-to target through the air, amassing 306 yards receiving to go with four touchdowns. Junior Zach Sparks joins Vick on the offensive side as the Red Devils' top offensive lineman and the heavy up front Vina relied on to open up holes in its run-heavy attack.

Another distinction goes to Vina's two defensive First Team selections, seniors Cai Lawler and Christian McCarley: they're the only two players to receive recognition on both sides of the ball. Lawler received his First Team

nod as a linebacker, who made 102 tackles, including 11 tackles-for-loss. McCarley comes in as a First Team defensive back, who recorded 52 tackles, 40 of which were solo, and he nabbed five interceptions. Lawler, there for every defensive snap for Vina this year, and McCarley played both sides of the ball and rarely left the field.

The FFP Franklin County Coach of the Year is Vina's Cody Renfrow. The second-year head coach led the Red Devils to quite a turnaround, from one win in his first season to a winning 6-4 record in 2024. Though the Red Devils, playing in a tough region, came up just short of the postseason, their six victories gave Vina its first winning campaign since 1989, snapping the longest drought in Alabama high school football history, according to AHSFHS.org.

## FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

- QB: Hayston Scott, Soph., Phil Campbell
- RB: Cameron Phinizee, Jr., Russellville
- RB: Hayden Wingo, Sr., Phil Campbell
- OL: Neyland Baker, Sr., Russellville
- OL: Zach Sparks, Jr., Vina
- OL: Johan Vasquez, Sr., Phil Campbell
- OL: Eddi Velasquez, Sr., Russellville
- OL: Logan Wright, Sr., Phil Campbell
- WR: Gunner Sappington, Sr., Russellville
- WR: Branson Vick, Fr., Vina
- WR: Ty Willis, Sr., Russellville
- TE: Hagen Raper, Jr., Phil Campbell

## FIRST TEAM DEFENSE

- DL: Logan Cooper, Jr., Phil Campbell
- DL: Jon Isaac Wilson, Sr., Phil Campbell
- LB: Keifer Hallmark, Soph., Russellville
- LB: Cai Lawler, Sr., Vina
- LB: Richard Scott, Sr., Russellville
- LB: Mason Weeks, Sr., Phil Campbell
- DB: Zaye Hubbard, Sr., Russellville
- DB: Christian McCarley, Sr., Vina
- DB: Jah Williams, Sr., Russellville

## FIRST TEAM SPECIAL TEAMS

- K/P: Manny Martinez, Sr., Russellville
- KR/PR: Jah Williams, Sr., Russellville

## SECOND TEAM OFFENSE

- QB: Whit Goodwin, Fr., Russellville
- RB: Cai Lawler, Sr., Vina
- RB: Jaxson Vinson, Jr., Red Bay
- OL: Luis Dircio, Jr., Tharptown
- OL: Reed Hamilton, Sr., Red Bay
- OL: Angel Morales, Soph., Tharptown
- OL: Bryan Ruiz, Sr., Russellville
- OL: Jayden Smith, Red Bay
- WR: Chandler Benford, Soph., Phil Campbell
- WR: Cody McCluskey, Fr., Tharptown
- WR: Javon Poss, Sr., Russellville



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# 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' From Page 11

"We knew they were gonna be super aggressive and that they were gonna get out in transition, so offensively we were trying to see if we could initiate our offense more effectively. We struggled, it didn't work well, we didn't hit a lot of shots," Groce added. "Defensively we were also trying to figure out how we can take away transition points and easy baskets for them—we didn't accomplish that either. That gives us two things to work on continuously."

Although the defeat was heavy-handed, Groce is optimistic tough, non-area games like the one against Austin Monday night will serve as a learning opportunity and help prepare his young squad for the contests that count for much more later on in the season.

"It's still early. It's six games that we've played so far. The message that we've talked to them about is that in order to be a great team offensively and defensively all five people have to be on the same page. We got people that are figuring it out; it's just player one, two and three may figure it out faster than player four and five, which still doesn't give us the continuity that we need," Groce said. "Players are learning. Every game they're getting a little better and a little bit more confident."

Ultimately, what I tell players a lot is that, you know, in the regular season the state gives you 30 exhibitions to get ready for the seven games that matter. We're trying to use every regular season game to prepare for the postseason," he added. "Hopefully it don't take us all 30 games—hopefully we get it figured out faster than that—but they are learning and they are growing."

Laila Hill led the Lady Golden Tigers with 12 points against the Lady Bears while Alexia Groce scored 11 points in the defeat.

Russellville's varsity boys played the nightcap against Austin on Monday night. While the game began differently than the girls' contest played right before it—the Golden Tigers held a 14-12 advantage after the first period—the end result was pretty similar: The Bears purchased a foothold late in the first period, seized the lead in the second, and then continued to press their advantage in the second half.

Austin, making the most of Russellville turnovers and winning the rebound battle in the second period of play, took a nine-point advantage into halftime. The Bears then went on a 10-0 run to start the second half before eventually jumping out to a lead as high as 31 points in the fourth period.

"I thought for a half we competed real well," Russellville head coach Patrick Odom said. "They came out and hit us in the mouth pretty good in the third quarter, and we didn't respond very well."

"(Austin) did a really good job of trying to keep EJ (King) and Jah (Williams) out of the paint, and I thought at times we probably tried to do too much," he added. "We gotta be able to stretch the defense out. We just gotta be able to play with a little bit more flow, and they did a really good job, because of their physicality, of taking us out of that. We've gotta grow up, make some adjustments, and we'll be fine."

"We're still a good team. They're just the best team we've seen, and we didn't play real well. We've gotta work through the adversity. We haven't dealt with any and we didn't handle it as well as we needed to, but it's early December basketball."

Odom and the Golden Tigers are no strangers to playoff basketball. Odom, now in his 10th year as Russellville's head coach, said playing big opponents like Austin early in the regular season should pay dividends come the postseason.

"We needed to play a really good team. These are the teams that are on our schedule because we want to be able to be prepared for this type of stuff when we see it late in February," Odom said. "We need to play these games, I love playing these games, and tonight will make us better."

Senior EJ King, who is averaging 28.3 points-per-game this season, led the Golden Tigers with 21 points in the loss. Junior Cameron Phinizee was Russellville's second-leading scorer with nine points.



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A graphic celebrating Layla Hester as the Athlete of the Week. It features a red background with a black lightning bolt graphic. In the top right corner is the 'DEVILS' logo, which includes a red devil head. Below the logo is a photograph of Layla Hester in a red basketball jersey, looking focused. An arrow points from the logo to her. The text 'Layla Hester' is written in white cursive below the photo. At the bottom, the words 'ATHLETE OF THE WEEK' are written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below that, it says 'Layla Hester - VINA girls' basketball' and '@FCgoodnews'.

# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

Angeleah Smith—she would finish the game as the Lady Golden Tigers' top scorer with 16 points—Russellville cut the hosts advantage to five points at the halftime break.

Size-wise, Russellville and Belgreen were fairly evenly matched, but RHS was able to out-rebound the Lady Bulldogs at times, giving the Lady Golden Tigers second-chance opportunities that allowed them to cut into Belgreen's lead.

"I thought they killed us on the boards," Green said. "I thought our rebounding was absolutely horrible tonight. That's something we gotta get better at if we're gonna go on to Hanceville and Birmingham at the end of the year in the playoffs.

"We got ball-handlers, we got shooters, we got girls that can slash the lane and stuff like that. My posts were much better tonight; Lilliana (Willingham), Carson (Hovater), and Jacqueline (Alban) came off the bench and did a good job for us. But we've gotta rebound better," he added.

In the second half, though, Belgreen came out firing and put Russellville under intense pressure up and down the court. After a Russellville charge, a couple of steals that led to fast-break points, and some defensive rebounds, Belgreen took advantage and outscored RHS 15-6 in the third period. At one point, the Lady Bulldogs held a 17 point advantage.

A little bit of impatience on Belgreen's part, according to Green, allowed the Lady Golden Tigers to cut back into the double-digit BHS lead late in the third, but Russellville never got within 10 points the remainder of the contest.

"You want to be patient, you know? If we've got something easy we definitely want to take it. I'm not telling them not to shoot or not to score or anything," Green said. "But we want to be patient because what was happening...we would break the press where we'd take a quick, jacked up shot and miss. Well, that's as good as a turnover. Maybe we'll get better at that as the year goes on, too."

BHS senior Dacota Green led all scorers with 23 points. The head coach Green said he was pleased with her performance, as well as some other Bulldogs that contributed to the victory.

"My little point guard (Bryn Scott) always does her job defensively, handling the ball—she's working," he said. "Of course, Dacota, she's our leading scorer and our veteran player and stuff like that. I thought Mackinley Hogan did a good job starting for us tonight. And once again, I thought our posts did a good job for us coming off the bench, scoring and giving us stuff like that. We just need a little bit more rebounding."

Belgreen travelled to Clements to face Elkmont the following day, November 27th, and grabbed another win, beating the Lady Red Devils 74-51. The result improved the BHS girls to 6-2. Lilliana Willingham led the Lady Bulldogs with 14 points in the victory. Lily Green added 13 points and Dacota Green finished with 11 points.

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### Space Heater

Rebate of

**\$300** / up to **\$600** total  
per heater



### Clothes Dryers

High efficiency, less wrinkling and economical drying



**\$100** Rebate

### Ranges

Instant and precise heat control when preparing meals for your family and friends



### Primary Home Heating Units

Superior heating to bring warmth and comfort to your home

**\$800** Rebate



### Water Heaters

Reliable hot water for your home

**\$500** Rebate





**SUN, DEC 8TH**

**12:00-7:00**

# **CHRISTMAS**

**ON**

# **SLOSS LAKE**

*"NAVIDAD EN EL LAGO SLOSS"*

**40 CRAFT VENDORS**

**FREE INFLATABLES**

**TRAIN RIDES**

**PHOTO BOOTH**

**AN AFTERNOON FILLED**

**WITH LOCAL TALENT,**

**LOCAL BANDS,**

**and SCHOOL CHOIRS**

**FOOD TRUCKS**

**SMASHED**

**DIXIE CONSESSIONS**

**ASHLEE'S SWEET TREATS**

**OLIVER CREAMERY**

**CIRCLE BAR C SNACK WAGON**

**TACO TRUCK**

**AND MORE**

**SANTA ARRIVES AT 4:00 P.M.**

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AT 4:30**

**LEADING UP TO LIVE BETHELHEM NATIVITY!**

**BRING A LAWN CHAIR!**

**Thank You to Our Sponsors of Christmas at Sloss Lake:**

**Pilgrim's • Riley Bridge Engineering • Gault Signs**