


**Modern Woodmen**  
FRATERNAL FINANCIAL



**JJ McCormick**  
 220 W. Tennessee  
 Suite 112  
 Florence, AL 35630  
 256-668-7803  
 jeffrey.w.mccormick@mwarep.org

Life insurance | Retirement planning  
 Financial services | Member programs

## REB tabs Decatur Utilities' Moore as new general manager

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

The Russellville Electric Board will soon be led by Derrick Moore, who was the board's selection to fill the vacant general manager position. Moore, a manager for Decatur Utilities and second in its management hierarchy, will begin his new position December 16, 2024, REB Chairman Chad Wells told the FFP last week. Moore was the board's selection from approximately 10 interviews that were conducted last month in the board's second application process to fill the GM position. That

process was done 'blind,' meaning board members only saw each applicant's educational background professional experience, but did not see any personal identifying information. After 28 applications were received, board attorney Jeff Bowling's office contacted the applicants to make sure each was willing to move to Russellville if offered the job, a condition of the GM's employment contract. Of the approximately 21 candidates who confirmed their willingness to either move to Russellville or remain in Russellville, board members chose 10 to interview. In Moore, the REB found a GM who

See 'MOORE,' Page 4



**24 HR TOWING**

"We don't back down to anyone, but we will back up!"

11833 Hwy 43 South  
 Russellville, AL 35653  
 256.332.7279

Have an opinion?  
 Story idea?



Let us know!  
**We're All Ears!**  
 256.332.0255

**Morgan Chiropractic**

## RPD Chief's attorney asks federal judge to dismiss civil rights lawsuit brought by Littleville man

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Attorneys for Russellville Police Department Chief Chris Hargett have filed a motion asking a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit brought against Hargett by a Littleville man. Through his attorney, Griffin Sikes Jr., of Montgomery, Henry Eudone Donnie Vinson filed a two-count civil complaint in the United States District Court for the Northern District

of Alabama naming Hargett as the lone defendant. Vinson alleges Hargett unlawfully arrested and detained him on May 11, 2020, after he was taken into custody in the driveway of his Colbert County residence. The second count alleges Hargett used excessive force against Vinson, resulting in physical injury. Hargett's attorney, Gregory Burgess of Huntsville, filed an answer denying all claims by Vinson.

See 'LAWSUIT,' Page 8

Taking care of your family's dental needs




Brett M. Bowen, DDS

**Bowen Family Dentistry**

243 Underwood Road • Russellville 256.332.4000

Chiropractic for the Entire Family



**Dr. Tom Morgan**  
 811 Village Wood Drive  
 Russellville  
**332-4949**



**LAWN AND TOWING SERVICE**

- Mowing, Hedge Trimming
- Pressure Washing
- 24-Hr Towing & Roadside Assistance

**256.324.0385**

Hablamos Espanol

World-class dentistry.  
 Hometown care.



**SINGING RIVER DENTISTRY**

531 St. CLAIR ST. | RUSSELLVILLE | 256-332-6888

Clayton russellville



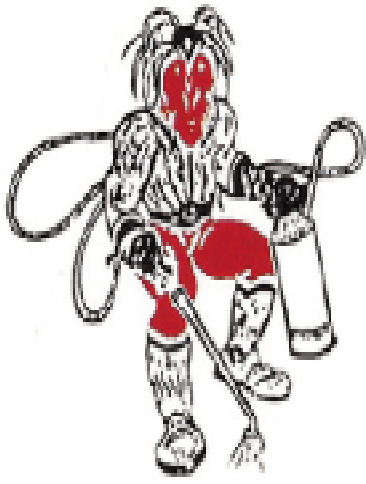
**NOW HIRING HOME BUILDING TEAM MEMBERS**

STARTING PAY: \$21.50/HR + WEEKLY BONUS!

HTTP://CAREERS.CLAYTONHOMES.COM



# PEST CONTROL



## PREDATOR PEST CONTROL

"The Insect Predator"

**Eddie Deaton**  
**(256) 627-1996**

50 Years Combined Experience

**Toll Free 1-888-832-5405**

(662) 862-5631

(662) 840-4055

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at [www.franklinfreepress.net](http://www.franklinfreepress.net)!



**John Almirol, M.D.**  
**Internal Medicine**

**"Over 22 Years Caring  
for Franklin County."**

Mon-Thur: 8:30-5:00

Friday: 8:30-12:00

**Se habla Español**

Medicare, Medicaid, Viva, BCBS, Humana,  
and United Healthcare insurances accepted.

Specializing in preventing, diagnosing  
and treating a wide variety of diseases  
and health issues affecting adults.

**Accepting new patients**  
**256.331.1900**

**15225 Highway 43, Suite G**  
**Next to Russellville Hospital**

# FRANKLIN MEMORY GARDENS



We offer ground burial, mausoleum  
and cremation spaces. All may be  
purchased at need or pre-need to include  
the burial vault and bronze memorial.

*Providing a peaceful, beautiful and serene  
cemetery for the people of Franklin County.*

**Carolyn Atkins Porter** *Since 1960*  
2710 Waterloo Road • 256.332.2115

*"In Memory of our loved ones..."  
brought to you by Atkins Marble and Granite Works  
and Franklin Memory Gardens*

**Charles Wyatt King (Bobwhite), 58 of  
Belgreen, Alabama died on December 7,  
2024. A memorial will be held on  
Saturday, December 14th from 2 to 4 pm  
at The Way Fellowship Church.**

**Willis O. Bishop, age 87, of Tuscumbia,  
Alabama, passed away Thursday,  
December 5, 2024. Pinkard Funeral  
Home assisted the family.**

*Jeff Elledge's*  
**CREDIT CARS**  
**WE FINANCE NO CREDIT**  
**SLOW CREDIT BAD CREDIT**  
**Down Payments As Low As**  
**\$800\* to \$2,200\***  
\*According to inventory and any prior history with this dealership.  
**2506 Woodward Ave • Muscle Shoals**  
**256.383.7979 • 256.710.3711**





Russellville Hospital  
welcomes back  
Sandy Evans, CRNP  
to our Rural Health Clinic.

- **Accepting New Patients**
- **Same Day Appointments**
- **Family Practice, Primary care Medical Check-Ups, Health Screenings**



**256.331.2700**  
**15225 Hwy 43 • Suite 1**



### Franklin Free Press

113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653  
256-332-0255

The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc.  
Our publication is available at newsstands and online at no charge.

- Publisher**  
John Pilati  
E-mail: franklinfreepress@yahoo.com
- Sports Editor**  
Kadin Pounders
- Layout Design**  
Michael Rice
- Sales Representatives**  
John Pilati
- Content Contributors**  
Willodean Davis
- Graphic Design**  
Jason Hill

#### Correction Policy

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.

#### Copyright Information

Published by Pilati Investments, Inc. Copyright 2024  
All materials and content are copyrighted by the Publisher  
This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, by any method, without the express written permission of the Publisher.

# Department of Human Resources warns EBT recipients to guard against fraud, theft of benefits

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Fraudulent use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are on the rise, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources is cautioning recipients of the program to guard against EBT card theft.

If a lawful recipient of SNAP benefits incurs the theft of benefits from his or her EBT card, DHR is accepting and processing replacement requests through each county office. Clients whose benefits were stolen prior to December 20, 2024, may be reimbursed even if it's their second time to have their benefits stolen, subject to the client reporting the theft within 30 days of discovering it.

If you believe your EBT benefits have been stolen and/or your card has been compromised, DHR officials recommend taking the following three steps:

- change your EBT card PIN number immediately to prevent further theft.
- call or visit your local county DHR office to report your benefits having been stolen.
- complete and submit a reimbursement request affidavit with supporting documentation.

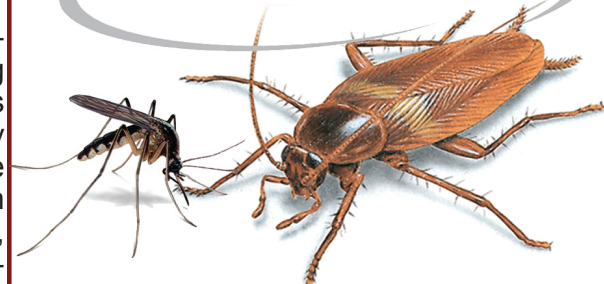
All reports of skimming, cloning or similar fraud require confirmation from the client verifying that all information contained in the reimbursement request is true and correct. Clients may be contacted about their request and those who purposefully give false information may be prosecuted.

Safeguards to reduce your risk of EBT benefits include changing your PIN often, avoiding simple PINs with repetitive or sequential numbers, keeping your PIN and card number secret, guarding against phishing (DHS will NEVER call or text asking for your PIN or card number) and checking your EBT account regularly for unauthorized charges.

Skimming occurs when devices illegally installed on ATMs or point-of-sale terminals capture data or record PINs. Card cloning occurs when data captured by skimming are used to create fake EBT cards. Other types of fraud eligible for replacement benefits include scamming through fraudulent phone calls or text messages that attempt to make the participant believe they are coming from DHR.

“We are asking the public to stay vigilant when shopping at retailers that accept EBT. If you see anything suspicious immediately report it to the retailer,” said Alabama DHR Commissioner Nancy Buckner. “This is a horrible situation for our clients who are already going through tough times. Our team is working hard to process reimbursement claims timely and get our clients some relief, but we need everyone’s help to stop these criminals.”

## Pest Solutions



**Pest & Mosquito Control**  
**256-332-4008**



**REWARD YOURSELF...**

**GIFT CARDS Available**

**OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE**

**Angel Harris**  
Licensed Massage Therapist LMT #1495  
Reiki Practitioner II

**256.332.4220**  
Creative Image Salon  
7129 Hwy 43 • Spruce Pine

**Northwest Shoals COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**YOU CAN SPECIALIZE**

nwscc.edu

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



**2009 FORD RANGER**  
**EXTENDED Cab**  
**4.0 V6**  
**Mileage – 132,000**  
**(has transmission issue)**  
**SOLD AS IS**

Phil Campbell Water & Sewer Board reserves the right to refuse any bid. Bids will be accepted at the Water and Sewer Board Office at 215 McClung St. Phil Campbell, AL.

Bids will be taken thru 4:00 p.m. January 6<sup>th</sup>.  
Truck is located at Water Dept.

# 'MOORE,' From Page 1

brings the professional background and management experience board members sought.

"He is just what we were looking for and hoped we would find during the first round of applications," Wells said. "He's in a position as second in command (at Decatur Utilities) and he just couldn't move up because he was hired at the same time the current general manager was. He was the top pick of everyone on the board."

Wells said board members ranked their preferences after interviews and submitted those rankings to Bowling, who calculated them to determine the highest-ranked candidate, which was Moore.

"He had a great interview, knows power systems and even took time to ride around prior to his interview and tell us his observations about our power system in Russellville. He was well-prepared and he's one of those guys who just gets it," Wells said.

Board members wanted to conduct a hiring process that was honest, objective and done without any personal preferences, something it accomplished with the 'blind' application process.

This is a stark contrast to 12 years ago, when former GM Charles Canida, serving as REB Chairman, opened a business meeting in December 2012, resigned as board chairman and then was hired as GM all at the same meeting, an apparent violation of Alabama's 'Revolving Door' Act which prohibits someone in a position of authority in an agency to leave that position and be hired in another position for at least two years.

One of Moore's challenges as GM will be to rebuild what could mildly be described as eroded public relations between the board and the community it serves. Canida's tenure included raising electric rates during the COVID-19 pandemic even after REB received subsidies from TVA designed to help utilities during the pandemic, as many of those local power companies approved relaxed cutoff policies in light of COVID. Canida used ratepayer funds to purchase an \$85,000 luxury GMC Yukon Denali, without prior board approval, seven months after a new SUV was purchased for his use. And Canida was responsible for REB opening an account at Alabama Central Credit Union with a \$25,000 initial deposit, used only to make cash withdrawals and purchase gift cards. When the FFP made a request for records for all REB bank accounts, Canida omitted the ACCU account, claiming months later he forgot to include it in the original Open Records Request.

Wells said board members discussed the public relations aspect of the job with Moore, and the importance of representing REB both in the community it serves as well as across the state.

"That's something we talked with him about and he understands it," Wells said. "he's in touch and active with the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association, and he does speaking engagements. To us, he was clearly the best candidate."

Wells said he's satisfied with the hiring process and that it was done with integrity.

"I think a lot of people thought the first time we posted the job that we had someone already picked out, and when we didn't make a hire, they realized this was a legitimate process and that's why we had so many more applications the second time around.

"It was a long process but it turned out well," Wells said.

Please send your guest columns and other creative submissions to franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.



# Making Bear Creek Education Center and Overton Farm accessible for all the focus of Bear Creek Collaborative

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

There are literally thousands of northwest Alabama residents who fondly remember their childhood experiences at the Bear Creek Education Center and Overton Farm in Hodges.

Most were part of a school or church group that participated in events at the 400-acre facility located on the shores of Big Bear Creek. Those events often included overnight stays in the two bunkhouses and meals in the Education Center's spacious dining hall. The Tennessee Valley Authority purchased Overton Farm in 1969 and opened the Bear Creek Education Center as a way to educate local children about life in a rural, farming community.

You can count Bethany Green, Bear Creek Collaborative's Director of Funding & Project Development, among those who still remember visiting Bear Creek as a child.

"I'm a Bear Creek kid," Green said. "I went to Bear Creek with Muscle Shoals City Schools in the fourth and sixth grade. It's always had a special place for me."

Along with Jen Berry, Director of Educational Programming, Green is one of two full-time employees of the Bear Creek Collaborative, a not-for-profit organization founded in 2022, which now operates and maintains the Bear Creek Education Center for educational events including field trips, day and overnight trips, inclusive events, group events and customized outings.

This is done in partnership with Past Times, LLC, a business which hosts weddings, corporate events and catering at the dining hall. John L. (Bo) Williams is Past Times' owner.

Yes, Bear Creek experiences have returned, and the collaborative has hosted more than 1,000 kids so far this year. Tailoring activities appropriate for each group is the responsibility of Berry, who works with the officials booking the event to customize the experience to meet their needs.

That can include team-building activities, educational programs, historical field trips to Bear Creek's pioneer village or outdoor recreational activities. There's no limit to the creative ways Bear Creek Collaborative can plan an event, and that's going to become easier as fund-raising grows to allow continued renovations and improvement of the property.

The past three years have included a lot of cleaning of the property, as well as clearing brush, tree limbs, etc., to make trails accessible once again.

From its outdoor classroom pavilion to the five remaining structures at the farm, the Bear Creek Collaborative is moving toward the goal of returning to what it once was, with some enhancements.

In addition to Green and Berry, the Bear Creek Collaborative Board of Directors and several part-time employees are the ones working to maximize the potential of this natural learning environment including making it completely accessible for all guests, regardless of disability, while creating a setting 'where individuals value one another's differences and engage in experiences where they are understanding and accepting of others,' according to the collaborative's website, [www.bearcreekcollab.org](http://www.bearcreekcollab.org).

Board members include former Bear Creek Education Center Director Patrick Shremshock, who worked at the center for 19 years.

"We're fortunate to have him on board and he's been a huge help," Green said of Shremshock. "He's helping map out trails, he's a good voice of reason and he talks about events they used to do here and what did and didn't work."

Bear Creek Collaborative's Board of Directors also includes Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee, a Dean at the University of Tennessee-Martin, Amanda Martin, who brings her business experience to the board, Nicholas Simmons, a K-12 educator and Jessica Davenport, who created the Kruzn for a Kure Foundation.

A recent visit to Bear Creek by McBride

Elementary School's fifth-grade classes included a day filled with archery, a sensory hike to identify what does and doesn't belong in the outdoors, water testing (with assistance of TVA), learning about Native Americans' use of corn with a sampling of corn cakes and a history lesson from the early 1800s, according to the Bear Creek Collaborative's Facebook page.

That visit was significant as it was the first field trip to Bear Creek for any Muscle Shoals City School in more than 10 years. Next summer, Bear Creek will host the Healing Place's grief camp, for children who have experienced the death of a family member.

Bear Creek's two bunkhouses allow overnight lodging for up to 88 guests. The dining hall has undergone significant renovations by Past Times. And the main building's downstairs has been updated to serve as a powder room for weddings. There's also an office on the downstairs level, Green said.

There remains much renovation and updating to be done, though. And that's where Green's Director of Funding title come into play. Bear Creek received a grant that will allow for construction and installation of a completely accessible dock and kayak launch. This will be only the second of its kind in Alabama when it's completed this spring.

A special Community Paddle Day is set for Saturday, April 12, 2025, when the grand opening of the dock and kayak launch will take place. There will be local elected officials, donors and other contributors invited to this event, which will be from 10-2 that day.

Green said plans are underway to bring back the ropes course, a very popular activity in past years at Bear Creek/Overton Farm. The course will be professionally designed but first, the old ropes must be taken down and staff must be trained to run the course. Meanwhile, work continues on trail rebuilding, plans for 2025 events, promoting the reopening of the property and, of course, fund raising.

"We have a built-in audience we never realized we were going to have in people who experienced coming here when they were kids," Green said. "We've had so many people share their old photos and their experiences at Bear Creek. Most of our donors have had a Bear Creek experience. If I can get people to the property, I can sell it. But we are very blessed that people have fond memories of coming here and are willing to continue supporting it," she added.

For more information on the Bear Creek Collaborative, like and follow its Facebook page and/or visit [www.bearcreekcollab.org](http://www.bearcreekcollab.org).



COURTESY PHOTO

**A fully-accessible boat dock and kayak launch will open next spring at Bear Creek.**

 **EyeCare Professionals**

Russellville • Moulton • Red Bay



 **Comprehensive Eye Exams for Adults & Children**

 **Contacts & Glasses**

 **Eye Injuries & Emergencies**

 **Designer & Safety Frames, Sunglasses**

Mon.-Fri.  
8a.m.-5p.m.

[eyecareprofessionalspc.com](http://eyecareprofessionalspc.com)

15255 Hwy 43 • Russellville • 256.332.5440



**freedom FIBER**   
connecting the way to a better future

**Coming Soon to  
Russellville!**

**We are offering the fastest  
internet speeds in Alabama  
and superior HD phone  
services at affordable prices.**

**Ready to sign up?**

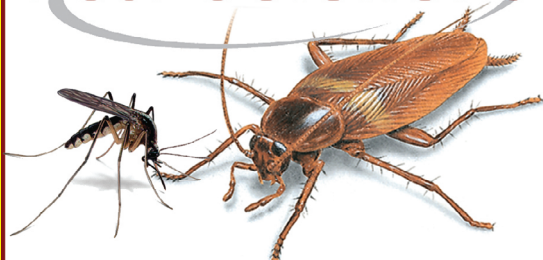
**www.freedomfiber.com  
205-921-6712**

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

**"The standard for fixed-income  
living in Russellville"**



**Pest Solutions**





**Pest & Mosquito  
Control  
256-332-4008**


# What's Happening


256.332.0255


EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS


 **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.

 **G**ateway Church announces the following events for the month of December. Church is located at 15988 Highway 43, Russellville. December 15th: Family Day at 10:30 a.m. Christmas Dinner immediately following service with Purpose singing during lunch. Everyone is invited. December 22nd: 10:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Play. December 24th: Christmas Eve/Candle Light Service from 5-5:45 p.m. This will be the church's first Christmas Even service. And they would love to have you join them for all events. For more information, call 256-627-7935.

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

**George Evans, MD**

Offering general medical care  
services for the entire family



**SHOALS  
PRIMARY CARE**



**256.383.4473 Ext. 2021  
340 Cox Blvd • Sheffield, AL**



**Pick up your FREE copy of the Franklin Free Press at CJ's!!!**

**OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 4a - 7p**



**GROCERY  
FISHING  
SUPPLIES  
DELI  
256-332-1324**

- 🐟 Full Service Deli w/ Breakfast & Lunch Plates
- 🐟 Ethanol-Free Gas
- 🐟 Hunting/Fishing Licenses
- 🐟 Fishing Supplies/ Live Bait

**14545 AL 187 @  
Intersection of AL 24**

**Online Auction!**

**BEGINS CLOSING AT 2:00PM MONDAY, DECEMBER 16TH**

**- 3650 Ricks Lane, Leighton, Alabama -  
3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bathroom Home on 10 Acres+/-  
Offered in 2 Tracts & As A Whole**



**BID ONLINE AT [WWW.SHANEALBRIGHT.COM](http://WWW.SHANEALBRIGHT.COM)**



**Call Ben Phillips for more information 256-710-9683**



**Shane Albright Auctions**

Shane Albright Owner/ Broker/ Auctioneer AL#1569 TN#5431  
6508 US-72, Killen, Alabama 35645  
Office Number: 256-757-8898

# **Pilgrim's Is Hiring ! Be Part of Feeding America!**

**Production wages from \$17.50/hr up to \$20.25/hr, with incentive. (Additional \$2/hr for Third Shift Differential)**

Apply in person at our 2045 Hwy 44, Russellville,  
or Apply online at [pilgrimsusa.com](http://pilgrimsusa.com)!

Benefits include: Medical, Dental & Vision Insurance,  
Advancement opportunities, 401K Retirement,  
Paid Holidays and Vacations.



**Pilgrim's**



# 'LAWSUIT,' From Page 1

On June 21, 2024, Burgess filed a Motion for Summary Judgment, arguing that, as a matter of law, Hargett is entitled to summary judgment and the case is due to be dismissed. The motion alleges there are 'no genuine issues as to any material facts' on Vinson's false arrest claim and his excessive force claim.

Vinson's attorney has filed a response to the motion and a legal brief which denies there are no genuine issues of material facts and asking the Court to set the case for a jury trial.

The case was assigned to United States District Judge Madeline Hughes Haikala, who will ultimately decide whether Hargett's Motion for Summary Judgment should be granted or denied.

Vinson was arrested by Hargett on three misdemeanor charges, Resisting Arrest, Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer and a violation of Alabama's Move Over Law. Vinson was found not guilty of Resisting Arrest in Russellville Municipal Court, but was convicted of the other two offenses. Vinson then appealed the cases to Franklin County Circuit Court and asked for a jury trial.

On March 8, 2023, a jury found Vinson not guilty of both charges.

Vinson, who was 65 at the time of his arrest in 2020, was absolved of any criminal liability from the May 11, 2020, incident after that jury trial.

One of Hargett's defenses in his answer to the federal lawsuit was that Vinson was not unlawfully detained because Hargett lawfully arrested him and charged him with three offenses. Hargett's attorney maintains that defense now even after a jury found Vinson not guilty.

According to Vinson's complaint, he was driving north on U.S. Highway 43 on May 11, 2020, with his wife, daughter and son-in-law in the car with him. Vinson's complaint maintains he was driving home, which would have entailed him making a right turn onto Lakeview Lane, where he lives about .5 miles down the road at the intersection of Lakeview Lane and Sheffield Circle.

Vinson alleges he was nearing Lakeview Lane when he drove 'over a rise in Highway 43' and noticed a Russellville police vehicle on a traffic stop of another vehicle. Vinson's complaint states both vehicles were 'stopped or parked barely off the right-hand side of the roadway.'

That police vehicle was being driven by Hargett, who was working overtime traffic detail that afternoon.

Vinson said he slowed his truck in preparation of moving into the left lane, but a white SUV was traveling in that lane and prevented him from safely moving over, as is required by Alabama's Motor Vehicle Code.

Vinson maintains Hargett and the driver of the vehicle he had stopped both were in their vehicles when he passed and that he did so 'without incident' since he could not change lanes.

Vinson turned onto Lakeview Lane, and as he neared his driveway, his daughter told him a police vehicle was approaching with its lights and siren on. Vinson pulled into his driveway and the police vehicle, driven by Hargett, pulled in behind him, the complaint alleges.

He further alleges Hargett approached him angrily and was 'visibly shaking with rage' as he approached Vinson, accusing Vinson of 'almost running over him.'

He then states Hargett 'forcefully grabbed Vinson's right arm and twisted it behind his back,' something Vinson protested due to having previously had rotator cuff surgery on his right arm. He maintains Hargett threw him on the ground, pinned him down and forcefully placed handcuffs on him.

In his answer, Hargett alleges Vinson 'failed to slow down while passing him and his patrol vehicle...and continued to drive in the right-hand lane at the same rate of speed toward Lakeview Lane before turning.'

Hargett also maintains Vinson failed to pull over even though Hargett's lights and siren were activated. And when he instructed Vinson to put his hands on his truck, Vinson failed to comply so he grabbed Vinson's right arm.

Hargett's defense is based on his position that no excessive force was used and that he acted reasonably and in good faith while arresting Vinson.

Hargett's attorney also asserts that Vinson's civil rights violation allegation fails because Vinson 'was in violation of Alabama law.'

With the jury's verdict acquitting Vinson of all charges, though, that defense could seemingly no longer be available.

If Hargett's Motion for Summary Judgment is granted, the case would end, subject to any appeals. If it's denied, the Court will set a trial date, likely to be in 2025.



## Dr. Kelly's Urgent Care

Walk-In visits available.

We are available to screen and test for COVID-19.

Mon.-Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-3, Sun. 1-5  
13150 Hwy. 43, Suite 10, Russellville  
256-331-2092.

Serving your family for more than 30 years.  
Family Practice, Pediatrics, Newborn Care.

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



# Sandhill cranes on display at upcoming 'Festival of the Cranes' at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

More than 14,000 visitors 'flocked' to Decatur's Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge last month, and you're invited to their temporary home during the 2025 Festival of The Cranes, January 10-12, 2025.



COURTESY PHOTO

The annual event includes educational programs, speakers, workshops and entertainment at Decatur's Princess Theatre and Alabama Center for the Arts. But the stars of the show are the 14,000-plus sandhill and a few whooping cranes that arrive at Wheeler each year and escape the frigid temperatures of the northern states they live in during the spring and summer.

Sandhill cranes are North America's most populous crane. Their preferred habitat includes marshes and bogs, making them ideally suited for the 35,000-acre Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Sandhill cranes engage in a mating dance that involves stretching their wings. The cranes partner up and remain monogamous for life. And they can get feisty when it comes to defending their breeding area, where intruders are greeted rudely.

The annual Festival of the Cranes attracts bird enthusiasts, from experts to beginners, who enjoy the indoor confines of Wheeler's Observation Building.

In addition to the sandhills, visitors often see whooping cranes, ducks, geese and raptors. Bald eagle sightings are rare, but possible. Festival of the Cranes staff and volunteers are available in the Observation Building to answer visitor questions.

Conservationist and crane expert Christopher Joe will host a bird

walk on Friday, January 10th at 3 p.m., at Wheeler.

The Princess Theatre in downtown Decatur will host several free programs during the festival, including Wings to Soar, an educational program about the role birds of prey hold in nature. The event also allows participants to view birds of prey up close. That event is set for Saturday, January 11th at 9 a.m.

Andy Caven, Vice President of the International Crane Foundation, will host an educational program Saturday, January 11th at 9 a.m., at the Alabama Center for the Arts' Visual Arts Building.

Vicky Smith, affectionately nicknamed 'The Bat Lady,' will present 'Batty About Bats' from 9:30-10:30 a.m., Saturday, January 11th at the Alabama Center for the Arts' Performing Arts Building.

Naturalist, storyteller and wildlife artist Brian 'Fox' Ellis will present his program about his adventures in the wilds of America at 10:30 a.m., at the Princess.

At 11:30 a.m., back at the Alabama Center for the Arts' Performing Arts Building, Dr. Matthew Niemiller will present a program on Wheeler's cave life and its unique diversity.

Dr. Jon Armbruster will discuss Auburn's 83 million year old dinosaur egg that was discovered 54 years ago near Selma. That program is set for 1 p.m., at the Alabama Center for the Arts.

At 2 p.m., the Alabama Center for the Arts will host 'Nestwatch,' a program by scientist Robyn Bailey where she will discuss how ordinary people around the world contribute important bird observations to long-term databases.

For more information on the 2025 Festival of the Cranes, visit [www.friendsofwheelerwr.org](http://www.friendsofwheelerwr.org).

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**RUSSELLVILLE HOUSING  
AUTHORITY SECTION 8  
(HCV PROGRAM) IS NOW  
ACCEPTING PREAPPLICATIONS  
FOR A WAITING LIST.**

**COME IN THE OFFICE**

**MON, DEC 2, 2024 THROUGH MON, JAN 6, 2025**

**FROM 7 A.M. UNTIL 4 P.M.**

**TO DO A PRE-APPLICATION.**

**MESSAGES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**



Russellville  
Housing Authority  
Incorporated

256-332-1561  
73 Flippen St  
Russellville



## Village at Oliver Place NOW LEASING

*Water included starting at:*

**2 BR \$505 • 3 BR: \$575**



205.993.5005 • 1361 Pike Avenue • Phil Campbell  
TDD (Hearing impaired) 800.548.2546







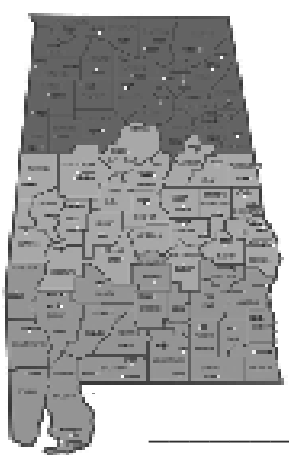
# Classifieds

256.332.0255

**BUSINESS • LOST & FOUND • GARAGE SALES • PETS • APPLIANCES • HELP WANTED • SERVICES • APPLIANCES • CLOTHING • FURNITURE SERVICES**

<p><b>SELLING a RV, Tractor or Golf Cart? ADVERTISE STATEWIDE</b> or by region in over 100 Newspapers, reaching over 1 million readers each week! Run your ad in our Classified Network for just \$210 per week! Make one call to this newspaper (participating Alabama newspaper) or call 1-800-264-7043 to find out how easy it is to advertise statewide!</p> <p><b>BATH &amp; SHOWER UPDATES</b> in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty &amp; professional installs. Senior &amp; Military Discounts available. Call: 1-855-405-8901</p> <p><b>NEW AUTHORS WANTED!</b> Our publishing staff will</p>	<p>help you self-publish your own book. <b>FREE</b> author submission kit! Limited offer! Why wait? Call now: 1-877-567-9754</p> <p><b>LONG DISTANCE MOVING:</b> Call today for a <b>FREE QUOTE</b> from America's Most Trusted Interstate Movers. Let us take the stress out of moving! Speak to a Relocation Specialist, call 844-925-3534</p> <p><b>WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP &amp; RESTORATION:</b> A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals dry out the wet area and do repairs to protect your family and your home's value! If you have water in your home that needs to be dried, Call 24/7: 1-877-727-2344 Have zip code of service</p>	<p>location ready when you call!</p> <p><b>MEDICARE PLANS HAVE CHANGED!!!</b> Make sure your plan will meet your needs in 2025. Our licensed agents can review the changes, address your needs and make sure you aren't overpaying! For a free quote, Call now! 1-877-730-0711</p> <p><b>EDUCATION ATTENTION ACTIVE Duty &amp; Military Veterans!</b> Begin a new career and earn your Degree at CTI! Online Computer &amp; Medical training available for Veterans &amp; Families! To learn more, call 866-475-1014 (M-F 8am-6pm ET).</p> <p><b>HEALTH/BEAUTY ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS!</b> Discover Oxygen</p>	<p>Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrator s. <b>FREE</b> information kit. Call 1-855-405-8647 Attention: <b>VIAGRA and CIALIS USERS!</b> A cheaper alternative to high drugstore prices! 50 Pill Special - Only \$99! 100% guaranteed. <b>CALL NOW: 1-855-405-9791</b></p> <p><b>FOR SALE</b> Car for Sale. 1994 Buick Regal Custom. Blue in color. 99,000 miles. Good condition. Asking \$2,500. Call 256-412-0390.</p> <p><b>AFFORDABLE TV &amp; INTERNET.</b> If you are overpaying for your service, call now for a free quote and see how much you can save! 1-866-816-3535</p> <p><b>DirecTV Satellite TV Service</b> Starting at \$59.99/month!</p>	<p><b>Free Installation!</b> 160+ channels available. Call Now to Get the Most Sports &amp; Entertainment on TV! 844-594-7108</p> <p><b>NEED NEW FLOORING?</b> Call today schedule a <b>FREE</b> in-home estimate on Carpeting &amp; Flooring. Call Today! 1-877-568-2248</p> <p><b>UPDATE YOUR HOME</b> with Beautiful New Blinds &amp; Shades. <b>FREE</b> in-home estimates make it convenient to shop from home. Professional installation. Top quality - Made in the USA. Call for free consultation: 1-855-405-8839. Ask about our specials!</p>	<p><b>LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior &amp; Military Discounts.</b> Call 1-833-683-2005</p> <p>Prepare for power outages today with a <b>Generac Home Standby Generator.</b> Act now to receive a <b>FREE 7-Year warranty</b> with qualifying purchase* Call 1-877-323-5516 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.</p> <p><b>Safe Step. North Americas #1 Walk-In Tub. Comprehensive lifetime</b></p>	<p>warranty. <b>Top-of-the-line installation and service.</b> Now featuring our <b>FREE shower package and \$1600 Off</b> for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call <b>Safe Step 1-844-871-6175</b></p> <p>Call <b>LeafGuard</b> and say goodbye to gutter cleaning for good. No cleaning. No leaking. No water damage. No more ladder accidents. Get <b>LeafGuard</b> today and be protected for life. <b>FREE</b> estimate. Financing available. <b>20% off total purchase (Restrictions may apply.)</b> Call 1-844-</p>	<p>679-2490</p> <p><b>DENTAL INSURANCE</b> from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400 plus procedures. Real dental insurance - NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your <b>FREE</b> Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-877-817-4697 <a href="http://www.dental50plus.com/alabama">www.dental50plus.com/alabama</a> #6258</p> <p>Donate your car, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a <b>FAST, FREE</b> vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call <b>Veteran Car</b></p>	<p>Donations at 1-877-724-3049 today!</p> <p><b>Jacuzzi Bath Remodel</b> can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waving <b>ALL</b> installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer.) Offer ends 6/30/24. Call 1-877-205-0836</p>
---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

## ADVERTISE STATEWIDE!



Make a **HUGE SPLASH STATEWIDE** or target your ad **REGIONALLY** for the most cost effective media buy anywhere!

Statewide ads appear in over 100 **NEWSPAPERS**, reaching 1 **MILLION READERS** each week!

**DISPLAY ADS START AT \$400** (2x2 display ad in 1 region)

**CLASSIFIED ADS START AT \$99** (25 word line ad in 1 region)

CALL THIS NEWSPAPER'S AD DEPARTMENT TO PLACE YOUR AD OR CALL 1-800-264-7043



[www.alabamapress.org](http://www.alabamapress.org)

### NEW BUSINESS LOCATION:

**Foster's Service Center is now located at 15891 Hwy. 43 North, in the former MPE Services building. Come see us for ATV, lawnmower, generator or tiller repair, or when it's time to winterize your ATV or side-by-side.**



## Phil Campbell basketball teams open area play against Mars Hill

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Phil Campbell High School varsity girls' and boys' basketball teams fell at home to Mars Hill Bible School on Friday night. The games marked Class 3A Area 15 openers for both PCHS squads.

The Lady Bobcats tipped off the evening with a 57-24 loss to the Lady Panthers, dropping Phil Campbell to 5-6 overall. Senior Siddalee Rogers led the way with eight points for Phil Campbell in the defeat.

Mars Hill, newbies to Class 3A, mostly dominated the game: The Lady Bobcats were unable to sink their shots, even on some breakaway, gimme lay-ups, while the visitors took away second-chance opportunities by owning the boards throughout the game.

"We're shooting very poorly right now," PCHS girls' basketball coach Craig Thomas said postgame. "We're shooting like in the low 20s. If we don't pick it up, start shooting a better percentage, it's going to be a rough, rough go for us."

Thomas feels his team has the potential to build on its defense and its effort, but the Lady Bobcats will need to be more effective offensively if they hope to reach the postseason.

"Defensively, we play with a lot of people."

See, 'PC,' Page 14

## RHS basketball standout EJ King reaches 1,000 career point milestone

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Russellville High School varsity girls' and boys' basketball teams saw mixed results last week in two road games versus Brooks on December 3rd and Haleyville on December 6th.

The RHS girls' basketball team went 1-1 against the two sides, beating BHS 65-41 and losing to HHS in a close one 49-48; the RHS boys' team finished with the same overall results but in opposing manner: the Golden Tigers fell to the Lions from Killen 62-54 before defeating the Haleyville Lions 80-70, a game during which one Golden Tiger recorded a remarkable individual achievement.

Against Brooks the Lady Golden Tigers jumped out to a 20-6 lead in the opening period of play and never relinquished their advantage. RHS extended its lead in the second period, taking the

See, 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' Page 12



COURTESY PHOTO

Russellville's EJ King at the free throw line against Brooks.

## Belgreen basketball teams earn wins over area rival Tharptown, Shoals Christian on Homecoming

Kadin Pounders  
 Franklin Free Press

The Belgreen High School varsity girls' and boys' basketball teams returned home and took care of business against Franklin County and Class 2A Area 14 rivals Tharptown High School on December 3rd. The Lady Bulldogs, in their area opener, ran away from the Lady Wildcats 56-18 to move to 7-3 on the season, while the BHS boys routed Tharptown 52-17 to improve to 3-4 overall, 1-0 in area play.

The Belgreen and Tharptown girls' teams tipped the evening off. Tharptown, with baskets from Carly Cason and Maddaline Amaro, surprised the hosts and jumped out to a 5-0 lead to start the contest, but Belgreen quickly regrouped as the Lady Wildcats went cold soon after. BHS, led by a 15-point second period by senior Dacota Green, went on a 35-2 run to end the half and took a 35-7 lead into the break.

After halftime the Lady Bulldogs continued to increase their lead, eventually ending the contest with their final 38-point advantage. Tharptown's Aalivia Wilson scored eight points in the second half to lead her team in the defeat. Belgreen's Dacota Green, averaging 15.2 points-per-game this season, led all scorers with 15 points in the win while teammate Isabella Tate chipped in 12 points. All but one of the Lady Bulldogs who saw action scored during the game.

Belgreen head coach Chad Green said one of the emphasis for his team coming into the game against Tharptown was playing better defensively.

"Last Wednesday we played Elkmont over at Clements right before Thanksgiving, and we shot the ball tremendously—we were like 46 percent from the three-point line. But we didn't defend real well," he said. "That was one thing we really wanted to work on was defense in the half-court. You know, we like to get out and press and stuff, but eventually you're gonna run into teams that you gotta defend in the halfcourt, so that's what we're working on and trying to get

See, 'BELGREEN,' Page 13

Have an opinion?  
 Story idea?

Let us know!

**We're All Ears!**

256.332.0255





# 'GOLDEN TIGERS,' From Page 11

game into the halftime break up 32-18. Russellville maintained its double-digit edge over the Lady Lions for the remainder to come out with the 24-point victory. The Lady Golden Tigers' leading scorer this season, Angeleah Smith, co-led the team with 15 points alongside Sadie Odom, whose tally was a season-high for the freshman.

In the boys' game between Russellville and Brooks the Lions topped the visitors behind 21 points by RJ Gourley. The two teams traded blows in the opening half with Brooks leading 9-8 after the first period and Russellville up 23-22 at the intermission. The second half belonged to the hosts, however, who outscored the Golden Tigers 17-14 in the third period and 23-17 in the fourth to hand RHS its second loss of the season. Russellville's EJ King led all scorers with 31 points, but his total wasn't enough to push the Golden Tigers over the top.

A few days later, on the road trip to Haleyville, the Lady Golden Tigers suffered a reversal of fortunes against the Lady Lions. The Lady Golden Tigers led 14-9 after the first eight minutes, but HHS found its rhythm in the second period to take command 29-22 at the break.

The Lady Golden Tigers regrouped and pulled the game back within three points at the end of the third quarter before narrowing the host's advantage even further at the end. Russellville forced Haleyville to eke out its win but the matchup ultimately ended in a one-point defeat for the visitors, the closest game for the Lady Golden Tigers so far this campaign. Laila Hill's season-high 20 points led RHS in its fifth loss of the year.

It was the Russellville boys' team that would come out on top in the nightcap at Haleyville. The Golden Tigers started the contest on fire, doubling up the Lions 29-14 in the first quarter. The advantage RHS gained in the first period of play would prove crucial as HHS recovered from the body blow to outscore the Golden Tigers in the remaining three periods 18-17, 22-19, and 16-15. In the end, the 15-point

advantage RHS gathered in the first period was too much for the Lions to overcome and the Golden Tigers earned their third win of the season.

Senior EJ King led all scorers in the game, dropping 24 points for the Golden Tigers. Notably, King, who has amassed 140 total points this season, hit a career milestone scoring his 1,000th point at RHS during the win.

"It's a special accomplishment. You don't see it a lot," Russellville head coach Patrick Odom said of King's feat. "It obviously takes a lot of scoring, but it also takes years playing at the varsity level and EJ has done that. He's played a lot of games for us. I think it shows more of a picture of the overall player he is.

"We're not even to February of his senior year and he's already gotten there. That just tells you what a great scorer he is," he added.

King joins the likes of former Golden Tigers Devin Buckhalter, Chandler Dyas, and Lucas McNutt, who also reached the 1,000 career points mark during Odom's tenure at Russellville.

"This is my 10th year (at Russellville) and we've had a lot of great players come through here, but only a few players have reached that goal," Odom said. "I think that tells you how special—how big of an accomplishment it is.

"What I think makes it even more special is, you know what a great player EJ is," he added of the all-state guard, "but he's a great kid, too."

The Russellville girls' and boys' basketball teams will face Phil Campbell in their next home game on Friday, December 13th.

Please send your guest columns and other creative submissions to [franklinfreepress@yahoo.com](mailto:franklinfreepress@yahoo.com).




**North Highlands Church of Christ**  
in partnership with Food Bank of North Alabama

**FREE** Every 3rd Saturday of each month  
Sat., Dec 21<sup>st</sup>

**9:00am-11:00am**  
**North Highlands Church of Christ Fellowship Hall**

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat Matthew 25:35"



Angeleah Smith

**ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**

Angeleah Smith - Russellville girls' basketball  
@FCgoodnews



# 'BELGREEN,' From Page 11

better rebounding, too.”

Belgreen’s defensive effort definitely paid off: the 18 points scored by Tharptown was the second fewest BHS has allowed this season. (BHS only allowed 11 points against Red Bay on November 15th.)

Up next the Lady Bulldogs will face off against Shoals Christian on homecoming. No doubt the big win over Tharptown will breed confidence for the Lady Bulldogs heading into their next contest, but Green said BHS can’t afford to become complacent against a team like the Flame.

“Everybody likes to win big, you know, and get everybody in and play a lot of minutes and stuff—and we did. Almost every one of our girls got on the scoresheet tonight, so you know that’s good,” Green said. “But Friday night (December 6th) we go in—we’ve already went to Shoals Christian and we won, but now they’re coming here with an outstanding collegiate player (who) scored 48 points last night, so we can’t have no letdowns.

“(Shoals Christian’s) Sarah Davis, she’s just an outstanding player. We’ve got all attention on her and then rebounding,” he added. “You almost focus on her so much, sometimes your defense gets out of position and then you give up those easy rebounds and let them go back for putbacks, so we can’t do that.”

The Belgreen and Tharptown boys finished out the evening at the BHS gym. The Bulldogs, led by Jonathan Mendoza’s 16 points, jumped on the Wildcats early and never really looked back. BHS led 22-4 after the opening period and increased its advantage to 32-9 at halftime. The second half was more of the same with Belgreen outscoring Tharptown 20-8 in the final 16 minutes.

Cody McClusky, with five points, was Tharptown’s top scorer in the defeat. For Belgreen, right behind Mendoza and his 16 points, Braycen Johnson scored 14 points and Gabriel Estrada added seven.

The big victory was huge for the BHS boys, who were coming off three consecutive defeats heading into Tuesday’s contest. Belgreen’s first-year head coach Will Bonner said the Bulldogs faced tough competition in those losses, but he wasn’t liking what he saw. Therefore, it felt



COURTESY PHOTO

Belgreen's Braycen Johnson leading the offense against Tharptown

pretty good to play well and get back in the win column against Tharptown.

“The last three games we played very bad,” Bonner said. “Tougher competition. We played (Class) 4A Hamilton, Deshler, played a really good Hubbertville team. So, I was just really wondering how our guys would respond, and I think they responded well tonight.”

The 17 points Belgreen allowed Tharptown was the fewest the Bulldogs have surrendered to this point this season. Bonner liked the defensive effort of his team against the Wildcats Tuesday night, but it’s an area, overall, that the first-year head coach would like to see his team improve in as the Bulldogs push deeper into the schedule.

“Defensively we’ve struggled in the last three games. I think we played really well tonight, but like I said, we played some very tough competition, so that’s why we haven’t been doing as well. But that’s where I want to see us improve is mostly on the defensive end,” he said.

“I think we’re heading in the right direction. I just hope we can gel at the correct time. We still got a long way to go to be where we wanna be,” Bonner added.

Belgreen finished off the week with Homecoming games against Shoals Christian on Friday, December 13th.

The Lady Bulldogs defeated the Shoals Christian 66-47 behind 19 points from Lily Green and 15 from Bryn Scott. The BHS boys’ basketball team doubled up on the Flame, 62-31 to improve to .500. The Bulldogs’ Braycen Johnson scored a game-high 28 points in the win.



The Sleep Clinic at Russellville Hospital provides complete sleep health management including sleep studies, diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders.

Our sleep experts are here to help you take control of your sleep health. Most insurance companies do not require a referral to meet with one of our board certified sleep physicians.



*“We are sleep specialists!”*

Our experience and knowledgeable physicians provide expert advice for a multitude of sleep-related disorders, including: Insomnia, sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, snoring, excessive daytime sleepiness, hypertension, periodic limb movement syndrome (PLMS), sleepwalking and pediatric sleep problems.

*The Sleep Clinic*

[www.russellvillehospital.com](http://www.russellvillehospital.com)

15225 Hwy 43, Russellville, AL (256) 332-1611

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



We hustle, we're scrappy, we get after it. Defensively we're okay," Thomas said. "Offensively, we've gotta put more points up. "We've gotta get higher percentage shots, and we're just not converting right now. We're shooting less than 30 percent in the paint right now, and it's just not happening. We've gotta fix that," he added.

The PCHS boys' basketball team had a little more success against Mars Hill Friday night, despite the fact that the Bobcats lost in the end, 61-47.

Phil Campbell initiated the game with a 6-0 run before Mars Hill went on a run of its own to take the lead at the end of the first period. From there, the Panthers maintained their advantage, but the Bobcats, who trailed by double digits at various points in the game, created some turnovers and hit a few three-pointers to pull within three points midway through the fourth quarter. Phil Campbell couldn't complete the coup, but sophomore



COURTESY PHOTO

Phil Campbell's Siddalee Rogers prepares to shoot a free throw against Mars Hill.

Austin Elliott, who finished with a team-high 17 points, and senior Hayden Wingo, scoring 14 points, helped push the hosts within striking distance of an upset.

Phil Campbell head coach Shannon Benford felt his team could have done a better job rebounding in the game, but after suffering two previous blowout defeats against Haleyville and Deshler earlier in the week, the first-year head coach believes his team's testing of the defending Class 2A champions and current area favorites may prove to be a confidence-booster heading into back-to-back area contests.

"I don't think anybody gave us a chance tonight," Benford told the Franklin Free Press after the game. "We fought so I'm proud of that."

"This is big because this was the first area game. The last two games, Deshler and Haleyville, we got smoked, so this game, hopefully, gives us a little confidence going in—we got two area games next week against Colbert Heights and Sheffield," he added. "You play teams like Deshler and Haleyville like we have and then to have this game against Mars Hill, who's the defending 2A state champions with a lot of people back, it's big going into next week, especially."

The PCHS boys' basketball team is 6-5 overall after the Mars Hill game.



# Russellville Gas Board

## Natural Gas Appliance Rebates & Financing

Call for details  
**256.332.2020**

# Financing Available

### Loan Features:

- Can finance 100% of installation costs
- Monthly loan payment added to utility bill
- Quick approval process
- Fixed rate loan terms are available up to 6 years
- No prepayment penalty
- Must use licensed contractor
- Available to residential owner-occupied single-family and duplex homes

### 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





# Russellville Fire Department donates \$2,000 to Russellville Hospital's 'Firemen's Fund' to fund mammograms for low-income residents

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in eight women who live to be age 70 will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.

That's the bad news. The good news, though, is breast cancer's mortality rate has been declining since 1989 due to early detection and advances in treatment.

Mammograms are an essential component of early detection of breast cancer.

That's why for the past 15 years, the Russellville Fire Department has held a t-shirt fundraiser to support Russellville Hospital's Firemen's Fund.

The Firemen's Fund is used to pay for mammo-

grams, at no cost, to those who are uninsured and have no other resources to pay for the screening.

Last Tuesday, several RFD firemen present Russellville Hospital CEO Chris Ware with a \$2,000 check for the Firemen's Fund.

Women who are interested in applying for a no-cost mammogram should visit the Russellville Hospital business office to begin the application process.

Ware said he's appreciative of the support each year from the Russellville Fire Department that's allowed more than 200 women to receive free mammograms.

"Because of the cost, some people miss out and could die because they never have testing or screening for breast cancer. We are very appreciative of the Russellville Fire Department's support," Ware said.

The department's annual t-shirt sale has become a Russellville tradition that generates excitement each year to see the new design. Shirt orders are made starting at the Franklin County Watermelon Festival in August and run through September. The shirts, which are pink to be themed with Breast Cancer Awareness Month each October.

RFD Sgt. Grant Tarascou coordinates the t-shirt fund raiser each year. Deputy Chief Randy Seal said it's important for residents to know funds raised through t-shirt sales stay right here in Russellville.

"We're proud to raise money for such a good cause that benefits people right here in our community," Seal said. "We appreciate the support received each year with the t-shirt sales."



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

Russellville firemen present a \$2,000 donation to Russellville Hospital's 'Firemen's Fund' last week.

## Shoals Primary Care

welcomes

## Dr. Zaman Shah

to the practice  
in Sheffield



Board certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Shah is an exceptional physician and a close family member of Dr. Syed.

He will be continuing Dr. Syed's legacy of excellent and compassionate patient care with Shoals Primary Care.

Monday-Thursday 8am - 5pm

Walk-ins are Welcome

MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED

MEDICARE PATIENTS WELCOME



342 Cox Boulevard  
Sheffield  
256-383-4473

shoalsprimarycarellc.com

361231-1

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



# 58 of 58 Franklin County establishments earn satisfactory health ratings

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Each of the 58 Franklin County establishments that received health ratings during the period of November 1, 2024, through December 3, 2024, had scores that fell into the “satisfactory compliance” range.

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

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

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

58 of 58 Franklin County establishments listed in the most recent food and lodging establishment ratings scored 85 or above, within the satisfactory compliance range.

The high score was 100, received by Bel Haven Heights, 107 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, Red Bay Nutrition, 102 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, Red Bay Hospital, 211 Hospital Road, Red Bay, Russellville Elementary School, 133 Chucky Mullins Drive, Russellville, and Russellville High School, 1865 Waterloo Road, Russellville.

The lowest score among the 45 establishments was a 92, although this score was well within the 'satisfactory compliance' range.

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

- 306 BBQ, 13670 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 97.
- BestWestern, 13770 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 94.
- Best Western Breakfast, 13770 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Black & Gold Nutrition, 700 Waterloo Road, Russellville, 99.
- Blue Boys, 4141 Hwy. 24, Red Bay, 99.
- Bojangle's Famous Chicken, 13810 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 96.
- Budget Inn, 14184 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 97.
- Burger King #1574, 15455 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- C.J.'s Grocery, 14545 Hwy. 187, Russellville, 95.
- Casa Fiesta Mexican Grill, 520 4th Ave, Red Bay, 95.
- Discount Grocery & Variety, 201 E. Lawrence St., Russellville, 99.
- Dollar General #20293, 5206 Hwy. 48, Russellville, 98.
- Dollar General #22991, 10450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Dollar General #973, 3621 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 97.
- Dollar General #17373, 18625 Hwy. 24, Russellville, 99.
- Dollar General #2056, 212 Montgomery St., SW, Russellville, 98.
- Dollar General #20938, 9260 Hwy. 243, Phil Campbell, 98.
- EconoLodge, 13600 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 95.
- El Buen Sabor-Latin Cuisine, 104 Montgomery St., Russellville, 95.
- El Quetzal Buena Vista, 118 East Franklin St., Russellville, 98.
- Gas Mart North, 17060 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Ideal Mart, 503 Waterloo Road, Russellville, 98.
- Jack's #136, 521 4th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 93.
- Jay Raja Inc., 109 Madison St., NE, Russellville, 98.
- Kidz Korner, 14131 N. Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- King's Pizza, 14001 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 97.
- Las Tres Fronteras, 519 St. Clair St., SE, Russellville, 98.
- Legacy Chevron, 13518 Hwy. 43 South, Russellville, 98.
- Little Caesars Pizza, 13655 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 96.
- Los Dos Hermanos, 409 Madison St. NE, Russellville, 99.
- Los Primos, 105, 107 Marion St., Russellville, 98.
- M&H Food Mart Inc., 9224 Hwy. 243, Phil Campbell, 92.
- Mama Cortez dba Rancho Viejo, 11797 Hwy. 43 S., Russellville, 98.
- Panaderia Adonai, 311 S. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 98.
- Phil Campbell Deli Mart, 3515 Broad St., Phil Campbell, 98.
- Pilgrim's Place, 1314 N. Jackson Ave., Russellville, 98.
- Pizza Hut, 13450 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Quinn's Grocery, 9980 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Red Bay High School, 800 Eighth Street, Red Bay, 98.
- Red Bay Senior Center, 115 5th Ave. SE, Red Bay, 99.
- Red Bay Tiger Mart, Inc., 211 4th Ave. SW, Red Bay, 97.
- Red Bay Yacht Club, 996 9th St. W, Red Bay, 99.
- Russellville Middle School, 765 Summit St., Russellville, 99.
- Russellville Nutrition, 14130 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Russellville Senior Center, 201 Washington Ave. SW, Russellville, 98.
- Shiv Prayagi Inc., DBA Cedar Creek, 11477 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 93.
- Southside Quick Mart, LLC, 12301 Hwy. 43S, Russellville, 98.
- Subway 24292, 15300 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 99.
- Subway 37464, 13675 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Swamp John's Country Store, 5181 Hwy. 24, Red Bay, 97.
- The Grind Cafe and Coffee Shop, 13760 Hwy. 43, Russellville, 98.
- Tienda Latina Mi Refugio, 412 Madison St. NE, Russellville, 99.

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