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# FRANKLIN FREE PRESS

YOUR HOMETOWN, "GOOD NEWS" NEWSPAPER!

8.30.17

## City of Russellville launches clean-up effort

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

A new initiative from the city of Russellville will focus on cleaning up the city with increased enforcement of ordinances that prohibit nuisances within the city.

The "Take Pride Initiative" is a joint effort among the Russellville mayor and city council, the Russellville Fire Department and the Russellville Police Department. City officials acknowledged that enforcement of nuisance violations, from weed growth to abandoned vehicles, has not been at a sufficient level in

past years. "We're trying to clean our city up," said councilman Arthur Elliott, who organized the

**"We're trying to clean our city up," said councilman Arthur Elliott, who organized the joint effort. "It's a tough fix, but it can be done. We're going to accept the challenge and do it."**

joint effort. "We're getting this task force together to look at issues from dilapidated buildings to properties needing cleaning up. I

feel we've been lax for a while in this area. "It's a tough fix, but it can be done. We're going to accept the challenge and do it."

Elliott and mayor David Grissom, police chief Chris Hargett, captain Mike Prince, fire chief Joe Mansell and fire marshal Justin Green met last Tuesday afternoon to announce the initiative in an effort to make the public aware of the increased efforts to clean up the city.

"We want to come up with a plan to take care of this," Elliott said. "The mayor and council get complaints every day. People in

See 'CITY,' Page 9

## Officials act fast to address THS traffic issue

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

After a request from Franklin County Schools officials and law enforcement, Franklin County engineer David Palmer acted fast to help remedy a potential traffic issue at Tharptown High School.

Tharptown has seen unprecedented growth in enrollment the last two years, which has further contributed to traffic jams on Highway 48 during morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up times.

On August 11, there was a two-vehicle accident during the morning hours when a vehicle traveling east on 48 collided with a vehicle attempting to turn onto County Road 80. The area has hilly terrain that creates a limited sight distance for vehicles, even if they are

traveling at the posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour.

Within days of the request being made by law enforcement, the Franklin County Highway Department installed "Reduced Speed Ahead" signs on both directions on 48. Additionally, the speed limit now drops from 45 mph to 35 mph for a brief period before vehicles enter the school zone with a 25-mph limit.

Although there is a turn lane for westbound traffic on 48 attempting to turn into the school, traffic in the afternoons is often backed up all the way onto 48.

"Vehicles get backed up trying to drop off and pick up kids. It's a tough situation there," Palmer said. "There was an accident recently, and the state troopers spoke with me and asked if we could put up some signs to help with that area right through there with speed and

See 'TRAFFIC,' Page 9




Higher enrollment has led to traffic jams and safety concerns near THS on Hwy. 48.

See Ad on Page 5!



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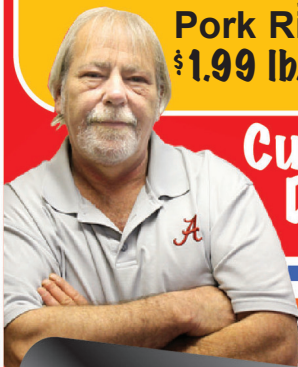
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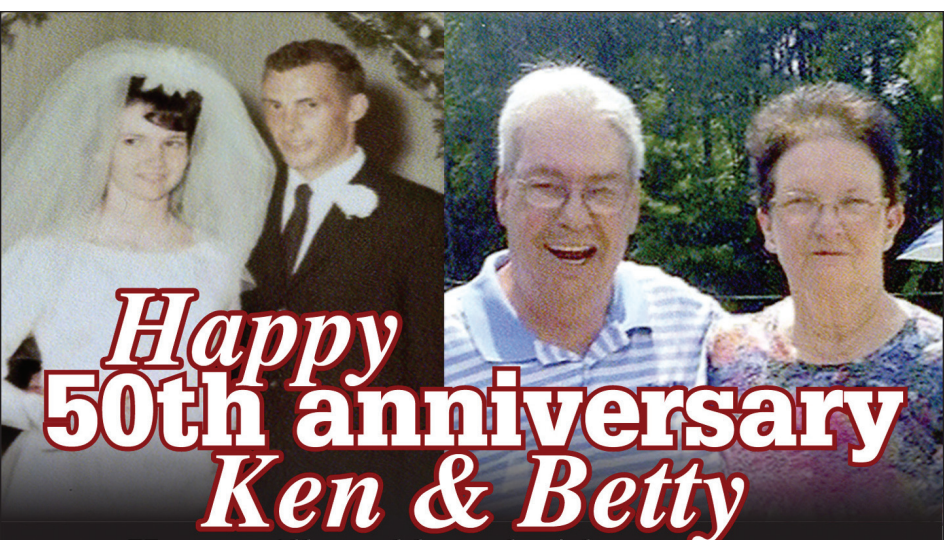
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**James William DuBoise**, Russellville, age 73  
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**Betty Mae Pounders Grissom**, Spruce Pine, age 86  
 Died Saturday, August 26, 2017. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Grissom Cemetery in Spruce Pine.

**Raymond A. Hall**, Russellville, age 82  
 Died Monday, August 21, 2017. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home. Interment in Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

**Ruby Lee Hines**, Russellville, age 79  
 Died Saturday, August 26, 2017. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Oak Grove Cemetery.

**John D. Seay**, Moulton, age 64  
 Died Monday, August 21, 2017. Funeral held at Macedonia Baptist Church in Russellville.

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# Tharptown student wins top honor at Cyber Camp

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

“Breathtaking.”  
That’s how Tharptown High School sophomore Annslee Bottoms described her experience of meeting Gov. Kay Ivey at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center.  
Bottoms spent most of the day last Tuesday at the invitation of the governor after Ivey watched a video recorded by Bottoms that detailed her experience of participating in the first Cyber Camp in July.  
The Cyber Camp is a program developed jointly by Cyber Huntsville, the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. Teachers from across Alabama took part in the camp this summer and were then asked to nominate a student from their school system to participate in a trial camp. Tharptown robotics teacher Marsha Inmon nominated Bottoms, and she was selected to represent Franklin County Schools.

**Bottoms was leaning toward a career in the medical field, but that could change based on what she learned at the camp.**

**“I always knew I wanted to go into a STEM career,” she said. “After camp, it opened so many doors that it’s really made me consider if I should go into this. It was life-changing.”**

“Mrs. Inmon is great,” Bottoms said. “We’ve only had robotics at our school three years. I was hopping on that train as soon as it came to Tharptown. This is the first year I’ve had her as a teacher. I always knew her as the robotics mentor. I love our relationship and appreciate how much she’s helped me. She’s done a lot for me.”  
Bottoms was front and center on stage last Tuesday when Ivey announced a \$10 million economic development grant that will help establish the cyber camp and allow expansion of classrooms and simulation space at the Space and Rocket Center.  
“It was breathtaking to be surrounded by all these leaders and important people,” Bottoms said, “not just to Alabama but across the nation. It showed me what I

can aspire to be and what I want to be.”  
Camp participants learn about cyber ethics, file protections and cryptography. At the end of the week, students broke into teams of four and put what they learned into action in the Cyber Patriot Competition. Bottoms’ team took first place.

“What we learned all week led up to Friday,” Bottoms said. “We took part in a competition called ‘Defend the Flag,’ where we had to strengthen the computer against cyber security threats and attacks. We went into the computer and beefed up the security, added a firewall and antivirus program. We changed the passwords, made sure only the administrators had administrative rights and made sure there was no malware.”

Bottoms came away from the Cyber Camp experience with a newfound appreciation of the importance of cyber security and how it affects everyone.

“That’s what makes it so important. It’s such an integral part of life,” she said. “Most everyone has a computer in their pocket right now with their cell phone. It’s so integrated we don’t realize how important it is to defend, and the camp taught me that and the value of that security.”

Bottoms was accompanied by THS principal Barry Laster, Inmon and her mother, Cinda Gilbert.

“We’re extremely proud of Annslee, what she accomplished and how she represents Tharptown High School,” Laster said. “And Gov. Ivey was so impressed, she wanted to meet her after watching Annslee’s recorded interview.”

Before the camp, Bottoms was leaning toward a career in the medical field, but that could change based on what she learned.

“I always knew I wanted to go into a STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] career,” she said. “After camp, it opened so many doors that it’s really made me consider if I should go into this. It was life-changing.”

Bottoms’ dedication during the camp caught the eye of Cyber Camp officials, who awarded her the Right Stuff Award, the camp’s top individual honor.

When she’s not dining with the governor, Bottoms takes part at THS in a myriad of activities. In addition to being class president, she’s also a member of the volleyball and basketball teams, student government, Spanish Club, Pi Club (math tutoring), the History



COURTESY PHOTO

Tharptown High sophomore Annslee Bottoms is pictured above with Alabama governor Kay Ivey at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville. The two met at a Cyber Camp, where Bottoms won the Right Stuff Award, the camp’s top individual honor.

Honor Society and FBLA, where she finished second in Alabama last year for public speaking.

Ivey echoed Bottoms’ thoughts about the importance of cyber security and technological education for students when she announced the \$10 million grant.

“Today is a great day for Huntsville, north Alabama and indeed the great state of Alabama,” Ivey said. “In order to have a workplace that is prepared for the 21st century and can field jobs for the 21st century, we must train our students in technology.”

# Board approves priority listing of capital projects

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

The Russellville City Board of Education approved its revised annual capital plan at its meeting last week, and the board is swinging for the fences with its priority listing of capital outlay projects.

Russellville City Schools superintendent Heath Grimes said the annual listing of projects the board would like to complete is just that—a list. But the requested projects, which include major renovations and additions for Russellville High School, serve as a road map for the State of Alabama when it comes to determining funding levels.

“It’s just an idea of what we’d like to see here in the district,” Grimes said. “It’s more for the state to see our needs and the dollar amount attached to those. There are a lot of things on the plan we can’t do but would like to do.”

At the top of the system’s priority listing is the addition of a new vocational building for Russellville High School, at an estimated cost of \$3,000,000. The second priority includes additional classrooms, a science lab and administration office and new gym for RHS, at a cost of \$10,000,000.

“We need to update the campus and add a STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] wing,” Grimes said. “We also want to update wiring for technology. All that is not possible because we don’t have the funding to do that. It’s listed as priority one, but it can’t get accomplished without state funding through a bond issue.”

**“It’s just an idea of what we’d like to see here in the district,” said Heath Grimes, Russellville City Schools superintendent. “It’s more for the state to see our needs and the dollar amount attached to those. There are a lot of things on the plan we can’t do but would like to do.”**

He explained the projects were part of a five-year plan that shows the state the system’s priorities and needs within the system.

“I’ve been a superintendent ten years, and there’s been no bond issue from the state in that time,” Grimes said.

The district saw the completion of a new eight-classroom addition this fall. Funding for that project came out of the system’s general fund at a cost of approxi-

mately \$2 million.

“It’s unusual to be able to fund a project like that out of the general fund,” Grimes said. “Those were capital funds we had saved over a number of years to do something with. We had built a reserve to more than \$4 million. [Former superintendent] Rex Mayfield and the board deserve credit for that, as they were very conservative in not spending a lot on capital projects.”

“We decided there were some things we needed to do, so we did.”

The State of Alabama requires school systems to maintain a reserve fund equal to one month’s operating budget. The practice of Russellville City Schools, Grimes said, is to keep a two-month reserve on hand.

“With the middle school addition, we’re very close to that two-month reserve now, so we have to build back to a safe zone,” Grimes said. “It will be a while until we can do anything capital-wise out of the general fund.”

Other proposed projects on the list include a new roof on the pods and cafeteria at West Elementary School (\$300,000); a new roof on the kindergarten building at West (\$500,000); covering the skylights with metal and adding an entrance at Russellville Middle School (\$365,000); and other projects totaling an estimated \$15,670,000.

# Honey Do: Primer paint

One of the most unusual products that I have seen hit the market in the last several years is paint with primer in it. I have always thought this was a marketing scheme started by a certain national chain store, and everyone else followed. Here's why.

Even though primer may be "in the paint", most jobs still need a base coat of primer. Actually, there is only one situation in which I wouldn't use it. I'll

get to that in a minute. So, why primer?

Primer does three things. It makes the paint stick to the surface better; it makes the paint more durable; and it protects the surface being painted better than paint alone. In addition, primer/sealer can block stains, or darker colors, from coming through the finish coat of paint.

If there are stains (for example, water, smoke, discoloration), use primer. If you are making a drastic color change, especially covering a darker color, use primer. If the existing paint leaves "dust" when you wipe over it, clean it and then use primer. If you are painting new, never painted drywall, use primer.

The only time a base coat of primer is not needed is when you are repainting, the old paint is in good shape, and you are using a color similar to the existing paint.

A good quality top coat of paint with a good primer base will yield a truer color, be easier to clean and maintain, and should last for years.

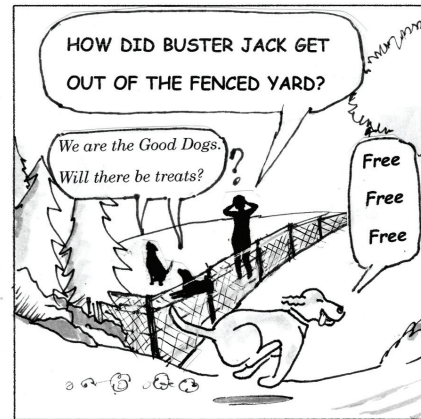
Remember, any surface that is to be painted should be clean and dry. The perspiration is in the preparation. Help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.



Doug Green



## OUR <sup>Lost & Found</sup> HOUSE By: Ree SHANNON



Ree Shannon © 2017

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The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc. Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.

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**DAVE SAYS**  
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 by Dave Ramsey

**You need a better plan**

Dear Dave,  
 My husband opened his own commercial painting business in May. He knows he will have about three months in the year where he's making little to no income. We've got \$1,000 set aside for our Baby Step 1 beginner's emergency fund, but because of that down period he would like to skip paying off all our debt except for the house, which is Baby Step 2, and move to Baby Step 3 and put an emergency fund aside. I can understand his thinking, but I wanted your thoughts on the idea.

Melody

Dear Melody,  
 Baby Step 3 is not a fill-in-the-gap measure for income you already know won't be there. Baby Step 3 is an *emergency* fund of three to six months of expenses, and the scenario he's talking about is *not* an emergency--he knows it's coming.

I think he needs to re-work his business model. This guy needs something to do during those three months, so he doesn't drop off to no income. Also, if you're going to set some money aside for a down time, that would not be Baby Step 3. It would be a line in the

budget where you're setting some money aside, because you know a problem's coming.

If something happens around the same time every year, it becomes predictable and it's not an emergency. So, it's not really a matter of the order of the Baby Steps. You budget for this down time or, even smarter, figure out a plan for his time during these months, based on his skill set, that will earn some money!

Dave

**You still need one**

Dear Dave,  
 I'm debt-free except for my home, and I'm about to start Baby Step 3 of your plan. I will be will back on active duty in the Navy soon, and they provide certain types of relief funds for its members depending on where you're based and other factors. With this in mind, how should I approach Baby Step 3?

Brad

Dear Brad,  
 For Baby Step 3, I tell folks to have three to six months of expenses set aside in an emergency fund. You have incredibly stable employment, so you would probably be okay on the three-month side of that equation. And you wouldn't need quite as much emergency fund money as if you were a straight commission salesman.

However, my guess is you'll still have emergencies that will be your responsibility to cover. *Everyone* needs an emergency fund, Brad. But in your situation, you'll probably be okay with one that's closer to three months of expenses rather than six months.

Thank you for your service to our country!

Dave

\*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. Follow Dave on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

# RCS off to a great start

We are off to a great start to the new school year at Russellville City Schools and are already excited about what this year will hold for our students, teachers and administration!

Before school officially started back on August 8, our faculty and staff engaged in several professional development sessions and meetings aimed at celebrating the tremendous success and growth we had during the last school year, as well as getting motivated and excited for the upcoming year.

We are privileged to have such hard-working and dedicated educators in our school system who are truly excited to teach their students and help them grow, both academically and personally. I've already seen such great motivation from our faculty, and I know that will continue in the months to come.

We are also excited about some of the changes taking place in our system—instructional changes, policy changes and personnel changes. We have several staff members who are taking on new or different roles this school year in an effort to make sure we are making the most out of the talents and abilities our educators have. And we are constantly working to improve our instruction so that our students are always receiving the best education possible at our schools.

At RCS, we believe change and adaptation is a sign of a thriving system dedicated to doing what is best in regards to the education of our students, as opposed to being stagnant, unchanging and unwilling to progress in a way that will be beneficial to everyone in or affected by our system. I am a firm believer that while change is sometimes tough, it is also necessary for us to remain a beacon of excellence for our students and our community.

While we have had so many exciting things taking place at our schools, one of the highlights this month was the solar eclipse on August 21. We were thrilled to welcome parents and community members to our schools to view this awesome event with us. We love being part of this strong and supportive

community, and we love when parents play an active role in their child's education!

Our teachers worked hard to ensure this would be both a fun and educational event for all involved, and it certainly was. We are thankful to Connie Cole, whose generous donation allowed all of our students to have a pair of certified solar eclipse glasses and safely take part in something I'm sure they will always remember.

Outside the classroom, we were excited to host our annual "Meet the Tigers" event last week and officially kick off our fall sports season. Our students who play sports or participate in our fine arts programs are so talented and always show such heart and determination with all that they do.

Whether we win or whether we lose, our students are learning important life lessons just by being part of the teams and organizations we have in our system. These lessons will carry them far beyond their time in our schools, and I fully believe in the importance of these values and lessons they will learn.

I am looking forward to supporting them this fall and hope our community is, too!

There is so much more taking place within our system, and we would love for each of you to know about our events, activities and successes. If you want to keep up with what's going on at RCS on a daily basis, make sure to follow our district Twitter (@RussellvilleK12) and Facebook accounts as well as the Twitter (@Russellville\_HS, @RussellvilleMS, @ResElem, @Westatrcs) and Facebook accounts for each of our individual schools.

As always, it's GREAT to be a Golden Tiger!



Heath Grimes, RCS Sup't.

Heath Grimes  
Superintendent  
Russellville City Schools



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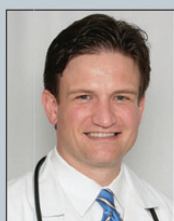
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# What's Happening

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

**T**he Russellville Touchdown Club will begin meeting this Friday, September 1 at noon in the RHS field house. Membership fee is \$175 for the year. The Touchdown Club meets each Friday throughout football season, and members get the opportunity to hear Golden Tiger football coach Mark Heaton speak about the previous week's game and also preview that night's game as well. Lunch is served each week. For more info, call 256-331-2110 or 256-710-4713.

**T**he Sons of Confederate Veterans, Lt. Col. John W. Harris, Jr. Camp #1833 will meet Thursday, September 7 at 6 p.m. at the Russellville Rec Center on Ash Avenue. Camp #1833 meets the first Thursday of each month EXCEPT January and July. For more info, call 256-324-2317. Everyone welcome!

**R**ed Bay Hospital will host a Shoe Sale Fundraiser on Thursday and Friday, September 7-8 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. each day. This "Shoe Show" is presented by Flying Footwear. Brands will include New Balance, Sketchers, Alegria and more. There will be great pricing on all items, including rubber clots from \$17, tennis shoes from \$55 and slip-on styles from \$45. This is a fundraiser for the Red Bay Hospital Volunteers. For more information, call Red Bay Hospital at 256-356-9532.

**A**uditions for The Roxy's *Legend of Toyland* are scheduled for Saturday, September 9 at the Russellville First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. If you are 16 years of age (by November 1) or older, you are urged to participate in this audition. Women are scheduled for 10 a.m. and men for 2 p.m. No routine needs to be prepared, but tennis shoes or dance shoes are required. This much-loved musical, written and directed by Lanny McAlister, will premiere at the historic Roxy Theatre on November 29 and run through December 3, with 12 performances. Tickets will be sold the second Saturday of each month prior to the Kerry Gilbert Band and Guests Show at the Roxy. For updates on events and ticket sales, visit the Facebook page, The Legend of Toyland.

**T**he Kerry Gilbert Band will perform a benefit concert with special guests James LeBlanc and Angela Hacker at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Russellville on Saturday, September 9 at 7 p.m. General admission seating. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6. Group discounts available! Call 256-335-4356.

**T**harptown Fire Department will host an Open House and Community Outreach event on Sunday, September 10 from 1-5 p.m. Everyone is welcome! There will be free food and drinks, popcorn and candy, and inflatables for kids. A drawing for a cash prize will be held (\$1 donation per ticket). All donations will be combined for a 50/50 drawing. The winner will receive half of the money, and the other half will go to the Tharptown Fire Department. Winner must be present at the time of the drawing, or the donation will go to the Tharptown Fire Department in its entirety. Tharptown Fire Department would like to thank everyone for the donations that made this event possible.

**R**evival will be held at Mars Hill Community Church (Hwy. 5 South in Phil Campbell) on September 10-15 with Sunday service at 5 p.m. and Monday-Friday services at 7 p.m. each night. Everyone is welcome!

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**T**he Russellville varsity cheerleaders will sponsor a Mini-Cheerleading Clinic at the West Elementary gym Monday, September 11 through Wednesday, September 13. Clinic will be from 3-5 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday and from 3-4:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Cost for three days is \$30. Performance date will be Friday, September 15 at Golden Tiger Stadium during the Russellville-Lawrence County football game. Deadline to register for the clinic is Friday, September 11! For more info, please call Russellville cheer coach Stephanie Mayfield at 256-810-7067.

**A**merican Legion Post 64 meets the second Thursday of each month at the Chamber of Commerce office on Jackson Avenue. Meal served around 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Next meeting will be Thursday, September 14.

**H**elen Keller Hospital and Healthy Valley Women will present "Sepsis Awareness: How Infection Can Kill" at the Keller Wellcare Center on Tuesday, September 26 at 12 p.m. Dr. Laurence Carmichael will speak on the importance of understanding the signs and symptoms of sepsis. Helen Keller Hospital recently received Gold Star Certification for Sepsis Protocols by the Joint Commission. September is Septic Awareness Month. The program is free, and a light lunch will be served. To reserve your seat, call 256-386-4747.

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## 'TRAFFIC,' from page 1

warn folks that there's a school zone there.

"We wanted people to be more cognizant of what's going on, especially during those times of the day."

The need for a reduced speed limit comes in large part due to the limited sight distance for eastbound traffic on 48, but also from the higher traffic volume.

"The school has exploded in growth," Palmer said. "We didn't really have this problem for a long time, but now with the number of students at Tharptown contin-

uing to grow it's become more of an issue. It's sort of a tough place there, as far as the geometry of the road and having some limited sight distance there.

"Not that the [45 mph] speed limit was excessive for that type of road, but considering school issues during those two peak times of the day, after discussion with state troopers, we felt it was prudent to try and help them out and give the public more warning."

Jamie Kiel, who has three children that attend

Tharptown, said the signs were a welcome addition.

"We literally have people sitting on the road during school pick-up time because traffic is backed up," Kiel said. "Imagine a big truck coming around the curve on 48 with limited sight distance and a limited distance to stop even if the driver is paying attention."

"I thought David was very proactive in getting that done once he and the Franklin County Commission were made aware of the problem."

## 'CITY,' from page 1

Russellville are just tired of it.

"The most important part is teaching people who don't know the codes and ordinances what they contain. Then if they don't comply, we'll have no choice but to fine them."

Mansell regularly receives complaints about compliance issues from residents who do their part to keep the city clean.

"People don't move into our city to lose property value," Mansell said. "They shouldn't have to worry about what their neighbor is doing, because we have people in place to handle this."

Those people include Green, who enforces the fire code and life safety code sections; Bill Fuller, who handles building code violations; and RPD officer Brian Shackelford, who enforces compliance issues for the city. In order to streamline efforts and make it easier for citizens to file complaints, all complaints may be initiated with the Russellville Police Department at 256-332-2230.

Russellville Ordinance 2001-107 defines a nuisance as: "Anything that unlawfully causes hurt, inconvenience or damage; that class of wrongs that arises from the unreasonable, unwarrantable or unlawful use by a person of his own property, either real or personal, or from his own improper, indecent, unsightly, or

unlawful personal conduct, working an obstruction of or injury to the right of another or of the public, and producing material annoyance, inconvenience, discomfort or hurt to another person or to the general public; anything which is injurious to health, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property of another."

Elliott said most complaints deal with overgrown lawns and/or weeds, junked or abandoned vehicles, livestock or excessive litter or debris.

Officials said the ordinances will be enforced as to all citizens, regardless of who owns a specific property.

"We do every district the same. We don't just pick one area," Hargett said. "The compliance officer goes by districts. If he's in District One this week, he'll move to District Two the next week. We want to be as fair as possible."

Penalties for violations under the city ordinance are punishable by a term in the municipal jail of up to 30 days and/or a fine not to exceed \$200 for a first offense, \$300 for a second offense and \$500 for each offense thereafter.

Alleged violators have the right to be notified in writing of the offense and are

to be given 20 working days to correct the violation. If not corrected after that time, the compliance officer will make a complaint to a magistrate for issuance of a warrant of arrest for the offender.

Additional ordinances make it illegal to abandon vehicles on streets or highways within Russellville city limits or to allow such vehicles to remain on private property for more than 72 hours.

As part of the new initiative, Green, Shackelford and Fuller will work together at least two days a week to resolve pending complaints.

"I think with the three of them working together twice a week, that will be an effective solution with good results," Elliott said.

Hargett said he would consult with the city attorney and council to consider possibly strengthening penalties for repeat offenders of these ordinances.

Grissom often works to diffuse com-

plaints before they are officially filed.

"I had a call recently about an overgrown lot the person wanted turned over to the compliance officer," Grissom said. "The caller told me the property owner's name, and I called this gentleman and told him we'd received a call at city hall. I asked him to help solve the problem."

"The lot was cut that day and hasn't been a problem since."

Mansell said he's been encouraged by the mayor and council's resolve to address what has been a long-term problem in Russellville.

"The mayor and council want things done fair, right across the board," Mansell said. "Some things may have been let go for a while, but from my standpoint as a department head as well as Chief Hargett's standpoint, we're going to clean up fair and equal. It doesn't matter if you're the richest person in town or the poorest person in town."



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## Have a Sports Story?

Mike Self, Executive Editor  
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## Week 1 in the SEC

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

Each week throughout the season, we'll give you a preview and pick for the four most intriguing games on the SEC schedule. Let's dive right in.

### N.C. State (-6) vs. So. Carolina (in Charlotte)

South Carolina's offense, with rising star Jake Bentley throwing to All-SEC targets Deebo Samuel and Hayden Hurst, should be vastly improved over last season, when the Gamecocks scored the fewest points in the SEC. It might be hard to tell, though, against N.C. State, which returns eight starters—including stud pass-rusher Bradley Chubb—on a defense capable of causing all sorts of problems up front. South Carolina's O-line, which allowed the most sacks in the SEC last year, will be in the crosshairs.

### The Pick: N.C. State 24 South Carolina 21 Michigan (-4) vs. Florida (in Arlington)

With two defensive-minded teams and an over-under of just 45 points, don't expect fireworks at AT&T Stadium. Michigan lost 17 starters from last season, and Florida is replacing a boatload of NFL talent on defense. Still, both teams should be excellent on the D-line, which could make for a long afternoon for both offenses.

The Gators and transfer quarterback Malik Zaire will miss top receiver Antonio Callaway, one of seven players suspended for the opener.

### The Pick: Michigan 20 Florida 16

### Alabama (-7) vs. Florida State (in Atlanta)

This one seems pretty cut and dried. If Florida State's shaky offensive line, which yielded 36 sacks last season, can block the Tide up front, we should have a ball game. If they can't, then QB Deondre Francois will spend the evening getting acquainted with the brand new turf at Mercedes Benz Stadium, and it'll get ugly.

Given the tough schedule that awaits them, a loss here—particularly a blowout loss—would place the Seminoles' playoff hopes in serious jeopardy. Should Alabama suffer an upset, they're in a better position to run the table the rest of the way and still make the top four. Nick Saban's track record with the Tide in these season-opening showdowns suggests that won't be an issue.

### The Pick: Alabama 31 Florida State 17 LSU (-13.5) vs. BYU (location TBD)

Flooding from Hurricane Harvey forced this game out of Houston, but, as of Monday morning, no alternate site had been chosen. Wherever it's played, expect a defensive struggle. BYU is stingy on that side of the ball, and the next time we see the LSU offense go up and down the field against an above-average defense will be the first.

On the other side of the ball, the Cougars' O-line could have a hard time trying to block the LSU defensive front—but not quite as hard with stud pass-rusher Arden Key sitting out due to injury.

### The Pick: LSU 24 BYU 14

# Wildcat 'D' delivers

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

TUSCUMBIA - Brendan Borden is a linebacker, and most linebackers don't get a chance to make an impact in the kick return game.

Then again, Borden—listed at 5'7 and 160 pounds—is not most linebackers. So when the Colbert Heights senior got his hands on the football last Friday night against Red Bay, he did his best to make it count.

Fielding the second-half kickoff at his own 20-yard line in a scoreless game, Borden barreled up the middle of the field and then made his way down the right sideline, motor-ing all the way to the Red Bay 19 before he was knocked out of bounds. His 61-yard return was exactly the spark a struggling offense had been searching for, and it raised a perfectly valid question.

What's a linebacker doing running

See 'DELIVERS,' page 16



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

**CAT CORNERED**—The Tigers, including Kennedy (80) and Meier (72), held Shaw (3) largely in check, but the Colbert Heights defense picked up the slack, pitching a shutout until late in the fourth quarter and securing the Wildcats' first win over Red Bay since 2010.

## Russellville deals with key injury

### Buckhalter to miss at least six weeks with fracture in foot

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

Already bearing the burden of replacing five All-State performers from last year's team, Russellville must now confront the harsh reality of playing the first several weeks—at least—of this season without its most experienced quarterback, best receiver and starting strong safety.

The fact that all those positions are filled by one player only makes his absence that much more significant.

The player in question is junior Devin Buckhalter, who sustained a broken bone in his right foot last Friday night while attempting to make a tackle in the third quarter of a preseason game at Athens. The timetable for Buckhalter's return isn't exactly clear, but this much is certain—the Golden Tigers, who open the regular season Friday night at Deshler, are going to be missing perhaps their most valuable piece for quite a while.

"We're looking at a potential long haul for him," head coach Mark Heaton said on Monday morning. "It's a fractured foot. He's in a cast right now. He'll go back [to the doctor] in two weeks, and we'll go from there. It could be six to eight weeks. It could be less, or it could be more. We'll just have to let it heal and see how it does."

Buckhalter was in line to share reps at quarterback with freshman Luke Barnwell, who now takes over the starting role and will make his varsity debut under the Friday-night lights in Tusculumbia. Heaton said the team planned to get senior receiver/corner Logan Jones some reps at quarterback this week, with sophomore Jacob Davis also moving up the depth chart.

"Luke will take all the reps with the ones now," Heaton said. "We knew this summer that it was crucial for us to develop him, because with Devin doing as much as he was doing, [Luke] was gonna have to play."

Barnwell played a lot in the preseason game against Athens last week, completing 17-of-25 passes. He did throw two interceptions, but overall Heaton said he was pleased with how the freshman performed.

**"Like I told our guys Sunday," Heaton said, "we don't have one great player—we have a bunch of great players. We need those other guys to continue to be great players and do everything they're asked to do and help us win games."**

"He did a great job on Friday night," Heaton said. "The two interceptions we had, realistically, were execution errors. On one we didn't run the route the right way, and the second interception was a situation where we weren't aligned correctly and that kept us from getting to the right place on our route. Luke threw the ball both places where it was supposed to be, but we weren't in the position we should have been in to catch it."

"I'm not trying to put blame on somebody else and take it off him, though. Like I told him, it's his responsibility to ensure that we don't have turnovers. But I saw a lot of positive things there in terms of leadership and his ability to make a mistake and go right back out there and keep playing."

The Golden Tigers can't afford to waste drives on Friday night against Deshler (1-0), which dominated

See 'INJURY,' page 14



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# Bobcats wary of Colbert Heights ground game

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

Phil Campbell football coach Ryan Swinney was watching game film of Colbert Heights at his home on Sunday afternoon when a faulty internet connection forced him to take a break.

It was just as well. Swinney has seen more than enough of Wildcat quarterback Kevin Shaw in real life—not to mention in his nightmares.

“We haven’t stopped him yet,” Swinney said of the speedy and elusive Shaw, who sliced up the Bobcat defense for 129 yards on just 11 carries last August in a 47-26 Colbert Heights win. “They ran the ball on us and scored forty-something points. We moved the ball pretty good on them, but we had a hard time stopping them. I don’t know if we ever did. That’s something we’re definitely concerned about—they run the ball pretty well.”

“Pretty well” doesn’t even begin to describe what the Wildcats did to Phil Campbell on the ground a year ago, when they piled up a season-high 473 rushing yards at Amos Mitchell Stadium.

Containing that ground attack is priority number one for the Bobcats (1-0) in Friday’s rematch with Colbert Height (1-0), and it starts with slowing down Shaw.

“The quarterback, obviously, stands out,” said Swinney, whose team opened the season last week with a 54-6 rout of Tharptown. “He’s pretty athletic, and he throws the ball well, too. He’s got a strong arm. He didn’t throw it a lot last week, but he can. There was one

time of possession and beat Haleyville 31-12 last week in new head coach Bo Culver’s debut. The Lions failed to score after the first quarter and ran only 12 offensive plays in the second half, finishing the night with 197 total yards.

“That says a lot for what [Deshler] did defensively, getting stops in the second half,” Heaton said. “They also did a great job controlling the ball. We knew right off the bat they were gonna be better offensively with Coach Culver coming in.”

Culver, who previously coached at Haleyville and Phil Campbell with a two-year stint as Florence’s offensive coordinator in between, has for years orchestrated high-scoring attacks built on spread principles and prolific passing games. Deshler dominated Haleyville on the ground, however, rushing for 352 yards. Quarterback Channing Marmann (166 yards on 21 carries) and running back Kam Pritchard (133 yards on 20 attempts) did the bulk of the damage, with Xavier Trotter adding a 22-yard touchdown run. Marmann also threw for 119 yards on 9-for-15 passing.

Russellville has won 13 of the last 17 games and three in a row against Deshler, but Heaton acknowledged this isn’t the same Tiger team that finished 2-8 last season and missed the playoffs for the first time since 1983.

“They’re better, and we knew they’d be better based on what we had seen from them this summer,” said Heaton, who has a chance to join Doug Goodwin as the only head coaches in Golden Tiger history to win their first four meetings with Deshler. “They have a lot of

play where he was rolling away from his strong side and threw it about fifty yards in the air.

“But, obviously, the running is the first thing that stands out at you. He’s gonna beat ninety-five percent of people out in space. That’s why it’s so important to get as many people as you can to the football. If you don’t, playing a kid like that, he can break one and make a big play at any time.”

**“It all goes through the quarterback,” Swinney said, “but if you worry too much about him they have some other guys with pretty good speed who can hurt you. They have a running back who’s pretty big and some slot guys who are pretty quick. They’re not bad, for sure.”**

Red Bay’s defense largely held Shaw in check last week, with the exception of one 29-yard run in the first quarter. He finished with 42 yards on six carries (and just one completion, for 12 yards, in four attempts) in a 14-6 win, but the Wildcats have a few other weapons at their disposal.

Senior fullback Dylan Chandler (6’2, 180) was the workhorse for head coach Taylor Leathers, grinding out 54 yards and two touchdowns on 15 attempts, while senior Chandler Willis and junior Braden McCaig combined to rush for 95 yards on just three carries apiece.

The fleet-footed McCaig ripped off a 91-yard touchdown run in the first quarter, but a block-in-the-back penalty against the Wildcats negated the score and

knocked it down to a 29-yard gain. Willis, meanwhile, set up Chandler’s second touchdown run of the night late in the fourth quarter with a 43-yard burst down the right sideline.

As a team, Colbert Heights rushed for 185 yards on 27 carries, a solid average of nearly seven yards a pop.

“It all goes through the quarterback,” Swinney said, “but if you worry too much about him they have some other guys with pretty good speed who can hurt you. It’s not just the quarterback. They have a running back who’s pretty big and some slot guys who are pretty quick. They’re not bad, for sure.”

Swinney was particularly impressed with how well Colbert Heights played up front defensively against a physical Red Bay rushing attack. The Wildcats made 14 tackles at or behind the line of scrimmage and limited the Tigers to just 3.7 yards per carry.

“They were really good up front,” said Swinney, whose team rushed for 264 yards last Friday at Tharptown. “Red Bay is known for running the ball, and Colbert Heights stood up well against it. I thought our offensive line blocked well last week. Tharptown was bringing their linebackers every play, but we were able to pick them up and still run the ball.

“At the same time, seeing what [Colbert Heights] did at the line of scrimmage against Red Bay, and knowing what Red Bay likes to do, we’re probably gonna have to spread it out some. We’ll spread them out and throw the ball some—how much depends on how things go.”

Last year at Colbert Heights, the Bobcats fell behind

See ‘BOBCATS,’ page 15

## ‘INJURY’ from page 13

confidence, which is what you want when you’re coming off the kind of year they had last year. We’ve gotta make a lot of corrections to have a chance to win that football game.

“It’ll be a great game. It always is, regardless. We’ve got our hands full, no doubt. They’re a good football team, but you wanna play teams like that in your non-region games, teams that challenge you and make you better.”

Heaton has high expectations for a defense that—even without Buckhalter—returns nine players with at least some starting experience. Senior ends Roman Cortez and Jeff Lloyd lead a veteran defensive line, and senior linebackers Connor Stults, Bernard Phinizee and Bruce Ambrosio all played key roles a year ago. Jones and senior free safety Robert Hamilton lead the secondary, with junior Wylie Boyd, sophomore Jamaal Hubbard and freshman Rowe Gallagher stepping in to fill Buckhalter’s spot at strong safety.

“Defensively, I thought we played lights-out the other night,” said Heaton, whose defensive starters allowed 21 points in the 35-7 loss to Athens. “Two of the scores they got came off turnovers. We missed a tackle, and a guy breaks a long run. We go for a pick and barely miss it, and their guy catches it. We just have to clean up our mistakes and find a way to make those plays.

“Special teams, which we didn’t do [live] the other night, will be a factor, too. I told our kids Sunday, I expect that to be an advantage on our end. We’ll work really hard on that.”

As for an offense now looking to replace a three-year starter at quarterback, four starting linemen, its leading rusher and its top two receivers from last season, Heaton is keeping the faith.

“I think we still have a chance to be very explosive offensively,” he said. “The other night, it seemed like we were just one or two things away from making some big plays. On our assignments, it was three feet here or a hat placement there from being very explosive instead of ending drives the way we did. I expect to see a big difference offensively from last week to this week.”

Including this week’s trip to Howard Chapell Stadium, five of the Golden Tigers’ first six games are on the road—and now their most dynamic player will be a spectator for all of them. Heaton wasn’t making any excuses on Monday, though.

“I think our guys will respond fine,” he said. “I told Devin, being a leader when you’re on the field playing is a lot easier than it is when you’re hurt, but what we still need from him is leadership. Sometimes, when you’re in the situation he’s in, you can be a more powerful and positive leader—in the locker room, in the classroom, in the community. We have the same expectations for him that we have when he’s playing.

“Personnel-wise, we’ll move some things around and adjust. Like I told our guys Sunday, we don’t have one great player—we have a bunch of great players. We need those other guys to continue to be great players and do everything they’re asked to do and help us win games.”

## 'BOBCATS', from page 14

early and had no choice but to air it out; they went to a no-huddle offense late in the first half and stuck with it the rest of the night, nearly making a game out of it before the Wildcats finally pulled away.

Phil Campbell quarterback Peyton Thomas wound up throwing for 225 yards and two touchdowns in the loss, and he'll get another shot on Friday at a Colbert Heights pass defense that didn't get tested much by Red Bay until late in the game.

"Peyton throws it as good as anybody around here," Swinney said of Thomas, who threw for 109 yards and a score on 6-for-10 passing against Tharptown and now has 31 touchdown passes since the start of his sophomore season. "And we had some guys catch the ball pretty well last week."

Senior wideout Daniel Smith led the Bobcats last week with two catches for 48 yards and a touchdown. Senior tight end Brody Nix caught a 20-yard pass, and sophomore receiver Ben Williams had one catch for 18 yards. Brandon Thomas (77 yards and a touchdown on seven carries) and Seth Brindley (61 yards and a touchdown on three carries) led the ground attack, combining to rush for 138 yards on just 10 attempts.

Fullback Imer Ordonez added six carries for 25 yards and a score and drew rave reviews from Swinney as a lead

blocker.

Defensively, the Bobcats picked off three passes—one each by Williams, Brindley and sophomore safety Brandon Baker, who returned his for a touchdown. Swinney was also pleased with the way coordinator Jonathan Raper's defense rallied to the football—something that will be paramount against Shaw and the Wildcats on Friday.

"Our guys were pretty physical," Swinney said. "They got after it pretty good and got to the ball. It wasn't just one guy getting to the ball. We had several guys making tackles, and you always like to see that.

"I didn't really know what to expect going into the game. All we had to go on was the spring game, but I was pleasantly surprised. We didn't make a whole lot of mistakes. We didn't have a lot of penalties, and we didn't turn the ball over. The competition is definitely gonna get better this week. Our next four weeks are brutal. But these guys are working hard at it. They want to play, and they're excited."

The Bobcats' 54 points last week were their most in a single game since September of 2003, when they beat Carbon Hill 56-20. Phil Campbell hasn't started a season 2-0 since winning its first eight games of the year on the way to a 9-2 record in 2001.

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## Dylan Chandler

Senior RB/LB, Colbert Heights

Chandler helped the Wildcats start the season in strong fashion last week, rushing for two touchdowns and also coming up with a key interception late in the fourth quarter of a 14-6 victory over Red Bay. Chandler's first TD run came on third-and-goal from a yard out in the third quarter, and he added the clinching three-yard score midway through the fourth. He finished the night with 54 yards on 15 carries.



back kicks anyway?

"I don't know," Borden later said with a smile. "If you hit hard and run hard, I guess that's what they want. Everybody was saying, 'Man, you gotta do something,' because our offense just couldn't get going. So I tried to do what I could on my own."

"That play meant everything, but I couldn't have gone anywhere without my blockers. They did a great job of opening things up for me."

Five plays after Borden's big return, fellow senior Dylan Chandler plowed into the end zone on third-and-goal from inside the one, breaking up the scoreless tie and giving the Wildcats a lead they would never relinquish. They survived a series of mistakes down the stretch to hold on for a 14-6 win, snapping a streak of six straight losses to Red Bay and opening the season 1-0 for the first time since 2011.

"It was an ugly win," second-year head coach Taylor Leathers said, "but I'll take it ten times out of ten. It felt like that game ended three times before it was finally over."

Colbert Heights seemed to have things virtually wrapped up just past the midway point of the fourth quarter after Chandler's second touchdown run of the night (this one from three yards out) made it 14-0 with 5:51 remaining. A spirited Wildcat defense that had played well all night had a chance to slam the door shut on Red Bay's ensuing drive, but a sure interception slipped right through the hands of cornerback Carson Shaw. [The freshman didn't waste much time redeeming himself; more on that later.]

Playing with house money after the near-turnover, Red Bay junior quarterback Kolby Bragwell dropped an absolute dime two plays later on third-and-10, hitting a streaking Luke Rooker in stride down the left sideline for a 54-yard touchdown to give the Tigers new life. The try for two failed, and Red Bay trailed 14-6 with four minutes to go.

"I was proud of the effort," said Tiger head coach Michael Jackson, whose team had won 10 consecutive games in non-region play prior to Friday night. "I'm excited about the way our guys kept fighting. We did a lot of things tonight where we hurt ourselves a little bit, and those are things we'll have to fix. But our guys played hard and gave themselves a chance to win it at the end."

After Bragwell's bomb to Rooker, Colbert Heights recovered an onside kick attempt by Red Bay, but the officials had blown the play dead due to the Tigers being off-sides. Following another off-sides penalty, Red Bay recovered its next onside attempt at its own 40-yard line. Suddenly, the Tigers had all the momentum and the football back with a chance to drive for the tying score.

Just as suddenly, Colbert Heights appeared to put the nail in the coffin (again) courtesy of Chandler (again), who made a terrific diving interception in the right flat on Red Bay's first snap after the onside kick recovery.

**"Best defensive effort I've seen from our guys since I've been here," said Leathers, a former defensive lineman himself at UNA. "Coach [Lonnie] Robinson did a great job with those guys. Our defense was exceptional."**

"That was a huge play," Borden said. "That's the play that sparked everything."

Chandler's pick did indeed set off a jubilant celebration on the home sideline, but it was short-lived. Looking to bleed the clock and put the game on ice, the Wildcats botched a shotgun snap exchange, and sophomore end Ethan Meier pounced on the loose football for Red Bay at the Tiger 29 with 2:37 remaining.

"Our ball security was not good tonight," Leathers said, "and it almost cost us."

Bragwell hit on a couple of quick passes to Skylar Brazil and Rooker, and a seven-yard run by Aaron Lewey left Red Bay facing a third-and-three at the Colbert Heights 38 with a little more than a minute to go. Following a timeout by the Tigers, Bragwell lofted a pass down the right sideline in the direction of 6'2 senior Max Bullen, but this time Shaw made the game-sealing play that had eluded him earlier. The freshman corner leaped high in the air and snagged his first career varsity interception, sparking yet another mass celebration on the Wildcat sideline.

This one would last a while.

"Carson came through for us there at the end," Borden said of his younger teammate. "For a ninth-grader starting on the varsity, he played great tonight."

It was only fitting that Colbert Heights should put the game away on defense; after all, the Wildcats dominated on that side of the ball for most of the night—particularly up front. Red Bay rushed for a respectable 162 yards but needed 44 carries to get there, an average of just 3.7 yards per attempt. Colbert Heights stuffed the Tigers for no gain or negative yardage 14 times; after yielding four rushing plays of 10-plus yards in the first half, the Wildcats gave up just two such plays in the second half—both on scrambles by Bragwell.

"Our defensive line came through for us tonight," said Borden, who was one of eight different Wildcats to record a tackle for loss on Friday. "They did a great job."

Ends Bud Pratt (two tackles for loss) and Tyler Tubbs (one tackle for loss) led the charge up front, along with senior tackle Cain Phifer and linebackers Borden, Chandler, Korey Saint (one tackle for loss) and Bevin Foust (one tackle for loss). Ten times on either third or fourth down, Red Bay ran the football; the Tigers only converted twice.

"Best defensive effort I've seen from our guys since I've been here," said Leathers,

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# 'DELIVERS', from pg. 16

a former defensive lineman himself at UNA. "Coach [Lonnie] Robinson did a great job with those guys. Our defense was exceptional. I thought we controlled the line of scrimmage all night. We did a good job against the run, and our four down linemen got pressure on the quarterback in passing situations.

"We still have some improvements to make on the back end, but our eight guys in the box played really well."

Both defenses dominated in the first half, with the two teams combining for seven punts—and no points. Each team threatened once. On the first play of Colbert Heights' second possession, junior Braden McCaig took a handoff from senior quarterback Kevin Shaw and sprinted 91 yards to the end zone, but a block-in-the-back penalty on the Wildcats negated the score and knocked it down to merely a 29-yard gain.

Three plays later, Shaw scooted for 29 more yards on a keeper down to the Red Bay 22, but then a holding penalty, a bad snap and a delay of game cost the Wildcats a total of 25 yards and pushed them out of scoring range.

The Tigers appeared poised to break the scoreless tie on their final drive of the first half, converting a second-and-21 when Bullen made a juggling catch down the middle of the field on a nice throw from Bragwell for a gain of 25 yards. Facing a fourth-and-three from the Colbert Heights 12 with less than 30 seconds on the clock, Red Bay gave the ball to Lewey on a toss play to the right, but Carson Shaw shot up from his cornerback position and got into the backfield to disrupt the play and force a turnover on downs.

The Wildcats kept the momentum rolling to open the second half, thanks to Borden's big kickoff return.

"Special teams was huge for us tonight," Leathers said. "That kick return put us in great position to score. We needed that spark, because our offense just wasn't clicking. We didn't play well on the offensive side of the ball tonight, and that's on me. We'll get that fixed."

After Chandler's touchdown run made it 7-0 with 8:30 left in the third, the two teams exchanged punts. Finding little room to run, Red Bay opened up the passing game a bit and converted a pair of third-and-10 plays on two completions from Bragwell to Rooker, one for 14 yards and the other for 20. The drive stalled near midfield, however, and the Wildcats came up with another key stop early in the fourth quarter when Carson Shaw and Chandler combined to bring down Skylar Brazil for a two-yard loss on fourth-and-three.

Moments later, senior Chandler Willis busted loose for a 43-yard run down to the Red Bay 5-yard line, setting up Dylan Chandler's second touchdown run of the night that made it 14-0. The Tigers fought to the end but ultimately fell short in their bid to get Jackson his 100th career win as a high school head coach. Red Bay will play another non-region game this Friday at Tharptown, which lost its season-opener 54-6 to Phil Campbell last week.

"We knew it was gonna be a tough game tonight," Jackson said last Friday. "Colbert Heights has eighteen seniors, and we have eight—and seven juniors. We were playing against a lot of older kids. We had nine guys making their first start ever tonight, but the good news is when we play next week, it won't be their first game any more."

The Wildcats, meanwhile, will travel Friday to Phil Campbell in search of their first 2-0 start since 2011.

"It means everything," Borden said of winning the season opener. "We're 1-0 this week, but next week we're 0-0. We have to go back to work and get ready to play Phil Campbell."

The Wildcats finished with just seven first downs and 197 yards of offense last Friday night, 185 of which came on the ground. They ran only 35 plays, barely half of Red Bay's total. Kevin Shaw completed just one pass (a 12-yarder to Devin Holt) in four attempts while



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

**OFF TO THE RACES**—Braden McCaig took this first-quarter carry 91 yards to the house, but a block-in-the-back penalty (not pictured) against the Wildcats negated the score. McCaig was credited with a 29-yard gain, and the game remained scoreless until early in the second half.

rushing six times for 42 yards. Chandler ran for 54 yards and two touchdowns on 15 carries, and McCaig (48 yards) and Willis (47 yards) made the most of their three carries apiece.

Red Bay ran 60 offensive plays, finishing with 297 yards and 14 first downs. Bragwell threw for 135 yards on 8-for-16 passing, hooking up with Rooker four times for 97 yards and a touchdown.

"Luke Rooker made some big plays for us in the sec-

ond half," Jackson said. "We thought we would be able to throw the ball on them, but we didn't know if we could protect well enough to give our quarterback time. We'll have to improve on that. I thought we ran the ball well at times in the first half, but we have to get more consistent in that area, too."

Lewey led the Tigers with 73 yards rushing on 23 carries. Bragwell ran for 64 yards on 11 attempts, and Bullen ran seven times for 18 yards.

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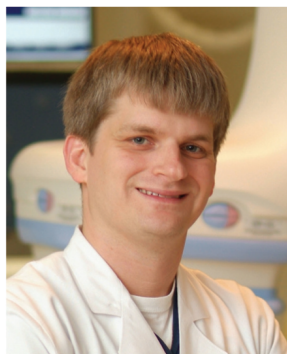


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# Thomas commits to UNA

Mike Self  
Franklin Free Press

For as long as he can remember, Peyton Thomas has envisioned himself as a college baseball player. That vision will soon become a reality.

Thomas, a senior at Phil Campbell High School, has committed to play baseball for the University of North Alabama, choosing the Lions over offers from Wallace-Hanceville and UAH.

"I just felt at home there," said Thomas, who was named Class 2A Hitter of the Year by the Alabama Sports Writers Association as a junior at PCHS last season. "And I get the chance to play Division One baseball and compete at the highest collegiate level. I've always dreamed of getting a scholarship and playing D-One baseball, and in about a year from now it's gonna come true. I'm real excited."

UNA, a long-standing member of the Gulf South Conference at the Division II level, will begin a four-year transitional period into Division I in the fall of 2018. The Lions have accepted an invitation to join the Atlantic Sun Conference for all sports except football, which will compete in the Big South.

The 6'1, 200-pound Thomas, a short-stop and ace pitcher for Phil Campbell, said he will sign with UNA as a hitter.

"It's a good feeling to know that your hard work has paid off," he said. "And there is definitely more hard work to come, because at the next level everybody is good and everybody is competing for a spot to play."

Thomas's big bat and power-patience combo certainly make him a strong candidate to become an impact player for head coach Mike Keehn and the Lions. Over the past three seasons at Phil Campbell, Thomas has smashed 22 home runs and 38 doubles while driving in 105 runs and scoring 120. During that stretch, he's drawn 83 walks while striking out only 28 times.

Thomas put up his best season to date in 2017, batting .433 with a career-high 12 homers (tied for fourth in the state), 33 RBIs and 48 runs scored in 36 games. More than half (24) of his 45 hits went



Thomas, the Class 2A Hitter of the Year in 2017, chose the Lions over Wallace-Hanceville and UAH.

for extra bases, and he posted an outstanding ratio of 29 walks to just nine strikeouts. He also got hit by a pitch nine times, reaching base at a stellar .585 clip.

Thomas went 6-for-12 in four playoff games, helping the Bobcats finish the season with an overall record of 26-10.

Thomas also excelled on the mound for head coach Jonathan Raper last season, finishing 7-1 with a 2.10 ERA and seven complete games in 10 starts. Relying on a mid-80s fastball and a sharp-breaking curve, Thomas struck out 80 batters and walked only 17 in 60.1 innings. Heading into his senior season, he has a career record of 15-3 with three saves, a 1.56 ERA and 158 strikeouts in 126 innings.

After earning All-State honorable mention as a freshman, first-team honors as a sophomore and Hitter of the Year as a junior, Thomas has entertained even bigger goals for his final season at PCHS.

"It would be nice to be Mr. Baseball," he said this past summer. "But, coming from a smaller school, that's probably not gonna happen. They usually give that to the bigger-school guys. I don't know. Jeremiah Jackson [a junior shortstop at St. Luke's] was 2A Player of the Year [in 2017]. To do something like that would be pretty awesome."

"Anything can happen. You never know. But the ultimate goal would be Mr. Baseball. We'll see."

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- \$25 BONUS WITH eSTATEMENT ENROLLMENT<sup>3</sup>
- FREE INTERNET & MOBILE BANKING<sup>4</sup>
- REFUNDS UP TO 5 FEES PER YEAR<sup>5</sup>
- ATM FEE REFUNDS UP TO 20 BUCKS<sup>6</sup>
- EMAIL ALERTS WHEN BALANCE IS LOW
- AND MORE



cbsbank.com | 256.332.1410

1. Wireless carrier data usage rates may apply. Customers must be enrolled in CB&S Bank's Internet Banking to use the Mobile Banking App and enrolled in Bill Pay to use the App's Bill Pay feature. 2. Must deposit \$25 to open account. No requirement to maintain a minimum balance. 3. Limited time offer. One \$25 bonus per account. To receive the bonus, your account must remain open for 30 calendar days, the account must not be overdrawn within the first 30 days, and you must be enrolled in eStatements. The value of the bonus will be reported as interest income for IRS purposes, and the customer is responsible for any taxes. 4. Charges and fees may apply from your cellular service provider. Contact your service provider for information. 5. Maximum of 5 fees refunded per calendar year by request. Only valid on All About U checking. 6. CB&S Bank does not charge a fee for ATM withdrawals and refunds up to \$20 in other banks' ATM usage fees per statement cycle upon customer request. Only valid on All About U checking.

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY



Advertise with us! Call 256.668.2708 or 256.332.0255

[franklinfreepress.net](http://franklinfreepress.net)

## WINDOW TINTING

**Window Tinting**  
**\$30 OFF** Pinnacle Series  
 Gift Certificates Available  
**DESIGNERS Graphics**  
Expires 02/28/17  
 FORMULA ONE PERFORMANCE AUTOMOTIVE FILM  
 256.383.5217  
 1501 Broadway, Sheffield

## MOWING

**SALVADOR'S LAWN SERVICE**  
 MOWING • TRIMMING  
 EDGING • MULCHING  
 HEDGING & SHRUBS  
 CLEANING LEAVING  
**FREE ESTIMATES LICENSED**  
**256-810-2351**

## LANDSCAPING

**K&S TREE SERVICE**  
 253 Laurelwood Dr. Russellville, Alabama  
 Trimming • Removal  
 Topping • Stump Grinding  
**KARL RAGAN 256.332.9064**

## FINANCIAL

**Edward Jones** | MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
 IRAs - Investments  
**Mike Jones**, Financial Advisor - AAMS  
**256-332-7924**  
 128 N. Jackson Ave. Russellville  
[mike.jones@edwardjones.com](mailto:mike.jones@edwardjones.com)

## HOUSING

256-332-1561  
 73 Flippen St  
**UNITS NOW AVAILABLE**  
 Russellville Housing Authority Incorporated  
 "The standard for fixed-income living in Russellville."

## MASSAGE

**REWARD YOURSELF**  
 OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE  
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**Angel Harris**  
 Licensed Massage Therapist LMT #1495  
 Reiki Practitioner II  
 256.332.4220  
 Creative Image Salon  
 7129 Hwy 43 • Spruce Pine

## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Alabama Great Seal  
 Compliments of  
**Joey Rushing**  
 Franklin County District Attorney  
 256.332.8870 • 256.710.4713  
 (daytime) (after hours)

## SEPTIC SERVICE

**SUPERIOR SEPTIC TANKS**  
 RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL  
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**FOR PROMPT SERVICE**  
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 LICENSED BONDED INSURED  
 SERVICING Lauderdale Lawrence Colbert & Franklin  
 Over 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE  
 DISCOVER, AMERICAN EXPRESS, VISA

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Franklin County Chamber of Commerce  
 P.O. Box 44 • Russellville, AL  
 Cassie Medley, Executive Director  
 256.332.1760 • fax 256.332.1740  
[info@franklincountychamber.org](mailto:info@franklincountychamber.org)  
[franklincountychamber.org](http://franklincountychamber.org)

## CHURCH

**Come Worship with Us!**  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
 Sunday: 11:00 - 12:00  
 Adult Sunday School: 10:00 - 11:00  
 Everyone is invited to join us for this special time of worship.  
 201 N. Green Street, Russellville

## PUBLIC SERVICE

[franklinsheriff.org](http://franklinsheriff.org) • (256) 332-8811  
 Compliments of  
**SHANNON OLIVER SHERIFF**

## PUBLIC SERVICE

Franklin Free Press Reaches **MORE READERS** than the other NEWSPAPERS in Franklin County **COMBINED!**  
**FRANKLIN FREE PRESS**

## ADVERTISING

Real Country **WGOL 100.7 FM**  
 92.0 AM  
 All the cool kids are listening!

## HEALTHCARE

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 IN THE BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY  
**256.332.0214**