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9.13.17

RCS 'adopts' school district in Texas

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Russellville City Schools are reaching out to the hurricane-ravaged Lumberton, Texas, schools to provide help for students by 'adopting' the district in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

Lumberton, located northeast of Houston, was among the many Texas cities ravaged by catastrophic flooding last month. Russellville City Schools have undertaken the project of adopting the school district to help students

and faculty get back on their feet.

According to RCS superintendent Heath Grimes, more than 50 percent of the

"From what I understand," Grimes said, "the schools themselves are fine for the most part, but it's the people who need our help."

Lumberton Independent School District students and faculty lost everything they had in the flooding. Lumberton schools were set to open Monday, September 11, and they need

help.

"From what I understand, the schools themselves are fine for the most part, but it's the people who need our help," Grimes said. "Those of us in this area who remember the tornado outbreak in April of 2011 remember seeing many of our friends and neighbors lose everything that day and what a tremendous task it was for them to face in the wake of such a disaster.

"But there were so many people from all over the country who offered their assistance,

See 'SCHOOL,' Page 9

Local church considers Hispanic ministry

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

The demographics of Russellville continue to change.

Ethnic breakdown of last year's kindergarten class at West Elementary School saw 52 percent of the 213 students classified as Hispanic. Nearly 45 percent of Russellville City Schools' enrollment, as reported by parents and/or guardians, are Hispanic.

Meanwhile, the decline in African-American students continues in Russellville City Schools; with just over four percent of this year's first-grade class classified as African-American, those numbers are at an

all-time low.

Growth in the Hispanic community is not merely a trend in Russellville. Instead, it is a reality that smart businessmen and women will embrace and incorporate into their business strategy.

"We've been looking at ways to engage the Hispanic community since I've been here," said FBC pastor Patrick Martin.

The same is true with churches. And one of Russellville's largest churches may soon move in that direction as officials at First Baptist Church of Russellville are consider-

ing creating a Spanish ministry.

"We've been looking at ways to engage the Hispanic community since I've been here," said FBC pastor Patrick Martin. "I befriended a Hispanic pastor in town, and we've prayed for ways we can better serve the Hispanic community."

Martin recently held a town hall forum with FBC Russellville members to gauge the congregation's interest in starting the Hispanic ministry.

"There was definitely some interest," Martin said. "We have some questions and things that need to be answered. We're probably a few months away from doing anything,

See 'CHURCH,' Page 11

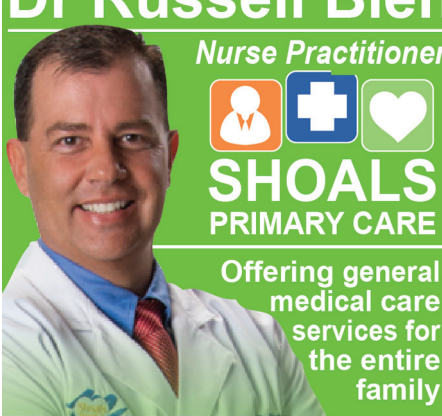
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W.L. Bailey, Phil Campbell, age 79

Died Thursday, September 7, 2017. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Liberty Hill Cemetery.

Syble Kimbrough Colburn, Phil Campbell, age 87

Died Wednesday, September 6, 2017. Funeral held at Oak Grove Free Will Baptist Church. Interment in the adjoining cemetery. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

Roy Lane Grissom, Spruce Pine, age 84

Died Monday, September 4, 2017. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel in Russellville. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Regina Dawn Allen Nix, Russellville, age 57

Died Sunday, September 10, 2017. Visitation will be held Wednesday, September 13, 2017 from noon until 2 p.m. at Pinkard Funeral Home, with funeral service immediately following. Interment in Franklin Memory Gardens.

Luther "Billy" Quinn, Russellville, age 82

Died Monday, September 4, 2017. Funeral held at Bethsaida Baptist Church. Interment in Bethsaida Cemetery. Pinkard Funeral Home assisted the family.

William Berry Robison, Jr., Russellville, age 64

Died Wednesday, September 6, 2017. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home. Interment in Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

Judy Renice Howard Smith, Russellville, age 42

Died Sunday, September 10, 2017. The family was planning to hold a memorial service at a later date.

Melisha Ann Washington Vandiver, Russellville, age 60

Died Sunday, September 3, 2017. Funeral held at Spry Memorial Chapel. Interment in Knights of Pythias Cemetery.

Adrian Willodean Wadley, Kodak, TN (formerly of Phil Campbell), age 85

Died Saturday, September 9, 2017. Funeral held at Pinkard Funeral Home in Russellville. Interment in Phil Campbell Cemetery.

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UNA set to host town hall meeting on opioid abuse

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

With Alabama ranked as the nation's highest prescribing state for opioid pain reliever prescriptions, it's time for state officials to act to end the epidemic.

With that goal in mind, the University of North Alabama, in conjunction with Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow (D-Red Bay), will host a town hall meeting to raise awareness of opioid addiction in Alabama.

The event is set for Wednesday, September 27 from 4-6 p.m. in the Norton Auditorium on UNA's campus.

According to a study by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, Franklin County ranks ninth among Alabama's 67 counties in opioid prescriptions per capita, with 1.6 prescriptions written per person.

Gov. Kay Ivey recently signed Executive Order 708, which established the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council. With an estimated 30,000 Alabamians over the age of 17 addicted to prescription painkillers or heroin, the order states that this epidemic requires "a systemic change and the development of a unified, comprehensive strategy to guide, support and evaluate this change."

"I hope to see a good turnout from Franklin County at this town hall event," said Morrow, who organized the forum in conjunction with UNA. "This is a major health epidemic that affects all Alabamians."

The governor's council will develop and submit a strategic action plan to her by December 31, 2017 that establishes recommendations for policy, regulatory and legislative actions to address the overdose crisis.

According to the CDC, Alabama ranks highest in the nation as having more opioid prescriptions than people, with Alabama doctors writing 5.8 million prescriptions for opioids in 2015. Alabama's 2015 population was 4.859 million.

Scheduled to appear at the September 27 meeting are Alabama attorney general Steve Marshall, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health Lynn Beshear, acting state health officer Scott Harris, state senator Tim Melson (R-Florence), Riverbend Center for Mental Health CEO Bryan Libell, and chair of UNA's Counselor Education Department Quinn Pearson.

The event is free and open to the public. Social work, nursing and counseling continuing education units (CEUS) will be available to certified professionals.

"I hope to see a good turnout from Franklin County at this town hall event," Morrow said. "This is a major health epidemic that affects all Alabamians."

A recent look at the grand jury indictments in Franklin County shows how rampant drug charges are in the county. The June indictment list indicates that, of the 50 individuals indicted on felony charges, 26 were facing drug charges.

According to www.thewellnesscoalition.org, Franklin County saw a 6.1-percent increase in filled opioid prescriptions in 2015, earning the county a rank of fourth-highest in Alabama. Cleburne County, which ranked first, saw an alarming increase of 97.4 percent in opioid prescriptions written in 2015.

Opioid abuse isn't a male-dominated problem. In fact, the BCBS study showed that among those 45 and older, women have a higher rate of opioid abuse than do men.

The BCBS Health Index shows the top five conditions affecting the health of Franklin County residents to be hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, depression/anxiety and substance use disorder.

City council approves pay raise for Civil Service Board

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

After more than a year of dispute in the Alabama Legislature, a bill that allowed the Russellville City Council to raise the salary of the Russellville Civil Service Board finally passed earlier this year.

At its meeting last Tuesday, the council approved an ordinance to set the compensation for its Civil Service Board at \$300/month per member, an increase of \$100/month from the current compensation.

Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow introduced H.B. 511 this year after a similar bill died because of disagreement as to

whether the substance of the legislation changed before it was presented to Morrow.

After a public meeting last year, Morrow determined that most Russellville residents wanted the council to have the authority to set the board's compensation at a level it felt appropriate rather than the bill stating a specific dollar amount.

The pay raise will take effect October 1, 2017.

In other action, the council:
•Approved a resolution allowing for an adjustment in the rate of pay for certain employees to account for differences in

See 'RAISE,' Page 9

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Honey Do List: Fall grilling

I know you folks like to grill on the Fourth of July and Memorial Day, but hey, it's hot out there. These cool evenings we've been having lately are a great time to fire up the grill, throw on some steaks or ribs and enjoy a delicious meal served up with a cold glass of sweet tea and a nice breeze.

with great sear marks. Do you have a favorite barbecue sauce or seasoning that you like to baste on while cooking? Consider using a paint brush instead of a fancy, expensive basting brush. I think you will find that it works better and lasts longer.



Doug Green

Put away the forks. Moving and turning meat with a good set of tongs is easier, and you don't lose the juice as you would stabbing it with a fork.

Okay, that's enough, because I'm getting really hungry.

Remember, help is just around the corner at your local hardware store.

How do you control flare-ups? I'll bet you have a spray bottle filled with water to lightly wet the grill when the flames get out of control. How about replacing the water in that bottle with apple juice? It smells great and adds a rich brown color to the meat. Hey, if it looks better, it must taste better.

Here are a few tips that even you grill gurus may not have heard of.

How do you control flare-ups? I'll bet you have a spray bottle filled with water to lightly wet the grill when the flames get out of control. How about replacing the water in that bottle with apple juice? It smells great and adds a rich brown color to the meat. Hey, if it looks better, it must taste better.

Take a cast iron skillet and set it on top of the meat while it's grilling. The weight of the skillet will cook meat faster, and the design on the bottom of the skillet will enhance the finished dish

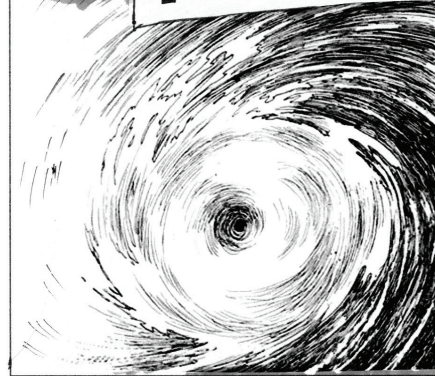


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Thank you

FIRST RESPONDERS



Five fears about assisted living

By Regina Lawler,
Managing Director
Country Cottage

You've had "the talk" with your loved one about assisted living, and you both agree that it's time for them to make the move. Though your loved one agrees with you, they may still have a few reservations about assisted living, and that's perfectly normal.

Moving to an assisted living community is a brand new adventure for your loved one, and it's natural to be a little hesitant about the unknown. Help your loved one learn more about assisted living so they can overcome their fears. Here are a few common fears that people have about assisted living and why your loved one shouldn't worry.

Fear #1: I will lose my independence.

Fact: Mom will have more freedom to enjoy activities that she likes.

While moving to an assisted living community does mean that Mom will have to downsize and change some of her old daily routines to fit her new residence, that doesn't mean she will have to give up her independence. When she moves to an assisted living community, she will be replacing some of the old with the new. This kind of move can give her even more freedom instead of less independence.

In an assisted living community, Mom will get help with daily tasks that might be difficult for her, like cooking, cleaning, and medication management. Having help with these tasks will give her more free time to focus on other interests and activities that she would rather be doing.

Fear #2: It will cost too much.

Fact: In most cases, assisted living actually costs less than paying for home care for Mom.

The median hourly cost of a home care aide is about

\$20 per hour, which comes out to about \$4,900 a month for a home care aide who works eight hours a day, seven days a week. The cost of assisted living is considerably less.

While other monthly services are available for additional fees, the introductory cost of the Cottages' Country Cottage in Russellville is \$2,047 per month. With good financial planning and benefits like Social Security, VA benefits or long term care insurance, Mom will be able to afford living at an assisted living community.

Fear #3: I won't get proper care.

Fact: At a licensed assisted living community, the staff will be trained and professional.

Assisted living is not babysitting. Mom should know that when she moves to her new residence, the staff at the community are going to be well-trained, professional and helpful. To ensure that you choose the best fit for Mom, make sure you tour an assisted living community before making the decision to move Mom there.

Fear #4: I will be bored.

Fact: Assisted living communities offer a variety of extra amenities and activities for their residents.

Chances are, once Mom moves into her new home at the assisted living community, she will have so many different choices of activities that she will have very little time to be bored. Many communities offer fun activities and events to their residents like field trips, classes, clubs, fitness options and other social gatherings. Monthly calendars with activities and events specifically geared toward the interests of residents at each community are planned by the assisted living community.

Fear #5: I will feel alone.

Fact: Mom will be surrounded by other residents,

See 'FEARS,' page 9

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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.

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Separate accounts?

Dear Dave,
I have a full-time job, but I also have a small Etsy business on the side selling 10 products that makes about \$200 a month. I don't see the money from this part-time work getting any bigger in the future. Should I keep a separate account for this business or just roll it into our regular checking account?

Sydney

Dear Sydney,
It's very important to have a separate account, or accounts, for small businesses for two reasons. One, it's a huge help when it comes to taxes and tax season. It will also give you a much clearer picture of how your business is actually doing. Whether you're talking about revenue or tracking expenses, it will give you an easy-to-read report card.

Even if the business is small and is going to stay small, I would want to know—almost as an intellectual exercise—which of my products were winning in the marketplace. This would help you concentrate on the ones that are making you money and allow you to focus less on the ones that aren't doing so well.

So yeah, you need to keep a separate business account, and preferably a separate checking *and* savings account on your business. Make sure 100 percent of the income from the business goes into those accounts and only expenses associated with the business come out of those accounts. With really small side businesses, your checkbook register can almost become a simplified profit and loss statement.

Dave

Balance rebuilding and repaying

Dear Dave,
My wife and I have had marriage problems, and a lot of them were related to money. We're working through those issues and are on Baby Step 1 of your plan. In the process, we're talking more and things are getting better.

We have \$40,000 in credit card debt, along with a combined income of around \$70,000, so I talked to her about taking an extra job or two. She said she would rather I be at home so we can spend more time together in working on our marriage. What should I do?

James

Dear James,
First and foremost, I would urge you two to begin seeing a good marriage counselor together. Money problems and fights over money are the number one cause of divorce in our country today. Continuing to deal with these issues, with the help of a good, caring counselor, will create even more communication.

I think you've both realized you're going to be in a mess if you don't address your income and money management issues. However, her concern about spending more time together and becoming closer is valid. Since you've just started the rebuilding process, maybe you could put off the extra jobs for a month or two—but no longer.

That should give you both time to talk, hug on each other a lot and start developing a solid plan together for the future!

Dave

**Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 13 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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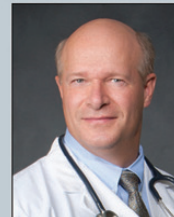
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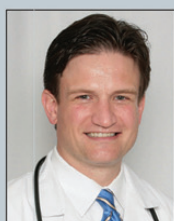
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 American Legion Post 64 meets the second Thursday of each month at the Chamber of Commerce office on Jackson Avenue. Meal served around 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Next meeting will be this Thursday, September 14.


 East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department will hold a fundraiser selling William Bishop's smoked chicken plates this Friday, September 15 from 4-7 p.m. at the East Franklin Fire Department. Barbecue or half chicken plates are \$9 each. Come join us!


 The annual Red Bay Founder's Fest will take place this Saturday, September 16 at Bay Tree Park. The day-long event kicks off at 8:30 a.m. with the King and Queen's Train Ride of the beauty pageant winners, and live music cranks up at 9 a.m. There will also be contests, arts and crafts, sidewalk sales, a 5K run, an antique car-truck-motorcycle-tractor show and much more! Bay Tree Park is located near 2nd Street in downtown Red Bay. Festival hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For info, call Tracie Clark at 256-356-4473, ext. 3.


 Old Fashioned and Elderly Appreciation Day will be held this Sunday, September 17 at Waldrop Free Will Baptist Church, Hwy. 195 in Haleyville. Heaven's Mountain Band will sing in the afternoon starting around 1:15 or 1:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome!


 The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay announces auditions for its first production of the 2017-2018 season, *In-Laws, Outlaws, and Others (Who Should be Shot)*, by Steve Franco. Auditions will be held at Community Spirit Bank's Weatherford Centre in Red Bay this Sunday, September 17 at 2 p.m. and Monday, September 18 at 7 p.m. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the book, and the play will be directed by Mark Richardson. Parts are available for seven males and eight females, ages teen to adult. Performance dates are November 9-12 at the Weatherford Centre, with practice beginning Monday, September 25. Tickets go on sale one week before the production, and those interested in group sales with dinner may call Beth Hammock at 256-356-9286. For more info, call Mark Richardson at 256-356-3099 or Scotty Kennedy at 256-356-8758.

 Gateway Church/Russellville Church of God (Hwy. 43, Russellville) will be in its 10th week of revival on Monday, September 18 through Wednesday, September 20, with services at 7 p.m. each night. God is saving, healing and delivering! Everyone is welcome!

 The Franklin County Extension Office will offer a class, "Quickbooks for Farmers," with two class sessions focusing on the banking function of QuickBooks Pro from Intuit software. The class is taught by Robert Page, regional extension agent. Fee is \$25. To register, call 334-844-5100 or log onto www.aces.edu/go/734. Class size limited to 10 students. Laptops provided. Dates in Franklin County will be September 19 and 21 at Franklin County Extension Office, Courthouse Basement. Colbert County class will be November 7 and 9 at Colbert County Extension Office, Courthouse Basement.

 The Spruce Pine Historical Society will be having Craft Night on the third Thursday of each month. This month's craft will be Flower Arrangement. Meetings are at the Spruce Pine Community Center at 6:30 p.m. For more information, please call Kim at 256-436-3992.

 Helen 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.

 Gentiva Hospice offers a grief support group, "Grieving Well Together," that meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Lenox room at Calvary Baptist Church in Russellville. The next meeting will be held September 28. You are invited to attend.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured above are eleven students, including Austin Martindale (back row, second from left) of Russellville and the University of Alabama, who each received a \$500 book stipend from Alfa as part of the Rural Medicine Program of the UAB School of Medicine.

Local student taking part in Rural Medicine Program

Submitted to the FFP

Alfa and the Alabama Farmers Federation continued supporting students involved in the Rural Medicine Program (RMP) of the UAB School of Medicine by awarding a book stipend to the 2017 entering class.

The \$500-per-student stipend was presented August 22 during a matriculation ceremony at the East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, where students also received their first clinical white coats and stethoscopes. Among the students was Austin Martindale of Russellville.

The RMP is a pre-matriculation year for students who were raised in rural Alabama, which supports and guides students to return to rural Alabama as primary care physicians. RMP is completed before they enter the UAB School of Medicine.

Alfa has provided the annual book stipend since the first class started in 2006. To date, all of the students who are now practicing physicians work in Alabama, with 79 percent serving rural Alabama.

'SCHOOL,' from page 1

their time, their money and their resources to help our community and others during such a tragic time. Now it's time for us to do the same for the people of Texas."

Grimes said the project also provides a great learning opportunity for RCS students about the importance of charity, compassion and helping others.

"At Russellville City Schools, developing outstanding character is just as important as developing academic or athletic skills and abilities," Grimes said. "We want our students to know the value of being good friends, good neighbors and good citizens."

Instead of collecting many physical donations, Grimes said the best way to help those affected in Lumberton school district is through monetary donations.

"They need basic things like clothing and shoes to start back to school in," he said. "Because there would be so many size ranges and needs, we will be taking up monetary donations only. We will then convert the monetary donations into gift cards that can be distributed to those in need in Lumberton. We believe this will be the best way to make sure

they are getting the things they really need right now."

RCS students can bring monetary donations to school to give to their teachers. Those in the community wanting to help can drop off monetary donations at the RCS Central Office. Any checks should be made out to Russellville City Schools with "Lumberton Relief Fund" listed on the memo section of the check. Donations are needed as soon as possible.

"Any amount will be appreciated and will help," Grimes said. "This isn't just a school effort—it's a community effort. We feel this is a great way to help the people of Texas, because you know exactly where your money is going. This is a direct link from Russellville, Alabama, to Lumberton, Texas, that will one hundred percent help the people of this school district.

We hope everyone in our city and our entire county will consider helping these people during such a great time of need."

Donation checks may also be mailed to Russellville City Schools, 1945 Waterloo Road, Russellville, AL, 35653.

'FEARS,' from page 4

and family and loved ones can visit whenever they please.

Perhaps one of the greatest human fears is being alone. You should make extra effort to let Mom know that, though she is moving to a different home, her family and her friends will still be visiting her as much as they were before.

The benefit of living in an assisted living community is that Mom will be surrounded by other seniors who are in similar life stages as she is. She will be able to make new friends who share her interests, and through all of the special events and activities that are offered, she will rarely find herself alone unless she chooses to be.

'RAISE,' from page 3

length of their service. After the city adopted new pay chart schedules and grades earlier this year, changing the previous method of longevity raises, some of the younger workers were making close or equal to what more experienced employees were earning, according to mayor David Grissom.

The resolution raised the salary of employees affected by this, with Bryan Sutton, Bradley Pounders, Grant Tarascou, Brett Evans, Timothy Balcom, Michael G. Miller and Scotty Lowery moving up one step in pay and Jacob Tompkins and Danny Reece Coan moving up two steps.

- Approved an expenditure of \$2,500 to the Liberty Learning Foundation for the Super Citizen Program curriculum to be presented in Russellville City Schools. The program includes a kickoff event starring Libby Liberty and is geared toward civic education.

- Approved an employment contract with Sammy Washington to serve as a School Resource Officer to replace Cary Hitt, who retired last school year.

- Approved the purchase of a new telephone system for the Russellville Police Department and the Russellville Municipal Court from SmartFox Solutions in the amount of \$14,688.46. Payment will be made from: Corrections Fund (\$7,343.43), Driving School (\$3,673) and MJA Fund (\$3,672).

- Approved the waiver of the rental fee for the A.W. Todd Centre on October 24, 2017 for use by Russellville Middle School for its football banquet.

- Approved abatement of nuisances at 606 Gandy, owned by Jerry F. Scott, for failure to clean yard and remove furniture from the front porch, refusal to clean the property, failure to remove a vehicle on blocks on the property and failure to pick up junk, trash and litter in the front yard.

- Heard from Tim and Jody Hollimon regarding placement of a mobile home on property on Filmore Street.

The Hollimons told the council a mobile home had been on the property since 1987 and they purchased a used mobile home to replace the existing one and weren't given authority by the city building inspector to do so. City attorney Danny McDowell advised them to file a petition asking the Compatibility Review Committee to meet and consider their request.

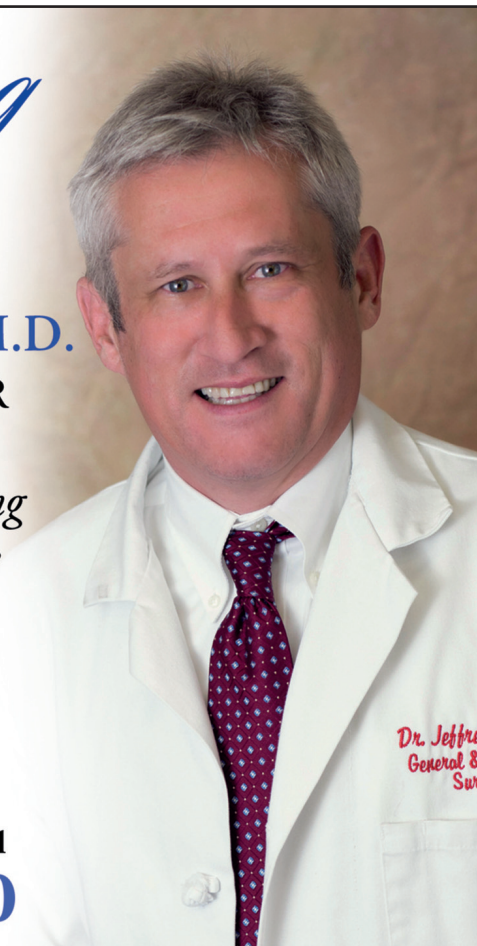
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Red Bay T.R.A.C.K.S. afterschool program is off to a great start this school year. Enrollment is up, and there are many exciting enrichment activities for students and their families to enjoy! Due to the increased enrollment, Red Bay is in need of an increase in staff. Positions available include: Teacher, Certified Teacher Aide and Aide. If you are interested in one of these positions, you will need to fill out an employment packet and have a fingerprint/background check done (through the Franklin County Board of Education's approved sites). There is also a Mandatory Reporter (Erin's Law) training that must be completed online, with a certificate turned in along with your

application. For more information or pay rates for these positions, contact Franklin County Community Education at 256-331-0005.

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Full set of Louis L'Amour Western books for sale. Part hardback, part paperback. \$900 firm. Please call 256-332-8245.

Boat For Sale. 1420 Procraft Fishing Boat. 60 HP Johnson motor. Almost new trolling motor. Call 256-436-4622. (3)

1950 Russellville High School Yearbook *Tiger Track* for sale. Please call 256-476-3028. (5)

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'CHURCH,' from page 1

but the interest was there."

Before the idea was presented to the church body, Martin met with his deacons.

"We didn't want to even broach this unless we had deacon support," he said. "I just wanted to get an idea where they were. All the deacons in attendance gave a hundred percent support. There was no division in the church on this."

"When you have a town hall forum and people express concerns, some may say that's division, but that's not true at all. Just because they had some questions or concerns doesn't mean they were against the idea."

Jason Pierce, a First Baptist deacon, said he believes the idea of a Hispanic ministry is something that would be effective.

"We all want to be Christ-like, and this is Christ's church. I think this is a really good thing," Pierce said. "A church should look like its community."

Martin said First Baptist's student ministry has been working to build bridges with the Hispanic community the last couple years.

"Students go to a school in a system already nearly half Hispanic," Martin said. "We're looking to try and build some inroads. Our desire is for our church to look like our community. We don't want to be isolated from the community. Obviously, we have a long way

to go to get to that point. We've started praying how to best facilitate that.

"God really dropped this in our lap when I got to know a guy who's conservative, evangelical and part of a church looking to join the Southern Baptist Convention. There's not a lot of that in Russellville. So we started praying together. You need some folks already in that community to help foster trust, and this is a natural fit for us."

Martin said no specific details have been worked out, but the ministry would likely involve a Spanish language service similar in message to the English service—one church in two languages.

"I know a lot of our Hispanic friends who come to Russellville looking for work speak very little English. Put them in an English speaking worship service and they won't get a lot out of it," Martin said. "If this materializes, we would probably start with a Spanish-speaking worship service, with the idea down the road to integrate more. Just because you're worshipping in a second room doesn't make it a separate church."

"We'll look at this as a ministry of our church, meaning they will be a part of our church."

First Baptist Church officials will continue work on the best way to proceed with the Spanish ministry, and Martin said it would likely not begin before 2018.

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Have a Sports Story?

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Week 3 in the SEC

Mike Self
 Franklin Free Press

Week 3 is light on big games, so we'll start by squeezing in a few early-season observations.

- The four consensus preseason playoff favorites were Alabama, Ohio State, USC and Florida State. It's not even officially fall yet, and two of those (OSU and FSU) are now long shots to make the field. Oh well. Nobody likes chalk anyway.

- This season's Heisman race could be one for the ages. Baker Mayfield and Sam Darnold both made major statements this past Saturday, and Saquon Barkley is off to a fantastic start. But the best player in college football this year is the same guy who was the best player in college football last year—Lamar Jackson. His performance at North Carolina (525 total yards, six touchdowns) was breathtaking, eye-opening...and pretty much par for the course. The man can flat-out ball.

- Auburn has a championship-caliber defense...and major issues on offense. Barring drastic improvement at quarterback, offensive line and receiver, the Tigers will go as far as that defense can drag them—and no farther.

Auburn catches Mercer at home this week, which didn't make the cut as one of the top four games on the SEC slate. These games did.

Last week's record: 3-1 (Season record: 6-2)
Tennessee (2-0) at Florida (0-1)

The Vols snapped an 11-year skid in the series last year in Knoxville, but they still haven't won in Gainesville since 2003. Florida seems ripe for the pickin' right about now, but this Tennessee defense is nowhere near the same class as the Michigan unit that smothered the Gators in Arlington. The Swamp streak survives.

The Pick: Florida 23 Tennessee 20
LSU (2-0) at Mississippi State (2-0)

Tiger tailback Derrius Guice and Bulldog QB Nick Fitzgerald were the top two rushers in the SEC last year. Both are off to strong starts this season, but Guice will have the bigger game on Saturday—mostly because he doesn't have to run against the LSU defense, which is allowing 1.54 yards per carry (second-best in the country).

The Pick: LSU 27 Mississippi State 14
Kentucky (2-0) at South Carolina (2-0)

A neutral-site win over N.C. State and a road win in conference play at Missouri make for a nice start to the season for the Gamecocks. They'll keep it rolling in the Rooster's Den behind Deebo Samuel, the most electrifying player in the SEC.

The Pick: South Carolina 31 Kentucky 24
Kansas State (2-0) at Vanderbilt (2-0)

The Commodores have quietly allowed the fewest points (six) in the SEC thus far. K-State (a dark-horse contender for the Big 12 title) is a major step up in competition, however. Put your hard hats on for this one.

The Pick: Kansas State 21 Vanderbilt 17

Peak performance



PHOTO BY KYLE GLASGOW

MOUNTAIN MEN - Seniors (from left) Dylan Chandler, Bevin Foust, Cain Phifer and Kevin Shaw have helped the Wildcats start 3-0 for the first time since 2010.

There is a buzz on The Mountain, where shut-down D and solid special teams have carried Colbert Heights to its best start in seven years. A tall task in Trinity awaits.

Mike Self
 Franklin Free Press

Trailing 14-10 with less than 30 seconds left in the all-important region opener at Clements last Friday night, Colbert Heights faced fourth-and-six from the Colt 18-yard-line. Enough time remained for the Wildcats to consider going for a first down rather than a touchdown, but head coach Taylor Leathers only had one thing on his mind.

"I was thinking end zone the whole time," said Leathers, whose team had seen Clements wipe out a 10-0 deficit with a pair of second-half touchdowns, including the go-ahead score just moments earlier. "We hadn't moved the ball well all night."

Leathers signaled in the play-call to senior quarterback Kevin Shaw; then, after getting a look at the way the Colts aligned their defense, Leathers called the team's final timeout.

"We decided to coach it one more time," he said. "We saw the safety cheating over to one side of the field a little bit, and we thought we could squeeze the post in there and go for the end zone."

Senior Corey Saint, who would finish the night with 10 tackles and two interceptions at linebacker, lined up as a receiver for the critical fourth-down play, drawing single coverage in the Wildcats' four-wide formation. The 6'2, 200-pound Saint ran the post route, and Shaw threw him a strike for an 18-yard touchdown to put

Colbert Heights back in front.

The defense closed the deal, and the Wildcats improved to 3-0 for the first time since 2010. More importantly, they averted a loss that would have dealt a damaging early blow to their hopes of ending a five-year playoff drought.

"When we're clicking on all cylinders in all three phases," Leathers said, "I think we're a pretty good football team."

"It was one of those games that came down to the wire," Leathers said. "We were fortunate enough to make a big play when it counted. They had Corey singled up. He's a talented athlete, and Kevin made a good throw to him. The good Lord was looking out for us, and he hauled it in."

"It was a huge clutch play that had to be made, or we lose the game."

At the very least, the game-winner from Shaw to Saint (who, incidentally, hadn't caught a pass yet this season) got Colbert Heights off on the right foot in the Class 3A, Region 8 race. If it also turns out to be a shot in the arm for an offense that has struggled to find a rhythm thus far, that would be even better.

"I certainly think it could," said Leathers, whose team has scored a total of seven first-half points in three games—while giving up zero. "I believe our offense

See 'PEAK,' page 16

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Ground game powers Wildcats to region win

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

A year ago, in head coach Kevin Lacey's first season at the helm, Tharptown finished fifth in Class 1A, Region 8, missing out on what would have been the program's first-ever playoff berth by one game.

The Wildcats are determined not to suffer the same fate in 2017. "That's the goal," Lacey said of reaching the postseason. "We hit on it all the time. We talk about it a lot. We've drilled it in their heads."

With that in mind, it's difficult to overstate the importance of Tharptown's 38-28 win at Shoals Christian last Friday in the Region 8 opener for both teams. Shoals earned the region's fourth and final playoff spot last season, finishing one game ahead of the Wildcats.

"This was a huge win for us," Lacey said on Sunday afternoon. "We were one win away [from the playoffs] last year, and we struggled to find it and we didn't find it. So this was a big win for us."

Tharptown (1-2 overall, 1-0 in region play) still has five region games to go, of course, starting with this Friday's visit from reigning region champion Hackleburg (1-1, 0-0). The Wildcats (whose two region wins last season came against Waterloo and Vina) have merely taken the first step toward becoming a playoff team, but last Friday's performance suggests that their ultimate goal is certainly within reach.

"I thought we played really well," said Lacey, whose team put up 406 yards of total offense against the Flame and topped the 30-point mark for the first time since a 64-34 rout of Alabama School for the Deaf in the final game of the 2013 season. "The offensive line did really well. The running backs had holes all night. Defensively, we had a good game plan. Our defensive coaches came up with a good plan, and our guys did well filling gaps and making tackles. I was pleased with how we played on both sides of the ball."

Senior tailback Payton Price and junior fullback K.J. Hamilton carried the load on offense, combining to rush for 339 yards and five touchdowns. Price put up 220 yards and three scores, and Hamilton added 119 yards and found the end zone twice.

"It was pretty much run it 'til they stop it," Lacey said. "We only threw the ball a very few times. We knew it was gonna be a run-heavy game on both ends. They run it a lot, and we run it a lot. We knew we had to score with them."

Lacey praised the efforts of his offensive line, which includes sophomore Ruben Alfaro at center, junior Evan Franks and sophomore Gunner Lane at guard, and seniors Frank Miguel and Skylar Fields at tackle.

"They were finding the guys they needed to block and getting on them," Lacey said. "Most of the time, when we can get Payton and K.J. in one-on-one situations, they're good at making people miss."

So, for that matter, is Shoals Christian tailback Christian Martin, a speedy senior who had scored on touchdown runs of 45 and 64 yards and also returned a kickoff 88 yards to the house in Shoals Christian's season-opening loss to Collinwood the previous week. Needless to say, Martin—and, to a lesser degree, fullback Taylor Spinks—was the focal point of Tharptown's defensive game plan heading into last Friday.

"He was," Lacey said of Martin, who burned the Wildcats for long touchdown runs of 61 and 85 yards in last year's 41-13 win by the Flame. "The first three touches he had last year against us, nobody could catch him. We know how good he is. Our defensive coaches really prepared our guys every day this week. We spent a lot of

See 'GROUND,' page 18

Payton Price Senior RB/LB, Tharptown

Price helped the Wildcats pick up their first win of the season last Friday with a dominant performance on both sides of the ball in the Class 1A, Region 8 opener at Shoals Christian.

Price carried the load for Tharptown on offense, rushing for a career-high 220 yards and three touchdowns in the 38-28 win. He also led a solid defensive effort against the Flame, recording a team-best eight tackles.

Price and the Wildcats will look for another region win Friday when they host Hackleburg.



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Golden Tigers circle the wagons for 'crucial' game

Mike Self
Franklin Free Press

Before they left the playing field at Louis Crews Stadium on the campus of Alabama A&M University last Friday night, Russellville's players gathered tightly around head coach Mark Heaton on the visitors' sideline.

The Golden Tigers had just suffered their most lop-sided loss in 44 years, 45-0 to Lee of Huntsville, to drop to 0-2 on the season, and Heaton knew what was waiting on them once they got outside. He wanted to be sure they heard his message first.

"When adversity strikes, you have people come against you," said Heaton, now in his fourth season at RHS and 10th year overall as a head coach. "There's a lot of negative talk. I wanted to talk to our guys before they left and talked to anybody else. That was the second-worst I've ever been beaten in my career. I told them, 'People are gonna point the finger at me. They're gonna point the finger at your teammates.' That's fine. We don't do that inside. We support each other. We stand up for each other, no matter what happens from this point on. We're the only ones out there working together to try and fix it, so we have to take up for each other and support each other.

"That's our main focus—to live out the family-type atmosphere and the standards we've put in place. I told them how hard that was gonna be. They didn't understand it right then, but I wanted them to be ready to face the challenge of it."

A loss like last Friday's, in which Russellville got out-gained 343 total yards to 76 and failed to score for the first time since a 28-0 loss to Cullman on Halloween night in 2014, can undermine a team's self-belief. Heaton did his best to nip that problem in the bud when the players arrived at the football facility on Sunday afternoon.

"We know how to win," said Heaton, whose 27-9 record in his first three seasons at Russellville included a 19-2 mark in region play. "I just reminded them that we're all winners. We have won. We know how to win. Just because you lose football games, that doesn't change. We know what it takes to win at a high level, and we've been doing that. The last three years, we started out 4-0 or 5-0, ranked in the top five in the state. We've been there because we were doing the things you have to do to give yourself the opportunity to be in that situation.

"We haven't changed anything. The process works. What we do works. We have to go to work every day believing that. The outcome is different right now, but so are the circumstances. There's nothing else left to do but to work every day and keep doing things the way we know how. We'll be patient and wait on God's timing, but we can't change our winning ways and our winning attitudes."

As of Monday morning, Heaton's message seemed to have gotten through. "Our guys came in this morning and worked like we're 2-0," he said. "That means a lot to me. That says a lot for the guys who have been in the program in the past and have laid that foundation. These seniors have been with me four years. They're the first group of seniors that I've had since they were freshmen. These guys know the expectations, because they're the ones who laid the groundwork and laid the foundation. They're living every day and working every day in the program that they built. I expect them to take pride in that.

"Losing brings out a losing mentality. Losing will test you. But deep down, if you're a winner, it will also fuel you a little bit. Once you get past the testing part, it allows you to develop the fuel you need that drives you to be better. That's something we deal with as men every day in the real world. Those are things we're going through right now, the things we face as adults and as teenagers."

In his post-game address on the field last Friday night, Heaton laid out his expectations for his players in no uncertain terms.

"Friday after the game, I told them I only expect two things from them," he said. "Be there on time Sunday, ready to work with a great attitude and to continue doing things the way we do them. And for them to be loyal and committed to the team, their teammates and their coaches.

"I believe in my guys," he added on Monday morning. "They're fighting through some hard times, and we're fighting with them."

This was already going to be Heaton's youngest and least experienced team at Russellville, and that was before a series of transfers, injuries, illnesses and various other defections whittled away at the Golden Tigers' depth and robbed them of some of their top returning playmakers. Two games into the season, they're still searching for their first touchdown, and since kicking a short field goal to grab an early 3-0 lead against Deshler in the opener, they've surrendered 80 unanswered points.

"The attention to detail has got to be better," Heaton said. "We're gonna make the mistakes we're gonna make, because we are an inexperienced football team in so many areas. We know that comes with the territory. Those will get better every game you play. But the attention to the little things is an area where we have to make tremendous progress.

"Regardless of what grade you're in or how many nights you've played under the lights, you've gotta have the will to be self-disciplined and pay attention to the little things and do those things better, for your team."

"Losing brings out a losing mentality," Heaton said. "Losing will test you. But deep down, if you're a winner, it will also fuel you a little bit. Once you get past the testing part, it allows you to develop the fuel you need that drives you to be better."

Heaton did not attempt to downplay the significance of Friday night's home opener against rival Lawrence County. The Red Devils (1-1, 1-0) routed St. John Paul II 49-7 last week, and they will arrive at Golden Tiger Stadium bound and determined to leave with their first win over Russellville since 1945. [The Golden Tigers have won all 13 meetings since, including three hotly contested battles since Heaton took over.]

"It's the next game," Heaton said, "and you look at it that way in the grand scheme of things. But it's a region game, and we're 0-1 in the region. If you start out 0-2 in the region, your back's really against the wall. You pretty much have to win out to get in the playoffs, and you still have the tough part of your schedule to go. So this is a big game.

"We need to play our best football. We're at home, and we need to take advantage of that. We need to play the best football game we've played all year and eliminate mistakes. This is a crucial point of the season for us."

The most recent meetings between Russellville and Lawrence County have been marred by numerous personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on both sides. There's certainly no love lost between the two teams.

"It is a very chippy game," Heaton acknowledged. "I think it's developed into a

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‘PEAK,’ from page 13

will improve. We’re focused on executing better, getting all eleven guys to carry out their assignment. But that’s the kind of play that could be a spark for our offense and give us some confidence moving forward.”

If the Wildcats, who averaged a respectable 23.5 points per game last year in Leathers’ first season as head coach, do get their offense rolling, they just might make some legitimate noise in an extremely competitive region where playoff spots are hard to come by.

“When we’re clicking on all cylinders in all three phases,” Leathers said, “I think we’re a pretty good football team.”

So far, two out of three has been good enough to get the Wildcats to 3-0. A stingy defense led by Saint (27 tackles) and fellow senior linebackers Dylan Chandler (29 tackles, including 12 against Clements last week), Brendan Borden (25 tackles) and Bevin Foust (19 tackles) is holding opponents to just 6.7 points per game.

Special teams have also been a strength, with Borden providing a much-needed spark in the return game and senior Blane Howard (whose 25-yard field goal against Clements proved to be the difference) solidifying the kicking game.

“Blane’s a senior, but this is his first year to play for us,” Leathers said. “He came out this year, and I told him, ‘See if you can kick this football.’ He’s really done a great job for us. He’s consistently putting the ball inside the ten on kickoffs, and the other night he put one inside the five. Our goal is to keep our opponents inside the thirty-yard line on kickoffs, and he’s really helped us with that.”

“Our kick return game has been really solid, too, just putting us in position to score. In all three games so far, Brendan has returned one into the red zone. That’s a credit to him and to Coach [Isaac] Fuller, who works with our special teams.”

Leathers said field position will be critical once again in Friday night’s region game at West Morgan—along with more consistent production on offense and another disciplined effort on defense.

“Offensively, we’ve gotta have sustained drives,” Leathers said. “That’s the number one thing. That’s been our nemesis these first three weeks. We’ve gotta run the football and sustain lengthy drives, and then finish those drives with points. Defensively, we have to be sure tacklers. Coach [Lonnie] Robinson will have

our guys in the right place; we just have to make the plays.

“West Morgan has a very talented running back who’s elusive and hard to tackle. We can’t let him slip out. Their quarterback is a good passer, and he likes to throw the deep ball. Our corners and safeties have to do a good job of taking that away. We’ve gotta make them earn what they get. They’ll run some zone-read, too, and against the zone-read you have to be where you’re supposed to be. Their quarterback can throw it, but he’s a good runner, too.”

Senior quarterback Gabe Peluso leads a potent West Morgan attack that put up 103 combined points in wins over St. John Paul II and Priceville to start the season before hitting a bump in the road last week in a 21-15 loss to Lauderdale County. In a 47-6 rout of Priceville two weeks ago, Peluso threw for 97 yards and a touchdown and also rushed for 97 yards. He followed that up with a pair of touchdown tosses to his favorite target, Maurice Gray, in last week’s loss in Rogersville.

“That’s something we’ll remind our guys about every day this week,” Leathers said.

“[West Morgan] made the playoffs last year, and we didn’t. Plus, this group of seniors we’ve got has never lost to West Morgan. I don’t think motivation will be a problem for either side.”

Gray, who totaled 161 yards and two touchdowns on just four receptions in a season-opening 56-0 rout of St. John Paul II, is one of several big-play threats for the Rebels (2-1, 0-1). Senior running back Isaac Huguley, a Decatur transfer, broke off a 70-yard touchdown run against Priceville, finishing the game with 119 yards on 15 carries. JaKobe Fletcher, who totaled 147 yards and four touchdowns on just 11 carries in the first two games of the season, is also dangerous.

“West Morgan is a really good football team,” Leathers said on Sunday night while breaking down game film of the Rebels. “They were definitely the most improved team in the region last year, and I think it’s a close call between them and Clements as to who the most improved team in the region is this year. They have some new faces. I’m looking at an outside linebacker from East Lawrence, an inside linebacker from

East Lawrence. They have some talented players who were not a part of their program last year. They definitely improved their roster.

“They’re very sound defensively. Coach [Chris] Balentine, who used to be the defensive coordinator at Muscle Shoals, is their defensive coordinator now. He does a great job on that side of the ball, and Coach [John] Ritter does a great job with the offense.”

In an interesting twist, both teams will be looking for a measure of revenge on Friday night in Trinity. The Wildcats won last year’s meeting 42-27 in Tusculumbia (their fourth straight win in the series) and were on track to make the playoffs before stumbling in the final game of the regular season with a 30-24 loss at East Lawrence. West Morgan capitalized, stealing the fourth and final playoff spot in Region 8 with a 17-7 upset of Lexington.

“That’s something we’ll remind our guys about every day this week,” Leathers said. “They made the playoffs last year, and we didn’t. Plus, this group of seniors we’ve got has never lost to West Morgan. We beat them last year at our homecoming game, and this is their homecoming game on Friday night.”

“I don’t think motivation will be a problem for either side.”

Should they need any extra incentive moving forward, the Wildcats need only look back to last season, when the momentum from a 3-1 start failed to survive the grind of a brutally tough schedule down the stretch.

Leathers is optimistic that this year’s team can write a different script.

“Our guys have some confidence right now,” he said, “and I don’t want them to take being 3-0 for granted. But we still have a long way to go. We started fast last year, too. We were 3-1, and then we only won one more game the rest of the year. A lot of that had to do with our strength of schedule on the back end, but we have the same schedule this year.”

“One difference is, I do think we’re playing better on defense than we were last year. We just have to continue to improve overall. We have eighteen seniors, but a lot of those guys hadn’t started a game before this year. We’ve really challenged our guys to take ownership of this team and keep working every day. If our guys will take ownership and continue to improve, we can be as good as they want to be.”

Lady Bulldogs win twice at Muscle Shoals tourney

Submitted to the FFP

Belgreen's varsity volleyball team finished second in its pool in a tournament at Muscle Shoals High School this past Saturday before losing to Winston County 2-1 in tournament play.

Playing without injured starters Ansley Tate (outside hitter) and Kaycee Wilson (defensive specialist), the Lady Bulldogs nonetheless went 2-1 in pool play. They lost to Addison 2-0 but earned a pair of 2-1 wins over Mars Hill and East Lawrence.

Freshman middle hitter Emma Dempsey led Belgreen in Saturday's action with 36 total kills, six aces and five blocks. Sophomore Katie Dempsey added 25 kills and seven aces, and sophomore setter Autumn Bragwell recorded 69 assists and seven aces.

Newcomer Kaley Chandler, an eighth-grader, finished the day with 12 kills and 14 aces.

Head coach Teresa Whitten said Tate was expected to return to action Monday, while Wilson will likely miss two to three weeks with an ankle injury.

The Lady Bulldogs will play a home match on Thursday before hosting their first tournament on Saturday.

In previous action:

A banged-up Belgreen volleyball team split its first two matches of the regular season last Tuesday, beating Colbert County and losing to Colbert Heights in a tri-match at Colbert Heights High School.

The Lady Bulldogs, ranked No. 6 in Class 1A by the Alabama Sports Writers Association in the preseason, defeated Class 3A Colbert County despite playing without starting outside hitter Ansley Tate, who was sidelined by a shoulder injury. Senior Callie Barber led Belgreen with nine aces, and sophomore setter Autumn Bragwell had 15 assists, two aces and a kill.

Freshman Emma Dempsey recorded six kills, and sophomore Katie Dempsey added five kills.

Junior Kaycee Wilson, a defensive specialist who was also filling in for Tate at outside hitter, sustained an ankle injury and was unable to play in the second match against Colbert Heights.

Freshman Bailey Oliver and eighth-grader Kaley Chandler filled in for Wilson. Katie Dempsey and Emma Dempsey totaled 10 kills for Belgreen, but Class 3A Colbert Heights picked up the win.

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'GROUND' from page 14

time on him. They have a good fullback, too, and we spent a lot of time on both of those guys.

"Our coaches did a really good job, and our guys responded well."

Lacey credited Price, who recorded a team-high eight tackles, and fellow outside linebacker Trent Risley, another senior who had six tackles, with helping minimize Martin's big-play opportunities.

"The main thing is just to keep him contained," Lacey said. "Defensively, we've got some pretty quick outside guys ourselves, and they did a great job of keeping him contained and setting the edge. He got the edge on us one time, and he scored. But that's better than last year, when the first three times he touched it, he was gone.

"Our outside guys did a good job of turning him in and keeping him inside, and when we did turn him in we had other guys filling the gaps and tackling."

Fields, who starts at middle linebacker, also had six tackles last Friday. Alfaro, Dakota Palmer and defensive back Luis Macias added five tackles apiece. Macias had a big night in the kicking game as well, drilling three extra points and a 35-yard field goal.

After dropping their first two games of the season to county rivals Phil Campbell and Red Bay by a combined margin of 107-13, the Wildcats with-

stood the ebb and flow of a back-and-forth affair with Shoals Christian and then finished strong to claim a crucial region win.

"We didn't get down at any point in the game," Lacey said. "That's what I'm most proud of. If we don't get down on ourselves, we can put up some points. The last couple of games against Phil Campbell and Red Bay, they got on us quick and we got down a little. We stopped getting on our blocks and hitting our holes. But the other night I thought we were in it the whole game."

Region game number two promises to be tougher still. Hackleburg has a remarkable record of 30-2 in region play over the past five seasons, and head coach Rod Hudson and the Panthers are 7-0 all-time against Tharptown with an average margin of victory of 25 points.

Hackleburg opened this season with a 48-27 win at Marion County before falling 28-26 at home to Decatur Heritage last week.

"Hackleburg is always tough—even when I was in school, they were tough," said Lacey, a 2006 graduate of Phil Campbell High School. "Coach Hudson does a great job with them. It's gonna be a challenge."

The Panthers won last year's meeting 30-14 in Hackleburg. On their most recent trip to Tharptown, they won 34-17 in 2014.

'CIRCLE' from page 15

pretty good rivalry over the years. We want to make sure we have the right attitudes and channel those emotions in the right direction. I expect our guys will handle it great."

As for the game itself, Heaton said that getting the ground game going early will be a big key. Russellville ran for just 32 yards last week at Lee, and freshman quarterback Luke Barnwell has already attempted 55 passes in his first two starts at the varsity level.

"If we can establish the run game earlier in the game, that will help us get going," Heaton said. "If we can run the football more effectively, maybe that will take some of the pressure off Luke and help him be a little more comfortable."

Heaton expects a four-quarter battle on Friday, which would be nothing new against the Red Devils.

"They're a good football team," he said. "They challenge you, no doubt about it. We'll have to be ready to play four quarters and then hopefully win it at the end. There's the potential for it to come down to the end, if we play well.

"We're prepared to get that first win Friday night. That's our expectation. That's our goal. And the kids see it the same way."

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