

The

Murfreesboro Diamond

Wednesday, June 18, 2025
Issue 50 • 1 Section • 6 Pages

\$1.00
USPC 103-230

Serving South Pike County, Arkansas Since 1975
◆◆◆ Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park ◆◆◆



Library summer reading programs announced

Parents asked to preregister attendees for participation

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Library has announced their dates for the 2025 summer reading program under the theme "Color Our World."

Due to the overwhelming attendance last year, in order to make sure enough supplies are ordered, all children must be registered to attend any/all programs. You may pick up registration form at the library.

The library is located at 204 East Main Street in Murfreesboro.

All programs will be in Tuesdays through Fridays throughout July, at 1:30 p.m. each day.

The program schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday, July 2 -- Courthouse reading and trip
- Friday, July 4 -- Library closed
- Tuesday, July 8 -- Chair volleyball
- Wednesday, July 9 -- Post Office reading and trip
- Friday, July 11 -- Colored sand art
- Tuesday, July 15 -- Bean bag toss with Eva Langley
- Wednesday, July 16 -- Veterans reading
- Thursday, July 17 -- Alligators with the AGFC
- Friday, July 18 -- Colored sand art
- Tuesday, July 22 -- Chair volleyball
- Wednesday, July 23 -- Police reading
- Thursday, July 24 -- Black bears with the AGFC
- Friday, July 25 -- Colored sand art
- Tuesday, July 29 -- Bean bag toss with Eva Langley
- Wednesday, July 30 -- Diamond reading
- Thursday, July 31 -- Water safety with the AGFC

For more information, contact librarian Dawson Sellers at 870-285-2575 or e-mail at murfreesboropubliclibrary@gmail.com.



Staff photos

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION ... In it's second year of existence, the City of Murfreesboro's Juneteenth festivities were on full display this year. Starting last Friday night, participants gathered for a meet and greet at the municipal building, then on Saturday the day kicked off with a parade to the City Park, followed by merriment including food, dancing and dominoes.



Pike County Library

Summer Reading Program

July 2nd - July 31st



Serv Safe classes set for next week in G'wood

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike and Montgomery County Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension agents will be hosting a ServSafe® Managers training course on June 24-25 at the Glenwood Bainum Community Room, offering food service professionals a critical opportunity to advance their food safety knowledge and certification.

The training sessions will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on both days, with the certification exam scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on June 25. The cost for the full training package — which includes the course, book, and exam — is \$140. Those needing only to retake the test can do so for \$60.

The ServSafe® Manager Training is a nationally recognized program designed to educate food service managers, operators, and owners on best practices in food handling — from receiving and storing ingredients to preparing and serving meals safely. Participants who successfully complete the course and pass the exam will receive a Certificate of Completion from ServSafe®.

The importance of food safety is underscored by data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which estimates that foodborne illnesses affect roughly 1 in 6 Americans annually — leading to approximately 48

TRAINING Continued on Page 2

City readies next set of blight letters

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro City Council was informed during its June meeting that certain property owners with unsightly yards should expect a letter from the city sometime this week.

Zoning Inspector Ricky Branch reported during the meeting that the letters instructing property owners to clean up will be the first step, followed by possible misdemeanor charges and fines, if the issues are not addressed.

In other business during the 31-minute meeting, the council approved a resolution for the city to apply for a Fun Park Grant and adopted a lengthy ordinance entitled, "An Ordinance for Fair Housing" for the city. The entire ordinance appears in this week's Diamond.

Mayor Jim O'Neal said the ordinance was adopted on the advice of the West Central Arkansas Planning Development District as part of the ongoing attempt to appeal the city's lower to moderate income ratio. The high ratio is affecting the city's ability to obtain substantial grants. The mayor added that fair housing is already state and federal law but the ordinance

is a required part of the LMI appeal procedure.

The council also approved Recorder/Treasurer Penny Lamb's financial report, which included the following beginning and ending balances for May:

- General Funds -- \$329,057/\$347,916
- Street Funds -- \$313,697/\$311,384
- Park Funds -- \$23,739/\$25,435
- Waterworks -- \$507,471/\$510,975
- Advertising & Tourism -- \$76,481/\$77,806
- Special Funds -- \$318,159/\$322,053

Chamber announces changes to Christmas in July event

MURFREESBORO -- At last week's Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce meeting, the group put the final touches on the Juneteenth celebration that was held over the weekend in Murfreesboro.

Murfreesboro mayor Jim O'Neal was complimentary of the lead up to the event, stating that the fundraising went well.

"The good people of Murfreesboro opened their wallets and were very generous," he said.

At the June 5 farmer's market there were four vendors present, and the day had a "good turnout" of 28 registered customers.

"Look for the new signage [soon to be installed] and keep sharing media posts," chamber president Lisa Harvill said about the ongoing attempt to grow the effort.

The farmer's market is held this year on Thursday mornings at the pavilion behind the tennis courts across the street from C-Stop Exxon.

The group is still continuing the efforts to refurbish their stock of Christmas decorations in a piece-by-piece fashion for the upcoming season, and will look into the possibility of taking some of the décor to the Pike County Sheriff's Office to see if any inmates are willing to help the relighting efforts.

"It would be something for them to work on," said board member Ricky Branch.

The chamber made final plans for the efforts to feed the displayers at the "Famous Crater Diamonds Exhibition" during the Crater of Diamonds State Park's "Prospectors' Gemboree" celebration this Saturday, June 21.

It was stated that the group will provide sandwiches, chips, drinks and dessert for those showing their finds.

The group's upcoming Christmas in July fundraiser will undergo some changes, revert-

CHAMBER Continued on Page 2

CHAMBER Continued from Page 1

ing back to the format employed during the covid pandemic of several years ago.

Due to no longer wishing to ask for donations of food from local church members because of rising costs and the effort involved, the group will eschew the familiar buffet style format of holiday style dishes and simply offer to-go barbeque pork sandwich meals.

The meals will be prepared with chips, dessert and a drink and will cost \$10 or by larger donation each. The event is set for Thursday, July 17 at the Murfreesboro Municipal Building community room from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

State senator Steve Crowell will host a town hall meeting on Thursday, June 26, 6 p.m. at the Murfreesboro Municipal Building community room. Crowell will discuss the year’s legislative session and then hold a question and answer session, including the state of the senior citizen centers.

O’Neal noted that Crowell was instrumental in recent legislation that increased the homestead exemption from \$500 to \$600.

TRAINING Continued from Page 1

million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths. Even a 10% reduction in foodborne illness rates could prevent 5 million people from becoming sick each year.

ServSafe® is a key component of the Food Safety initiative led by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service’s Family and Consumer Sciences Department. Certified county educators deliver the training and proctor the exams statewide. Each year, the Cooperative Extension Service partners with the Arkansas Restaurant Association to help train hundreds of food service employees across Arkansas for certification and recertification.

ServSafe® sets the industry standard in food safety. This training ensures food service workers are equipped with the most current and relevant safety practices. For more information or to register for the Glenwood training, contact the Pike County Extension office at (870) 285-2161.

County ham radio club to hold classes this summer

PIKE COUNTY -- The Pike County Ham Radio Club os planning to host license classes and tests this summer.

The group will host technician and general level classes on July 11 and 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days, and will hold license testing on July 26 from 9 a.m. to noon.

The events will take place at the conference room in the Glenwood Police Department at 210 N. 2nd St in Glenwood.

Anyone interested on classes or testing should contact one of the following:

Mark Reed
(903) 701-5954, mark.reed.ii@gmail.com

Will Henderson
(870) 925-0168, redhenderson@hotmail.com

Pat Chaloner
(870) 285-5023, n5wcl1991@gmail.com

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Murfreesboro Diamond

Your Hometown Newspaper since 1975

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Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park

Little Missouri River • Lake Greeson

• John Robert Schirmer, Publisher

• P.J. Tracy IV, Editor

• Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

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\$30 for 6-months in area; \$35 for 6-months elsewhere.

College Subscriptions- \$25 for 9-months.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 550, Murfreesboro, AR 71958

Telephone: 870-285-2723

Business Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Wednesday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Please Send Change of Address Information to:

Murfreesboro Diamond

P.O. Box 550

Murfreesboro, AR 71958

Any erroneous statement published in the newspaper

will be gladly and promptly corrected if called

to the attention of the management.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

FRIDAYS AT 3:00 P.M.

Staff photos

RETIREMENT PARTY ... A retirement party was held for Bank of Delight employee Cathy Rather last week in Delight. Pictured above (L to R) were bank employees Anna Arney, Melissa Owens, Jessica Mitchell, Myrie Lewis, Nickki Hutcherson, Cathy Rather, Pam Hayward, Becky Humphry, Debbie Muse, Trent Cox, Rae Durdess and Darwin Hendrix. Rather is pictured below with her grandchildren (below left) and bank president Hendrix (below right). Rather has been with since 1987.

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Jason Porter (870) 703-1039

Johnny Porter (870) 703-1628

P.O. Box 1316 Hope, AR 71802

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The City of Antoine is seeking qualified architectural firms to provide professional design services for a new fire station.

IMPORTANT: This project is contingent upon the Community Grant Assistance award. Contract execution is subject to successful grant funding notification expected October 2025.

Interested firms must demonstrate experience in similar municipal construction projects.

Responses must be received no later than July 2, 2025. Please email RFQ to Mayor David Hendrix at dbhantoine@outlook.com or townofantoine@outlook.com or mail to City of Antoine, P.O. Box 52, Antoine, AR 71922.

The City of Antoine reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. This is not a commitment to a contract for services.

This publication was paid for by the City of Antoine. The amount paid for this publication is \$59.85.

(c.o.a., 133w., 50,51)

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PIKE COUNTY,
ARKANSAS PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE ESTATE OF
Dorothy Susanne Smith
DECEASED

NO, 55PR-25-27-2

NOTICE

Last known address: 651 Channing Road, Nashville,
Arkansas 71852

Date of Death: November 4, 2024

An instrument dated July 25, 2024 was admitted to probate as the Last Will and Testament in the above-named decedent. Notice is hereby given that Lindsey Myrkle was appointed Personal Representative of the Estate of the above name Decedent and Letters Testamentary issued on June 10, 2025.

All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, duly verified, to the undersigned within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in the estate. Provided that claims for injury or death caused by the negligence of the decedent shall be filed within six months from the date of the first publication of the notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in such estate.

This notice first published this 18th day of June 2025.

Estate of Dorothy Susanne Smith, Deceased
c/o Robert B. “Brad” Crayne
ROSS & SHOALMIRE, PLLC
1820 Galleria Oaks Drive
Texarkana, Texas 75503

(r.s., 206w., 50,51)

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS
PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
WANDA FAYE VERMEER, deceased Case No. 55PR-25-28

PUBLIC NOTICE-ESTATE

Last known address of the decedent:
408 Woodlawn St, Glenwood, AR 71943

Date of Death: April 21, 2025.

An instrument, dated July 26, 2022, was on May 19th, 2025 admitted to probate as the Last Will of the above decedent, and Michell Lee Garner was lawfully appointed as the Executrix of the above estate.

That all persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, duly verified, within six (6) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in the estate.

This notice first published on this day of June 11, 2025.

Michell Lee Garner, Petitioner

BY: /s/ Dustin Bissell
DUSTIN BISSELL
Attorney for Petitioner
306 E Broadway
Glenwood, AR 71943
(870)-356-2589
Arkansas Bar #2022047

(d.b., 158w., 49,50)

Tourism Commission discusses trails and shuttle services for 2026

MURFREESBORO – The Murfreesboro Advertising and Tourism Commission heard recent numbers regarding the group’s purchase of television advertising through DNT media. It was reported that more than 166,000 commercials had been shown to regional households streaming Tubi, Max, Paramount, and Peacock amongst others. It was also stated that 167 people had directly gone to the website digmurfreesboro.com, though that number could be more as all methods of access are not definitively trackable. After recent legislation involving the opening of city and county roads to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for access to trails, it was said that Pike County Judge Eddie Howard was on board as was Sheriff Travis Hill.

With many questions yet to be answered, including what roads will be opened – state highways would be limited as much as possible. “We will look into getting as many county roads as make sense,” said commission chairman Jamie Terrell.

Other questions about regulations were yet to be completely determined, but it was said it was likely to include a valid driver’s license and collision insurance as well as equipment such as blinkers and seatbelts on the ATVs. It was also debated that children under 16 would require the use of helmets and that perhaps a certain engine size (over 900cc) could be required, but it is all still in a murky area.

When issuing licenses, it was said the Department of Transportation did not do checks on equipment, so it would be up to a police officer to check if the ATV was in compliance of the rules upon a stop. At the next Tourism Commission meeting on Tuesday, July 15, members of the state Outdoor Recreation and Tourism would be on hand. The group plans to inquire about grants for bikes and ATVs around Lake Greeson that could eventually connect to other trails allowing for statewide travel.

Terrell said the plan was to get all the logistics straight and be ready to go by March 2026. “It will take some time,” he said about preparing for next tourist season as opposed to this one. An idea by Riley Bonds was also broached, one that would employ a shuttle that would take people from the diamond mine to town and vice versa.

Terrell said that Murfreesboro Mayor Jim O’Neal was interested in the idea, and that the proposed goal was to have the city supply the employee and the tourism commission purchase the shuttle vehicle.

Obviously early in the discussion, ideas that had been offered for the effort could include the shuttle running on Thursdays-Sundays until 10 p.m., with riders paying a nominal fee for use. Local residents could purchase a yearly pass that would allow their use. Terrell mentioned it would be a great option for the local senior citizens.

Other stops could also include Kadoba Indian Village and Lake Greeson, but all a schedule, pickup by call or path had yet to be ironed out. “Shuttle busses can be gotten for around \$20,000 ... the question is how much would the service be used? We could try it for three or four months and see,” said Terrell. “It’s something to look into, but we have plenty of time to discuss and consider the idea.”

The discussion for next tourism season will prove interesting, due to the constant question of how to get more of the state park attendees to town.

Boardmember Caleb Howell said the group would need to consider the idea of not doing by call to the park, but perhaps more of a schedule, simply due to the volume possible.

“As soon as you pick one up, three minutes later you’ll have another call ... they will wear you out.”

He also asked if there would be room on the shuttle for mining equipment if it was rented, and that on wet days it would be “muddy and filthy.”

Terrell said part of the prospective driver’s job would be to help keep the shuttle clean.

Contractor Ricky Branch gave the board an update on their former rent house that was being updated for use as offices by a counseling service. The house is located behind the former bus station that was later Glynda’s Fashions before being demolished last year.

Branch said all that was left was flooring to finish and that would be completed this week after having previously updating the wiring, painting the outside brick façade and installing new windows.

“There will be a big sign up by the road ... and later a chamber coffee/ribbon cutting. It’s turned out pretty nice,” said Branch.

MURFREESBORO SENIOR ADULT CENTER LUNCH MENU

MONDAY, JUNE 23
Hoppin John stew, yellow squash, okra & tomatoes, cornbread, pear crips
TUESDAY, JUNE 24
Lemon herb chicken, herb corn, brusse sprouts, dinner roll, gelatin

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25
Beef stroganoff, egg noodles, broccoli, carrots, salad, cookie
Lunch served at 11:30 a.m. For more information (870) 285-2312. Open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 a.m. Carry out is now available for \$6.00

Car show set for September in M’boro

MURFREESBORO -- The fourth annual Keith Stone Memorial Car Show is set for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 12-13 in Murfreesboro. On Friday night, a “show and shine,” cruise and poker run is planned starting at 6 p.m. on the Pike County Courthouse square. Then, on Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. the show will be held around the square. There is a \$20 entry for the vehicles to be judged in a number of categories, including a participant’s choice award. After the awards, a \$500 drawing will be held along with door prizes and a 50/50 pot. Matt Gunter will serve as a D.J. at the event. Contact Kirk Stone at (870) 703-1860 for more information.

Town hall meeting

MURFREESBORO -- The City of Murfreesboro’s Mayor’s Office has announced that on Thursday, June 26, a town hall meeting will be held at the Municipal Building at 6 p.m. The featured speaker will be state senator Steve Crowell, who will be discussing and answering questions about the recent state legislative session.


4-H cereal drive ongoing

MURFREESBORO -- Pike County 4-H is conducting a summer cereal drive to help fight summer hunger. The items being requested are:
• Cereal
• Oatmeal
• Toaster Pastries
• Granola Bars
Drop off sites for the items are at the Bainum Library and Learning Center in Glenwood and the Pike County Extension Office in Murfreesboro. The program will run through to July 31.



Mayberry popcorn

MURFREESBORO -- Everyone is invited to join -- free of charge -- the Murfreesboro chapter of “The Andy Griffith Show Rerun Watchers Club - Rev. Tucker’s Congregation.” The next meeting will be Sunday afternoon, June 29, 2:00 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall of Murfreesboro First Baptist Church. Interim Pastor Rick Hyde will be hosting a “Mayberry Popcorn Fellowship.” The group will watch a “Moments from Mayberry - Being Faithful” video and play The Females vs. The Males “Mayberry Trivia Game.” Kids are invited and a trophy will be awarded to the winning team. The church will furnish the popcorn, those attending need to BYOSD (Bring Your Own Soft Drink). Rev. Tucker AKA Rick Hyde, Interim Pastor PS: Gomer says, “Hey!”




Where To Find A Copy of the Diamond:

People’s Pharmacy • C-Stop • EZ Mart
Tobacco & More • Gypsy Underground

‘Dear Preacher’

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ



JOURNEY TO HEAVEN
Two of my favorite old gospel songs are “Walking Alone at Eve” and “Paradise Valley”. I love these songs because they draw our thoughts away from earthly troubles to visions of Heaven, and I fondly remember my dad leading these in Murfreesboro.

As I close my eyes and think of the words to these songs about Heaven, a peace and calm comes over me and it makes everything else unimportant when compared to Heaven. As we press toward Heaven, let us meditate on other great songs such as “Heaven Holds All to Me”, “How Beautiful Heaven Must Be”, and “When We All Get to Heaven”. These words encourage us on the day to day journey of this life and its struggles.

The Bible gives descriptions of how great our Heavenly home will be: John 14:2 – In My Father’s House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

II Corinthians 5:1 – For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed,

we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Revelation 21:4 – And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Scripture assures us that God shall dwell with us, that we shall be His people and He shall be our God.

Let us encourage and uplift one another through scripture and song as we continue our journey to Heaven.

I pray that each of you may have a blessed week and strive daily to be Heaven bound.

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324 Facts About The BIBLE BY JOHN LEHTI

This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the book of Genesis intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times.

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC
ELIEZER WANTS TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY WITH REBEKAH TO BRING HER TO ISAAC AS HIS BRIDE, BUT REBEKAH'S FAMILY OBJECTS, NOW....

DO NOT HINDER ME – SEND ME AWAY NOW WITH THE MAIDEN!

WE MAY NEVER SEE REBEKAH AGAIN – DO NOT GO YET!

LABAN PUTS THE QUESTION DIRECTLY TO REBEKAH...

WILT THOU GO WITH THIS MAN?

I WILL GO!

AND SO IT IS SETTLED! REBEKAH IS MOUNTED ON A BRIDAL CAMEL, AND ALL PREPARATIONS FOR THE LONG TRIP BACK TO CANAAN ARE MADE....

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Bro. Buddy Ray

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PUBLIC NOTICE

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-2

AN ORDINANCE FOR FAIR HOUSING IN THE CITY OF MURFREESBORO, PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the City of Murfreesboro, Arkansas to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing throughout its jurisdiction. It is hereby declared that this policy of the City of Murfreesboro, Arkansas assures full and equal opportunity to all residents to obtain fair and adequate housing for themselves and their families without discrimination against them because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status and disability.

WHEREAS, definitions are as follows:

(a) "Dwelling" means any building, structure, or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed or intended for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure, or portion thereof.

(b) "Family" includes a single individual.

(c) "Person" includes one or more individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint-stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers, and fiduciaries.

(d) "To rent" includes to lease, to sublease, to let and otherwise to grant for a consideration the right to occupy premises not owned by the occupant.

(e) "Discriminatory housing practice" means an act that is unlawful as described in this Ordinance.

(f) "Handicap" means, with respect to a person –

(1) a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities,

(2) a record of having such an impairment, or

(3) being regarded as having such an impairment, but such term does not include current, illegal use of or addition to a controlled substance.

(g) "Aggrieved person" includes any person who –

(1) claims to have been injured by a discriminatory housing practice; or

(2) believes that such person will be injured by a discriminatory housing practice that is about to occur.

(h) "Familial status" means one or more individuals (who have not attained the age of 18 years) being domiciled with –

(1) a parent or another person having legal custody of such individual or individuals; or

(2) the designee of such parent or other person having such custody, with the written permission of such parent or other person.

The protections afforded against discrimination on the basis of familial status shall apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

WHEREAS, it shall be unlawful for any owner, lessee, sub-lessee, assignee, managing agent, or other person, firm or corporation having the right to sell, rent, lease or sublease any housing accommodation, or any agent of these—

(a) To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap;

(b) To discriminate against any person in the price, terms, conditions, or privileges of sale, rental or lease of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap;

(c) To make, print or publish, or cause to be made, printed or published any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination;

(d) To represent to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available;

(e) For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin;

(f) To discriminate in the sale or rental, or to otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a handicap of--

(A) that buyer or renter,

(B) a person residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it is so sold, rented, or made available; or

(C) any person associated with that buyer or renter;

(g) To refuse to any renter because of a handicap to make reasonable modifications to the dwelling or common use areas, if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing. (Where reasonable, the owner may permit changes only if the renter/lessee agrees to restore the property to its original condition upon termination of rental agreement.)

(h) To refuse to any renter because of a handicap to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing.

(i) To deliberately and knowingly refuse examination of any listing of residential real estate to any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status or disability.

WHEREAS, the prohibitions against discrimination in the sale or rental of housing set forth in the previous section shall apply to all dwellings except the following:

(a) Restricting rental or sale of a housing accommodation to a person of a certain age group when such housing accommodation is authorized, approved, financed, or subsidized in whole or in part for the benefit of that age group by a unit of state, local, or federal government;

(b) A religious organization, association, or society, or any nonprofit institution or organization operated, supervised or controlled by or in conjunction with a religious organization, association or society, from limiting the sale, rental or occupancy of a dwelling which it owns or operates for other than a commercial purpose to persons of the same religion, or from giving preference to such persons of the same religion, unless membership in such religion is restricted on account of race, color or national origin.

(c) Nor shall anything in this ordinance prohibit a private club not in fact open to the public, which as an incident to its primary purpose or purposes provides lodgings which it owns or operates for other than a commercial purpose, from limiting the rental or occupancy of such lodgings to its members or from giving preference to its members.

(d) Any single-family house sold or rented by an owner: **Provided**, that such private individual owner does not own more than three such single-family houses at any one time; **Provided further**, that in the case of the sale of any such single-family house by a private individual owner not residing in such house at the time of such sale or who was not the most recent resident of such house prior to such sale, the exemption granted by this subsection shall apply only with respect to one such sale within any twenty-four month period; **Provided further**, that such bona fide private individual owner does not own any interest in, nor is there owned or reserved on his behalf, under any express or voluntary agreement, title to or any right to all or a portion of the proceeds from the sale or rental of, more than three such single-family houses at any one time; **Provided further**, that the sale or rental of any such single-family house shall be excepted from the application of this title only if such house is sold or rented:

a. Without the use in any manner of the sales or rental facilities or the sales or rental services of any real estate broker, agent, or salesman, or of such facilities or services of any person in the business of selling or renting dwellings, or of any employee or agent of any such broker, agent, salesman, or person and

b. Without the publication, posting or mailing, after notice of any advertisement or written notice in violation of this ordinance, but nothing in this provision shall prohibit the use of attorneys, escrow agents, abstractors, title companies, and other such professional assistance as necessary to perfect or transfer title

(e) Rooms or units in dwellings containing living quarters occupied or intended to be occupied by no more than four families living independently of each other, if the owner actually maintains and occupies one of such living quarters as his residence.

WHEREAS, it shall be unlawful to discriminate in housing on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or marital status and precludes owners and operators of HUD-assisted housing from inquiring about the sexual orientation or gender identity of an applicant or occupant of a dwelling, whether renter-or owner-occupied.

This does not prohibit any individual from voluntarily self-identifying his or her own sexual orientation or gender identity nor does it prohibit otherwise lawful inquiries of an applicant or occupant's sex for the limited purpose of determining placement or meeting occupancy requirements in temporary or shared housing.

The Arkansas Fair Housing Commission and HUD may pursue an enforcement action upon violations of the Fair Housing Act, such as discrimination based on nonconformity with gender stereotypes or discrimination based on perceived disability.

WHEREAS, it shall be unlawful for any bank, building and loan association, insurance company or other corporation, association, firm or enterprise whose business consists in whole or in part in the making of commercial real estate loans, to:

(a) Deny a loan or other financial assistance to a person applying for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing, or maintaining a dwelling on account of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status and disability; or

(b) Discriminate in the fixing of the amount, interest rate, duration, or other terms or conditions of such loan or other financial assistance to the present or prospective owners, lessees, tenants or occupants of the dwelling or dwellings in relation to such loan or other financial assistance to be made or provided because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status or disability.

WHEREAS, it shall be unlawful to deny any person access to or membership or participation in any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers organization or other service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him in the terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation, on account of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MURFREESBORO, ARKANSAS, OF THE FOLLOWING:

SECTION 1: The City Council hereby approves the Ordinance for Fair Housing in the City of Murfreesboro.

SECTION 2: The authority and responsibility for administering this Act shall be in the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Murfreesboro, Arkansas.

The Chief Executive Officer may delegate any of these functions, duties, and powers to employees of the city or to boards of such employees, including functions, duties, and powers with respect to investigating, conciliating, hearing, determining, ordering, certifying, reporting or otherwise acting as to any work, business, or matter under this ordinance. The Chief Executive Officer shall by rule prescribe such rights of appeal from the decisions of his hearing examiners to other hearing examiners or to other officers in the City/County, to boards of officers or to himself, as shall be appropriate and in accordance with law.

All executive departments and agencies shall administer their programs and activities relating to housing and urban development in a manner affirmatively to further the purposes of this ordinance and shall cooperate with the Chief Executive Officer to further such purposes.

SECTION 3: Immediately after the enactment of this ordinance, the Chief Executive Officer shall commence such educational and conciliatory activities as will further the purposes of this ordinance. He shall call conferences of persons in the housing industry and other interested parties to acquaint them with the provisions of this ordinance and his suggested means of implementing it, and shall endeavor with their advice to work out programs of voluntary compliance and of enforcement.

SECTION 4: An "aggrieved person" who claims to have been injured by a discriminatory housing practice or who believes that he/she will be irrevocably injured by a discriminatory housing practice that is about to occur may file a complaint with the Chief Executive Officer. Complaints shall be in writing and shall contain such information and be in such form, as the Chief Executive Officer requires. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the Chief Executive Officer shall furnish a copy of the same to the person or persons who allegedly committed or was about to commit the alleged discriminatory housing practice. Within thirty days after receiving a complaint, or within thirty days after the expiration of any period of reference under subsection (c), the Chief Executive Officer shall investigate the complaint and give notice in writing to the person aggrieved whether he intends to resolve it. If the Chief Executive Officer decides to resolve the complaints, he shall proceed to try to eliminate or correct the alleged discriminatory housing practice by informal methods of conference, conciliation, and persuasion. Nothing said or done in the course of such informal endeavors may be made public or used as evidence in a subsequent proceeding under this ordinance without the written consent of the persons concerned. Any employee of the Chief Executive Officer who shall make public any information in violation of this provision shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year.

A complaint under Sub-section (a) shall be filed within one year after the alleged discriminatory housing practice occurred. Complaints shall be in writing and shall state the facts upon which the allegations of a discriminatory housing practice are based. Complaints may be reasonably and fairly amended at any time. A respondent may file an answer to the complaint against him and with the leave of the Chief Executive Officer, which shall be granted whenever it would be reasonable and fair to do so, may amend his answer at any time. Both complaints and answers shall be verified.

If within thirty days after a complaint is filed with the Chief Executive Officer, he/she has been unable to obtain volun-

tary compliance with this ordinance, the person aggrieved may, within thirty days thereafter, file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Chief Executive Officer will assist in filing.

If the Chief Executive Officer has been unable to obtain voluntary compliance within thirty days of the complaint, the person aggrieved may, within thirty days hereafter commence a civil action in any appropriate court, against the respondent named in the complaint, to enforce the rights granted or protected by this ordinance, insofar as such rights relate to the subject of the complaint. If the court finds that a discriminatory housing practice has occurred or is about to occur, the court may enjoin the respondent from engaging in such practice or order such affirmative action as may be appropriate.

In proceedings brought pursuant to this section, the burden of proof shall be on the complainant.

Whenever an action filed by an individual shall come to trial, the Chief Executive Officer shall immediately terminate all efforts to obtain voluntary compliance.

SECTION 5: In conducting an investigation, the Chief Executive Officer shall have access at all reasonable times to premises, records, documents, individuals, and other evidence or possible sources of evidence and may examine, record, and copy such materials and take and record the testimony or statements of such persons as are reasonably necessary for the furtherance of the investigation: **Provided, however**, that the Chief Executive Officer first complies with the provisions of the Fourth Amendment relating to unreasonable searches and seizures. The Chief Executive Officer may issue subpoenas to compel his access to or the production of such materials, or the appearance of such persons, and may issue interrogatories to a respondent, to the same extent and subject to the same limitations as would apply if the subpoenas or interrogatories were issued or served in aid of a civil action in the United States district court for the district in which the investigation is taking place. The Chief Executive Officer may administer oaths.

Upon written application to the Chief Executive Officer, a respondent shall be entitled to the issuance of a reasonable number of subpoenas by and in the name of the Chief Executive Officer to the same extent and subject to the same limitations as subpoenas issued by the Chief Executive Officer himself. Subpoenas issued at the request of a respondent shall show on their face the name and address of such respondent and shall state that they were issued at his request.

Witnesses summoned by subpoena of the Chief Executive Officer shall be entitled to the same witness and mileage fees as are witnesses in proceedings in United States district courts. Fees payable to a witness summoned by a subpoena issued at the request of a respondent shall be paid by him.

Within five days after service of a subpoena upon any person, such person may petition the Chief Executive Officer to revoke or modify the subpoena. The Chief Executive Officer shall grant the petition if he finds that the subpoena requires appearance or attendance at an unreasonable time or place, that it requires production of evidence which does not relate to any matter under investigation, that it does not describe with sufficient particularity the evidence to be produced, that compliance would be unduly onerous, or for other good reason. In case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena, the Chief Executive Officer or person at whose request it was issued may petition for enforcement in the Municipal or State court for the district in which the person to whom the subpoena was addressed resides, was served, etc.

Any person who willfully fails or neglects to attend and testify or to answer any lawful inquiry or to produce records, documents, or other evidence, if in his power to do so, in obedience to the subpoena or lawful order of the Chief Executive Officer shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both. Any person who, with intent thereby to mislead the Chief Executive Officer, shall make or cause to be made any false entry or statement of fact in any report, account, record, or another document submitted to the Chief Executive Officer pursuant to his subpoena or other order, or shall willfully neglect or fail to make or cause to be made full, true, and correct entries in such reports, accounts, records, or other documents, or shall willfully mutilate, alter, or by any other means falsify any documentary evidence, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

The Grantee's Attorney shall conduct all litigation in which the Chief Executive Officer participates as a party or as amicus pursuant to this ordinance.

SECTION 6: The rights granted by this Ordinance may be enforced by civil actions in State or local courts of general jurisdiction. A civil action shall be commenced within two years after the alleged discriminatory housing practice occurred: **Provided, however**, that the court shall continue such civil case brought pursuant to this Ordinance from time to time before

bringing it to trial if the court believes that the conciliation efforts of the Chief Executive Officer are likely to result in satisfactory settlement of the discriminatory housing practice complained of in the complaint made to the Chief Executive Officer and which practice forms the basis for the action in court: **And provided, however**, that any sale, encumbrance, or rental consummated prior to the issuance of any court order issued under the authority of this ordinance, and involving a bona fide purchaser, encumbrancer, or tenant without actual notice of the existence of the filing of a complaint or civil action under the provisions of this ordinance shall not be affected.

The court may grant as relief, as it deems appropriate, any permanent or temporary injunction, temporary restraining order, or other order, and may award to the plaintiff actual damages and not more than \$1,000 in punitive damages, together with court costs and reasonable attorney fees in the case of a prevailing plaintiff: **Provided**, That the said plaintiff in the opinion of the court is not financially able to assume said attorney's fees.

SECTION 7: If any provision, section, or paragraph of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the ordinance and the application of the provision to other persons not similarly situated or to other circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 8: It shall be unlawful practice for any person(s) to:

(a) Retaliate or discriminate against a person because the person has opposed a violation or because the person has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this ordinance;

(b) Attempt, directly or indirectly, to commit an act prohibited by this ordinance;

(c) Willfully interfere, obstruct, or prevent a person from complying with an order issued or rule promulgated under this ordinance; or

(d) Discharge, threaten, coerce, intimidate, or take any other adverse action against an employee, broker, agent, or other person because he or she refused to take part in a discriminatory housing practice or because he or she has aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted under the provisions of this ordinance; or

(e) To resist, prevent, impede, or interfere with the enforcing agent(s) in the lawful performance of duty under this ordinance.

SECTION 9: Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, by force or threat of force willfully injures, intimidates or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with--

(a) Any person because of his race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin and because he is or has been selling, purchasing, renting, financing, occupying, or contracting or negotiating for the sale, purchase, rental, financing or occupation of any dwelling, or applying for or participating in any service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings; or

(b) Any person because he is or has been, or in order to intimidate such person or any other person or any class of persons from:

(1) Participating, without discrimination on account of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, in any of the activities, services, organizations or facilities described in section (a) above; or

(2) Affording another person or class of persons opportunity or protection so to participate; or

(c) Any citizen because he is or has been, or in order to discourage such citizen or any other citizen from lawfully aiding or encouraging other persons to participate, without discrimination on account of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, in any of the activities, services, organizations or facilities described in subsection (a) above, or participating lawfully in speech or peaceful assembly opposing any denial of the opportunity to so participate--

Shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both; and if bodily injury results shall be fined not more than \$10,000, or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both; and if death results shall be subject to imprisonment for any term of years or for life.

A housing provider found to have violated the Fair Housing Act may be liable for actual damages, injunctive and other equitable relief, civil penalties and attorney's fees.

RESOLVED, APPROVED AND AD-
OPTED on this 9th day of June, 2025.

JIM O'NEAL, Mayor

Attest:
PENNY LAMB, Recorder/Treasurer
DATE: June 9, 2025

This publication was paid for by the City of Murfreesboro, office of the Treasurer. The amount paid for this publication is \$1,809.

Tuition set to increase across state universities

STATE CAPITOL WEEK IN REVIEW
Senator Steve Crowell

LITTLE ROCK – Tuition will increase at almost all Arkansas universities and colleges in the fall.

The University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees has approved tuition and fees for the school year that begins in the fall of 2025. The system comprises five four-year universities, several colleges in the medical school, an online university and eight two-year colleges. More than 70,000 students are enrolled. The system employs 28,000 people and has a total budget of more than \$4 billion.

A typical undergraduate at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville who takes 30 hours will see an increase of 3.89 percent. Tuition will go up 2.5 percent to \$8,092 and mandatory fees will increase 8.88 percent to \$2,404.

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock will increase fees by 1.93 percent, to \$3,161, and tuition for undergraduate residents will not change. The University of Arkansas at Monticello will see tuition increase from \$189 to \$194 per credit hour.

At the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff the cost of a credit hour will go from \$211 to \$219. The University of Arkansas at Fort Smith will increase tuition for the typical undergraduate from \$5,940 to \$6,600. Fees will go up from \$3,188 to \$3,226.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences will raise tuition by \$475 to \$17,475 at the College of Medicine. Tuition at the College of Pharmacy will remain \$10,428.

The Board of Trustees of the Arkansas State University System has also set new rates for tu-

ition and fees at its campuses. The system has four-year universities - ASU in Jonesboro and Henderson State in Arkadelphia.

It has a two-year college in Beebe with campuses in Heber Springs, Searcy and the Little Rock Air Force Base. It has a two-year college in Newport with additional campuses in Marked Tree and Jonesboro. Also, the system has colleges in West Memphis, Mountain Home and Malvern.

The ASU system includes a campus in Queretaro, Mexico. In total, the system enrolls almost 35,000 students.

ASU at Jonesboro will raise tuition and fees by 3.3 percent, to \$10,430. Henderson State will raise tuition and fees 2.5 percent, to \$10,560. At both ASU-Newport and ASU-Beebe tuition and fees will be \$4,290, up 3.6 percent and 2.9 percent respectively.

At ASU Mid-South in West Memphis tuition and fees will increase 1.9 percent, to \$4,770. At ASU-Mountain Home tuition and fees will increase 1.4 percent, to \$4,200.

The University of Central Arkansas at Conway will raise tuition and fees by an average of 3.96 percent for graduate and undergraduate students. A typical undergrad who enrolls for 30 credit hours over two semesters will pay \$10,940, up from \$10,523 this year.

Arkansas Tech in Russellville will increase tuition and fees for a typical undergraduate by 2.55 percent. A student taking 15 hours a semester will pay \$5,113 a semester. That is \$127 more than last year. Students at the Ozark campus enrolled in skilled career education and skilled trades will pay \$140 per credit hour, up from \$136 last year.

Free meals still available for youth in summer

MURFREESBORO -- In partnership with Harvest Food Bank of Texarkana, Murfreesboro's First United Methodist Church (FUMC) is offering summer meals for children 18 years and younger during the summer while school is out of session.

The program is free and will provide meals for every day of the week to participants.

The meals will be distributed on Mondays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. from May 19-August 3.

Parents and guardians may pick up the meals

for their children without the children present.

Monday distributions will include three meals, while Thursday pickups will have four meals.

Meals may be picked up at the Methodist Church's Blessed Beginnings building, located at 403 Second Avenue in Murfreesboro. Participants are asked to enter from the FUMC Family Life Center on Third Street.

For more information on the program, call the church at (870) 285-2579.

Students collecting old American flags

MURFREESBORO -- Several Pike County 4-H students are conducting a project to properly dispose of old American flags.

Flags may be dropped off at the Pike County Courthouse in Murfreesboro.

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REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY

DEWAYNE HOLLOWAY
Editor, Glenwood Herald

LANGLEY – While most people were preparing for a day with dad for Father’s Day the hearts of some families weighed heavily with the memory of a 15 year old tragedy that claimed the lives of 20 people at Albert Pike Recreation Area.

The slash flood that swept through parts of Albert Pike Recreation Area in the early morning hours of June 11, 2010 were later labeled as a “100 year event”, stressing the unique nature of the horrible tragedy.

Storms bringing heavy rain began moving into the area June 10, 2010 sparking flash flood watches for the area. As the evening hours drifted into early morning rain had increased to the point that the Little Missouri River and neighboring Caddo River were rising at a rate of eight feet per hour with the Little Missouri River peaking at over 23 feet near Langley.

The geological topography surrounding the Loop D section of Albert Pike resulted in a bottleneck for rising water flowing out of nearby streams and creeks feeding into the already swollen Little Missouri River. As the water levels quickly rose campers in the area had little warning of the danger quickly pressing upon them.

By the time the rain stopped and the flash flood began to recede with over 200 people caught in the event according to estimates by the American Red Cross. After search and rescue efforts ended it was discovered that 20 people, many of which were children, had lost their lives in the tragic event.

The victims were Anthony Smith, Katelynn Smith and Joey Smith of Gloster, Louisiana; Shane Basinger, Jady Basinger, and Kinsley Basinger of Shreveport, Louisiana; Robert Lynn Shumake; Wilene Shumake and Rick Shumake of Dekalb, Texas; Eric Sultz of Nash Texas; Sheri Wade of Ashdown, Arkansas, Leslie Jez and Kaden Jez of Foreman; Bruce Roeder, Debbie Roeder, and Kay Roeder of Luling, Louisiana; Julie Free-

man, Kylee Sullivan, Gayble V Moss, and Debra McMaster of Texarkana, Texas

In the aftermath of the event the U.S. Forest Service closed campsites on Albert Pike Recreation Area with the area restricted to day use only. Public support for the reopening of the area to camping led to a study by the U.S. Forest Service U.S. Representative Bruce Westerman advocated for the reopening of the area to camping.

In December 2024, Congressman Westerman announced that camping was to return to Albert Pike Recreation Area thanks to the passing of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act, also known as the EXPLORE Act.

Included in the bill is a provision to reopen overnight camping at Albert Pike Recreation Area. Westerman stated in his column, “Numerous constituents have expressed

their disappointment with the initial decision by the Forest Service to suspend overnight camping, and this bill will reinstate that access in addition to better management of the Albert Pike Recreation Area.”

Congressman Westerman’s EXPLORE Act will:

- Safely re-open any existing overnight campsites outside of the 100-year flood plain within 30 days of the bill’s enactment.
- Identify 54 areas that may be suitable for overnight camping in the recreation area within 6 months of the bill’s enactment.
- Establish at least 27 new overnight camping sites outside of the 100-year flood plain, including at least 8 with electric and water hookups, for public use within 2 years of the bill’s enactment.
- Require the rehabilitation necessary to make publicly accessible areas in APRA suitable for year-round day use.



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