

The Murfreesboro Diamond

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Serving South Pike County, Arkansas Since 1975

◆◆◆ Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park ◆◆◆



Cheer camp announced

Attendees to be instructed by MHS cheerleaders

MURFREESBORO -- The "Pack the Pit" cheer camp will be held Friday, August 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Murfreesboro High School.

The camp is open to female students in grades kindergarten-sixth grades and will cost \$25 per camper to attend.

The students will learn the MHS cheerleaders' pep rally cheers and the basics of cheerleading in a session instructed by the MHS cheerleaders.

Students may be registered at osp.osmsinc.com/p/yr015-6.

For more information about the camp, please e-mail melissa.jones@rattlers.org or melissa.cornish@rattlers.org.

OCC seeks donations for garage sale

NASHVILLE -- Operation Christmas Child's (OCC) semi-annual garage sale will be held on Friday, August 1, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, August 2, 8 a.m.-12 a.m. in the Family Activity Building (FAB) of the First Baptist Church in Nashville (College & 2nd Streets).

In order for this garage sale to be successful, the group need your donations of no longer wanted but still usable furniture, tools, dishes, lamps, decorations, art, collectables, electronics, toys, jewelry, books, clothing, etc.

OCC volunteers will accept donations at the FAB on Monday-Thursday, July 28-31.

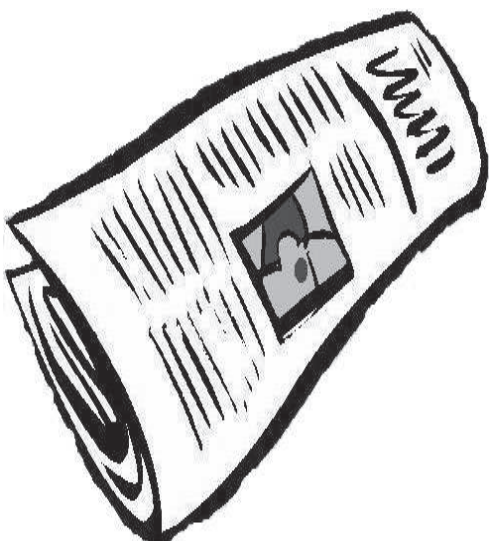
"Please mark your calendar with the donation times and especially the garage sale times. Thanks for your generous donations which will go toward helping children in need around the world," said the release.

FBC to host benefit bunco fundraiser

MURFREESBORO -- The First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, located at 500 S. Washington, will be hosting a Bunco fundraiser on Monday, July 28 starting at 6 p.m. The fundraiser is for missions to help children.

Participants are asked to bring a small stuffed animal for a free bunco. The cost is \$30 if pre-registered or \$35 at the door.

For more information or to pre-register call (903) 244-1635.



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Visitor finds 3.36-carat diamond at Crater

BY SARAH REAP,
Interpreter, Crater of Diamonds State Park

MURFREESBORO, Ark. -- Scott and Jennifer Freitas of New Port Richey, Florida, visited Arkansas' Crater of Diamonds State Park on July 1 and took home the second-largest diamond of the year.

Having first heard about the park on the Bobby Bones Show, the Freitas planned a several-week road trip through Alabama and Mississippi, with Crater of Diamonds State Park as their bucket list destination. Jennifer was particularly excited, as she holds a degree in geology.

As avid miners of rubies, sapphires, and smoky quartz, the Freitas showed up to the park Tuesday morning at 8:30 a.m., ready to dig and full of hope. Once finding a spot to dig, the Freitas dug a few buckets, only digging about 6-8 inches deep.

The couple chose to wet sift, a method that many guests use to search for diamonds. Guests submerge screen sets in water to wash away the soil. Once the soil is removed, the gravel is then separated by size and weight to make diamonds easier to find. Many large diamonds seen in the news are found by surface searching, but only about 10% of diamonds are found that way. Most diamonds found at the park are found by wet sifting.

After sifting through the first couple of buckets, Jennifer noted, "This isn't like mining for rubies; we may end up walking away empty-handed."

Luckily, Jennifer didn't have to wait much longer because on the third bucket is when Scott pulled his screen out of the water and noticed a gorgeous glimmering stone staring back up at him.

Scott called over to Jennifer and said, "Hey, I think I have one!" Jennifer replied with "Oh yeah, right." But after inspecting the stone, Jennifer also knew they had something special.

The couple finished sifting through the



THE FREITAS DASH DIAMOND

Submitted photos/CODSP

bucket before bringing their find to the park's rock and mineral identification table. Park staff identified the unmistakable stone as a 3.36-carat white diamond. The beautiful diamond is crystal clear in the center with off-white edges, about the size of a blueberry.

"I was stunned when I saw the pictures of the diamond," notes Park Superintendent Caleb Howell. "The shape, clarity, color and size made it a beautifully natural gemstone. It was a great reminder of the awesomeness of Crater of Diamonds State Park."

Many people who find diamonds at Crater of Diamonds State Park choose to name their gems. The Freitas have chosen to name their di-

amond, the Dash Diamond, after their beloved family dog.

The Freitas Dash Diamond is the second-largest diamond registered at the park this year, following the 3.81-carat Duke Diamond, also named after a beloved dog. As of this publication, 332 diamonds have been registered at Crater of Diamonds State Park in 2025.

In total, over 75,000 diamonds have been unearthed at the Crater of Diamonds State Park since the first diamonds were discovered in 1906 by John Huddleston, a farmer who owned the land long before it became an Arkansas State Park in 1972.

Local man commits suicide after charges filed

BY JOHN BALCH
Nashville News-Leader

MURFREESBORO -- A Murfreesboro man charged last week with felony domestic violence died by his own hand two days after the charges were filed, according to information from the Pike County Sheriff's Department.

Benjamin Thomas Stevens, 48, died of a self-inflicted gunshot on Friday, July 18. He had been charged in Pike County with two counts of felony domestic battery and misdemeanor

terroristic threatening on July 16. Stevens had been held in the county jail until his release on \$30,000 bond and his first court appearance was scheduled for Monday, July 21. The charges against Stevens were officially dismissed Monday.

According to an incident report, the Pike County Sheriff's Department received a 911 call on July 18 around 11:30 a.m. from a 39-year-old female who reported she had been beaten by Stevens and that he allegedly had threatened to kill her. The incident was reported to have hap-

pened at the home of a Stevens' relative.

The victim also stated that Stevens was intoxicated and had allegedly mentioned killing another woman and himself. The victim eventually left the home and waited at a nearby intersection for law officials to arrive. She refused a several requests for medical treatment and informed officers of Stevens' possible whereabouts.

Around 12 noon, law officials found Stevens' body in the home's carport. The relatives were not at home at the time.

School announces gate fee raised

BY JOHN BALCH
Nashville News-Leader staff

MURFREESBORO -- South Pike County School Superintendent Tanya Wilcher reported last week the district is "getting closer to wrapping up" the completion of the sports complex project that started in mid-February 2024.

The project officially started in December 2023 when SPCSD board members approved a resolution authorizing the district to issue second-lien bonds "in an estimated amount of \$1,830,000 for the purposes of constructing athletic facilities" with any remaining funds to be used for other construction, renovation and equipment purchases.

Wilcher said work on complex perimeter fence was done and the parking lot extension was underway last week to complete the project.

The project's original price tag was estimated at \$1.750 million in 2023, but Wilcher said during last week's July board meeting that the project went over the \$1.822 million secured by the bond issue by approximately \$512,823.

The amount to pay off the project from the district's general building fund was approved by the board last week, as was \$26,250 for track improvements from the same account.

The complex includes baseball and softball fields located on the 27-acre tract purchased by the district in 2007 for \$48,000. The land adjoins the campus and is north of the visitors' side of Rattler Stadium.

In other sports-related news, the district will be increasing gate costs at Rattler Stadium to \$7. Wilcher said the increase is consistent with other districts facing rising costs. She added that there are plans to offer special ticket packages for both junior and senior high games.

Also, Wilcher said the district's coaching duties have been set for the school year and in-

clude:

- Jay Turley, head football coach and athletic director
- Chuck Lowery, football assistant coach, head track coach, youth sports coordinator
- Kevin Bright, football assistant coach, head boys basketball coach
- Blevin Boyd, head girls basketball coach, offseason (boys and girls)
- Marc McRae, head baseball coach
- Traci Jones, head softball coach
- Jordan Shanks, head cross country coach, assistant track coach
- Jonathan Bennet, football assistant coach, strength and conditioning
- Buddy Ray, assistant football coach

In other July business, the board approved a "board to board" transfer of a student from a Nashville third-grader; approved student handbook changes, as presented; and accepted a student accident plan bid from EBI Players Health for the 2025-2026 school year.

Also, the board approved a \$762,500 building fund transfer to keep the district operating fund's ending balance at a percentage specified by the state to avoid fiscal distress.

After a short closed executive session, the board voted to hire Ed Jones and Breanna Stevens as custodians for the new school year and to allow employee Beck Avery to work extra days before school starts cleaning floors.



Submitted photo/City of Murfreesboro

SWORN IN ... Caleb Howell was sworn in as a member of the Murfreesboro Water Commission board by city recorder/treasurer Penny Lamb on July 15 after Howell's appointment by the city council. His term last until February of 2027.

PIKE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT DOCKET

July 8, 2025
BF=Bond Forfeited

PIKE COUNTY

Alexander, Garrett Anthony, 21, Arkadelphia, \$125 BF, speeding

Barksdale, James Benjamin, 18, Amity, \$135 BF, speeding

Boyd, Kolton Lee, 18, Kirby, \$315 BF, no proof of liability insurance; \$125 BF, improper muffler; \$125 BF, careless prohibited driving

Burrus, Logan Dean, 17, Nashville, \$45 BF, no seat belt

Camacho, Brayan, 18, Hope, \$185 BF, speeding

Cogburn, Larissa R., 21, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay, \$570 owed

Collins, Zachary R., 38, Murfreesboro, guilty of failure to pay, \$1,591 owed

Crabtree, Jared W., 19, Murfreesboro, \$135 BF, speeding

Dewsbury, Bryce G., 53, Shawnee Mission, Kan., \$135 BF, speeding

Dixon, Ronald G., 64, Delight, guilty of possession of controlled substance, fined \$1,075 and license suspended for six months

Easttam, Kimber Elaine, 17, Camden, \$135 BF, speeding

Eoff, Holly A., 44, Delight, guilty of failure to present insurance, fined \$70

Fagan, James Tristan, 22, Bigelow, \$125 BF, speeding

Fannin, Charles Nathan, 43, Delight, \$220 BF, disorderly conduct

Files, Katelyn Leigh, 24, Amity, guilty of failure to pay, \$800 owed

Flores, Jose Irene, 69, Crosby, Texas, \$125 BF, violation of permit

Garrett, Timothy Scott, 53, Deer Lodge, Mt., guilty of failure to pay, \$795 owed

Hathcock, Hanna Grace, 26, Prescott, guilty of failure to pay, \$650 owed

Hawthorn, Lucas Wayne, 21, Mount Ida, \$125 BF, failure to register tags/expired; \$325 BF, driving with suspended license

Hudson, Howard Lee, 73, Nardin, Okla., \$125 BF, over height-over wide; \$205 BF, failure to appear

Hutcheson, Lucas Bankston, 46, Taskwood, guilty of driving with suspended license, fined \$125; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$70

Hutchings, Jeffrey Jack, 49, Cheyenne, Wyo., \$135 BF, speeding

Keek, Zachary Andrew, 27, Broken Bow, Okla., \$125 BF,

speeding

Lamb, Curtis D., 37, Delight, \$135 BF, speeding

Lowery, Charles Wayne, 60, Murfreesboro, \$45 BF, non seat belt

Lowery, Steven D., 68, Murfreesboro, \$125 BF, no child restraint device; \$45 BF, no seat belt

Martinez, Kayle Aylin, 26, Hot Springs, \$135 BF, speeding

Maxfield, Alexandra H., 36, Arkadelphia, guilty of speeding, fined \$135; guilty of violation of Ignition Interlock Device Act, fined \$170

McCormick, Sydney Nicole, 17, Glenwood, \$125 BF, speeding

Murray, Jeffery K., 41, Wickes, \$423.38 BF, violation of Arkansas Hot Check Law; \$245 BF, violation of AHCL

Murray, Leah Marie, 21, Queen City, Texas, \$135 BF, speeding

Nuthulapati, Stanley S., 37, Dallas, Texas, \$135 BF, speeding

Oliver, Tony Parker, 51, Newhope, \$315 BF, no proof of liability insurance

Pate, Clifton M., 29, Amity, guilty of third-degree domestic battery, fined \$580; guilty of fleeing, fined \$630; guilty of resisting arrest, fined \$500; guilty criminal impersonation, fined \$655; guilty of driving with suspended license, fined \$325; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$315; guilty of fictitious tags, fined \$125

Perez, Valeria Marie, 36, Mount Ida, \$125 BF, speeding; \$205 BF, failure to appear

Pipkins, Warner, 32, Kirby, \$125 BF, speeding

Porter, Kinsey Leigh, 30, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay, \$1,380 owed

Purtle, Valerie Miranda, 40, McCaskill, \$125 BF, speeding

Qualls, Allen Jay, 29, Mount Ida, guilty of failure to pay, \$910 owed

Saldana, Judy K., 61, Murfreesboro, \$135 BF, speeding

Sanchez, Heriberto Pina, 26, Nashville, \$205 BF, failure to pay

Smillie, James D., 35, Delight, \$480 BF, third-degree battery

Snell, Tempest Michelle, 35, Nashville, \$125 BF, defective tires

Staggs, Toney Adell, 41, Nashville, \$125 BF, speeding

Thomas, Princess Sadie, 23, Mineral Springs, \$205 BF, failure to pay

Vanuaken, Brianna S., 42, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay, \$1,285 owed

Wakefield, Matthew Q., 26, Mountain View, \$185 BF, speeding

CITY OF MURFREESBORO

Alden, Ashley C., 41, Murfreesboro, guilty of driving with suspended license, fined \$345

Allen, John D., 26, Saratoga, \$145 BF, obstruction of interior prohibited; \$225 BF, failure to appear; \$225 BF, failure to appear

Anderson, David J., 58, Murfreesboro, violation of city dog/cat ordinance, fined \$165

Atterberry, Robin A., 49, Murfreesboro, guilty of failure to pay, \$620 owed

Dean, James Charles, 50, Murfreesboro, guilty of failure to appear, fined \$225; guilty of driving with suspended license, fined \$345; guilty of running stop sign, fined \$145; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$225; guilty of failure to pay, \$1,660 owed

Gastelum, Rogelio, 28, Murfreesboro, guilty of failure to pay, \$1,010 owed

Hudson, Ryan James, 25, Murfreesboro, guilty of third-degree battery, fined \$500

Terwilliger, Lacey Renay, 36, Nashville, guilty of failure to register tags/expired, fined \$145; \$45 BF, no seat belt

White, Cecil Ray, 46, Nashville, guilty of driving with sus-

DOCKET Continued on Page 5

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

JULY 29 -- The Call in Pike and Montgomery counties will be holding a prayer meeting on Tuesday, July 29 at 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church (MAC building) in Glenwood.

fourth annual Keith Stone Memorial Car Show has changed their dates to Friday and Saturday, Sept. 19-20 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 with a participant's choice award. After the awards, a \$500 drawing will be held along with door prizes and a 50/50 pot. Contact Kirk Stone at (870) 703-7365 for more information.

AUGUST 3 -- The Crossroads Assembly of God will be hosting their Fish Fry Fundraiser on Sunday, August 3, starting after morning services. The menu will consist of fried catfish, beans, fries, coleslaw, hushpuppies, dessert and a drink. Price will be \$12 for ages 7 and up and \$6 for ages 6 and under. To go trays will be available. Crossroads Assembly of God is located at 728 AR-19, Delight. All funds will go toward yearly church insurance cost.

SEND YOUR COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS TO mdiamond@windstream.net

Murfreesboro Diamond

Your Hometown Newspaper since 1975

Located in the County Seat of Pike County • Murfreesboro, Arkansas
*Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park
Little Missouri River • Lake Greason*

- John Robert Schirmer, Publisher
- P.J. Tracy IV, Editor
- Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

Published by Nashville Leader Inc.,
418 North Main Street
Nashville, AR 71852

Periodical Class postage paid at Murfreesboro, AR

The Murfreesboro Diamond (USPC 103-230) is published every Wednesday.

Subscription Rates: \$40 per year in area: *Pike, Howard, Hempstead, Clark, Nevada & Montgomery counties;* \$55 per year elsewhere.

\$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.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF SALE

The City of Murfreesboro Police Department is requesting sealed bids for the sale of a 2020 Ford Explorer Hybrid, mileage 55,103, with an appraised value of \$23,438. Bids must be received by mail or delivery to 805 N. Washington Ave, Murfreesboro, AR 71958 no later than August 8, 2025 by 4:00 pm. Bids will be opened and canvassed on August 11, 2025. The City of Murfreesboro reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Any questions may be directed to admin@murfreesboro-ar.gov or call (870) 285-3732.

This publication was paid for by the City of Murfreesboro. The amount paid for this publication is \$ 50.40 (c.o.m., 112w., 3,4)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pike County Sheriff's Department is updating the current Avalon camera system in jail. We are taking bids for 16 new cameras, 1 work station with 64 TB server. Deadline is July 29, 2025. Contact Sheriff Travis Hill at 870-285-3301 or email pike.secretary@yahoo.com, for bid or more information. Pike County Sheriff's Department, 305 Industrial Park Drive, Murfreesboro, Ar 71958.

This publication was paid for by the Pike County Sheriff's Office. The amount paid for this publication is \$36.45. (p.c.s.o. 81w., 2,3)

PUBLIC NOTICE

2025 PROPOSED BUDGET: STREET FUND CITY OF DAISY

BEGINNING BALANCE: \$3,793.72

REVENUE:	
Municipal Aid (Hwy Severance)	\$80.00
Municipal Aid (Fuel Tax)	\$600.00
Municipal Aid (Highway Construction)	\$100.00
Municipal Aid (Department Finance)	\$6,500.00
Chambers Interest	\$10.00
Pike County Road Tax	\$2,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$9,290.00

EXPENSES:	
South Central Electric	\$2,000.00
Advertisement	\$100.00
Road Maintenance Eugene W.	\$7,000.00
Harland Checks	\$30.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$9,130.00

This publication was paid for by the City of Daisy. The amount paid for this publication is \$40.50. (c.o.d., 90w., 2,3)

AUCTION PIKE COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT

Sale Location: 305 INDUSTRIAL PARK DR. ~ MURFREESBORO AR. 71958
SATURDAY JULY 26~10 AM

PIKE COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT will be selling the following items in conjunction with the PC Sheriff's Department Auction consisting of;

LOT 9-Skid Steer Attachment, PALIDIN #105068, 415710 Sheepfoot Roller Vibrator Packer 8' Wide "Like New"

LOT 10-Etnyre K-5179 Chip Spreader for Chipping and Sealing Roads, Pre-Def Cummins Diesel, 1387± Hours

LOT 11-SW100 SAKIA Double Drum, Packer 1437± Hours

LOT 12- 2006 Cat Eye Chevy 2500 "3/4 ton" 4X4, 6.0 Gas, Automatic Transmission, ????? Miles.

LOT13-Welding and Torch Trailer with a MILLER Bobcat 225G 867± Hours (no bottles)These items can be seen at the Road Department during business hours but will be moved to the SO.

LIVE AUCTION TERMS: Cash or Good Check day of Auction 10% Buyer Premium. Auction announcements take precedence. **Can't make the Live Auction? Start Bidding your price now online plus see more information on our website.**

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PUBLIC NOTICE

2025 PROPOSED BUDGET: GENERAL FUND CITY OF DAISY

BEGINNING BALANCE: \$23,218.91

REVENUE:	
Daisy Fire Department (p/r transfer)	\$1,200.00
Chambers Interest	\$30.00
State of Arkansas Act (municipal aid)	\$1,300.00
State of Arkansas Property (municipal aid)	\$100.00
State of Arkansas (sales tax)	\$18,000.00
Pike County Road Tax	\$11,000.00
State of Arkansas (Great American Fund)	\$0.00
State of Arkansas-Budget Stanlization	\$200.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$31,830.00

EXPENSES:	
Salaries	\$7,200.00
Payroll Tax Withheld	\$0.00
Boyd Contracting	\$8,100.00
Upper South West Landfill	\$3,000.00
US Treasurer 944 P/R Tax	\$1,000.00
Municipal Property	\$1,700.00
Municipal Membership	\$250.00
Municipal Workers Comp	\$250.00
League of City Membership	\$200.00
Office Supplies	\$200.00
Advertisement	\$300.00
Hartland Checks	\$130.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00
USPS	\$200.00
Fema Grant	\$4,000.00
Daisy Fireworks	\$2,000.00
South Central Internet	\$1,600.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$31,130.00

This publication was paid for by the City of Daisy. The amount paid for this publication is \$76.05. (c.o.d., 169w., 2,3)

AUCTION PIKE COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

305 INDUSTRIAL PARK DR. ~ MURFREESBORO AR. 71958
SATURDAY JULY 26~10 AM

PIKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT will be selling at public auction the following vehicles **LIVE with ONLINE BIDDING at the SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.** These vehicles are retired patrol cars, trucks and SUVs and are in good running condition and have cold air, drive one home.

(1) 2008 Chevrolet 1500 EX Cab, 4X4, 5.3L, 182,433 Miles

(2) 2011 Ford F150, 4x4, Big 6.2L, 148,245 Miles

(3) 2014 Dodge Charger, 5.7L HEMI, 161,241 Miles

(4) 2015 Dodge Charger, 5.7L HEMI, 143,353 Miles

(5) 2016 Dodge Charger, 5.7L HEMI, 147,592 Miles

(6) 2016 Dodge Charger, 5.7L HEMI, 172,351 Miles

(7) 2019 Dodge Durango, 3.6 V6, 102,688 Miles

(8) 2019 Dodge Durango, 3.6 V6, 109,425 Miles

Vehicles are in good running condition, air blowing cold

TERMS: Cash or Good Check day of auction 10% Buyer Premium. Auction day announcements take precedence. **Can't make Live Auction? Go to FowlerAuctioneers.com** for more information and to register to Start Bidding your price. Have your paid receipt to pickup your purchases. These units are displayed at the SO Behind SONIC

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Pike County Extension experiences change in staff

MURFREESBORO -- After the recent departure of the popular 4-H program assistant Christina Myrkle, the Pike County Extension service revamped its office staff.

Shannon Ballard, former administration specialist, move to take the position of 4-H program assistant, allowing the office to hire Hallie Caldwell as the new administration specialist.

Caldwell, a 2022 graduate of Nashville High School, is the daughter of Jillian and Dr. Brian Caldwell, and is the sister of Kade and Kooper. She also is the former Miss Howard County.

She jokes that her brothers are always in the newspaper, while she only appears once every three years.

Approximately one month into the job she is happy with the decision, calling it a "great workplace that's drama free."

"I like it because I get to do a lot with helping with kids in the 4-H program and I really like that. I couldn't be a teacher ... but this is small doses, so it's good," she says with a laugh.

She said that the job came along at the right time.

"I was looking to get out on my own and find something I would enjoy ... I was working two [part-time] jobs at a time and just decided I needed one."

She said the job would open up educational avenues for her -- such as finishing her bachelor's degree in communications after having already earned two associate's degrees.

"[Extension] will help me get my bachelor's degree, which will help me move up someday. I really like working here, in this system, so I would love to move up once I get my degree."

Caldwell said her coworkers were great -- "Mrs. Eva [Langley] is hilarious, Mrs. Shannon helped me get this job, and Codie [McAlister] and I get to yap all the time ... so it's pretty nice. I've already gotten to learn how to can [foods] and sew, so it's pretty cool."

She said she was glad she got an opportunity to "help out her community and the 4-H kids ... and encourage them to step out and do. Hopefully I can be a good role model for 4-H. I love living in Murfreesboro and so glad to be a part of this community. They have been so welcoming to me and I appreciate it more than they will ever know."

She said she was an "honorary Rattler at heart" and would "like to clarify I was the first Caldwell child [among her siblings] to graduate from Murfreesboro ... in kindergarten. I was here first."

SHANNON BALLARD

Ballard, who was the Pike County administrative specialist for two and a half years, decided she wanted to move up after Myrkle's absence.

"I love to work with kids ... I've been a 4-H leader for five years. I wanted to use that experience at a higher level."

Ballard said 4-H was special because it "young people develop life skills and become more involved in their community."

To get better acquainted with the community, Ballard will host 4-H informational gatherings for prospective students and parents. The first is scheduled for August 25 at the Murfreesboro Municipal Building in Murfreesboro at 6 p.m. Refreshments will be served to all attendees.

A second meeting is prospectively set for August 12 at 6 p.m. at the Banium Library and Learning Center in Glenwood. That date has yet to be definitively confirmed.

"Glenwood has not had a functional 4-H program [Caddo River Gems] in effect since I've been here, and I've had people reach out to me about starting that back up. The meetings will get me out in the community and meet people I've not yet met. I'm working for the county ... not just Murfreesboro. I'd like to get a club going and then have parent leaders take it over."

She notes that the Murfreesboro 4-H program meets the first Wednesday of the month and Kirby's program meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

Ballard, a Pike County resident was a Nashville High School graduate of 1995, is the wife of Cory Ballard and has four "bio-children" -- Amy, Zach, Cayden and Carson. She also has foster

parented a number of children.

"I have lived in Pike County most of my life -- local kids are my passion. They need something that will give them direction and guidance."

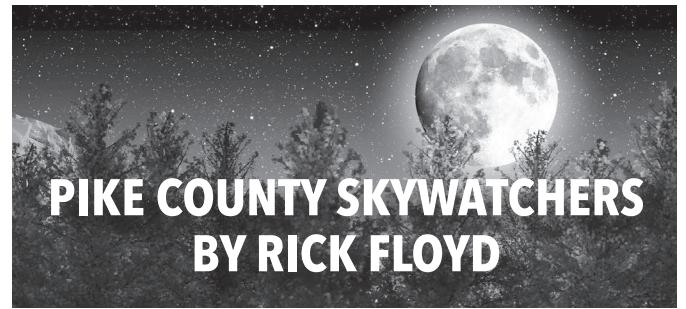
She said the office staff was great and would serve the community well.

"I enjoy working with them -- we just added Hallie to the team -- we all jump in, work together and will get things done. It's just a great atmosphere."



Staff/Submitted photos

HALLIE CALDWELL (above)
AND SHANNON BALLARD (below)



Things to note this week

There are plenty of astronomical events this week. A very thin sliver of the Moon will be close to Jupiter in the hour or so before sunrise on July 23 with bright Venus just above the two. Later on July 28 the waxing crescent moon will be low in the west just before sunset only 4 degrees from Mars. Be sure to have a good view of the horizon for both events.

Venus, as mentioned last week, will be getting lower in the eastern pre-sunrise sky each day until it goes out of view as the "morning star" in November. Venus, unlike the planets that are further from the Sun than Earth, does not cross the night sky. It is either the "morning star" or the "evening star," and it moves back and forth every 584 days (19 months).

Amazingly, some ancient cultures, like the Sumerians and the Maya, actually figured out that the morning and evening objects were actually the same. This conclusion was reached after many years of careful observations and record keeping plus some skilled mathematical calculations. Given the tools and theoretical concepts they had to work with, this was a very impressive accomplishment.

The Perseid Meteor Shower, perhaps the best know of all of them, started on July 17 and will continue through August 23. The peak period will be on August 12-13, but the Moon will be about 84% full then, so its light will obscure some of the dimmer meteor streaks. During that time-frame there will be good chances to see some of the bright flashes and fire-balls for which the Perseid are noted.

Meteor showers happen with the Earth passes through a trail of cosmic debris left by a comet. There are an estimated 900 or so such trails of which 100 are well established. The comet Swift-Tuttle is the one that left the Perseid trail. It was discovered in 1862 and orbits the Sun every 133 years. It was last seen from Earth in 1992, and will return to view in 2126.

The best time to watch a meteor shower is after midnight, say 2 or 3 a.m. This is because the Earth spins and moves around the Sun our part of the world is headed straight into the debris at that time. Look for constellations Perseus from where many of the meteors will seem to radiate, but streaks and fire-balls can come from other directions too. The first recorded viewing of this particular shower was made by the Chinese in 36 A.D.

WASTE



**Clayton
Tinkes**

I'm proud to announce that I'm running for Prosecuting Attorney in the 9th West Judicial District. I grew up in Cerro Gordo and moved to Ben Lomond during high school, where I was taught at a young age the small-town values of faith, fairness, and personal responsibility. Those same values guide my work in the courtroom and in the community. I've stood up for people when it mattered most, and now I'm ready to stand up for all of us.

At 17 years old, in the wake of 9/11, I had the honor of enlisting in the U.S. Air Force to serve our country. After receiving an honorable discharge from active duty, I used the G.I. Bill to attend college and then law school. I understand the meaning of commitment, hard work, and personal responsibility, and I will carry those values into the job of Prosecuting Attorney.

As a service member, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. As a trial attorney, I've carried that same oath into the courtroom, supporting and defending children who've been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect, and fighting to ensure everyone is given the protections guaranteed by our Constitution.

I took my oath to defend this country seriously. I will take my oath to defend the people of Pike, Little River, Howard, and Sevier counties just as seriously.

As your next Prosecuting Attorney, my focus will be simple:

- Protect kids and families
- Hold offenders accountable for their actions
- Restore public trust in the courtroom

I'll bring the same work ethic and sense of duty to this office that I've carried throughout my life. Justice should be fair, honest, and rooted in common sense. That is exactly what I will fight for.

— Clayton Tinkes

(Political ad paid for by Clayton Tinkes)

State provides more funding for county fairs

LITTLE ROCK -- Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture today announced more than \$1.4 million in funding to support Arkansas' local fairs and livestock shows.

The funding — awarded through the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Fair Funding Program — will assist with operational costs, facility improvements, and livestock-related expenses at 80 different fairs and livestock shows across the state.

"Agriculture isn't just Arkansas' largest industry — it's part of our way of life," said Governor Sanders. "The Fair Funding program helps showcase our farmers and ranchers and gets the next generation excited about agriculture — while also being a great way for small town Arkansas to come together and have fun."

"We're proud to work with fairs and livestock shows throughout the state to highlight the importance of our state's largest industry and provide opportunities for the next generation to participate in the industry that provides the food, fiber, fuel, and shelter that is critical to the daily lives of every Arkansan," said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward.

Pike County Fair Association will receive \$13,169.20.

In addition to administering funds through the Fair Funding Program, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture plays a vital role in safeguarding animal health during all fairs and livestock shows. Last year alone, livestock inspectors spent more than 1,600 hours at fairs across the state and inspected more than 1,800 cattle, 1,400 hogs, 2,200 goats, 1,000 sheep, 7,000 poultry, 1,700 rabbits, and 470 equine.

The Fair Funding Program was established to preserve and promote Arkansas' agricultural heritage while investing in the future of the industry. As part of the program, funding recipients are required to maintain detailed financial records and submit an annual report to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Arkansas Legislative Audit. For more information on the Fair Funding Program, visit agriculture.arkansas.gov.



Submitted photo

REUNION ... The Murfreesboro high school class of 1969 met last Saturday at Terri's Place for a get together. Pictured (L to R) is Darrell and Dorothy Miller, Susan Blanchard, Janice Ramage, Carol Strawn, Gay Bray with husband, Kay Haynie and husband, Jim O'Neal, Beckal Hawkins, Leon and Joann Hoover.

School announces free meals for kids in 2025-2026

MURFREESBORO -- The South Pike County is pleased to announce the district will again participate in Provision 2 during the 2025-2026 school year providing meals, regardless of eligibility, at no charge for all students at the following Murfreesboro

Elementary and Murfreesboro High School participating in the School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program. This is made possible through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Provision 2 Alternative.

All adults, e.g., visitors, teachers, support staff members, and administrators of the district must assume the full cost of the meal which is \$3 for breakfast and \$4.50 for lunch.

In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA

programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination

Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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'Dear Preacher'

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH
Romans 5:1

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, made it possible for all who are children of God to be righteous in our Father's sight. The absence of conflict between us and God, conflict caused by our sins, is peace of mind and soul. We can know and be obedient to the will of God because Jesus came to earth and lived, died and rose again. This good news was preached in His Holy Name. Submission to God's will is not enough to justify us from our sins in God's sight. Paul says in Romans 5:6 - For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. This is an insight into the actions of God on our part for forgiveness.



The sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary brought that peace that passes understanding. We are cleansed through the blood of Jesus from our sins and we are saved from the wrath of God. We are therefore reconciled to God because He has set us free from the guilt of our sins. How profound and comforting it is to know that through the Lord Jesus we are in har-

mony with the desires of our God. We are daily traveling in the direction that leads to favor with God and an eternal home in Heaven.

Philippians 4:7-8 - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me do, and the God of peace will be with you. God approves us and His peace is ours when we submit ourselves to Him in thought and in deed.

Paid Advertisement

Advisory alert for EBT users

LITTLE ROCK -- What's happening with EBT scams in Arkansas?

Arkansans are experiencing an increase in EBT theft. Scammers are accessing funds on EBT cards without the knowledge of the recipient and then immediately spending that money in states outside Arkansas. This leaves the most vulnerable of Arkansans without the funds they need to purchase groceries.

HOW DO SCAMMERS ACCESS EBT FUNDS?

Scammers can gain access to a recipient's EBT funds in a variety of ways. Some of the most common tactics include:

- Placing a "skimming" device at retailer locations. These devices copy EBT card information during a sale without any notice or prompting by a consumer.
- Impersonation. Scammers will contact a SNAP recipient pretending to be a government official. They often contact the recipient towards the end of the month and threaten that funds will not be received next month unless the recipient verifies certain information.
- Phishing. Similar to impersonation, phishing involves the sending of a fake text message or email claiming that a recipient's PIN has been compromised and needs to be reset, or some other excuse to cause a recipient to divulge his or her PIN.

WHO IS AT RISK OF EBT SCAMS?

EBT theft can happen to anyone with an EBT account. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to be vigilant in monitoring the use of funds. This includes:

- Protect your PIN. Never share your PIN with anyone, and make it something others would be unlikely to guess (but that you can still remember). Resetting your PIN monthly can help prevent PIN theft.
- Inspect card readers. Make sure there is nothing suspicious attached to the point-of-sale machine before you complete a purchase.
- Monitor your account regularly and report any unauthorized charges.
- Avoid using EBT cards online, when possible.
- Be cautious of unfamiliar requests. Government entities will never reach out via email or text message requesting your PIN.

If you have been a victim of SNAP fraud, immediately report the fraud to your local SNAP office. You can also file a police report, report the fraud to the Arkansas Department of Human Services at argov.com/snapfraud, and you can contact the Office of the Arkansas Attorney General by calling (501) 682-2007, emailing consumer@arkansasag.gov or by visiting <https://arkansasag.gov/file-a-complaint>.

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Facts About The BIBLE BY JOHN LEHTI

"LET THIS BE A WITNESS!"

WITH THESE WORDS MANY A BIBLICAL PERSON WOULD SEAL A CONTRACT OR A COVENANT, OR A BUSINESS PROMISE BY SOME TANGIBLE TOKEN AS A HEAP OF STONES, OR A MONUMENT WITH A CHISELED MARK OF AGREEMENT ON THE STONE (GEN. 31:46-52). SOMETIMES IT WAS BY A WRITTEN DOCUMENT SUCH AS A DEED OR A LETTER OF DIVORCE (DEUT. 24:1, 3; JER. 32:10). BUT THE MOST POPULAR METHOD WAS BY CALLING MEN TO WITNESS THE EVENT IN QUESTION. THIS CONCURRENT TESTIMONY OF AT LEAST TWO WITNESSES WAS REQUIRED UNDER THE MOSEIC LAW — ESPECIALLY IF IT WAS TO ESTABLISH GUILT OF A CAPITAL CRIME (NUM. 35:30). THIS PRINCIPLE WAS A GENERAL RULE IN ALL JUDICIAL PROCEDURE (DEUT. 19:15). ALL WITNESSES BEFORE THE TESTIMONY WAS GIVEN WERE CAUTIONED TO TELL NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH...



AND TO CONCEAL NOTHING THAT WAS PERTINENT TO THE CASE. IT WAS A SIN FOR A WITNESS TO WITHHOLD EVIDENCE IN HIS POSSESSION (LEV. 5:1; PROV. 29:24). FALSE WITNESS BEARING WAS DENOUNCED IN THE DECALOGUE (EX. 20:16) AND WHEN DETECTED, DREW THE SAME PENALTY UPON THE FALSE WITNESS THAT HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO GET IMPOSED ON THE ACCUSED — THESE ANCIENT JUDGES DID NOT FOOL AROUND!!

330

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IN THE KITCHEN

* -- Theme Related Clue

ACROSS

- 1. Basilica feature
2. Cameron, to friends
8. ___ and flow
11. One of the Bridges
12. Have the blues
13. Op-ed piece
15. Blondie's hit " ___ Me"
16. Certain something
17. *Granny Smith
18. *Broth-making container
20. Big name in mapmaking
21. Inexperienced
22. *Group of dishes or pots
23. Deprived of ovaries
26. Medusae
30. Got an Oscar, e.g.
31. Kind of license
34. Crescent
35. Description for twins
37. " ___ the season!"
38. Orthodox Judaism adherent
39. Class roster item
40. Between lights and action
42. Source of pork
43. *Shredding devices
45. Bear-like
47. Florida key
48. French farewell
50. Physicist Niels ___
52. *Kitchen hand protector (2 words)
55. Holy confection
56. Track event
57. ___ of the trade, sing.
59. 1st letter of Hebrew alphabet
60. Charlie Parker's nickname
61. Shrek or Fiona, e.g.
62. Word of compliance
63. Actor Stallone
64. *Spice ___ or pot ___

DOWN

- 1. Beginning of the alphabet
2. *Often go with carrots
3. *NaCl
4. Speech at a funeral
5. *Flute alternative
6. *Cook's garb
7. *Veal or venison, e.g.
8. Sport spectator's TV acronym
9. Like white-headed eagle
10. "Farewell" to Birdie
12. Manage (2 words)
13. Like cornstalks
14. *Flat-edged utensil
19. *Flapjack alternative
22. Blink of an eye, abbr.
23. Swing, ___, swung
24. Like Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station location
25. Carl Jung's inner self
26. * ___ en place
27. *Seaweed-wrapped dish
28. Opposite of cation
29. Swamp plant
32. Estimated arrival times, acr.
33. Timothy, to friends
36. *Popular condiment
38. Sheik's bevy
40. Alan Paton's novel " ___, The Beloved Country"
41. Broken, e.g.
44. Third planet from the sun
46. Bachelor on "The Bachelorette," e.g.
48. Be of use
49. Condemn
50. Bantu language
51. Change for a five
52. Globes and eyeballs, e.g.
53. "Animal House" garb
54. Rigid necklace
55. Calendar square
58. Albanian money

CROSSWORD grid with numbers 1 through 64.

Consumer Cellular advertisement featuring a \$25 offer and contact information: 888-804-0913.

DOCKET Continued from Page 2

pending license, fined \$120
Wooten, Curley Junior, 19, Amity, \$145 BF, failure to register tags/expired; \$145 BF, nondriver's license
Wright, Kevin C., 42, Nashville, guilty of no driver's license, fined \$145; \$250 BF, obstructing government operations, fined \$250

ARKANSAS GAME & FISH COMMISSION

Broach, Richard, 40, Hope, \$220 BF, failure to display registration

CITY OF GLENWOOD

Baker, Nedra E., 58, Glenwood, \$145 BF, speeding
Bush, James Charles, 32, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay, \$2,935 owed
Castro, Jose Guillermo, 53, Springdale, \$145 BF, failure to register tags/expired; \$145 BF, no driver's license
Cogburn, Nathaniel Ray, 46, Nashville, guilty of DWI, fined \$1,090, credited for time served, license suspended and must complete DWI educational course
Cook, Austin Cooper, 17, Olustee, Okla., \$145 BF, failure to transfer Arkansas license; \$90 BF, failure to present insurance
Driggers, Patie Ann, 61, Bonnerdale, \$155 BF, speeding
Drye, Matthew Edward, 17, Amity, \$145 BF, defective lights; \$145 BF, improper muffler; \$45 BF, no seat belt
Duggan, Zane Walker, 27, Amity, \$145 BF, fictitious tags
Graves, Logan Michael, 16, Norman, \$145 BF, failure to present insurance
Hafeed, Hafid H., 41, Barling, \$145 BF, failure to stop or yield
Hathcock, Hanna Grace, 26, Prescott, guilty of speeding, fined \$150; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$205
Hernandez, Resendiz G., 57, Glenwood, \$45 BF, no seat belt
Hudson, Howard Lee, 73, Nardin, Okla., \$205 BF, striking fixtures open highway; \$245 BF, failure to appear

Martinez, Oscar, 34, Dierks, \$145 BF, no driver's license; \$335 BF, no proof of liability insurance
Meziere, Jole Mason, 25, Haughton, La., guilty of DWI, fined \$1,090, credited for time served, license suspended and must complete DWI educational course
Moran, Arturo F., 24, Glenwood, \$145 BF, operating ATV on public roads
Pacheco, Lauriano, 30, Dierks, \$155 BF, speeding
Richard, Joey Lee, 26, Vandervoort, \$145 BF, speeding
Sharp, Taylor Scott, 33, Little Rock, \$155 BF, speeding
Staggs, Gracie Nicole, 25, Norman, \$205 BF, speeding
Stewart, Destiny Faith, 26, Glenwood, guilty of passing stopped school bus, fined \$655
Stracener, Isaac T., 21, North Little Rock, \$145 BF, failure to register tags/expired
Sutter, Daniel, 31, Bonnerdale, \$145 BF, speeding
Vanuaken, Brianna S., 42, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay, \$1,005 owed
Whishenhunt, Nancy, 33, Amity, guilty of failure to register tags/expired, fined \$145; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$335
Wilson, Amber K., 36, Hot Springs, \$145 BF, running stop sign
Wilson, Christopher Lee, 46, Hot Springs, 145 BF, running stop sign
Wood, Alyssa Renea, 21, Broken Bow, Okla., \$155 BF, speeding

Pair sentenced in court

MURFREESBORO -- Two defendants entering guilty pleas were sentenced in the Monday session of Pike County Circuit Court.
Zachary Simmons, 30, of Traskwood, entered a guilty plea to possession of a controlled substance and drug paraphernalia and was sentenced to three years in the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) with a juridical transfer approved to the Arkansas Community Correction.
Michael Kinder, 36, of Lineville, Ala., entered a guilty plea to fleeing and was sentenced to three years of probation and fined \$1,500.

LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY
All letters to the editor must be signed, along with a phone number (that will not be published) provided for confirmation purposes.
The Murfreesboro Diamond reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters must not be libelous or contain any profanities.
Send Letters to P.O. Box 550 • Murfreesboro, AR 71958 or e-mail to mdiamond.editor@windstream.net

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© StatePoint Media
 Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.



MEAL FUNDRAISER ... The Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce and event volunteers served barbecue pork sandwiches at their fundraiser held last Thursday at the Murfreesboro Municipal Building. The group raised more than a thousand dollars at the event which will go toward the hometown Christmas event the groups holds in December.

Back-to-school tax holiday set for August 2-3

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas sales tax holiday this year will be on the first weekend in August, Saturday and Sunday, August 2 and 3.

Consumers will not have to pay sales tax on any articles of clothing that cost less than \$100.

The exempted items include pants, shirts, dresses and shoes. Also free from sales tax are bathing suits, baby blankets, underwear, raincoats, uniforms, hats and caps, aprons, neckties, scarves and steel-toes boots.

Diapers, even disposal diapers, are included on the list of exempt items. However, sports equipment will not be exempt, so you will pay sales tax on cleats, baseball gloves, goggles, life preservers, shin guards and shoulder pads.

Accessories are also on the list of exempted items, as long as they cost less than \$50. The list of articles is extensive, and includes handbags and purses, sunglasses, jewelry, hair notions, wallets, watches and wigs.

More than 65 categories of cosmetics are exempt from the sales tax, such as mascara, many types of hair products, fingernail polish and fingernail remover, bath salts, artificial eyelashes, perfume and stretch mark cream.

School supplies will be exempt from the sales tax. Officially the first weekend of August is called the sales tax holiday, but many people refer to it as the "Back to School" sales tax holiday. That's because the legislature intentionally scheduled it for early August, to benefit families with children going to school.

School supplies include pens, pencils and paper as well as art supplies.

Thanks to Act 944 of 2021 some electronic and computer equipment were added to the list of tax exempt items.

Laptops, desktops, tablets, printers, keyboards, calculators, cell phones, e-readers and monitors are exempt from the sales tax. However, video games, stereos and televisions are not included.

Arkansas families will save an estimated \$2.6 million on purchases of electronic and computer equipment.

The sales tax exemption applies to single articles, and is not based on the overall cost of everything you buy. For example, you can buy three shirts \$25 each and a pair of pants for \$50 and you will not be charged the sales tax, even though the total is \$125. Because each item is less than \$100, the exemption is applied.

However, if you buy a pair of shoes for \$120, you will have to pay the sales tax on the full amount of the purchase.

When you take advantage of a sale that allows you to buy one item and get another for a reduced price, the holiday exemption applies only to the items costing less than \$100. For example, a store may offer a pair of jeans for \$120 and you can get a second pair for half price, or \$60. The sales tax exemption will apply only to the second pair.

The exemption applies to all sales taxes, not just state sales taxes. That means exempt items are free of all city, county and local sales taxes.

All retailers have to participate. Articles cannot be separated in order to lower their price under the \$100 and \$50 thresholds. Men's suits and pairs of shoes, which normally are sold as one unit, cannot be split into separate purchases.



THIS IS AN ALLIGATOR ... Local participants saw a program on alligators last week at the Murfreesboro Public Library's summer reading program.

Former Delight resident charged with crimes after church van theft

HOPE -- The Hempstead County Sheriff's Office has announced that on July 12 Pike County Deputies Reed and Garner were dispatched to 314 Highway 332 East in reference to a stolen church van from the White Oak Grove church.

On July 16 deputies arrested David Leroy Hill, age 48 of

Hope, in connection with the theft. Hill was transported to the Hempstead County Detention Center where he is being held on Breaking or Entering, Theft of Property, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Parole Violation. Hill is awaiting a First Court Appearance.

Hempstead County investigators Lt. Gary Dorman and Sgt. Jeremy McBride recovered the church van on Thursday, July 17 in a wooded area in the Delight area. The van suffered damage and will be processed and returned to the church.



Submitted photos/HCSO
DAVID LEROY HILL

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4	5	9	6	8	7	3	2	1
2	6	3	1	9	4	5	7	8
7	1	8	3	5	2	4	6	9
6	8	4	7	2	9	1	5	3
1	9	5	8	3	6	2	4	7
3	2	7	5	4	1	8	9	6
9	3	1	2	6	5	7	8	4
8	4	2	9	7	3	6	1	5
5	7	6	4	1	8	9	3	2

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