

The

Murfreesboro Diamond

Wednesday, July 23, 2025
Issue 3 • 1 Section • 6 Pages

\$1.00
USPC 103-230

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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-Thursdays, 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.

County EQ board to start meeting Friday

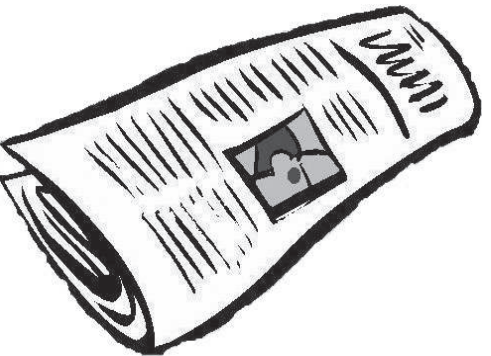
MURFREESBORO -- The Pike County Equalization Board will begin meeting in session at the Pike County Courthouse on Friday, Aug. 1. Anyone wishing to meet with the Equalization Board should contact the Pike County Clerk's office before the deadline of August 18. You may schedule an appointment by calling (870) 285-2743 and a date will be provided at that time.

Delight community worship service set

DELIGHT -- The Delight Community Worship Service will begin on Monday, Aug. 4 through Saturday, Aug. 9. The services will be held at the Delight Cafeteria starting each night at 7 p.m. Each night will feature a different speaker from our surrounding areas. • Monday night -- Larry Bloomfield -- Antoine Baptist Church • Tuesday night -- Doug McClure -- Cross-road Assembly - Delight • Wednesday night -- Brent Alexander -- Delight Church of Christ • Thursday night -- Travell Green -- Harrison Chapel- Antoine • Friday night -- Jim Henderson -- Delight Methodist Church On Saturday morning starting at 9 a.m. a breakfast service will conclude the Community Worship service at the Delight Cafeteria. The speaker for Saturday's breakfast meeting will be Brian Doyle -- Murfreesboro First Christian Church. Everyone is welcome to come be a part of this time of worship.

Biggs Chapel announces special service August 3

BIGGS CHAPEL -- Biggs Chapel Church is hosting guest speaker, Bro. Veron Livingston, on Sunday, August 3, starting at 10:30 a.m. Biggs Chapel Church is located at 46 Academy Rd. CR1. Nashville. The public is invited to attend this special service.



DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING WORTH TELLING?
Submit Your Local News to the Diamond!
mdiamond@windstream.net
Call (870) 285-2723 for More Information



Submitted photos

RATTLER RECOGNITION ... Graduated senior Brody Maroon was selected to the All-Arkansas Preps Baseball first team. The *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* honored the top players across 12 sports during a recent banquet at the State House Convention Center. Maroon was also selected for the AHSCA All Star team. Maroon batted .554 with 20 doubles and 12 home runs. He knocked in 60 runs and scored 41 runs. He also pitched and went 8-4 with 69 strikeouts and a 3.32 ERA in 52.2 innings pitched. Last season for MHS, Maroon batted .554 with 20 doubles and 12 home runs, knocking in 60 runs and scoring 41 runs. He also went 8-4 as a pitcher with 69 strikeouts and a 3.32 ERA in 52.2. Maroon was awarded a baseball scholarship and will be playing at the University of Arkansas - Rich Mountain this upcoming season.

County to seek grant to aid Meals on Wheels

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike County Quorum Court met for their July meeting on Monday night, approving a resolution for the county to seek a grant to fund the county's Meals on Wheels program. Operated by the senior citizen's center in Murfreesboro and Glenwood, the program has faced cuts from diminishing funding sources. Pike County will seek a \$144,000 grant from the Arkansas Community Assistance Grant Program overseen by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. The grant, if approved, would require a 20% match (\$36,000) over a two year period, which is what the county will already give to the two centers for fuel for the program. "The funding will support the critical issue of food insecurity among the elderly in the county ... these funds will directly support the expansion and enhancement of the Meals on Wheels program in Pike County ... increasing meal delivery capacity, extend service areas to reach underserved rural areas ... and ensure nutritious meals are available to those who might otherwise go without." Pike County Judge Eddie Howard said the plan to demolish the old log cabin located by the tennis courts had been put on hold during the road repairs from April's flooding, but needed to be accomplished before the fall rains. Amity resident Joe May has asked for any salvageable wood for his museum efforts, but it was noted that much of it was termite infested and beginning to collapse. In a flood damage report, Howard told the court that four roads -- Chaney, John Hale, East Farm and Shawmut were mostly complete and that paperwork would be submitted for slightly more than \$177,000 in equipment, labor and materials from FEMA after the area was classified a disaster from April flooding. Howard also said FEMA had approved the replacement of the Strawberry Road bridge, a \$435,000 project that would be 90% reimbursed, but he was waiting on written confirmation before forging ahead. Karen Barlow was again named administrator of the latest round of Historic Preservation Grant funds for the Pike County Courthouse. Howard said the county was awarded approximately \$200,000 that would go toward plumbing and replacing windows. A log discussion was held after Howard presented a plan to change leadership positions in both the road and landfill departments. He said no details about the people would be given as

a personnel matter, but that the role of landfill foreman would be changing to a combined position with a road employee in a role of supervisor. He said the plan was implemented over the last week and things were going smoothly. The major discussion of the issue came from several justices of the peace who wanted the salaries to remain "net neutral" despite the plan in front of them that seemingly called for around \$3,000 in raises. The was little discussion of them disagreeing with the plan after John Plyler said that "it's not our job to determine how the judge runs his departments ... only the finances." The motion passed 6-3 if a plan to make the move can be accomplished with no new money, and will be presented at the August meeting. Treasurer Loletia Rather presented the court with the following opening and closing figures for county accounts through June:

• County General	--
\$1,533,962.45 / \$1,589,817.66	
• County Road	--
\$522,703.98 / \$559,161.80	
• County Landfill	--
\$394,414.22 / \$413,542.15	
• All County Accounts	--
\$7,075,884.01 / \$7,193,411.59	

Mineral Springs man arrested after allegedly burglarizing local home

MURFREESBORO -- A Mineral Springs man is facing three felony charges in Pike County after he was allegedly caught in process of burglarizing a Murfreesboro home. Timothy Leon Spencer, 36, was charged July 24 with residential burglary, theft of priority and possession of firearm by a certain person as well as a misdemeanor theft charge. He pleaded innocent to the charges Monday, July 28 and a Sept. 29 pretrial date was set. Spencer is currently being held in the county jail on \$30,000 bond. According to case information, the Murfreesboro Police Department was dispatched to a home on Worrell Street the night of July 15. The responding officer found the homeowner with her juvenile son and Spencer standing under the carport. The homeowner told the officer when she arrived at the home they allegedly found a truck parked under their carport. Thinking the vehicle belonged to a visiting friend, the son went inside to tell the truck owner to move so his mother could park in the carport. The son reportedly found Spencer in the kitchen "holding a black handgun in his hand by the barrel," according to case information. Spencer is said to have dropped the handgun and claim he was in the wrong house. The mother stated the gun belonged in the home and it was apparent Spencer had taken off his shoes in the mas-

ter bedroom and was actually wearing the mother's shoes at the time of the incident. Spencer is also accused of eating and drinking from the refrigerator. The felony firearm charge against Spencer is due to his status as a convicted felon with a history of multiple felony offenses. **DELIGHT MAN CHARGED** A Pike County man with past drug convictions was charged July 24 with possession of a firearm by certain persons, possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia. Stan Funderburk, 64, of Delight, pleaded innocent to the charges Monday and a Sept. 29 pretrial date was set. Funderburk remains in county custody this week on \$15,000 bond. According to case information, Funderburk was arrested the night of July 21 after the Pike County Sheriff's Department received a harassment complaint from an E-Z Mart employee who claimed Funderburk had made inappropriate remarks to her and had called the store numbers times trying to obtain her personal information. Deputies went to Funderburk's home on Cummings Road in Delight and he agreed to no longer return to the store or contact the employee. Since Funderburk is on active parole and has a search waiver on file, deputies searched his home and recovered meth, paraphernalia and a shotgun.



Staff photo

EXPERIENCING NATURE ... Holly Watson is pictured investigating an opossum pelt during a local program at the Murfreesboro library about local wildlife.



Staff photos

BEARSKIN ... Local children has the experience of feeling a bearskin pelt during an AGFC presentation last week at the Murfreesboro library’s summer reading program.

PIKE COUNTY PUBLIC RECORD

DOMESTIC RELATIONS
DR-25-31 -- Heather Woodley, vs. Brian Woodley, divorce, June 2
DR-25-32 -- Brandon Gonzales, vs. Brittany Hill, paternity, June 9
DR-25-33 -- Nathaneal Wilson, vs. Rebekah Wilson, divorce, June 9
DR-25-34 -- Lacey Herring vs. Johnathan Francis, order of protection, July 11
DR-25-35 -- Christy Terrell, vs. John Terrell, divorce, July 11
DR-25-36 -- Jalyn Taylor, vs. Floyd Taylor, divorce, July 16
DR-25-37 -- Rex Watts, vs. Narcedalia Watts, divorce, July 24

CIVIL
CV-25- 41 -- Elizabeth Bright, vs. Matthew and Edna Mack, tort-other, June 2
CV-25-42 --P&S Crodova VH. and A. Rodriquez, buyer-plaintiff, June 3
CV-25-43 -- Dannie O’Neal, name change, June 9
CV-25-44 -- Credit Acceptance Corp., vs. Dustin Johnson, contract-other, June 9
CV-25-45 -- Portfolio Recovery vs. Holly Hale, debt collection, June 13
CV-25-46--- Portfolio Recovery, vs. Skylar Bostic, debt collection, June 13
CV-25-47 -- Jo Ann Stevens, vs. Breanna Stevens, landlord/tenant unlawful detain, June 18

CV-25-48 --LVNV Funding LLC., vs, Mary O’Donnel, debt collection, June 19
CV-25-49 -- LVNV Funding, vs, Regina Wotten, debt collection, June 25
CV-25-50 -- Capital One, vs. Jacob Warren, debt collection, June 28
CV-25-51 -- Credit Acceptance Corp., vs. Brittany Jackson, contract-other, July 2
CV-25-52 -- Credit Acceptance Corp., vs. Jessy Churchwell, contract-other, July 7
CV-25-53 -- Credit Acceptance Corp., vs. Geogory Jones, contract other, July 7
CV-25-54 -- Captial One NA., vs. Jalyn L. Jester, debt collection, July 8
CV-25-55 -- AR AF&A, vs. William Gilleylen, Registered Arkansas Judgment-CV, July 16
CV-25-56 -- Crown Asset Management, vs. Carie Maroon, debt collection, July 21
CV-25-57 -- Corwn Asset Management, vs. Michael Lamb, debt collection, July 21
CV-25-58 -- LVNV Funding, vs. Robert Hudson, debt collection, July 21
CV-25-59 -- Citibank, vs. Tammy Bakke, debt collection, July 22
CV-25-60 -- Tina Amonette, vs. O’Reilly Auto Parts, tort-other, July 22

MARRIAGE LICENSES
Justin Loyd K Brooks, 39, Glenwood; Deborah Lynn Baugher, 44, Glenwood, April 25
Kaiden Caleb Benedict 18, Amity; Alexis Chanel Cooper, 20, Kirby, June 5
Harley Dell Keys, 60, Murfreesboro; Stephanie Jane Lashbrook, 56, Waldon, June 6
Chandler Steven Brewer 26, Amity; Tara Santana Barrett, 34, Amity, June 9
Zane Wesley Collins, 20, Taihina, OK.; Khole Maragaret Haile, 21, Mcalester, OK., June 11
Brian McKenzie Bateman, 37, Glenwood; Tori Renee Koons, 43, Glenwood, June 13
Adam Floyd Coffman, 52, Amity; Ronda Jean Harrist 58, Amity, June19
Tyler Ryan Sherman, 26, Murfreesboro; Gabriela Elizabeth Ruiz, 27, June 27
Aaron Mark Crow, 40, Amity; Sasha Dasha Jester, 32, Amity, July 3
Timothy Daniel Welch, 29, Murfreesboro; Amanda Mae McCool, 31, Murfreesboro, July 14

Murfreesboro Diamond

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• P.J. Tracy IV, Editor

• Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

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

Please Send Change of Address Information to:
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Any erroneous statement published in the newspaper will be gladly and promptly corrected if called to the attention of the management.

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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@murfreesboroar.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)

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PIKE COUNTY EXTENSION

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Back-to-School success starts at home

Creating the perfect study spot

It’s that time of year again—when store aisles are buzzing with the sights of notebooks, backpacks, and the latest back-to-school fashions. As you’re checking off the supply list and helping your child gear up for another academic year, there’s one important element that’s often overlooked: a comfortable, welcoming, and well-stocked study space at home.

While school sets the stage for learning, the home study environment plays a critical supporting role. It can make all the difference between a stressful homework session and a productive one. If you have multiple school-age children, it’s important to recognize that one size does not fit all. What works for one child may not work for another.

You will need to tailor the space to their style. Start by considering your child’s personality and concentration needs. Do they focus better in a quiet, distraction-free zone, similar to a traditional classroom setup? Or do they thrive in a more relaxed setting—maybe sprawled out on their bed with music playing in the background?

Understanding how your child learns and concentrates best is the first step to creating a study space that actually works for them. And here’s a tip: get them involved in the process. When kids help choose or design their own space, they’re often more excited to use it. Let them pick colors, organize their supplies, or decorate their area with favorite posters or personal touches. Ownership can boost motivation.

Regardless of personality or preference, every study space needs a few key elements to support focus, organization, and comfort:

- **Good Lighting:** Whether it’s natural light from a nearby window, a bright overhead fixture, or an adjustable desk lamp, good lighting helps reduce eye strain and maintain alertness.
- **Essential Supplies:** Keep the basics on hand and within easy reach—pens, pencils, highlighters, sticky notes, paper, rulers, notebooks, and folders. A small organizer or caddy can make it easy to keep things tidy.
- **Room to Work:** Make sure there’s enough surface area for both paper assignments and electronics like a laptop or tablet. A clear, uncluttered workspace helps reduce distractions and gives your child room to spread out.
- **Charging Station:** If your child uses devices for schoolwork, ensure there’s a convenient place to plug in and recharge. A power strip with USB ports is a simple way to keep everything powered up and in one place.
- **Comfortable Seating:** Whether it’s a traditional desk chair, a kitchen stool, or a pile of soft pillows, comfort matters. The key is finding seating that supports good posture without making studying feel like a chore. For the child who prefers to work in bed, consider investing in a lap desk—it provides a stable writing or typing surface while keeping things cozy.
- **A Visual Calendar:** Hang a calendar or dry-erase board near by where your child can track homework deadlines, upcoming tests, and family events. This visual tool not only helps with time management but also gives kids a sense of control and organization over their schedules.

If you have more than one child, it might be worth creating more than one study spot—especially if they have different learning styles or schedules. Maybe one works best in a quiet corner of the dining room, while another prefers the solitude of their bedroom. You don’t need a lot of space or fancy furniture—just a bit of creativity and attention to their individual needs.

Remember, getting ready for school isn’t just about pencils and backpacks—it’s about setting your child up for success. With a thoughtfully prepared study area that reflects their learning style, gives them enough space to work, and includes tools to stay organized, you’re giving them more than a place to do homework. You’re giving them a foundation for focus, independence, and confidence all year long.

Here’s a recipe that’s kid friendly and easy on the budget and a parent’s busy schedule – Slow Cooker Chicken Tacos. Enjoy!

RECIPE OF THE WEEK: SLOW COOKER CHICKEN TACOS

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
 - 2 Tbsp. chili powder
 - 1 Tbsp. cumin
 - 1 Tbsp. salt
 - 2 tsp. paprika
 - 1 tsp. black pepper
 - 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 6 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 4 ½ pounds)

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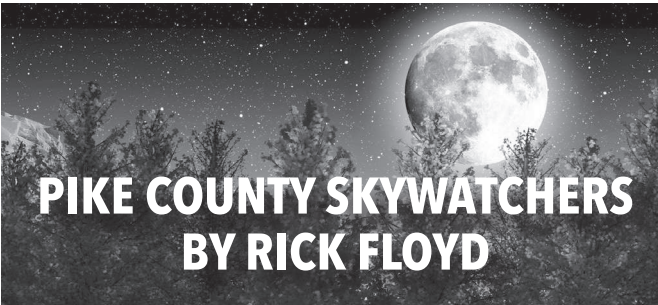
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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Flour tortillas, shredded iceberg lettuce, chopped tomato, shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, salsa, for serving

- DIRECTIONS:**
- In a 6- to 8-quart slow cooker, stir together the tomato sauce, chili powder, cumin, salt, paprika, pepper, garlic, and onion until well combined. Add the chicken, stirring to ensure it is fully coated with the sauce.
 - Cover and cook until the chicken is cooked through and the internal temperature of the chicken is 165°F, on low for 4 to 6 hours or on high for 2 to 3 hours.
 - Remove the chicken to a large cutting board. When it is cool enough to handle, shred or cut into bite-sized pieces. Return the chicken to the sauce and stir very well.
 - Cover and cook on low for 15 minutes more. Serve on tortillas topped with lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, sour cream, and salsa.



Dog days arrive and the magnificence of our galaxy

A bit of old news surfaced on the internet recently. It was an item about an earthquake that shook Los Angeles in 1994. Power outages were widespread for a period afterwards, which resulted in an after nightfall darkening of LA’s usually intense light dome. Panicked citizens started calling 911 and the local observatory about the strange and ominous cloud that hovered over the city. Over the years this story has been embellished and is now somewhat in the urban legend category, but it is well documented that such calls did occur.

Those who feared they were in danger as the cloud lingered had never seen the Milky Way in its full dark sky glory. There are thousands (or millions) of people across the globe that have missed the experience of a truly dark night sky. At a business conference I attended years ago in Fort Davis, Texas in the Big Bend area (a designated dark sky area), a fellow attendee was stunned by the number of stars and by the glow of the Milky Way. He was from Miami and had only experienced an urban night of a few stars, the moon, and some planets. “So, this is what the Milky Way looks like,” he murmured in awe.

Getting far from the city lights, even those of Murfreesboro, is the key to seeing a sky full of stars. When you look at the Milky Way you are looking at our galaxy edge on, and when you find the constellation Sagittarius in the southern part of the sky, you are looking toward the center of the galaxy where at least one massive Black Hole resides.

In fact, all of the stars we can see with the naked eye belong to our galaxy. Our eyes can also see the Andromeda Galaxy which looks like a hazy smudge. It is over a million light years away and the farthest object we can see with the naked eye.

A person with decent eyesight under a clear dark night sky can see 3,000 to 6,000 stars. The ones we see are standouts, the giants, but there are millions more we can’t see given there are an estimated 200 to 400 million stars in our galaxy.

The Dog Days have arrived. The Dog Star, Sirius, rises about 6 a.m. and , as the Romans believed, bringing extra heat with it. Also, high in the evening sky is the Summer Triangle made by three bright stars from three different constellations.

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Obituaries

Alice L. Skinner, 72



Alice L. Skinner, 72, born November 15, 1952, and went to her heavenly home Wednesday July 23, 2025 after a brief bout with cancer at St Vincent’s hospital in Hot Springs.

Alice was born and raised in Camden, Arkansas and later graduated from Harmony Grove High School. She served as a homemaker, devoted wife, loving mother, and nana. Her external vocation was in the insurance world as well as a waitress and later manager in the food service industry. She loved to hunt, fish,

craft, and spend time with her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Denver and Margie Smith, brothers Dean, Larry, and Don Smith, sister Kaye Jameson, and nephew Joe. She leaves behind to cherish her memory, her husband of 38 years, Carl Skinner of Murfreesboro, daughter Dione Smith (James) of Hope, Arkansas, daughter Alicia Baker of Murfreesboro, Arkansas, Grandson, Dr. Riley Smith of West Little Rock, Granddaughters, Kristen Baker of Nashville, Keagan Baker of Murfreesboro, two great grandchildren, and a host of other special family and friends.

There will be a graveside memorial at Mt Moriah Cemetery in Rosston, Arkansas at a later date. In lieu of flowers, you can make a donation, in her name, to the American Cancer Society or your local Humane Society.

Benjamin Thomas Stevens, 48

Benjamin Thomas Stevens, 48, of Murfreesboro, AR passed away Friday, July 18, 2025 in Murfreesboro, AR.

Ben was born March 10, 1977 in Texarkana, Texas to Stevie and Jo Ann Cornish Stevens.

Ben was a member of First Christian Church, Murfreesboro.

Ben was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents John Paul & Jackie Cornish and his paternal grandparents

Luke and Mary Ann Stevens.

Ben is survived by his wife Breanna Pipkins Stevens, sons: Brendan, Brandt, and Cameron Stevens; sisters Sheryl (Darwin) Turner, Jennifer Stevens, and numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

The family received friends on Saturday, July 26, 2025 on the Dave Holloway Field at Murfreesboro High School.

You may send an online sympathy message at www.latimerfuneralhome.com

Frank J. Ross, 70

Frank J. Ross, born on July 13, 1955, at the age of 70 went to his final resting place on July 26, 2025. He was born in San Antonio, Texas.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Benjamin Franklin Ross and Norma Jean Ross.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory his loving wife of 28 years, Latricia Ross; three children, James (Kayla) Ross, Jennifer Rather and Catherine Ross; six grandkids; his brother, Ben (Debbie) Ross; his

sister, Barbra Walker; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and lots of friends and coworkers.

The family received friends on Sunday, July 27, 2025 at Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville.

A graveside service was held on Monday, July 28, 2025 at the Delight Cemetery, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home.

You may send an online sympathy message at www.latimerfuneralhome.com

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Crossroads Church to host fish fry

DELIGHT -- 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.

Statewide tourism continue to grow

STATE CAPITOL WEEK IN REVIEW
Senator Steve Crowell

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas tourism continued to grow last year, generating \$17.4 billion to the state’s economy and supporting almost 72,000 jobs.

Every year the state Department of Parks Heritage and Tourism commissions an analysis of the economic impact of tourism. In 2024 about 52 million visitors were welcomed in Arkansas, an increase over 2023 of 2.6 percent.

Every day, visitor spending in Arkansas is about \$28.2 million, which supports 71,633 jobs directly. Visitor spending indirectly supports an additional 31,034 jobs, thus the visitor economy helps maintain one out of every 18 jobs in Arkansas.

Of the various spending categories within the tourism industry, food and beverage grew the most in 2024. It totaled about \$3 billion, which was 6.5 percent over the previous year.

Retail grew by 5.8 percent in 2024, while recreation grew by four percent. Short-term rentals grew 3.3 percent in 2024.

Arkansas tourism traditionally relied on outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing and camping. Marketing efforts were focused on neighboring states, and on persuading Arkansas residents to remain in state for their vacations.

About 20 years ago advertising and promotion efforts broadened their appeal, to emphasize the availability of historic, cultural and artistic destinations. Marketing emphasized activities such as a spa day in Hot Springs, a visit to the presidential library in Little Rock, a weekend at the blues festival in Helena-West Helena, a day at the art gallery in Bentonville, opportunities for geocaching in state parks or an educational stroll through a Civil War battlefield.

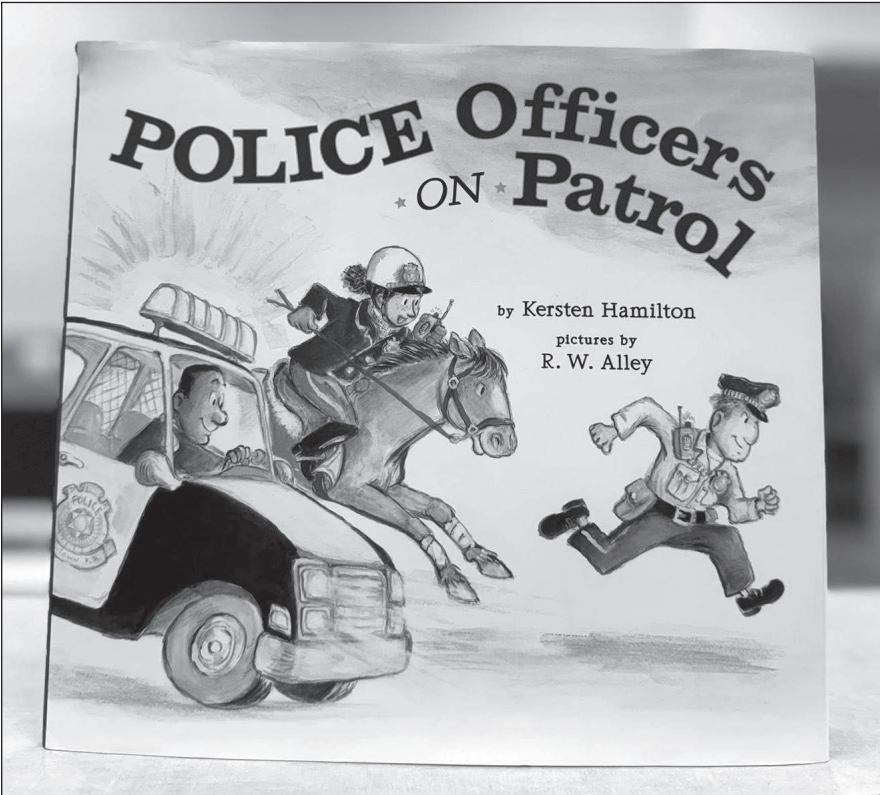
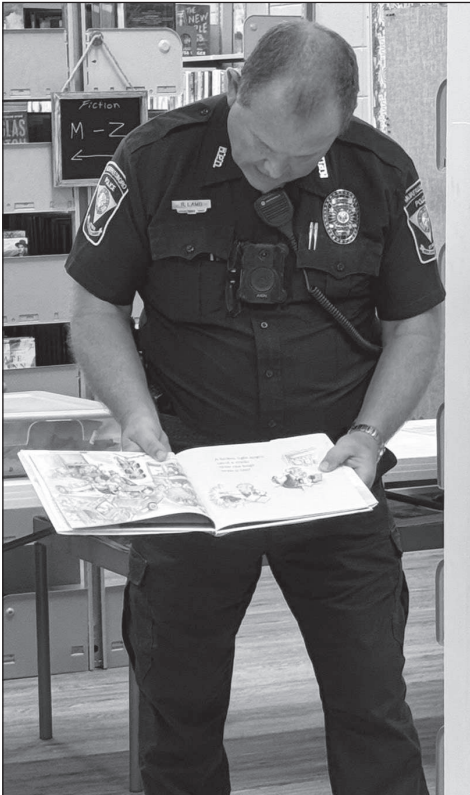
Arkansas tourism campaigns targeted specific demographics, such as motorcyclists who want to ride along mountain highways or groups of senior citizens who charter buses. In addition to advertising in media that caters to sportsmen who like to hunt and fish, ads for Arkansas tourism were placed in media for bird watchers.

In recent years Arkansas tourism promoters have been getting back to basics, but with a modern twist. Recognizing the importance of outdoor activities, the state has created an Office of Outdoor Recreation. Within the annual economic analysis is a separate measure of outdoor recreation as a component of the state’s overall tourism industry. It is huge and growing, and it is based on much more than hunting and fishing.

For example, in April the New York Times published an article on how Bentonville has become an “epicenter” for cycling. Growth in outdoor recreation has been boosted by more than building miles of trails. It also comprises manufacturing, warehousing and transportation of kayaks, bikes, fishing gear, boats, ammunition and hunting supplies.

Measured as a separate category within tourism, outdoor recreation contributed \$7.3 billion to the Arkansas economy last year, supporting 68,000 jobs. According to the Department of Parks Heritage and Tourism it represents 2.5 percent of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP), and has surpassed farming.

Arkansas tourism officials have broadened their efforts to appeal to a nationwide audience, and they use a dizzying array of digital media platforms to spread their message. One advantage they have is that Arkansas is a year-round destination, not just a seasonal one.



Submitted photos

SPECIAL GUEST ... City of Murfreesboro police chief Randy Lamb read the book “Police Officers on Patrol” to local children in attendance at a Murfreesboro library summer reading program.

Extension expert shares tips for tackling overconsumption

BY REBEKAH HALL
*U of A System
Division of Agriculture*

LITTLE ROCK — Impulse purchases, fast fashion, instant gratification: these factors contribute to the impact of overconsumption, which is the use of goods and services at a rate that is higher than the supply. An extension expert says tackling overconsumption is critical to the future health of our families and our planet.

“In the United States, overconsumption is fueled by our relative wealth, easy access to goods and services, and the mentality of ‘more is better,’” said Nina Roofoe, assistant vice president of family and consumer sciences for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “The average consumer may buy something without thinking while chasing the dopamine high of the purchase, without stopping to consider if the item or service is needed, affordable on their budget, fitting with their retirement plan, and sustainable for themselves, their community, and the planet.”

Overconsumption on an individual level can lead to cluttered homes and strained budgets, Roofoe said. And according to a 2021 review of research published in the Energy Research & Social Science Journal, overconsumption can even lead to physical health issues.

“Premature deaths and adult years lived with ill health — due to non-communicable diseases and attributable to high body mass index — are related to overconsumption,” Roofoe said. “This includes type two diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and cancer.”

On a national and global scale, Roofoe said overconsumption has had devastating impacts on the environment and will continue to degrade the planet without significant, consistent intervention. In 2022, UNICEF published a report finding that some

of the wealthiest countries in the world, including the United States, Belgium and Canada, “have a severe and widespread impact on global environments, based on CO2 emissions, e-waste and overall consumptions of resources per capita.”

“Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, is quoted as saying, ‘Unless we act now, the 2030 U.N. agenda will become an epitaph for a world that might have been,’” Roofoe said. “According to the U.N.’s sustainable development goals, overconsumption affects our environment by degrading our natural resources, including deforestation and pollution. This has led to habitat destruction, biodiversity loss, species extinction, and the overuse of electricity and greenhouse gas emissions.”

What you can do

To make strides towards changing the trajectory of overconsumption, Roofoe said it is key to keep sustainability at the heart of one’s lifestyle.

“Sustainability is the ability to meet my needs without hampering my child’s and

future generations’ ability to meet their needs,” Roofoe said. “Reducing overconsumption and sustainability go hand in hand. By reducing my consumption of goods and services today, I create a more sustainable future world in every way possible.”

As individuals, Roofoe said this progress must begin with the desire to make sustainability “a primary goal above other goals in our lives.”

“From a practical standpoint, we recommend that people adopt a ‘circular economy model,’ which aims to keep products in circulation for as long as possible,” Roofoe said. “This adds additional ‘Rs’ to the typical ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ mantra.”

- Waste reduction: Refuse new and single-use products: opt instead for refillable water bottles, metal straws and reusable food storage containers.
- Rehome, repurpose, revisit: Rehome items you no longer use or repurpose them into something you will use. “If you no longer need that side table, consider donat-

ing it to a college or newlywed couple, or paint it a fun color and use it as outdoor furniture,” Roofoe said. Revisit items you can’t seem to part with but don’t use. “Give yourself a deadline, and if you don’t use an item with a set amount of time, such as three or six months, then rehome it or repurpose it.”

- Restrain yourself: Use a checklist of criteria to guide your purchasing decisions, such as the one below:
 - Does it really have to be brand new?
 - Is the product designed for sustainability throughout its life cycle?
 - What do the consumer reports and past purchasers’ reviews indicate for this item?
 - Is this a duplicate of something you already own?
 - What are the maintenance and upkeep costs in the long run?
 - Reduce: “Reducing clutter creates a calm environment that supports your mental and physical health,” Roofoe said.
 - Use a capsule wardrobe to decrease clutter in your closet.

OVERCONSUMPTION Continued on Page 5



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Facts About The **BIBLE** *BY JOHN LEHTI*

A MESSAGE WITH GOOD-BAD TIDINGS!

AHIMAAZ WAS A SON OF ZADOK, THE HIGH PRIEST, IN KING DAVID’S REIGN. HE AND JONATHAN, THE SON OF THE OTHER HIGH PRIEST, ABIATHAR, HAD BEEN MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN KING DAVID’S LOYAL FORCES IN JERUSALEM AND PRINCE ABSALOM’S REBEL FORCES, ENSCONCED DEEP WITHIN THE FORESTS OF EPHRAIM (II SAM. 15:27, 36; 17:20). WHEN ABSALOM’S POORLY DISCIPLINED AND BADLY LED TROOPS WENT DOWN IN A ROUT BEFORE KING DAVID’S SKILLFUL VETERANS AND ABSALOM, HIMSELF, WAS KILLED, AHIMAAZ BEGGED JOAB, DAVID’S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FOR THE HONOR OF RUNNING AHEAD OF THE RETURNING VICTORIOUS TROOPS TO TELL THE KING OF THE VICTORY. (II SAM. 18:19) BUT JOAB REFUSED AHIMAAZ BECAUSE KING DAVID’S SON WAS KILLED IN THE BATTLE! INSTEAD, JOAB TOLD AN ETHIOPIAN TO RUN AND “TELL THE KING WHAT THOU HAST SEEN.” PERHAPS JOAB, A WISE VETERAN, KNEW THAT BEARERS OF BAD TIDINGS WERE OFTEN KILLED ON THE SPOT—AND AHIMAAZ WAS THE SON OF THE HIGH PRIEST, WHEREAS THE ETHIOPIAN WAS A NOBODY. SO...! NEVERTHELESS, AHIMAAZ WAS THE FASTER OF THE TWO, BECAUSE AFTER PESTERING JOAB UNTIL HE GOT HIS PERMISSION TO RUN, AHIMAAZ STILL GOT THERE FIRST! BUT HE ONLY TOLD KING DAVID OF THE VICTORY—LEAVING IT TO THE ETHIOPIAN TO TELL THE BAD NEWS! (II SAM. 18:32). LATER IN HIS CAREER, AHIMAAZ WAS THE TAX COLLECTOR FOR KING SOLOMON AND MARRIED ONE OF SOLOMON’S DAUGHTERS, BASMATH. (I KINGS 4:15).



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ETHIOPIAN RUNNER—OR “THE CUSHI”—A SLANG EXPRESSION USED TO DENOTE AN ETHIOPIAN IN THOSE DAYS—THE BIBLE DOES NOT RECORD!!

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6. Water glider
9. Opposite of eve
13. Artfully shyly
14. X
15. Move a plant
16. Saintly glows
17. Industrious insect
18. Inundated
19. ****“An American Tragedy” author Theodore _____
21. *Ignatius J. Reilly, “A Confederacy of Dunces” protagonist
23. Neither’s partner
24. Flipside of pros
25. What hernias do
28. Snowman’s corn cob
30. 1970s dancing venues
35. Home to China
37. Biceps exercise
39. W.E.B Du Bois’s org.
40. Clays or mucks
41. Quetzalcoatl worshiper
43. Viracocha worshipper
44. Muse of love poetry
46. The Hippocratic one
47. High in decibels
48. Orthopedic device
50. Egyptian goddess of fertility
52. Before, before
53. Kitten’s plaything
55. Between Cancer and Virgo
57. *Beatrice Belden’s nickname
60. *American Library Association’s medal for children’s literature
64. C in CSI
65. To boot
67. #61 Down plus E
68. Altar’s location, pl.
69. Fled
70. Indian cuisine dip
71. Give an impression
72. Mining product
73. See-through

DOWN
1. Common tropical marine fish
2. Part of BYO
3. Orpheus’ instrument
4. *Patricia MacLachlan’s “Sarah, ____ and Tall”
5. Medicinal herb
6. ____ anise, chai tea spice
7. * ____ Kesey’s “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”
8. Foreword
9. Whimper
10. Milky-white gem
11. Like certain people’s glasses
12. Greatest possible
15. Ex grape
20. ****“Fear of Flying” author ____ Jong
22. Finish line, e.g.
24. Not doubting
25. *Percival Everett’s reimagining of “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”
26. Steal a throne
27. Type of wave
29. ****“The Godfather” author Mario ____
31. Go yachting
32. Birch bark vessel
33. Come to pass
34. *Dashiell Hammett’s hardboiled detective Sam ____
36. ____ Spumante
38. Classic game show “ ____ Make a Deal”
42. Argentina’s western neighbor
45. December birthstone, pl.
49. “Mai” follower
51. Paris’ underground tourist attraction
54. Yesteryear style
56. West African religious practice
57. Genealogical plant
58. Winter window design
59. Allah’s cleric
60. Opposite of all
61. Huron’s neighbor
62. Baptism or shiva, e.g.
63. 2025, e.g.
64. “The Young and the Restless” network, acr.
66. Boat propeller

CROSSWORD

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OVERCONSUMPTION Continued from Page 4

“A capsule wardrobe is a smaller collection of versatile clothing items that can be mixed and matched to create several different outfits,” Roofe said.

-- Gift family members with duplicate tools, kitchen utensils, and other items that are taking up space in your home.

-- Go on a one-month spending freeze wherever you shop the most.

- Recycle: Recycle and purchase recycled materials whenever possible. Explore the recycling programs in your city to learn more.

Learn more about money management and personal and family wellbeing on the Cooperative Extension Service website, or contact Roofe at nroofe@uada.edu.

To learn about extension programs in Arkansas, contact your the Pike County Cooperative Extension Service at (870) 285-2161 or visit www.uaex.uada.edu.

USACE begins Millwood Lake drawdown

ASHDOWN -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District will begin lowering Millwood Lake on July 28 to improve shoreline vegetation and promote sediment compaction.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has requested that Millwood Lake be lowered 24 inches this summer to allow planting of Japanese millet. The Southwest Arkansas Water District, which owns the conservation pool rights, has approved the use of its storage to support the request.

The drawdown will expose a large area of shoreline for re-vegetation. Planting millet will help improve water quality, boost fish production and provide valuable habitat for wintering waterfowl. The lake will be held near an elevation of 257.2 feet until Sept. 15, 2025, when it will be raised six inches. The lake will be

raised to the top of its normal conservation pool of 259.2 feet on Nov. 1, 2025.

Boaters are encouraged to wear a life jacket and exercise caution during the drawdown as submerged stumps and shallow areas will be more prominent, especially in boat lanes.

For more information, contact the Millwood Tri-Lakes Project Office at 870-898-3343.

Recreation information can be found on the Internet at www.swl.usace.army.mil, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/little-rock-usace and on the USACE Little Rock water level mobile app at www.swl.usace.army.mil/Home/water-control-app/.

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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CCCUA Colts unveil 2025 soccer schedule

DE QUEEN -- UA Cossatot head soccer coach Justin Hinman announced the 2025 schedule Thursday. The men’s team is set to play 18 matches including five exhibitions, while the women’s team will have 15 matches, three of which are exhibitions. The highlight of the exhibition slate are the Red vs White matches on Oct. 18, when intra-squad matchups for both the men and women’s teams will take place.

All other exhibitions are away from home, while the Colts Soccer Complex is set to host four men’s matches and five women’s matches in the regular season. The men will also travel for six away matches and one neutral site match in regular season, while the women’s teams have five road matches in the regular season.

Both sides will take part in a preseason tune-up an hour south to start action on the evening of Aug. 16 against Texas A&M Texarkana, with UAC facing off against former Colts star Ben Whomersley.

The regular season kicks off a week later in Mena with a pair of midday matchups against UA Rich Mountain, followed by a trip to Mississippi to face Hinds Community College on

the evening of the 27th, when the Colts will face a men’s team who reached the Gulf South District semifinals.

Labor Day starts off the September slate for the Colts, with the men’s team taking part in a huge matchup against the defending national champions, facing Northeast Community College in Little Rock at 1 p.m.

UAC will then head up to Kansas two days later, with both teams playing Coffeyville Community College on the afternoon of Sept. 3.

They are then are back in action three days later, hosting Dallas Cedar Valley at noon, followed by an exhibition for the men’s team at 2:30 against De Queen FC, the highest level club team in De Queen.

A trio of exhibitions follow, starting with a split-slate of games on Sept. 8. While the women kick off a 7 p.m. matchup against NCAA Division III Hendrix college, the men will be starting their own showdown against Division I’s University of Central Arkansas.

The men are back in action eight days later, when they’ll travel to play Champion Christian College. The next day sees them and the women back in action, with an afternoon set of

matches at Southwestern Adventist University on Sept. 17.

The men will finally host a regular season match at Colts Soccer Complex on the 21st, as NOC Enid’s two programs are set to face UA Cossatot that afternoon. It’ll be an interesting matchup on the women’s side as well, with the Jets being a formidable opponent, having lost to eventual national champions Seminole State College in the South District semifinals.

Rounding off September is another pair of home matches, with Crowder coming to town.

October starts with a trip to Hot Springs, as Hinman returns again to National Park College where he was an assistant coach for another pair of matches on Oct 1.

Three days later the Colts return to Kansas, as the men will take on Neosho Community College, who finished runner-up to Northeast in last year’s national championship. The next day both will be taking on St. Charles Community College in a pair of midday matchups, facing a men’s side which was ranked last year while the women won Region 16.

The Colts then return home to host Ranger College on Oct. 10, who were ranked last year

on the men’s side.

Four days later the men will play their final road match of the regular season, as they are set to take on Northeast Texas Community College.

Oct 18. brings the Red vs White matches, with both the men and women facing themselves, intra-squad matchups for both the men and women’s teams will take place. A tailgate will start at 11 a.m. and will be followed by the women’s match at 1 p.m. before the men play at 2:30.

The regular season concludes the next Saturday against National Park. Since UAC and NPC are the only two programs in Division II of Region II, this essentially serves as the final of a two-legged conference championship, with the Colts playing host.

Following the season is the division championship on Nov. 7/8 with the NJCAA Division II Men’s and Women’s Soccer Championships taking place at the SCHEELS Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita, Kansas on Nov. 16-22.

New Ouachita major bridges faith and career

BY JAMES TAYLOR

ARCADELPHIA -- Ouachita Baptist University’s Christian foundations co-major is equipping students to integrate their faith with careers in fields like medicine, computer science, worship studies and graphic design.

The 30-hour co-major allows students to add theological training to any other Ouachita major. Created in response to student interest in biblical education while pursuing a variety of career paths, the program launched in 2021 and graduated its first student in 2024: Brooklyn Pitard, a biology and Christian foundations double major from El Dorado, Ark., who is now in her first year of medical school in Fort Smith, Ark.

“For Christians, every vocation is a mission field, providing opportunities to share Christ and His love to those around us,” said Pitard, who graduated with both degrees in four years. “The Christian foundations degree was a manageable complement to my biology and

chemistry coursework. It fostered a deeper love for God in my own heart and gave me the tools to study Scripture with theological insight.”

The program now has more than 30 students in the Pruet School of Christians Studies, which also offers in-depth, stand-alone degrees for those preparing for ministry. The Christian foundations co-major addresses a growing need among students who want theological training but plan to serve the church as lay leaders while pursuing careers in other fields. Students can complete double majors with Christian foundations and a variety of other programs within four years.

“I’ve been so encouraged to see students from across campus investing time and effort in our classes, not merely for job preparation but because they love the Lord, his word and the church,” said Dr. Jeremy Greer, dean of Ouachita’s Pruet School of Christian Studies. “I believe the impact these students will have on their churches and the world will be felt in the years ahead. What a blessing for the church to

have lay leaders with theological training.”

Recent graduates demonstrate the program’s versatility across disciplines.

“Christian foundations gave me the opportunity to learn and grow in my understanding of the Christian faith while still being able to focus on my computer science degree,” Kris Garcia, a computer science and Christian foundations graduate from Pine Bluff, Ark., said. “The courses were not only enriching but taught by incredible professors who are passionate about the material and invested in student success.”

“This degree allowed me to dive deeper into my faith, grow closer to God, and see his work across all disciplines, especially medicine,” Wyatt House, a biomedical sciences and Christian foundations graduate from Little Rock, Ark., said. He carries his experiences from the co-major into his current studies at the newly established Alice L. Walton School of Medicine in Bentonville, Ark.

For Mallorie Howard, a graphic design and Christian foundations graduate from Benton,

the program helped her discern her calling.

“I had a passion for ministry and a desire to serve the church but didn’t know what I was specifically called to or what ministry would look like for me,” Howard said. “Christian foundations helped me navigate integrating my faith and vocation to advance the Kingdom of Christ.”

Howard now serves as director of communications at First Baptist Church Benton.

“Today, I am a first-year medical student and hold a Master of Science in Biomedicine,” said Pitard. “The biblical training I received at Ouachita has equipped me to engage with others more thoughtfully — to speak the truth of the Gospel, to love deeply and to ask meaningful questions. My prayer is that these seeds of faith will grow into lasting relationships with our Savior.”

For more information about majors in the Pruet School of Christian Studies, visit obu.edu/christianstudies or contact the Office of Admissions Counseling at (870) 245-5110.

Parents suggested to model healthy screen time habits, encourage off-screen activities

BY REBEKAH HALL

U of A System Division of Agriculture

LITTLE ROCK-- Excess screen time harms children and adolescents’ social skills, but it also affects their behavior similarly to dementia, presenting as distractibility and memory deficit. To help combat this, an extension expert says parents should limit screen time, encourage children’s off-screen interests and closely monitor online activities.

Brittney Schrick, extension associate professor and family life specialist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said junior high and high school students are expected to manage study materials in a way that is not developmentally appropriate.

“They’re being expected to constantly multitask in way that’s not really even possible for adults, but especially not for a developing brain,” Schrick said. “They’re learning that that’s how you function in the world, and then the same adults who are asking them to do these things get frustrated when they get distracted.”

For example, if a student is working on algebra homework, they may be using a paper worksheet, but their textbook is an eBook, so they have that open in a browser for reference. Often, they use their phone as a calculator, and they are using another internet tab to review their teacher’s notes. Then, the moment a notification pops up on their phone, the distraction loop begins.

NO GOING BACK

“Unless you’re somebody who has an excellent ability to delay gratification, or you are exceptionally strong-willed for a kid, you’re going to go check that notification, and then scroll on your phone,” Schrick said. “There’s no scenario in which we can ‘go back’ to the old ways. All the money that used to be spent on textbooks is now being spent on eBooks and other programs. But it’s not developmentally appropriate for kids to manage things that way.”

Schrick said that in addition to phone and screen use eating up time that children used to spend outside, doing physical activity or socializing with friends, the impact is “even deeper than that.”

“A lot of the effects of screen time look similar to the effects of dementia, at least behaviorally,” Schrick said. “This presents as distractibility, executive function loss, or lack of executive function development, and memory deficit, especially short term and working memory.”

According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control over a two-and-a-half-year period, approximately one half of teenagers had four or more hours of daily screen time, and these youth were more likely to recently experience a higher rate of anxiety or depression.

Related to schoolwork, Schrick said students are “missing out on aspects of memorization, such as their multiplication tables, and improving handwriting, making sure that you can communicate in more than one way.”

“It’s just like anything else: there are pros and

cons, but we do have to acknowledge that it’s not going anywhere,” Schrick said. “If parents are able to at least provide encouragement and opportunities for their kids to explore academic topics or their own curiosity about different things without it being entirely on a screen, they’re probably going to be doing more good for them than they realize.”

Schrick said it’s important for parents to actively engage with their kids, including while they are using their devices.

“You don’t necessarily have to wrestle it from their hands, but ask them about what they’re watching or doing,” she said. “Find out what they’re playing in Roblox, or what they’re building in Minecraft. Who is this influencer, and what are they talking about? That way, you’re going to get a window into what they’re doing.”

IMPLEMENTING CHANGES, MODELING GOOD BEHAVIOR

For parents with younger children who want to raise them away from screens as much as possible, Schrick said implementing this lifestyle as early as possible is key.

“It is much easier to start out that way than it is to take it away,” she said. “If you already have a lifestyle as a family that really lends itself to having limited access to screens, it’s going to be simpler.”

Schrick said it is critical for parents to model healthy screen and phone use.

“You have to do it. If you are sitting there on your phone telling your kids to get off their phones, what’s the point?” she said. “Modeling is absolutely crucial, and that includes alternate activities. What else are you going to be doing in the time you are not spending on your phone?”

“By doing this, you are teaching kids how to spend their time,” Schrick said. “If you want them to spend their time in other ways that being on screens, you need to teach them to do that.”

For parents with older children who want to intervene and change their access to screens and phone habits, it’s important for both parents — or both households, if families are co-parenting — to first be on the same page about their own expectations and values.

“Parents need to have that conversation with each other when they are both calm, because if you try to talk about it when somebody is mad, or is saying ‘See, I told you this was going to happen!’ then it’s going to go badly,” Schrick said. “It will end up being a power struggle, not only with the kids but between the grown-ups.”

In addition to approaching the change as a united front, parents should be prepared for pushback from the child — stick to it anyway, Schrick said.

“It takes work to implement such a big change,” Schrick said. “You have to maintain it consistently, and you have to be willing to revise your plan if something doesn’t work. You can’t give up after the first bump in the road. It takes persistence, insistence, and determination. You have to be willing to stay firm and

strong about it.”

USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Schrick said the Cooperative Extension Service plans to launch a new program for parents, Smart Phone Smarts, over the next year. In the meantime, she suggested the program Wait Until 8th, which encourages parents to wait until after eighth grade to give their child a smartphone. The program includes educational resources and guides for recruiting other families to delay the smartphone.

Schrick also recommended using parental controls whenever they are available, including

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