

# The Murfreesboro Diamond

Wednesday, August 13, 2025  
Issue 6 • 1 Section • 6 Pages

\$1.00  
USPC 103-230

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



## County EQ board open for meetings

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike County Equalization Board will began 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.

## UAEX estate planning session set for Aug. 19

GLENWOOD -- An afternoon estate planning session will be held at the Glenwood Baimum Library from 1-4 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 19. Speakers will include Laura Hendrix, Professor Personal Finance & Consumer Economics, University of Arkansas Extension, and John K Ross IV, Attorney & Senior Partner Ross & Shoalmire, Elder Law Attorneys, P.L.L.C. This meeting is being offered by Pike and Montgomery Counties Family Consumer Science agents. Cost is \$10 per person and can be paid at the door. Please call the Pike County Extension Office to register (870) 285-2161.

## Benefit set for former Delight resident

DELIGHT -- A prayer circle and benefit for Stephanie Cox-Ivy will be held on Sunday, Aug. 24, at the Delight School cafeteria beginning at 12:15, immediately following church services. The menu will consist of spaghetti (regular or chicken), salad, bread, dessert and a drink. Take out will be available. Event organizers ask that the community join to support Cox-Ivy on her cancer journey. She has had multiple surgeries, suffered from sepsis, been on a wound vac and has a colostomy bag. She has developed a high output fistula which makes it difficult to leave her home. Stephanie is on IV nutrition for 16 hours per day to help with hydration. She will have test in September to determine if she is cancer free. If her scans are clear, she will have another major surgery. There will also be an online auction in the days prior as well. "Most of all, come together with us as we pray for Stephanie and her journey," said the event realase. If you would like to help in any way, please contact Celeste May, Pam Hayward or Carrie Tidwell. There is an account at the Bank of Delight for Stephanie's benefit. "Although Stephanie has moved from our community, let's remember the countless hours she has selflessly volunteered helping with community events. She has been a Teen Group leader at the Delight First Missionary Baptist Church, Delight Cemetery Dinner volunteer, local benefits and fundraiser helper, community supporter, all sports bookkeeper, original Prom Promise organizer, class sponsor, homecoming coordinator, carnival worker and the ultimate Bulldog and Rattler fan. Now she needs our help. This is a great time for our community and those she has helped to repay generosity and kindness."



Submitted photo/SPCSD

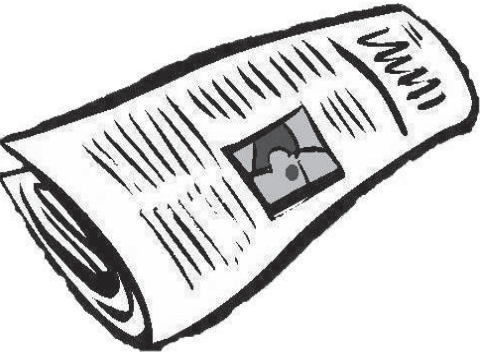
**NEW SOUTH PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ...** With schools ready to accept students Thursday, the South Pike County School District introduced its new employees for the 2025-2026 school year. Pictured (front row L to R) is McKenzie Fatheree, Jordan Shanks, Superintendent Tanya Wilcher, Lexie Bahloul and Amanda Buck; (back row) Hannah Taylor, Candy Hood, Chuck Lowery, Kevin Bright, Monica Riley, Krista Milner, Jay Turley and Bevin Boyd.

## School year set to begin Thursday

MURFREESBORO -- As students return to the South Pike County campus this Thursday for the 2025-2026 school year, Superintendent Tanya Wilcher said she was excited for the start of her fourth year as head of the schools. She said the school was bustling with new employees and she was "excited about all of them." Wilcher said they all fit in to the core values of the school -- family, pride and growth. Those three terms were selected by the school staff prior to the 2024-2025 school year. "Those three words will be a part of everything we do this year as we keep them in mind. It's not a me thing -- it's faculty driven as part of a collective ownership." A new look is abounding around campus as the elementary playground fence now features a wrap. Also, new window coverings have been added for safety as a security measure at the activity room and elementary front doors. Additionally radios will be on all school buses -- with antennas installed in Murfreesboro to reach Delight and one in Delight to reach Antoine. "All of our busses will be able to talk to us on a hand-held [radio] ... we've been trying to get that in place so we are excited." Wilcher joked "i'm not sure we'll ever be completely done" but said that the baseball/softball complex was progressing with the road from campus to the fields completed as well as extending the parking lot and completion of the perimeter fence. She said the campus will also be adding two new storage facilities for the track program. The district's agri program will construct the storage units as part of a hands-on learning experience. Wilcher added the agri instructor Blake Simmons received a grant to deck out the facilities on campus with new equipment. The new statewide cell phone policy for schools won't be a huge deal for the district according to Wilcher. In fact, she said the parents of students may have a bigger issue with it than the students themselves. She did say that since it was a state law, any student caught violating the policy will have the phone taken and must be collected by a parent. Last year elementary schools students began depositing their phones in a pocket of the homeroom. For high school students the devices -- including bluetooth headphones and smart watches -- must be turned off and put away, such as in their cars or lockers. They will not be able to carry the phones on their person. "We've been using technology in other ways [iPads] in the classrooms, so the students are used to other means, and we have a student phone in the high school office. I don't think it will be a huge change here ... the biggest adjustment might be for parents not being able to text their kids for scheduling. I think it will open up communication, that's what I've been told by some schools that have already started, that the big thing."

Wilcher said it was incumbent that parents sign up for ROOMS -- the district's communication app. She said every person in the district has been trained to get messages out to parents so they are apprised of situations. "That will be the place to get all communication -- we need to make sure all parents have that app on their phone and using the communication tool." She added that providing up-to-date cell phone numbers to the school will send out all messages as a text to the parent. "It's really important that parents have their correct cell phone number in our e-school, and then they'll start getting our messages with their phones." Wilcher said the school times will remain the same as last year -- 7:55 a.m. to 3:22 p.m. She did note the district will move from nine bus routes to seven, making some of the routes a little longer. They will also ask that some residents utilize bus stops to collect multiple students at one location. Stating that it will cost the district less in drivers, fuel and bus costs, she asked that parents be patient initially until routes gets smoothed out. While the district is increasing fees for athletic events to \$7, attendees will now be able to use cashless options at both the gate and concessions stand. This season the district is offering paid season passes at a discount to either MJHS or MHS

SCHOOL Continued on Page 2



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## New York resident finds 2.3 carat diamond at Crater

BY WAYMON COX  
Crater of Diamonds State Park

MURFREESBORO, Ark -- Weeks of dedication and hard work recently paid off for 31-year-old Micherre Fox, of Manhattan, NY, when she found a 2.30-carat white diamond at Arkansas' world-famous Crater of Diamonds State Park. About two years ago, Fox decided that she wanted to find her own diamond for an engagement ring. "There's something symbolic about being able to solve problems with money, but sometimes money runs out in a marriage," she explained. "You need to be willing and able to solve those problems with hard work." Her partner, supportive of the endeavor, agreed to wait until she achieved her goal. Fox, who just completed graduate school, decided to dedicate part of a month-long break to searching for a diamond. "I was willing to go anywhere in the world to make that happen," she said. "I researched, and it turned out that the only place in the world to do it was right in our backyard, in Arkansas!" After two weeks of intense preparation, Fox arrived at the Crater of Diamonds State Park on July 8 to begin her diamond-hunting adventure. July was a great time to enjoy everything the park has to offer, from cooling off in the on-site pool to exploring the park. Staff encourage guests to stay hydrated and take breaks in the shade or at the Diamond Springs Water Park when spending time outdoors. During her three-week visit, Fox made the most of her time, searching for diamonds nearly every day while also enjoying the unique Crater of Diamonds experience.



FOX-BALLOU DIAMOND

Submitted photo/CODSP

Around 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 29, her last day at the park, Fox was walking along the West Drain of the park's 37.5-acre diamond search area when she spotted something glistening at her feet. Thinking it might be

DIAMOND FIND Continued on Page 4





Staff photos

**NEW DECORATION ...** Last week a wrap was added to the Murfreesboro elementary school playground (far above) while Traci Jones, Marc McRae and Tanya Wilcher work to complete the project (near above).

## JOB OPENING

## TAKING APPLICATIONS

The Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department will be accepting applications for the position of Water Treatment Plant Operator.

Interested persons may obtain an application at the water office, located at 204 East Main, Murfreesboro, AR. 71958

Applications will be accepted until Thursday, August 14 with interviews being held on Friday, August 15.

Candidates desiring to be considered for the above position should apply in person, no phone calls please. The Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department is an equal opportunity employer.

*This publication was paid for by the Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department. The amount paid for this publication is \$ 54.00*

*(m.w.s.d. 120w., 5,6)*

# Murfreesboro Diamond

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• John Robert Schirmer, Publisher

• P.J. Tracy IV, Editor

• Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

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Nashville, AR 71852

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

**College Subscriptions- \$25 for 9-months.**

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

**Telephone:** 870-285-2723

**Business Hours:** Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Please Send Change of Address Information to:  
Murfreesboro Diamond  
P.O. Box 550  
Murfreesboro, AR 71958

*Any erroneous statement published in the newspaper will be gladly and promptly corrected if called to the attention of the management.*

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE

## FRIDAYS AT 3:00 P.M.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS**  
**PROBATE DIVISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF**  
**NO. 55PR-25-38**  
**SARAH LOUELLA TERRELL, DECEASED**

**NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT AS EXECUTOR**

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:  
2199 Highway 19 N, Murfreesboro, Arkansas 71958

DATE OF DEATH: April 28, 2025

An instrument dated September 15, 2015, was admitted to probate on July 29, 2025, as the Last Will and Testament of Sarah Louella Terrell, as amended by a First Codicil thereto dated February 20, 2019, and the undersigned has been appointed Executor thereunder. Contest of the probate of the will can be affected only by filing a petition within the time provided by law.

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

This Notice first published on August 6, 2025.  
PHIL A. TERRELL, Executor

By: CALEB D. HOLLINGER, #2020191  
FRIDAY, ELDREDGE & CLARK, LLP  
400 W. Capitol Ave., Suite 2000  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3522  
Direct Phone: (501) 370-1421  
e-mail: chollinger@fridayfirm.com  
Attorneys for the Estate

*(e.c. 196w., 5,6)*

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## SCHOOL Continued from Page 1

football games, as opposed to the all football pass sold last season.

Passes, bus route and all other school information for the new year, can be found on the school's website at [www.rattlers.org/article/2334220](http://www.rattlers.org/article/2334220).

It was also noted that the district's first football action -- the annual Red-White game -- will be held this Friday, Aug. 15 at 7 p.m. The cost of attendance will be a donation of laundry soap, towels or water.

The district's schedule for this year is as follows:

- August 14 First Day of School
- September 1 Labor Day – No School
- September 3 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- September 11 Parent/Teacher Conferences (4:00-6:00)
- October 1 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- October 10 End of 1st Quarter (41 days)
- October 13 Columbus Day – No School
- November 5 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- November 13 Parent/Teacher Conferences (4:00-6:00)
- November 24-28 Thanksgiving Break – No School
- December 17-18 Semester Test Days
- December 19 Make-up Semester Test Day End of 2nd Quarter (44 days)
- Dec 22-Jan 2 Christmas Break – No School
- January 5 Professional Development Day- No Students
- January 6 Students Resume School
- January 19 Martin Luther King, Jr Day – No School
- February 4 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- February 5 Parent/Teacher Conferences (4:00-6:00)
- February 16 President's Day – No School
- March 4 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- March 6 End of 3rd Quarter (42 days)
- March 23-27 Spring Break – No School
- April 1 Early Release/Professional Development (2:12 pm)
- April 16 Parent/Teacher Conferences (4:00-6:00)
- May 1 No School
- May 8 No School
- May 15 No School
- May 18-19 Semester Test Days
- May 20 Make-up Semester Test Day End of 4th Quarter (45)

Remember to buckle up and always pay attention while driving.

## Latimer Funeral Home

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against Donna Louise Spears, deceased, of Pike County, AR., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before November 10, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make payment immediately. This 30th day of July, 2025

Ilah Rita Risner, Administrator  
P.O. Box 204  
Glenwood, AR. 71943

*(I,R,R 70w., 5,6)*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against Walton Howard Partee Sr., deceased, of Pike County, AR., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before November 10, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make payment immediately. This 30th day of July, 2025

Ilah Rita Risner, Administrator  
P.O. Box 204  
Glenwood, AR. 71943

*(I,R,R 71w., 5,6)*





Submitted photo

**STORM DAMAGE ...** While Murfreesboro itself experienced nothing but a mild thunderstorm, all of Pike County was not so fortunate Monday night. There were many electrical outages across the county and Dunlap’s Store in Kirby (above) experienced roof damage due to high winds. Owner Sandra Garrett said on a social media site that the storm “rolled the roof back ... we are thankful no one was hurt. Please keep us in your prayers.”

State AG issues a consumer alert for DMV scams

LITTLE ROCK -- Arkansans are experiencing an increase in DMV and toll road scams. In these scams, criminals attempt to steal consumers’ personal information and trick consumers into handing over funds by impersonating a state service, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or another state’s toll road management service.

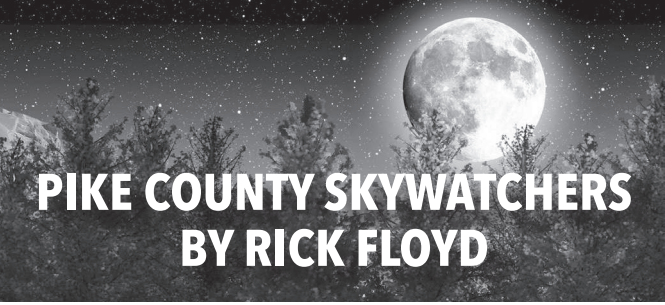
**WHAT ARKANSANS SHOULD KNOW**

Scammers are taking advantage of summer travel. While Arkansas does not have toll roads, many Arkansans may have traveled during the summer for vacation to states that do impose tolls on certain roads. Because of heightened travel, some Arkansans might be more easily tricked into thinking these are legitimate texts about unpaid toll fees.

- 2 THINGS TO REMEMBER**
- The DMV will never text you about an unpaid parking ticket.
  - The DMV will never threaten you with jail time.
- 4 TIPS TO AVOID DMV AND TOLL ROAD SCAMS**
- Here are some tips to recognize these scams and keep yourself safe if you receive a text message from someone claiming to be from a state toll service:
- Do not click on the link.

- Delete the text message and report it as junk.
  - Contact the state’s tolling agency or your local DMV office.
- Be sure to use a phone number or website that you know is legitimate and not the information in the text message.
- Take steps to protect your personal information if you clicked the link. Change your passwords, monitor your financial accounts, and dispute any unfamiliar charges.

To report a DMV or toll road scam, visit [arkansasag.gov/resources/contact-us/robocall-reporting-form/](https://arkansasag.gov/resources/contact-us/robocall-reporting-form/). For more information, please contact the Office of Attorney General at (501) 682-2007 or [oag@arkansasag.gov](mailto:oag@arkansasag.gov), or visit the website [www.ArkansasAG.gov](http://www.ArkansasAG.gov).



Billions of bugs in the sky

The Perseid meteor shower has been going on since July. But it’s predicted peak will be during the very early morning hours of 13 August. The possibility of seeing a multitude of fiery streaks are unfortunately dimmed by the brightness of the waning moon. Also, the upper atmosphere seems to be covered by a thin layer of smoke, Saharan dust or both. The bright yellow and gold colors of recent sunrises and sunsets are likely evidence of this.

Look to the east an hour or so before sunrise on 19 August to see the waning crescent moon, Venus and Jupiter forming an arc near the two brightest stars of the constellation Gemini, Castor and Pollux.

This time of year insects, spiders and the like are in abundance. What are just generally called “bugs” such as dragonflies, gnats, fireflies and mosquitoes are common sights in the air at eye level and slightly higher. Mostly invisible to us however are the high fliers and floaters in the upper part of the sky. A few years ago a team of British scientists sampled a half-mile square section of sky going up several thousand feet and found insects and spiders numbering in the billions, and subsequent research has found that there is what has been called a “bug highway” high in the Earth’s troposphere (the layer between Earth and the stratosphere). The record altitude for an insect is currently at 19,000 feet.

Most of the traffic on this highway is of migratory butterflies and moths, beetles and spiders. Certain spiders cast a web filament that catches the wind, and in an updraft they are lifted skyward thousands of feet, sometimes traveling hundreds of miles. Sailing ships of old reported finding webs sticking to their sails hundreds of miles out at sea, and aircraft get the occasional bug on the windshield. You might prefer not knowing that among the parasailing spiders, the Black Widow is included.

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**UAMS**

**HOUSE CALL**

Dr. Amber Norris is an assistant professor in the UAMS Department of Family and Preventive Medicine who treats patients at UAMS East Regional Campus in Helena.

**Q: What are cysts?**

**A:** Cysts are pockets of tissue that are often filled with fluid, pus or other materials. There are many types of cysts, and they can appear anywhere on the body, including the arms, back, chest, legs and scalp. Cysts are normally benign but may require treatment if complications occur.

Cysts are normally painless, slow-growing and smooth to the touch. Reasons for the development of cysts include infections, a defect in skin cells, the clogging of oil glands on the skin, injury or trauma, or a skin condition such as acne.

Symptoms include a round or dome-shaped lump, skin discoloration, tenderness or warmth to the touch, as well as pain and discomfort if the cyst is located in an area that moves frequently. Complications

include inflammation and the possibility of rupture.

Cysts normally do not require treatment unless they continue grow or cause pain. An ultrasound may be required to determine the content of the cyst. A biopsy also may be performed to remove a small amount of tissue for examination.

Treatment options include medications, an injection to decrease inflammation and swelling, an incision to drain the cyst, or surgical removal. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a cyst.

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Obituaries

Diane Whisenhunt Barton, 76



Diane Whisenhunt Barton, age 76, of Delight, left her loved ones on Sunday, August 10, 2025. She was born on May 27, 1949, in Hot Springs, the daughter of Bill Whisenhunt and Louise Burk Whisenhunt Short. Diane was preceded in death by her husband, Rickey Barton; her son Boytt Hutcherson; her father, Bill Whisenhunt; her mother, Louise Burk Whisenhunt Short; and her stepfather, James Short.

Diane worked 40 years as office manager and retired from Hanson Aggregates after 30 years of Service. She was a member of Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Diane enjoyed cooking enormous meals for family gatherings, working in her yard, going to church, and helping others anything she was needed. Above all she clearly loved and cherished her family.

Diane was a wonderful mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend whose greatest joy in life was spending time with her family and friends, especially her four great-grandbabies, that always brought a smile to her face when she would show pictures and tell stories about them. She will truly be missed

and while our hearts are breaking that we must let her go for now, we stand strong in our faith knowing she is in a much better place and this is not goodbye, because we will see you again someday soon.

Diane is survived by her two daughters, Stacie Hutcherson of Delight and Gena Barton of Hot Springs; her two granddaughters, Britton Hutcherson of Antoine and Nikki (Logan) Webb of Delight; three great-granddaughters and one great-grandson, Georgdyn Hutcherson and Crimson Haze Hutcherson both of Antoine, Josie Webb and Charlie Webb both of Delight; her two brothers, Larry (Fay) Whisenhunt of Delight and Joe (Judy) Short of Glenwood; her three sisters, Gail Parker of Lodi, Ann (Tony) Waites of Glenwood, Kim (Robert) Arnold of Royal; and many loving extended family members and a host of wonderful friends.

Pallbearers will be Willie Hutchison, Randy Cross, Eugene Hill, Justin Reid, Kenneth Harding, and Robert Arnold.

Honorary Pallbearers will be the Genesis Cancer Center, Jeffrey Miller, and Elite Hospice.

Visitation was held on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at Smith Family Funeral Home Chapel- Glenwood.

Funeral Services will be held on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 10:00 AM at Smith Family Funeral Home Chapel- Glenwood with Bro. John David Watson officiating.

Interment will be held at Lodi Cemetery.

Guest Registry can be found at [www.smithfamily-cares.com](http://www.smithfamily-cares.com)

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MICHERRE FOX

**SMALL ADS DO WORK ... YOU JUST READ ONE!!!**  
**Call (870) 285-2723 to place yours in next week's edition**

# SOUTH PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL MENU

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14**  
Breakfast: Chocolate muffin or cereal, fruit, juice, milk  
Lunch: Cheeseburger, potato smiles, lettuce, tomato, 7-12 onion & pickle slices, peaches, milk

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 15**  
Breakfast: Sausage biscuit or cereal, fruit, juice, milk  
Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes, black-eyed peas, whole grain roll, pears, milk

**MONDAY, AUGUST 18**  
Breakfast: Pancake on stick or cereal, fruit, juice, milk  
Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, baby carrots w/ ranch, steamed broccoli, pears, milk

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 19**  
Breakfast: Mini powered donuts or cereal, fruit, juice, milk  
Lunch: Meatball sub w/cheese, french fries, baked beans, applesauce, milk

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20**  
Breakfast: Chicken biscuit or cereal, fruit, juice, milk  
Lunch: Crisпитos, pinto beans, seasoned corn, 7-12 salsa, pineapple, milk

*\*Due to food item shortages menus are subject to change without notice. Any changes to the menu will be posted on the website at [www.rattlers.org](http://www.rattlers.org)*

## MURFREESBORO SENIOR ADULT CENTER LUNCH MENU

**MONDAY, AUGUST 18**  
Lemon herb chicken, corn, brussel sprouts, dinner roll, fruit

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 19**  
Beef stroganoff, egg noodles, broccoli, carrots, cookie

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20**  
Roast turkey w/ gravy, baked sweet potato, cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce, pineapple upside down cake

*Lunch served at 11:30 a.m. For more information (870) 285-2312. Open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 a.m. Carry out is now available for \$6.00*

# Trinity Missionary Baptist Church

**Hwy 27 N. Murfreesboro**  
 • Worship 11 a.m. • Sun. Eve. 5 p.m.  
 • Wed. Bible study & Prayer Meeting 6 p.m.  
 • Facebook services on Sunday at 10:45 a.m. & 5 p.m.  
**Bro. Curtis Abernathy**

To reserve this space for your church services or business...  
Call Christy at  
870-285-2723

**Bank of Delight**  
503 E. Antioch St. Delight  
(870) 379-2293

# DIAMOND FIND

Continued from Page 1

an iridescent, dew-covered spiderweb, Fox nudged it with her boot but the shine remained. Realizing it was a very shiny stone, Fox picked it up for a closer look. "Having never seen an actual diamond in my hands, I didn't know for sure, but it was the most 'diamond-y diamond' I had seen," she said.

Clenching the gem in her fist, Fox rushed to the Diamond Discovery Center, where park staff confirmed she had found a white, or colorless, diamond weighing more than two carats. Fox was overcome with emotion upon hearing the news, stating, "I got on my knees and cried, then started laughing."

Fox's diamond is about the size of a human canine tooth. It has a smooth, rounded shape and beautiful metallic luster, typical of most Crater diamonds. Its blemished surface hints at its violent origin deep within the Earth's mantle. It is the third-largest diamond found at the park, so far, in 2025.

Assistant Superintendent Waymon Cox says, "Ms. Fox's story highlights the fact that, even when putting forth your best effort, being in the right place at the right time plays a part in finding diamonds," said Crater of Diamonds State Park Assistant Superintendent Waymon Cox. "After weeks of hard work, Ms. Fox found her diamond sitting right on top of the ground."

Many guests choose to name the diamonds they find at Crater of Diamonds State Park. Fox has named her gem the Fox-Ballou Diamond, after her and her partner's last names. She plans to have the diamond set in her engagement ring.

Reflecting on her time at the Crater of Diamonds State Park, Fox emphasized the hands-on nature of the experience. "After all the re-

search, there's luck and there's hard work," she said. "When you are literally picking up the dirt in your hands, no amount of research can do that for you; no amount of education can take you all the way. It was daunting!" Fox credited park staff and other guests with helping her find her way and making her visit a memorable one.

As of this publication, 366 diamonds have been registered at Crater of Diamonds State Park in 2025, including 11 weighing more than one carat each. Quick facts about Crater of Diamonds State Park

Diamonds come in all colors of the rainbow. The three most common colors found at Crater of Diamonds State Park are white, brown and yellow, in that order.

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.

The largest diamond ever discovered in the United States was unearthed in 1924 during an early mining operation on the land that later became Crater of Diamonds State Park. Named the Uncle Sam, this white diamond with a pink cast weighed 40.23 carats. It was later cut into a 12.42-carat emerald shape. The Uncle Sam is now part of the Smithsonian's mineral and gem collection and can be seen at the National Museum of Natural History.

Another well-known diamond from the park is the Strawn-Wagner. Found in 1990 by Murfreesboro resident Shirley Strawn, this 3.03-carat white gem was cut into a round brilliant shape weighing 1.09 carats. It graded as ideal cut, D-colorless and flawless and was set in a platinum and 24-carat gold ring. In 1998, the state of Arkansas purchased this diamond for \$34,700 in donations and placed it on permanent display at the park visitor center.

## Case continued following death

MURFREESBORO -- As of Tuesday morning Aug. 12, there has been no charges filed, no pleas and now three court appearances for the Pike County man accused in the shooting death of another man in June.

Gage King, 23, is awaiting a decision on charges connected to the shooting death of Daniel Cain Lamb, 44, of Delight.

Pike County Circuit Clerk Sabrina Williams said Tuesday that King made his third court appearance Monday but was given another court date of Sept. 15 due to the "state needing more time."

# 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 email to [mdiamond.editor@windstream.net](mailto:mdiamond.editor@windstream.net)

# ‘Dear Preacher’

**By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ**



RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU!

Regardless of all the things going on around us in today's world, the greatest battle we face each day is Satan. Each day we must deal with the fact that Satan wants us to be lost and that he is constantly trying to pull us away from God and the things we enjoy in Christ Jesus. We know from the book of Job that Satan roams around on the earth each day.

Peter tells us that our adversary, the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The apostle John in 1 John 2 tells us the three ways that Satan tempts us: Lust of the

flesh; Lust of the eye; the pride of life. We, as Christians, must recognize these characteristics of the devil and know that we can withstand them and daily fight to overcome the things he does.

James tells us to submit to God and resist the devil. When we resist the devil, he

will flee from us. In Ephesians 6, the apostle Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God so that we can fight the wiles of the devil. We must daily resist and fight the devil. Let us draw encouragement from 1 Corinthians 10:13 as we wage our daily battle.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

I pray that each of you will daily submit to God and serve him faithfully. Have a great week!

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BACK TO SCHOOL  
\* -- Theme Related Clue

- ACROSS
- 1.\*Report \_\_\_\_
  - 5. One on the beat
  - 8. Put on the payroll
  - 12. Fan sound
  - 13. Buckeye State
  - 14. Indy entrant
  - 15. Table mountain
  - 16. 2021 movie “The Harder They \_\_\_\_”
  - 17. Carry away, in a way
  - 18. \* \_\_\_\_ Readers
  - 20. Weary walk
  - 21. Basketry stick
  - 22. \* \_\_\_\_ time for preschoolers
  - 23. Plums and cherries genus
  - 26. Allegiance
  - 30. Crew propeller
  - 31. Rh in Rh disease
  - 34. Your majesty
  - 35. Miss of the Muppets
  - 37. Band event
  - 38. Ascii, sing.
  - 39. Olympic castaway
  - 40. \*Didn’t fail
  - 42. Frozen H2O
  - 43. Took a penny-farthing, e.g.
  - 45. \*Punctuation marks for famous words
  - 47. Maltese or Havanese, e.g.
  - 48. \*Use Play-Doh
  - 50. Cheap trinket
  - 52. \*3+x=10, e.g.
  - 55. Soviet place of exile
  - 56. Curtis, to friends
  - 57. Beehive state
  - 59.\*Olden-day notebook
  - 60. Honey-producing facility
  - 61. Sushi restaurant soup
  - 62. Location of altar
  - 63. Type of poem

- 64. Sing like Ella Fitzgerald
- DOWN
- 1. Mountain basin
  - 2. Attention grabber
  - 3. Reduced Instruction Set Computer
  - 4. Hiccup’s Toothless, e.g.,
  - 5. Irritate by rubbing
  - 6. Persian Gulf ship
  - 7. Multi-
  - 8. \*”Get out of classroom” permit (2 words)
  - 9. International Civil Aviation Organization
  - 10. Retired, shortened
  - 11. Bard’s before
  - 13. Lacking cordiality
  - 14. Settle a debt
  - 19. Unethical loaner’s practice
  - 22. Us, in Mexico
  - 23. Temporary store
  - 24. Reason to strike
  - 25. Prodded
  - 26. Totes or tugs
  - 27. Permissible
  - 28. Cease-fire
  - 29. Many affirmatives
  - 32. “Good grief!”
  - 33. Bro’s counterpart
  - 36. \*School alum
  - 38. Next step for juvenile
  - 40. Margaret, for short
  - 41. Describe as similar
  - 44. Elks’ hangout
  - 46. Poppy derivative, pl.
  - 48. Marine cephalopod
  - 49. \*Grading arch
  - 50. Big one at 7-Eleven
  - 51. Regrettably, exclamation
  - 52. Sound reflection
  - 53. Auditory
  - 54. U.S. space agency, acr.
  - 55. Geological Society of America
  - 58. \*Van Halen’s “ \_\_\_\_ for Teacher”

CROSSWORD

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# Mount Ida team wins national forestry meet

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

WESTON, W.Va. — The Arkansas competitor who wound up with the highest individual score at the National 4-H Forestry Invitational said she knew little about forestry when she was invited to join what would become the national-title-winning Montgomery County team.

The team, composed of Serena Grey, Nathaniel Huitt, Eli McDowell and Ariel Murphy, competed against 11 other states and won the national invitational, which was held July 20-24 at Jackson’s Mill State 4-H Conference Center in Weston, West Virginia.

The champion team was coached by Ty Huitt, father of Nathaniel. The team advanced to the nationals after winning the state forestry contest in May.

At the invitational, 4-H members competed for both overall team and individual awards in several events, including tree identification, tree measurement, insect and disease identification and forest evaluation. Contestants also competed in compass and pacing, where they used a compass to locate a specific point, and took a written forestry exam.

**‘A COMPLETE SHOCK’**

Grey, a newcomer to forestry, had the highest overall individual score in the contest, earning 442 points out of a possible 500.

“Learning that I placed highest overall was a complete shock to me,” Grey, 15, said. “I wasn’t expecting to do well at all, since this was my first forestry contest. About two months before the national invitational, one of my friends texted me and asked if I would be willing to fill in as the fourth member of the team.

“I was originally unsure, because I knew close to nothing about trees,” Grey said. “I began practicing with the team every week and learning how to compass, pace and timber measure. Another thing that helped me learn was getting out with my team members and coach and just walking in the woods, studying the

trees.”

“I was not expecting us to win,” said Ty Huitt. “I thought we’d be competitive, but they really impressed me. I told them, ‘If you want to win, you have to put in the time to practice and study,’ and they flat out did it.”

As part of the forest evaluation event, Huitt said the team had to set up in an area of the forest and “essentially function as a forester” and give recommendations to a fictitious landowner in a scenario they were given.

“They had to work together to make choices and solve problems for that landowner, and it was cool to see them do well and work those things out,” Huitt said. “They taught one another, even during our practices while we were getting ready for it. They would each learn and teach the others.”

Jaret Rushing, extension forestry instructor for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and coordinator of the state 4-H forestry contest, said the forestry program gives 4-H members “an enhanced sense that forestry goes further than just trees.”

“Arkansas is in the top five of timber producing states in the nation,” Rushing said. “Therefore, I think it’s important to promote outdoor education and forestry education, so people understand that we are an agricultural commodity.”

**PASSING DOWN A PASSION**

Huitt said the team first began working together and practicing for the competition in May, though his son Nathaniel and McDowell had older siblings who previously competed in forestry competitions through FFA.

“I’ve been dragging those two through the woods since they were in sixth grade,” Huitt said.

Huitt said he grew up in Hermitage, Arkansas, and was on his high school’s FFA forestry team, which won the state forestry contest in 1995. He later became a pastor and moved with his family to Mt. Ida in 2009. To introduce his love for forestry to a new generation, Huitt soon began coaching his daughter and youth from his community in the FFA forestry program.

Due to scheduling conflicts for team members, Huitt and the team made the switch to Arkansas 4-H’s forestry program this year so they could continue competing in the subject.

McDowell, 17, said he enjoys forestry because it’s a “good excuse to outside and venture through the woods.”

“I enjoy the way it makes me use my critical thinking and reasoning skills,” he said. “It’s an experience that is too fun to pass up. Thanks to 4-H, I have made some incredible memories this summer.”

Murphy, 16, said forestry appeals to her because “I really like a challenge.”

“It’s more fun to not be able to know all of the trees, and it’s very difficult to identify all of them accurately, along with everything else that goes into this, like compass and pacing,” Murphy said. “I would say the mystery of it is very appealing to me.”

Nathaniel Huitt, 16, said the program provides him with “a lot of learning that school just can’t really offer.”

Rushing said forestry education equips youth with skills that will benefit them “in all other areas of agriculture.”

“Whenever you start talking about forestry education, that includes water and air quality among other environmental concerns,” Rushing said. “Whenever we start talking about forest management, it also encompasses a wildlife component and pest and disease prevention that can adapt into similar concerns for livestock, forages, agronomy or horticulture.

“By learning each and every aspect of the forestry competition area, and excelling in those events, you become more well-rounded in the entire agriculture field, rather than just one discipline,” Rushing said.

**A WELL-EARNED WIN**

Murphy said her team’s first place win “didn’t really hit me until the next day.”

“It was the most proud and exciting moment,” she said. “That we had done all of that hard work, practicing one, two, three times a week, and it had really paid off. If we were not out in the woods practicing with our coach, then we were at home studying anything that we could.”

“I was really happy,” Nathaniel Huitt said of the win. “I’m not usually a really emotional person, but I couldn’t stop smiling for five minutes.”

“I kind of felt on top of the world,” McDowell said. “Everyone was yelling and cheering for us, which was something I didn’t really expect and was a nice surprise.”

“Forestry is a growing industry, and it is so important in everything that we do,” Grey said. “I would encourage more 4-H’ers to join it. This contest was an amazing opportunity for me, and I discovered a new interest that I would never have previously tried.”

Rushing said he was not surprised that the Montgomery team took the top spot at the Invitational.

“This particular group of kids were very inquisitive and very attentive when we discussed aspects of the national contest,” Rushing said. “The fact that they went and represented Arkansas as well as they did may have been a surprise to themselves, but I knew they had it in them.”

To learn more about the Arkansas 4-H forestry program, visit the Forestry Contest page on the Cooperative Extension Service website or contact Rushing at jrushing@uada.edu.

To learn about extension programs in Arkansas, contact the Pike County Cooperative Extension Service at (870) 285-2161.

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The Murfreesboro Water Department is requesting sealed bids for the sale of a 2007 GMC Sierra 4.8-liter V8 long wheel base white 1/2 ton work truck, mileage 137,460. Sealed bids must be received by delivery to 204 East Main Street or by mail to:  
Murfreesboro Water Department  
Attn: Sealed bids  
P.O. Box 271  
Murfreesboro, AR. 71958  
no later then August 29, 2005 by 4:30 p.m. Sealed bids submitted will be opened on September 2, 20025. The Murfreesboro Water Department reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Any questions may be directed to Murfreesboro Water Office or (870) 285-2655.

This publication was paid for by the Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department. The amount paid for this publication is \$57.15

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# Rattler head coach at practice Monday after weekend issues

BY JOHN BALCH  
*Nashville News-Leader staff*

MURFREESBORO -- Murfreesboro Rattler head football coach Jay Turley was back on the practice field Monday afternoon with his junior and senior high teams after having been hospitalized over the weekend with a heart issue.

The coach told the newspaper Monday that he played soft-ball Saturday at the Hope Watermelon Festival and when he got home he began to experience pain that wouldn't go away and thought he was possibly suffering from indigestion. Early the next morning, he was taken to the hospital in Nashville and was "pretty much immediately" shipped out to the Arkansas Heart Hospital in Little Rock. He underwent a routine procedure for a blocked artery which required a stent and two nights in the hospital.

Turley, 53, was released Monday and was back in Murfreesboro in time for the 4:00 junior high practice followed by the seniors at 6:00.

He reported the doctors told him there was no damage to his heart and ordered him to "take it easy for the next couple of days." He coached from a chair Monday.

Turley was hired last December to lead the Rattlers and make his return to coaching after more than six years away from the game. He replaced Brad Chesshir, who left the head coach position open after three seasons to accept the head coaching job at Nashville. Turley has previously coached the Rattlers, leading them from 2006 to 2009 with a record of 30-15. He also serves as the district's athletic director.

# Nashville's farmers market amongst several across state to receive grant funding

LITTLE ROCK -- The Arkansas Department of Agriculture has announced the grant recipients of the tenth annual Arkansas Farmers Market Promotion Program. Administered by the Department and sponsored by Farm Credit, the program provides funding to support local farmers markets as demand continues to grow for locally grown and made products.

"My administration is committed to making fresh, nutritious foods accessible for every community in the Natural State, and our local farmers markets play a critical role in that mission," said Governor Sanders. "With this funding, farmers markets across Arkansas will be able to attract more customers, boost their visibility, and make Arkansas healthier -- all while supporting the farm families who are the backbone of our state."

"We're thankful for the ongoing partnership with Farm Credit through the Farmers Market Promotion Program which helps address food insecurity and provides an outlet for agricultural producers throughout the state," said Secretary Wes Ward.

In 2025, more than \$10,500 in grant funding was awarded to the following markets across the state, including the farmers market in Nashville.

Grant funding will be used to support a variety of promotional activities, including signage, local advertising, and digital marketing campaigns designed to raise community and regional awareness of each participating market. All recipients are members of the Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made programs.

Markets interested in applying for future funding should note that the Arkansas Farmers Market Promotion Program typically opens for applications in late spring or early summer each year. Funding is awarded to eligible markets in the order applications are received and remains available until all funds have been allocated. More information about the program can be found online at [agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-programs/farmers-market-programs/](http://agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-programs/farmers-market-programs/).

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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.

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# STATE CAPITOL WEEK IN REVIEW

## Arkansas death penalty method being challenged in court

LITTLE ROCK – Earlier this year the legislature approved Act 302 to allow executions by nitrogen hypoxia. The act took effect on August 5, the same day 10 inmates on death row filed suit to challenge its constitutionality.

Execution by nitrogen hypoxia occurs when the inmate is forced to breathe nitrogen and therefore is deprived of the oxygen required to live. Alabama has executed five men using the method, but its law is being challenged in federal court. Louisiana has executed one inmate. Oklahoma and Mississippi, like Arkansas, have passed laws allowing executions by nitrogen hypoxia but have not used it.

The new Arkansas law is being challenged in a Pulaski County Circuit Court. The Arkansas attorney general said he would vigorously defend Act 302.

There are 23 men on death row. Seven were convicted and sentenced in the 1990s. Two of the inmates who filed the lawsuit to strike Act 302 were convicted in 1992 and 1993, and two other inmates listed in the suit were convicted and sentenced in 1994.

Arkansas has used lethal injection since 1990, which was the last year an inmate was executed in an electric chair. Lethal injection requires three separate drugs that are difficult to obtain. The most recent executions in Arkansas were in 2017, when four men were killed by lethal injection before the Correction Department's supply of drugs was due to expire.

Act 302 had 20 Senate co-sponsors and was passed by a vote of 26-to-9. It passed in the House by a vote of 67-to-23.

Attorneys for the 10 inmates argue that their death sentences

were originally supposed to be by lethal injection and cannot be changed retroactively. At the date of their sentencing for capital murder the only legal sentences were death by lethal injection and serving life behind bars without parole.

The lawsuit asks for a judicial declaration that Act 302 should apply only to offenders who are convicted and sentenced after August 5, the date the law took effect. Also, attorneys for the inmates argue that Act 302 is unconstitutional because it amounts to legislative overreach into functions of the executive branch and the judicial branch.

**10 COMMANDMENTS IN CLASSROOMS**

Act 573, another new law that was scheduled to take effect on August 5, would require public school classrooms to display a copy of the Ten Commandments. However, it has been challenged in federal court and the judge called it "plainly unconstitutional."

He issued a preliminary injunction that prevented it from going into effect, based on his conclusion that plaintiffs were likely to win their challenge. The attorney general, who is defending the act, said he is reviewing the state's legal options.

The judge wrote that about 45 years ago the United States Supreme Court struck down a law that was very similar to Act 573.

The act would require the display to be at least 16 by 20 inches in size, with large enough lettering so that a person with average vision can read it from any place in the classroom.

## 4-H members showcase skills at statewide O-Rama

BY TRACY COURAGE  
*U of A System Division of Agriculture*

LITTLE ROCK — More than 300 Arkansas 4-H members are back home this week after four hectic days of competitions, workshops and tours at the annual Arkansas 4-H State O-Rama at the University of Arkansas campus in Fayetteville.

4-H members from 53 Arkansas counties participated in the annual event, which ended July 24. They competed in 40 events to showcase their knowledge and skills in projects areas ranging from archery to veterinary science.

"Our 4-H kids are developing the life skills they need to function as teenagers, and that carries over into their college years and into adulthood," 4-H Event Coordinator Priscella Thomas-Scott said. "They also fellowship with kids from all across the state and form lasting friendships."

While 4-H members do year-round community service in their respective counties, they seized an opportunity to help families in Texas affected by the floods. They collected gifts cards totaling nearly \$1,000 that will be sent to Texas 4-H to distribute to families in need.

During the week, the Arkansas 4-H Foundation also awarded more than \$100,000 to 4-H members for their achievements and for college scholarships.

For many 4-H members, being at O-Rama was their first time on a college campus, and they got a sneak peek at university life: They stayed in dorms, ate in the university cafeteria, toured the UA campus and the UA athletic facilities, and attended a career fair at the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences where they met staff and faculty from various academic programs.

**SKILLS ON DISPLAY**

During competitive events, 4-H members showcase their knowledge and skills developed through their 4-H project work. 4-H offers more than 50 project areas related to the 4-H core tenets of healthy living, science, civic engagement and leadership. Many 4-H members start with one main project but venture into others.

"It's all about encouraging them to step outside their comfort zones and try something new," Thomas-Scott said.

**THE 4-H WAY: LEARNING BY DOING**

Chloe Royce, 17, joined White County 4-H after moving to Arkansas from Arizona last year.

"I'm home-schooled, and I wanted to make friends and have new experiences," she said. With a love of sewing, she quickly found her niche in the Fashion Revue - Constructed project.

Royce learned to sew with her great-grandmother, who made and wore what she called "clown suits" — matching pant and tops, usually in bright colors or loud patterns. For the competition, Royce made and modeled a two-piece ensemble in animal print.

"The stretch stitch was the toughest for me to learn," she told the judges. "I had to learn to use a newer sewing machine."

Outdoor sports are always popular, said 4-H Outdoor Sports instructor Jesse Bocksnick, who coordinated archery, ATV, and gun safety and BB shooting events.

Ten people competed in the ATV safety competition, which required them to pass a written test and a safety test before riding.

"They have to demonstrate they can ride properly in different scenarios — such as making quick turns, traversing a hill, and over obstacles," Bocksnick said.

At the bicycle competition, youth zigzagged between tennis balls placed five inches apart to demonstrate skills.

In performing arts, 4-H members showcased their skills singing, dancing and playing musical instruments.

Other 4-H members showed their savviness in the Consumer Decision Making competition, which required them to analyze options in wearable technology, event venues and dental floss.

"It's all about analytical thinking for consumer decision-making, which we all have to do," said Laura Hendrix professor of personal finance and consumer economics for the Division of Agriculture. "They have to set aside their feelings about brands and think about specific criteria for quality and pick the product that best meets consumer needs."

Many state winners now advance to national competitions. Arkansas 4-H is the largest youth development program in the state. Programs are open to youth ages 5-19 in every county in Arkansas. To learn more, visit [4h.uada.edu](http://4h.uada.edu) or contact the Pike County Cooperative Extension Service at (870) 285-2161.

Submitted photo/SPCSD

**O'RAMA WINNER ...** Pike County's Carsyn Ballard (above left) was the third place winner in the statewide 4-H competition for "Fashion Review -- Purchased"

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