

The

Murfreesboro Diamond

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Wednesday, December 24, 2025  
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LETTERS  
TO SANTA  
SEE PAGES 4-7

Holiday hours, trash  
collection announced

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike County Court-house and associated offices will close at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 23 and will return to work on Friday, December 26.

Rural trash collection for the county this week will see no pickup on Wednesday or Thurs-day. On Friday, Dec. 26, Thursday's normal collection will occur for the north end, while Wednesday and Thursday collection will occur for the south part of Pike County.

The City of Murfreesboro offices will hold the same schedule as the county -- closed Wednesday and Thursday and reopening on the morning of Friday, Dec. 26.

The sanitation schedule this week for Mur-freesboro will see no collection on Wednesday or Thursday, with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday collection to occur on Friday, Dec. 26.

Christmas eve  
services announced

MURFREESBORO -- The First United Meth-odist Church in Murfreesboro will be hosting a night of candlelight, carols, and the good news of Christ's birth, on December 24, Christmas Eve at 9 p.m.

The public is invited to come worship the King and welcome the light.

First UMC is located at 403 Second Ave in Murfreesboro.

Local family named  
farm family of year

LITTLE ROCK -- Jared and Cathren Smith of Dierks were named as the 2025 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year. The Arkansas Farm Family of the Year program has helped to recognize outstanding farm families throughout the state since 1947. The Smiths have been farming in Howard County for 17 years.

The Smith's farm spans 250 acres, with eight poultry houses and a cow-calf operation. They have two children, Cooper and Clara, who are active in the daily farm operations. Both chil-dren are active in FFA.

"Farming is at the heart of who we are, and we're proud of the role our work plays in sus-taining our community and feeding families far beyond Arkansas," said Jared Smith. "Being named Farm Family of the Year is an honor we don't take lightly. We're thankful for this recog-nition and honored to showcase the strength of agriculture in our state."

Selection criteria for the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year includes efficiency of pro-duction, conservation of energy and resources, leadership in agricultural and community af-fairs, home and farm improvement and home and farm management. The Farm Family of the Year program's objective is to recognize farm-ers excelling at production, education and giv-ing back to their communities.

As Arkansas Farm Family of the Year, the Smiths will compete with nine other state winners in the Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year program in Moultrie, Ga.

Now in its 78th year, the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year is one of the longest-run-ning farm family recognition programs in the United States. It begins with selection of the top farm family in each county. Then, eight district Farm Families of the Year are selected.

The Smiths were the West Central District Farm Family of the Year.

Chamber establishes scholarship

MURFREESBORO -- At their December meeting, the Murfreesboro Chamber of Com-merce discussed the Haunted House effort in October, calling the event another success after it raised nearly \$10,000.

It was noted that this past year, the house was only open at the former Pike County Hos-pital for three weekends.

"Getting live people can be a challenge for a large number of dates," said chamber president Lisa Harvill. "But overall it was a great experi-ence again."

Despite this, it was noted that there were a handful of new participants in 2025 for the third installment of the effort.

Next year, the group will consider being open four of five of the weekends in October, with perhaps just Saturday nights for some of the earlier dates of the month. Halloween, Oct. 31, will be on a Saturday next year.

It was noted that staying open to 11 paid small dividends, such that the group will likely close down at 10 p.m or so in 2026.

The group was also pleased with the "Santa on the Square" turnout earlier this month, not-ing that some 80 children were in attendance. This was a significant upturn from the past couple years.

"It was attended really well ... the drawing for bikes to be given away went great," said chamber secretary Jane Fugitt.

The new Christmas décor around town was discussed, and it was stated that the group spend approximately \$15,000 on the effort in 2025.

This year's Christmas parade was also dis-cussed, with the group releasing the winning entries following the parade on Thursday, Dec. 11. The winning floats included in the com-mercial division Jones Construction, Clayton Tinkes in the political candidates division and the "Jingle Bell Favorite" being Elite Home Health.

The night of the parade, the chamber in conjunction with Santa Claus, held the Cham-ber Bucks drawing that was composed of en-tries from purchases made around town over the previous two weeks. Winners were Becky Foster of Nashville (\$100), Dawanda Schwope of Nashville (\$250) and Tina Richard of Kirby

(\$500).

The group announced it would work with the Pike County Republican Committee on a "meet the candidates" night with dates to be announced. The Republicans had previously stated that they plan to hold an event in both Murfreesboro and Glenwood ahead of the March 2026 preferential primary elections.

Kailee Parker proposed to the Chamber that they start an annual scholarship for a graduat-ing senior in 2026. The measure was approved by the group.

The scholarship will be \$500 in 2026, with possible expansion should the effort prove fruitful.

Applications will be provided to Murfrees-boro High School, and after return by students a committee of three people will be formed to choose the winner.

The winner will not be decided solely by grade point average, but also by the amount of volunteerism by the students. The scholarship will also ideally go toward a student planning to major in marketing, business or related field.

The scholarship form states that it would recognize students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to community service and volunteerism. The application also requires a short essay of no more than two pages on the importance of volunteerism and how it has im-pacted their goals/ character.

Parker said the scholarship will "allow for networking opportunities [with the students]" as well as the ability to "educating students on what the chamber does -- how we support local businesses, and why they should as well."

"Imagine if our next Economic Development employee through our county was a previ-ous chamber appointed scholarship winner ...

imagine how deep their roots will be and their motivation to better our organization and com-munity," Parker said during her pitch.

She said a better relationship with the school and community would be beneficial and that should the effort provide more volunteers for fundraising efforts, the scholarship could be increased or expanded to help more students.

"This can change a student's life," Parker said, noting how much \$500 means to a fresh-man. "There is no bad side to this, simply a \$500 cost. Since the chamber is a volunteer or-ganization, we should reward someone who has freely given their time to the community."

The scholarship can be used on books, tu-tion or educational expenses at an accredited college, university or technical school. The cho-sen student would be awarded the scholarship after providing proof of registration at a school.

The group discussed the "Jingle Bell Run" that was not held this year that was used to help fund Angel Tree efforts locally. Despite this, the Chamber did provide \$1,500 to the ef-fort this season that saw over 100 applicants to the angel tree program.

"Lots of volunteers were from Husqvama, and many of those have gone in a different di-rection since they closed," Harvill explained. "The effort is great for the angel tree program and participation will hopefully continue in the future when the race resumes."

It was noted that the race may be moved from December to earlier in the year (perhaps the spring) to find a time less hectic than the holidays.

The group also began discussion of the an-nual banquet set for March, with a location still yet to be set.



Submitted photos/Jimi Scarlett

**FLOAT WINNERS ANNOUNCED ...** The Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce has announced the winning entries from the Christmas parade on Thursday, Dec. 11. The winning floats included in the commercial division Jones Construction (above), Clayton Tinkes (below left) in the political candidates division and the "Jingle Bell Favorite" being Elite Home Health (below right)..



PIKE COUNTY 4-H BANQUET



Submitted photos/PC4-H

**4-H BANQUET RECOGNITION ...** The Pike County 4-H program held its annual banquet on Thursday, Dec. 11. Pictured above is the group of senior members, while (left) Betty Woodley is pictured with Extension Chair Eva Langley after being named "Friend of 4-H" for 2025.









**AN EAST CHRISTMAS ...** Murfreesboro high school's EAST Rattlers finished their project Christmas tree, where students were asked to make a logo that represents their current project or skill.

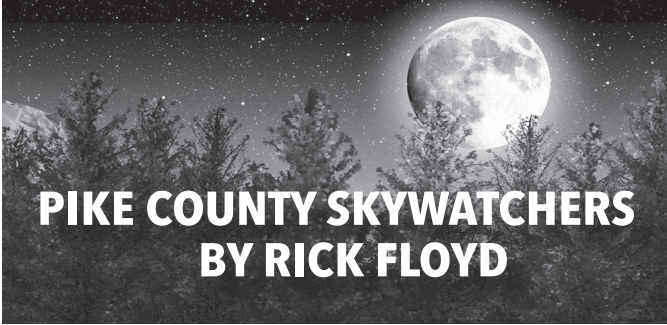


Submitted photos/MHS



Submitted photos/MHS

**ROBOTS IN THE HALLS ...** “Just a normal day at MHS... robots running around the high school hallways!” said advisor Melissa Cornish. Students are programming their robots to navigate a delivery route to another classroom, simulating real-world delivery challenges. They’re putting their skills to work as they: apply coding and problem-solving to real-world scenarios, practice algorithms for navigation, obstacle detection, and decision-making and strengthen teamwork and communication skills



### The search for the Christmas star

It was thirty years ago this month that the Hubble Space Telescope spent ten days focused on a tiny patch of “empty” space taking the now iconic Hubble Deep Field image. The image revealed 3,000 galaxies brought to light by the long telescopic exposure in a section of sky only the size of the nail of your pinkie finger held at arms length. That image and others that followed changed astronomy and what we know about the universe. Those “empty” spaces are full of galaxies far, far away.

Further back in time the New Testament book of Matthew was written, and in it was the description of the nativity of Jesus. Part of the narrative is about the star that appeared, and of the three wise men who came to Bethlehem to investigate, and to bring gifts, being certain of the portent of the celestial event.

There have been numerous dead-end attempts by modern astronomers to discover, in the history of star and planet movements, what the star was, but the other interesting star watching aspect to the story does have some facts. That is of the men who traveled from the east following the star. The King James version of the Bible translated the Greek word Magoi from a Greek language version of Matthew to wise men. The word Magi that we see often is Latin borrowed from the Greek word. The Greek word actually has its roots in the Old Persian word Magus.

That early root takes us to Persia (present day Iran) and to where the three Magi probably came from. In Persia at that time there was in Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian monotheistic religion, a priestly caste. These priests paid particular attention to the movements of stars and planets in a way that we now call astrology. Astrology and astronomy even today are often confused. Astrology two thousand years ago was considered the science of things celestial, but from it evolved an interest in the actual science of the things out there. Astrology, still practiced today, is a non-scientific practice that uses the positions of stars and planets as the basis of its belief that those celestial positions can influence people’s daily lives. Astronomy, on the other hand, is the scientific study of celestial objects and the universe. Astronomy owes a lot to the astrologers of old, as we have gone from horoscopes to telescopes. The word Magi, by the way, is the root of the English word magic.

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



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## Obituaries

### Randy Doy “Woody” Woodall, 68, Delight



Randy Doy “Woody” Woodall age 68, of Delight, Arkansas passed away on Friday, December 12, 2025, in Delight, Arkansas. He was born on October 16, 1957, in Eugene, Oregon, the son of the late Doy Woodall and Lorene Marshall Woodall.

Woody was a member of the First Baptist Church in Delight. He believed in hard work and was a Master electrician by trade and enjoyed working on his land. During his free time, he enjoyed riding Harleys and spending time with dogs Buddy and Junior.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by

his wife of thirty-nine years Nona Woodall.

Survivors include two sons Grant Woodall and wife Becca, Zane Woodall and wife Whitney all of Delight, AR; grandchildren Ella Gatliff, Brooks Woodall of Delight, AR, Ariel McGahey of Murfreesboro, AR, Isis Woodall and Eden Woodall of Delight, AR. as well as many friends.

Visitation was held on Thursday, December 18, at Latimer Funeral Home in Murfreesboro.

Graveside services were held on Friday, December 19, at Delight Cemetery, with Bro. Bryan Sellers officiating, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home in Murfreesboro.

Pallbearers were Mike Ruchalski, Tommy Woodall, Waylon Melson, Josh Ratcliff, Rob Starling, and Jimmie Henderson.

Honorary pallbearers were Gill Johnson, Pooh Ruchalski, Eddie Woodall and William “Red” Henderson

You may send an online sympathy message at [www.latimerfuneralhome.com](http://www.latimerfuneralhome.com)

### Dorothy Brock Miller, 74, Murfreesboro



Dorothy Brock Miller, age 74, of Murfreesboro, Arkansas passed away on Friday, December 19, 2025, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. She was born August 19, 1951, in Murfreesboro, Arkansas the daughter of the late CE Brock Jr. and Ruby Jean Duncan Brock.

Dorothy loved her God; she would begin her day at 5:00 a.m. every morning with her Bible and cup of coffee. She was a very active member of Trinity Baptist Church where she served in many parts of the church including assistant song leader. Mrs. Miller also enjoyed being a part of the

Lady Auxiliary.

Survivors include her husband Darrell Miller of Murfreesboro; two sons Matthew Miller of Murfreesboro, and James Cameron Brock of Nashville; two brothers James Edward Brock, John Mark Brock and wife Tammy, one niece Amanda Brock all of Murfreesboro; as well as a number of cousins and friends.

Visitation was held on Monday, December 22, 2025, at Latimer Funeral Home in Murfreesboro.

Funeral services began at 10:00 a.m. Monday, December 22, 2025, at Latimer Funeral Home in Murfreesboro, with Bro. Curtis Abernathy and Jeff Hale officiating, burial followed in the Pleasant Home Cemetery, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home in Murfreesboro.

Pallbearers were Mark Brock, Jeff Hale, James West, Justice West, Eric Campbell, and Steven Turner.

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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: How serious is meningitis?

**A:** Meningitis is a swelling of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The condition differs from encephalitis, which is the inflammation of the brain tissue. Meningitis can be a life-threatening illness and requires immediate treatment.

Bacteria and viruses are common causes of meningitis. Autoimmune disorders such as lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, a side effect of certain medications, a head injury, fungi or parasites can also cause meningitis. Those at risk for meningitis include people under the age of five or older than 65, those with weakened immune systems, or people who live in groups where germs spread quickly.

Symptoms include fever, headache, nausea, sensitivity to

light and vomiting. Infants affected by meningitis may have a low appetite, be irritable, have low energy, or sleepiness or trouble waking from sleep. Hearing or vision loss, kidney failure, seizures and sepsis are possible complications of meningitis.

Bacterial meningitis requires treatment with antibiotics. Viral meningitis will generally resolve itself with rest, fluids and medications to relieve body aches and fever. Corticosteroids are an option if the condition is caused by an autoimmune disease. Visit a health care provider if symptoms do not subside, particularly in the case of bacterial meningitis.





Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Carolina Scott. I am 5 years old. I live in Nashville. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a doll house and dolls, doctor toys, and a pink ball. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Rynlee Rae Sullivan and I am 5 years old. I live in Delight. This year I have been really good and sweet. I would really like it if you could bring me a hatching turtle egg.





Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Kenlee Cross. I am 5 years old. I live in Delight. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me an iPad, Barbie color reveal, and more baby-dolls. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Maverick Cox. I am 6 years old. I live in Pike City. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a cyber truck, big trucks, and a green SXS. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Rosemae Boham. I am 5 years old. I live in Delight, Arkansas. This year I have been really cute. I would really like it if you could bring me Hello Kitty toys, Bluey toys, and a toy gingerbread house. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Turner Shanks. I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good! I would really like it if you could bring me a turf pad to golf on and a square trampoline. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Vontez Franklin. I am 6 years old. I live in Prescott, AR. This year I have been really not in control of how good I’ve been. I would really like it if you could bring me legos, Zelda toys, and Sonic the Hedgehog toys. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Wrath Quiroz. I am 5 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me two Hulk punching hands, a superman costume with a cape, and a spiderman costume with gloves. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Yaritza Hernandez. I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good with everyone. I would really like it if you could bring me toys, shoes, a new backpack, and something for my teacher too, and barbies. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

MRS. MAAG’S KINDERGARTEN CLASS

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Remington Mills, and I am 5 years old. I live in Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me baby dolls, Barbie house and an iPad. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Ember Gatliff, and I am 5 years old. I live in Delight, Arkansas. This year I have tried to be good. I would really like it if you could bring me a toy T-Rex dinosaur, please, a scooter, please and a bicycle, please. My other bike is too small. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Conner Buck, and I am 5 years old. I live in Blevins and Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me an ATV, “a real one”, a toy feed truck, with a feed trailer, and a rifle to go hunting. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Suttan Womack, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a baby stroller, 3 Chelsea dolls with clothes and skates-not rollerblades. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Edith Thomas, and I am 5 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me some dolls, a carseat for my babies and a cotton candy machine. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Max Williams, and I am 6 years old. I live in Delight, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a gumball machine, Robux (Roblox gift card) and a mini fridge with Dr. Pepper inside. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Allie Kay Brown, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me some make-up, a TV in my room, and pink pajamas. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Nora Kosters, and I am 5 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a doll, some heels and Bal-lerina slippers. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Nayte Bates, and I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a train set with a controller, the Sonic Dr. Eggman and Black and white Robot Crab. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Reece Bromley, and I am 6 years old. I live in Kirby, Arkansas. This year I have been really good! I would really like it if you could bring me Spider-Man legos, a BB gun and action figures. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Ainsley Campbell, and I am 6 years old. I live in Billstown, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me some K-pop Demon Hunter stuff, a watch and video games. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Kopelynn Cox, and I am 5 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a puppy, a Lububu, and a make-up vanity. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Eva Vaught, and I am 6 years old. I live in Nathan, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a hula hoop, a Stitch pen, skin care and perfume. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Farrah Wilson, and I am 5 years old. I live in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. This year I have been really good. I would really like it if you could bring me a fake turtle, a toy deer and a Jinu t-shirt. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

MRS. KUYKENDALL’S FIRST GRADE CLASS

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Charli, and I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me new earrings, a Nintendo Switch, and a puppy. How is Mrs. Clause doing?  
Love, Charli

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Blakeleigh, and I am 7 years old. I live in Delight. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a silicone baby doll, Christmas sheets for your bed, and stuffed bunny. Have a great Christmas!  
Love, Blakeleigh

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Beau, and I am 6 years old. I live in Delight. This year I guess I’ve been good this year! I would like it if you could bring me a compound bow and a 4-wheeler with big mud tires. Thank you and Merry Christmas! I love you!  
Love, Beau

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Sage, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a rifle, a new lunchbox, and a new bow. Thank you and Merry Christmas!  
Love, Sage

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Zayla, and I am 6 years old. I live in Billstown. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me a hoverboard, Barbies, and a Barbie Dream House. Thank you and Merry Christmas!  
Love, Zayla

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Asher, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me a Nintendo Switch, a motorbike, and PS5. How many people are on the naughty list?  
Love, Asher

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Nathaniel, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me a BB gun pistol, V-Bucks, and an iPad. Thank you and Merry Christmas!  
Love, Nathaniel

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Callie, and I am 6 years old. I live in between Delight and Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a toy baby reindeer, a mama reindeer, and a daddy reindeer. You are the best! I love you!  
Love, Callie

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Hazel, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a My Mini Baby, clothes for my Roblox player, and a LOL doll. Tell Rudolph I said “hi!”  
Love, Hazel

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Rowdy, and I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been both good and bad. ! I would like it if you could bring me Hot Wheels, a RC car, and a rug. Merry Christmas!  
Love, Rowdy

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Rosalene, and I am 7 years old. I live in Antoine. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a baby puppy, cat clothes, and an iPad. Merry Christmas, Santa!  
Love, Rosalene

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Wyndell, and I am 7 years old. I live in Delight. This year I have been really nice! I would like it if you could bring me a stuffed bunny, Christmas sheets, and a silicone baby doll. Have a great Christmas!  
Love, Wyndell

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Penny, and I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been both good and bad! I would like it if you could bring me a Labubu, a globe, and a diary. Tell the elves I said hi! Merry Christmas!  
Love, Penny

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Cooper, and I am 6 years old. I live in Pike City. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me a Lego set and an electric bike. How old are you, Santa?  
Love, Cooper

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Lux, and I am 6 years old. I live in Delight. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a Nintendo, a new iPad, and an American Girl doll that looks just like me. I love you, Santa!  
Love, Lux

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Jones, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me my own Nintendo Switch, a hoverboard, and a new scooter. Merry Christmas, Santa  
Love, Jones

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is Roman, and I am 6 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been good! I would like it if you could bring me a dirt bike, a 4-wheeler, and a bike. Merry Christmas!  
Love, Roman

Dear Santa Claus,  
My name is McKynzie and I am 7 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could bring me a 4-wheeler, car to go in the 4-wheeler, and a LaBubu. Please tell Rudolph hi!  
Love, McKynzie

Dear Santa Clause,  
My name is Violet, and I am 8 years old. I live in Murfreesboro. This year I have been really good! I would like it if you could let me go to a gymnastics class. I really like gymnastics.  
Thank you and Merry Christmas!  
Love, Violet

MRS. MCDONALD’S CLASS

Dear Santa,  
My name is Grayson. I would like a Sonic costume and a Sonic remote control car and a robot Sonic costume also. I deserve these because I have been good all year and I am nice to my brother. I will give your reindeer some food and I will leave you milk and cookies and 1 piece of candy.  
Love, Grayson Coleman

Dear Santa,  
My name is Layken and I am 6 years old. I want a Barbie car, a Barbie house, and I want a Barbie doll. I deserve these because I help my classmates in the library. I am going to leave Santa some milk, hot chocolate, and mints.  
Love, Layken Ables

Dear Santa,  
My name is Taylor and I would like a toy remote control side-by-side and a PS5. I deserve these because I play with my brothers. I will leave you some milk and cookies.  
Love, Taylor Agudio

Dear Santa,  
My name is Yajayra and I am 7 years old. I want a Barbie house, a Barbie car, and a Barbie doll. I deserve these because I help my friends. I am going to leave you cookies and milk and some candy.  
Love, Yajayra Reyes

*Joy and blessings, from our family to yours,  
this Christmas and everyday!*

**Merry Christmas**

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Submitted photos/MHS BAND

**MERRY GRINCHMAS ...** The Murfreesboro Rattler Band Boosters held a “Breakfast with the Grinch” fundraiser on Saturday, Dec. 6 at First Christian Church in Murfreesboro. The menu included pancakes with sausage for the kids or a breakfast burrito options for the adults. Along with breakfast, there was also crafts/games set up for the attendees as well as pictures with the Grinch.



Submitted photos/MHS

**WARMTH AND CHEER ...** The Murfreesboro High School social media team spent a recent morning making the rounds with the “Christmas Cart,” delivering homemade cookies and hot chocolate to the school’s teachers, administration, and cafeteria staff. “It’s our small way of saying thank you for everything you do for us Rattlers all year long,” said a team representative.

# WINTER AID

Submitted photos/PC 4-H

**WARM FOR THE HOLIDAYS ...** After collection throughout November, Pike County 4Hers have recently been busy putting out blankets, gloves, hats, jackets and food in blessing boxes across the county to help those in need stay a bit more comfortable as the temperatures drop.



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# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Local residents asks when is off actually off?

Letter to Editor:  
Our water is not safe  
(... and not for the reason you think)  
When I asked the Water Department to turn off my water back in August 2024, I assumed that “off” meant, well... off. Locked. Secured. Untouchable. The kind of off you don’t have to think about again.  
Fast-forward to October 20, 2025, when I had it turned back on. Seven days later, I opened my first bill — almost six hundred dollars. For one week. In a building that wasn’t even open.  
I sat there staring at the bill, wondering if maybe my pipes had started bottling luxury water on the side.  
Eventually I learned something surprising: when the Water Department “turns off” your water, they apparently mean it in the loose, casual sense. As in, no lock. No seal. Just a friendly suggestion that the water please stay off.

So ... it didn’t.  
Someone used water from my property for over a year? Not me. Not my business. Not anyone I know. Just ... mystery water usage.  
The Water Department told me I was responsible and suggested a police report. The police told me the opposite -- that if the system wasn’t locked by the department, then the water wasn’t technically “mine” to be stolen.  
At this point, I’m just the person holding the bill, blinking.  
I’ve since had the water shut off again, and this time I personally watched the lock go on. I might even go visit it occasionally. We’ve bonded.  
Is this a case of water theft? A system glitch? A pipe with a secret nightlife? No idea. But apparently, whoever is responsible ... isn’t.  
Dhorea Kencayd  
Murfreesboro

## Extension suggests higher beef prices coming

**BY RYAN MCGEENEY**  
*U of A System Division of Agriculture*  
  
LITTLE ROCK — American beef cow slaughter fell during the fall quarter by 19 percent from the same period in 2024, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data released in the wake of the recent federal shutdown.  
James Mitchell, agricultural economist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said that while that may seem like a significant drop-off, context is important.  
“In 2023, we had a situation where producers were actively culling deep into their herds,” Mitchell said. “In 2025, there are simply fewer cows to slaughter.”  
The January 2025 U.S. beef cow and heifer inventories were lower than they had been since 1961, with approximately 27.9 million head. The Mitchell forecasts a slaughter rate of about 42 percent for the year.  
Record-low national beef herd sizes in the United States have been a large part of the record-high market prices producers have enjoyed in 2025. Cattle feeders saw fed cattle prices as high as \$242 per cwt over the summer in the Southern Plains, according to USDA.  
Culling is a normal part of the beef production business, Mitchell said, with producers typically removing 10-20 percent of their herds every year, in part because the cattle in question are aging and less productive.  
Between Aug. 30 and Nov. 15, U.S. producers slaughtered 543,586 head of cattle, Mitchell

said.  
“We had strong profitability the last couple of years,” he said. “Acknowledging that input costs are still high, we’ve had a couple of years of really good production and good pastures.”  
More than any other segment of agriculture, cattle production is cyclical. However, Mitchell said, consumers shouldn’t look forward to beef herd expansion in the near term.  
“We might see some inventory changes in January when the USDA inventory report comes out,” he said. “But market prices are so high, I think a lot of producers are happy with selling cattle.”  
None of this spells lower prices for consumers in the near future, Mitchell said, even if options from South American producers have an increased presence in U.S. grocery stores.  
“With slaughter down, you have less lean trimmings that you would use to make ground beef,” he said. “And so what we’ve seen this year is higher ground beef prices — and ground has typically been a competitive product.”  
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, ground chuck cost an average of \$6.33 a pound in September 2025, up from \$5.19 in September 2023.  
“The fact is that consumer prices are high, and they’re probably going to get higher,” Mitchell said.  
To learn about extension programs in Arkansas, contact the Pike County Cooperative Extension Service at (870) 285-2161 or visit www.uaex.uada.edu.



Submitted photos/AGFC

**TAGGED ...** Alligator gar being tagged before release to help with conservation efforts of this prehistoric species in Arkansas.

## AGFC taking applications for gar licenses

LITTLE ROCK — Anglers interested in hooking into an epic-sized trophy fish can apply for a 2026 Alligator Gar Trophy Tag from now until the end of 2025.  
Many Arkansas anglers travel all the way to the Gulf of Mexico each year in search of trophy fish like tarpon and sailfish. Most don’t know they are passing up a similar opportunity right here in The Natural State.  
While not truly a dinosaur, the alligator gar was alive during the Cretaceous Period (145 million to 66 million years ago), and can take decades to reach 6 feet long. They are the second-largest species of freshwater fish in North America, topped only by the white sturgeon. They frequently grow longer than 7 feet and weigh more than 200 pounds. The current alligator gar sportfishing record is 215 pounds caught from the Arkansas River in 1964, nearly 90 pounds heavier than the state’s next largest Arkansas catch, a 128-pound paddlefish from Beaver Lake in 2024.  
Alligator gar can take years to reach the 36-inch mark, and females aren’t able to reproduce until they are 14 years old. Their slow maturity rate, habitat loss due to dams and channeling

of large rivers, and an ill-fitting moniker as a trash fish or predator of other game species have hindered populations to the point where extra caution is required for harvest.  
Anyone may fish for alligator gar on a catch-and-release basis, but an Alligator Gar Trophy Tag (AGT) is required to keep an alligator gar longer than 36 inches. Interested anglers can submit an Alligator Gar Trophy Tag Application (AGTA) for \$5 by visiting the AGFC Licensing Catalog under “Fishing Stamps/Permits” to be entered for one of 200 Alligator Gar Trophy Tags available for the 2026 season. The application period is open Dec. 1-31, and the drawing will occur Jan. 2, 2026. Recipients will be notified of their selection by email with instructions on how to claim their tag.  
Alligator gar may not be taken from noon, May 1-noon, July 1. All harvested alligator gar must be temporarily tagged using a provided Alligator Gar Possession Tag placed on the dorsal fin before leaving the waterbody. All harvested alligator gar must be reported within 12 hours of harvest via the internet through the AGFC mobile app, similar to the game check system used for deer.

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## ‘Dear Preacher’

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ

ARE YOU STRIVING  
DAILY

In order to be pleasing to God on a daily basis we must sacrifice, and we must closely follow Him. Daily service requires us to have a healthy prayer life and to bring praises to our God.

In Luke 9:23 we read these words: If anyone desires to come after ME, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow ME.

Following Christ requires action on our part. We must faithfully serve in order to grow and to have a hope of heaven after this life.

Many times, we look to Bible characters for inspiration to help us day to day in our earthly lives. A great example



for us to look at in this case is David. He was described in scripture as a man after God’s own heart. He teaches us about praying and praising through his writings. We should study and adhere to David’s love for praying and praising.

Psalms 116:1-2 – I love the Lord, because He has heard

my voice and my supplications. Because he has inclined His ear to me, therefore, I will call upon Him as long as I live. David loved to praise God.

Psalms 119:164 – Seven times a day I praise You, because of your righteous judgments.

Each and every day we should follow and live these two scriptures. I Thessalonians 5:17 – Pray without ceasing.

Psalms 147:1 – Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.

May God continue to richly bless each for us, and may our days be happy ones.

*Paid Advertisement*



Submitted photo

**APPRECIATION FOR THE SENIOR CENTER ...** East Delight EHC Club (standing) members brought gifts to the Murfreesboro Senior Center employees (seated) recently.

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BODY LANGUAGE

\* -- Theme Related Clue

ACROSS

- 1. Hot Springs and such
- 5. \_\_\_\_ Bell and \_\_\_\_ Barker
- 8. Wharton degree, acr.
- 11. Artist’s inspiration
- 12. \*Move head to show attention
- 13. Angry growl
- 15. Shamu, e.g.
- 16. Diva’s number
- 17. Put on fancy dress (2 words)
- 18. \*Making facial expression showing pain
- 20. Mine passage
- 21. Single-handedly
- 22. Assistance
- 23. Made according to specifications
- 26. Economizes
- 30. Biochemistry acr.
- 31. Aerie baby
- 34. Genesis skipper
- 35. Leaves out
- 37. \*Some look up and to the right when telling one
- 38. Watcher
- 39. \*The Forsyte \_\_\_\_” by John Galsworthy
- 40. Forty winks
- 42. Fraternity letter T
- 43. \*Said “easy peasy” with fingers
- 45. Like a weight lifter, usually
- 47. Weasel-related onomatopoeia
- 48. Undo laces
- 50. Helicopter sound
- 52. \*Showing low self-esteem or boredom
- 56. 100 centimes
- 57. Purl partner
- 58. From square one
- 59. Frustration, in a comic book
- 60. “At \_\_\_\_, soldier!”
- 61. Don’t go
- 62. Dashboard acr.
- 63. Like Willie Winkie

64. Frustrated driver’s recourse

DOWN

- 1. Urban haze
- 2. Make like a cat
- 3. Ascus, pl.
- 4. Same as sea moss (2 words)
- 5. Rice wine
- 6. Dress with a flare
- 7. Rudolph, when older
- 8. Famous Christmas guests
- 9. Like some champagnes
- 10. High mountain
- 12. Toyota truck model
- 13. Part of flight
- 14. \*Showing agreement
- 19. Healing plants
- 22. Be in a cast
- 23. \*Show anger with arms
- 24. Unnerve
- 25. Eurasian antelope
- 26. “ \_\_\_\_ but not heard”
- 27. Much, in Italy
- 28. Song of praise
- 29. \*”I don’t know” move
- 32. \*One’s smiling because one’s \_\_\_\_
- 33. Intoxicated
- 36. \*Showing impatience with fingers
- 38. Like retina and brain connecting nerve
- 40. Large edible mushroom
- 41. Keen
- 44. Nice place for a rocking chair
- 46. Reuse ideas
- 48. Forearm bones
- 49. Hustle and bustle sound
- 50. Sandwich alternative
- 51. Stay out of its way!
- 52. Place at angle
- 53. Gung-ho about something
- 54. Close by
- 55. Gwyneth, for short
- 56. Opposite of #54 Down

CROSSWORD

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Couch announces candidacy for county judge

PIKE COUNTY -- Nathan resident Keith Couch has announced his plans to seek the office of Pike County judge in March 2026.

The following is his announcement:

“I am proud to officially announce my candidacy for Pike County Judge. My name is Keith Couch, I am 55 years old and a fifth-generation Pike County resident. I live in Nathan with my wife, Noelle, and our daughters, Karly and Kaylie, and I am the son of Jerry and Johnnie Couch, also of Nathan.

“For nearly 20 years, I have served our region through my work with the Upper Southwest Regional Solid Waste Management District, where I currently serve as Waste Tire Program Manager. In this role, I oversee the collection, transportation, reporting and recycling of waste tires across 14 counties in south and southwest Arkansas. This experience has given me hands-on knowledge of county operations, regulatory compliance, budgeting and working collaboratively with local governments.

“I was a small business owner, operating Keith’s Floor Covering Services, and I have also worked as an Area Manager for Arkansas Utility Protection Services (ARKUPS) during its startup phase. That position required close coordination with city and county officials, utility providers, and contractors - an experience that translates directly to the responsibilities of County Judge.

“I hold three state-issued licenses: Master Solid Waste License, Environmental Officer License and Class A CDL.

“On March 3, I am asking for your support and opportunity to serve Pike County as your next County Judge. If elected, I promise to bring honestly, integrity, transparency and

100 percent dedication to this office. My goal is simple: to work every day for growth, stability and longterm success of Pike County and its people. Thank you for your consideration, your support and your trust.”



Submitted photos/MVFD

**FIREMAN OF THE YEAR 2025 ...** At their end of the year meeting earlier this month, the Murfreesboro Volunteer Fire Department named Lee Vincent (left) their fireman of the year. Vincent is pictured with fire chief Ricky Branch. Vincent said that he appreciates the honor and simply enjoys serving his community.

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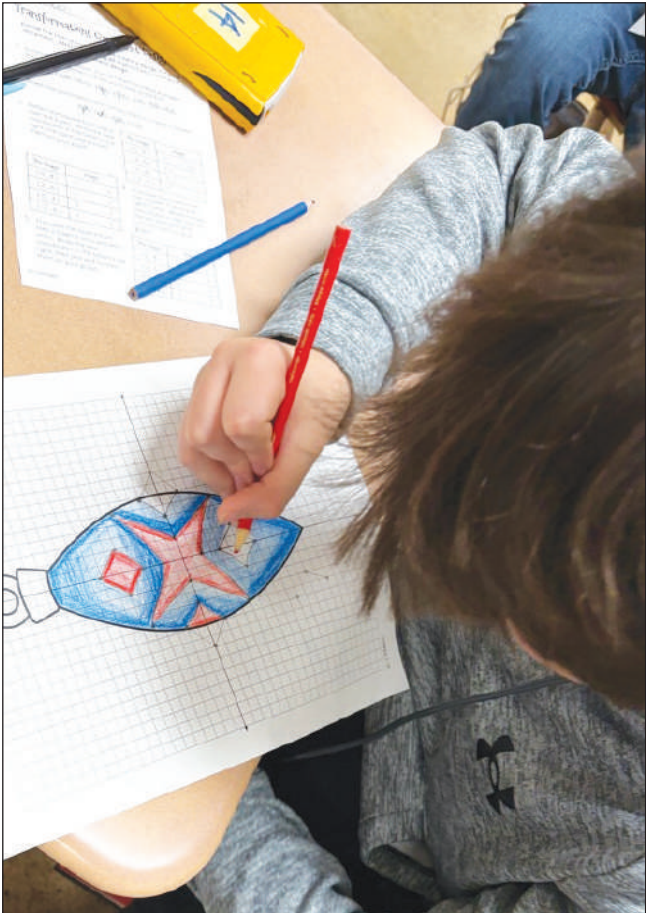
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Submitted photos/MHS

**DIRECTING SANTA AROUND THE WORLD ...** Murfreesboro High School geography students recently put their skills to use by helping Santa navigate the world. They solved puzzles that included grid references, direction, contour lines, distance, scale, longitude, latitude, and more! First place prize went to students Jack, Amos, and Jacob.



Submitted photos/MHS

**GEOMETRY TREE ...** Danielle Bobo's geometry classes at Murfreesboro High School made ornaments using reflections, rotations, translations, and dilations.



Submitted photos/MHS

**ORNAMENTS OF THE WORLD ...** Murfreesboro High School world history students researched countries around the world and designed ornaments for their class tree.



# PUBLIC NOTICE

This instrument prepared by and to be returned to: Biles Wilson, PLLC, 457 Laurence Drive, Suite 195, Heath, Texas 75032, (214) 662-8456

Borrower: Karen DeAnn White and Cecil Roy White, Jr., wife and husband

Lender: Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc.

NOTICE OF DEFAULT AND INTENTION TO SELL. YOU MAY LOSE YOUR PROPERTY IF YOU DO NOT TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION. IF YOUR PROPERTY IS SOLD YOU WILL REMAIN LIABLE FOR ANY DEFICIENCY AND AN ACTION FOR COLLECTION MAY BE BROUGHT AGAINST YOU. THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR AND IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION GIVEN MAY BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on January 13, 2026, at or about 10:00 a.m., the following real property will be sold at the main/ front door of the Pike County Courthouse, located at 1 Courthouse Square, Murfreesboro, Arkansas 71958, to the highest bidder for cash:

PART OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER SECTION TWO (2), TOWNSHIP NINE (9) SOUTH, RANGE TWENTY-SIX (26) WEST, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID FORTY-ACRE TRACT; THENCE SOUTH 49 YARDS; THENCE WEST 35 YARDS; THENCE NORTH 49 YARDS; THENCE EAST 35 YARDS TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, AND CONTAINING 35/100THS OF AN ACRE, MORE OR LESS; AND BEING THE SAME LAND AS THAT CONVEYED AND DESCRIBED IN BOOK D238 AT PAGE 375, LAND RECORDS OF PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS. ALSO DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

PART OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 2, T. 9 S., R. 26 W., PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID NE1/4 OF THE NE1/4 SECTION 2, T. 9 S., R. 26 W., PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS; THENCE - SOUTH 49 YARDS; THENCE - WEST 35 YARDS; THENCE - NORTH 49 YARDS THENCE - EAST 35 YARDS TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; BASIS OF BEARINGS IS DEED CALL BEARING SOUTH ALONG WEST BOUNDARY LINE. THE ABOVE PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED PROPERTY BEING SURVEYED BY RICHARD V. HALL, JR. CONTAINS 0.354 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS: AND SUBJECT TO SUCH RIGHTS AS MAY BE VESTED IN PUBLIC FOR SWEET HOME ROAD AND ROY ROAD ALONG THE WEST AND SOUTH BOUNDARY LINES OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED 0.354 ACRE TRACT, AS DEPICTED IN A SURVEY BY RICHARD V. HALL, AR RPLS #820, OF HALL SURVEYING & ENGINEERING, INC., DATED 11/22/10.

Along with a 2006 CMHM Manufactured Home with Serial No.: CLS104802TN, attached thereto, with the address of 552 Sweet Home Road, Nashville, Arkansas 71852.

On, October 1, 2018 a Mortgage was executed by Karen DeAnn White and Cecil Roy White, Jr., wife and husband, to Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc., which was recorded on October 15, 2018 (Document #: 20184812), in the real estate records of Pike County, Arkansas. The party initiating foreclosure can be contacted at: Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc., 500 Alcoa Trail, Maryville, Tennessee 37804, Phone (800) 970-7250.

Default has occurred in the payment of said indebtedness by the current owner(s) of the property, and the same is now therefore wholly due and owing. Lender intends to sell the above property to satisfy the obligation; and,

Tenants of the property may exist that claim an interest in the real property herein. The undersigned is the attorney for the Lender and is acting on and with the consent of the Lender who is exercising its power of sale under Ark. Code Ann. § 18-50-115, which implies a power of sale in every mortgage of real property situated in this State that is duty acknowledged and recorded.

The sale is subject to any requirements and conditions set forth in the applicable recorded or unrecorded plat or bill(s) of assurance affecting the above real property; any restrictive covenants, easements, set back lines or encroachments; any unpaid taxes or special assessments; any statutory redemption rights of any governmental entity; any prior liens or encumbrances as well as any priority created by a UCC or fixture filing; and, to any matter that an accurate survey of the property might disclose. This property is being sold "as-is" with no representation as to the condition of any structure(s) thereon.

This foreclosure proceeding includes a manufactured home that is titled as personal property. Ark. Code Ann § 4-9-604 allows the foreclosing party to proceed against both the personal property and the real property in this manner. The legal description contained herein controls and takes priority over any address used to the extent the legal description and address conflict.

Dated: November 5, 2025 Biles Wilson, PLLC, 457 Laurence Drive, Suite 195, Heath, Texas 75032, (214) 662-8456. By: Jeremy R. Wilson, ABN 2000108

(p.n.a., 781w., 24,25,26,27)

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SAVE UP TO \$4,000\* ON SELECT RIDGE CREW/RIDGE XR CREW MODELS

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KAWASAKI CARES: Read Owner's Manual and all on-product warnings. Warning: The RIDGE® side x side can be hazardous to operate. For your safety: Always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never operate under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Avoid excessive speeds and stunt driving. Be extra careful on difficult terrain. Protect the environment. The Kawasaki RIDGE side x side is an off-highway vehicle only, and is not designed, equipped or manufactured for use on public streets, roads or highways. © 2025 Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.

\*RIDGE® XR CREW HVAC models feature 116 horsepower. RIDGE® CREW HVAC models feature 92 horsepower. This vehicle's HP was measured according to ISO standard 406. This ISO standard measures HP differently than the SAE standards by which the horsepower of many cars is measured, and as a result the referenced HP measurement may be higher than if it were measured by an SAE standard. 6-passenger seating is available on RIDGE® CREW models only. Seating capacity varies by each RIDGE® XR CREW trim.

EXPLORE RIDGE® CREW

