

# THE NASHVILLE News-LEADER

Preserving Southwest Arkansas's Heritage While Leading Through the 21st Century

Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026 • Vol. 24, Issue 32 • 10 pages, 1 section • \$1

## Leader Board

[www.swarkansasnews.com](http://www.swarkansasnews.com)

### OPINION | 4A

Love your neighbor and get your vaccination.

### Soup kitchen to be offered Wednesday at MS church

The Mineral Springs Church of Christ soup kitchen will be open Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 2-5 p.m., weather permitting.

The menu includes hot dogs, chips and cookies.

The church is located at 318 Bridgeman Drive in Mineral Springs.

Individuals should check for weather updates.



### Soccer team fund-raiser set Feb. 12

The Scrapperette soccer team will hold a Valentine's fund-raiser Thursday, Feb. 12, at the First Baptist Church Family Activities Building from 12 noon until 3 p.m. or until sold out.

Heart-shaped al-pastor taco trays with 10 tacos will be available for \$20 and must be pre-ordered by Jan. 30.

Three al-pastor tacos with rice will be \$12 with no need to pre-order.

Desserts include brownie, \$2; three cookies for \$2; fresas con crema, \$3; fruit salad, \$3; and three chocolate strawberries, \$5.

Drinks will be sold for \$1 each. They include Coke, Sprite, Dr Pepper and water. They will be available at pick-up.

Cash, checks or online payments will be accepted.

For more information, contact Coach Clarissa Brizo at Nashville High School or email [clarissa.brizo@nashvillesd.com](mailto:clarissa.brizo@nashvillesd.com)

### SWA Paws dinner to be on March 28

SWA PAWS will hold a fund-raiser dinner Saturday, March 28, at 6 p.m. at Midtown Social in Nashville. The meal will be served by celebrity waiters.

More details will be announced.

#### Inside the News-Leader

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# Winter weather pays a visit



News-Leader photo/ASHLEY STARR-THOMPSON

**SNOW DAY.** Luci Kate Thompson, Eleanor Thompson and Alexa Copeland have fun on a frozen hillside in Nashville Sunday, Jan. 25. Winter weather moved in Friday night, Jan. 23, and continued into Sunday morning.



News-Leader photo/EMILY ALEXANDER-GAINES

**BUNDLED UP.** Jaxon Gaines and his sister Rylee Gaines are dressed for a cold Saturday morning, Jan. 24, at their home near Lake Hamilton High School where mom Emily, a former Nashville resident, teaches.



News-Leader photo/JOHN R. SCHIRMER

**SNOW REMOVAL.** City workers remove a wintry mix of freezing rain, sleet and snow from North Main Street in Nashville Monday afternoon, Jan. 26. Schools, businesses and industries were closed earlier this week because of the weather.

## 'Wet-dry' petition effort continues in county

There are 26 businesses in Howard County, along with seven canvassers where registered voters may sign the petition for a proposed 'wet-dry' election for the county.

The deadline for petitions to be

delivered to the County Clerk's office is May 5, according to canvasser Jessica Harris Delozier.

Locations include:  
Nashville  
Smoker Friendly Drive-Thru  
Nashville Truck Plaza

Topiary at Springhill Farm  
Poblanos Mexican Restaurant  
Futrell Marine  
Center Point Store  
Los Agaves of Nashville  
Smith Tax Service  
Flex Gym

La Villa Mexican Restaurant  
10 Minute Lube  
Brazil's Detailing & Window  
Tinting  
EZ-Mart

See **Petition** • Page 5



News-Leader photo/JOHN R. SCHIRMER

**STATE RECOGNITION.** Nashville High School and Nashville Junior High have received recognition from the University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy after state testing. Superintendent Doug Graham (center) presented OEP certificates to NHS Principal Ashley Riggs (left) and NJHS Principal Hannah Topor.

## UA office recognizes schools for test gains

By John R. Schirmer  
News-Leader staff

Two Nashville School District campuses have been recognized by the University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy for their results on the state's spring 2025 ATLAS testing. Superintendent Doug Graham told the school board Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Nashville Junior High received the following awards from OEP: Best Growth English/Language Arts, Best Growth Math, Beating the Odds Math, Beating the Odds ELA.

Nashville High School was recognized for Best Growth Math and Beating the Odds Math.

NJHS Principal Hannah Topor and NHS Principal Ashley Riggs received their campuses' certificates from OEP.

Graham said the office doesn't always send out the awards together. "I hope other campuses will be recognized in due time," he told

the board. Last week's meeting included a lengthy agenda.

After a 26-minute executive session, the board voted 5-0 to extend Graham's contract through the 2028-29 academic year.

Arkansas schools consider superintendents' contracts in January each year, with other administrators, faculty and staff re-employed in later board meetings.

In other business, Primary Principal Nathan Evans discussed ways to improve third graders' test scores.

"We want to do what we can to get third graders on grade level before fourth grade. Last year, we saw growth, with 39 percent on level. But our students deserve better; our teachers deserve better. We're going to do better," Evans said.

Primary teachers are looking at ways to make adjustments now.

See **School** • Page 5

# Obituaries



## Susan Virginia Schaal Hartness

Susan Virginia Schaal Hartness, age 79 of Mineral Springs, Ark., passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, in Texarkana. She was born Sept. 4, 1946, in Little Rock, Ark., the daughter of the late Oma and Russell Widmer.

Mrs. Hartness was a member of Central Baptist Church in Mineral Springs. During her career she was a school teacher, teaching at Mineral Springs, Nashville, Siloam Springs, and De Queen Public Schools. But more importantly she was a dedicated and loving mother, wife, sister, and grandmother.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, Jerry Schaal, and her brother Albert Widmer.

Survivors include her husband, Larry Hartness; two sons Henry Schaal, George Schaal and wife Christine; one daughter

Mary Schaal; one sister Catherine Price; two grandsons Wilson and Lincoln; as well as her stepchildren Mark, Jane, and Loria and their children Emma, Anna, Tyler, Regan, and Aurora.

Visitation was Thursday, Jan. 22, at Central Baptist Church in Mineral Springs.

Funeral services were at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 22, at Central Baptist Church in Mineral Springs with Bro. Ben Jones officiating; burial followed in Mineral Springs Cemetery under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville.

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



## Charlene Sharp

Charlene Sharp, 80, of Nashville, Ark., passed away on Monday, Jan. 26, 2026, in Nashville, Ark. She was born June 30, 1945, in Washington state, the daughter of the late Herbert U. and Thelma O. Pate Ferguson.

Mrs. Sharp was a member

of Ridgeway Baptist Church in Nashville. During her career she worked on the service crew at the Briar Plant.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, James Rudy Sharp; one brother, Ray Ferguson; two sisters, Shirley Crow and Almeta Shaw.

Survivors include: one daughter, Sherri Marshall of Nashville, Ark.; two grandchildren Ashley Ewing and husband Brad of Nashville, Ark.; Josh Marshall and wife Heidi of Hope, Ark.; five great grandchildren, Garrett Ewing, Carter Ewing, McKenna Marshall, Maddie Ewing, Lyla Rae Marshall and Isaac James Marshall; as well as a number of nieces, nephews, and friends.

Graveside services will be at 2 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 29, at Corinth Cemetery, with Bro. Alan Cook officiating, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville.

Pallbearers will be David Crow, Casey Crow, Jerry Ray Ferguson, Nicholas Cook, Carter Ewing, and John Hupp.

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

## Charley W. Hill

Charley W. Hill, 75, of Hope, Ark., died Dec. 21, 2025, in Missouri. Burial will be in Sunset Gardens Cemetery in Nashville.



News-Leader photo/NIKKI FIELDS

**CATCHING AN ICEY RIDE.** The tandem of Cash Nuttall and Jhett Fields, both of Dierks, catch an ATV ride while out on the ice this weekend.

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### Putting your aging parents' wishes first

As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, which may involve difficult conversations.

You'll want to be careful how you approach this. Mention ahead of time that you'd like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

If your parents are agreeable, choose a comfortable location and ask whom to invite (or not invite). Then, think about how to open the conversation, preferably not with what they want to do with their money, as this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broader discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:

- Health care – Seek to learn whether your parents have established appropriate health-related legal documents such as a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make decisions

about their medical care if they become unable, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.

- Independence – As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered options for long-term care, such as an assisted living community, a nursing home or a home health aide? If they plan to receive support from family members, do your parents' expectations match yours?

- Financial goals – Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have they updated their will or other estate documents, such as a living trust? Have they created a durable power of attorney for a trusted family member to make financial decisions for them if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies, retirement plan and bank accounts? If you position these issues around your

parents having control over transferring their assets, rather than curiosity over "who will get what," you'll more likely have a productive conversation.

- Last wishes – You'll want to learn whether your parents have instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express that you or another close family member should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met in a timely fashion.

Money, independence and aging can be sensitive topics. You don't have to go it alone, though — enlist help from another close family member. Or, if your parents work with an attorney, financial professional or other trusted advisor, consider asking if they're interested in having them participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce your parents to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but if handled correctly can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

## Cross Point Cowboy Church 'ladies' event scheduled Feb. 6

Cross Point Cowboy Church will host a 'ladies night out' on Friday, Feb. 6, with a humorous and inspirational talk by Tammy Whitehurst.

The event will begin at 6 p.m. at the church located west of Nashville on Hwy. 371.

The event will include a meal, music and fellowship. Admission is \$10 at the door, and reservations are requested. A QR code for reservations is included in the church advertisement elsewhere in this issue of the newspaper. The theme is "Broken by the World; Mended by His Grace."

## Grace Country Church plans 'ladies gathering' for Feb. 7

Grace Country Church in Lockesburg will host a Ladies Gathering "Through the Fire" on Saturday, Feb. 7.

Admission is \$20 and may be paid at the door by cash, check or credit card. The event will be from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., and will include door prizes and auction items. Breakfast and lunch are included.

One of the auction items is a quilt in memory of Hazel Romie.

Headliners will be LeAnn Hart and Tammy Whitehurst.

For reservations call or text Christy 870-828-0049. The public is invited, but childcare is not available. The church is located at 526 Hwy. 371, Lockesburg.

## Area students earn honors at UA H-T

Six area students have been named to the Chancellor's List or Vice-Chancellor's List for the fall semester at UA Hope-Texarkana.

Requirements are a 4.0 grade point average for the Chancellor's List, or 3.5 GPA for the Vice-Chancellor's List.

Chancellor's List -- Kyla Collins, Nashville; and Sarah Gibson and Grace Patterson, both of Washington.

Vice-Chancellor List -- Todd Gallegos, Mineral Springs; Eric Lacefield, Blevins; and Ke'untae McDonald, Washington.

## Thinking about Selling?



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## The Nashville News-Leader

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# THE CECIL "BIRDDOG" HARRIS MEMORIAL EARLY FILES

Tales from Howard County's history reprinted in honor of longtime staff historian and photographer, Cecil Harris.

September 19, 1938 - December 15, 2012

Compiled by Patsy Young



Methodist Church, Mineral Springs until 1966. Established circa 1870

#### 124 years ago: January 1902

On last Saturday night two men, Will Speed and Will Farrell, became involved in a row at the store of G. W. Berry, a jeweler at Redfield, formerly of Nashville. The row was started by Speed cursing a young boy, and Will Farrell taking the boy's part. Speed shot twice at Farrell, missing him both shots, but one of the bullets struck Bud Perry, a clerk, in the foot.

Mr. Berry then bluffed Speed out of the store with a 2-pound weight. He was later arrested and locked up.

The little shanty occupied by C. W. Creviston in the grove west of Walker's Blacksmith shop was torn down by Marshal D. A. Gibson last Monday upon the order of Mayor J. J. Reeder, to whom complaint had been made by a citizen that a blind tiger was being run on the premises and that the place was a nuisance.

Although the house was demolished, no liquor was found.

#### (Adv.) Columbia Disc Graphophone, \$15, \$20 and \$30. The best Disc Machine on the market. Uses flat indestructible records. The reproductions are loud, clear and brilliant. Columbia Phonograph Co. St. Louis, Mo.

#### 97 years ago: January 1929

The drive to kill out the rabbits which have become quite a pest to the fruit and truck growers of this section was held Monday under the leadership of County Agent C. L. Rodgers. The drive did not meet with the success which had been hoped for, with only about one hundred rabbits being killed.

The Nashville Methodist Church announced its regular services for Sunday. The topic for the evening sermon will be "The Sin of the Closed Mind." This is the second of the series on the general theme of "Ancient Sins of Modern Sinners."

#### 80 years ago: January 1946

Indications are that a capacity crowd will be on hand at 1 o'clock Sunday afternoon to see Byron Nelson, world's greatest golf professional; and Don Murphy, pro for the Texarkana Country Club, in an exhibition match at the Nashville Country Club.

This will be the first time a match of this kind has ever been played here and will also mark the first play on the course of a national figure.

#### 43 years ago: December 1983

The fourth annual selection of the Howard County Football All Stars gave Nashville the lead in star selection with seven, Mineral Springs landed six and Dierks had two. Only 15 football players are selected.

There is a tie for most valuable lineman, with Nashville's C.W. Walker and Dierks' Brad Hughes. The only sophomores on the honor list are Brad Hughes, Dierks and his Outlaw teammate, Tony Eudy; all others are seniors.

Cox will be Saturday, Feb. 7. Dinner will start at 5:30 p.m. followed by a live auction.

The meal cost will be for donation, and features smoked chicken quarters with trimmings.

The church is located west of Nashville on Hwy. 371.

For more information contact Charlie Chambers, 870-490-1248.

The public is invited.

## Church sets Feb. 7 benefit for 2 members

There will be a benefit auction and dinner for two members of Cross Point Cowboy Church who are facing medical issues.

The event benefitting Baccor Faulkner and Bubba

Cox will be Saturday, Feb. 7. Dinner will start at 5:30 p.m. followed by a live auction.

The meal cost will be for donation, and features smoked chicken quarters with trimmings.

The church is located west of Nashville on Hwy. 371.

For more information contact Charlie Chambers, 870-490-1248.

The public is invited.

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# Public Record of Howard County

Items or documents that were filed, issued or recorded at the Howard County, Arkansas, courthouse during the period from Jan. 15-21, 2026, unless noted otherwise, included the following:

#### Criminal Court

No new criminal cases filed since CR26-04, Jan. 14.

#### Land/Property Transactions

#### Quitclaim Deed

Jan. 15. Shelly Boykin, fka Shelly McKnight; to Shelly Boykin; property in S30 T7S R28W.

Jan. 15. Dalton Lee Smead, 26, Dierks, and Kammi Jace Pollard, 25, Dierks.

Jan. 16. Archie Wynn Cothren, et al; to Rosewood Ranch, LLC; aggregate 149.95 ac. in S36/S35 T7S R28W.

Jan. 16. CJ Davis and wife Judy Davis; to Wesley Patrick Wakley and wife, Julie Ann Wakley; 2 tracts, aggregate 45.29 ac. in S30 T5S R28W.

#### Deed of Trust

Jan. 21. David Smith and wife, Holly Harding Smith; to Red River Employees Federal Credit Union; 31.73 ac. in S29 T7S R27W. \$115,000.

#### Executor's Deed

Jan. 21. Thomas Leon Pancherz, executor of the estate of Ruby Lavon Pancherz; to Fiat Properties, LLC; aggregate 5.25 ac. in S30 T7S R28W. \$95,500.

#### Warranty Deed

Jan. 15. Pineview Motel

& Apartments, Inc.; to Justin Jacques and Sabrina Jacques, husband and wife; 0.6 ac. in S35 T9S R27W.

Jan. 20. Marty L. Quinn and Kelley D. Quinn, Co-trustees of the Marty L. and Kelley Quinn Trust; to Pamela Kay Shelton; part of Lots 1-2-3, Block 77, City of Nashville. \$62,000.

Jan. 20. Tye Barnett and wife, Amanda Barnett; to Vertz Enterprises, LLC; 2 tracts, Lot 9 and part of Lot 8, Block 12, Holly Addition, and Lot 3 and part of Lot 2, Block 1, Stephenson Addition, all in Town of Dierks. \$67,500.

Jan. 21. Cathy Quinn, surviving spouse of Anthony Lee Quinn; to David Smith and Holly Harding Smith, husband and wife; 1 ac. in S29 T7S R27. \$62,500.

Jan. 21. Billy Ray Montgomery and wife, Larenda Montgomery; to Billy Ray Montgomery and wife, Larenda Montgomery, Trustees of the Bill and Larenda Trust; 80 ac. in S19 T10S R28W.

Jan. 21. (Special) Secretary of Veteran Affairs, USA; to Alex Martinez; Lot 25, Block 5, Toland Heights Subdivision, Nashville, aka 209 Clermont St., Nashville. \$115,000.

## Nashville's City Sales and Use Tax For December 2025

Deposits.....	\$140,5118.14
State Service Charge .....	4,215.54
Interest Earned (Act 513 of 1983) .....	395.32
Vending Decals Sold .....	0.32
<b>Total Distributed .....</b>	<b>\$136,698.24</b>

SOURCE: City Finance Officer Kimberly Green

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## Benefit Auction & Dinner

Helping Our Friends: Baccor Faulkner and Bubba Cox

WHEN: Saturday, February 7, 2026

Time: Dinner starts at 5:30 PM | Live Auction to follow

Where: Cross Point Cowboy Church

2740 US-371, Mineral Springs, AR 71851

#### ON THE MENU

Enjoy a delicious meal of: Smoked Leg Quarters,

Baked Beans, Potato Salad, Rolls, & Desert

COST: Donation Based (Give as you feel led!)

#### LIVE AUCTION TO FOLLOW DINNER

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For more info: contact Charlie Chambers (870) 490-1248

# Point of view

## Street crossings

### Intersections protected by brave boys in uniform

(NEWS-LEADER NOTE: Yes, this is another repeat. I plead snow disease, which is the fear of walking on snow and ice by an old guy. Apologies, and I'll try to do better as February comes in.)

IT TELLS YOU a lot about the level of excitement in my life right now, that the best part of my usual weekend is watching all-day reruns of "Monk."

When "Monk" was a new television program, his neurotic and compulsive antics put me in the floor laughing helplessly.

It was one show I tried to watch each week.

Now I just chuckle heartily at the reruns.

If you never watched the show, you'll miss some of the humor in this article. But it's funny, let me assure you. Please laugh out loud occasionally as you read this.

And as usual, I am going somewhere with this.

Monk was a San Francisco detective who was suspended from active duty. Because of his special skills the police department kept him on as a consultant. Because of his overwhelming neuroses he had to have an assistant.

On a recent episode Monk escorted his assistant's little girl around on Halloween Night.

She was costumed as a fairy princess. Monk wore a school crossing guard's outfit. He had a neat over-the-shoulder-and-around-the-waist reflective safety belt. He was carrying a 'stop' sign.

Actually he wasn't so much wearing a Halloween costume as he was attired 'Monk' style for the job of escorting the precious daughter around the neighborhood in the safe pursuit of trick-or-treats.

He was appropriately compulsive and funny.

Maybe you're not old enough to appreciate 'school crossing guard.' I don't think schools still have crossing guards.

That's a pity because maybe they could grow up to become duly deputized Downtown J-Turn Enforcement Officers, but that's another story and I'm sure you wouldn't be interested.

Crossing guards were a big deal when I was in elementary school. A student would be selected to be crossing guard. He'd could get out of class a little bit early and strut to the office where he'd put on the school's official over-the-shoulder-and-around-the-waist reflective safety belt and pick out a 'stop' sign. Or was it a flag?

Anyway, he'd dash excitedly to his assigned street corner to halt traffic so that the little darlings could safely get across. I don't think adults really appreciated being stopped by a self-important 12-year-old kid wearing an over-the-shoulder-and-around-the-waist reflective safety belt and waving a stop sign. But they stopped anyway.

I need to mention here that this was back in the day when children actually walked to and from school. I'm serious. Even if they had to walk as far as four or maybe even five blocks. And the kids actually waited patiently until their classmate crossing guard said it was okay to cross the street.

After all of the kids were safely through that dangerous crossing on their way home, the crossing guard would return to the school office and give up the glamorous crossing guard outfit, proud of his safety accomplishment.

Every student wanted to be the crossing guard. Just like we wanted to be selected for pounding the chalk dust out of erasers after school.

I may be wrong but it seems that only boys got to be crossing guards. I guess it was because the school administration figured that only the boys were stupid enough to fling their bodies in front of a crazed motorist who might be trying to run down a pack of little darlings.

We volunteered to be crossing guards also to impress the girls although at the time we didn't know why. We'd understand later.

Fast forward a few years.

I promised you I was going somewhere with this.

In Navy boot camp we had 'road guards.' Except for the uniform they were pretty similar to school crossing guards.

Our boot camp company would be marching somewhere real important, and when we came to an intersection the boot company recruit commander would shout "Road guards post!"

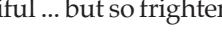
The marching company didn't miss a step. The designated road guards would rush out to block the intersection even if there wasn't vehicle within 20 miles.

They stood at 'parade rest.' Hands behind the back; feet spread just so. Eyes fixed firmly on the road ahead. Tummy sucked in to impress any girls who might be within a 20-mile radius.

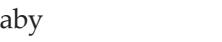
There were none, of course. This was boot camp.

After the whole company was past the intersection, the road guards would run to catch up and resume their place in the column. Boot camp was rigorous but safe because of these brave future sailors.

If there ARE crossing guards at elementary schools these days I'm sure that they are properly armed just as the Lord and the Arkansas Legislature intended.



HE SAID: "If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own." Henry Ford, industrialist



SHE SAID: "As long as the people don't fear the truth, there is hope. For once they fear it, the one who tells it doesn't stand a chance. And today, truth is still beautiful ... but so frightening." Alice Walker, novelist ('The Color Purple')



SWEET DREAMS, Baby

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John Balch, associate editor

Tracy Denny-Bailey, advertising manager

Pam McAnelly, office manager

John R. Schirmer, editor

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**Don't let the cold weather stop you. Keep yourself and those around you safe. Please get your free Covid-19 vaccination. If you're already fully immunized, remember to get the booster shots.**

Presented in the public interest by the Nashville News-Leader

## Legislative panel approves additional funding for school voucher program

**By State Sen. Jimmy Hickey Jr.**

The Arkansas Legislative Council voted to fund the Educational Freedom Accounts (EFA) through the rest of the 2025-2026 school year. The accounts can be used to offset the expenses of home school materials or go toward tuition at an accredited private or parochial school in Arkansas. Currently, over 44,000 Arkansas students are participating in the program this school year.

Educational Freedom Accounts are part of the LEARNS Act that was passed during the 2023 Legislative Session. Unlike other states, the program was implemented in stages. In 2023, the first year of the EFA program, about 1.5 percent of Arkansas students were allowed to participate. During the 2024-2025 school year, the percentage of students increased to 3 percent.

This school year is the first time that all Arkansas children in grades K-12 have been allowed to participate in the EFA program. Each account is funded up to \$6,864 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Many more students applied

for the EFA program this school year, but their parents either did not complete all the paperwork, or they made other choices for their children such as attending their local public school.

**Arkansas Teacher Maternity Leave**

As of 2023, school districts have been able to choose to participate in a cost sharing model that would allow teachers to have paid maternity leave. Each school district and the state would pay 50/50 into the program, giving teachers up the 12 weeks of paid maternity leave. The leave does not require teachers to exhaust their accumulated sick days first.

Act 904 of 2025, with bipartisan support, updated the law to require the state to cover 100% of the cost, making it a fully funded, paid benefit for teachers rather than a cost-shared one. Public school and charter schoolteachers are allowed to participate in the program. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a case study highlighting the Arkansas' teacher maternity leave

program. The study confirmed that bipartisan legislation helps Arkansas strengthen support for schoolteachers. The program gives teachers the time they need to recover and bond with their newborn or adopted child(ren) before they must return to the classroom.

**Online Services**

With the tax deadline only a few months away, Arkansas residents can check for their state refund by accessing the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) website at: <https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov>. You will need your Social Security Number and expected refund amount to access your tax refund information.

Also, on the DFA website, there is a section of online services that the department offers.

For example, you can order a replacement driver's license or change your address on your license online. DFA also offers the opportunity to book an appointment at your local DMV online. The department states booking an appointment online reduces wait time at the DMV.

## Human trafficking fight continues

**By U.S. Sen. John Boozman**

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month—an important time to increase awareness of one of the most heinous but hidden crimes facing our modern world. While this crime and the illegal enterprises that sustain it feel like they only exist on movie and television screens or in the shadows of distant communities, human trafficking plays out coast to coast, including right here in our state.

Worldwide, an estimated 27.6 million people are trafficking victims. In the United States, it has been reported and documented in all 50 states with Arkansas alone seeing 80 cases in 2024 that involved 153 victims, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

This form of modern-day slavery encompasses the exploitation and transport of people for forced labor and sexual abuse. Anyone can become a victim, and many are often hiding in plain sight. For this reason, human trafficking is especially pervasive and requires coordinated efforts across the local, state and federal levels to combat it while also ensuring each victim can be identified, rescued and receive proper care.

Natural State law enforcement agencies acknowledge that our rural nature and highway infrastructure make it even more critical for the public to recognize the signs of this crime and how to report it. Suspected human trafficking can

always be reported to the Arkansas State Police anonymously via email to [reportht@arkansas.gov](mailto:reportht@arkansas.gov) or by calling \*277.

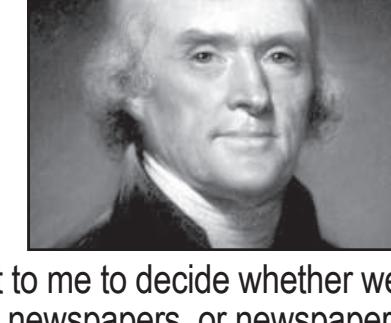
Congress has also made strides to protect our communities. I was proud to champion a \$500,000 provision in the Fiscal Year 2026 Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill that passed the House and Senate with overwhelmingly bipartisan support. This funding will assist the Arkansas State Police with law enforcement investigation hardware, software, and tools needed to solve internet crimes involving online child sex abuse and human trafficking.

Further, the House of Representatives has passed a measure that would appropriate \$100 million to combat human trafficking worldwide. The Senate is expected to take this up in the coming weeks, and I look forward to the opportunity to support the bill in the Senate.

Throughout the years, landmark legislation has been continually reauthorized and funded to prevent and combat trafficking. However, criminal organizations and gangs easily exploited open-border policies under the previous administration, creating an unmitigated flow of weapons, narcotics and human trafficking victims across our southern border.

During January and year-round, education and awareness of this pervasive criminal enterprise and its tragic consequences are the most effective means to curb it.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues, the administration and our law enforcement to strengthen partnerships and initiatives at every level to safeguard our most vulnerable and maintain Arkansas's commitment to eradicating trafficking and holding perpetrators accountable.



"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Thomas Jefferson, 1787  
Free press, free people

### Letters policy

The *News-Leader* welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, address with ZIP code and a daytime phone number for verification. Letters become the property of the *News-Leader* and will not be printed if they appear in other papers.

Mail: Nashville News-Leader, Box 205, Nashville, AR 71852.

E-mail: [jrs@nashvilleleader.com](mailto:jrs@nashvilleleader.com)

All letters must be signed and must not be libelous, superfluous or obscene. Letters may be edited to conform to newspaper style and to fit space requirements.



News-Leader photo/DEDE ROBINSON

A bird rests on a tree limb near Mineral Springs during the weekend as a combination of snow, sleet and freezing rain moved into Arkansas and neighboring states. The wintry weather event began Friday night, Jan. 23, and continued into the morning on Jan. 25. Roads in parts of Howard County remained impassable earlier this week.

## Petition

Continued from page 1

Olga's Taco Shop

Back 2 Nature Herbals

Co.

Quick Mart (Fina)

First National Insurance Agency

Roma's Italian Restaurant

El Karnalito Meat Market  
The Corner Store  
Individual canvassers include: Trae Ford, Gail Hearnberger, Jessica DeLozier, Jennifer Perez and MaChelle Powers.

Dierks  
Kenya's Restaurant

Deadline for petition delivery will be Tuesday, May 5.

Moore's Logging  
Shelter Insurance  
VP Racing Fuels  
Jason Welch, canvasser.  
Mineral Springs  
Buddy's Quick Stop  
B's Quick Stop  
Wendy Haddan, canvasser.

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## Ways a RINGER!



News-Leader photo/JOHN R. SCHIRMER

Superintendent Doug Graham (left) presents certificates to Nashville School Board members Jerry Wilson, David Hilliard, Nick Britt, Tem Gunter and Anthony Whitmore at their meeting Jan. 20. Graham thanked board members for their service to the school and community. The recognition was part of School Board Appreciation Month.

## School

Continued from page 1

instead of waiting until 2026-27, according to Evans.

"Time is the problem. We had intervention time at the middle of the day, and it's easy to miss that time. We've implemented a plan, Scrap Time, to focus on reading," Evans said.

Scrap Time refers to Students Concentrating on Reading at Primary.

Each morning, students report to their assigned locations for 35 minutes of intervention. The program started when classes resumed Jan. 6 after the Christmas break.

"I'm confident we will see growth because of this," Evans said. "Students are working hard. We have some tweaking to do for August, but it's been a really good thing."

Other items were also considered during the meeting.

Board members approved a recommendation from Riggs to add a section to the NHS honor graduate policy. Riggs said the state approved weighted credit for all concurrent credit courses beginning in the 2025-26 academic year. Weighted credit was also extended to Physics and Networking. Prior to the change, only Advanced Placement courses received weighted credit, Riggs said.

"These changes were not retroactive. As a result, seniors who completed any of these courses before their senior year did not receive the additional weighted credit. This created an unfair imbalance in GPA calculations and class rank," Riggs said.

"To ensure equity for the Class of 2026, we will calculate honor graduate GPA the same way we did last year. While student transcripts will still reflect the updated weighted credit, GPA calculations for graduation ceremony purposes will only include weighted credit for AP courses," according to the policy.

Riggs said other schools are doing the same thing.

NHS weighted courses include AP U.S. History, AP Statistics, AP Biology, AP English 12, Physics, College Chemistry, Pre-Calculus/Trig, Networking, and UA-Cossatot SCC classes.

Also at the meeting, Graham presented an update on the possibility of new turf at Scrapper Stadium. Current turf has been through 10 seasons, more than the warranty included.

The district is looking at several companies, including Symmetry which installed the turf now in use. "I liked ours 10 years ago and like it today," Graham said.

School officials at a recent Arkansas Activities Association board meeting said Nashville has the best turf they've seen, Graham said.

The district is considering new turf at the stadium and in the Scrapper Dome. The stadium's track also needs to be re-done, Graham said.

"We may not be able to afford all three, but they all need attention," he told the board.

In personnel decisions at the meeting, Dontrelle Robinson was hired as special education paraprofessional at junior high. He will be considered for a full-time position including coaching contingent upon completing his teacher certification requirements.

Maddie Rodgers was hired as a half-day paraprofessional in a self-contained classroom at NJHS.

Both hires are retroactive to Jan. 6.

Graham presented certificates to board members in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month.

He reviewed members' training hours and said each member has the required six hours.

Members and their hours include Jerry Wilson, 11 including five carried over from the previous year; David Hilliard, with five carryover hours; Nick Britt, 17 including 11 carryover; Tem Gunter 96 including carryover; and Anthony Whitmore with 6. He is the newest board member and doesn't yet have carryover hours.

The next board meeting will be Feb. 23.

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## STEPHANIE LOCKHART

Certified Public Accountant

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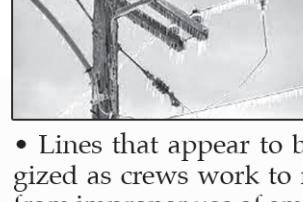
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**Johnny Porter (870) 703-1628**

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When ice and heavy snow bring down limbs and power lines, safety is a consideration indoors and out. Make sure you know how to weather the storms.

When outside, stay away from downed power lines:



• Lines that appear to be "dead" can become energized as crews work to restore power or sometimes from improper use of emergency generators. Assume all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous. If you see a downed or sagging line, contact your utility.

• If you are in an auto accident involving a downed power line, your vehicle is usually the safest place to be (unless it is on fire.) If it is safe to do so, stay in your car, call 9-1-1, and wait for electric utility personnel to arrive to deenergize the power. If you step out of the car and the ground is energized, you could become the electrical current's path to ground and you could be electrocuted. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, make a solid, clean jump from your vehicle and hop away with your feet together as far away as you can. If you run or walk away, you could get electrocuted.

• Motorists should never drive over a downed line, as snagging a line could pull down a pole or other equipment and cause other hazards.



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## Howard County District Court

**Jan. 22, 2026**  
**BF=Bond Forfeited**  
**Howard County**  
 Benson, Dreshauna L., 28, Nashville, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Bevill, Adam, 42, Nashville, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460; guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$260  
 Bowers, Jason Carr, 55, Dallas, Texas, \$285 BF, speeding  
 Burton, Michele Lashaun, 33, Mineral Springs, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$705 balance  
 Butler, Coby, 24, De Queen, \$255 BF, speeding  
 Clayton, Charles H. III, 33, Nashville, guilty of careless or prohibited driving, fined \$360; guilty of DWI, fined \$1,125, credited for time served, license suspended and must complete DWI educational course  
 Collins, Amber L., 36, Nashville, guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360  
 Cooper, Tony Marcell, 35, Hope, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$2,690 balance; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$260  
 Dancer, Tashaina Breona, 30, Texarkana, guilty of no driver's license/expired license, fined \$210; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360; guilty of no driver's license/expired license, fined \$210  
 Dunn, Knicole Irene, 25, Horatio, \$255 BF, speeding  
 Elliot, Acie Jr., 68, Hope, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Eudy, Dalton Lane, 26, Dierks, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Forton, Keyshawn, 19, Texarkana, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460  
 Garza, Anita R., 37, De Queen, \$245 BF, speeding  
 Grubbs, Trey Alexander, 24, Umpire, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Hartman, Keith Eric, 55, Lebanon, Penn., \$275 BF, speeding  
 Hernandez-Yanez, Edna M., 29, Idabel, Okla., \$50 BF, failure to present insurance  
 Lee, Andrea Michelle, 24, Broken Bow, Okla., guilty of failure to pay registration, fined \$225  
 Lee, Terry G., 53, Bismarck, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$3,078 balance  
 Martinez, Jennifer P., 34, Horatio, guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$345; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245  
 O'Neal, Beckie D., 56, Saratoga, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$2,395 balance; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245  
 Rodriguez, Eutiquito G., 53, De Queen, \$210 BF, no driver's license/expired license  
 Stuart, Tyquan T., 27, Texarkana, guilty of no driver's license/expired license, fined \$210; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360  
 Ward, Abigail Grace, 23, Dierks, \$225 BF, failure to pay registration  
 registration  
**City of Nashville**  
 Bailey, Peggy A., 65, Nashville, \$305 BF, speeding  
 Bustos, Maricela K., 26, Nashville, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$4,055 balance; committed to jail for maximum of 30 days  
 Dotson, Trevails, 39, Nashville, guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360  
 Griffin, Nicholas David, 43, Fulton, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$2,250 balance  
 Hendrix, Keon T., 29, Nashville, guilty of no seat belt, fined \$85; guilty of non-payment of fines, \$1,335 balance; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245  
 Humphrey, James D., 50, Delight, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Jackson, Eric R., 37, Nashville, \$50 BF, failure to present insurance  
 Johnson, Perry R., 35, Nashville, \$210 BF, expired vehicle tags/no tags  
 Martinez, Jennifer P., 34, Horatio, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$1,665 balance  
 Murphy, Jackie R., 51, Glenwood, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$1,425 balance  
 Piza, Jose, 18, Nashville, possession of controlled substance, deferred adjudication for six months to dismiss  
 Ramos, Abdiel, 14, Nashville, \$210 BF, no driver's license/expired license  
 Rhodes, Xan Robert, 18, Nashville, guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360  
 Ward, Abigail Grace, 23, Dierks, \$225 BF, failure to pay registration  
 Williams, Natisha, 26, Hope, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Woodberry, Jaylan, 26, Texarkana, \$550 BF, second-degree assault  
 Hupp, Brandon C., 39, Nashville, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360; guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460  
**City of Dierks**  
 Mercier, Cooper J., 24, Dallas, Texas, \$230 BF, speeding  
**City of Mineral Springs**  
 Brown, Stephanie, 29, Ozan, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$445; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245  
 Caldwell, Lonnier Delamel, 37, Texarkana, guilty of driving suspended or revoked license, fined \$460  
 Cooper, Tony Mercell, 35, Hope, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460; guilty of failure to pay registration, fined \$75  
**Arkansas Game & Fish Commission**  
 Gardner, Clay W., 15, Lewisville, guilty of hunting/fishing without permission, fined \$100  
 Humphrey, Caydn H., 18, Texarkana, guilty of hunting/fishing without permission, fined \$100  
 Thomas, Jaxon T., 17, Texarkana, guilty of hunting/fishing without permission, fined \$100



News-Leader photo/JOHN BALCH

**CLEARING AROUND THE SQUARE.** The Pike County road department was busy Monday morning under blue skies trying to remove the thick layer of ice coating the roadways around the town square in Murfreesboro.

\$360  
 Staggers, Tiffany Dawn, 42, Nashville, guilty of non-payment of fines, \$2,295 balance  
 Stewart, Mychel M., 22, Washington, \$225 BF, failure to pay registration  
 Williams, Natisha, 26, Hope, \$15 BF, non-payment of fines  
 Woodberry, Jaylan, 26, Texarkana, \$550 BF, second-degree assault  
 Hupp, Brandon C., 39, Nashville, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined \$360; guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$460  
**City of Dierks**  
 Mercier, Cooper J., 24, Dallas, Texas, \$230 BF, speeding  
**City of Mineral Springs**  
 Brown, Stephanie, 29, Ozan, guilty of driving on suspended or revoked license, fined \$445; guilty of failure to appear, fined \$245  
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 Humphrey, Caydn H., 18, Texarkana, guilty of hunting/fishing without permission, fined \$100  
 Thomas, Jaxon T., 17, Texarkana, guilty of hunting/fishing without permission, fined \$100

### Bench Trials

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# Nashville Primary School Honor Roll & Merit List

## Honor Roll (All A)

### Second Grade

Karen Allen's Class -- Ethan Hale, Samuel Hernandez, Savannah McElvea, Hudson Mote, Madelyn Teague, August Williamson.

Kayla Coulter's Class -- Bryson Hill, Naomi Sanchez. Dana Darling's Class -- Morgan Gills, Jameson Shaver. Kaitlyn Hanney's Class -- Melody Capetillo, Alexander Cardona, Leonardo Hines, Kacen Holliman, Jehsey Jones, Kade Linhoff, A'jiah Miller, Marcus Reid Montgomery,

Juliette Sullivan, Tripp Troutt, Madani Valente, Winter Wallace, Kambryn Womack.

Jennifer Hill's Class -- Kutter Clay, Daleyza Fraire, Taiya Hall, Brandon Holmes, Jayden Patel, Jenna Watson.

Becky Horne's Class -- Enrique Alonso, Baylor Casper, Andrea Castro, Ethan Darling, Melany Hughes, Jaxon Morrow, Aubrey Smith.

### Third Grade

Julie Backus's Class -- Miriam Dowdy, Audrey Gunter, Kiptin Horn, Drake McAdams.

Haley Davis's Class -- Amelia McKinnon.

Tesla Gills' Class -- Haven Goodwin, Ryan Jones, Bryson Seavers.

Heather Harmon's Class -- Baylor Brasel, Rayner Johnson, Kelsyn Scrivner, Mia Solorio, Caeli Zaragoza.

Jennifer Johnson's Class -- Maeslyn Berruquin, Lexi Bohn, Phuong Nghi Dinh, Luke Scott, Nathan Topor, Brayden Venable.

Brittany Moore's Class -- Jeremiah Hibberd, Joshua Land, Hunter Dean, Kennedy Ginda, Sophia Harris, Sarai Hernandez.

Virginia Schwoppe's Class -- Isaac Bean, Quade Dinger, Laylah Green, Millie Petty, Eleanor Pierce, Tripp Turner.

### Merit List (All A and B)

### Second Grade

Karen Allen's Class -- Graham Askew, Javi Bearden, Veronica Hernandez, Khylie Jones, Teagan Sanders, Anna Troutt, Blake Robins.

Kayla Coulter's Class -- Evan Chandler, Evie Friend, Evelyn Fuentes, River Hugg, Cataleya Marshall, Aleida Ornelas, Ethan Phillips, Trenton Smith, Clay Sullivan, Miriam Tollett, Ava Williams.

Dana Darling's Class -- Noemi Escamilla, Hayes Haskins, Ariana Hunter, Eli Pham, Lillian Smith, Isaiah Teresa.

Kaitlyn Hanney's Class -- Michael Barker, Bishop Green, JaLyric Gulley, Jennifer Marrufo, Ma'Kayla McNeal.

Mrs. Jennifer Hill's Class -- Everleigh Gardner, Lorenzo Hines, Cason Lockhart, Madeline Mendez, Mason Williamson.

Becky Horne's Class -- Faithlyn Harris, Matthew Hawkins, Braven Hunter, Andres Navarrete, Royce Wade.

### Third Grade

Julie Backus's Class -- Sadie Bailey, Ari Briggs, DeAngelo Finley, Francisco Pizarro, Dawson Smith, Zahara Walker, Fisher Westfall.

Haley Davis's Class -- Hunter Sunderman, Oakleigh Pedron, Lucas Lingo, Diego Sanchez, Jazlyn Sanchez, John Schooley, Brett Chesshir, Keshun Davis, Mateo Dukes, Ruby Floyd, Elizabeth Leppert.

Tesla Gills' Class -- Kora Bagley, Connor Brackeen, Kenan Green, Braxton Lewis, Zoe Nunez, Mateo Ruiz, Lathen Watts.

Heather Harmon's Class -- Adi Ackley, Januel Cervantes, Kyleck Dansby, Daleyza Gomez, Jordan Harberson, Kayden Johnson, Alexander Maldonado, Wyatt Roberts, Harley Sharp.

Jennifer Johnson's Class -- Brody Backus, Emma Joy Jacques, Mateo Pacheco, Javier Sanchez, Sophia Simmons.

Brittany Moore's Class -- Amelia Wright, Trenton Walker, Braelyn Williams, Oaklyn Self, Joaquin Padilla, Nova Lorraine Mitchell, Amir Ortiz, Gavin Roberts, Bryson Scroggins, Abby Cox, Hugo Hernandez, Aiyden Farris.

Virginia Schwoppe's Class -- Blake Benson, Reed Chesshir, Orlando Espino, Katherin Garate, Brayson Griffin, Eva Hernandez, Victoria Murillo, Olivia Poulton, Rhodey White.

Veronica Tomblin's Class -- Azerion Jefferson.



News-Leader photo/NIKKI FIELDS

**QUICK SLEDDING.** Driver Scarlett Nuttall and passenger Taigen Collins gain speed on the solid ice while sledding over the weekend in Dierks.

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Nashville  
870-845-4422

Jason Lenderman, CPA

## ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR LOW INCOME HOUSING IN NASHVILLE AND DIERKS

Applications may be picked up at the Howard County Housing Authority office located at

**1010 S. Pope Street, Nashville, Arkansas**  
(off of Hope Hwy).

Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, Monday - Friday, closed on Wednesday afternoons.

For questions, you may call the Housing Authority Office at (870) 845-1080.



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## Newspaper Fun!

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Hmm... is that my shadow?  
Hey! What are you doing down there?  
I'm searching for my shadow - I think it is escaping the cold weather!

On February 2nd, all eyes will be on Punxsutawney Phil, the famous groundhog who predicts whether spring and warmer weather will come soon, or if winter and the cold weather will longer.

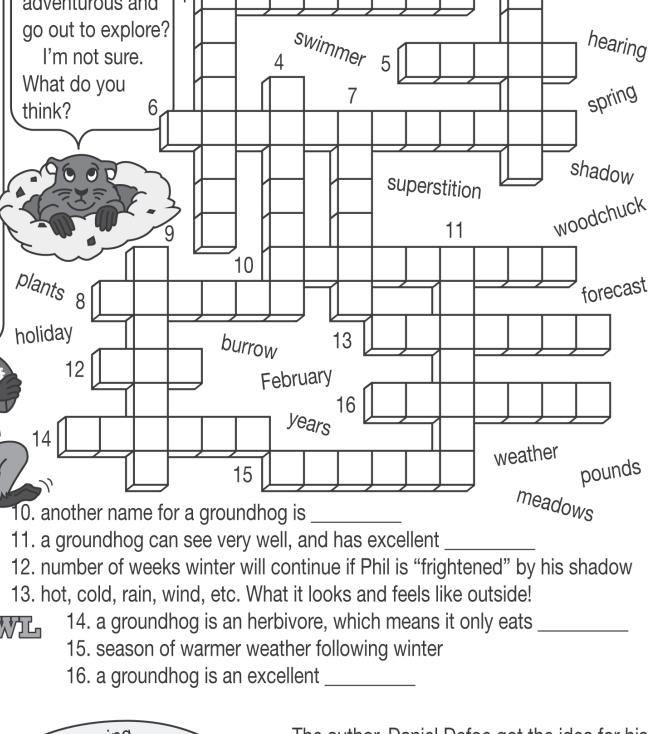
How does he do this? Well, legend holds that when a groundhog pokes out of his hole, if the sun is shining, he will see his shadow, be frightened and dive back into his burrow to wait out six more weeks of winter. But, if he sees clouds when he comes out of his hole, he will not be afraid, will venture out, and we will know that spring is near!

Read the clues to fill in the puzzle:  
1. On February 2nd, Phil, the famous groundhog (and other groundhogs in other places) will be watched for his weather - a "prediction" about what kind of weather to expect  
2. the second month of the year  
3. a tunnel dug underground  
4. groundhogs can be found in the woods, fields and  
5. a groundhog usually lives to be 6 to 8 old  
6. belief in magic, luck and chance  
7. the dark area formed when light is blocked  
8. a groundhog usually weighs about 12  
9. the groundhog is the only animal with its own national

...when we try exciting new things.  
Animills LLC © 2017 V14-04

## Groundhog Adventures

Forecasts & Football



## Adventures and Excitement!

Have you had any exciting adventures lately? Many people are adventurous. They like new and unusual experiences. A few people even like to do things that are very bold or full of risks. These people like danger and thrills.

I love new adventures but I think that we should leave the dangerous, bold acts to the characters in movies and books!

Did you know that some of the ideas for adventure stories are based on real people's lives?

The author, Daniel Defoe got the idea for his famous book, *Robinson Crusoe*, from the adventures of a real sailor. The sailor, named Alexander Selkirk, was marooned on an island in the Pacific Ocean in 1704 after an argument with his captain. He lived there alone for more than four years until he was rescued in 1709.

The adventures of Robinson Crusoe are filled with sea voyages, storms, shipwrecks and pirates! One day, after being marooned on the island (with only a dog for a friend), Crusoe saw a large footprint in the sand. Later, he saw about 30 cannibals around a fire ready to kill two men. What do you think he did? Was he ever rescued? You'll have to read the book to find out!

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Photos Courtesy of SWAHA FACEBOOK

**WAIT AND SEE NOW.** Marina docks throughout Arkansas were damaged by Winter Storm Fern and Swaha Lodge & Marina on Lake Greeson was no exception. The owners of the longtime lake vendor on the south end of Greeson, Kevin (pictured here surveying the initial damage) and Janet Fant, reported on social media that there was major damage and collapse on several docks following Fern's one-two punch. The area remains closed this week, including by vehicle and boat. The Fant family reported Tuesday that the extent of the damage is still unknown, due to not being able to access the unstable docks for further inspection.

## HMH Foundation fundraiser 'Hearts for HMH' Feb. 14

A night of bingo, food, music and more will be in a fundraiser for the Howard Memorial Hospital Foundation on Valentine's Day Saturday, Feb. 14, at Midtown Social in Nashville.

The event will feature entertainment by Chris Gunn plus prizes, a live auction and a silent auction.

Food will be provided by Tyson and Chef Walline Williams.

Tickets are \$60 and may be purchased by calling Sandy Webb, 870-845-8006 at Howard Memorial or sending email to [sandyw@howardmemorial.com](mailto:sandyw@howardmemorial.com).

The theme for the event is "Hearts for HMH."

## Pike County couple officially charged with felony endangerment of child

The Murfreesboro couple arrested on suspicion of child abuse and neglect have officially been charged in Pike County with felony first-degree endangering the welfare of a minor.

Timothy Mason Phillips, 54, and Mary Louise Phillips, 49, were arrested Dec. 31 and released from county custody Jan. 2 on \$25,000 bond each.

The charges were filed Jan. 23. The husband and wife made their first court appearance Jan. 5 and were ordered by Judge Tom Cooper to return to court Jan. 26 with an attorney but that court date was cancelled due to the weather.

According to affidavits of arrest obtained from the Murfreesboro Police De-

partment, an investigation into the couple started after an 8-year-old female child under their care was reported missing from their Third Avenue home. The incident touched off a massive search that concluded with the child being found just steps from her home.

On Dec. 4 around 8:11 a.m., local law enforcement was made aware of the missing child by the mother at the Pike County Sheriff's Department. The child was described as 3'2" and weighing 38 pounds and reportedly wearing no clothes. A search got underway soon after and concluded at approximately 12 noon when the child's father located her, covered in a blanket and hidden behind a pool pump

in a shed in the backyard.

The child was immediately placed in an ambulance to be evaluated and her body temperature registered at 98 degrees when "the outside ambient temperatures was between 37-39 degrees during the course of the search," according to the affidavits.

The child and her biological siblings were removed from the home that day by the Arkansas Department of Human Services until an investigation into allegations of abuse and neglect could be completed.

The siblings were interviewed Dec. 5 regarding events related to the child's disappearance the day before and allegations of neglect and abuse at home.

## Stavely and Associates



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For more home, farm or land listings visit [www.stavelyandassociates.com](http://www.stavelyandassociates.com)

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**870-845-1188**

## NEWS-LEADER CLASSIFIEDS

### BUSINESS SERVICES

MINI STORAGE IN MURFREESBORO. 870-845-6304.  
(gs:4-tf)

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 202 W. Howard St. Mon., Wed. & Fri. 8 to 9 p.m. Elizabeth 870-949-5833, Warren 870-557-0446, Chad 430-200-7150.

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### FOR SALE

This 60 acres near Old Washington and 2 miles from Grandview Wildlife Management Area is a **Hunter's Dream**. Lots of oak and pine timber and a beautiful creek running through the middle plus a pond. Access is through a locked gate with a gravel timber company road that dead ends into the property. The area around the property is leased and controlled which makes this place very private. **\$165,000.**

**CALL 870-703-1628.**

### Featured LISTING! 101 S. Jones St., Nashville



1532 sq ft home sitting on a corner lot in the heart of Nashville. This home offers 3 bedrooms, 1.5 upgraded bathrooms and a large bonus room. Galley kitchen has been upgraded with granite countertops and a beautiful glass backsplash. The living room has a ton of natural light coming in from the double door that leads out to concrete patio. This home is a must see to fully appreciate. **PRICE \$165,000.**

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DeAnn Simmons, 870-557-4968  
Allana O'Neal, 870-557-7162

### PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HOWARD COUNTY, ARKANSAS PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF  
THE ESTATE OF: LLOYD HARRISON ASHLEY

31 PR-26-10

### NOTICE OF PROBATE-INTESTATE

Last known address of decedent: 504 Cornbridge Road, Mineral Springs, Howard County, Arkansas  
Date of death: November 26, 2025

Michael W. Ashley was appointed the Administrator of the Estate of Lloyd Harrison Ashley, by order dated January 14, 2026. 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 the 21st day of January, 2026.

Michael W. Ashley, Administrator, by  
Aaron R. Brasel, ABN 2009138  
Post Office Box 813  
Nashville AR 71852  
(870) 845-4100 - Telephone

(AB: 31, 32)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HOWARD COUNTY,  
ARKANSAS PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE  
OF PATRICIA ANN BLAKELY, Deceased  
No. 31PR-26-9

### NOTICE

Last known address of decedent:  
1407 Wildwood Dr., Nashville, AR 71852  
Date of Death:

November 21, 2025

On the 12th of January, 2026, an Affidavit for Collection of Small Estate by Distributee was filed with respect to the estate of Patricia Ann Blakely, deceased, with the clerk of the probate division of the circuit court of Howard County, Arkansas, under Ark. Code Ann. §28-41-101.

All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, properly verified, to the distributee or his or her attorney within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit of the estate.

This notice first published 28th day of January, 2026.

The name, mailing, address, and telephone number of the distributee's attorney is:

Gardner Milner, PLLC  
By: Sara Gay  
P.O. Box 17037

Jonesboro, AR 72403

(870) 972-8180

(GM: 32, 33)



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Melinda Bennett 870-451-2226

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### LEGAL NOTICE - SCHOOL BOARD VACANCIES

Vacancies will exist on the Umpire School District Board for at-large positions.

The Umpire School District Steering Committee will interview applicants and refer recommended candidates to the Howard County Quorum Court.

The Howard County Quorum Court will make the appointment at a public meeting on March 16, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., at the Howard County Courthouse.

Applicants must be qualified electors of the Umpire School District.

Interested individuals must contact the Umpire School District Steering Committee by February 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Contact: Linda Kitchens, President  
(870) 584-6340  
[lindakitchens51@yahoo.com](mailto:lindakitchens51@yahoo.com)

Ad paid for my the Umpire School District Steering Committee.

(pd. 32)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HOWARD COUNTY, ARKANSAS PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

JIMMY DALE ESKEW, deceased

31PR-26-12

### NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND FILING OF CLAIMS

Estate of JIMMY DALE ESKEW, deceased

Address of decedent: 1236 Hwy 84 E, Howard County, Umpire, Arkansas 71971

Date of Death: MAY 8, 2025

The undersigned person was appointed Administrator of the estate of the above-named decedent on the 20th day of January, 2026.

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. Provided, that claims for injury or death caused by the negligence of the decedent shall be filed 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 the 28th day of January, 2026.

John Eskew Executor  
[P.O. Box 810, De Queen, AR 71832](mailto:P.O. Box 810, De Queen, AR 71832)

Mailing Address

Prepared by:

Erin Hunter

Attorney at Law

(EH: 32, 33)

## Former Scrapper QB makes move to Ole Miss coaching staff

CLEVELAND, MISS. - Nashville native Todd Cooley, Delta State University's head football coach since 2013, has announced his resignation to accept a position at the University of Mississippi. Cooley will be the Director of High School Relations/Special Assistant to the Head Coach at Ole Miss.

The Scrapper football alumnus recorded his 77th career victory during the 2025 season with a 41-9 victory over North Greenville to become Delta State's winningest football coach.

Delta State recorded an 82-49 record with Cooley at the helm of the football program with four NCAA Division II Playoff berths (2014, 2017, 2022, 2023) and three Gulf South Conference Championships (2014, 2022, 2023) in 12 seasons.

Cooley is also a four-time GSC Coach of the Year (2013, 2014, 2022, 2023).

During his tenure, Cooley has coached

more than 100 All-GSC selections while also graduating nearly 250 football student-athletes.

"Todd's hard work and commitment has elevated our program to a nationally respected and competitive level. We wish Todd and Lisa continued success in his new position," said Director of Athletics Mike Kinnison.

Cooley quarterbacked the Scappers to their first appearance in a state championship game at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock in 1993.

He played quarterback at Arkansas Tech, where he received a degree in English.

Cooley's coaching career includes stops at Tech, Northeastern State, Ouachita Baptist, Central Arkansas and Northwestern State.

He was named head coach at Delta State Jan. 25, 2013.



Photo Courtesy of Delta State University

**NASHVILLE NATIVE.** Todd Cooley as Delta State University head coach.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Nashville Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet  
Monday, Feb. 16 • 6 p.m. • NHS cafeteria

# CONGRATS!

## Jennifer Revels

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Come and Enjoy the Great talents of:  
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Quilt to be Auctioned in  
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For questions, or to RSVP your reservations,  
please call or text: Christy at 870-828-0049

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# NHS teams sweep Arkadelphia Jan. 22

News-Leader photos/LAYLA SIRMON



Bo Bell (23) scores on Arkadelphia in Nashville's 70-4A win Thursday, Jan. 22, at Scrapper Arena.



Karstyn Scrivner (24) eyes a shot Jan. 22 during the Scrapperettes' 73-38 conference win over Arkadelphia.



Johnte Taylor controls the ball in the Scappers' home win against Arkadelphia last Thursday night.



Courtesy photo/LYNETTE LOVELIS

Addison Gammage drives to the basket in the junior high Scrapperettes' 55-18 win over Arkadelphia Jan. 22 at Scrapper Arena. The NJHS boys also earned a win.



Courtesy photo/LYNETTE LOVELIS

Jadyn Johnson (14) goes for the ball against Arkadelphia in last week's Nashville victory.



Lucy Hagler (left) sets up a shot against the Lady Badgers Jan. 22.

Johnte Taylor controls the ball in the Scappers' home win against Arkadelphia last Thursday night.

## SPORTS LEADERS

Players of the Week as selected by The Leader sports department

Area teams ready to play again

**Area basketball teams** were sidelined Monday and Tuesday of this week because of wintry weather which moved into Arkansas Friday night, Jan. 23, and continued through the weekend. Schools were closed, and games were canceled because of the inclement weather conditions. Sunshine and warmer weather were expected to ease some of the travel problems, with basketball set to resume.



This weekly feature sponsored by  
**McDonald's of Nashville**  
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South Fourth Street



Kiyanna Stewart gets set for a free throw in Nashville's District 7-4A victory over Arkadelphia. The game was rescheduled from Jan. 23 to Jan. 22 because of impending winter weather.

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*Come Worship With Us!*  
Sunday Morning Worship  
8:00 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.  
Wednesday Night  
6:00 p.m.  
Rev. Kevin Sartin



Kiyanna Stewart gets set for a free throw in Nashville's District 7-4A victory over Arkadelphia. The game was rescheduled from Jan. 23 to Jan. 22 because of impending winter weather.

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