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Farmers market opens 2026 campaign on May 30

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce has announced their season opening date of the Murfreesboro Farmers Market.

The first day of the 2026 season will be held on Saturday, May 30 from 7 a.m. to noon at the old city park. The pavilion site is located behind the tennis courts adjacent to the former Pike County Hospital building.

All food vendors and crafters with home-made crafts are invited to attend and sell their wares.

Any interested vendor is asked to call (870) 285-3131 to register.

Door prizes will be given to attendees.



Staff photos

LEVEL COMPLETED ... The Murfreesboro High School class of 2026 officially became graduates at commencement exercises held at Rattler Stadium on Tuesday, May 12. Pictured below is (left) Faith Teel, the winner of the 2026 Freeman Henderson "Voice of the Rattlers" award for being the best all-around student (presented by South Pike County Schools Superintendent Tanya Wilcher) and (right) Landen Jones smiles to the crowd as he is presented his diploma.

Gills attends 2026 Meet of Champions

RUSSELLVILLE -- Murfreesboro Lady Rattler Macy Gills participated in the May 13 Meet of Champions at Russellville High School. The Meet of Champions faces off the best performers from all classifications.

Gills ran to a tenth place finish in the 400 meter dash with a time of 1:05.11, which was slower than her mark of 1:02.14 at the Class AA state track meet the week prior.

Coach Chuck Lowery attributed it to the fact that it was Gills' only race (at the Meet of Champions) and that was a different scenario for her than multiple races at all the other track meets she participated in this year.

Other local athletes participating at the Meet of Champions included:

- Alec O'Neal, Kirby -- fifth place, 3200 meter run, 10:40.33
- Mineral Springs girls 4x100 meter relay team -- eleventh place, 51.24
- Mineral Springs girls 4x200 meter relay team -- twelfth place, 1:51.51
- Shamachia Stuard, Mineral Spring -- ninth place triple jump, 35'9"
- Mineral Springs boys 4x100 meter relay team -- twelfth place, 44.01
- Mineral Springs boys 4x200 meter relay team -- tenth place, 1:31.50
- Jalen Staggars, Nashville, fifteenth place discus, 136'7"
- Kathryn Williamson, Caddo Hills -- seventh place 800 meter run, 2:34.93
- Aleigha Sanchez, Caddo Hills -- fourteenth place discus, 96'2"
- Cory Passmore, Centerpoint -- seventh place high jump, 6'2"



FUMC to offer meals for all children throughout summer

TEXARKANA -- This summer, children can enjoy FREE lunches through the Summer Feeding Program, sponsored by Harvest Regional Food Bank and open to all kids ages 1-18 years. No applications are necessary to drop in and all children and teens are welcome.

The Summer Feeding Program makes sure all children can eat healthy food during the summer months when they cannot eat at school. Approximately one in five children in Arkansas are food insecure, meaning they have limited or uncertain access to safe and nutritious food. Children who are hungry or food insecure are more likely to be in poor health and less likely to develop physically, mentally and emotionally.

Locally, meals in Pike County will be available at Blessed Beginnings (Murfreesboro First United Methodist Church), 403 2nd. Avenue in Murfreesboro.

The meals will be offered "Grab-N-Go," where parents and guardians may pick up meals for their children without children present. Three days of meals can be picked up on Monday and four days of meals on Thursday per child. The meals may be collected on Mondays and Thursdays from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. from May 28- August 13.

For more information call Blessed Beginnings at (870) 285-2579 or Harvest Regional Food Bank at (870) 774-1398.

About Harvest Regional Food Bank, Inc.
Harvest Regional Food Bank serves Bowie County in Texas, and Miller, Columbia, Little River, Lafayette, Hempstead, Howard, Nevada, Pike, and Sevier counties in Arkansas. As a Feeding America and Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance partner, our mission is to eliminate hunger in this region through food distribution and education. More information can be found at www.harvestregionalfoodbank.org or by following facebook.com/harvesttkk.

Council discusses ATV use in M'boro city limits

Proposed plan will require blinkers, seat belts and headlights for those 16+

BY JOHN BALCH
Nashville News-Leader staff

MURFREESBORO -- Murfreesboro Mayor Jim O'Neal has asked the City Council to consider allowing ATVs/UTVs to legally operate on all city streets to support tourism and local recreation with a balance of safety.

The mayor posed the question during the council's May meeting and it falls in line with the ongoing effort to establish ATV/UTV/bike trails in and around Pike County.

O'Neal said that the current plan indicates the city would need to designate at least two streets within the city limits, which includes Highway 301 out to the Crater of Diamonds State Park, for the recreation vehicles to travel to Sour Springs Road outside of town to join other parts of the trail system.

The obvious street choices for designa-

tion would be North and South Washington, he said, so visitors could go to the diamond mine, stay in motels, shop local, etc. But with just only two streets designated for legal use, O'Neal said those who do not stay in town but wanted to visit the town and the diamond mine would be illegal to do so.

The mayor added that the city-wide designation would also give locals the same opportunity to travel via ATV/UTV.

All recreational vehicles would have to meet Arkansas code to become street legal, O'Neal noted, with a specific equipment criteria such as blinkers, seat belts, and headlights with a minimum age of 16 for drivers.

The mayor said Police Chief Randy Lamb was in favor of the plan and there was a strong consensus among the council to prohibit ATVs/UTVs in school zones during school hours and events, and to establish a reasonable curfew.

There was also questions about what constitutes an ATV or UTV and it was agreed that four-wheelers should not be included in the plan if they lack required equipment set by state criteria.

The project is being spearheaded locally by the Murfreesboro Advertising & Tourism Commission. Council member Jane Fugitt serves on that commission and reported that the trail system is progressing.

"The trails are already there," she said. "They're already using them."

The commission is now working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and moving ahead with establishing signage, trail setup, maintenance and mapping, according to Fugitt.

O'Neal did not call for a vote on the matter and advised the council to review the Arkansas ATV/UTV statute and vehicle criteria before next month's meeting.

Quorum Court discusses placement of Farmers Market

No more structures to be added, will tear down old hospital as soon as feasible

MURFREESBORO -- With the Murfreesboro Farmers Market set to open their 2026 on Saturday, May 30, the Pike County Quorum Court discussed the matter at their May meeting on Monday night.

Pike County Judge Eddie Howard said he had been approached about vendors not wanting to utilize the pavilion in the back of the old city park -- which is off the highway frontage and is out of sight to locals, and unknown to tourists, despite the sign on the highway.

Howard said that anyone was able to utilize the area, but he felt it was unlikely for a request of building facilities by the county. The county owns the former hospital property as well as the old city park area. "They have permission to set up, but they want shade in front -- they don't like being off the highway."

"We spent \$20,000 to put it where it is -- where they wanted it," said Justice of the Peace Johnny Plyler of the existing pavilion area.

Paul Baker stated that "it's a great idea, but we can't put in a permanent structure [nearer the hospital], because if the hospital gets torn down, it will be useless."

According to Howard, the county is applying for a grant to remove the hazardous material from the building, which once completed, will allow them to apply for a grant to raze the building to the ground.

"Once the hazardous materials are removed, we will apply for the grant every year until it gets torn down," said Howard.

It was discussed amongst the court members that vendors may certainly utilize tents to provide themselves shade.

The Quorum Court also reappointed Pike County resident Gary Wofford to the Pike County Equalization Board after he agreed to serve another three-year term that will expire in June 2029.

"I'm glad he wants to do it," Plyler said honestly. "I wouldn't."

A request by Pike County Assessor Staci Stewart to add hours to the part-time assessor employee in Glenwood was tabled until next month after Stewart was unable to attend the meeting.

Howard told the court that Pike County was the recipient of the "pavement preservation"

award for the chip and seal work done on Head and Strawberry roads in Delight.

"This is an award for the best chip and seal job in the state -- across all counties," said Howard. "I'd like to thank all who supported me on purchasing the new roller, because without this it couldn't have been done."

Howard also credited the Pike County road crew members, stating that "they did a great job and it looks really nice ... this is the first award that Pike County has ever received for road work that I know of."

Kip Holbrook asked Howard if the county had investigated the "Step Grant" from the State of Arkansas that would pay for county officer's overtime.

Pike County Clerk Randee Edwards said Sheriff Travis Hill had applied, but the first attempt had been turned down as Pike County's employee handbook specifically states that

QUORUM COURT
Continued on Page 2

QUORUM COURT Continued from Page 2

there are no overtime hours paid for, only comp time accrued. "We have a policy for no overtime, so the employee handbook would have to be changed first."

Edwards said that the grant was a reimbursement, so the county would also have to open a dedicated account to handle any overtime payments.

"It would save the county a lot of money," Baker said.

Edwards said Hill was working to develop the verbiage to revise the handbook with state officials.

Pike County Treasurer Loletia Rather reported the following openings/closings of county accounts through the month of April

- County General -- \$1,598,633.75/\$1,522,158.01
- County Road -- \$235,010.07/\$208,198.99
- County Landfill -- \$264,543.79/\$268,975.04
- All County Accounts -- \$6,722,508.92/\$6,601,516.64

APRIL MEETING

Last month, the Pike County Quorum Court heard more about the proposal to make part of Highway 27 a memorial for veterans and first responders of Pike County.

The court was asked to pass a resolution to allow Howard to seek a Highway 27 roadside sign permit as a memorial.

Glenwood resident Rhonda Eleazar from Glenwood was present to speak on the idea, stating that although she appreciated the work that both the veterans and first responders do, she feels the need to separate the two groups or donate the money collected for signage to the groups individually to benefit them directly.

Howard said that the effort for the signs was done by Gary Graves with the Pike County Archives and Historical Society and the county only needed the approval to satisfy ARDOT.

Justice Holbrook questioned the title of the highway signage, stating it was too wordy and encouraged the idea of splitting the names and doing two separate sections of dedication.

Howard said he would discuss the matter further with Graves before the issue moves forward.

Noah McGalliard, with Southwest Arkansas Weather, introduced the need for a new weather camera network through hazcams, with four corner coverage of the county being the future goal.

He said the purpose is to ultimately improve awareness and public safety for severe weather preparedness, with the cost of the network being around \$7,500 per site with installation costs varying by location as well as a \$100 per month streaming package, with other package options also available.

He added that electricity and internet would be required at each site.

The public would be able to log into the hazcam website to view the live camera footage.

The court took no action on the proposal.

Effort seeks petition signers

Three convenient locations available

MURFREESBORO -- The quest to get alcohol sales on the ballot for the second time is well underway.

According to the numbers provided by Pike County Clerk Randee Edwards, the group has to obtain a minimum of 2,387 valid petitions from registered Pike County Voters to place the referendum on the November ballot for voter consideration.

The referendum failed by six votes at the polls in 2022. Anyone that is willing to help with petition efforts -- regardless of amount -- is asked to call (870) 557-1860.

For those that would like to sign a petition, can visit Harville Insurance, Chimney Rock Grocery Store or the Gypsy Underground Flea Market, all located in Murfreesboro, where petitions are available.

Senior Center to hold benefit meal on June 7

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Senior Center will be having a fundraising meal on Sunday, June 7, starting at 11:30. The meal will consist of chicken and dressing, candied yams, English peas, cranberry sauce, roll and peach cobbler. Donations for meals will be appreciated.



Staff/submitted photos

ROAD WORK AWARDED ... Pike County was awarded "Quality Asphalt Paving Award" for pavement preservation for their work on Head and Strawberry Roads in 2025. The award is pictured above along with Pike County Judge Eddie Howard, while (below) the Pike County Road Crew is pictured with Howard. Howard deflected all credit for the award stating that the efforts of the road crew was the reason for the quality work.



Murfreesboro Diamond

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

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FRIDAYS AT 3:00 P.M.

Man charged in Pike County for explicit child materials

MURFREESBORO -- A Kirby man has been charged in Pike County with four counts of distributing, possessing or viewing matter depicting sexually explicit conduct involving a child.

Zane Walker Duggan, 28, was charged May 15. He pleaded not guilty to the charges Monday and an Aug. 10 pretrial date was set by Judge Bryan Chesshir.

According to case information, the Arkansas State Police opened an investigation on March 10 involving Duggan after receiving a cyber tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children about the uploading of sexually explicit ma-

terial to SnapChat.

SnapChat provided data that led to Duggan and his iPhone was seized and searched. Four different videos were allegedly found during the search.

Also Monday, Brandon Davis, 30, of Caddo Gap, pleaded guilty to the charge of furnishing, possessing or using prohibited articles while he was an inmate at the Pike County jail. He was sentenced to 10 years in the Arkansas Department of Corrections with five years suspended.

Driver seriously injured in accident, child avoids major injury

AMITY -- A Murfreesboro driver was seriously injured last week in a one-vehicle accident near in Pike County that also injured his daughter, according to the Arkansas State Police.

Family members identified the injured as Marshall Floyd, 38, and his daughter, Mira, 8.

The state police reported that on May 13 around 7:53 p.m.

Floyd was traveling westbound on Highway 84 east near Amity in a 2001 Dodge truck when he collided with Horn Creek bridge.

Floyd remains hospitalized this week with serious injuries. His daughter, who was airlifted from the scene, was not seriously hurt in the accident.



Submitted photo

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS ... The 12-and-under Murfreesboro Rattlers recently defeated the Horatio Lions 4-2 to win their league championship.

Ouachita graduates, faculty and families gather for spring commencement

BY CHASE HARTSELL
OBU Office of Communications & Marketing

ARCADELPHIA -- Ouachita Baptist University honored 432 graduates during its 139th Spring Commencement ceremony on the front lawn of historic Cone-Bottoms Hall on Saturday, May 9. Honorees included those who earned Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Education and Master of Business Administration degrees in August 2025, December 2025 and May 2026.

Following tradition, Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president, delivered the commencement address. His message, drawn from Matthew 7:11, covered the fierce and sacrificial love of family as well as God-given gifts. Sells encouraged students to rely on God, ask boldly and often and trust in the gifts God gives.

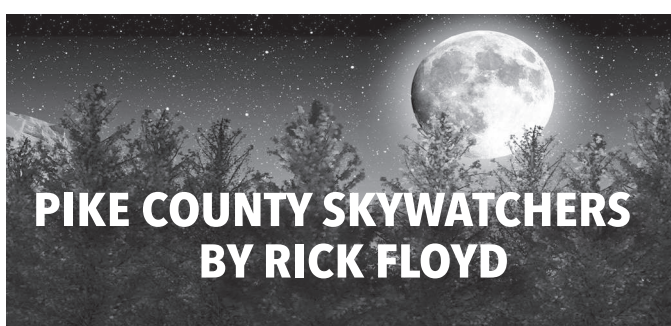
"The words of Jesus remind us that you do not live in an indif-

ferent universe governed by chance," Sells told the graduates. "Your Heavenly Father knows your name, your needs and your future. The God who led you here goes with you."

Dr. Justin Hardin, vice president for academic affairs and professor of biblical studies, presented the degree candidates. Sells then conferred the degrees and recognized graduates who would be commissioned second lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

Local graduates involved in the ceremony included:
• Ella Claire Brinkley, Murfreesboro, Elementary Education
• Makenzie G. Grider, Amity, Political Science and Criminal Justice
• Tiffany Leann Byers, Nashville, Biology

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The truth is out there ... alien files released

There is much in the news lately about possible alien spacecraft being real, after the release on May 8 of the first batch of Pentagon files on UAPS. There are more than 160 files including videos and related documents in this batch which can be found at WAR.gov/UFO. Reportedly, future releases will be better organized and found at UFO Release Tracker and Pentagon UAP files. A recently added research site on the Department of War website is called PURSUE which stands for Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters. So far, there have been no updated reports from Scully and Mulder on what the X-files contain.

The wide-ranging materials include historical records largely from the 1940's to the 1960's much of which has been in the public domain for years. More recent reports come primarily from military sources, and one source in particular the AARO (All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office) lists resolved and unresolved sightings.

Almost everyone knows what UFO stands for, but recently the unidentified flying object world started referring to its observations as UAP's. This briefly stood for unidentified aerial phenomena, and the reason for the change was to get away from all of the baggage that UFO carried with it, and to be more inclusive of what might be going on. However, UAP has been updated to mean unidentified anomalous phenomena which presumably was done to add a bit more of a scientific sound to it, and to give us a bit of a tongue twister when trying to sound more technical.

The Sun flared on May 10 and sent a coronal mass ejection (CME) toward Earth. This large blast of energy hit Earth in a glancing blow that disrupted communications (mainly in the Atlantic region) and spawned more auroras. The Sun is in a decline of activity, but this is a reminder that it is in the solar maximum phase until around 2030. Every eleven years or so the Sun's magnetic field flips causing a change in its activity level. During the more active maximum there are more sunspots, flares and CMEs. Solar minimum is the quiet phase.

This current maximum phase started in 2020 and supposedly peaked last year, but some scientists think the Sun will continue to be very active for the rest of this year. Earthlings can thank our magnetic field and atmosphere for protection from most of the Sun's eruptions that come our way.

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Obituaries

Maxine Brooks, 89, Murfreesboro



she was preceded in death by her two sisters, Virginia Dunn and Juanita Franklin; her brother, A.L. Brooks, Jr.; and her two sons, Russell Robert "Rusty" Nettles and Michael Guy Nettles.

Those left to cherish her memory include her daughter, Robin Dildy; two grandchildren, Michelle Nettles and Michael Nettles; three great-grandchildren Rayne Gosney, Grant Kosters and Adalyn Tobalske; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Visitation was held from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at the First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro.

Funeral services followed visitation at 12:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro. Interment followed in the Murfreesboro Cemetery, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home of Murfreesboro.

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

Maxine Brooks, age 89 of Murfreesboro, Arkansas, passed away on May 14, 2026 in Murfreesboro. She was born on June 11, 1936 in Ruston, Louisiana to the late Andrew and Alice Mae Brooks.

Maxine was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro. She loved working in her yard, collecting rocks from all her travels, as well as visiting with others. She was very social and outspoken; she never met a stranger. She loved spending time with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents,

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONGOING -- The public is invited to drop by the Pike County Extension Office and get some Texas Roadhouse Rolls. The rolls have been cut in price to \$4 a dozen and \$2 for container of cinnamon butter. Call the office at (870) 285-2161 for more information.

MAY 16 -- The Class of 1976 will be having their fiftieth Delight High School reunion on May 16 at 7 p.m. at The Feed Bin Cafe in Murfreesboro. All graduates, their spouses and former classmates are invited to attend. Attending parties are requested to contact The Feed Bin Cafe (870) 285-3122 by May 11th to pre-order from their online dinner menu. Event host contact is Lyn Pilot, text only, (870) 681-2050 for more information.

JUNE 16 -- The Murfreesboro Class of 1972 will hold their annual lunch on Saturday, June 6 at 12 noon at Telinga's.

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.

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UAMS

HOUSE CALL

Dr. Bala Simon is an associate professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Q: What are some disorders affecting sleep?

A: Sleep disorders are issues with the quality, quantity, and timing of sleep. Sleep disorders may result in people having difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking too soon. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute estimates that between 50 million and 70 million people in the U.S. have some type of sleep disorder.

Causes of sleep disorders vary. There are several categories of sleep disorders, including breathing disorders (i.e. sleep apnea), insomnia (trouble falling and staying asleep), and circadian rhythm disorders (problems with the body's internal clock). Anyone can be affected by sleep disorders. Risk factors may include family history, being obese, medical

conditions such as asthma or heart disease, working late shifts, or taking certain medications.

Symptoms of sleep disorders include abnormal breathing patterns, daytime sleepiness, difficulty paying attention, irritability or other mood changes, or unusual activities during sleep such as bed-wetting or sleepwalking. Complications include depression, obesity, and the worsening of medical conditions such as dementia or diabetes.

Sleep disorders can have a detrimental effect on one's quality of life. Resolution of sleep disorders depends upon the cause. Work with your health care provider if you experience problems sleeping and to develop a treatment plan.

Email your health questions to housecall@uams.edu.

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Submitted photos/PC4-H

STARTING THE SUMMER STRONG ... Pike County 4-H'ers are starting their summer off strong by putting their helping hands to work in the community. As part of 4-H, these members are leading through service by planting a community garden, with plans to place the harvest in blessing boxes throughout the area to help those in need. They are also working hard to make their Extension office flower beds beautiful, adding color and pride to their local space. Their efforts are making a meaningful impact while setting the tone for a summer filled with teamwork, responsibility, and giving back.

Extension financial expert shares tips to navigate high gas prices

BY REBEKAH HALL
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture

LITTLE ROCK -- Arkansas drivers are paying higher gas costs at the pump, and a financial expert with the Cooperative Extension Service says some households may need to adjust their spending habits to accommodate increasing gas prices.

According to AAA (<https://gasprices.aaa.com/?state=AR>), the average price of regular unleaded gas in Arkansas was \$4.076 per gallon as of May 15. That's up 44% from a year ago when gas prices averaged \$2.818 a gallon.

"Reducing other expenses can allow more income to be used to cover the cost of gas," said Laura Hendrix, extension associate professor of personal finance and consumer economics for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. "Sometimes it is necessary to adjust a spending plan to allow for uncontrollable changes in expenses. When gas prices return to normal, you can resume your regular spending habits."

In the meantime, Hendrix shares these tips to help make ends meet:

- Watch your speed. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, driving 55 mph instead of 65 mph improves gas mileage by 15 percent.
- Avoid aggressive driving. "Eliminating 'jackrabbit' starts and stops can help improve gas mileage by 5 percent," Hendrix said.
- Use cruise control when appropriate. Steady driving uses less fuel.
- Use air conditioning less. "It can help to use air conditioning as little as possible," Hen-

drix said. "However, on warm days, running the AC may be more cost-effective than driving with the windows down, which can cause drag and reduce aerodynamics." The U.S. Department of Energy recommends rolling the windows down at lower speeds and using the AC at highway speeds.

- Remove excess weight. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce fuel economy by up to 2 percent, according to the Department of Energy. "Excess weight in the luggage rack on top of the car also creates wind resistance, causing additional reductions in fuel efficiency," Hendrix said.

DRIVE SMART

According to AAA, Arkansas currently ranks among the nation's 10 least expensive gasoline markets. For many Arkansans, however, higher prices at the pump are causing strains on the wallet, Hendrix added.

Hendrix said it's important to shop around for the best gas prices near you. Compare gas stations, and remember to check the octane level, which measures fuel stability, if necessary.

"Refer to the owner's manual for the recommended octane level of gasoline for your car," Hendrix said. "Don't buy a more expensive octane level if your car doesn't need it."

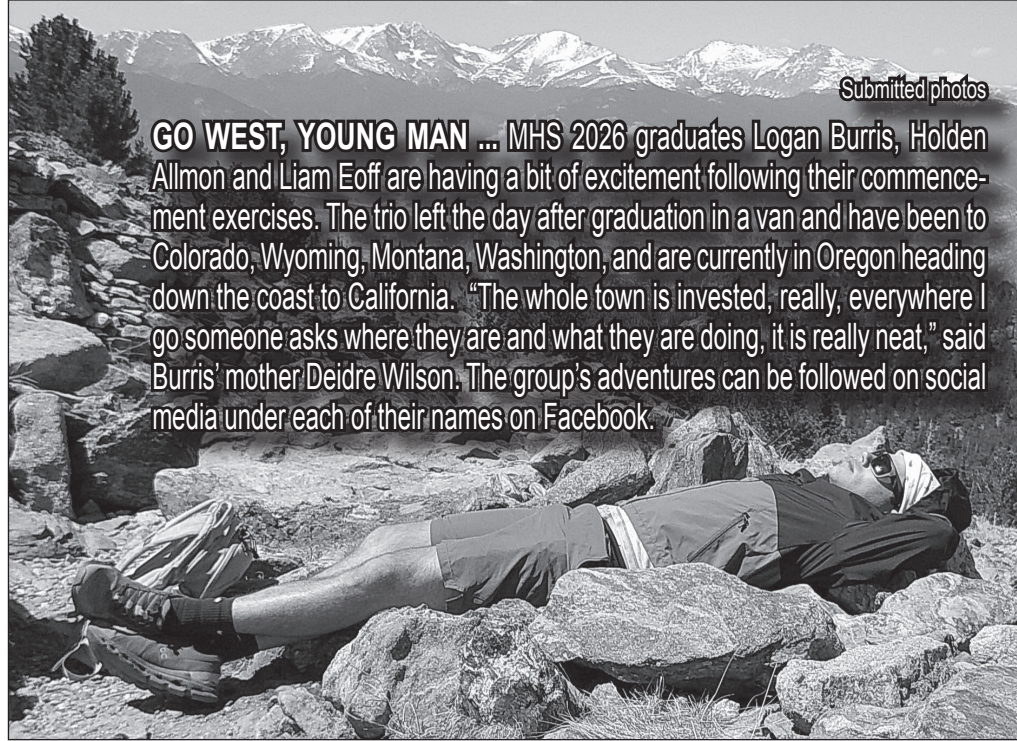
By planning trips ahead of time, you can also reduce miles by combining errands so that you make stops along a planned route, Hendrix said. To spend less time driving in general, make plans to carpool, walk when possible or ride a bike. Check the availability of public transportation in your area or work remotely from home, if possible.

Be efficient when choosing a vehicle. "If you own more than one vehicle, drive the one that gets the best gas mileage," Hendrix said. "If

you are looking to purchase a new vehicle, consider energy-efficient options such as electric or hybrid."



Submitted photos



GO WEST, YOUNG MAN ... MHS 2026 graduates Logan Burris, Holden Allmon and Liam Eoff are having a bit of excitement following their commencement exercises. The trio left the day after graduation in a van and have been to Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Washington, and are currently in Oregon heading down the coast to California. "The whole town is invested, really, everywhere I go someone asks where they are and what they are doing, it is really neat," said Burris' mother Deidre Wilson. The group's adventures can be followed on social media under each of their names on Facebook.

'Dear Preacher'

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ

THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE

As a faithful Christian, it is my duty and responsibility to live the best life that I can possibly live. We should give our very best each day to the Lord and accept the challenge given to us by the apostle Paul. He tells us in Romans 12:1-2: 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



We are encouraged and implored by Paul to be transformed from the world and live in such a way that we become holy and acceptable to our God. Scripture tells us how to accomplish this.

Look into Scripture to learn how to become a living sacrifice and give our reasonable service to

God:
BECOME FULLY SPIRITUAL
Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:3-5

USE THE WORD
Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15
CHECK YOURSELF
2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 9:27

SPREAD THE WORD
Matthew 28:19-20

Please look to these passages this week to strengthen us in our service and may we take the challenge to give God our very best of everything we have!

HAVE A GREAT WEEK!

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Facts About The BIBLE BY JOHN LEHTI

354

This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the Book of II Kings intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times.

The Shunammite's Son
ELISHA IS VERY PLEASED WITH THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN WHO HAS BUILT A ROOM ON HER GARDEN WALL FOR HIM TO REST IN, ON HIS TRAVELS THRU THE LAND NOW.

...AS HIS SERVANT, GEHAZI, TIDES THE ROOM, ELISHA IS PONDERING OVER THE WOMAN'S KINDNESS...

CALL THIS SHUNAMMITE WOMAN!

ELISHA ASKS THE WOMAN HOW SHE MIGHT REPAY HER KINDNESS...

"THOU HAST BEEN KIND... SHALL I ASK FOR A FAVOR FROM THE KING FOR THEE?"

I DID NOT DO THIS THING FOR PAY, BUT BECAUSE THOU ART A MAN OF GOD!

WHAT NOW CAN WE DO FOR THIS KIND WOMAN?

AND AS THE WOMAN WALKS BACK ACROSS THE GARDEN TO HER HOUSE, GEHAZI SPECULATES! THEN HE REALIZES THAT THE WOMAN, WEALTHY THOUGH SHE MAY BE, STILL LACKS THE ONE THING AND THE ONLY THING WHICH CAN GIVE HER IMPORTANT STATUS IN THESE ANCIENT DAYS...

VERILY SHE HATH NO SON, AND HER HUSBAND IS OLD!

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ELISHA'S GIFT!

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Bro. Buddy Ray

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MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES

* -- Theme Related Clue

ACROSS

1. Throat-clearing sound
5. Like a fiddle?
8. Chicago baseballer
11. Cyberattack target
12. Opposite of pizzicato, in music
13. Bullying, e.g.
15. Pharmacy ware
16. Wedding cake layer
17. *Mythological part woman, part bird
18. *Part man, part bull
20. Means justifiers
21. Seize the throne
22. Found at the pump
23. *Part man, part fish
26. Julianne Moore or Lucille Ball, e.g.
30. Schiller's address to joy
31. Popular pet rodent
34. Bono's bandmate, with The
35. Chunk of iceberg
37. *Pointy-eared humanoid
38. Knight's breastplate
39. Independent chieftan
40. Pay, in casino (2 words)
42. Bugling ungulate
43. Like sun
45. Mother-of-pearl, pl.
47. Public health org.
48. Manila hemp
50. Vegan's protein choice
52. *Three-headed dog
55. African antelope, pl.
56. Not written
57. Arch above eye
59. Actor's rep
60. Sommelier's domain
61. *Large and hideous humanoid
62. *Giant bird of prey
63. Bulb type
64. *Abominable humanoid

DOWN

1. Tally
2. Stay out of its way!
3. Small ladies' handbag
4. Extra large wine bottle
5. Robin Hood's companion Tuck
6. Frost over (2 words)
7. Millimeter of mercury
8. Little Miss Muffet's morsel
9. Mail carrier, acr.
10. Beyonc , a.k.a. Queen
12. Adjust
13. Beforehand
14. *Wailing spirit
19. "Killers of the Flower Moon" Oklahoma location
22. Hair-raising product
23. Lawn trimmer
24. Organ swelling
25. Made over
26. Abundant
27. Landscaper's tool
28. Like an athlete
29. Office stations
32. Landlord's due
33. Acronym-named sandwich
36. *Part lion, part eagle
38. Lickety-split
40. Nurses' org.
41. Incapable
44. Sunbaked, archaically speaking
46. Demijohn
48. Eagle's home
49. Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop
50. Not for here (2 words)
51. Barrel-counting org.
52. Type of hood
53. Restless desire
54. Database command
55. Roofing sealant
58. Yellow river tributary

CROSSWORD

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MHS holds commencement exercises for class of 2026

MURFREESBORO -- Commencement exercises for the 2026 graduating class of Murfreesboro High School were held on May 12 at Rattler Stadium.

The invocation was presented by Kale Burns, while Faith Teel gave the welcome speech.

Danny Eckert provided the baccalaureate address, followed by Mabree Sweat with her salutatory address and Colton Robbins' valedictory address.

Robbins was also awarded with a cord signifying he had concurrently graduated with an associate's degree from college.

MHS Counselor Courtney Stone presented the scholarship awards and CTE completers while MHS principal gave the class presentation following the presentation of diplomas to the student by Superintendent Tanya Wilcher and the South Pike County School Board members.

Faith Teel was presented the Freeman Henderson "Voice of the Rattlers" award by Wilcher.

John Parker Jackson gave the closing benediction.

Grand Marshals for the event were Ramsey Terrell and Charleigh Wheeler.

Ushers were Carter Gilmer, Jordyn Nance, Ross Spradlin and Aurora Stone.

The class of 2026 unveiled their preferences for the event:

- Class Flower -- red rose
- Class Colors -- red and black
- Class Motto -- "The best is yet to come"
- Class Song -- "Good Ole Days" by Macklemore featuring Kesha

The Class of 2026 included (with designations)

- Holden Augustus Allmon -- Beta
- Teegan Blair Barnett -- Beta, Honor Graduate
- Nicole Maggie Beaty -- Beta
- Sydney Jade Braden -- Beta, Honor Graduate
- Kale Wayne Burns -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Logan Dean Burris

Elena Marie Campbell -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Justen Tyler Carey -- CTE Completer

Lucas Aiden Carey

Edie Meshelle Copeland -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Kasey Lynn Cornwell

Tyler Floyd Cox -- CTE Completer

Robert Rhee Garrett Downs -- Beta

Liam Henry Eoff -- CTE Completer

Faye Lynn Marie Fannin

Gracie Elizabeth Goodwin -- CTE Completer

Faith Lenee Henderson -- Beta

Samantha Sanchez Hernandez

Jasmin Nicole Hughes

Hawkins Kyle Jackson -- Beta, Honor Graduate

John Parker Jackson -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Reid Christopher Jackson -- CTE Completer

JaMauri Daeleon James -- CTE Completer

Landen Edward Jones -- Beta

Jason Lynn Jordan

Reese Allen Kizzia

Djay John Leeper -- CTE Completer

Chloe Lynn Madrid

Haley Alexis Markcum

Gracie Ray McMillian

Miguel Martin Mendez -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Garrett James Molnaird -- Beta, CTE Completer

Grace Helen Molnaird -- Beta

Kinleigh Klaire Mounts -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Colton Kenneth Robbins -- Beta, Honor Graduate, Valedictorian, CTE Completer

Alyssa Lynn Sigman -- CTE Completer

Mabree Elizabeth Sweat -- Beta, Honor Graduate, Salutatorian

Hailey Jolene Sweeney -- CTE Completer

Allison Anne Teel

Debra Faith Teel -- Beta, Honor Graduate

Caleb William Terrell -- Beta

Madeliene Grace Wicker -- CTE Completer



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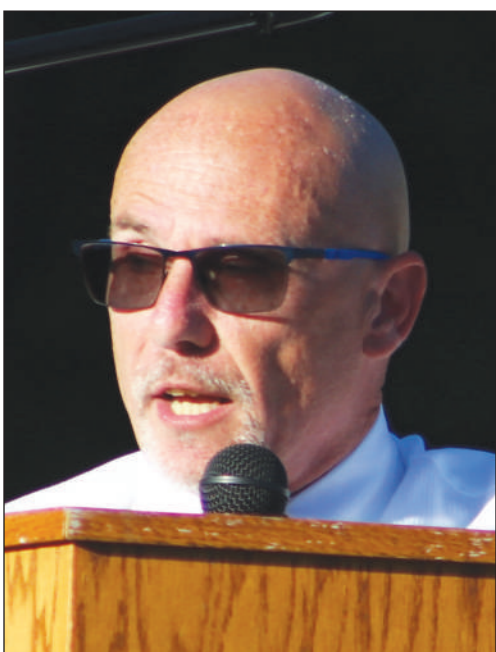
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2026 MHS graduation thoughts



BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS DANNY ECKERT

Here you are. You made it. There are those among you that have been motivated from very early on in your academic journey to be among the top of your class. Some of you have achieved that tonight.

Then there are those of you who but for the grace of God and a few dedicated teachers that pulled you across the finish line kicking and screaming that you are here tonight. Then there are those who are somewhere in the middle. You didn't want to be here but you showed up, did your work, and completed everything you needed to.

Whichever group you fall into tonight doesn't really matter. Everyone leaves here tonight with a diploma. Whether you finished first in this class or last, everyone gets the same diploma. The only difference is the name on it.

Throughout your time in school you have been somewhat insulated and protected from the outside world. As you leave this football field tonight you will be entering the real world. I want to give you some advice tonight about how to survive in the real world. Here is what you need to know.

Every person on this football field needs every person on this football field. The class of 2026 is a community that has grown together since kindergarten. You are a community that has gone through many highs and lows throughout the years. Your community has already experienced the loss of a classmate. This community has members that have already lost a parent. You are a community that has grown together through hardships and adversity. You have made it to this point because you have had a community around you that has supported you.

As you navigate this life you will still need the support of the community that you have been a part of these many years. Your community is made up of varied interests and career choices.

This community already has a preacher in it. Do you know how unheard of it is for there to be a minister in a high school graduating class. You already have someone that has been praying for your souls and spirituality. This community means something to him. That's why just a couple of weeks ago he made an impassioned plea for you to have a real relationship with Christ based on faith and not just relying on emotion and feelings. He did that because he loves this community.

This community has a volunteer firefighter who risks their life for your property and life.

There are those here in this community that aspire to me in the medical field. As someone who did not graduate college, I have to admit

that sometimes I have had a chip on my shoulder. I would think, look at them, they think they are hot stuff. We should not feel that way. You better hope that this community has doctors and nurses that you can trust and turn to when you need them.

On the flip side there are those of you that are going straight into the workforce or skilled labor. There may be those that are Dr.'s and lawyers that would look down on those that did not complete college. You should not feel that way. You better pray that there will be electricians, plumbers, and mechanics that you trust.

Whatever your career path is, you all need each other. You may not see some of your classmates after you leave this football field tonight. Then maybe 6-7 years from now you run into them and reconnect with them and it's like no time has passed.

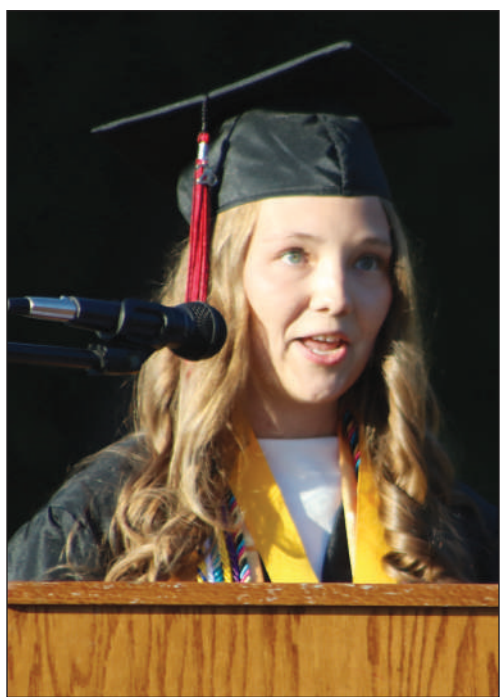
Listen carefully to what I am telling you. There will never, ever be another Murfreesboro High School graduating class of 2026. Take care of your community. Please always value this community and serve this community for years to come.

Now if I may leave you with a football metaphor. We have seen some great victories and suffered some great disappointments on this field.

Whether you played the game on this field, played in the band, cheered from the sidelines, or watched in the stands, you were all a part of what happened on this field.

Now as you leave this field for the final time, you all leave as winners. You leave this field with your diploma. You have earned everything you have received. Nothing was given to you. And now as the clock runs out on your time here, there are two words that I believe put the exclamation point on your time here at Murfreesboro High. BALL GAME!

Thank you and may God bless the class of 2026!



SALUTORIAN SPEECH MABREE SWEAT

Good evening, peers, faculty, and families of our class. Thank you for being here today to join us in celebrating the Class of 2026. Since I am not the only speaker tonight, I'll keep this short and sweet so y'all aren't out here too long.

First, I would like to thank a few people who have immensely supported me.

Most importantly, I'd like to thank God for all the blessings He has given me and for the sacrifice our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, made for us.

Thank you to my family: Mom and Dad; Hunter and Wyatt; my Nana; Aunt Liz and Colton; Aubrey and Drew; and my Mimi and

Pop.

From school, I would like to thank some of the teachers and friends who have been there for me.

Thank you to my Aunt Tarah, also known as Mrs. Gentry, for making yearbook memorable while also allowing your classroom to be a safe space for me on a bad school day.

Thank you to Mrs. Barnes for being the toughest teacher at this school—you have truly prepared me for life.

Thank you to Mrs. Bobo and Mrs. Motley for making math seem not so terrible.

Thank you to Mrs. Maroon and Mrs. Collins for making FBLA one of the greatest opportunities this school has offered me.

And thank you to Mrs. Perrin and Mrs. Wood for being the teachers who could always cheer me up as I walked into the school day—especially this last year, as senioritis hit hard.

Growing up, I quickly learned the difference between fake and true friendships. I have been extremely blessed to find my two best friends during my time here—two friends who like me for me, not just for my brain. Thank you, Faith and Sydney. I wouldn't be standing here without you.

When I started thinking about ideas for this speech, I initially wanted to talk about my experiences at this school—some good and some bad. But when I reflected on it, I realized there was someone more important I wanted to dedicate my speech to.

Something I have lived by since I was little came from my late Jpaw, who passed away when I was 11. He always told me, whenever we'd part, "Keep up the straight A's and do good in school."

He also taught me to be kind—and that kindness is the most important thing of all. As a Christian, we should strive to be kind to everyone, and he showed me the importance of that. He is a big part of the reason I am even up here speaking right now. Whenever I do something major, like a big test or this speech, for example, I always think back to him. He was taken too soon, but I know he is here with us today, along with so many others.

By being kind to others, you make a difference in your life and in the lives of those around you—and that is the most important lesson my Jpaw taught me. At the end of this life, it won't matter how many cords we had at graduation or what order we sat in. All that matters is that we made it—and that we will continue to make it.

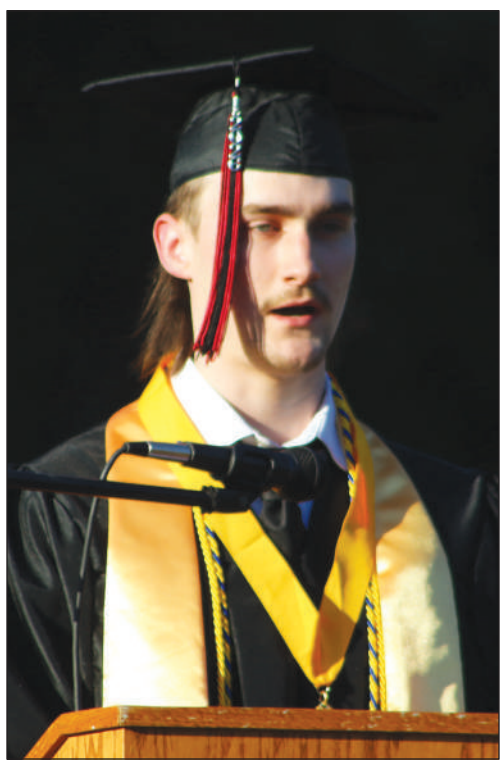
My advice to my classmates is this: Don't live your life worried about what others think. You've made it through high school—don't settle. Reach for your dreams; they are not out of reach.

Finally, go forward from here and take my Jpaw's advice: try your best and be kind to others. Let Christ lead the way, and everything else will be given to you.

I'd like to finish with this Bible verse, Joshua 1:9:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Thank you.



VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH COLTON ROBBINS

Good evening family members, friends, teachers, advisors, and the Class of 2026,

Standing here today, I am meant to represent the ideal future. I am meant to be more than

prepared, but the reality is that nobody is ever a finished product.

Society is obsessed with finality. We are obsessed with the destination, but, as cliché as it is, the journey along the way is where the most memories are made. We've been told for years that we have so much potential. But potential is a heavy thing to carry. It implies that who we are right now isn't enough, that we are just fragments of the people we are supposed to become.

I want to challenge that idea.

The last four years weren't just spent preparing for real life. The moments when we failed, the tests we bombed, the friendships that faded, the hobbies we started and quit after two weeks—those weren't wasted potential. That was the process of life. We are not finished products today. We are the culmination of our failures, successes, and memories.

To everyone here who has their next ten years mapped out, I admire you. To everyone here who feels sick at the question, "What's next?"—that's normal.

Society obsesses over the destination. We celebrate graduations, weddings, and promotions. But we ignore the in-between. Most of our lives will be lived in those moments. They will be lived in the messy, confusing, quiet days where nothing major happens.

If you don't have a grand plan today, don't panic. Many people are still figuring it out at a stage in life far beyond ours, and that is how it is supposed to be. Your value is not tied to your productivity or your trajectory. It is tied to your striving to constantly become better.

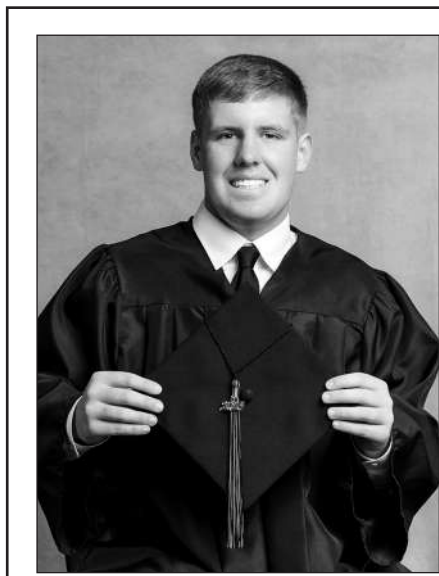
We didn't get here because we were the smartest or the hardest working, though many of you are. We got here because of a massive web of support that we often took for granted.

Thank you to the teachers who were there for us. Thank you to the parents who didn't lose their minds when we were at our most difficult. And thank you to each other. Thank you for the shared jokes in class that always seemed funnier than they really were, making every day in class just a bit easier.

So, my advice isn't to go out there and change the world. That's a lot of pressure for a Tuesday.

My advice is to be okay with being unfinished. Be okay with being a work in progress. Don't rush to the end of the story. The chapters in between are who we are.

Class of 2026, congratulations on being wonderfully incomplete. I wish you all the best in your futures.



Editor's note: The information for John Parker Jackson was incorrect in last week's senior profile section. The information should have read as is printed below. The Diamond apologizes for the error.

JOHN PARKER JACKSON

Parents/Guardians: Marc and Megan Jackson
9-12 Honors & Activities: Beta Club, FCA, Football
9-12th, Track 9-11th Senior Class Treasurer, All A Honor Roll 9-12
Concurrent College Hours: 15
Plans After Graduation: Attend Ouachita Baptist University and major in Christian Studies.
Scholarships: \$96,000

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120-00012-000	ABNEY ROBBIE LEE (HEIRS)	07-05S-23W	43	1,944.80	001-04613-000	GILLEYLEN KAREN	09-08S-25W	16	6.20	750-00026-000	TEEL MATIA	23-08S-23W	16A	520.60
001-03571-000	ANDERSON THOMAS CHRISTOPHER & TONIA SUE	33-05S-25W	32	5,473.60	900-09097-000	GILLEYLEN KAREN	09-08S-25W	16M	138.12	001-05943-003	THOMAS CHRISTOPHER COLT & LEAH D	32-08S-26W	01	27.04
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001-00297-001	BARRETT ANDREW	30-05S-23W	43	524.22	001-02054-004	HUGHES FRITZ A	06-08S-24W	16	30.62	850-00065-000	TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR CHRIST CHURCH	10-05S-24W	43G	771.46
001-00302-002	BARRETT ROBERT & LISA	30-05S-23W	43	114.04	900-00397-000	JESTER SHAYLA	08-05S-25W	32	13,126.12	001-01500-000	VANGUNDY MICHAEL LEE (HEIRS)	08-05S-24W	32	1,226.22
610-00029-000	BUY & SELL LIFESTYLE LLC	24-08S-26W	16	886.00	001-06405-001	JOHNSON MARCELLA A	23-08S-23W	16	40.76	900-00691-000	WOFFORD KENNY & DEBBIE	17-08S-25W	16M	156.08
850-00225-001	CHAMBERS ROBERT LEE (HEIRS)	11-05S-24W	43G	382.77	001-05158-001	KELLEY JACQUELYN F	30-08S-23W	16D	475.26	900-00622-000	ZACARIAS JOSE & BRITTANY	08-08S-25W	16M	204.34
001-01698-000	COFFMAN JAY SHANE & CRYSTAL	15-05S-24W	43	795.70	850-00802-002	LOZANO JOCELINE O	02-05S-24W	43G	352.24					
001-05358-000	CRANFORD STACY G	30-06S-26W	16	52.72	001-05158-001	NEWREZ LLC	08-08S-25W	16M	636.41		TRAVIS HILL			
001-01105-000	DAVIS CYNTHIA LYNN	06-09S-23W	16	133.58	001-05158-001	NEWSOM MICHAEL	36-05S-24W	32	1,791.00		BY KIM EVANS, DEPUTY COLLECTOR			
001-00973-000	DAVIS CYNTHIA LYNN; MORRIS WANDA	31-08S-23W	16	1,066.72	001-06405-001	ONEAL BRIGITTE	08-06S-26W	32	1,215.59		COLLECTOR OF PIKE COUNTY			
225-00001-000	DOSTER KELLY	09-05S-24W	32	42.96	001-05158-001	ONEAL LARRY DON	08-06S-26W	32	1,845.09					
001-00730-000	DOWDLE DANNY WADE	21-08S-23W	16	946.67	001-05158-001	JOHNSON MARCELLA A	03-05S-24W	43G	487.04					
180-00013-000	HERST JOHN TESTAMENTARY TRUST; MOWAT CAROLYN E;	09-07S-23W	16	9.74	850-00003-000	PARTEE GERA & MICHAEL	09-06S-26W	32	10.64					
					001-05257-000	PALMER GERALD J & SHERRY M	09-06S-26W	32	123.16					
					001-0602-000	PASCHOS CHRISTINE	16-08S-23W	16	23.58					
					900-00877-000	PENNINGTON WILLIAM (HEIRS)	08-08S-25W	16M	625.30					
					850-00249-000	PINKERTON JANET (HEIRS)	02-05S-24W	43G	1,268.87					
					430-00008-000	SELF WESLEY A; SELF ERIN; SELF CLARENCE WESLEY	09-06S-26W	32	221.50					

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 15TH DAY OF MAY, 2026
RANDEE EDWARDS
BY KRISTIE HARRIS
COUNTY CLERK OF PIKE COUNTY

THIS NOTICE PAID FOR BY THE PIKE COUNTY COLLECTOR'S OFFICE - \$115.80