Wednesday, November 4, 2026
Issue 18 • 1 Section • 6 Pages

The Murfreesboro Diamond

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

Veterans Day bash to be held Nov. 11

MURFREESBORO -- A Veterans Day celebration will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 10 a.m. in the Murfreesboro Senior Citizens Building.

The Senior Center is located at 120 East Court Street in Murfresboro.

All Pike County and area military veterans are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served after the event.

Holiday craft fair set for Nov. 14

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Holiday Craft Fair will occur on Saturday, Nov. 14.

The event, now in its fourth year, will be held from 9 a.m-3 p.m. at both the Murfreesboro Municipal Building and the Murfreesboro Senior Center across the street. Some outside spaces will also occur between the two locations.

All items for sale at the event will be locally made by the vendor with no retail, pre-made or multi-level marketing (MLM) items.

For more information, contact event organizer Robin Cox by calling or texting (501) 912-0803.

Crater finishes as finalist for 2026 'Park of the Year'

LITTLE ROCK -- Arkansas State Parks has announced Lake Dardanelle State Park as the 2026 Park of the Year, recognizing a year of exceptional achievement in tourism, education, outdoor recreation and financial stewardship. The award was presented alongside recognition of three other outstanding finalists: Crater of Diamonds State Park, DeGray Lake Resort State Park and Pinnacle Mountain State Park.

The four parks demonstrated exceptional achievement in visitor service, conservation, recreation, tourism development, community engagement and support of Arkansas' Natural State Initiative. Each park was selected for outstanding accomplishments that contributed to the growth and success of Arkansas' state park system during the past fiscal year.

Crater of Diamonds State Park earned recognition following a year of historic growth and international attention. Several high-profile diamond discoveries attracted worldwide media coverage and helped drive increases in visitation and revenue. The park welcomed more than 183,000 visitors and expanded educational programming while continuing its strong commitment to conservation, community partnerships and visitor engagement.

Lake Dardanelle State Park was named the 2026 Park of the Year for its exceptional contributions to Arkansas tourism, outdoor recreation and conservation education. The park hosted 15 major fishing tournaments that generated more than $3.7 million in local economic impact and attracted over 1,600 anglers. Expanded interpretive programming reached more than 17,000 participants, while strong financial stewardship helped the park increase revenue by more than 10% while remaining under budget. These accomplishments, combined with the park's leadership in advancing outdoor recreation opportunities and supporting local communities, distinguished Lake Dardanelle as the top honor recipient among this year's finalists.

"Congratulations to Lake Dardanelle State Park on earning the distinction of 2026 Park of the Year," said Shea Lewis, Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism. "This recognition reflects the dedication, creativity and commitment of the entire park team and the tremendous impact they have had on visitors and their community. Together, Lake Dardanelle, along with the finalists, showcase the diverse experiences, exceptional service and stewardship that make Arkansas State Parks the best place for outdoor recreation and exploration of all ages and abilities."

The annual Park of the Year program recognizes parks that demonstrate excellence across a wide range of operational and strategic goals, including resource stewardship, visitor experience, financial performance, community engagement, innovation and support of agency-wide initiatives.

Submit Your Local News to the Diamond!
mdiamond@swarkansasnews.com
Call (870) 285-2723 For More Information



Staff photos

SENIOR NIGHT ... Murfreesboro Rattler seniors (above) acted as captains in last week's pregame coin toss against Spring Hill. The Rattlers would battle to a 38-6 win in the game. Murfreesboro will face off against Mineral Springs this week in their season finale. (Below) Keith Wilkinson hauls in a pass in front of a Spring Hill defender.

Rattlers tame Bears for second win

Team to close out 2026 season this Friday at home against Mineral Springs

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Rattlers (2-7. 1-4) defeated Spring Hill (1-8, 0-5) 38-6 last Friday night at home.

Murfreesboro head coach Jay Turley said it was a combination of things that led to the victory, including catching the football and a "relentless effort."

"We had some kids back -- Kooper Caldwell and Cale Humphry -- along with some great contributions from ninth graders, it really helped with our confidence. While Spring Hill isn't a great team, we went out and did what we should have done all year long. Kooper got into a rhythm and we had a good Friday night."

He said his team was able to keep drives alive and overcome penalties for the first time this season.

"Our defense played hard -- Spring Hill's offense is very hard to defend -- it is so disciplined. They made some big plays, but largely we were able to make the drive the football."

He felt that a key moment of the game was the Rattlers going on a touchdown drive in the final 48 seconds of the first half, moving the score from 14-8 to 22-8 at the break on a Caldwell to Cayden Ballard TD on a fade pass to the back corner of the end zone.

"We talked to them and said if we could get a stop to start the second half and go score it would really change the game," said Turley, noting that Spring Hill's triple option offense was designed for ball control, not to score quickly.

In the game Caldwell went 21/31 passing with three touchdowns along with eight rushes for 45 yards and a touchdown.

Justin Burgess would lead the Rattlers in rushing with nine carries for 90 yards and a touchdown.

Keith Wilkinson grabbed seven receptions for 94 yards to lead the receivers. Ballard added four catches for 43 yards and two scores, while Burgess had three catches for 39 yards and a touchdown.

Turley said the win should allow his team to take some momentum into the team's final game of 2026 -- a home game versus Mineral Springs (4-5, 3-2) this Friday night.

He said the Hornets feature some great athletes, including "the best sophomore in Arkansas."

"We have to stop him by attacking them. They will make plays, so we have to try to keep the ball out of their hands. We will try to control the ball and not get into a shootout. We need to control the clock and finish drives."

Turley labeled Mineral Springs as "super athletic and well coached" noting they moved up the ninth grade quarterback to play running back.

"We just have to play hard -- Mineral will be out there vying for a playoff spot, and it would be nice to knock them out of that spot."

He said his team needed to go out the right way, and teach the underclassmen that regardless of the record "you go out and fight to the end."

"Play hard for 48 minutes," Turley added simply.

Turley said he hopes for a big crowd in the season finale.

"It says a lot about our community that the stands were still full for a 1-7 team" in last week's win over Spring Hill. "It's how important football is to Murfreesboro and what you want as a team."



School board hears potential plans of four day school week in 2026-2027

MURFREESBORO -- South Pike County Schools Superintendent Tanya Wilcher told the school board that the district was investigating the possibility of moving to a four day school week beginning in the 2027-2028 school year.

They are currently looking at calendar options to determine if the day off would be Friday or Monday.

Wilcher told the board she was open to having a question and answer forum if they decide to move forward.

She said the school day would be lengthened, starting at around 7:50 a.m. in the morning (currently 7:55) and going to 4:10-4:15 p.m. in the afternoon (currently 3:22).

A survey is out on each student's "rooms" program and about half the parents and students had participated by the time the school board meeting was held last week. She invited all parents and students to participate so the school could have the best view of the process.

She said the state had relinquished any objections to a four day week on the basis of lowered test scores, because the data simply did not back up the theory.

"There would be some changes -- but as a smaller district, I can't give extra salaries to our employees, but we can give them more time."

Wilcher added the the district had lost some students and educators to districts with four day week, noting that most of the school districts surrounding South Pike County had moved to four day weeks.

Whichever way the district decides to go, Wilcher said she hoped to have a final decision by December.

"There would be some hard decisions, but we can't make decisions based on one sport," Wilcher said about questions about loss of pep rallies if Friday was the day off. She added that football coaches preferred Fridays instead of Mondays, when the team would lose a day of practice, especially on the junior high level.

The next school board meeting is set for Thursday, Nov. 19 at 6 p.m.

The high school report cited Jordyn Nance for her Class 2A tennis championship, and noted that seniors were currently doing graduation checks. It was also noted that many scholarships would soon ramp up, and that any seniors looking to seek scholarships should visit with high school counselor Courtney Stone.

Rowan Gillard, a first grade student, was named the Murfreesboro Elementary School student of the month.

MES principal James Riley said that Gillard was a "great student that was an example for all ... she gets good grades, is polite and is very aware of things that looks after all," noting Gillard's protection of a student with a peanut allergy whenever snacks are had.

Elemetary school staff member of the month was Karen Terrell. The third grade science teacher was named for such student responses including "fun activities" and "the nicest teacher ever." Riley said she did everything he could ever ask of her.

The MES Fun Run raised over $10,000, which will allow some six to seven thousand dollars to help fund student field trips and activities.

Additionally, by going over $10,000, kindergarten student Holly Watson -- who was the leading fundraising student -- was to give Riley a haircut with clippers.

The board approved the move to a new school purchasing card with startup company Stowe that will work exclusively with school districts. The district currently uses Arvest Bank for purchases.

SCHOOL BOARD
Continued on Page 2

SCHOOL BOARD Continued from Page 1

The board also approved a agreement with Ideal Impact that will work with the school on energy efficiency.

While Wilcher said the findings from the school's audit found them "pretty energy efficient," she said the 3-4 year project would help eliminate mold and mildew from the schools by focusing on humidity reduction. The contract will cost $79,000, with $70,000 projected savings in electrical use over the first three years of the agreement.



Staff photos

MES STUDENT AND TEACHER OF THE MONTH ... Murfreesboro Elementary School principal named Karen Terrell (above) as the school's teacher of the month for October, while Rowan Gilliard (below) was named the student of the month. The South Pike County School board is pictured with the winners.



OCC to start collections for sale

NASHVILLE -- The Operation Christmas Child 2026 Shoebox Collection Week is November 16 – 23, 2026. Volunteers have been transforming empty shoeboxes into gifts of hope filled with toys, school supplies, hygiene items, and articles of clothing for children in need worldwide.

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way so that missionaries and volunteers can share the Good News of Jesus Christ. And, it all starts with the help of a shoebox filled with gifts.

Since 1993, more than 244 million children in over 175 countries and territories have received a shoebox gift. These children as well as those who hear the Gospel at shoebox outreach events share their faith with friends and family who, in turn, disciple others.

LOCAL DROP-OFF SITE
Nashville, Arkansas - First Baptist Church
415 N Main Street Nashville, AR, 71852-2007
- Mon, Nov. 16: 10:00 AM -4:00 PM
- Tue, Nov. 17: 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Wed, Nov. 18: 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Thu, Nov. 19: 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Fri, Nov. 20: 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Sat, Nov. 21: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- Sun, Nov. 22: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
- Mon, Nov. 23: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

For additional drop-off sites, collection dates and hours, and directions to the drop-off sites, go to samaritanspurse.org/occ and select Drop-off Locations. For area questions, contact Jim Herman at occjim.herman@yahoo.com.

Please deliver your shoebox gifts to a drop-off site as soon as possible during collection week.

Murfreesboro Diamond

Your Hometown Newspaper since 1975

Located in the County Seat of Pike County • Murfreesboro, Arkansas
Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park
Little Missouri River • Lake Greeson

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• Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

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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.

Senior adult center sets dates for holiday sales

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Senior Adult Center has announced their annual holiday dressing and roll fundraiser.

Orders will be taken starting Thursday, Nov. 19, through Monday, Nov. 23 for Thanksgiving and and again starting on Tuesday, Dec. 1 through Monday, Dec. 21 for Christmas.

Dressing sizes available will be 5 lbs. for $15 and 10 lbs. for $30. Rolls will be $6 per dozen.

Contact Vickie Hutson at (870) 285-2312 for pick up dates and times.

Where To Find A Copy of the Diamond:
People's Pharmacy • Gypsy Underground
C-Stop • Tobacco & More • EZ Mart
Murfreesboro Diamond Office



AUCTION SATURDAY, Nov. 14 @ 12 NOON
Mid-Tex Livestock Auction, LLC
1,200 HEAD OF QUALITY REPLACEMENT FEMALES
Including Pairs, Bred Cows, Bred & Open Heifers
These cattle have all been screened to ensure you only the best quality commercial cattle will be offered. Cattle will be palpated and sold in uniformly sorted groups to fit any cattleman's needs.
LiveAg Sale listing along with pictures of cattle will be online Nov. 6 at JohnsonCattleMarketing.com
Sale managed by JOHNSON CATTLE MARKETING
Tom Johnson
817-291-5121
johnsoncattlemarketing@gmail.com

After calling the first year of paying football gate workers a success -- school workers were paid $75 a game for home dates -- the board approved rates for the basketball season. Workers will be paid $50 for nights with two games, $75 for nights with three games, and $100 for nights with four games.

The board approved holiday bonuses of $600 for school employees, which will appear in their November checks.

To close business for the month, the board approved replacing windows in the counseling building for $15,500, which will include 27 windows to be installed by Nashville Glass. Board member Carrie Tidwell abstained from the vote, citing the fact she works in the building.

Recognizing first responders in Arkansas communities

BY JOHN BOOZMAN
U.S. Senator, Arkansas

WASHINGTON D.C. -- National First Responders Day was October 28, providing an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the first responders in Arkansas who serve in the line of duty to keep us safe.

Police officers, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics and emergency dispatchers serve their communities in Arkansas and across the country when we need it most: amid dangers and emergencies. These everyday heroes answer the call with courage and professionalism. Their efforts protect neighbors and strangers alike.

The unique challenges that first responders face makes their jobs both challenging and invaluable. Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel support their communities while balancing other jobs and family responsibilities. Arkansas has a long tradition of community service that is embodied by our first responders' selflessness, compassion and commitment.

In April 2025, when Arkansas experienced historic flooding and tornadoes, at least 22 Arkansas counties reported storm damage. The Arkansas National Guard activated more than 40 personnel in northeastern Arkansas to assist local authorities with flood evacuations. This response highlighted the critical function that local first responders, emergency management personnel and National Guard teams play when our communities need them the most.

First responders are often the first people Arkansans encounter during emergencies. Whether responding to a fire, medical emergency, serious incident, or natural disaster, they provide reassurance and assistance. Their service requires not only courage in the face of danger, but also compassion, sound judgment and the ability to make difficult decisions under pressure.

First responders answer calls every day. Firefighters respond routinely to medical emergencies, traffic accidents and rescue operations. EMTs and paramedics provide lifesaving care before patients reach a hospital. Law enforcement officers respond to emergencies, assist victims and protect public safety. All first responders face immense challenges but consistently demonstrate courage, devotion and resilience.

It is our responsibility to support them as best we can and recognize their tremendous contributions.

Throughout The Natural State, there are countless examples. The Conway County Volunteer Fire Department has more than 180 volunteers. The Van Buren County Rescue Squad is an all-volunteer organization that renders aid to citizens in emergencies. Arkansas has also increased efforts to distribute wildland fire suppression kits to rural fire departments to respond quickly to local fire emergencies.

I have been proud to consistently support efforts in Washington, D.C. to help our first responders. They deserve the tools and resources necessary to keep our communities safe. In FY 2026 appropriations, I helped secure additional funding for the Etowah Volunteer Fire Department in Mississippi County to purchase new firefighting equipment. Additionally, I am proud of our success in securing additional funding for the Arkansas Criminal Intelligence Network, Jonesboro Real-Time Crime Center and Batesville Police Department, in addition to many other ongoing initiatives.

National First Responders Day is the perfect time to express our gratitude, but it should continue throughout the year. They are a classic example of what my former coach, Frank Broyles, always called "givers" who constantly put others above themselves.

I will always fight to support these men and women in Washington. To all of those who serve in those invaluable roles across our state and throughout the nation — know we are very proud of you and deeply appreciate all that you represent.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JANE CAROLYN BEAN, DECEASED NO. 55PR-2026-57

NOTICE

ADDRESS OF DECEDENT:
507 Mountain View Rd. Glenwood, Arkansas

DATE OF DEATH OF DECEDENT:
April 30, 2026

An instrument dated the 22nd day of June, 2023, was, on the 21st day of October, 2026,

admitted to probate as the Last Will and Testament of JANE CAROLYN BEAN, Deceased, and the undersigned has been appointed Executor thereunder. A contest of the probate of the Will can be effected only by filing a Petition within the time provided by law.

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

THIS NOTICE first published on the 28th day of October, 2026.

TIMOTHY CURT BEAN, EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF JANE CAROLYN BEAN, DECEASED

C/O ADAM WILLIAMS, ATTORNEY FOR FARRAR & WILLIAMS, PLLC
1720 Higdon Ferry Road Suite 202 Hot Springs, AR 71913
501-525-4401

(f&w, 236w. 16,17)

PIKE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT DOCKET

October 20, 2026
BF=Bond Forfeited

PIKE COUNTY

Bush, James C., 33, Glenwood, guilty of driving with suspended license, fined $325 and sentenced to two days in jail-suspended conditions

Dejean, Gary, 60, Delight, guilty of possession of controlled substance, fined $1,075 and license suspended for six months; guilty of drinking in public or on highway, fined $220; guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined $315; guilty of no seat belt, fined $45; guilty of driving left of center, fined $125; guilty of failure to stop or yield, fined $125

Horn, James Keith, 66, Glenwood, $45 BF, no seat belt; $205 BF, failure to appear

Oglesby, Hailey Brooke, 29, Murfreesboro, $325 BF, driving with suspended license; $205 BF, failure to appear

Ward, Natasha N., 35, Glenwood, guilty of failure to pay; $1,290 balance

Wilson, David A., 52, Arkadelphia, guilty of failure to pay, committed to jail; $2,455 balance

CITY OF MURFREESBORO

Bailey, Charles M., 52, Delight, guilty of expired vehicle license/tags, fined $160; guilty of no driver's license, fined $160

Wilson, David A., 52, Arkadelphia, guilty of no proof of liability insurance, fined $335; guilty of failure to appear, fined $225; guilty of failure to appear, fined $225

ARKANSAS GAME & FISH COMMISSION

Briggs, Justice R., 17, Texarkana, Texas, $620 BF, negligent operation of vessel

Chavez, Sergio A., 25, Los Fresnos, Texas, $170 BF, no wake zone; $205 BF, failure to appear

CITY OF GLENWOOD

Kinard, Joseph Nathaniel, 34, Amity, guilty of defective equipment, fined $145

Martin, Kolton Lee, 19, Kirby, $350 BF, no proof of liability insurance; $630 BF, modified bumpers

BENCH TRIALS
PIKE COUNTY

Bailey, Jaiden Wyatt, 18, Barling, speeding, under advisement for 30 days to dismiss, fined $215

Culpepper, Kason Paul, 20, Kirby, guilty of disorderly conduct, fined $220

Hall, Jessica Denise, 36, De Queen, guilty of failure to present insurance, fined $70

Pullen, Cody J., 34, Delight, possession of drug paraphernalia, under advisement for one year to dismiss, fined $600

CITY OF MURFREESBORO

Baker, Kristen A., 27, Murfreesboro, third-degree assault, under advisement for six months to dismiss, fined $240; guilty of failure to appear, fined $240

Watson, Michael, 40, Murfreesboro, guilty of violation of city ordinance #260-dogs, fined $165

CITY OF GLENWOOD

Galloway, Sawyer Lee, 17, Glenwood, guilty of modified bumpers, fined $365

Hancock, Lukas Landon, 19, Amity, guilty of modified bumpers, fined $365

Wilder, Matthew Dale, 23, Amity, guilty of failure to register tags/expired, fined $75

Obituaries

Peggy (Lee) Lewallen, 77, Hope

Peggy (Lee) Lewallen, age 77 of Hope, Arkansas, passed away on Sunday, November 1, 2026 in Texarkana, Texas. She was born on May 20, 1949 in Delight, Arkansas to the late Orville and Glendora Lee.

She was married to Danny for fifty-six years before his death in 2023.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Virginia House and Wanda Puryear, as well as a niece, Mallory Lee.

Those left to cherish her memory include her son, Waylon Lewallen; her two precious grandkids; her daughter-in-law, Pam Harris; her brother and sister-in-law, Sonny Lee and Brenda; as well as a host of special nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

A graveside service for Mrs. Lewallen will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 4, 2026 at Delight Cemetery, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home of Murfreesboro.

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

Ark. Dept. of Ag urges monitoring for avian influenza

LITTLE ROCK -- The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is reminding poultry producers, industry partners, and the public to remain alert for signs of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and to follow biosecurity measures to protect flocks as detections continue across the United States.

On October 27, 2026, the Department confirmed the first case of HPAI this season in a backyard domestic poultry flock in eastern Baxter County. While this is currently the only detection in Arkansas, increasing detections in other states reinforce the importance of continued prevention and monitoring.

HPAI is a highly contagious virus that affects both domestic and wild birds. It can cause sudden death or severe illness in poultry and lead to major economic losses for producers and the state's poultry industry, which is valued at more than $6.7 billion annually. The virus spreads easily through contact with infected birds, contaminated equipment, or materials, and even a single detection can disrupt trade and local food supply chains.

Under Arkansas state rule, any suspected or confirmed case of avian influenza must be reported immediately to the Department. State regulations authorize the Department to quarantine infected premises, restrict poultry movement within designated control zones, and require depopulation and disinfection when necessary to prevent further spread.

To protect flocks, poultry owners should follow strict biosecurity practices, including washing hands and shoes before and after contact with birds, limiting exposure to wild birds, restricting visitors to poultry areas, and quarantining new birds for at least two weeks. Poultry owners should also report any unusual illness or sudden deaths in their flocks to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture at (501) 823-1746.

More information, biosecurity guidance, and updates on HPAI in Arkansas can be found on the Department's website at agriculture.arkansas.gov/animals/poultry/avian-influenza/.

Putting the 'natural' in the Natural State

REP. BRUCE WESTERMAN (AR-04)
U.S. House of Representatives (

WASHINGTON D.C. -- Each fall, Arkansas' natural beauty is on full display, highlighting the majesty of our rolling hills, rivers, and forests. This week, with cooler temperatures and changing leaves, Arkansans are eager to get outside and explore. Whether it's hiking a trail in the Ozark Mountains, cruising the Scenic 7 Byway, or just taking in the beauty of the Arkansas Grand Canyon, there's something for everyone in the Natural State.

This week, I was grateful for the opportunity to get outside and explore the Fourth District. As an avid outdoorsman, there's nothing quite like getting up on a chilly, early morning to spot some wild elk in Boxley Valley before spending the afternoon hiking along trails that lead to incredible views like Hawksbill Crag, where miles and miles of leaves in every shade of amber can be seen.

My love for the great outdoors and Arkansas' abundant recreation opportunities are why I am proud to have been able to introduce the EXPLORE Act, which is now law. This legislation expands access and improvements to outdoor recreation and infrastructure. Specifically, it supports rural towns across Arkansas and America that act as gateway communities to beloved campsites, trailheads, bike trails, and more. By doing so, it helps these local communities address the housing shortages and outdated infrastructure that often directly result from heavy volumes of tourists.

Beyond ensuring our local communities are equipped with the resources they need to host an abundance of visitors, this law also works to restore campgrounds, protect rock climbing locations, create long-distance bike trails, increase broadband connectivity, and improve accessibility for our service members, veterans, children, and visitors with disabilities.

Growing up in Arkansas gave me a great appreciation for our natural heritage. It's a goal of mine in Congress to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience the same wonder and beauty here in our own backyard and across the country. October is one of the most beautiful months of the year for the Natural State, and my hope is that every Arkansan can find time to get outside and explore this beautiful state we all have the privilege to call our home.

Send Your Community Announcements
mdiamond@swarkansasnews.com
Call (870) 285-2723 for More Information

LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

All letters to the editor must be signed, along with a phone number (that will not be published) provided for confirmation purposes. The Murfreesboro Diamond reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters must not be libelous or contain any profanities.

Send letters to P.O. Box 550, Murfreesboro, AR 71958 or email to mdiamond.editor@windstream.net

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

PIKE COUNTY SKYWATCHERS BY RICK FLOYD

'Space-al' awareness

Our ancestors were very aware of what was going on in the sky. Simple curiosity, awe and sometimes fear were factors, but the sky also provided information, about time and place, as well as being a part of their spiritual existence.

Things are quite different now for most of us. The celestial realm is generally not regarded as having much impact on our daily lives. However, we are now in an age when human activity in near space, and human study of deep space, is at unprecedented levels.

One way to get a perspective on our modern connections with the sky is to search the web. A good site for information about world-wide commercial, military and launch activities is SpaceNews.com. The U.S., for example, is in the news lately as our government announced plans to create a space academy. It was also revealed recently that Vietnam is the latest member of the Artemis Accords, which is a non-binding agreement among, now 78, nations to come together "with a vision for the peaceful, sustainable, and transparent cooperation in space." Russia and China are noticeably absent from the group.

Another good site, if you want information about solar storms and auroras or the latest data on near Earth objects such as "Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHA's)", is SpaceWeather.com.

Deep space is also being probed like never before. Recently, the Vera Rubin observatory in Chile came online. The observatory houses a huge telescope with the world's largest digital camera attached, and it will start a 10-year capture of high-resolution images of the entire universe, creating a time-lapse equivalent to 1000 HD feature length movies. The scope can image a different part of the sky every 40 seconds, so after 10 years every point in the sky will have been imaged 800 times. The amount of data compiled will be enormous.

Vera Rubin (1928-2016) was an American Astronomer who is famous for her studies of galaxy rotation which led to her discoveries of key pieces of dark matter science. She is the first female astronomer to have an observatory named after her.

Look to the predawn eastern sky on Monday, Nov. 7 for a very thin sliver of Moon (and a globe of earth-shine) just above the horizon with bright Venus nearby.





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 is COPD and how is it treated?

A: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) refers to a group of chronic conditions that affect lung function. COPD causes inflammation and swelling inside the lungs, making it more difficult to breathe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 16 million Americans are affected by COPD.

Chronic bronchitis and emphysema are the two most common types of COPD. Thick mucus in the airways and loss of elasticity in the airways from these illness restrict airflow in the lungs. Smoking, exposure to dust and fumes, and toxins in the air are some causes of COPD. The condition affects women more than men, and those who are over the age of 65 are more at risk.

COPD symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing up thick mucus, fatigue, swelling in the lower legs, or wheezing or whistling when breathing. Frequent coughing, a collapsed lung, low levels of oxygen in the blood, pneumonia, and pulmonary hypertension are some possible complications of COPD.

Treatment for COPD focuses on managing symptoms. Bronchodilators to relax muscles around the airways, inhaled steroids to reduce inflammation, and quitting smoking are some methods to treat COPD. Visit your healthcare provider to develop a plan, particularly if symptoms persist.

Email your health questions to housecall@uams.edu.

2	7	1	6	9	3	5	4	8
5	6	8	7	4	1	2	3	9
4	9	3	5	8	2	1	6	7
1	3	2	9	7	6	4	8	5
8	4	9	1	2	5	3	7	6
7	5	6	8	3	4	9	2	1
3	8	7	2	1	9	6	5	4
9	2	5	4	6	7	8	1	3
6	1	4	3	5	8	7	9	2

TeamSmarts: Helping Pike County youth become smarter consumers

Local students learn life skills today for more successful tomorrows

MURFREESBORO -- When we think about preparing young people for the future, we often focus on education, careers, and leadership. But what about the everyday decisions they will face as adults? From managing money and understanding consumer rights to protecting personal information online, these are important skills that every young person needs.

Through TeamSmarts, 4-H members have an opportunity to develop these essential life skills while participating in a fun, educational team competition.

TeamSmarts is an online competition offered through LifeSmarts, a national consumer education program of the National Consumers League. The program challenges youth to work together, think critically, and apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Each month, participating teams complete a 50-question multiple-choice challenge covering a different topic. Competition topics include health and safety, personal finance, consumer rights and responsibilities, technology and workforce preparation, and the environment.

Imagine being a teenager who has just received their first paycheck. Do you know how to create a budget? Understand the difference between a debit card and a credit card? Recognize an online scam? These are just a few examples of the practical skills TeamSmarts helps young people develop.

One of the greatest benefits of TeamSmarts is that it encourages teamwork. Members must communicate, share their knowledge, solve problems, and make decisions together. These experiences help build confidence and leadership skills that extend far beyond the competition. Teams also have an opportunity to earn national recognition. Each month, the highest-scoring 4-H team can receive a $100 award, adding a little friendly competition to the learning experience.

TeamSmarts supports the 4-H mission of learning by doing. Rather than simply reading about financial responsibility or consumer protection, youth are challenged to use what they know to answer questions and solve everyday problems. The knowledge gained through this program can benefit participants long after their 4-H years are over. Whether they are purchasing their first vehicle, applying for a job, managing a bank account, or making important financial decisions, these lessons can help them become more informed and responsible adults.

Pike County is proudly represented in this year's TeamSmarts competition! Carsyn Ballard, Blakelee Dixon, Abigail Campbell, Maci Gills, and Abby Howard are competing as the "Red Rubies," representing Murfreesboro High School, and the "Smart Sprouts," representing Pike County 4-H.

These young ladies are putting their knowledge, teamwork, and problem-solving skills to the test while representing their school and community. We are proud of their willingness to take on this challenge and wish them the best of luck throughout the competition!

At Pike County 4-H, our goal is not just to prepare youth for their next competition. It is to prepare them for life. For more information about Pike County 4-H programs and opportunities, contact the Pike County Extension Office at (870) 285-2161.

4-H Pike County
HEAD, HEART, HANDS & HEALTH
SHANNON BALLARD • 4-H PROGRAM ASSISTANT
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE PIKE COUNTY
PHONE (870) 285-2161 • E-MAIL SBALLARD@UADA.EDU
18 USC 707



Submitted photo/PC4-H

RED RUBIES ... The Pike County team of (L to R) Carsyn Ballard, Blakelee Dixon, Abigail Campbell, Maci Gills and Abby Howard will represent the area in this year's TeamSmarts competition.

Angel tree forms now available at three Murfreesboro locations

MURFREESBORO -- Program director Angie Strawn has announced that 2026 angel tree forms have been released.

They may be collected at the Murfreesboro Library, Murfreesboro City Hall or the Pike County Sheriff's Office Lobby.The deadline to return the forms for participation in the program is Thursday, Nov. 17. For questions on the angel tree program, please call Strawn at (870) 285-5269.

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Arkansas names 2026 Gem Schools, awards nearly $7 million

STATE CAPITOL WEEK IN REVIEW

LITTLE ROCK -- The Arkansas Department of Education has announced the 2026 Arkansas Gem Schools, recognizing 167 public and public charter schools for strong academic achievement, notable student growth, and steady improvement over multiple years. The program, which serves as the state's Rewards and Recognition initiative, will distribute nearly $7 million to schools that rank among the highest performers statewide.

The Gem Schools program highlights campuses that show exceptional results in core academic areas and demonstrate consistent progress. Designations are based on data from the state's assessment and accountability system, which measures how well students perform, how much they grow academically from year to year, and whether schools are improving across multiple indicators. The program aims to acknowledge schools that are helping students succeed and to spotlight educators and leaders who are contributing to those gains.

This year's funding will go to schools that place in the top 10 percent statewide for overall achievement and overall student growth. State officials emphasized that strong academic outcomes typically reflect sustained effort from teachers, school leaders, families, and students. They noted that the schools recognized through the Gem program are helping set a high bar for academic performance across Arkansas.

A total of 167 schools earned at least one Gem designation. Schools may receive recognition in several categories:

Achievement of All — awarded to schools ranking in the top 10 percent statewide within their grade span on the overall achievement indicator. These schools may receive up to $100 per student.

Growth of All — awarded to schools ranking in the top 10 percent statewide within their grade span on the overall growth indicator. These schools may also receive up to $100 per student.

Achievement by Content Area — recognition for schools ranking in the top 10 percent statewide in English language arts, mathematics, or science achievement.

Growth by Content Area — recognition for schools ranking in the top 10 percent statewide in growth in English language arts, mathematics, or science.

Sustained Improvement — recognition for schools that show increases in multiple indicators for three consecutive years.

Schools receiving financial awards may use the funds for staff bonuses, instructional materials, educational equipment, or temporary personnel who support continued academic improvement. Local committees made up of school leaders, teachers, and parents will decide how the funds are used to best support students.

The Arkansas Department of Education describes the Gem Schools program as part of a broader effort to encourage continuous improvement and highlight schools that are helping students reach higher levels of achievement. Officials say the program is intended to reinforce the importance of strong instruction, effective school leadership, and community support.

The full list of 2026 Gem Schools and award amounts is available on the Arkansas Gem Schools webpage. Families and community members can review which schools earned recognition and explore how the designations reflect statewide academic trends.

'Dear Preacher'

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ



GOD'S GOODNESS

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" A Christian who does not appreciate the great patience of Jehovah is in dire danger. The problem with human nature is that we tend to think we are not as weak as those around us. If we are not careful, we attribute sinful things to others. The difficulty with this is that we cannot know why people act and talk as they do. Only God can judge the motivation of the individuals of our acquaintance. On occasion, we will think a family member is angry because of an expression on the face or in the tone of voice. The truth many times is a result of a family emergency or an upsetting situation. It is evident that we cannot know what is going on in the lives of our peers. God wants us to understand that He has a perfect grasp of what is happening in our heart. God blesses us every day to show how much He loves us. Satan will tempt us, and we will sin. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8. He goes further to tell us. "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us." I John 1:10. Paul says God's goodness is the motivation for us to repent and turn away from sin. God is always ready to forgive us if we will repent with all our heart. The inspired writer tells us, "Glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no partiality with God." Romans 2:10,11.

MURFREESBORO SENIOR ADULT CENTER LUNCH MENU

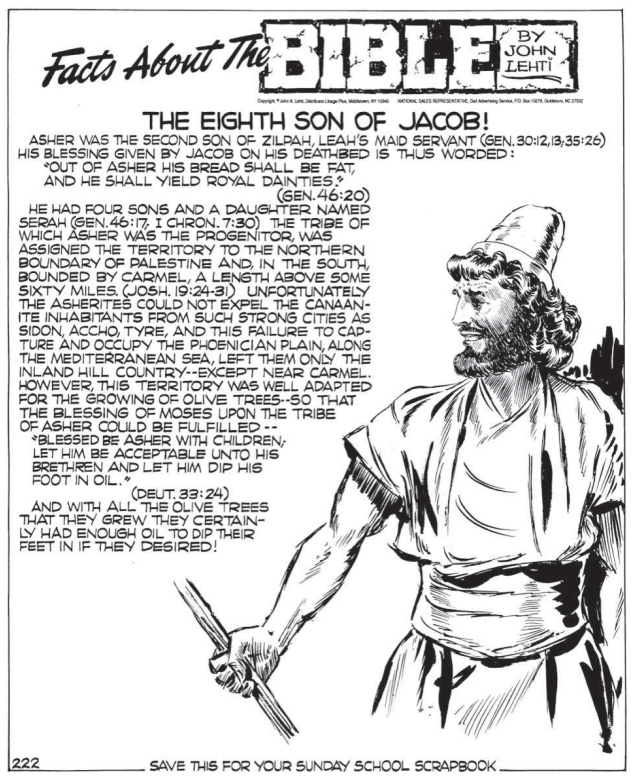
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9
Pulled pork, baked beans, corn, roll, fruit cobber

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
Eggs,sausage, biscuits & gravy, hash-browns, fruit

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
Chicken fried steak, scalloped potatoes, green peas, roll, spiced peaches

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

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



Murfreesboro church of Christ
305 S. Second Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 • Worship 10:20
Sun. eve. 6 p.m. • Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Radio Broadcast B99.5 @ 8:30 a.m.
Bro. Buddy Ray

Bank of Delight
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(870) 379-2293

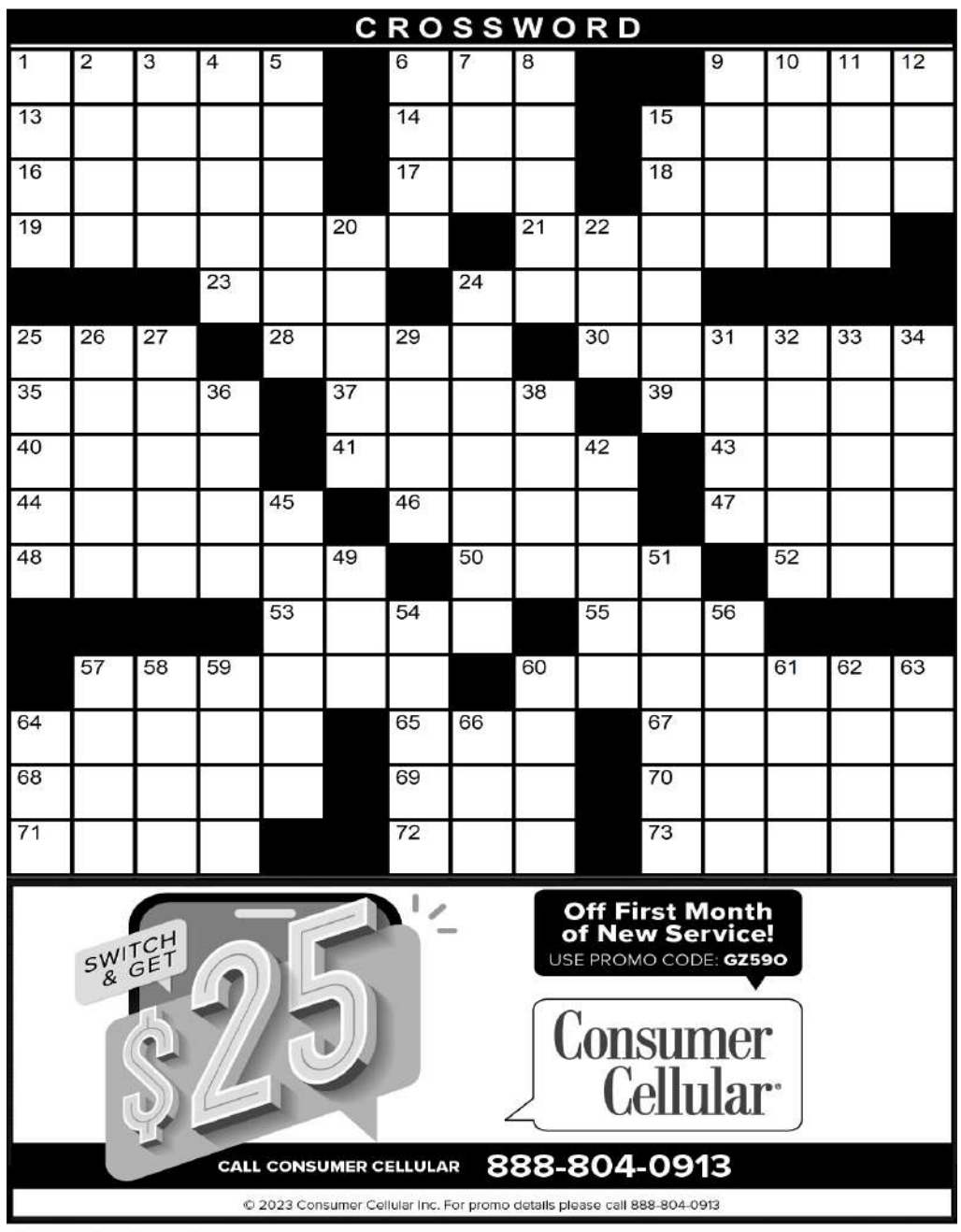
Attend Church This Sunday!

HOLIDAY MOVIES
** -- Theme Related Clue*

ACROSS
1. "As the World Turns" and such
6. Hundredweight, acr.
9. Notable achievement
13. Keep a threat ____ ____, or away
14. Across, in verse
15. Jiggly dessert
16. Opposite of bow
17. Sch. grp.
18. Kidman's ex
19. *HomeExchange story, with The
21. *Rudolph's father
23. *Kevin to Buzz in "Home Alone"
24. "Dickens!"
25. Quantity, acr.
28. *"Candy ____ Lane" starring Eddie Murphy
30. Opposite of anaerobe
35. Russian mountain range
37. Coxae, sing.
39. Tori, sing.
40. Goals
41. Famous Mac & Cheese manufacturer
43. One of auto pioneers
44. Letter-shaped girder
46. Home to Taj Mahal
47. A la _____, with ice cream
48. Relating to teeth
50. "My bad"
52. Eucharist vessel
53. Multicolored horse
55. NHL court
57. *Bailey of Bedford Falls
60. *Mount ____, Grinch's home
64. Supercharger
65. Ewe's mate
67. Alice Halsey on "Little House on the Prairie"
68. Ammo in a quiver, sing.
69. Knot-tying vow (2 words)
70. Sensory threshold, in psychology
71. Artist's inspiration
72. Bajillion years
73. Guns N' Roses lead guitarist

DOWN
1. "Away to the window I flew like a flash, ... and threw up the ____"
2. "Beetle Bailey" pooch
3. Cain's brother
4. *The McCallisters' travel destination
5. Trustee
6. Printer button
7. *Harry and Marv, a.k.a. the ____ Bandits
8. Pro move
9. Shade-loving plant
10. Hamburg river
11. Winglike
12. Freight weight
15. Official work trip
20. Taken where?
22. South American tuber
24. Six-sided polygon
25. *Cousin Eddie actor
26. Human social group
27. Mandarin's headquarters
29. *Luther Krank's wife
31. Living space
32. Lowest deck
33. *Will Ferrell's famous holiday role
34. English county
36. Future J.D.'s hurdle
38. Like Bob Ross' do
42. Short-trunked ungulate
45. Bone filler
49. Yule treat
51. Type of racing boat, pl.
54. Nest for an eagle
56. Not your grandmother's mail?
57. Spiritual leader
58. Makes a mistake
59. Double reed woodwind
60. Slangy "Follow me!"
61. Cat on a shoe
62. Wraths
63. Hyperbolic tangent
64. _____ o' shanter
66. Fuss, to Shakespeare

CROSSWORD



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Diamond relocated to new office in M'boro

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Diamond has relocated to the Harvill Insurance Building at 325 West Main from their former office behind Caddo Antiques on Court Street.

The phone number will remain the same at (870) 285-2723, though the Diamond's email addresses will change -- they will now be mdiamond@swarkansasnews.com and mdiamond.editor@swarkansasnews.com.



Staff photos

VISITING MURFREESBORO ... The Democratic candidate for Secretary of State Kelly Grappe (above center) visited Murfreesboro last week to talk about issues ahead of the statewide election that was held Tuesday.





STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS

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Week of November 2, 2026

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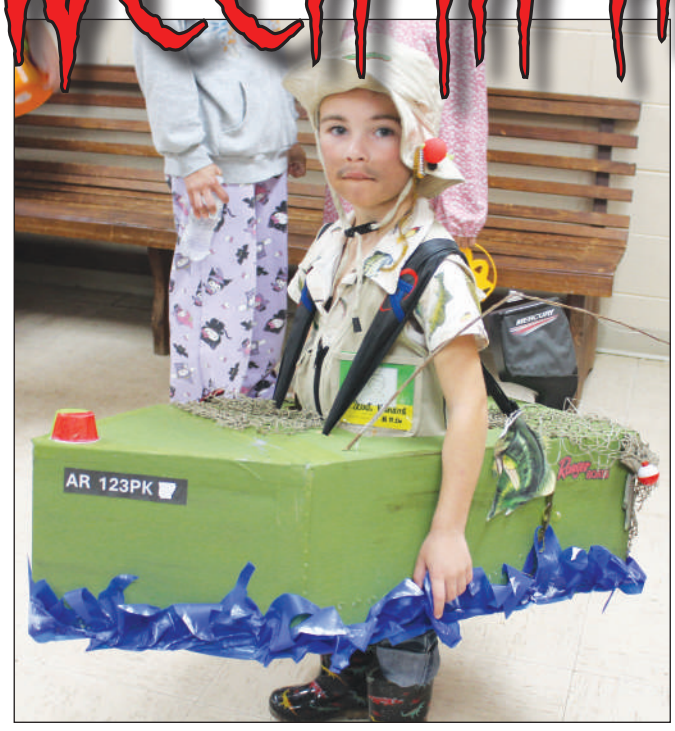


Staff photos

CHILI CONTEST WINNERS ... Winners were named in the Pike County 4-H Chili Cookoff contest held last Saturday in Murfreesboro, including (above left, L to R) first place Dan Eoff, second place Patty Jackson and third place Cory Ballard. (Above right, front to back) The contest was judged by Murfreesboro Mayor Jim O'Neal, Pike County Judge Eddie Howard and local educator Anna Howard.

HALLOWEEN IN MURFREESBORO



















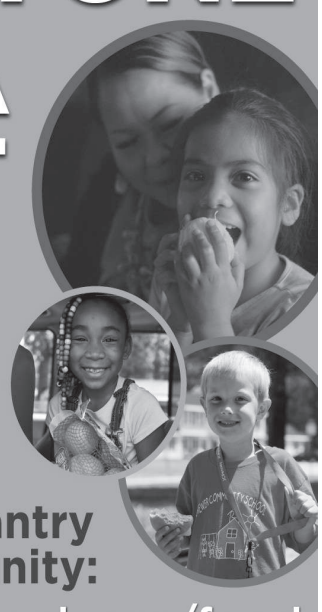






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