

4 RESIDENTS SPEAK AT COUNCIL OPPOSING RE-ZONING PROPOSAL — PAGE 4

CUBS LOOK TO FINISH ON ODD >>>

Monett aiming for multiple state qualifiers. — PAGE 3

MONETT



Monthly

FEBRUARY 4, 2026 | FACEBOOK.COM/MONETTMONTHLY



One last overpass

Chapell Drive project groundbreaking this year

BY JESSICA BREGER

Special to the Monett Monthly

The city of Monett aims to start work this year on an overpass project approved six years ago, adding one final bridge over railroad tracks in city.

The overpass project to

CITY OF MONETT

What: Chapell Drive overpass
Cost: \$7.6 million, with city to cover about 30%
More: Overpass to be the final one in Monett

add a concrete girder bridge to carry Chapell Drive above BNSF railway was approved by voters over six years ago.

City Engineer Kevin Sprenkle said that the project was approved and funding

applications for federal funding assistance began between 2017 and 2018, with funds being approved in December of 2025.

“COVID did set things back because of everything that was going on,” he said. “The most recent budget that we have is right at \$7.3 million for the project cost estimate. And at this point in time, we’re waiting on formal approval from BNSF.”

“We were right in the midst

of design when COVID hit, so everything came to a screeching halt on finalizing the design. We were going through preliminary processing with BNSF. This was part of the city Transportation Tax implemented in 2016.”

Sprenkle said the project had actually been planned long before the project approval.

“This thing, the Chapell Drive overpass, was looked at in 1986,” he said. “At that point

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SALES TAXES

What: 2025 sales tax revenues
Monett: Up 4% compared to 2024

More: Lawrence County down 0.5%, Barry County up 1%

Mixed bag of sales tax revenue in 2025

Monett up 4% for the year

BY MURRAY BISHOFF

Special to the Cassville Democrat

In 2025, more than \$48.7 million in sales and use tax revenues came to the 13 bi-county cities, two county governments, the two county emergency services boards, and the two ambulance districts operating in Barry County.

The Lawrence County Ambulance District, run by the Mercy system, failed to file timely paperwork after earning passage of a 1 percent sales tax last April, and does not expect to receive its first disbursement until January.

That total compares to \$47.5 million collected in 2024, and \$43 million in 2023.

The 2025 total came from 72 different sales and use taxes. Note that online sales, including grocery orders to Walmart, do not charge sales taxes, but go to use taxes. Consequently, general fund totals may drop, drained by a diversion to the use tax, but rise when use tax totals are added in. Cities with older use taxes, like Monett and Aurora, may have seen that drop in a previous year and recorded higher numbers more recently.

Most cities have not committed use tax revenues to specific purposes and lump them back into the general fund. The following totals show specific collections, not combinations.

Here’s where the money went:

Aurora, \$1,584,931.32, +2 %
Cassville, \$1,392,002.36, -3 %
Exeter, \$31,615.30, -3 %
Marionville, \$192,433.97, -13 %
Miller (1.5%), \$120,128.91, +1 %
Monett, \$2,494,914.68, +4 %
Mt. Vernon, \$1,065,148.75, +2 %
Pierce City (1.125%), \$106,222.95, -13 %
Purdy, \$62,631.50, -11 %
Seligman, \$150,397.22, +3 %
Verona, \$23,604.56, -29 %
Washburn, \$33,212.61, -20 %
Wheaton, \$68,823.14, +12 %

The following tax amounts reflect the total amount of tax collected by each city and county, in 2025, as compared to 2024:

Aurora, with four taxes, generated \$3,962,305.27, up almost \$67,000 from the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Amazon facility taking shape



Here’s a recent view of the Amazon warehouse under construction in Monett. At right is Chapell Drive. At bottom is the Tyson Foods hatchery. At top is the Monett Speedway. The 119,152 square foot, \$22.2 million facility is expected to begin operations in June. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly

GO CAPS group presents plan for new scoreboard

Board approves bid to update 12-year-old equipment

BY JESSICA BREGER

Special to the Monett Monthly

Students took center stage at the Monett School Board meeting on Jan. 16.

While the meeting began with its usual student presentation, allowing members of the school’s Gifted program to speak about their growth,

MONETT SCHOOLS

What: Students present plan for new scoreboard
Who: Five GO CAPS participants
More: Project cost to be fundraiser-supported with advertising

the members of GO CAPS (Greater Ozark Schools’ Center for Advanced Professional Studies) were the ones who held the floor this month.

The GO CAPS students provided the board with an overview of the planning process underway to explore a future video display scoreboard for

Burl Fowler Stadium.

Student presenters shared that the current scoreboard was last updated in 2014. The program advisor Ty Goetz, Athletic Director and Assistant Principal at MHS explained that several schools including Cassville High School have upgraded their scoreboards to fit the technological advances of the time.

The proposed scoreboard would be an HD video display which would also be equipped with additional speakers for enhanced sound coverage and

static space for permanent advertisers.

GO CAPS students involved included junior Jacob McCall, senior Adam Martinez, senior Malachi Wagers, senior Benjamin Lamar and junior Hunter Taylor (Wheaton High School).

The students engaged in researching and developing the project under the leadership of Ty Goetz, athletic director and assistant principal at MHS.

The students were required

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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NEWS BRIEFS

100+ Women third quarter meeting on Feb. 5
The 100+Women of Barry and Lawrence Counties will meet on Feb. 5 from 6-8 p.m. at the Barry-Lawrence Regional Library, located at 2200 Park St. in Monett. Social hour is from 6-7 p.m., and at 7 p.m., voting members (those who donate \$100 or more) can nominate a charity from Barry or Lawrence counties to receive fourth-quarter meeting funds. People may donate online at cfozark.org/100monett, or by mail to Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Attn: 100 Women Monett, PO Box 8960, Springfield, MO 65801.

Blood Drive at Church of Christ on Feb. 9
The American Red Cross will host the Monett Area Blood Drive at the Church of Christ meeting room, located at 1107 9th St. in Monett, from 1-6 p.m. on Feb. 9. People may call 1-800-733-2767, or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter “MONETT” to schedule an appointment.

Valentine fundraiser on Feb. 15
Chapel of Grace youth will serve the annual Valentine lunch after services on Feb. 15, from noon to 1 p.m. People may preorder chocolate strawberries or chocolate-covered Oreos to take home. The Church is located at 1153 Farm Road 1060 in Monett. To preorder desserts, people may order on CashApp at cash.app/\$chapelofgracemo, a donation envelope or by message to Jimmie Jamie Finch.

Women's Community Worship Night on Feb. 15
Join women of all ages from across the community for an evening of worship, reflection and unity at Heart of Worship, a special women's worship night hosted by multiple churches. The event will be on Feb. 15 at 5 p.m. at the Monett Performing Arts Center, located at 1 Dave Sippy Drive in Monett. The evening will feature a worship team made up of local women from our area churches, creating a powerful and meaningful time of worship together. This gathering is designed to create space to encounter God's presence through heartfelt worship, prayer, and encouragement alongside other women of faith. Whether you come with friends or on your own, you are welcome just as you are. Host churches include:First United Methodist, Monett Community, Waymark, Connect Point and New Site.

St. Lawrence hosting pancake supper
St. Lawrence Catholic School, located at 407 7th St. in Monett, will host a Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper on Feb. 17 from 5-7 p.m. at the Parish Hall. The event is to celebrate Mardi Gras and to support the school and community. The pancake and sausage dinner will feature a cake walk and 50/50 raffle. There is a \$5 suggested donation per person, and proceeds directly support the school and staff.

Lil Pizzazz Dance Clinic on Feb. 21
The annual Lil Pizzazz Dance Clinic will be held on Feb. 21 from 1-5 p.m. at the Monett High School gymnasium, located at 1 Dave Sippy Drive in Monett. All K-8 students, boys and girls, in Monett and surrounding schools are welcome to attend. The registration deadline is Feb. 6. Online registration is available at: <https://forms.gle/937V-tUTS9N9W1AT86>.

Pickleball Scramble on Feb. 21
Grab a paddle and a friend and register for the Monett Area YMCA's Pickleball Tournament. This indoor scramble will have divisions of 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0. The top three in each bracket will earn a medal. This is a fundraiser to benefit families in the Monett area. The funds collected at this event will be used to help families, seniors and youth obtain financial assistance for memberships and programs that that will allow them a sense of belonging, build their confidence, all while staying active. This scramble is in memory of one of the YMCA's beloved members and avid pickleball player, Bob Lee. For more information, people may call 417-235-8213 or visit orymca.org/monett.

Publisher's note: Do you have an event coming up? Publish it free in news briefs by emailing: monettmonthly@outlook.com

CORRECTIONS

Monett Monthly corrects factual errors or clarifies information promptly and courteously. If you have a correction or clarification, please email Publisher Kyle Troutman at monettmonthly@outlook.com.

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ABOUT

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4 speak opposing re-zoning proposal

Residents: multi-family housing would affect neighborhood

BY JESSICA BREGER
Special to the Monett Monthly
The Monett City Council kicked off the new year in a new space, as it held its first council meeting at the newly renovated City Annex Building on Jan 8.
The building has had many faces since its construction in the 1970s, formerly used as the Monett Community Center and then Barry-Lawrence Ambulance District base, among other uses.
The annex is located at 100 South Maple St. Mayor Randy Burke announced that this facility will now be the official meeting space for city council. Meetings have previously been held at the Monett school district Central Office at 900 E Scott St.
The city held a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially introduce the space to the public on Jan. 29.

During the meeting, the council saw the most civic engagement displayed since opening up a public comment portion of the meetings several month ago.
At least four city residents stood up to speak about one issue in particular. Residents of West Hazel St. gathered to express concerns about a proposed rezoning issue that would place multi-family housing on the street.
“The rezoning of a single family lot to a multi-family lot is not appropriate for our neighborhood,” said resident Sallie Pryor who stated she has lived on the street for over 20 years. “This is a single-family street with a majority of the population being older residents who depend on a stable, predictable environment. It’s home to young families.”
“Introducing a multi-family structure in the middle of this block would significantly increase traffic, noise and parking pressure in a way that directly undermines the safety and livability of the people who currently live there.”
Three other residents

of the street also stood and echoed Pryor’s concerns. All speakers noted that they moved to the area for the calm and quiet nature of the street. The residents also supplied the council with a signed petition opposing the rezoning.
The rezoning project was first brought before the city in 2021. Planning and Zoning had recommended the rezoning to the council, but it was never officially approved.
City officials discussed, due to multiple questions about the validity of the re-zoning proposal, the action of voting the issue down.
This would require the requesting parties to present the project to Planning and Zoning again and re-start the process.
Council members ultimately decided that since they were holding only the first reading of the issue to make no motion at this time. A second reading of the proposal will be held at the Feb. 12 meeting.
Council members said they hope to be better informed by the next meeting so an educated decision can be made on

the matter.
Council also held first readings for city improvement projects including an ordinance to establish an Airport Commission for the City of Monett with service to the Monett Regional Airport.
This would expand the current five-member commission to a seven-member advisory commission to include representatives from Barry County.
Council also discussed in a first reading an ordinance approving the Historic Downtown Monett Redevelopment Plan. A second reading on this matter will allow the city to move forward with the establishment of a five-member corporation to manage funding for the operation.
Second reading for all projects will be held at the next regular city council meeting on Feb. 12.
Regular City Council Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Monett City Annex located at 100 South Maple St., with video available on the city’s website the following day.

Overpass: Good for traffic flow, first responders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A
in time, the city council picked Kyler street as the overpass to go for, and then we built the Eisenhower overpass.
“This has been an ongoing project for years and the city applied for funding in probably 2017 or 2018. We submitted for federal funds, on one of the FRA’s (Federal Railroad Administration) funding programs that came up. They were looking at eliminating, I think it was 80% of all of the outgrade crossings throughout the nation.”
Sprenkle said the city was denied the first grant it applied for but was ultimately awarded a grant for \$4.987 million for the \$7.8 million dollar project.
According to the city’s project plan, the total estimated cost for the Project is \$7,609,399.
The remainder of the funding for the project, in the amount of \$2,782,820, will be pro-

vided by the City, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and BNSF. The non-federal funding contributions represent 36.6% of the overall Project total.
The city will fund approximately 30% of the project, in the amount of \$2,282,820.
A breakdown of the project cost shows \$2,358,914 for roadway construction, \$3,956,887 for bridge construction, \$989,222 for right-of-way/engineering, and \$304,376 for utility relocations.
The project includes a 36-foot-wide driving surface with a 5-foot sidewalk, 42-inch barriers for pedestrian railing, extension of existing three-cell culvert in both directions to accommodate additional fill for the north approach as well as curb, gutter and storm sewers to collect additional water runoff from the new structure.

Sprenkle also said COVID was not the only factor that slowed the project, as standards have been updated for such crossings since the last project completed in the city, forcing an adjustment in plans.
“At this point in time, we’re waiting on formal approval from BNSF to get the bridge plans approved, because everything happens to go through the railroad,” he said. “The railway changed some of their requirements from when we did the last overpass.”
Sprenkle said the city has not been motionless in the project while waiting for approvals, but has instead been working on elements of the project that are in city control.
He said that city utilities have already been moved for the project, with one waterline left to move when construction begins.
The city is expected to

break ground on the project this year, with hopes of completion in 2027.
Mayor Randy Burke said this project will be beneficial not only for traffic flow and safely crossing railroads, but it will also aid in response time for first responders and emergency services.
“Another key factor is when we started this, the hospital was in central Monett,” he said. “That’s no longer the case, so from a public safety standpoint, it’s good for emergency services, particularly if you’re going to grow up here on the north side.”
Monett was built as a railroad town acting as a transportation hub for people and products since the 1800s, with several roads having to cross railroad tracks.
This has facilitated the need for such overpasses in multiple areas of the city, but according to city officials, this will be the last overpass placed.

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JARED LANKFORD

Tomorrow, the sun will rise in the east

Verona trailed Wheaton by a single point with just a shade over 8 seconds remaining in a basketball contest that had been brutal and back and forth. Regulation and one overtime had not been enough to settle the contest, and the Wildcats were looking to escape with a much needed conference win.

The atmosphere in the old gym at Verona High School was electric. The crowd created the best home court advantage in the bi-county area — bar none.

The play design was simple. Get the ball to Verona's best player, have the other four players spread out and crash the board if necessary.

While driving to the hoop, a mass of Bulldog bodies appeared to swat more than leather, causing the shot attempt to be altered and the shooter's arm to display discoloring. Yet, no foul was called, and time expired with the Bulldogs escaping with a win.

The uproar from the fans was to be expected. The officials were rushed off the court while one team celebrated and another tried to grasp with the agony of defeat.

It took Verona Coach Brad Stewart over an hour to address his team and final make his way out to speak to the lone media representative (me).

Stewart didn't blame the officiating, but used the game as a teachable moment. He told them the lack of a call wasn't the real reason they lost.

He pointed to the fact that his team shot only 50 percent from the free throw line in the second half. He mentioned how they committed too many turnovers and how they started to slow to begin the game.

Then Stewart added, "This is just a game. Sometimes you get breaks and sometimes you don't, but the sun will rise in the east tomorrow and won't care about the results of tonight."

One of the most important, but hardest, lessons for any player or parent, and especially the fans, to learn is that sports are just a game.

I understand and don't wish in any way to minimize the sacrifices and dedication players and parents make to provide opportunities to play, nor the enormous amount of hours put into practice.

Granted, I do not attend the same amount of contests now that I did a decade ago, but in 22 basketball games this season I have witnessed two fan ejections, two fan warnings and a bench technical assessed.

Try as I may, I learned to accept the fact that wherever I go, I represent my employer.

People associated me with the places I work and the local businesses I run. Never am I just run of the mill, plain old Jared Lankford.

How I act is a direct representation of the entities that I am associated with. It doesn't matter if it is fair or not.

Recently, a local school district issued a letter to all of its students, parents and community members.

The district outlined 10 reminders to keep in mind while attending their sporting events.

Included in the bulletin point letter were:

- Remember that you are at the contest to support and yell for your team and to enjoy the skill and competition on display, not to intimidate or ridicule the other team or its fans.

- Game officials can ask that school administrators have unruly fans removed from a contest facility.

- There is no such thing as a "right" to attend interscholastic athletics. In fact, interscholastic athletics are considered a "privilege" and the spectator who avails himself of it is expected to conduct himself or herself accordingly.

- The school is responsible for the behavior of spectators at home games. The school can be and will be punished for the action of patrons in violation of MSHSAA standards and rules.

I understand what it means to be a passionate fan, but when that passion boils over and causes you to lash out, then it is a problem.

While you may not care how you act or what you say at games, it does reflect upon the school's reputation that you cheer for.

I think we can all learn from what Brad Stewart told his team years ago — It is just a game and the sun will rise in the east tomorrow.

Jared Lankford is the sports reporter for Monett Monthly and has more than 15 years of experience covering Monett-area athletics. He may be reached at monettsports@gmail.com

FINISH ON AN ODD NUMBER



Monett's Karsen Madrid takes a shot at an opponent in the Monett Tournament earlier this season. Kyle Troutman/ktoutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cubs wrestling rounds into district shape

BY JARED LANKFORD
monettsports@gmail.com

As the wrestling season winds down to its conclusion, Monett is preparing to take the next step on the season.

Coming into the year, the team set season goals of finishing higher in the Big 8 standings than the 2024-25 season, and working on having finalists at every tournament, not just placers.

"I think this season we had had at least one or two finalists at every tournament," said Ben Hohensee, Monett coach. "We have met nearly all of our goals and improved 10-fold over last year. Right now, we are focused on getting the guys to reach their peak performance."

The Cubs fell just short of their goal at the Big 8 Conference tournament, but Hohensee said that the result was misleading.

Monett only had 10 out of 12 wrestlers and finished fourth as a team, just 10 points short of third and on the heels of Cassville for second.

"We were right there where we wanted to be," Hohensee



Monett's Chris Spears defends against a shot by his opponent in the Monett Tournament earlier this season. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com

said. "With only 10 guys, I wasn't upset. Last year, we only had three All-Conference wrestlers. This year, we had seven."

The Cubs coaches have driven home the point to the team to let their max effort all hang out and to finish the season on an odd number, which would mean a victory in their final match.

"These guys are letting us push them to get better," Hohensee said. "We had a

Monday practice when maybe I wasn't in the best mood and the practice wasn't the way we wanted, and we went hard on the team. Afterward, we talked it out and then put together the best four practices of the year. The winter sports season is tough. Just from a length of season standpoint and to have these guys come back and lock in has shown their growth."

Monett has just one lone
CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Taking the matches one at a time

Inexperienced Lady Cubs gaining experience

BY JARED LANKFORD
monettsports@gmail.com

With just two grapplers returning with varsity experience Monett Girls Wrestling Coach Justin Semerad knew wins would be hard to come by this season.

Still, Semerad has plowed into the year and the challenge placed in front of his team with a vigor and determination, and now, he is beginning to see his team improving.

"The is season has

LADY CUBS WRESTLING

What: Team learning with only two varsity returners
Challenge: Applying practice techniques in matches
More: Coach thinks some wrestlers may surprise at districts

been about growing due to our inexperience," Semerad said. "All but two of our girls have no experience or have not made it through a full season of wrestling."

Monett's two seniors with varsity experience are Vivian Rodriguez and Amethyst James.

The Lady Cubs' losses mounted early in the year, but the tide seems



Monett's Leanny Sandoval works against her opponent at the Monett Tournament earlier this season. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com

to be turning, as the Lady Cubs are taking to the coaching.

"The first thing you

have to have is an athlete that not just wants to be coached, but is able

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



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Barry County Health Corner



Safe sleep program available

The Barry County Health Department hosts free safe sleep education sessions for new and expecting parents and caregivers. These events provide hands-on demonstrations, expert guidance, and even free portable cribs for families in need that meet certain requirements.

Every year, thousands of infants in the U.S. lose their lives due to sleep-related incidents, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and accidental suffocation. However, by following safe sleep recommendations, these risks can be significantly reduced.

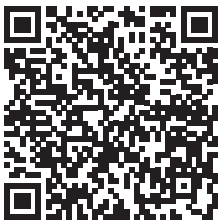
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends placing babies on their backs for both naps and nighttime. Infants should sleep alone on a firm, flat surface, such as a crib or bassinet with a fitted sheet, and without soft bedding, pillows, or stuffed toys. By keeping the baby's sleep area in the same room as caregivers for at least the first six months can also lower the risk of sleep-related deaths.


If you have any questions regarding the Barry County Health Departments Safe Sleep program please give us a call at 417-847-2114.

Publisher's note: This article is courtesy of Barry County Health Department, located at 90 Barry County Drive in Cassville. The Department may be reached at 417-847-2114.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The purpose of the Commentary page is to provide a forum of various opinions, and we highly encourage letters to the editor. The opinions of columnists are not necessarily shared by *Monett Monthly* or its staff. If you have an opinion, send a letter to Kyle Troutman, Monett Monthly, P.O. Box 486, Cassville, MO 65625, email ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com or scan the QR code to the right to submit a letter online.





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Local Death Notices

Rick Eaton • Monett • Nov. 29, 1943 — Jan. 5, 2026
Pamela Kay Plough • Wentworth • Nov. 14, 1946 — Jan. 7, 2026
Barbara Gates • Monett • April 7, 1938 — Jan. 8, 2026
John Fritz • Freistatt • Sept. 26, 1940 — Jan. 8, 2026
Jean Zebert-Kutz • Pierce City • Aug. 7, 19930 — Jan. 14, 2026
Brett Allen Walters • Monett • July 23, 1960 — Jan. 18, 2026
Bob Bremer • Monett • Jan. 23, 1947 — Jan. 19, 2026
Nancy Ellen Knight • Monett • Dec. 1, 1952 — Jan. 21, 2026
Phyllis Schaller • Monett • Aug. 25, 1936 — Jan. 25, 2026
Steven Ray Hunnell • Wentzville • April 10, 1955 — Jan. 27, 2026
Maria Barrientos • Siloam Springs • Dec. 12, 1983 — Jan. 28, 2026

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LOCAL DEVOTIONAL

Soul and spirit

Soul and spirit are not the same.

The common tendency is to use the terms interchangeably as if they were the same, but they are not. More specifically there is a profound difference or distinction to be made between the soul of man and the Spirit of God.

The soul is a vital part of how humans are put together. We are created body, mind, and soul. All three parts indivisibly together makes us into the persons we are.

All parts are born together and die together. Just as no human body is the same as any other body and no other mind thinks exactly like any other mind, so no human soul is like any other human soul. Every soul is distinctive, different and separate from every other soul, which immediately rules out the possibility that every soul is simply a part of God or God's Spirit which by nature has been embedded within us.

The soul is distinctively human. It is a part of our original equipment-standard issue. Everyone has one.

Like the body and mind, the soul can grow and change over time. It can also regress and deteriorate. However, time has little to do with that. Some of the best souls are "good old souls," while the souls of those much younger can unfortunately be damaged or misused.

The soul then is a part of who we are and conversely not a part of who God is, namely a Spirit. The soul of man is our inner being when we are operating at our very best.

Our bodies give us our form, our minds our intellect and our souls our personality and character. All three, body, mind, and soul are the work of the creator which gives us a body that is not His body but one that can act, a mind which is less than His mind but one that can reason, and a soul which is not His Spirit but one that can distinguish between good and evil.

The soul can sometimes act like a conscience, though that is not its main function. The soul is a part of the image of God in us. It is the source of creativity, compassion, community and every other good characteristic we attribute to God. Of course, just as we can misuse our bodies and corrupt our minds so we can ignore the good urgings of the soul within us. It is wrong to reason that God's Spirit could lead us to do wrong. The soul of man within us is the source of good and evil. Evil is the result of a wayward soul.

While everyone has a soul not everyone possesses God's Spirit. The Spirit is the gift of God's presence around us and within us. The gift is offered to many, but unfortunately, fully accepted and utilized by too few. To the extent that God's Spirit is incorporated into our being, our souls can be nourished and even healed when broken.

There is then a real connection between the human soul and God's Spirit. God's Spirit not only breaths life into our bodies, mind, and souls, it also nourishes and repairs them. But the Spirit is not the soul. The Spirit is a gift to the soul. The soul is human, the Spirit is of God. The Spirit brings life to the soul. The soul honors the Spirit by making room for the Spirit of God to live within us.

The Spirit can enter the soul any time at the will of the Father and specifically at baptism by the promise of Christ.

Rev. Raymond Ticknor is a retired Christian church (Disciple of Christ) pastor living in Monett. He may be reached at judith.ticknor@yahoo.com.

Griggs leaving animal control for Dept. of Ag.



Monett Animal Control Officer Karen Griggs, a member of the Monett police Department for nearly 10 years, is leaving the organization for a new position. Beginning as a dispatcher in 2016, Griggs transferred to animal control in 2019. She will soon take on a new position as an Animal Health Officer for the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Contributed photo

GO CAPS: Board approves NEVCO bid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to create a request for proposal (RFP), research potential vendors and evaluate options based on district needs and long-term goals.

Martinez and McCall shared how students narrowed vendor options and coordinated presentations with chosen vendors.

The students laid out a preliminary timeline and financing approach, outlining a multi-year plan that remains subject to future school board decisions.

Students focused on the project's long-range planning, potential student involvement and aligning the school with current and future culture and community engagement.

The students said the project gave them an understanding of the scope, cost, planning and time required for a project of this scale.

The board also heard how a video display scoreboard could serve the district beyond athletics, including student recognition, live streaming activities such as graduation, and partnerships with local businesses through sponsorship opportunities.

It was noted that these sponsorships would be the primary means of funding for the project, making it a fundraiser-supported initiative rather than a district-funded expense.

Goetz also explained how the scoreboard could be used to advance student learning by making it possible to introduce multimedia and broadcasting opportunities for students, and potential connections to postsecondary pathways.

The board approved a motion to move forward with the bid received from the company NEVCO, contingent upon fundraising progress and a review at the March Board meeting.

In other business, the board also announced a standing date for graduation, confirming moving forward that graduation will be held on the second Friday of May each year.

The board said that this will allow a reliable annual date parents and students can expect.

The Monett School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at Board Administrative Meeting Room located at the District Office.



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Monett's Amethyst James looks for an angle against an opponent in the Monett Tournament this season. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com



Monett's Naomi Orellano grapples with an opponent at the Monett Tournament earlier this season. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com

Lady Cubs: Freshman Orellano is strongest wrestler in the room

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3
to apply that coaching to their style,” Semerad said. “I am not a yeller, and am fairly relaxed in my coaching style, and early on, you saw our girls reverting to their bad habits. That was frustrating. Now, over the last three weeks, you are seeing the girls apply techniques that we are drilling in practice, and that is exciting. Because then, we can watch the tape and I can show them

specifically what they can do to improve.” Semerad noted that improvement in practice does not always translate to wins on the mat, but several of his athletes are now going the full three rounds instead of getting pinned in the first period. Sophomore Leanny Sandoval drew high praise from her coach on how much she has developed in the sport. “The last three weeks,

she has come a tremendous way,” Semerad said. “She medaled at Willard and now is finding herself wrestling on the winners side of the bracket instead of wrestling for 17th place. For a coach, when you see players taking what they learn in practice and apply it in a match, it makes you feel good. I can handle the losses in those situations. She is one that keeps working hard.”

Semerad highlighted freshman Naomi Orellano who he described as the strongest wrestler in the Lady Cubs’ room. “Pound for pound, she is the strongest,” Semerad said. “She a tenacious wrestler with a strong work ethic. She had worked hard to get better and the matches are slowing down for her now. She is winning those types of matches that were a close loss earlier in

the season. She went 3-0 at the Big 8 Conference meet and became a conference champion. She is one of those that could surprise some people in the district.” Monett has developed a motto of “Why Not Us.” “Every year at the district tournament, there are girls that on paper have no business making a run or winning a match,” Semerad said. “I think that is us right now.

On paper, we have some girls that based on their record shouldn’t have a chance. But if they continue to work hard and grow in practice, they could surprise some people.” Regardless of how the season ends, Semerad has stressed to his team that the ground work they lay this year, while maybe not racking up wins, will translate into wins next year.

Cubs: Lone senior looking for state medal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3
senior in Logan Cole. Cole lost a heartbreaking match that prohibited a state medal last year, but he has embraced the leadership role this year and is looking to finish strong. “As the only senior, he didn’t have a choice but to embrace a leadership role,” Hohensee said. “I think he underestimates how good he can be. As a coach, it is our job to help them see how high the ceiling is. I think Logan is starting to believe and the effort is getting there. I just want him to finish strong and have no regrets.” Hohensee also noted Henry Reed and his development this season. “He is such a selfless wrestler,” Hohensee said. “He truly wants to get better. Last year he was a 50/50 wrestler in every match. This year, he is 30-6. After every match, whether win, lose or draw, he is asking us what he could do better. In practice, he wants to be tested, and then we see those things we teach him play out in a match. I can’t say enough about how good a kid he is.” The best thing about all of the Cubs wrestlers is that there is still room to grow, and that as long



Monett's Kaven Keller looks for leverage in a match in the Monett Tournament earlier this season. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com

as they keep listening to the coaching, the team will continue to improve. As the district tournament approaches a new goal for Monett has been set. “I think a minimum of three state qualifiers is our baseline,” said Hohensee. “Less than three and I’ll feel like I’ve failed. If things break right and we compete, we could have five or six

make state. We want to finish on an odd number and be wrestling our best at the end.”

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LOCAL

Cox Monett Hospital welcomes Dr. Ally Loveland to inpatient care team

Cox Monett Hospital is pleased to welcome Ally Loveland, DO, to its inpatient care team.

Loveland joins the hospital as a hospitalist, specializing in the care of patients during their hospital stay.

As a hospitalist, Loveland works closely with nurses, specialists and interdisciplinary care teams to provide coordinated, high-quality care from admission through discharge. Her role focuses on ensuring continuity of care and support-



LOVELAND

ing patients and families throughout the hospitalization process.

Loveland completed her residency in

family medicine at the University of Wyoming in Casper, Wyo., with a focus on rural and underserved populations. She also previously served as a covering hospitalist at a critical access hospital in the Pacific Northwest, where she gained valuable experience delivering care in rural and community-based settings.

Her return to CoxHealth marks a meaningful full-circle moment in her career. Loveland began her health care journey with the organi-

zation in 2013, working as a pharmacy technician before relocating to complete her master's degree in biomedical science. That early experience provided a strong clinical foundation and a unique perspective that now informs her work as a physician.

Loveland has a deep commitment to supporting the health and well-being of patients in the Monett community, a CoxHealth press release said.

Fuller Housing Center gives thanks

Fuller Housing Center thanks those involved in building 15th house

The Monett Fuller Housing Center Board of Directors is proud to honor the Gilmore family and all of the following who offered their time, energy, skills, and financial support to build House No. 15 at 8th and Scott Streets in Monett.

Directors are Steve Allman, Gordon Brown, Chris Davis, Louise Hensley, Jerry Hudson, Brooke Lien, Robert McGuire, Karen Standerwick, Jason Prine, Jennifer Prine, Annie Reed, Linda Schelin, Bill VanEaton, Katy Velasquez, Frank Washburn, Rejeanna Williams and Kayla Younker.

The organization thanks all volunteers working most Saturday mornings from June 9, 2025 to January 3,

2026, including: new homeowners Amanda and Kevin Gilmore, Jimmy Adams, Steve Allman, Matt Batson, Ouei Bennion, Emma Boggs, Christy Brown, Ron Brown, Gerald Bradley, Mike Brownsberger, Patrisha Burns, Gil Butler, Tom Carroll, Gary Clark, Kyle Clawson, Steve Courter, Shaun Courtney, Denise Crouch, Krista Crouch, Glennon Crouch, Chris Davis, William Davis, Andy Day, JR Day, Marcelino Diaz, Al Dohmen, Kelly Echols, Dale Ellis, Jordan Ellis, Tori Fife, Zoey Freitag, Geinoz Garcia, Jerson Garcia, Matthew Gibson, Tim Goetzinger, James Grant, Jessica Grant, Becky Griffin, Raymond Griffin, Joshua Hammond, Harry Habecker, Tyler Hankins, Denise Haston, Kevin Hatfield, Ronda Hatfield, Carla Hembree, William Hembree, David Hobbs, Derick Holmes, Joseph Holmes, William Holmes, Aaron Hoyt, Matthew Hoyt, Jerry Hudson, Brian Hunter, Bryan Jackson, Fred Jobe, Christy Kerns, Thai-Khao-on, Matt Kutz, Benji LaMastus, Allan Land, Larry LaQuick, Kevin Layton, Casey Leavitt, Brooke Lien, Joshua Lien, Jeff Lynn, Adam Martinez, Dillon McCullah, Timothy McDonough, Robert McGuire, Douglas Merrill, Danny Moennig,

Jenny Moennig, Vansen Moennig, Joe Muenzer, Matt Oldnettle, Mike Palmer, Raymond Palmer, Trisha Palmer, Roger Phelps, Blair Powell, Laurlie Powell, Annie Reed, Jorge Rivera, Joe Sanches, Marilyn Schellen, Tim Schellen, Ralph Schmitz, Stephanie Schumacher, Jesse Shouse, Brian Smith, Jared Snider, Michael Stadwick, Karen Standerwick, Derek Turner, Marcus Turner, Joshua Tromier, Bill VanEaton, Evar Velasquez, Kirk Verhoff, Becky Ward, Robert Ward, Frank Washburn, Jack Williams, Rejeanna Williams, Evan Wishon, Neil Wolfe, Jonathan Wright, Landon Wright, Lincoln Wright, Justin York, David Younker, Kayla Younker.

Appreciation is also extended to Construction Manager, Jim Copeland, and the following businesses and individuals who provided labor and supplies, with some donations: ASI Scott Beckwith, Andy Brown Plumbing, Scott Denny, Gliedt Electric, Herman Lumber, JL Johnson Foundations, Richard Jones, Kay Concrete, Benji LaMastus drywall, Leavitt Construction, Lowes, Lucky M Concrete, Meeks Lumber, Monett Garage Door, Post Electric, Quality Cabinets, Monett Rental, Schoen Heating and Air, Sebastian

Plumbing Supply, Stanphill Sanitation, Evar Velasquez roofing, Sherwin Williams Paint.

Kudos was given to the Fuller Housing Center's 2025 financial campaign donors: Steve and Janice Allman, Architectural Systems Inc., Barry County Retired School personnel, Don and Janie Bates, John and Melissa Beckwith, Bennett Wormington Funeral Home, Gordon and Melissa Brown, Buchanan Funeral Home, Roy and Jeanie Cash, Russell Courdin, EFCO Corp., Freedom Bank of Southern Missouri, Fuldner Family Foundation, R.N. Holmes, Jerry and Judy Hudson, E.K. Johnson, Richard and Mary Jones, Joe and Sara Lay, Monett Glass, Robert and Marlene Mareth, New Site Church, Jack and Margaret Prim, LLC Tomas Saef, Harold and Linda Schelin, Mary Scott, Rick and Elizabeth Short, Karen Standerwick, Scott Thrasher Agency, LLC., Thunderbird Wealth Management, United Missouri Bank, Bill VanEaton, Frank Washburn, Jack and Rejeanna Williams, Willie Enterprises, Wintech Corp., Jim and Linda Wirm, Steve Wise, Tom Wormington, Andrew and Carrie Zahn.

Finally, the Center gives thanks to Bill VanEaton for organizing the following groups of laborers and lunch providers for Saturday work: Church of Christ, Community Church, Connection Point Church, First United Methodist Church, Habitat for Humanity homeowners, Knights of Columbus, Latter Day Saints Church, Miracle Recreation, Monett Nazarene Church, New Site Church, Reavisville Baptist Church, and Wintech Windows.

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This World War I Era Valentine's card displayed at the Monett Museum gives insight to the world of the time.

By Jessica Breger/
Special to the Monett Monthly



Monett State Bank in 1910 used Valentine's Day to encourage banking.

By Jessica Breger/
Special to the Monett Monthly

Valentines for the ages

Museum display depicts historic scenes, characters, events

BY JESSICA BREGER
Special to the Monett Monthly

Take a romantic stroll down memory lane at the Monett Historical Society and Museum this month, as it displays local valentines from the past.

"Honestly, it was hard to choose which ones to pull out because we have, I think four boxes," said Christa Stout, Historical Society volunteer.

With two displays of Valentine cards, the museum invites guests to explore local love stories through the ages. Stout said many of the cards on display are from one local woman, Hildreth Mansfield.

Born in Monett in 1907, Mansfield would grow up to

become the mother of local business owner Charles Rowell who continued the family business, Mansfield Clothing, until 2006.

The business sat in what is relieved to be the oldest building in Monett.

Before becoming a mother, Mansfield shared her love of cards throughout her childhood, with one early card on display being addressed to her own mother.

The card was from the 1910s, and Stout noted that it appeared to be when Mansfield was beginning to learn cursive writing.

Cards on display reflect the differing times throughout not only Mansfield's life, but society as a whole.

One card from Mansfield's son Charles Rowell, depicted a little soldier boy. The card is believed to be from the World War II era, reflecting the state of the world in a Valentine greeting.

"They really, really are

just so sweet, you know, and just very, it's a whole other time, Stout said. "And it shows you a lot about the time period during which they were sent.

"They were so much more elaborate and special, and you can really see the care that was taken in not only making them, but choosing them. You didn't buy them for a penny."

These cards depict historic scenes, characters and events connecting Monett residents to not only local and family history, but world history as well.

The museum invites guests to come walk through the displays and admire the intricate details of popular card styles including pop-out and interactive cards to get a look at the love and whimsy of the past.

The Museum, located at 422 E. Broadway St., is open five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.



The Monett Museum gives a glimpse into hearts of Monett residents of the past with cards saved from area locals such as Hildreth Mansfield. By Jessica Breger/
Special to the Monett Monthly

Taxes: Seven total Monett taxes bring in \$5.5 million, up \$224K from 2024

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

previous year, holding onto 2024's 6 percent gain over 2023. For its use tax, Aurora took in \$461,138.39, up 16 percent, or almost \$65,000 more than the previous year. All Aurora's taxes combined totaled \$4,423,443.66, up more than \$131,600, or 3 percent for the year, a gain of almost \$1.35 million over pre-pandemic 2019.

Cassville, which collected four taxes, took in a total of \$3,305,005.65, down almost \$29,250 from 2024 with rises in only 6 of the last 12 months. The city's use tax gathered \$344,404.50 in its second full year of collections, up 15% from the first full year. The use tax pushed overall totals to \$3,649,410.15, up almost \$16,500 over last year's record, up more than \$1.3 million from before the pandemic six years ago.

Exeter, with one tax, collected \$31,615.30, down 8%, or \$2,811.62 from 2024, when receipts rose by 24%. The total is still up more than \$10,000 from six years ago.

Marionville, which has five taxes, collected \$481,083.49, down more than \$71,000, or 13 percent from 2024, in part due to the loss of the community grocery store. Marionville's use tax, collected for the first full year, brought in an additional \$115,104.01, up 32 percent from 10 months collected in 2024, bringing the overall total to \$596,187.50, for a drop of \$45,477.16, or 7 percent. That's still up more than \$155,000 from pre-pandemic 2019.

Miller, which collects five taxes, received \$204,656.68, up almost \$2,000 from 2024, breaking a three-year skid. Miller's receipts are still up more than \$32,000 from six years ago.

Monett, with five active sales taxes and two sunsetted taxes, generated revenue in 2025. Even the sales tax paying for the Justice Center, sunsetted in 2016, still brought in

\$48.59. The seven taxes combined brought in \$5,572,579.03, up almost \$224,000 from a year ago, almost wiping out the drop in 2024 due to the newly introduced use tax. The use tax, collected for its second full year, brought in \$954,045.34, up 11% from 2024. All Monett's taxes combined totaled \$6,526,575.78, up almost \$316,000, or 5%, on top of the 4% gain in 2024. That's up more than \$2 million from 2019.

Mt. Vernon, which has four taxes, received \$2,612,114.75, down \$11,777.19, or less than half a percent from 2024. However, receipts from Mt. Vernon's use tax totaled \$417,689.11, up 42 percent from the previous year. Combined, Mt. Vernon's tax total of \$3,029,805.86, down a mere \$7,516.21 from 2024, and down almost \$38,000 from the pandemic peak in 2023. However, compared to pre-pandemic 2019, before the city added its half-cent tax for parks and its use tax, tax receipts are up by more than \$1.3 million.

Pierce City, which collects five taxes, received \$204,165.90, down almost \$30,000, or 13 percent with the loss of its grocery store. It was the city's third consecutive annual drop, coming off a \$267,428 pandemic peak in 2022, and \$38,000 lower than pre-pandemic 2019.

Purdy, with three taxes, collected \$125,264.36, down 11%, or almost \$15,000 under the 2024 total. Purdy also saw its pandemic peak in 2022 at \$144,309.31. Current receipts are about \$277 lower than the 2018 total.

Seligman now has five sales taxes, with five months of collections from its new 1% tax supporting law enforcement, creating the highest total of any bi-county city at 3.5%. These taxes combined generated \$371,489.91, up \$43,234.40 from a year ago. Without the

police tax, receipts were down almost \$6,000. Seligman's use tax, now in its second full year, generated \$82,660.17, up 40% from 2024, putting total receipts at \$454,150.08, up almost \$67,000 over last year. Compared to pre-pandemic 2019, which had two fewer taxes, receipts are up almost \$200,000 in six years.

Verona, with four sales taxes, saw sales tax income total \$59,009.99, a \$9,101, or 29 percent drop from 2024, a drop of three consecutive years from a pandemic peak of \$132,828.79. It's the lowest annual total since 2013, when Verona had only three sales taxes.

Washburn, with three taxes, produced \$66,934.22, thanks in part to an unprecedented suspension of collections by the State Auditor for two months due to a clerical mix-up. That's a drop of \$15,274.76, or 19% from 2024. Washburn's use tax, collected for a second full year, brought in an additional \$32,921.59, boosting the year's total to \$99,855.81, only \$4,000 below the 2023 tally but a drop of \$16,376.44 from 2024. Prior to the pandemic, and the arrival of Washburn's Dollar General store, the city received just under \$60,000 from its sales taxes in 2019.

Wheaton produced \$98,895.89 from its two sales taxes, even though the city's half-cent tax for transportation only generated 46% of the 1-cent tax instead of 50%, an unexplained anomaly that's been going on since 2017. The year's total was up nearly \$10,000, or 11% from last year. Wheaton's use tax generated \$16,430.07, a gain of 33%, putting the combined tax revenue total at \$115,325.96. That's down from the pandemic peak of \$146,998.93 in 2021, but up \$14,000 from 2024. Prior to the pandemic, Wheaton's tax total was \$71,217.18 in 2019.

Lawrence County has

four .5 percent sales taxes and a .25 percent tax supporting maintenance of the Judicial Center. The general fund received \$2,110,569.69, down \$10,850.01, or a half of a percent, almost exactly the amount that receipts rose between 2023 and 2024. The five taxes collected \$8,435,462.90, down \$36,439.87 for the year. However, the county's use tax brought in an additional \$2,387,485.16, a gain of 13 percent over 2024. That gave the county total sales and use tax revenue of \$10,822,948.06, up \$238,125.03, or 2 percent for the second year in a row. That's almost double the total from 2019.

Barry County has three .5% taxes plus a .125% tax augmenting the general fund. Barry County's two general fund sales taxes received \$3,545,276.04, up \$45,076.58, or 1% from 2024. In pre-pandemic 2019, general fund receipts were just under \$2.7 million.

Barry County's four taxes combined brought

in \$9,218,430.78, up almost \$135,000 from last year, the sixth consecutive year of gains. Barry County's use tax yielded an additional \$2,271,450.74, another 10% gain, with 26%, or \$593,028.16 of that going into law enforcement. The overall sum of \$11,489,881.52 was up almost \$345,000, or 3%. That's nearly \$667,000 more than Lawrence County's sales taxes generated. In pre-pandemic 2019, before the law enforcement and the use taxes, the county received a little more than \$4.8 million in the year.

Lawrence County 911, supported by its .5 percent sales tax, received \$2,107,322.46, a drop of \$9,143.55, or less than a half a percent. It was the first annual tax since it started in 2018.

Barry County 911 and central dispatching, supported by a .375% sales tax, garnered \$2,127,145.41, up a little more than \$27,000 for the year, the third year in a row for a gain of less

than 1%. Six years ago, the tax generated \$1.6 million.

South Barry County Ambulance District, south of Butterfield, reported receiving \$1,227,664.78, a gain of \$44,213.87 from a year ago, or 4%, compared to a 7% jump between 2023 and 2024.

The Barry-Lawrence Ambulance District received a tax increase to 1% in April, and began receiving larger collections, up from .5%, in November. For the year, the district received \$1,419,844.74, an increase of \$123,430.91. Between 2023 and 2024, receipts fell by almost \$43,000 as Monett's use tax kicked in, decreasing sales tax volume. Barry-Lawrence serves territory from Freistatt to Purdy, and from just west of Verona to east of Sarcoxie. Prior to switching to sales tax in 2019, the ambulance district serving Monett received around \$330,000 in property taxes annually.

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Stellwagen, Meeks crowned Rose Royalty



Zoey Stellwagen, left, was crowned Rose Homecoming Queen, and Alex Meeks was crowned Rose Homecoming King. Contributed photo



The 2026 Monett Rose Homecoming Court included: freshman attendant Zella Zahn; sophomore attendant Miley Cecenas; junior attendant Salma Hernandez; Rose King candidates Xavier Garcia, Alex Meeks and Ben Rogers; and Rose Queen candidates Carsyn Goetz, Maelyn Moreno and Zoey Stellwagen. Contributed photo

Youth returns from serving

Noah Holmes, of Monett, son of Joseph and Rebecca Holmes, has returned from serving two years in the California Fresno Mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "I wanted to serve Jesus Christ and knew what I needed to do," Holmes said about why he chose the mission. "Life is so much better when I do what He wants me to do than when I do what I want to do."

Holmes attended Monett and Pierce City High Schools, graduating from Pierce City High School in 2021. He participated on the Monett



HOLMES swim team and basketball. He also participated in basketball in Pierce City and added track and FFA. Looking ahead, Holmes would like to be a veterinarian. Meanwhile, he has the goal of weekly attending the temple.

Monett opens City Annex building



The Monett city government has opened the Monett City Annex at 100 S. Maple St. for meetings, conferences, and training sessions. The former Monett Community Center, built in the 1970s, has housed the Barry-Lawrence Ambulance District, the Missouri Career Center, and a therapy service over the years. Mayor Randy Burke, right, is pictured describing the main room where Monett City Council sessions will now be held during a VIP tour at the beginning of January. The facility enables the city to move meetings from the school district's administration center into its own building. City Hall conference rooms, holding approximately 35 people at capacity, have proven inadequate for larger gatherings. In addition to Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, the facility has several rooms for different sized sessions and a media room for photos against a decorated background. Murray Bischoff/Special to the Monett Monthly

OFO Young Artists perform Feb. 22 in Monett

4 area youth to perform in annual concert

BY MURRAY BISCHOFF

Special to the Monett Monthly

The Ozark Festival Orchestra will continue its 46th season of concerts in Monett at 3 p.m. on Feb. 22, with the annual Young Artists concert at the Monett High School Performing Arts Center, featuring four area young people appearing as soloists with the OFO, plus more international works showcasing the full ensemble.

The Young Artists, selected by panel of judges as ready to play with a full orchestra, will present works showcasing the trumpet, flute, clarinet, and voice. Three qualified in the senior division and one in the junior division.

The concert will include Mt. Vernon High School senior Ayden Alexander, a soprano, singing "Laurie's Song" from Aaron Copland's opera "The Tender Land;" J.P. Dickey, a junior from Mountain Grove, on trumpet, playing Arban's "Carnival of Venice" by French composer Jean Baptist Arban; and Israel Merida-Noriega, a junior from Berryville, Ark., who will play the first movement of Mozart's first Flute Concerto.

In the junior division, seventh-grader Henry Sexton, from Republic, will play a movement from Carl Maria von Weber's "Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra."

Music Director Carla Wootton will lead the OFO in additional selections from the masters. Italy is represented by Giuseppe Verdi's dramatic over-



Young artists from the area performing with the Ozark Festival Orchestra on Feb. 22 will be, from left: J.P. Dickey from Mountain Grove on trumpet, Israel Merida-Noriega from Berryville, Ark., on flute, soprano Ayden Alexander from Mt. Vernon, and Henry Sexton from Republic on clarinet. Contributed photo

ture from his opera "The Force of Destiny." Czech composer Antonin Dvorák puts dance on display with one of his Slavonic Dances. Dvorák's countryman Julius Fucik weighs in with his colorful "March of the Gladiators." Cinema tips its hat with a medley of tunes from the 2017 musical film "The Greatest Showman."

Admission to the concert will be \$10 for adults and free to children high school age and younger. Online tickets are available from www.ozarkfestivalorchestra.org.

Local players in the orchestra are: LeAna Colf, Seligman; Holly Thompson, Eagle Rock; Sarah Willson, Purdy; Christina Oliphant, Katie Oliphant, Jennifer Oliphant, Michele Oliphant, Moira Oliphant, Trent Oliphant, and Nick Berrett, all of Cassville; Jessica Hall, Elizabeth Snarey, Marena Snarey, Gina Milburn, Stevani Stovall, Carol Dahlstrom, and Phyllis Garrett, all of Monett; and Murray Bischoff and Julie Waetke-Bischoff, Pierce City.

Monett High School, 1 David Sippy Drive, is located off East Cleveland Avenue (Business Hwy.

60) at the east end of the city, next to Price Cutter Supermarket.

Mike and Phyllis Garrett are sponsors for the Young Artists concert for the second year.

The orchestra is also playing its second annual Kiddie Concert at the MHS Performing Arts Center for all the fifth graders in Monett during February. The concert introduces students to different instrumental sounds as they have the opportunity to choose what to play in band as sixth graders. Jerry and Judy Hudson of Monett are sponsoring that performance.

The OFO is a community orchestra composed of players from southwest Missouri and nearby towns, focusing primarily on classical music. The orchestra is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization supported by sponsors, memberships, local foundations, ads in the orchestra program book, and funds managed by the Monett Community Foundation.

Additional information is available at www.ozarkfestivalorchestra.org or Facebook/ Ozark Festival Orchestra or at www.ozarkfestivalorchestra.org.

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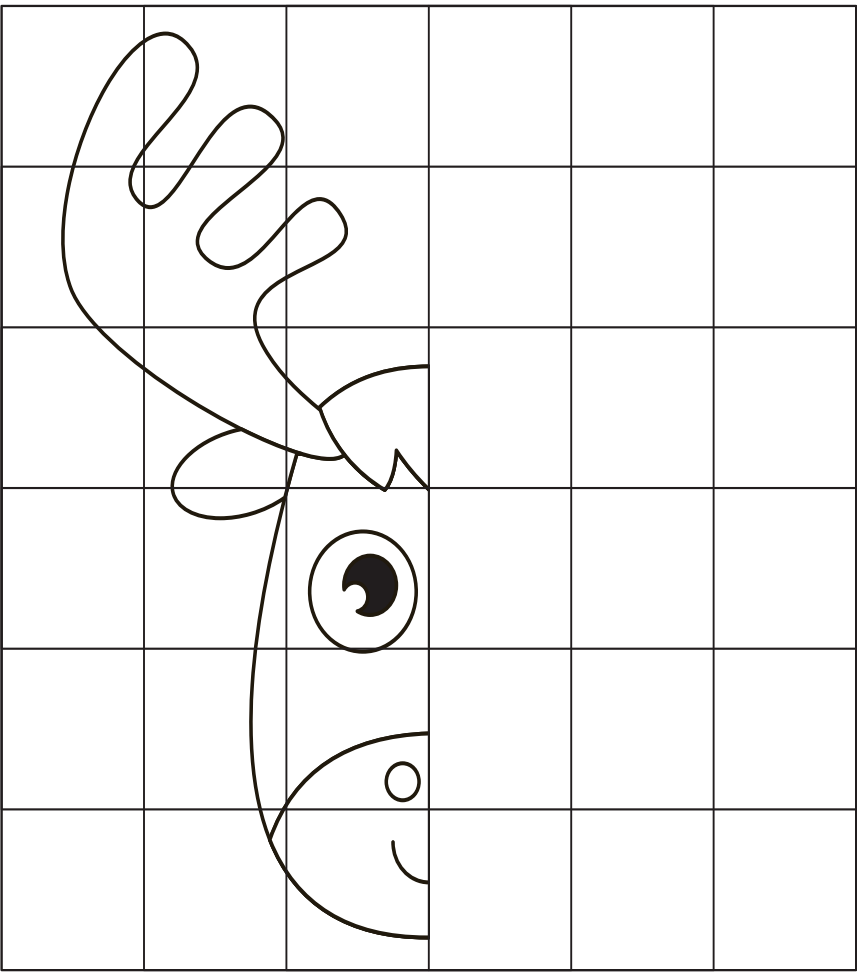
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KIDS' COLUMNS

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JUST kidding

Q: Why can't Elsa have a balloon?

A: She'll let it go.



JUST kidding

Q: What do you call a dog magician?

A: A labracadabrador.



JUST kidding

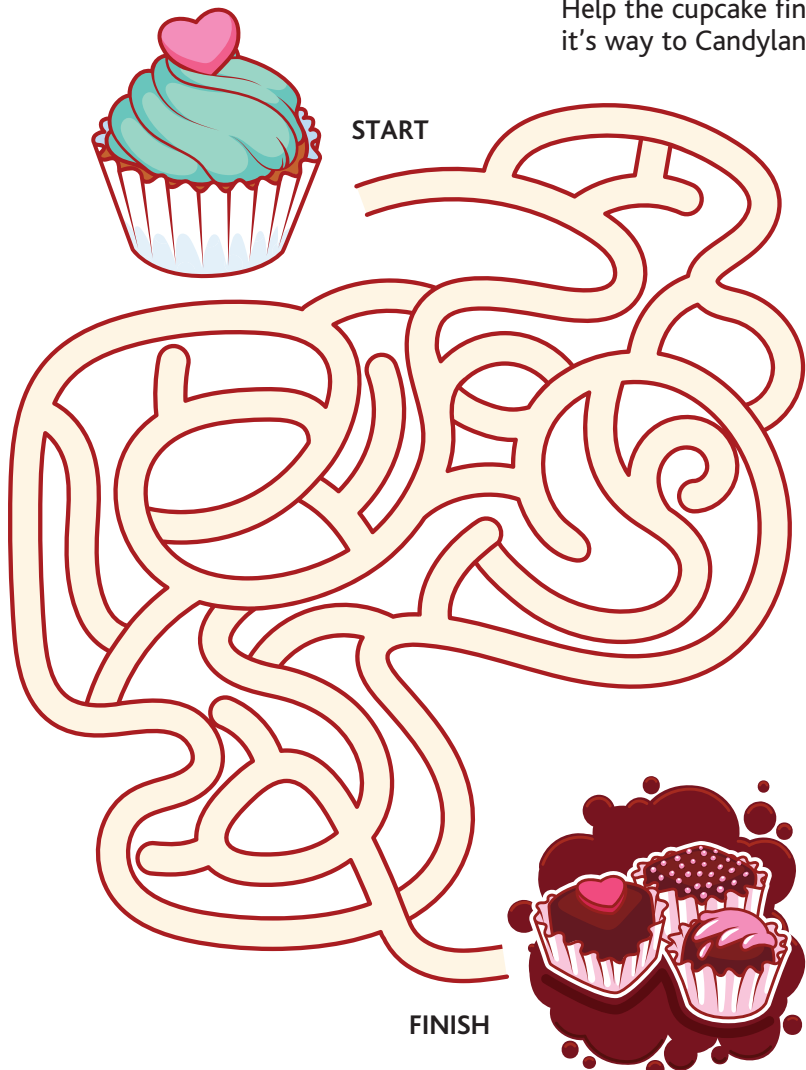
Q: What do you call two bananas?

A: Slipppers.



Amazing maze

Help the cupcake find it's way to Candyland



START

FINISH



Private eye

Which shadow matches the raccoon?
Find the right one.



ANSWER: 5

Sudoku 6 x 6

3				1	
	2		5		
	4	6			
	5		4	6	
		4			2
5					3

COMPLETE EACH GRID WITH NUMBERS FROM 1 TO 6, KEEPING IN MIND THAT:

- a number can only appear once per row
- a number can only appear once per column
- a number can only appear once in each box of 6 squares

3	4	6	2	1	5
2	5	1	4	3	6
1	6	4	3	5	2
5	2	3	6	4	1
6	3	5	1	2	4
4	1	2	5	6	3


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Professional Development

Across the Monett School District, professional learning extends beyond scheduled Professional Development Days; it represents an ongoing commitment to growth, collaboration, and putting students first. This school year, teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels have focused on strengthening instruction, refining support systems, and continuously learning how to better meet the needs of every student.

At the elementary level, professional learning has centered on building a strong understanding of the RTI (Response to Intervention) process, improving reading fluency, and supporting new teachers as they learn curriculum expectations and effective instructional practices. Teachers and instructional coaches have worked closely together, collaborating to create and share lesson plans for skill-based groups used during Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. This shared work ensures students receive consistent, targeted support while allowing teachers to learn from one another. Teachers are also participating in book studies and professional learning demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

At the secondary level, professional learning has focused on strengthening support systems, particularly at the middle school, through targeted interventions and effective instructional strategies. At the high school, teachers have focused on building-wide learning walks as a professional learning tool, using formative assessments to gain deeper insight into student learning and instructional effectiveness. These learning walks have become powerful tools for collaboration, reflection, and growth, allowing teachers to learn from one another while refining their own instructional practices.

Collaboration and innovation is evident across the district. At the Monett Elementary School, teachers implemented a daily fluency block designed to make reading both engaging and effective. Through reflection and collaboration, teachers continue to refine this practice, resulting in strong gains in reading fluency. At the middle school, the 6th grade English Language Arts team developed an intervention hour to better support students transitioning into middle school, demonstrating a proactive, student-centered approach.

Professional Learning has led to measurable gains. At the Monett Early Childhood Center, focused work on RTI resulted in 75% of kindergarten students showing proficient or advanced performance in early literacy skills. At the secondary level, 81% of 7th grade Math students achieved proficient or advanced performance in math standards, highlighting effective instruction and collaboration.

Monett teachers bring dedication, heart, and purpose to their professional learning because of their deep commitment to students. Through ongoing collaboration, reflection, and a willingness to grow, they continually strengthen their practice to support every learner. This commitment is a true reflection of The Monett Way, student-focused, collaborative, and rooted in excellence.

This dedication is felt in classrooms across the district each day. Our teachers' hard work, professionalism, and care for students continue to shape positive learning environments, and their impact reaches far beyond the school day.



Real-World Learning in Action

Planning is underway to explore a future video display scoreboard for Burl Fowler Stadium, and students are playing a leading role in the process.

During the January Board of Education meeting, members heard an overview of the project led by students in the GO CAPS Global Business and Entrepreneurism strand. Students shared that the current scoreboard, installed in 2014, no longer reflects the experience many schools now provide for students, athletes, and the community. The focus of the discussion was not about adding something “new and shiny,” but about strengthening school culture, increasing engagement, and creating opportunities that build pride in district programs.

Under the guidance of Ty Goetz, Athletic Director and Assistant Principal at Monett High School, GO CAPS students took on real-world responsibilities connected to the project. Students learned how to develop a request for proposal (RFP), research and evaluate vendors, and consider long-term needs and costs. Senior Adam Martinez and junior Jacob McCall shared how students narrowed options, coordinated presentations, and gained hands-on experience with planning a project of this scale.

Beyond athletics, a future video display scoreboard could serve multiple purposes across the district. Possible uses include student recognition, community events, live streaming activities such as graduation, enhanced sound coverage, and multimedia opportunities for students interested in broadcasting and production. Partnerships with local businesses through advertising were also discussed as the primary funding source, making the project fundraiser-supported rather than district-funded.

Following discussion, the Board approved moving forward with the bid from NEVCO, contingent upon fundraising progress and a future review at the March Board meeting. A preliminary timeline and financing approach were also shared, outlining a multi-year plan that remains subject to future Board decisions.

The discussion highlighted the value of meaningful student involvement and how projects like this connect classroom learning to real-world experience while supporting school culture and community engagement.

Community members and local businesses interested in supporting this project through donations or advertising opportunities on the future scoreboard are encouraged to contact Ty Goetz, Athletic Director and Assistant Principal at Monett High School, to learn more.



Fine Arts Festival

The Monett School District is looking forward to welcoming families and the community to the Fine Arts Festival on Saturday, February 28, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Monett High School.

The festival will feature student artwork and performances from art, band, choir, drama, and general music, giving guests a chance to see the many ways our students learn, create, and express themselves through the arts. From visual art displays to live performances, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

We invite our Monett families and community members to stop by, support our students, and celebrate the creativity that makes our fine arts programs so special.

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ART / BAND / CHOIR / DRAMA / GEN MUSIC

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10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
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MES
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Mary Aga

MHS
Carissa Smith

SRTC
Julie Southard

District
Robbie Davis

Board of Education Highlights

At the January Board of Education meeting, the Board received updates focused on student support, district operations, and academic progress.

Gifted students shared a thoughtful presentation highlighting what the gifted program means to them and how it supports learning, creativity, and confidence through activities such as problem-solving challenges, Genius Hour, and STEAM projects.

Kat Gervais provided an update on Care to Learn – Monett, sharing how the program meets urgent student needs related to health, hunger, and hygiene. The Board also recognized a generous \$70,000 donation from the Fuldner Family Foundation, which will help support student needs across the district, especially during the winter months.

Steve Garner, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, shared updates on facilities, including the completion of the SRTC welding ventilation project and IT infrastructure upgrades to support server battery backups. Appreciation was also shared for the work of the operations, maintenance, and custodial teams.

Dr. Isaac Sooter, Assistant Superintendent of Academics, provided an academic update reflecting on the first semester, highlighting positive reading and math growth across grade levels and the district's continued focus on improvement.



Did you know?

Board members serve as the link between the community and the school district, representing the interests of students, families, and taxpayers.

At Monett Schools, every decision is guided by our vision to prepare students for the future.

We are proud to grow learners, thinkers, and leaders, together with our community.

