



# MONETT



# Monthly

APRIL 1, 2026 | FACEBOOK.COM/MONETTMONTHLY

### MONETT SCHOOL BOARD

**What:** Met on March 17  
**Discussion:** Largely on next big project  
**Project:** Demolition of South Building on former campus

## South Building to come down

Old school has been used for storage since 2023

**BY JESSICA BREGER**

Special to the Monett Monthly

The March 17 Monett School Board meeting focused much of its time discussing the “next big project” in the district, the demolition of the South Building located on the former high school/middle school campus.

“We are in the process of getting that prepared pretty much ready to be demoed,” said Steve Garner, operations director.

A bid from Vaughn Construction for the demolition at \$75,000 was approved for the project. The firm also agreed to donate \$50,000 toward a new scoreboard at Burl Fowler Stadium, reducing the out-of-pocket cost to the district to \$25,000.

The building was opened in 1964 as part of the high school and was once used as part of the middle school, but has been used only as storage since the middle school changed locations in 2023.

While renovation and re-use of the building has been discussed in the past, it was determined to be too costly with no added value.

Middle school students no longer have a need to cross Ninth Street during school, and school leaders are apt to keep it that way for the safety of students.

While at least two different parking lot options are being discussed for the space, the district has no immediate plans for what to do with the space after the South Building is demolished.

Moving on to curriculum updates, the board heard updates on a program intended to expand student opportunities through language.

The Seal of Biliteracy program provides a nationally recognized distinction awarded to students who demonstrate proficiency in two or

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## CHAMBER ANNOUNCES AWARDS



Competition was fast and furious in the fish races, the entertainment at the close of the Monett Area Chamber’s banquet. Pictured are members of the Railroad Boys 7v7 team urging on their charges in the dash against the clock. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly

## Stellwagen, Drury GO, Alejandra singled out for service

**BY MURRAY BISHOFF**

Special to the Monett Monthly

The Monett Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated its biggest night with the annual membership banquet on March 5 at the Monett City Park Casino. Awards for the year were presented, outgoing board members recognized, and new board members elected.

City Commissioner Ken Gaspar served as master of ceremonies. In his opening remarks, Gaspar said, “Every community has a story. Monett’s story began as a railroad town – built on

connection, grit, and opportunity. What started as a stop along the rails grew into a community defined by hard work, resilience, and vision. Through decades of change – from agriculture to manufacturing, from small storefronts to thriving industry – this city has continued to adapt, grow, and move forward. That is the heart of our theme tonight: ‘A Tale as Old as Time.’

“Because Monett’s journey connects our past, our present, and our future. Like any timeless story, ours is one of reinventions

and heart. It’s written by businesses willing to take risks. By leaders willing to serve. And by neighbors who believe in the power of ‘we.’ Each year, we write another chapter together. Tonight, we pause to reflect on where we’ve been...to celebrate who we are...and to step forward with pride – and purpose – towards what will come next! This isn’t just a banquet. It’s a chance to honor the authors and illustrators of our community – the businesses, the leaders, the volunteers, and all the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

### CITY OF MONETT

**What:** March City Council meeting  
**Focus:** Discussions on city budget for new fiscal year  
**More:** Ordinance to put switch to Charter government on April 2027 ballot

## City meets on budget, infrastructure, rezonings

Charter form of government to go on April 2027 ballot

**BY JESSICA BREGER**

Special to the Monett Monthly

The Monett city council began its March monthly meeting with discussions on the city budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Officials said the major infrastructure project for the year will be updating internet infrastructure for the city.

In new business, the council discussed multiple re-zoning issues approving the progress to rezone an industrial area known as Callan’s Addition to reflect its current commercial use.

The area is currently zoned for industrial use, so council members said the rezoning is simply to reflect the area’s actual current use.

The council also held a second reading to move forward with phase two of the rezoning of North Hill subdivision located between 17th Street and H Highway on the Lawrence County line.

The first reading for this item was held in January of 2026, noting that the project will be placing duplex style housing in the area.

Council approved the final plat for both phase one and phase two of the North Hills Subdivision allowing the project to move forward.

The council also made a motion on the ongoing attempt to restructure the city government.

Council members once again approved an ordinance of the city directing that the question “Shall a Commission be Chosen to Frame a Charter?” and the list of candidates for that commission be submitted to the voters to provide for the initiation of the process to explore whether Monett should become a constitutional charter city, and directing that the question “shall a commission be chosen to frame a charter?” and the list of candidates for that commission be placed on the ballot for the local election in April of 2027.

This initiative was brought forward during the city council

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FOCUSED ON MONETT – NEWS, SPORTS, COMMUNITY DELIVERED MONTHLY

# REVIVE

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Food Truck Friday on April 3

Food Truck Friday will be this Friday, April 3, starting at 11 a.m. at the Glen and Sharon Garrett Pavilion on Front Street. Sound The Alarm and The Mixtapes will play live music from 5:30-9 p.m.

### Mixtapes playing at VFW April 3

The Mixtapes will perform at VFW Post 4207, located at 5400 Hwy. 60, in Monett on Friday, April 3 starting at 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.

### Eggstravaganza on Saturday, April 4

New Site Baptist Church, located at 1925 Farm Road 1060 in Monett, will host the Eggstravaganza egg hunt on Saturday, April 4 starting at 1 p.m. The Monett Fire Department will perform the first ever egg drop. There will also be a petting zoo, snacks and egg hunts for grades 5 and below.

### Lacoba Homes hosting Egg Hunt April 4

Lacoba Homes, located at 850 Hwy. 60 in Monett, will host an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4 beginning at 10 a.m. Different age group hunts will be held, and drinks and snacks will be provided.

### Pancake breakfast at FUMC on April 5

First United Methodist Church, located at 1600 N. Central Ave. in Monett, will host an Easter Morning Pancake Breakfast starting at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, April 5. Funds raised will support the church's summer mission trips.

### Blood Drive on April 6

The American Red Cross will host the Monett Area Blood Drive on Monday, April 6 from 1-6 p.m. at Connection Point Church - Fellowship Hall, located at 700 E. Sycamore St. in Monett. People may call 1-800-733-2767 or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter "MONETT" to schedule an appointment. Donors will receive a T-shirt while supplies last.

### Senior Center hosting Wellness Event April 17

The Monett Senior Center, located at 405 Dairy St. in Monett, will host a Wellness event on Friday, April 17 at 12:30 p.m. The program is "Integrity Home Care+Hospice Hosts: Hydration & Succulents," will give information on the importance of staying hydrated, and participants will plant a succulent to take home.

### Monett Speedway opens season April 18

The Monett Speedway "Grand 'Ol Lady" will host its opening night on Saturday, April 18, with grandstands opening at 5 p.m., hot-laps at 6:30 p.m. and racing to follow. The Speedway is located at 685 Chapell Drive in Monett. Admission is \$10 for adults (12+), and children 12-and-under are free with a paid adult. Admission for seniors (62+) is \$5. Racing classes include B Mods, Midwest Mods, Pure Stocks and Bombers.

### Annual Spring Salad Luncheon on April 22

The St. Lawrence Parish Council of Catholic Women will host the Annual Spring Salad Luncheon on Wednesday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the St. Lawrence parish Hall, located at 405 7th Street in Monett. The cost is \$10 at the door. People may shop with local vendors and dine in or carry out. Proceed benefit the Monett Historical Museum and St. Lawrence School.

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



An exhibit on the garden clubs of Monett is on display at the Monett History Museum. Jessica Breger/Special to the Monett Monthly



# Spring into the Museum

## Monett garden clubs display ongoing

JESSICA BREGER

Special to the Monett Monthly

The Monett Historical Society and Museum jumped into spring this March with a focus on plants in Monett.

The Museum features a new display exploring the garden clubs of Monett, while the March membership meeting for the organization centered around the city's history as a strawberry hub.

Strawberries were among the first commercial crops introduced in Southwest Missouri during the 1880s alongside the implementation of refrigerated produce carts on the Frisco Railroad.

With the Frisco Railroad and its refrigerated carts combined with the Railway Ice Company which produced approximately 160 tons of ice per day, Monett was uniquely equipped to become a leading hub for shipping the fruit all across the nation.

The 1920s were considered to be the heyday of the strawberry industry in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas.

It was at this time Monett became

known as the Strawberry Capital of the World as farmers throughout Berry county would meet in Monett during strawberry season to ship their produce.

Presenter Jim Randall, a Monett attorney, spoke on four generations of raising strawberries with railroad connections within the city.

The meeting had the highest attendance in recent history with more than 80 people gathering to hear about Monett's fruitful history.

In the museum, the newest display gave a look into the garden clubs that were once a staple in the community.

The exhibit centers around a flower display designed and made by our own Carol Kay specially for the museum to showcase what the clubs of the past would present in shows.

Consisting of mainly women in the community the garden clubs would enter into national competitions on growing flowers and produce as well as creating floral arrangements.

While some clubs still remained through the early 2000s, the height of the garden clubs was said to be in the 1950's through the 1960's.

With more women staying in the home at those times, garden clubs served as both community connections

and educational opportunities.

Members not only entered in competitions, but also learned gardening and farming techniques and nutritional advancements in social settings.

The display showcases yearbooks from each of the eight garden clubs that existed in Monett during their peak as well as albums which hold photos and awards from local gardeners.

Guests are welcome to browse the books to find their friends and family members, many of whom are still living in Monett today.

While the garden clubs of Monett have fallen to the wayside in recent years, museum staff did note that similar competition and learning opportunities are still available with organizations such as the Master Gardeners club through the University of Missouri Extension.

The public is invited to learn more about local history and personal connection at the Te Monett Historical Society monthly membership meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Monett Museum 422 E. Broadway St.

The Museum is open five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

## Council: Goal still to form 13-member commission

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cil meeting in September 2025 and approved in the November 2025 meeting, during which the council proposed a list of candidates for that commission be placed on the ballot for the local election in April of 2026.

The original proposal was canceled during the February 2026 meeting after failing to meet needed criteria.

The goal is to place a 13 member charter commission. During the first attempt, 25 applications

were taken, only 14 were submitted. Of the 14 submitted, 2 applicants withdrew and one was denied due to insufficient signatures.

The matter was discussed during the January 22 city work session where options were discussed to move forward.

Ultimately, it was determined that the issue should be placed before voters in 2027 with the belief of council members that time restraints were the largest issue that caused the initial failure.

Mayor Randy Burke noted that the timing of the proposal may have had an impact on the results.

He explained that he believed the timing of the request for participation may have been a hindrance as the initial attempt was held in a short period of time of the holiday season when people were already overwhelmed.

The new hope is that given a year for citizens to research and consider the issue, enough qualified candidates can be found to form

the charter commission and move forward with the restructuring.

As this was a first reading of the updated motion and the city attorney was not in attendance during the March meeting, the issue will be discussed further during upcoming council meetings.

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.

## 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](mailto:monettmonthly@outlook.com).

# MONETT Monthly

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**ABOUT**  
Monett Monthly is delivered on the first full week of each month to numerous businesses in Monett. The publication is free, and additional copies are available at the Cassville Democrat office.

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## HALL OF FAME WORTHY



Daryl Bradley, left, former Monett wrestling coach, and Ben Hohensee, right, current Monett wrestling head coach, embrace one of their wrestlers after a win at the state tournament. Bradley is being inducted into the Missouri Wrestling Association's Hall of Fame on April 26 in Columbia. Hohensee was a wrestler for Monett during one of the state championships for which Bradley was head coach. Jared Lankford/sports@monett-times.com

### BIG 8 AWARDS

**What:** Three Monett athletes earn honors  
**Who:** Jack Stephens, Kilee Wilson and Meredith Merriman  
**More:** Full teams listed

## Trio of athletes graced with awards

Cubs, Lady Cubs collect Big 8 honors

BY JARED LANKFORD

monettsports@gmail.com

The high school basketball season has officially ended in Missouri, but the time for award has just begun

For the Monett Cubs and Lady Cubs, their hard work on the hardwood has paid off with a pair of Big 8 All-Conference awards.

On the boys' side Monett's Jack Stephens earned Honorable Mention accolades.

On the girls' All-Big 8 team Kilee Wilson landed a Second Team nod, with Meredith Merriman named to the Honorable Mention team.

The Big 8 All-Conference boys team is as follows:

#### First Team

Nevada: Mason Majors, senior

McDonald County: Cael Carlin, senior

East Newton: Caden Youngblood, senior

Mt. Vernon: Hunter Conway, senior

Nevada: Kellen Braden, senior

#### Second Team

Aurora: Thomas Lara, senior

East Newton: Kaden Cole, junior

Lamar: Talon Timmons, senior

Mt. Vernon: Hunter Dawson, senior

Cassville: Tyson Bohmke, senior

#### Honorable Mention

East Newton: Ethan Bales, junior

Monett: Jack Stephens, junior

Nevada: Sean Simmons, senior

Mt. Vernon: Griffin Cordray, sophomore

Lamar: Jude Harris, junior

Coch of the Year: Shaun Gray, Nevada

Player of the Year: Mason Majors, Nevada

The Big 8 All-Conference girls team is as follows:

#### First Team

McDonald County: Dakota O'Brien, junior

McDonald County: Jamie Washam, senior

Nevada: Grace Anderson, sophomore

Nevada: Cora Braden, sophomore

Cassville: Alex Holycross, sophomore

Mt. Vernon: Ellie Eddington, freshman

#### Second Team

McDonald County: Carlie Martin, senior

Monett: Kilee Wilson, senior

Nevada: Lucy Swearingin, junior

Cassville: Audrey Kennedy, junior

East Newton: Sylvia Larsen, sophomore

#### Honorable Mention

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# Bradley selected for wrestling Hall of Fame

BY JARED LANKFORD

monettsports@gmail.com

It was never a consideration.

At no time did the thought of career honors or personal glory — let alone a hall of fame induction — cross the mind of Daryl Bradley when he entered in the coaching field and began at Monett High School.

Over 23 years, two decades of which he spent as the head coach of the Monett wrestling program, Bradley guided the Monett wrestling team to 134 state qualifiers, 25 state champions, 10 High School All-Americans and three State Championships in 2008, 2019 and 2020. Bradley won numerous awards as a wrestling coach, including the Missouri Coaches Association's State Wrestling Coach of the Year in 2019.

He can now add Hall of Fame Coach to his resume, as he will be inducted into the Missouri Wrestling Association's Hall of Fame on April 26 in Columbia.

"I'm just humbled and honored," Bradley said. "I never thought about being in a hall of fame. But to be recognized for the effort is a wonderful

### HALL OF FAME

**Who:** Daryl Bradley, former Monett wrestling coach

**What:** Is being inducted into the Missouri Wrestling Association's Hall of Fame

**More:** Bradley led Cubs to three state titles

feeling."

The Missouri Wrestling Association (formerly the Missouri Wrestling Coaches Association) is comprised of over 250 member schools.

Candidates for the Hall of Fame must be out of coaching for five years and then be nominated by a member school in good standing.

The names and short biography are then submitted on a ballot to the entire membership, and the top three nominees receiving votes are then selected for induction.

Bradley said his prospective about coaching changed while at Monett. It started out about winning and then morphed into something much deeper and meaningful.

"It was different time when I came

to Monett," Bradley said. "I came out of Oklahoma, and winning was the main thing. I started out wanting to just get kids on the podium. I pushed them and coached them hard. Then, I realized, it is nice win, but I wanted to help these boys become better men. Set goals and help them reach that. It became more than just wins and losses. It became about building a better person. It became about a relationship."

Bradley said it is those relationships that give him the most joy today.

"As I look back on my time at Monett, I am thankful for all the long lasting relationships with players and parents that I developed over the years," he said. "That to me is bigger than anything we ever won. Seeing those boys become men and now watching them as adults means everything to me. I have lots of friends in Monett and still spend time with them when I come back to town. I am so thankful for every opportunity that Monett gave to me."

Bradley began his career in Monett as elementary physical education teach-

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## Monett soccer off and running

### Lady Cubs seeking to keep things up tempo

BY JARED LANKFORD

monettsports@gmail.com

The spring soccer season is off and running, and Monett looks to grow with a solid group of returning talent and a focus on fitness and fast-paced play.

Head Coach Neil Bluel, entering his 12th season leading the Lady Cubs and 19th year overall, will rely on six returning starters — all of whom earned varsity letters last season — to anchor a team looking to compete with anyone on the schedule.

Leading the attack at for-

ward are seniors Jacelyn Arreola and Lilliana Merida, both expected to play key roles in generating scoring opportunities. In the mid-field, the Lady Cubs will blend experience with fresh energy, as senior Valeria Hernandez teams up with newcomer Yoselin Alberto, a junior stepping into a significant role.

"We are always looking to get into better tactically in the game of soccer," Bluel said. "We are always looking at how to most efficiently work the ball up to the forwards for them to get into scoring position."

Defensively, sophomore Yarielys Cordero is poised for a breakout year, while McKenzie Waterman,

also a sophomore, returns as the starting goalkeeper. Waterman earned the position as a freshman and has shown notable improvement during the offseason, giving the team confidence between the posts.

Leadership will be a cornerstone for Monett this season, with senior Merida and Milly Villa guiding the team. Their experience and on-field skill set the tone for a squad aiming to grow both technically and tactically according to Bluel.

"We have a tough beginning of the season and look to build off our experiences," Bluel said. "We have a good Branson tournament right away giving us a good look at

lots of different teams we may not normally play."

One of the team's biggest strengths will be conditioning. The Lady Cubs are emphasizing a high-energy approach, particularly in the opening minutes of matches.

"We want to come out strong and overwhelm teams early," Bluel said. "There is room for growth. Improving tactical awareness and overall soccer IQ will be key areas of focus as the team works to move the ball efficiently and create scoring chances."

The Lady Cubs will face an early test with a challenging start to the season, highlighted by a trip to the Branson tournament. The competition

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# LOCAL

## LOCAL DEVOTIONAL

# The importance of resurrection

The 15th Chapter of I Corinthians is one of the greatest passages in the entire Bible.

It is about the importance of the resurrection to our faith and salvation. Verse 17 says it plainly, "If Christ hasn't been raised, then your faith (our faith) is worthless; you are still in your sins."

Many have been mistakenly given to believe that our faith and salvation centers on the death of Jesus and not necessarily on resurrection. We frequently hear Christians say, "The central message of the Gospel is 'Jesus died for our sins, so we might go to heaven.'"

While that is part of the story, it is not the whole story. Of course, one

cannot have resurrection without a prior death.

However, Jesus came or was sent not only to forgive us our sins. God had been doing that for a long time before Jesus ever became known. What humankind most needed was not more forgiveness, but rather an answer for the penalty of sin which is death. The truth is that we can be forgiven and still remain unchanged. That is the story of the Old Testament.

The New Testament story is that Jesus Christ not only forgives sins, but by His resurrection He forever defeats sins and death. By defeat we mean He entirely eliminates them from the equation. Sin is made powerless by

God's grace and eternal death is overcome by Jesus' resurrection.

All of this is happening Now, for this present moment. We do not need to wait to be changed from sinner to saint, mortal to immortal, from death to eternal life. It has all been done before and for us by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection there is no victory for Jesus, nor for us.

"If Christ hasn't been raised then your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." Verse 17.

I particularly like what James Bryan Smith writes about this in his little book, "Hidden In."

"Death is the great enemy, but it has been

defeated. Sin is the great destroyer, but it too has been defeated. Both of those menaces have been defeated by the greatest event the world has ever witnessed: the resurrection of Jesus. Every single issue in life, every problem we face, every hope we have-absolutely everything hinges on the resurrection of Jesus."

Jesus died our death for our sins. He rose from death to make eternal life possible.

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

## Relief Society Birthday Celebration



On March 8, International Women's Day, 50 women gathered at the Monett Missouri Stake Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to celebrate the birthday of the global women's Relief Society, founded in March 1842, to give relief to those in need. They were from the Monett Ward Relief Society, the Pierce City Ward Relief Society, and the Monett Young Single Adult Branch Relief Society. The women enjoyed dinner, a game, and a broadcast from the General Relief Society Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ, who spoke about the love and support that women receive from Jesus Christ. Camille N. Johnson, the Relief Society General President of the over 8 million members, said, "You can do hard with Jesus, or you can do hard alone. That is your choice. But when you do hard with Jesus Christ, the hard becomes holy. You become holy women." Contributed photos

## Ozark Festival Orchestra Pops Concert April 12

The Ozark Festival Orchestra will conclude its 46th season of concerts in Monett at 3 p.m. on April 12 with the annual Marty Beckwith Memorial Pops Concert, held this year at the Monett High School Performing Arts Center.

This concert is sponsored by the children of long-time OFO cellist and founding member, Marty Beckwith.

Music Director Carla Wootton takes listeners to the movies with a selection of cinematic music showpieces and a salute to the Armed Forces. For the first time, the OFO will play Trevor Jones' music from the 1992 film "The Last of the Mohicans," recreating dramatic moments including the "Elk Hunt," "The Kiss," and "Fort Battle."

Keeping in that dra-

matic mood, the OFO will play musical highlights from "Rocky," John Williams' score to "Jurassic Park," the theme from the "James Bond" films, the romance "Somewhere in Time," and the rowdy overture to "The Magnificent Seven."

Offering a favorite for audiences, the OFO will also play the "Armed Forces Salute," drawn from themes from the US Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force, and Navy. The orchestra will ask veterans from those organizations to rise and be recognized.

The OFO pops concert has traditionally been a benefit for the orchestra to help meet its annual expenses. This year the OFO will again offer a silent auction of pies

in the lobby of the performing arts center, and a live auction of specialty pies during intermission. Eating is not allowed in the auditorium, so the winners will take home their prizes for later enjoyment.

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.

The concert will be held at the Monett High School Performing Arts Center, 1 David Sippy Drive, located off East Cleveland Avenue (Business Hwy. 60) at the east end of the city, just west of the Price Cutter Supermarket, two miles north of Walmart on Hwy. 60.

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 organiza-

tion 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.

This has been an exciting season for the OFO, a press release from the organization said.

"We secured new staging that enables our brass section to project better into the audience," the release said. "We acquired new microphones to help the audience hear our soloists. A new keyboard has joined the ensemble that enables us to share the sounds of a harp as needed. The number of players has grown as musicians are drawn into our family by the excitement of performing with us. Carla Wootton has made playing challenging and fun."

## Barry County Health Corner



### Detailing the Environmental Program

The community hears about the Health Department's Environmental Program and thinks, "Oh, you mean the health inspector."

People may be familiar with our work in restaurants but do not realize the extent of all we do to ensure our community here in Barry County has access to safe and clean food, water, childcare facilities, and lodging establishments.

Yes, we are often seen in restaurants doing routine inspections of food establishments. We use these interactions to educate food service employees, based on what is seen during these inspections. With this we can improve their food safety procedures to protect the public. No food establishment wants to make their customers sick with their food practices; however, if someone has such an encounter at a food establishment a confidential complaint can be submitted to the Health Department.

Environmentalists will then conduct a prompt investigation. If our community does experience a food borne outbreak, our environmentalists are onsite to work closely with public health nurses and state officials to conduct a comprehensive investigation. When there is an emergency involving food establishments, such as power outages due to tornados, a fire or a flood event, our environmentalists are there to help ensure a safe facility.

We provide guidance for when it is safe to reopen, and the best practices to prevent food that has become compromised from being consumed by the public.

To help protect our community's drinking and recreational waters the citizens of Barry County established an ordinance in 1996 requiring property owners to effectively treat their wastewater. To facilitate clean water, our environmentalists, work with homeowners and septic installers to ensure both new and existing homes have onsite septic systems. This is important to ensure wastewater is properly treated before it gets into our drinking water, lakes, and streams.

Environmentalist issue permits for septic system installations or repairs, and conduct complaint investigations when members of the community may be having a system failure. Copies of these permitted systems are then kept on file at the Health Department and available upon request.

Individuals who are on private wells should be confident that their wells are providing safe water. A water sample can be submitted to our office for in-house testing. In addition, our environmentalists collect water samples from wells that offer water to the public on a routine basis. Changes in a home's plumbing or well pump, flooding and droughts can all have an impact on the water we drink. We recommend getting your private well tested at least once a year to ensure the water it provides is safe to drink.

Children are more likely to get sick from their environment and shared illnesses. Their bodies and immune systems are not fully developed making them more susceptible to disease and environmental hazards, such as lead, that can have lasting effects.

Our environmentalists work with the State Health Department to ensure the childcare facilities in Barry County are safe places for our children. We conduct inspections of childcare facilities to help identify safety hazards in the facilities, and educate providers on food safety and disease prevention practices to keep children safe.

To protect our community and those visiting our beautiful area of the state, our Environmentalists also work with the State Health Department to ensure lodging establishments are clean and safe. We routinely inspect lodging establishments to ensure they have the appropriate fire and building safety measures in place, pools are being maintained to prevent waterborne illnesses from occurring, and sanitary cleaning practices are being used to prevent the spread of disease and pests.

It is our goal to prevent through education, investigate with dedication and help be one small part of what makes our community a safe place to live.

*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.*

## Local Death Notices

Daniel Jimenez • Monett • Jan. 18, 1981 – Feb. 28, 2026  
 Joanna Oganeyan • Monett • Sept. 8, 1940 – March 9, 2026  
 Anna Lee Forrester • Mt. Vernon • Aug. 20, 1930 – March 12, 2026  
 Gary L. DeRosier • Monett (Ozark) • May 18, 1950 – March 14, 2026  
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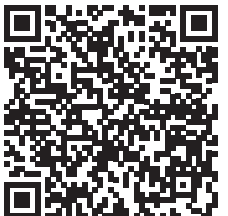
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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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Monett's Jack Stephens drives to the hoop in a Southwest Holiday Tournament game this season. Stephens was named Big 8 Honorable Mention. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com



Monett's Kilee Wilson looks for the next play during a home game this season. Wilson was named Second Team All-Big 8. Kyle Troutman/monettmonthly@outlook.com

## Big 8: Merriman earns Honorable Mention All-Conference honor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Aurora: Brooke Dixon, sophomore  
Blevins, senior Mt. Vernon: Emmie  
Lamar: Chrislyn Schubert, junior

Seneca: Olivia Haase, senior  
Cassville: Aubrey  
Stoufer, senior  
Monett: Meredith  
Merriman, senior

Coach of the year: Brad Shorter, McDonald County  
Player of the Year: Dakota O'Brien, McDonald County

## Bradley: Began career in Monett as PE teacher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

er in 2000. After serving as the athletic director for the middle school from 2006 through 2010, he became the Monett R-1 School District Activities Director in 2010.

Bradley wore many hats during his tenure at

Monett, including being a teacher and activities director: high school dean of students, head wrestling and golf coach, assistant football coach and middle school head wrestling and football coach.

Over the course of his 17 years as an athletic and activities administrator, Bradley facilitated the addition of eight sports at the high school and middle school and numerous facility additions and improvements while

Monett teams won four state championships and finished in the top four in eight others.

Bradley left Monett in 2023 and now serves as a director for the Missouri State High School Activities Association.

## Soccer: Tough schedule

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

there is expected to provide valuable experience against unfamiliar opponents.

Despite the tough schedule, expectations remain steady.

"We always expect to compete with anyone on

the field," Bluel said

With a mix of veteran leadership, emerging talent, and a commitment to fitness, Bluel believes the Lady Cubs are set to build momentum as the season unfolds.

## School: SRCT 60th anniversary celebration on April 6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

more languages. In Missouri, students must meet criteria that show they can read, write, speak, and understand a second language at a high level.

Students earn the seal in a variety of languages, including English paired with another language, as well as American Sign Language. This recognition is reflected on their diploma with a stamp and noted on a student's transcript.

Jessica McNichols, MHS ELD Teacher, said the program will be taken "a step further" with the school's BRIDGE

program.

"So, we're actually creating a course that will house this program in it," McNichols said.

She went on to explain that this program would help to open up internship opportunities for students in areas such as translating in different capacities within the community.

According to the school, the program will include a structured student selection process, similar to GO CAPS, and will be embedded into the school day through a double-blocked schedule.

During the first semester, students will build foundational skills such as communication, professionalism, and confidentiality.

During the second semester, students will transition into internship experiences, where they will have the opportunity to work within the community and apply their language skills in real-world settings. The program will be open to any student who meets the qualifications.

Monett Superintendent Dr. Mark Drake took a moment at the opening of the board

meeting to recognize the work of board members, marking School Board Recognition Month in Missouri

"This is school board appreciation month," Drake said. "Obviously, the people that are in here know how valuable of a school board member they are. I would just like to say to you guys. You're obviously not getting paid. You're having to make lots of difficult decisions. You're having to talk to community members, balanced community, community, ideas, school ideas and come

up with the best decisions for kids.

"We appreciate everything you do and it's a thankless job and I believe that when I talk to other people in the area that is the sentiment, you do a great job, a very high-functioning effective board that is always keeping kids first in every decision. So thank you for everything you guys do."d

The board also recognized upcoming board events which include a celebration for the SRCT 60th anniversary on April 6 and its next monthly board meeting on April 21 which will also serve as the annual organizational meeting.

The School Board will meet at 6 p.m. at the Administrative Meeting Room located at the District Office.

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# Monett Fire Department turns 120

Firefighting efforts grow with the times, resources

**BY MURRAY BISHOFF**

Special to the Monett Monthly

The Monett Fire Department marked its 120th anniversary on March 27, commemorating the occasion with a department dinner, and looking back at the history of the department's humble beginnings and consistent growth.

With Monett forming its city government in 1888, the lack of an organized fire department until 1906 seemed odd in retrospect. Current Fire Chief Brandon

Pennington recalls seeing a reference to a major fire in 1905 that could have been the motivating factor.

Records kept by the fire department refer to a Southwest Firemen's tournament in Webb City in June 1905. Lawson Jeffries, who became Monett's first fire chief, and 19 other men competed for the city, using a steel ball bearing hose cart borrowed from the City of Aurora. They placed fourth in the 100-yard horse race, third in the hub, and second in the hub race. There's nothing like local rivalry to inspire innovation. The date of establishment comes from the City Council passing Ordinance No.

183. Where the first fire station was located is unclear. Some records suggest it was attached to the rear of Monett's original city hall, located where Station No. 1 is today. By one account, when the city government needed more room for offices, the fire department was moved to Wagner's Garage, located where the city parking lot is today at Sixth and Broadway.

In 1909, a livery stable was added to house a fire wagon and two horses, Max and Jack. The horses were supposed to "work the streets" to keep them fit for fire runs. According to one account, Max was "wind broken" and could be heard coming before the fire wagon was in sight.

Firefighters could appear in the street and try to flag down the fire wagon for a trip to the fire. Another account stated, "Every time the fire alarm would go off, the team of horses would head for the Martin Hotel [the future home of Jumping-Jacks Shoes, on the east side of Fourth Street south of what would become Kelly Creek], because there had been so many fires there, and it was all they could do to turn the horses to keep them from going there."

The first chief was paid \$100 a year. The volunteer firemen were paid \$2 a run, more later on if water was poured. One of the few surviving name-dropping stories from those early days said, "The Clinton brothers were the fastest men on the department, and Pee Wee Bowman was the smallest," all key qualities for success.

One newspaper



Here is the fire department's 1958 ladder truck, acquired in 1985. Contributed photo



Here is the Monett Fire Department's first rescue truck, seen as it arrived in December 1976. Pictured with it, from left, were Winnie Atwell, Jim Nolan, and Brooks Ham. Contributed photo

account from April 1909 stated, "The fire department boys made a trial run Sunday night with the fire wagon. The small team hitched to it ran with ease with the wagon brake on. The wagon carried 1,000 feet of hose, coupled and ready," an upgrade from the original 300 feet of hose, "and several of the firemen. It is a heavy-looking affair, but it is ball bearing [equipped] and so perfectly adjusted that it takes little power to run it. The alarm will be turned in at the barn at the same time it is at the city hall, and by the time any of the firemen arrive, the team will be ready to start. This will be a great improvement over the old days, when the boys had to wait until enough arrived to haul the cart. Then, after a tiresome run, they would be tired at the start of the actual fire-fighting. Then they also had to endure the jeers of a crowd who hooted at the fire appliances provided by the city."

In 1916 the department saw an upgrade with the purchase of a 1915 REO chain-driven truck, which did not have a pump and carried no water. It had a ladder, an axe, and some hose. According to firefighter Walt Feehan, "when the new truck was delivered, the old station and horse stalls were cleaned out, although it still smelled like a livery stable. Chief T.D. Pitts had a room upstairs, and he had to sleep downstairs where the truck was kept. He says that the old

fire station was full of rats, and for entertainment, he used to lay on his cot and wait for the rats to stick their heads out of holes, and he would shoot them with his .22 caliber rifle."

In 1922, the city bought a 1922 REO truck, which had a 500-gallon-per-minute pump and 1,000 feet of hose, but still carried no water. In 1931, under Chief Henry Planchon and Assistant Chief William Burrous, they built a tank to hold 100 gallons of water, added a booster reel with 150 feet of hose, and a 28-foot extension ladder.

The history of the department is measured in its men and its equipment.

Lawson Jeffries, who had an active business, only stayed as chief four years. T.D. Pitts followed for a year. George Patterson wore the top hat from 1911-1916, then Ed Wagner was chief from 1916-1928. The department stabilizes under Henry Planchon, who served as chief from 1929-1959. When the current city hall was built in 1929, Planchon, his assistant chief, and their families moved into the fire station section, serving as round-the-clock staff.

It is said the staircase leading to the quarters upstairs at the fire station was built at sharp right angles to keep the horses from climbing them. The horses may have been retired by then, but the story endures.

O.A. Manes, an assistant chief, succeeded

Planchon for a decade. Between 1929 and the early 1960s, a total of 70 men served as either firefighters or volunteers.

Equipment steps up in 1939 when the city council, under Mayor V.B. Hall, bought a 1939 Dodge truck, deemed to be "the first white truck in this section of the country," a tradition that lasted into the 1960s. This truck had a 500-gallon-per-minute pump, 150 gallons of water, and 1,200 feet of hose. The 1922 REO truck was kept in reserve. In 1944, when trucks were hard to find due to the war, the city took a 1940 Dodge truck used for Works Project Administration jobs, attached a tanker to it, and converted it to a fire truck, trading in the REO truck in the process. The city used this makeshift fire truck until 1951, when it purchased a two-ton GMC chassis and had a wide truck made of it. The 1939 Dodge was traded in 1955 for a Ford F800, a new front-line truck. The 1955 truck, unfortunately, was broadsided by a car in 1959. It was traded in for a 1960 Chevrolet chassis, which was then made into a fire truck.

In 1982, the city took delivery of a 1951 Seagrave 85 Service aerial truck. The department purchased a Pierce pumper in 1988 and has stuck with Pierce trucks ever since.

In April 1954, the city acquired a two-way Motorola radio system. The base was installed in what is the office of Station No. 1. The base station could transmit signals out about 50 miles and had separate channels for police and the Highway Patrol. Mobile units were installed in the 1951 GMC fire truck. The call letters for the base station were KAG-801.

A new radio system went into use in March 1980. The new base was located in the northwest corner of the city hall, which had originally been part of the public library. It stayed there until the Monett Police Station moved its operations

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# LOCAL



Here is a photo of Monett's 1915 REO fire truck, made by the Hale Fire Company. Walt Feehan is the driver, accompanied by John Mansfield. Contributed photo



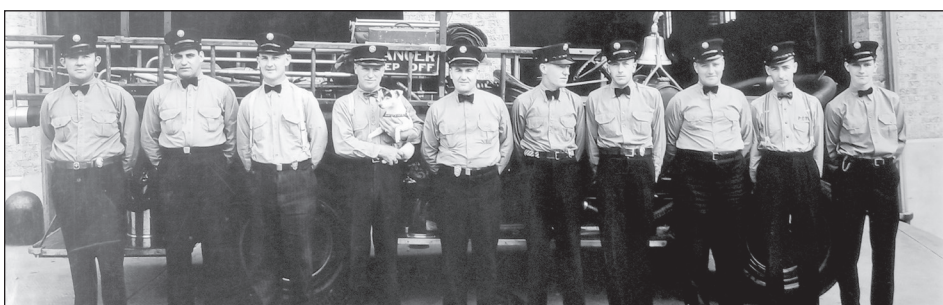
Here is the city's first radio base, set up in April 1954, in Station No. 1 office. According to retired chief Tom Jones, the electrical panel on the brick wall at right is still there, under the current paneling. Pictured, from left, are: Police Chief Dan Macdonald, Assistant Chief O.A. Manes standing, Assistant Chief Mike Mayer at the controls, and Mayor L.G. Jones. Contributed photo



Here is the Monett fire department's first "modern" fire truck, a 1939 Dodge, that served the city for decades. Contributed photo



Here is the famous photo from one of Logan McKee's post-cards of the Monett fire truck in action, pulled by horses Max and Jack, in 1909, in front of what is today Bruner's Pharmacy and buildings owned by Mike Brownsberger on the south side of Broadway, west of Fourth Street. Contributed photo



Here's the Monett fire department around 1930, in front of the new city hall. Pictured, from left, are: John Schultz, Francis Wallner, Jess Scoby, Assistant Chief Bill Burrows, Chief Henry Planchon, Sock Scott, George Gregory, Sherman DeBross, Pete Wagner, and Charles Main Jr. Contributed photo

across the street in 1991 to the old Monett Times building at 212 Fifth Street. The fire department radio then switched back to the original office in the fire station.

In 1961, the Missouri Inspection Bureau, the precursor for the Insurance Services Office (ISO), advised the city to upgrade its water mains, fire hydrants, hire a 10th volunteer, and purchase a 45-foot extension ladder. All these steps were taken, lowering the insurance rating to a 7 for most of the city. The 45-foot ladder came in three sections and took six men to raise it.

"There's a lot more training today," Chief Pennington said. "It was all in-house or on-the-job training where my grandpa [Jim Nolan] was chief. Everything is changing these days, sometimes every year. Fires are more toxic now, full of plastics. A flashover used to take a long time then. Now fire temperatures ramp up quickly. Citizens expect us to be training. When they are having their worst day, we bring chaos to calm."

One of Pennington's innovations has been to replace mutual aid with automatic aid. If there's one alarm, Freistatt, Pierce City, Purdy, and Monett Rural come to help. A second alarm will bring four more departments, and a third alarm will bring four more. In a major incident, Pennington stressed, timing is crucial. He observed it's easier to call off help

than to mobilize it in an emergency.

In the city's 1971 comprehensive plan, the idea for a second fire station south of the railroad tracks surfaces, as Monett's Industrial Park became busier. Among Chief Nolan's notes was a list of major fires and deaths that occurred since 1960. In that list were two children killed in one house fire south of the railroad tracks before there was an easy way to get to Marshall Hill. Pennington said that fire "haunted my grandpa," and Nolan began pushing for that second station south of the tracks in November 1982. It finally opened in 1996, three years after Nolan retired, the same year the city bought its current ladder truck.

Now Pennington is pushing to have a third station opened just west of North Park on Hwy. 37. The city council is listening and supporting the idea of building a new access road across the north of North Park to Hwy. H, offering quick access by firefighters to houses on the north side of town. Pennington hopes it doesn't take another 20 years, as it did for his grandfather, to see that new station built.

All that takes money. Pennington will be the first to concede costs are much more today. Single-layer bunker gear in the 1960s cost \$1,500. Today's bunker gear, with three layers, costs \$4,000 to \$5,000, and it has to be replaced every

10 years. Self-contained breathing apparatuses used to be seldom used, in part because they had to be sent to Springfield to be refilled. Today, they are essential equipment. Station No. 2 has its own cascading device for refilling the air.

A 60-foot ladder truck in the 1980s cost \$14,500. The city just placed an order for a new ladder truck to replace the 30-year-old truck now in use, for \$1.8 million, with a 107-foot ladder.

In 1906, the city had two full-time firefighters. Two years after Station No. 2 opened, the city boosted staffing to two people on duty at the downtown station and three at the Industrial Park. That staffing level has remained for 28 years. Now the department has 16 full-time firefighters and two part-timers, five per shift, working 48 hours on and 96 hours off. Adding a third station would boost staffing to an additional four people per shift, adding 12 more people to the payroll.

"The city has been good to us," Pennington stressed. "Benefits are the biggest kicker. We're getting there."

"Everything me and my time are doing is to benefit the city and the citizens, to lower the ISO rating and be prepared at a moment's notice. We're like a life insurance policy. You don't need us until you do. It's time to start doing the Pride and Progress that's on those water towers," he added.



Here's a look at Monett's first major fire disaster, the destruction of the Harvey House hotel and the original train station on Sept. 24, 1914. The fire department did not have the resources to stop this blaze. Contributed photo

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# LOCAL



The team from Drury GO in Monett accepted the Pride and Progress Award at the Chamber banquet. Pictured from left, are: José Mondragon, Jasmine Canales, Kristi Chapman, Cooper Massey, and Rhonda Schilly, with presenter Heidi Clark from Cox Monett Hospital at right. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly



Jane Saunders, at left, and her mother, Laura Saunders, sang the National Anthem to open the Monett Area Chamber of Commerce banquet. Jane provided a strong voice and charmed the crowd with her poise and presentation. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly

Clark Industries received the Big Business of the Year Award at the Monett Area Chamber of Commerce banquet. President Jack Schulz at right received the honor from Heather Van Note. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly



Dustin Stellwagen, left, received the 2026 Monett Community Service Award, presented by Donna Beckett. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly



The Small Business of the Year went to Briar House Brewing Company, a newer entry to the Monett downtown scene, owned and run by Matt and Rawn Batson. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly



New members of the Monett Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors were selected at the annual membership meeting on March 4. The slate of candidates was introduced by master of ceremonies Ken Gaspar, far right, as he congratulated the group. Pictured, from left, are: alternate Treanna Daughtery, new board member Kristi Chapman, alternate Jared Barchak, and new board members Jake Saffer and Bryan Taylor. New board member Michael Roberts was absent. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly



Alejandra Ortega, left, received the Young Professional of the Year Award. It was presented by Cory Hartman, last year's recipient. Murray Bishoff/Special to the Monett Monthly

## Chamber: Drury Go wins Pride and Progress Award

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

partners who helped shape and continue to develop Monett's future every single day."

The program opened with Dr. Tom Trent, chief medical officer with Cox Monett Hospital, sharing a welcome. He noted, "At Cox Monett, we recognize success is measured by the growth of our community. Today we take a moment to show the strides we've made as a healthcare provider." A brief video, narrated by hospital president Andrea McKay, followed.

The National Anthem was sung by Laura Saunders and her small daughter, Jane, who gave a very spirited rendition. The Saunders are part of the family that runs Great Dave's Coffee.

The meal was catered by B&N Concessions.

### Community Service Award

The top honor, the Chamber's Community Service Award, given for making a longstanding contribution to the community, went to Dustin Stellwagen, a Monett native who has been a member of the Monett Fire Department since 2003, and full-time since 2005, now serving as deputy chief. In addition to helping coach the high school football team for six years,

Stellwagen has taught the Big Red fire prevention course to Monett school children since 2005. He also helps with Special Olympics.

More recently, Stellwagen has led the department's annual fundraiser for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This past year he expanded the effort with the "Hunt for a Cause" scavenger hunt activity event, which raised more than \$14,000 for the Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks.

In accepting the award, Stellwagen, the youngest recipient of the Chamber's highest honor, said he had been drawn to the breast cancer issue by personal experience helping a Monett woman in her final battle. He hopes to expand the hunt next year to include a procession of survivors down Broadway. Getting recognized for his efforts, he noted, was a different experience, as he said, "I do stuff behind closed doors. I love helping."

Donna Beckett, a past Community Service Award winner, made the presentation.

### Pride and Progress Award

The Pride and Progress

Award, offered for a significant but short-term contribution to the community. This year's honor went to the Drury GO University campus in Monett for hosting a multi-cultural showcase on Oct. 18. It was Drury's first foray into such a public event, emphasizing the many cultures in the Monett community.

In announcing the award, Andrea McKay from Cox Monett Hospital outlined the achievement, as read by Heidi Clark, nursing executive with the hospital. "This year, we celebrate an event that not only highlighted the beautiful diversity of Monett, but also brought our community closer together," McKay referred specifically to the "culture and community" showcase Drury hosted on Oct. 18.

"This event," McKay continued, "featured cultural presentations, performances, and displays from multiple cultural groups, including those representing Myanmar, Nepal, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines, and many more. It was an extraordinary celebration of cultures that make Monett and the surrounding communities so vibrant."

"Drury GO's contribution to our community has

made a real difference. They have not only provided a platform for diverse cultural expressions but have also shown us the power of coming together to celebrate what unites us, rather than what divides us," McKay concluded.

Rhonda Schilly, senior director of Drury's Monett GO campus, accepted the award with several of her colleagues. She asked members of the audience to stand who were Drury graduates, had family or someone close who had benefited from the Drury experience.

"This is how we do what we do," Schilly said. "All of you are part of the story we are telling. Thank you for supporting our big ideas, our crazy dreams. We are so proud to be part of this community."

### Young Professional of the Year Award

The Young Professional of the Year award went to Alejandra Ortega, who works at First State Bank of the Ozarks as assistant cashier and also teaches. In presenting the award, Cory Hartman, last year's winner, identified Ortega as a 2021 Drury graduate who has been with the bank since 2017. "She is also very involved in the community, serving both on the Cox (Monett) Advisory board, the Monett Young Professional Network board, and teaching [religious education classes] at St. Lawrence Catholic

School, where she teaches fourth through sixth grade."

Ortega, clearly surprised by the recognition, expressed thanks for the support she has received "to do this for the community."

### Business awards

The Big Business of the Year Award, chosen from a slate of choices presented to the membership, went to Clark Industries. Jack Schulz, company president, called the award "a great honor." Schulz said the business had struggled in recent years, but he added that, "If you keep your nose to the grindstone, ask customers what they want, things happen," resulting in a major boom for the company.

Heather Van Note, representing last year's winner, Schreiber Foods, made the presentation.

The Small Business of the Year went to Briar House Brewing Company, a newer entry to the Monett downtown scene, owned and run by Matt and Rawn Batson. David Saunders from Great Dave's Coffee, presented the award "from one brewer to another."

Chamber business Outgoing members of the Chamber board received plaques for their term of service. Coming forward to accept their honor were Kevin Jones and Matt Batson, along with Brad Hill, who was recognized as a past pres-

ident, stepping into that role when President Mary Dutton resigned. His plaque included a gavel in recognition of that service.

Hill's service, as it turns out, has not ended, despite receiving the plaque. Having completed only two years of his three-year term, Hill asked to stay on the board. Heather Van Note, who came on the board in December as an alternate when Cassie Branch resigned as president-elect, agreed to step aside to allow Hill to continue, though not as an officer.

Andrea McKay was also recognized for her three years on the board, but was absent.

The six candidates placed up for the four open seats on the Chamber board were summoned to the stage. Although the results of voting by those present were not announced, joining as full board members were Kristi Chapman from Drury GO, Jake Saffer from Jack Henry, Bryan Taylor from B&N Concession, and Michael Roberts from Roberts Family Eyecare. Treanna Daughtery from Arc of the Ozarks and Jared Barchak from EFCO were named as alternates.

### Entertainment

The banquet had an unusual post-business attraction, in the form of fish races, a feature previously undertaken at the Mt. Vernon Chamber of Commerce banquet. Two lengthy fish tanks, each with two lanes, offered a chance to race fish against the clock from one end to the other.

The event served as a fundraiser for the Railroad Boys 7v7 touch football team, whose members volunteered to be "auctioned" as jockeys, using a straw to blow air or squirt guns to encourage the fish. Professional auctioneers Jason and Britini Bates ran the event and the auction. The 16 fish in the races raised \$2,910. The boys earned \$750 to help their team from their efforts.

A strategically placed camera enabled bidders to watch the races from screens in different locations around the room.

Chamber executive director Jasmine Burks coordinated the evening.

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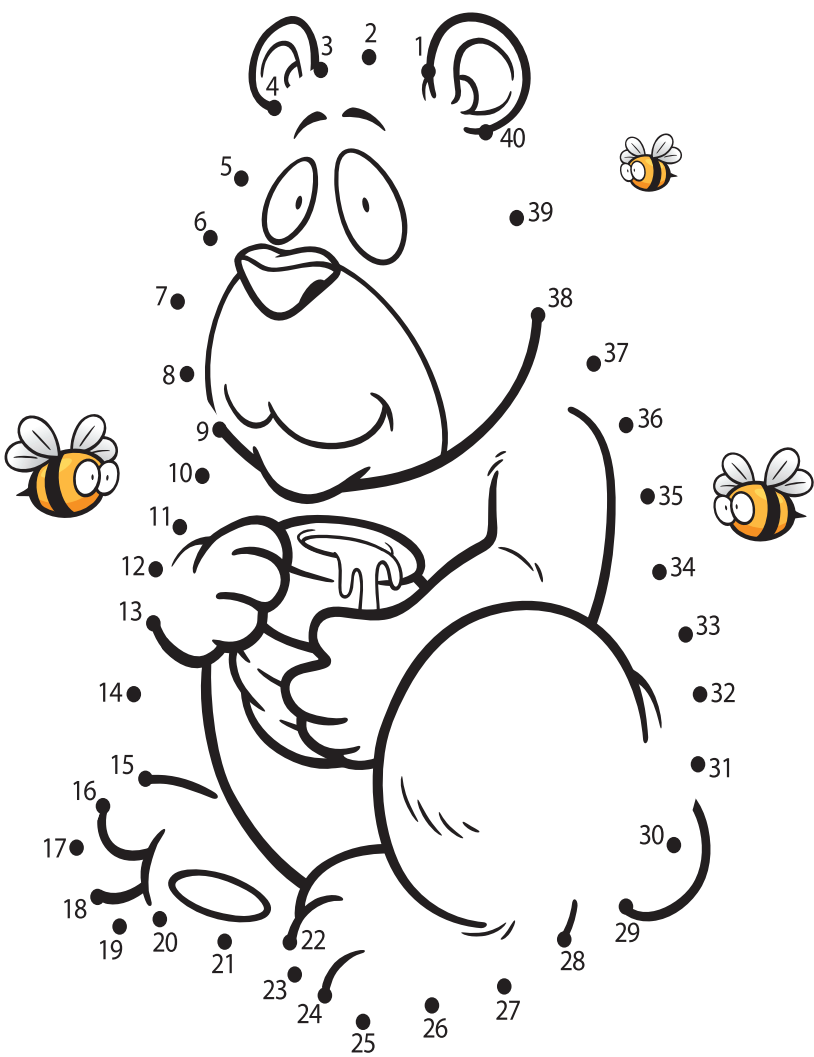
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# DOT TO DOT



## JUST kidding

**Q:** How does a cucumber become a pickle?  
**A:** It goes through a pickling experience.



## JUST kidding

**Q:** What musical instrument is found in the bathroom?  
**A:** A tuba toothpaste.



## JUST kidding

**Q:** Why didn't the orange win the race?  
**A:** It ran out of juice.



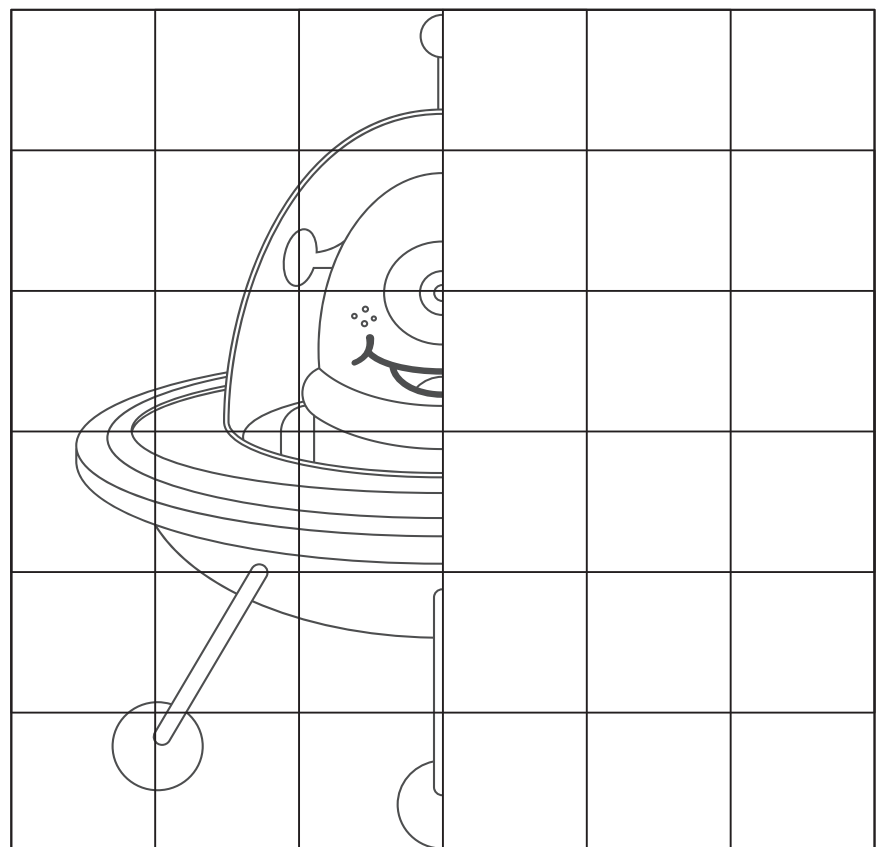
## Amazing maze

Help the bunny to deliver his beautiful egg to the empty basket.



## MIRROR IMAGE

DRAW THE MIRROR IMAGE OF THE PICTURE YOU SEE



## Sudoku 6 x 6

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

5	3	2	9	4	1
9	1	4	1	2	3
4	4	1	2	4	3
3	9	5	1	5	6
4	2	1	5	6	3
9	1	4	3	5	2
2	5	3	6	4	1

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# MONETT SCHOOLS

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Purple Reign

2025-2026 School Year

April 2026

## Seal of Biliteracy

Monett High School students will soon have a new opportunity to build on their strengths and apply their learning in real-world ways through the Seal of Biliteracy program.

After participating in a real-world learning exploration in Kansas City and learning how other districts implement the Seal of Biliteracy, a team of teachers identified it as a strong fit for Monett Schools. This work has been led by Tamara Stadter, MHS ELD Teacher, Jessica McNichols, MHS Principal, and Daphne Hensley, ELD Director, whose dedication and hands-on leadership helped bring the vision to life.



The Seal of Biliteracy is a nationally recognized distinction awarded to students who demonstrate proficiency in two or more languages. In Missouri, students must meet specific criteria that show they can read, write, speak, and understand a second language at a high level. Students may earn the seal in a variety of languages, including English paired with another language as well as American Sign Language. This recognition is noted on a student's transcript and serves as a strong indicator of communication skills that are valuable in college, careers, and the community.

What makes Monett's approach unique is the focus on real-world application. The program will include a structured student selection process, similar to GO CAPS, and will be embedded into the school day through a double-blocked schedule. During the first semester, students will build foundational skills such as communication, professionalism, and confidentiality. In the second semester, students will transition into internship experiences, where they will have the opportunity to work within the community and apply their language skills in real-world settings. This program is open to any student who meets the qualifications and is interested in developing and using their language skills beyond the classroom.

As part of the program, students will also develop a portfolio to reflect their learning and demonstrate growth. This portfolio will be submitted to the state as part of the Seal of Biliteracy process.

The Seal of Biliteracy program is set to begin in the 2026-2027 school year.

Monett Schools is excited about the Seal of Biliteracy and the opportunities it will create for students to grow, connect, and contribute within our community and beyond.

## Mock Accident at MHS

Monett High School students recently participated in a mock accident demonstration designed to raise awareness about the dangers of impaired and distracted driving.

The simulation brought together local emergency responders and community partners to create a realistic scene, helping students better understand the serious consequences that can result from unsafe decisions behind the wheel. From the moment sirens were heard, the experience created a powerful and lasting impression.

Students were respectful, attentive, and fully engaged throughout the presentation. The demonstration provided an opportunity for reflection and encouraged students to think carefully about the choices they make both now and in the future.

Monett Schools is grateful for the many community partners who helped make this experience possible and for their continued commitment to student safety. Opportunities like this play an important role in helping students make safe, responsible decisions.



## Monett Intermediate School Earns PRiME Center Growth Award

Monett Intermediate School has been recognized by the PRiME Center at Saint Louis University for outstanding student growth in English Language Arts over a three-year period ending in the 2024-2025 school year. This recognition is a proud moment for the Monett School District, Monett Intermediate, and the entire Monett community. It reflects the hard work and dedication of both our students and teachers.

Each year, the PRiME Center highlights schools across Missouri that demonstrate exceptional student growth in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Monett Intermediate's recognition places the school among the top-performing schools in the state for sustained academic growth, an accomplishment that speaks to the dedication and care happening in classrooms each day.

Through intentional instruction, collaboration, and a commitment to meeting the needs of every learner, students continue to make strong progress year after year.

This achievement reflects the district's ongoing commitment to helping every student grow, succeed, and prepare for the future.



## Chess Club Earns Top Finish at State

Monett's Chess Team made an impressive showing at the state chess tournament in Columbia, Missouri, with eight students representing the district in competition: Diego Murillo, Johnathon Jett, Owen Wormington, Damiene Merida, Michael Albig, Carter Hedgpeh, Marshall Verslues, and Violet Samson.

In their first appearance at the state level, Monett students rose to the occasion. Diego Murillo earned a medal in the 9th grade and under division, and Marshall Verslues earned a medal in the 8th grade and under division, highlighting their skill, focus, and preparation.

As a team, Monett Middle School placed 5th in the state in the 8th grade and under division, a great accomplishment and a strong reflection of the team's dedication and hard work.

Our students competed at the state level for the first time. It was an exciting moment for the Monett Chess program, led by Brian Verslues, and a great step forward for the future of chess in Monett.



## Summer School 2026

Summer School is just around the corner, and enrollment is now open for all students. Monett's Summer School program provides a welcoming and engaging environment where students can strengthen their skills and explore new interests. Whether they need additional support or want to stay active in their learning, Summer School offers a positive and structured experience.

## Summer School 2026

June 1 - June 26



Summer School will run from June 1 through June 26.

If bus transportation is needed, please complete enrollment by April 24 to secure a spot on the bus.

Scan the QR code or visit the link below for Summer School information and enrollment: <https://bit.ly/monettsummer26>



## The Cubbies Celebrating Staff Who Embody The Monett Way



## Board of Education Highlights

The Monett Board of Education met to celebrate achievements across the district and review important updates supporting students and schools.

March is School Board Recognition Month. The district honored Board members for their service and ongoing commitment to students, staff, and the Monett community. Their leadership and dedication play an important role in the success of our schools.

The Board also celebrated a Monett student, Sarah McDonald, who was awarded the Missouri School Boards' Association (MSBA) Future Builders Scholarship, recognizing her hard work and bright future ahead. Student Council representatives, Carsyn Goetz and Ruby Smith, were acknowledged for their leadership and for serving as student voices during Board of Education meetings.

A presentation was also given for the Seal of Biliteracy, recognizing students who have demonstrated proficiency in multiple languages. This honor highlights the diverse strengths of our students and their readiness for future opportunities.

The Board received a facilities update from Director of Operations, Steve Garner. Updates included preparations for the demolition of the south building and the removal of rooftop HVAC units as part of ongoing improvements across the district.

The Monett R-1 Board of Education remains committed to supporting students, staff, and families while continuing to plan for the future of Monett Schools.



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.



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