



<<< WILDCATS SET GOALS FOR SEASON
Cassville hopes to score more, reach district championship. — 1B

CASSVILLE Democrat

AUGUST 5, 2026 | CASSVILLE-DEMOCRAT.COM

MURDER CHARGES

Who: Mark Wesley Scott, Bobby Ray Scott and David Ray Scott
What: Charged with first-degree murder in the 1999 death of 14-year-old Justin Hocutt, of Seligman
More: Multiple new witnesses come forward in new investigation

3 brothers charged with murder

New investigation brings new witnesses in 1999 Hocutt cold case
BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktROUTMAN@cassville-democrat.com

Twenty-seven years after 14-year-old Seligman resident Justin Hocutt was found dead on the train tracks 100 yards away from his girlfriend's home, three men have been arrested and charged with the teenager's murder.

Mark Wesley Scott, Bobby Ray Scott and David Ray Scott have each been charged with first-degree murder in for Hocutt's death in October 1999.

All three men have been arrested. David Scott, born 1977, of Pineville, is being held in the Barry County jail on no bond and was arraigned on July 27, pleading not guilty. His next court appearance is a bond hearing scheduled for Aug. 12 at 9 a.m. in the courtroom of Judge Robert Foulke.

Mark Scott, born 1980, of Little Rock, Ark., and Bobby Scott, born 1978, of Little Rock, Ark., were both arrested in Pulaski County, Ark.

Mark has waived extradition and local authorities are planning a time to pick him up for said extradition. Amy Boxx, Barry County prosecutor, said he should appear in court with 48 hours of being booked into the Barry County jail.

Bobby chose not waive extradition, Boxx said, and her office has 60 days to get a Governor's Warrant to have him extradited to Barry County.

According to a probable cause statement filed by Master Sgt. J.L. Mason, with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, at about 3:30 a.m. on Oct. 9, 1999, the Barry County Sheriff's office responded to a call for service of a human body located on the railroad tracks north of Missouri Package (a commercial business) on Business Highway 37 in Seligman.

The deceased was identified as Hocutt, and the Sheriff's Office coordinated with the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad to conduct the investigation, with the primary investigating agency being the railroad.

Mason's statement said through the original investigation, it was determined Hocutt was visiting Catrina Johnso, his juvenile girlfriend, at her resi-

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Hundreds of hours on case

Detectives verified information, reconstructed large portions of case
BY KYLE TROUTMAN
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The Barry County Sheriff's office hosted a public press conference on Tuesday to discuss details of the murder of Justin Hocutt, as the Office made three arrests in the cold case last week. Danny Boyd, Barry County

PRESS CONFERENCE

Where: Barry County Sheriff's Office
For: To overview charges and details in murder case of Justin Hocutt, 14, of Seligman, in 1999
More: Physical evidence in case remains minimal

sheriff, said 27 years after 14-year-old Justin Hocutt was found dead on railroad tracks in Seligman in October 1999, three men have been charged with first-degree murder following

a renewed investigation by the Sheriff's Office and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Boyd announced on July 23 that Mark Scott, Bobby Scott and David Scott, stepbrothers to Hocutt's girlfriend at the time, have each been charged with first-degree murder in Hocutt's death. Authorities allege Hocutt was fatally assaulted at a Seligman residence before his body was placed on the railroad tracks in an attempt to conceal the crime.

"Justin was found deceased

on the rail tracks in Seligman, Missouri, on October 10, 1999," Boyd said. "He was only 14 years old. His death was quickly determined to be a homicide, and the Scott brothers were identified early in the investigation as suspects."

The brothers were born in 1977, 1978 and 1980, all legal adults at the time of the alleged crime.

The arrests follow an extensive review launched after Boyd took office. Boyd said his admin-

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Hardware to hair



Carl Schell, center, with Carl Schell Construction, hands down a piece of plywood to Frank Diaz while working on the facade of Zachary Fields' building on Main Street on Monday. Under the wood was a "Hardware" sign made of single-pane glass. The former Haddock & Meador Hardware Store operated through the 1970s. Now, the building houses J&L Hair Fashion salon and Stumpff Barbershop. Kyle Troutman/ktROUTMAN@cassville-democrat.com

BARRY COUNTY COMMISSION

What: Adopted resolution addressing planned storage tank
Request: For technical review of land area, including hydrogeological survey
More: Resolution echoes letter sent to DNR by Cassville city administrator

County Commission has tank concerns

Leaders request technical review, hydrogeological survey

BY SHEILA HARRIS
sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

On July 27, the Barry County Commission adopted a written Resolution highlighting concerns the commission has about a pending operational permit for an industrial food and meat-processing-residuals storage tank to be constructed in the county.

If approved by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the permit will allow HydroAg Environmental, LLC, to operate a 900,000-gallon, inclement-weather storage tank on private property, two miles north of Cassville.

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Local author's first book published

Branstetter's reproductive stories cover sensitive topic

BY SHEILA HARRIS
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Within her busy schedule, Kayla Branstetter, of rural Purdy, found time to write a book.

The release of "Don't Be An Athena" — published by Ozark Hollow Press, and marked by a book-signing at Morgan's Hollow Bookstore in Monett, on July 20 — represents six years of work, Branstetter said.

As an English instructor at Crowder College, the wife of Wheaton High School coach, Chris Branstetter, and the mother of two young daughters who both play travel ball, Branstetter's plate already seems pretty full. Now, she will add a book-signing tour to her itinerary.

Although the book took sever-



Crowder College English Instructor Kayla Branstetter, of rural Purdy, signs a copy of her first book on July 20, the day of its release, at a book-signing at Morgan's Hollow Bookstore, in Monett. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

al years to complete, Branstetter said it's been a lifetime in the making. Its theme centers around the way society as a whole, and women, in particular, make cruel judgment calls about the reproductive choices — or about reproductive issues beyond their control — in the

lives of other women.

Branstetter compares the judges to the goddess Athena, who, out of jealousy, cast a vicious curse on her beautiful servant, Medusa, condemning her to a life of shame, after she was violated by the god Poseidon. "My unwed parents got preg-

nant with me, when my mom was 16," Branstetter said. "In the 1980s, in southwest Missouri, tradition dictated that they get married to keep me from being born 'out of wedlock.'"

Branstetter said that although she was the product of her parents' choice, she felt as though she, herself, bore a part of the community's condemnation of their decision.

"It is an unforgiving certainty that the children of teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage parents themselves," Branstetter said.

In school, Branstetter said, some educators treated her like a future high school dropout, one who would "get knocked up."

Determined to break the cycle

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NEWS BRIEFS

Monett Historical Society to meet

The Monett Historical Society will hold its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Aug. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Event Center at the Museum. Membership is not a requirement to attend, nor is there an admission fee. The program for this evening event will be a presentation given by Sean Kelley, the president of the Monett Athletic Boosters. Please join us to welcome Sean and kick off the coming 2026-2027 school athletic season.

Purdy Special Road District to meet

The Purdy Special Road District will meet at 4 p.m. on Aug. 10 at the Purdy District Road Barn, located at 200 South 9th St. (Farm Road 1085).

Barry County Democratic Central Committee meeting

The Barry County Democratic Central Committee will meet on Aug. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Cassville Public Library.

Cassville Health Care and Rehab hosting Back to School event

Cassville Health Care and Rehabilitation, located at 1300 County Farm Road in Cassville, will sponsor a Back to School Backpack Night on Aug. 7 from 5-7 p.m. Attendees can pick out a backpack, which will be filled with grade-level school supplies. Residents will help at the tables, along with staff. The event is geared toward families in the community that cannot afford school supplies for their children.

Cassville Branch Library hosting events

The Cassville Branch Library will host the following events in the coming week: Thursday, Book Club, 5:30 p.m.; Friday, Santa Monica Paint Night, 5:30 p.m. (registration and \$5 supply fee required); Saturday, Crochet/Knitting Class, 10 a.m.; Monday, Adult Paint with Jenna, 5:30 p.m. (registration and \$45 supply fee required).

Old Church Gallery Farmers Market open

The Old Church Gallery Farmers' Market runs every Thursday from 8-11 a.m. at the Gallery, located on Farm Road 1240 in Shell Knob. The market offer farm fresh produce, eggs, jellies, relishes, baked goods, cut flowers, handmade crafts and more. The selection varies every week, so come early for the best choice. For more information, people may call 417-342-8671.

Barry County Community Garden meetings set

The Barry County Community Garden has scheduled its monthly meetings on the first Monday of every month, at Harvick Farms, located at 16062 Hwy. 76 in Cassville. The work in the garden days are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Garden, located at on 10160 Farm Road 2160. Tentative working days depend on the weather and will be updated on the organization's Facebook page, "Barry County Community Garden," and people may contact the page fort more information. Produce from the garden goes to the Cassville Pantry. New members and/ or volunteers may come and reserve a plot.

Cassville Farmers' Market open on Saturdays

The Cassville Farmers Market is open weekly on Saturdays on the Barry County Courthouse Square, from 8 a.m. to noon. Vendors are offering eggs, vegetables, hand-made crafts, baked goods and more. Those interested in becoming a vendor may contact Chad Sprinkle at 417-846-3539.

Lessons offered before Seligman's Saturday dances

The Seligman Chamber of Commerce country dances at the Seligman Chamber Event Center are every Saturday from 7-10 p.m. No alcohol is allowed. Admission is \$10 per person, and 18-and-under are free. There is a potluck, 50-50 drawing and door prizes. Free dance lessons will also be given from 5-6 p.m. For more information, people may call 479-903-3640.

OATS rides available in Barry County

OATS Transit offers regular transportation services for the rural general public of any age, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. People may call the local OATS Transit office at 417-887-9272 or 800-770-6287 to schedule a ride or find out about services in the Barry County area. People may also visit the OATS website at oatstransit.org to view local schedules under "Bus Schedules," then click on the county of service. OATS Transit is hiring drivers statewide to continue serving riders. Openings are listed on the OATS website.

Charges: Witness described odor of bleach in apartment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

dence, located at Rt. 1 Box 1179 B (now known as 29016 Main St.) in Seligman.

Sometime around 4-5 a.m., Harold Johnson, Catrina's father, woke up and discovered both juveniles lying together in the living room floor. Harold allegedly confronted Hocutt. As a result of being found together, Harold, Mark Wesley Scott, Bobby Ray Scott, and David Scott allegedly began to physically assault Hocutt. Mark, Bobby and David were identified as the stepbrothers of Catrina.

A witness inside the residence (Witness No. 2) observed the beating and watched as the group allegedly strangled Hocutt by placing a rope around his neck. The witness also allegedly heard the group making statements about going to the tracks.

Investigators also learned that Brenda Scott, the mother of the three brother, also allegedly participated in the beating. It was reported that Hocutt was beaten with a stick, a cane, a baseball bat or a similar object during the incident. Witness No. 1 was also inside the residence and allegedly observed Harold confronting Hocutt and the beating that ensued.

When Hocutt's body was located on the tracks, the positioning of his body was a short distance from the Johnson/Scott residence, which was located directly across the street from the railroad tracks. It was believed that Hocutt was struck multiple times by a passing train before the discovery of his body.

Mason said in the statement numerous police officers and law enforcement agencies participated in the original

investigation. Multiple witness statements were collected and numerous statements identified Harold Johnson, Brenda Scott, Mark Scott, Bobby Scott, and David Scott as the subjects allegedly responsible for Hocutt's death and the placement of his body onto the railroad tracks.

However, the original investigation eventually was designated a cold case and/ or unsolved. It is unknown to current members of the investigative team (Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Barry County Sheriffs Office Investigators), why the case is unsolved and why subjects responsible for the death haven't been charged criminally.

While reviewing the autopsy report, the doctor determined that based on medical evidence observed at the time of the autopsy, Hocutt was alive at the time he was placed on the railroad tracks and struck by a train.

The Barry County Sheriff's Office and Missouri State Highway Patrol initiated a new investigation in February 2026, and Mason noted multiple witnesses expressed concerns for their safety if they participated or assisted law enforcement. As a result, witness' names in the probable cause statement have been withheld, instead identified by number. Mason also noted that multiple wit-

nesses, including Harold Johnson and Brenda Scott, are now deceased.

Mason said throughout the years following the alleged homicide, Witness No. 1 has made statements to multiple individuals that Brenda Scott beat Hocutt with a stick and Brenda's sons (at least two, Mark and Bobby) were involved in the alleged beating and death. In addition, Mark and Bobby have also allegedly made numerous comments about their involvement in the juvenile's death.

Mason said on Feb. 18, he met with Barry County Sheriff Danny Boyd and other investigators at the Sheriff's Office, Per Sheriff Boyd, in 1999, Hocutt was found deceased after being struck by a train multiple times. Sheriff Boyd indicated that current investigators with the Sheriffs Office have reviewed the original investigation and believe Hocutt's death was a result of a violent confrontation. His body, Boyd said, was then placed on the track in an attempt to hide evidence of the assault.

On Feb. 18, Witness No. 3 was interviewed. On the day Justin Hocutt's body was discovered on the railroad tracks, Witness No. 3 allegedly observed Brenda Scott purchasing five gallons of bleach.

On Feb. 19, Witness No. 4 was interviewed. On the night the witness believed the homicide occurred, the witness allegedly observed Mark fighting Hocutt in the front yard/ditch near 29016 Main St. The witness said Mark did not like Hocutt and was jealous of his relationship with Catrina.

Brenda and Bobby were allegedly watching the fight, and during the altercation, the witness believed Brenda struck Justin in the head with a cast iron skillet. The witness was uncertain what happened to Hocutt after the fight.

The witness allegedly observed this from a nearby vacant apartment. Later in the evening, Witness No. 1 informed Witness No. 4 that the Scotts did not like Hocutt, and they allegedly killed him. Witness No. 4 returned to the vacant apartment the following night and found one of the Johnsons inside (the witness believed this was Gary johnson) with a bunch of kids, cleaning. When the witness left the previous day, the apartment was clean.

The witness advised the apartment had a strong odor of bleach throughout, and the witness did not use bleach use because of a recent medical procedure. The witness wondered if Hocutt was brought into the

apartment during or after the homicide. On the night of the homicide, the street light near the roadway was allegedly shot out, making it so dark no one could see.

On March 20, Witness No. 5 was interviewed. Prior to Hocutt's death, the witness was sitting on the front porch of a nearby residence. Hocutt was in the front yard of the apartments and was having some sort of disagreement with two of Catrina's older stepbrothers. The wit-

ness allegedly observed and overheard David and Bobby arguing with Hocutt. David and Bobby were confronting Hocutt about some sort of incident involving Catrina where they had been caught together in some manner.

As the confrontation occurred, the witness stated Hocutt was back peddling with his hands/arms raised in the air, and was apologetic. Hocutt repeatedly stated something similar to, "my bad," the witness said.

The Scott brothers were allegedly aggressively walking towards Hocutt, but the situation didn't escalate into a physical altercation. As Hocutt was leaving the yard, Bobby said something similar to, "We'll talk soon, Justin."

Later, the witness observed Catrina having a "huge meltdown" with her stepbrothers and Brenda. Catrina was crying, stating that they (Hocutt and Catrina) didn't do anything wrong. The witness said Catrina's stepmother then forced her back into the apartment.

On April 23, Witness No. 6 was interviewed. The witness stated around 5 a.m. on "the morning that it happened" a lot of noise was coming from Harold and Brenda's apartment. The witness advised it sounded like someone was fighting because they heard a lot of screaming, cussing and yelling.

After Angela Johnson, Catrina's sister, and Witness No. 8 discovered Hocutt's body, they responded to the residence of the witness and informed the witness of their discovery. The witness questioned them on why they didn't notify the adults at the Johnson/Scott residence. Chadwell and Johnson advised that they did; however, Harold and Brenda told them to notify the witness.

Approximately two days later, Mark was at the residence of the witness, and the witness allegedly overheard Mark saying that he was wearing the boy's hat and the hat still had brain matter on it. In addition, the witness allegedly overheard Mark say something similar to, "I didn't mean to do it, brother."

Later, the witness took Harold Johnson and Brenda Scott to a law office for legal assistance. Harold and Brenda were sitting in the back seat of the van when Harold Johnson allegedly informed, "Brenda, I told you, you shouldn't have hit him in the head with a baseball bat." Brenda Scott allegedly replied, "Shut up, Harold. We're not in the van by ourselves."

On May 6, Witness No. 7 was interviewed. The witness said in approximately 2015, the witness and Mark were sitting on the front porch of the witness' residence. Mark drank three beers during the visit, the witness said. They talked about Catrina and/or Hocutt's death. The witness said Mark allegedly divulged he and Bobby came in and started punching Hocutt, and Hocutt stopped moving. Bobby allegedly informed Mark that he believed he

(Bobby) hit Hocutt too hard.

On May 12, Witness No. 8 was interviewed. While walking on the railroad tracks, the witness and Angela Johnson, who lived at the same residence as Catrina, discovered Hocutt's body. The body was located approximately 100 yards from Angela's residence. The body was located on the railroad tracks and was positioned in a 10 o'clock direction from the Johnson/Scott residence.

On May 19, Witness No. 9 was interviewed. The witness participated in a law enforcement interview of witness No. 1. During the interview, Witness No. 1 identified two of Brenda Scott's sons as the subjects responsible for Hocutt's death. Witness No. 9 recalled Mark was one of the sons. However, the witness had difficulty recalling the second son.

Mason said he mentioned the names of Bobby and David, and. Witness No. 9 immediately recalled the second son/suspect as Bobby. Per Witness No. 1, Hocutt snuck over to the Johnson/Scott residence. The witness said at some point, Harold caught Hocutt and Catrina together at the house. The witness said Bobby and Ray "stomped Justin's head in with their boots."

On May 19, former Barry County Detective Brian Martin was interviewed. Martin said he conducted a recorded interview of Witness No. 1, which was attended by Witness No. 9. On the evening prior, when the Johnsons and Scotts went to bed, Hocutt wasn't at the residence. However, some of the Johnsons and Scotts were employed as chicken catchers and had to be to work during the early morning hours.

Martin said when the Johnsons and Scotts woke up, they found Hocutt and Catrina lying on the floor together. Martin believed Brenda was the instigator and Harold likely helped. Mark and Bobby, Martin said, allegedly killed Hocutt in the living room, allegedly beating him with sticks and a pipe.

Martin confirmed that Brenda kept a stick behind her door that was used on anyone who visited the residence that "needed an attitude adjustment."

Mason's probable cause statement has been filed in the case of David Scott, who he said allegedly participated in the murder of Hocutt by beating, stoping and/or striking Hocutt with an object, causing Hocutt to become incapacitated of unresponsive.

Mason said during the unresponsive period, David allegedly coordinated with other suspects to transport Hocutt to the railroad track, where he was struck by the passing train.

Regarding probable cause statements for Mark and Bobby, Boxx said per Court Operating Rule 4.24, it is prohibited to disclose to the public any documents in a felony case that does not yet have a served warrant filed. Boxx noted that the probable cause statements for all three brothers are very similar.

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Crowder College English Instructor Kayla Branstetter, of rural Purdy, stands between her mother, Tammy Doss (right) and her “other mother,” Gayle Hicks, left. The trio hold copies of Branstetter’s newly-released book, *Don’t Be An Athena*, published by Ozark Hollow Press. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

Branstetter: Book widely available online

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

of a wheel set in motion during previous generations, Branstetter became hyper-vigilant in her attempt to avoid becoming a statistic of teenage-motherhood, herself.

“Little did I know that when I did get married, and we started planning a family, that I would struggle with unexplained infertility,” she said.

That irony is not lost on Branstetter.

“When we finally did get pregnant, I just about lost our oldest daughter, Berlin; then, I did have a miscarriage with our second pregnancy,” Branstetter said.

The couple’s third pregnancy resulted in the birth of their second daughter, Leigha, after a full-term pregnancy without complications.

Branstetter said infertility is a lonely place to be, especially when you see women around you — your friends and family members — becoming pregnant with ease.

“A failure to conceive can feel like a personal failure in your role as a woman,” Branstetter said. “And, when a long-awaited pregnancy ends in miscarriage, it can be doubly devastating.”

Branstetter said that women sometimes don’t know how to show compassion to each other in these types of reproductive heartbreaks, as well as others — in part, because they can’t fully empathize.

Branstetter’s hope is that her book, “Don’t Be An Athena,” will shine light into those areas of women’s lives where other women may have historically cast judgment, or have been unaware of how to empathize.

“Women can be each other’s worst enemies,” Branstetter said. “We need to start changing that narrative.”

“Narrative Medicine,” as Branstetter labels the new genre of instruction she hopes to incorporate into Crowder College’s curriculum, will focus on learning, relating, conveying and, above all, empathizing with the personal stories of the patients with whom medical personnel interact.

“Don’t Be An Athena,” Branstetter admits, can be a tough read. Many of the chapters contain content-warning labels, not because they’re sexually detailed, but because they can trigger bad memo-

ries from the past, for the women who read them. However, within those memories — resurrected by women who traveled a similar path and came out on top — may lie a path forward for women trying to heal from past traumas.

The book is a compilation of the true narratives of the reproductive lives of women from various eras and different walks of life who Branstetter interviewed over the last several years.

Included at the end of “Don’t Be An Athena” is a section of helpful resources: tools for “Advocacy, Survival, and Voice,” as Branstetter calls them. They cut a broad swathe, and include such topics as crisis and domestic violence resources, education and

youth development, mental health trauma, reproductive healthcare, community support, fertility and pregnancy loss, support for loved ones, patients’ rights, and writing for healing.

With “Don’t Be An Athena” now available for purchase, Branstetter will begin a book-signing tour. Some scheduled stops include Oklahoma City; Boston; and Key West, Fla.

This fall, Branstetter will be heading “down under,” to speak about her narrative medicine research, as well as her book, at an international conference at the University of Sydney, in Sydney, Australia.

“Don’t Be An Athena” can be purchased online from Ozarkhollowpress.com, Amazon, Walmart or Barnes & Noble.

Barry County
Health Corner



Back-to-school immunizations available

Did you know that immunization programs are considered one of the most important public health achievements in the world? Together with clean water and improved access to health care, immunizations have contributed to most countries’ life expectancy.

According to data from the World Health Organization, vaccination campaigns prevent 4 to 5 million deaths annually worldwide. The Barry County Health Department offers all required vaccinations for school on a walk-in basis from Monday through Thursday until 5 p.m.

Most eighth-grade students will require Tdap and meningitis vaccines, seniors will need meningitis vaccines, and kindergartners will need Dtap, Polio, MMR and Varicella vaccines. We offer combination vaccines for students who are previously up to date on their vaccinations.

We also now have a combination vaccination for teens 16 years and older that protects against 5 different bacterial strains of meningitis (A,C,W,Y, and B). These are the most common strains that can be fatal, according to CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

Back to School will be here before you know it, so beat the rush and come in for your vaccinations today. You can do your part in keeping our community healthy by vaccinating yourself and your children against vaccine-preventable diseases.

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.

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COMMENTARY

PUBLISHER'S VIEW



KYLE TROUTMAN

Old news to celebrate

In the past two weeks, there have been more important topics to cover in this space than my mid-July trip to Wales, my first time across the pond for a mix of business and vacation.

The trip was mainly to attend the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors' (ISWNE) annual conference, which has taken me to South Dakota and Toronto in the last two years. This year, the conference was held in Cardiff, Wales, about a mile from the City Centre and the kind of big city life I grew up with.

Along with the conference sessions, there were two main reasons I made the trip. The first was because I was asked to be on a panel, also a first for me at the ISWNE conference, discussing the future of publications in the digital age. Being six months into implementing our payroll, it was of interest to our small group how it is going.

The second reason was a different kind of delightful, as on the gala night, I accepted my fourth Golden Dozen editorial writing award in the last five years. This year, I was honored for my column last year on the "Old Jailhouse Hullabaloo," breaking down the break down of the bidding process for the old Barry County jail.

As many award-winning pieces do, that one largely wrote itself. Telling such stories in depth and with that first-person perspective is a privilege I do not take lightly, and to be recognized by my professional colleagues for doing so year after year is an immense honor.

As humbling as that honor was, what was more humbling was the location and travel experience. My first night in Wales, after having traveled 18 hours by plane and train, I embarked on my first walk to the City Centre to find a pub in which to watch the England-Argentina World Cup semifinal.

Less than a mile from my hotel, I found the perfect one. Packed to the brim with no seats left and a 5-foot projector screen showing the game, I found a spot in the back where I could see and took in the ambience. When it comes to watching soccer games in public, it was an experience unlike any other. Standing next to me was an ethnic Englishman, Raul, who I thought was going to kiss me when the Brits put in the first goal of the game.

As it wore on and Argentina completed a comeback, Raul's mood faded and the Argentina fans broke into song as the pub cleared out into the city streets. Much like attending two World Cup games this summer, the 90 minutes there was something I won't soon forget.

The following morning, our ISWNE group trekked about a mile-and-a-half to Cardiff Castle. Built by the Romans and abandoned for a century, it was revived in the 1800s by a family so rich with coal money their wealth was compared to Elon Musk's today. Their lifestyle showed it.

The artistry, craftsmanship, heritage and expanse of turn-of-the-20th-century castle living was on full display, a museum unlike any I had ever experienced.

After sessions throughout the day, I again embarked on a City Centre journey, meandering through streets and establishments enjoying one of my favorite past-times — people-watching. Eventually, I fond my IWSNE folks in the Welsh-named pub that had been dubbed "the one with no vowels in the name."

The following day, we took a water taxi down the bay to the Welsh Senedd (Parliament) building, where we learned a bit about the young Welsh government. Following that venture, a few of use ISWNE members went to dinner at a great Italian place nearby, then I took my longest walk yet through Cardiff — also on the day I learned our print shop and the Barry County Advertiser had shuttered.

I walked at least four miles that night, capped by returning to Cardiff Castle at the time a concert was ending and thousands of people flooded the streets. I spent another couple hours watching people dance to street musicians and at a pub with a lively karaoke night.

The final night of the trip was our gala night, treated to a harpist and a fantastic meal capped with our awards and the last moments of mingling before preparing for trips home the following day.

I've written about ISWNE conference experiences before, but this year's was unlike any other. As much as being 4,000 miles away from home made me miss it, traveling to that extent was also an eye-opener. I'd suggest to anyone and everyone to find ways to make trips happen. Whether it's just across a few state lines or halfway around the world, seek new experiences, meet new people, see different things and immerse yourself in other cultures.

If my experience is any indication, you won't regret it. And, you'll bring something back far more important than any kind of award.

Kyle Troutman has served as editor of the Cassville Democrat since 2014 and owner/publisher since 2023. He is a three-time ISWNE Golden Dozen award winner. He may be reached at 417-847-2610 or ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com.

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 the Cassville Democrat or its staff. If you have an opinion, send a letter to Kyle Troutman, Cassville Democrat, 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.



COMMUNITY VOICES

The two words that never go out of style

I recently received one of many "Thank You" cards from various members of the Class of 2026.

I may be old fashioned, but I love receiving "Thank You" notes, cards, texts, etc. There are two simple words that have the power to brighten someone's day, strengthen relationships and remind people that what they do matters. Those words are, "Thank you."

It doesn't cost anything to say them, yet they may be among the most valuable words we ever speak.

In our busy lives, it's easy to overlook the everyday expressions of thoughtfulness that surround us. A cashier who greets us with a smile, a neighbor (by the name of Paul or Bev) who mows an extra strip of grass, a teacher who spends extra time helping a student, or a volunteer who quietly gives hours of service without expecting recognition.

These acts often become part of the background of our lives, but they shouldn't.

A sincere "thank you" lets people know they are seen. It tells them that their effort made a difference.

In our wonderful community, gratitude helps build the sense of togetherness that makes our town special. We rely on one another more than we sometimes realize. Whether it's our local firefighters who respond when an alarm sounds, the healthcare workers who care for us, the city crews who keep our streets and water lines maintained, or the local businesses that support school fundraisers and community events, there are countless people working behind the



JON HORNER

scenes every day.

This was on full display in two significant ways over the past month. The Hometown Heroes recognition event last week was a touching ceremony, in which our community recognized, and in the process collectively said "thank you" to those who have served our country.

Secondly, I am in awe with sincere appreciation to Dr. Richard Asbill, Sheila Harris and Adryana Quinlan for their leadership along with the many others who had the courage to stand up and voice their opinions recently regarding the sludge facility permit. That is how our town has become a community that we can be proud to call home.

Just like those who have served our country and those rising up to protect our community, they aren't looking for applause. But, everyone appreciates being appreciated.

Gratitude is contagious. When someone feels valued, they're often inspired to extend that same kindness to someone else. A simple thank you can start a chain reaction

of goodwill that reaches much farther than we imagine.

It's also worth remembering to thank those closest to us. Whether it's family, friends or co-workers, they often do countless little things that can be taken for granted. Sometimes the people who mean the most to us need to hear "thank you" the most.

As summer continues and community events fill our calendars, perhaps we can make it a point to notice the people who make our days a little easier. Thank the volunteer serving food at the fundraiser. Thank the crossing guard, the librarian, the coach, the church member arranging flowers, or the neighbor who brings in your trash can when you're away.

Those two words may seem small, but their impact can be lasting.

Kindness doesn't always require grand gestures. Often, it begins with simply noticing someone else's effort and taking a moment to say, "Thank you."

Those words never go out of style—and neither does the gratitude behind them.

And, finally, thank you to Kyle Troutman for the opportunity to be a part of the Cassville Democrat each month. It's an honor to write for Missouri's Best Small Town Newspaper.

Jon Horner is a local community bank president, published author, newspaper columnist, motivational speaker, and mayor of America's Real Hometown. He can be reached at jon.horner77@gmail.com.

STATE VIEW

Rural Missouri's future depends on its public schools

Next month, a child waiting for the bus in a rural district may stand beside a two-lane road, looking across land that has been in one family for generations.

But more and more, that will not be the case.

Rural land that once supported family farms and community life is being absorbed into something larger and less personal. On the ride to school, he may pass where decades ago a locally owned grocery store, hardware store, diner, feed store, or physician's office once stood — places where people knew not only your name, but your grandparents' names too.

Now, he is more likely to pass a Walmart, a corporate feed store, empty storefronts, and farmland whose future may be decided by people who will never call that community home. If his community is lucky, the hospital is still there. If not, the nearest emergency room may be an hour away.

That child did not make any of those decisions.

He did not decide manufacturing jobs would leave, the family farm would be sold, or consolidated, main streets would hollow out, hospitals would close, or outside investors would look at rural land and see only acreage, not history.

But through all that change, one institution has remained.

The local public school.

It is where a child can still learn close to home, be known, be challenged, and have the same claim on the future as any child in Missouri.

In many rural communities, the school is not just another public building. It is the last anchor.

It is where children learn, where families gather on Friday nights, and where the community turns in crisis — as southeast Missouri did during recent flooding, when schools became response posts.

The school is where a community tells its children: you belong here, and you have a future here.

We have become consumed by grade-level performance, statewide rankings, and figures that fit neatly into narratives. Yet in rural Missouri where almost every other indicator is flashing red — population, jobs, healthcare, income — rural schools are still doing their job. They are educating children in communities asked to absorb decades of economic disruption and preparing students for college, careers, military service, skilled trades, agriculture, health care, and public service.

A state report can measure proficiency, attendance, graduation. Those things matter. But it cannot fully measure whether the school is the last institution keeping a community intact.

Behind every spreadsheet is a larger question: Ten years from now, will every Missouri child still have a strong local public school? And will communities still decide what that school looks like?

That question should concern every Missourian. It is why the future of public education in Missouri is also a rural survival issue.

Because when a rural school weakens, the whole community feels it.

Families who have stayed, worked, worshiped, coached, volunteered, farmed, opened businesses, and raised children there depend on the school as proof that their community still has a future. So do employers, churches, fire departments, and civic groups that rely on people believing the town is worth investing in.

If the school closes, the decision is no longer just about education. It becomes a signal that the community itself is being asked to fade away.

And once that happens, it is very hard to come back.

Missouri is more than its largest cities and suburbs. Our state's identity was shaped along river towns on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, on family farms, and in small communities that built schools before almost anything else.

These places are not relics. They are not sentimental backdrops for America's 250th birthday or the campaign trail. They are living communities, part of the character, economy, and history that made Missouri great.

As we reflect on America's 250th birthday this year, we should be honest about what kind of Missouri we are preparing to hand to the next generation.

Will we be a state where only larger, wealthier, fast-growing communities can maintain strong schools? Will we tell children in smaller towns that opportunity requires leaving home? Will we accept a future where rural Missouri's remaining institutions disappear until there is no town left to preserve?

Or will we decide that some things are worth protecting?

Rural Missourians know how to adapt. They have done it for generations. They do not ask for special treatment. They do not expect every challenge to be solved for them. But they do expect the people making decisions in Jefferson City to understand what is at stake.

A school is not merely a building that can be merged, moved, or consolidated without consequence. In many communities, it is the heartbeat.

If that heartbeat stops, something more than a school is lost.

This is a moment when rural Missouri must say enough: enough to the idea that decline is inevitable, enough to policies that make it harder for communities to sustain themselves, and enough to decisions that erase the places that made Missouri what it is.

Rural leaders have stood apart before to defend the people and places they represent. We need them to do it again.

The fight ahead is not about protecting a system for the sake of a system. It is about protecting children, families, local control, and the communities that have held this state together for over two centuries.

That child waiting for the bus is thinking about his first day of school, about his teacher, his friends, his teammates, and whether lunch will be pizza.

He believes the school will always be there.

The adults owe him more than nostalgia. We owe him a future.

And for much of rural Missouri, that future begins with whether the local public school survives.

Kevin Sandlin is executive director of the Missouri Association of Rural Education.

50 years ago
Aug. 11, 1976
— AIRPORT BUSINESS DOMINATES
CASSVILLE COUNCIL MEETING

Review of airport business, something new for the City of Cassville, took a major portion of the Board of Aldermen's time in its regular meeting Tuesday evening. Among the most important items were reports that approximately \$20,000 of the \$350,000 project budget would remain after construction of the \$330,000 airport, including \$12,000 in federal funds and \$8,000 in state funds. Engineer George Ulmer said those savings could be used for future improvements. Mayor Bill LeCompte said the council authorized Ulmer to proceed with pre-application requests for funding to install lighting, a beacon and a visual approach slope through a 90-10 participation program with the Federal Aviation Administration. Plans for the airport dedication that Sunday and proposals from CASCO Developers and L.D. Brown for hangar construction were reviewed, with decisions on facilities deferred until legal contracts could be prepared. Other council business included receiving the annual audit report for discussion at the following month's meeting; awarding Brown Ford Sales the lone bid for a new police car with a \$2,088 trade-in allowance, leaving a difference of \$3,580; rejecting an offer to purchase two surplus trucks; ordering updated insurance appraisals on city buildings and airport liability coverage; deciding not to replace the city park fence while supporting the South Barry County Jaycees in securing a non-flood-prone location; reviewing future plans for aviation fuel service at the airport with CASCO Developers; approving \$1,200 for curb and drop-box work at the Neighborhood Center; and authorizing \$700 to complete improvements to the former firehouse so it would match the Neighborhood Center renovations.

— VANZANDT GRADUATES AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER TRAINING

Airman First Class James E. Vanzandt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy A. Vanzandt of Wheaton, graduated from the U.S. Air Force air traffic control operator course at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, conducted by the Air Training Command. Qualified to regulate air traffic and direct aircraft to radar-controlled landings, Vanzandt was assigned to Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan, for duty with a unit of the Air Force Communications Service. The airman was a 1975 graduate of Wheaton High School.

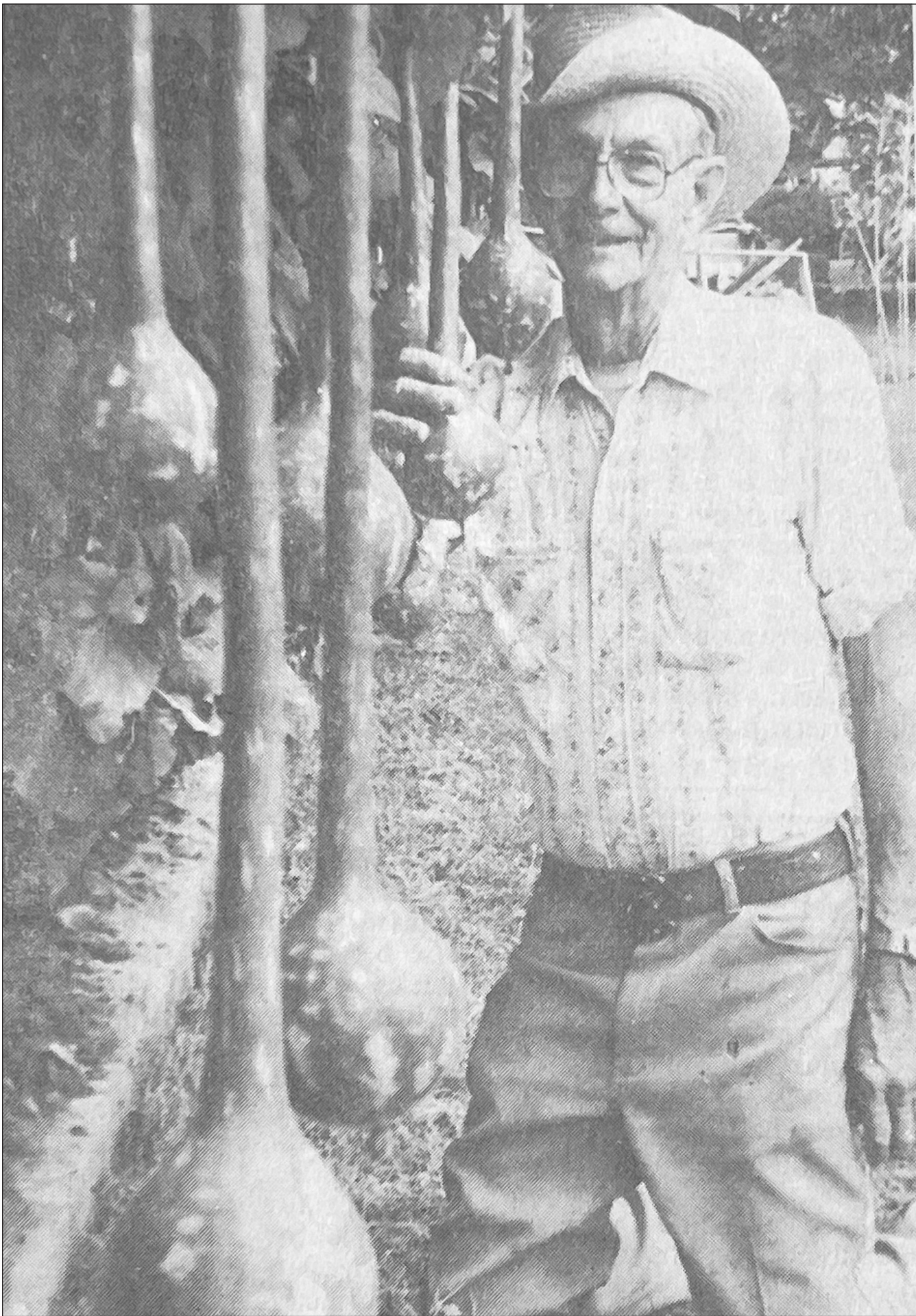
40 years ago
Aug. 13, 1986
— FASCO ACQUISITION ADDS TO
CASSVILLE PLANT WORKFORCE

Manufacturing of a firm on the east and west coasts of the U.S., acquired by FASCO Industries the previous September, would be moving to Cassville in the near future. In fact, the first truckload of machinery had already arrived at the local plant, according to Morris Castleberry, FASCO vice president and local plant manager. Castleberry said manufacturing consolidation of California and Connecticut plants of Torin Engineered Blowers would move swiftly over the next few months. "There will not be any significant addition of personnel immediately," Castleberry said. "Additional people will be employed in early 1987 if current plans continue." FASCO Cassville had added about 20 people to its employment list, bringing total payroll to 520 employees. The company planned no physical expansion, instead placing the new line equipment in existing space. Addition of Torin blowers would consist primarily of product assembly, with most parts purchased by contract, unlike FASCO blowers manufactured largely in Cassville. Castleberry said the product line, used extensively in business machines, would give FASCO another source for marketing, while engineering and sales forces would remain in California and

Connecticut. He added that the company's confidence in Cassville's productivity and workmanship played an important role in selecting the local plant for consolidation. FASCO, a subsidiary of Hawker-Siddeley Companies of London, England, planned to begin consolidating the Torin lines on Oct. 1. Castleberry had spent much of the previous year coordinating the relocation of Torin offices in Chatsworth, California, and Torrington, Connecticut. Interior reconfiguration of the Cassville plant was underway to accommodate equipment arriving daily, with completion expected in early fall. Originally a Rochester, New York, company with South Carolina plants, FASCO first came to Missouri in Ozark before expanding to Cassville in 1975 through utility bond issues and industrial revenue bonds. The original 150,000-square-foot plant had since expanded three times and totaled 210,000 square feet on a 50-acre site along Sales Barn Road.

30 years ago
Aug. 7, 1996
— EPPERLY PULLS AHEAD TO WIN
G.O.P. NOMINATION FOR SHERIFF;
LAKE AREA VOTERS APPROVE EAGLE
ROCK-MANO-GOLDEN FIRE DISTRICT

The five-way contest for the Republican nomination for Barry County sheriff narrowed to a race between two candidates Tuesday night, with Mick Epperly and Randy Yarnall running neck-and-neck until the last precinct vote was tallied. Epperly was declared the winner with 1,335 votes, edging out Yarnall by a narrow 28-vote margin. Epperly will face incumbent Ralph Hendrix in the November general election. Hendrix, who was unopposed in the Democratic primary, garnered 848 votes. Bill Corn, William Heagerty and Charlie Long, the other candidates making a bid for sheriff on the Republican ballot, grabbed 272, 222 and 448 votes, respectively. In the only other contested race for county office, John Sullivan beat out opponents Don Chadd and Gene Robbins to become the G.O.P.'s candidate for southern commissioner. Sullivan attracted 1,002 votes to Chadd's 838 and Robbins' 259. Sullivan will go up against incumbent Red Edens in November. Edens earned 594 votes in the primary. Residents in the Eagle Rock, Golden and Mano communities voted in favor of establishing a fire protection district in the lake area. The final vote count was 318 in favor of the proposal and 177 votes against. By casting a "yes" vote, residents were giving the district's board of directors permission to levy a property tax to support the district in an amount not to exceed 30 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Voters in the area also elected Cliff Mitchell (365 votes), Normal Hillyer (311), Richard Penfield (315), Oscar Wade (322) and Courtland (Corky) Nelson (323) to the first board of directors. Vote totals determined who would serve two-, four- and six-year terms on the board. Residents in the village of Butterfield overwhelmingly approved a \$600,000 bond issue to construct a sewage system by a vote of 46 to 6. Voters countywide and in the cities of Cassville, Monett and Washburn rejected attempts to re-establish a local use tax. In the county, the issue attracted 1,475 "yes" votes and 1,760 "no" votes. Cassville's issue lost with 136 ballots cast in favor and 266 against. The issue was narrowly defeated in Washburn by a vote of 26 to 27. In the race for sheriff, Yarnall and Epperly battled it out precinct by precinct. Yarnall carried 10 of the 21 precincts and Epperly captured nine. Epperly won by the widest margins in the precincts of Shell Knob and White River 2. Yarnall found his greatest support in the northern precincts of the county. Barry Countians went along with other voters in the 7th District, giving Roy Blunt the edge over Gary Nodler in the race for the G.O.P. congressional nomination. Blunt got 52.49 percent of the Barry County vote (1,853 votes)



40 YEARS AGO: ARTIST WHO USES GOURDS — Sighting down a line of long-handled gourds, Harold Clark of Seligman uses the know-how of raising gourds and decorating them for a business. His product is found throughout the area at tourist attractions. Clark will grow nearly 2,000 of the gourds at his home near the Missouri-Arkansas border. He's made his home in Barry County for about three years. Democrat file photo

and Nodler received 47.51 percent (1,677). Blunt's final vote tally in primary balloting was 39,277 votes to Nodler's 31,210. Blunt will be running against Ruth Bamberger of Springfield, who topped the six-way race for the Democratic nomination, and Mike Harman of Dunnegan, the Libertarian candidate. In Barry County, Bamberger was the top vote-getter, capturing 408 votes. The G.O.P. race for state senator in the 29th District was also close among county voters. There were 1,759 votes cast for Wendell Bailey and 1,700 for Doyle Childers, who ended up capturing the Republican nomination in the race to fill the Senate seat vacated by retiring Sen. Emory Melton. Childers will face Democratic nominee D.J. Gross, who was unopposed in the primary. County voters didn't pull any surprises when it came to votes cast for statewide offices. Republican voters in Barry County overwhelmingly supported Margaret Kelly, giving her 2,482 votes. Mel Carnahan captured 690 Democratic votes in the county. Rebecca Cook outdistanced challenger James J. Askew in the race for secretary of state on the Democratic ticket. In Barry County, Cook had 484 votes to Askew's 324. Incumbent Cook will face Republican challenger John Hancock in November.

— CITY LOOKS AT ISSUES FACING WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Cassville aldermen turned their attention toward the city's wastewater treatment facility at Monday night's council meeting. Discussion centered around short- and long-term problems facing the treatment plant, which was converted last year from a lagoon disposal system to a liquid land application system. City Administrator Greg Beavers presented aldermen with a proposal from Bio-Tech Resources Inc., a company that would provide for placement of genetically engineered bac-

teria into the treatment system. The bacteria could work to clear up the majority of problems that currently interfere with efficient plant operations, Beavers said. Steve Henderson, wastewater treatment plant supervisor, said the introduction of genetically engineered bacteria into the water treatment system should achieve a number of positive results, including a reduction in the amount of grease in the system, a decrease in phosphate levels, fewer trips to the land application site and elimination of some of the natural bacteria that is harmful to the treatment system. The bacteria should also reduce the amount of man-hours and costly chemicals used to clean the collection system. "In time, I believe the bacteria will make the sewer mains cleaner, thereby giving the plant more capacity," Henderson said. "I believe it will more than

justify the cost." Bio-Tech is offering a 60-day trial period. If the bacteria does not produce the desired effects, the city would not pay the company a dime. If the bacteria works, the city would agree to pay the company \$1,457 a month for its services. The genetically engineered bacteria is organically bred to target specific problems in the system, such as grease or phosphate accumulation. Henderson said the bacteria poses no human threat. "It's a naturally occurring organism," Henderson said. "It's no super bug or anything." The council deferred any action on the agreement with Bio-Tech until its Aug. 19 meeting. Aldermen planned to tour the treatment facility on Wednesday. According to both Beavers and Henderson, three other concerns faced the city's treatment plant: removal of sludge from the 18.2-acre lagoon, where Henderson

estimated a two-foot blanket of sludge would cost between \$275,000 and more than \$300,000 to remove; reduction of inflow and infiltration into the system, with the city planning a manhole rehabilitation program and sewer main inspections beginning the following year; and phosphate reduction, as Henderson expected the Department of Natural Resources eventually to impose a phosphate limit of 0.5 parts per million on treatment plants discharging into the White River Basin near Table Rock Lake. At the time, Cassville's treated water contained 3 to 4 parts phosphate per million. Henderson said, "No one has a watertight system. We'll start fixing what we can afford each year and eventually we hope to see a reduction in I and I (inflow and infiltration)."

Haven of the Ozarks Pet of the Week

Hi, I'm Latoya — a sweet grey and white tabby kitten ready to bring joy to your home! At just 6 months old, I'm still young and full of energy, weighing in at a petite 6 lbs. I'm affectionate and cuddly, and I love being close to my people — I'm the kind of kitten who'll curl up with you and show you all the love I have to give. My adoption fee is \$65, and I'm waiting to meet you and become your loyal companion. Adopters can complete an application at www.havenoftheoazarks.org/adopt. No appointment is needed. The Haven is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week. All Haven of the Ozarks pets are fixed, up to date on their vaccinations, and microchipped. For more information, people may email havenozarksanctuary@gmail.com, or call at 417-835-3647. Contributed photo



OBITUARIES



CONNIE JEWELL FERGUSON

Connie Jewell Ferguson, age 83, of Exeter, Missouri passed away Monday, July 27, 2026 at her home.

She was born April 9, 1943 in Neosho, Missouri, the daughter of Dewey Thomas and Nora Martha (Wilson) Sharp. On June 16, 1962 in Neosho, Missouri she was united in marriage to Albert "Wayne" Ferguson, who preceded her in death on June 2, 2019. Also preceding her in death were her parents; brothers, Glen Sharp and Vern Sharp and sisters, Lou Brown, Mozelle Sandlin, Sue Firth, Muriel Dean Sharp, and Irma Faye (Pug) Money.

Surviving are her children, Penny Ferguson of Exeter, Missouri, Pamela Ferguson Ralls of Exeter, Missouri, and Kevin Ferguson and wife Carri of Golden City, Missouri; sister, Ruth Janene Greer of Largo, Florida; nine grandchildren; 11 great grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild

with one on the way.

Connie grew up in Neosho, Missouri, where she attended school and graduated from Neosho High School. She dedicated much of her life to serving others, working as an activities director at several nursing homes in Kansas before later becoming a library assistant for the Missouri Migrant Education Center. Connie was a Nazarene pastor's wife for most of her married life and loved to do anything related to church and serving the Lord.

She enjoyed painting, gardening, cooking, and participating in church activities. Above all, she treasured the time she spent with her family, who were the center of her life. Connie will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Graveside services were held at 10:00 A.M. Saturday, August 1, 2026 at Newtonia I.O.O. F. Cemetery in Granby, Missouri. Pastor Josh Hall conducted the services.

The family received friends from 6:00 until 7:00 P.M. Friday at Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

Contributions may be made to Child Sponsorship – Pea Ridge Church of the Nazarene in memory of Connie.

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Tanks: Written resolution makes public statement

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

A construction permit is not required for storage containers with a capacity of one million gallons or less, if containers are constructed in accordance with a registered professional engineer's design and plan.

The Barry County Commissioners' primary concern with the storage tank, as expressed in their July 27 Resolution, is for the future quality of the county's drinking and recreational waters.

"Barry County's residents, agricultural producers, businesses, public water systems and local governments depend upon the continued availability of groundwater and surface water resources," the Resolution states.

The county's many karst features, commissioners say, "May allow contaminants to move through groundwater systems in ways not readily visible from the surface."

Fractured bedrock, sinkholes, cave systems, springs and losing streams are common features of the karst hydrogeology that underlies much of the 47,000-square-mile Ozark Plateau, including that of Barry County.

The protection of groundwater in southwest Missouri's susceptible karst hydrogeology was a primary consideration when the DNR nixed the City of Wheaton's plan for the construction of a new municipal wastewater lagoon in 1994.

According to a September 1, 1994, article in The Wheaton Journal, engineer Steve Schultz, with Algeier-Marten, of Joplin, told the Wheaton city council that the DNR wouldn't permit a lagoon system in an area where geological surveys say there is a severe collapse potential, because, "A lagoon collapse into a sinkhole or cavern could

"The County Commission does not seek through this Resolution does not seek to replace the Department's permitting authority or prohibit lawful agricultural practices, but desires to ensure that Barry County's water resources, residents, property owners, public services, natural resources, tourism economy and emergency-response interests receive full consideration before a final permit decision is made."

BARRY COUNTY COMMISSION
Resolution seeking to protect Barry County water resources amidst plan to build sludge storage tank near Cassville.

suck untreated sewage into groundwater and poison wells and springs," Schultz said.

According to Cave Research Foundation Volunteer Ben Miller, sinkholes provide a direct conduit from the surface to groundwater below.

In 1994, Wheaton city council members were also told that, in an area where surface water tends to seep into the bedrock, the [City's wastewater treatment] plant would probably have to meet the state's cleanest wastewater standards.

With the DNR's current draft permit for the Cassville storage tank, no mention is made of susceptible underlying karst hydrogeology, although the storage tank will be situated near the City of Cassville's five public wells, in a karst area where groundwater can travel as rapidly as one mile per day, according to Missouri hydrologist, Tom Aley.

Cassville's public wells serve an entire community with water, the Commission's Resolution notes.

In addition to a concern for drinking water – both public and private – the commissioners' Resolution points out that "Barry County's tourism economy depends substantially upon clean water, natural resources, outdoor recreation, public confidence and the continued protection of its streams, springs, lakes, forests and public lands."

The formal, written Resolution makes a public statement and lets the State know that the Barry County commissioners are unhappy with the DNR's plans to approve permits for the storage and land-application of raw, meat-processing waste.

"We felt like we had to do something," said Steve Blankenship, presiding commissioner.

According to Missouri Senate Bill 391, signed into law by former Governor Mike Parson in 2019, no county health department or county government can enact ordinances more stringent than state laws.

"The County Commission does not seek through this Resolution does not seek to replace the Department's permitting authority or prohibit lawful agricultural practices, but desires to ensure that Barry County's water resources, residents, property owners, public services, natural resources, tourism economy and emergency-response interests receive full consideration before a final permit decision is made," the county's Resolution states.

The Resolution does request that the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) completes a technical review – including a hydrogeological survey that would include an assessment of karst features, well and spring recharge characteristics, groundwater movement and other sensitive underground characteristics that would be affected by an environmental discharge from the tank.

While HydroAg characterizes their residual sludge as "organic fertilizer," an environmental impact report compiled by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calls meat and poultry-processing waste the largest source of nutrient pollution in the nation. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus in water sources can lead to harmful algal blooms, detrimental to aquatic life and humans.

Although, according to the DNR's draft permit for the storage tank, chemicals and contaminants not covered in the permit will not be allowed in the sludge, the department does make exceptions. "Incidental amounts of cleaning materials" may be included, the department says.

The County Commission asks that storage-tank materials be identified and tested, and groundwater be monitored.

"If DNR determines that groundwater testing is unnecessary, the County Commission requests a written explanation of the technical basis for that determination," the Resolution states.

While, according to its Resolution, the Commission supports state oversight and requirements, it also supports the consideration of additional legislative or regulatory protections, "if experience demonstrates that existing requirements do not adequately protect karst groundwater, public water supplies, private wells, neighboring properties, natural resources, tourism and affected communities."

Barry County Clerk, Joyce Ennis, directed a certified copy of the Resolution to Mo. DNR, Water Protection Program; Mo. DNR, Public Drinking Water Branch; HydroAg Environmental, LLC; the City of Cassville; the Barry County Health Department; Barry County Emergency Management; members of Barry County's state legislative delegation; and other agencies or public water systems the Commission deemed appropriate.

The Commission requests a joint meeting with the above-named entities regarding the proposed HydroAg storage facility and the matters mentioned in the Resolution.

The county Resolution follows a letter with similar concerns sent to the DNR by Cassville city administrator, Richard Asbill, on July 17.

If the permit for the storage tank is approved, the DNR will move forward with preparing language for draft permits for the land application of the food and meat-processing residuals.

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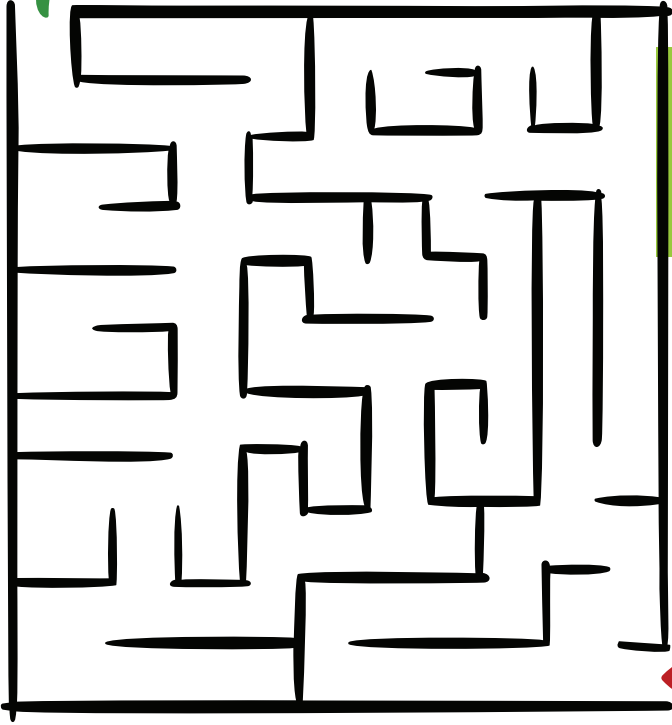
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Q: Which is the longest word in the dictionary?

A: "Smiles," because there is a mile between each "s."



JUST kidding

Q: Why did the computer break up with the Internet?

A: There was no connection.



JUST kidding

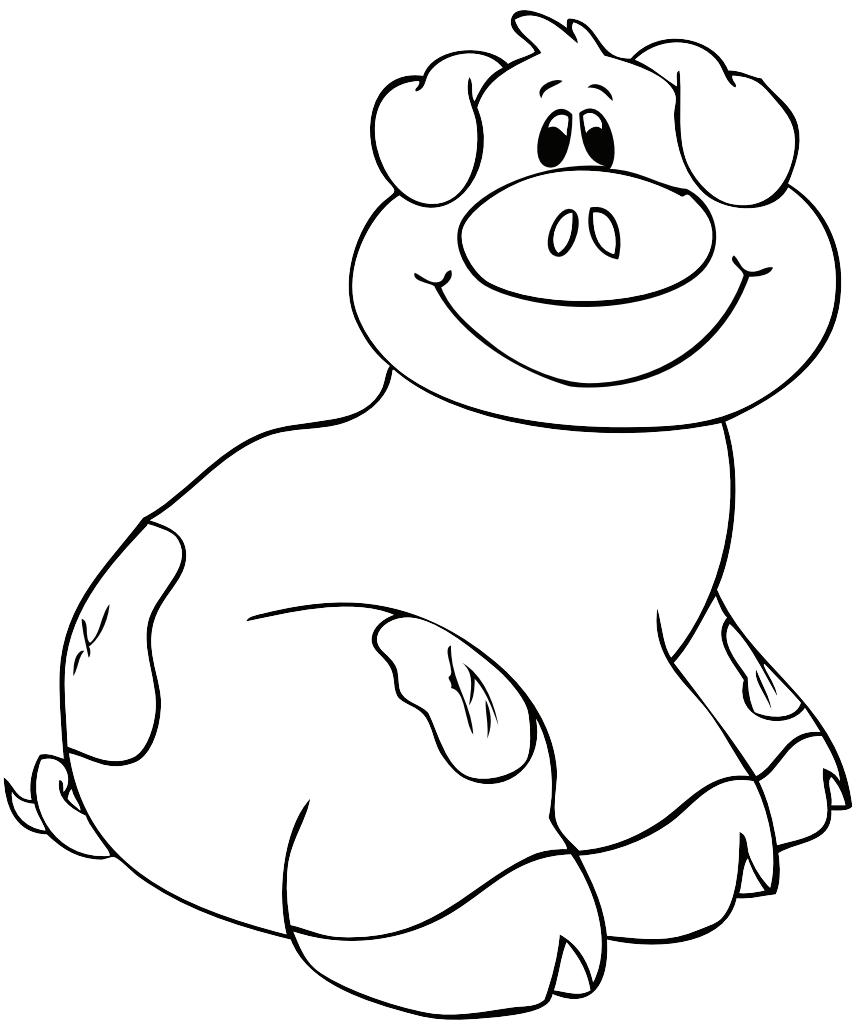
Q: What do you call cheese that is not yours?

A: Nacho cheese.





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				3	1
		6			
			2		
6	3				
	4				5

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- 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

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7	2	1	5	£	9
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Farm & Ranch



Purdy farmer, Doug Clifton, raises cattle and chickens by day, and travels the Midwest with the Route 3 bluegrass band in his spare time. Contributed photo

A FARMER BY DAY

Local cattleman plays the bluegrass circuit

BY SHEILA HARRIS
sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

Like many Barry County residents, agricultural roots run deep in Doug Clifton’s family.

Ever since he can remember, he helped his parents — Loren and Sharon Clifton — milk cows on the family’s dairy farm, southeast of Purdy. The Clifton farm was one of over 80 local dairy operations in Barry County in

1980. That number has since dwindled to three, according to MU Extension agent, Reagan Bluel.

After Clifton graduated from high school, he accepted a job with Jack Henry & Associates (JHA) in Monett, where he met his future wife Leslea on his first day of work. Aside from Leslea, who wrapped strings around his heart, JHA couldn’t hold him — farming was in his blood.

“I stayed at Jack Henry for five years,” Clifton said. “Then, I built four chicken houses and started raising pullets for George’s.”

Pullet farms, explained Clifton, entail raising chicks for six months, until they reach laying-hen size.

“Then, the hens are transferred to separate egg-laying operations,” he said.

Clifton operated the poultry farm while continuing to help his

parents run their dairy operation until 2005, when the family called dairy farming a wrap.

“That’s when I switched over to a cow/calf operation,” Clifton said. “I have a mixed herd of 195 cattle right now, most of them cows with calves, and most of them black — my favorites.”

Clifton’s mother passed away in 2014 and his father in 2022, and Clifton continues with his own family’s farm on the same

land he was raised on.

The Cliftons’ son Evan is 22, and their daughter Mallie is 19.

“We put up our own hay and pretty much do everything by tradition where farming is concerned,” Clifton said. “I can’t think of anything we’ve done, or do, that could necessarily be considered out of the ordinary.”

What Clifton doesn’t say, and what a person might not learn

CONTINUED ON PAGE XX

Harvick Farms offers fresh options

Business shifts model to offering locally-grown produce



Harvick Farms, in Cassville, offers a variety of food from local producers. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

BY SHEILA HARRIS
sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

Harvick Farms — situated along State Highway 76/112, on the south edge of Cassville — shifted its business model this year to that of a community food resource.

With food-borne bacteria such as Cyclosporiasis making the rounds this summer, Harvick Farms’ new iteration could not have come at a better time. As a cooperative outlet where farmers and producers sell their fresh produce and other food items, the purchase of locally-produced foods can offer a type of consumer confidence that doesn’t come with purchases from large retail grocery chains.

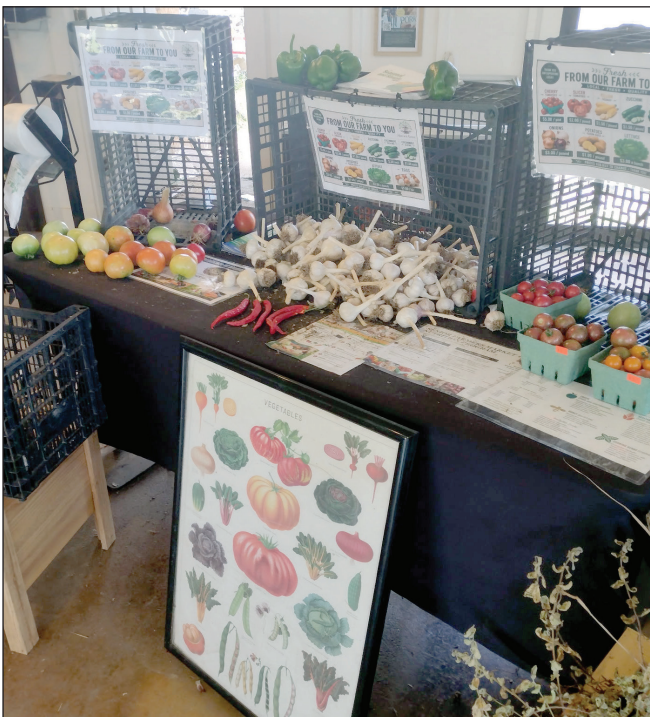
“Our cooperative is a win-win situation for producers and for the entire community,” said Lainey Harvick, who is excited about the role Harvick Farms has taken on in facilitating a local food hub. “We’re a farming community, so there’s no reason that people in this area should go hungry or shouldn’t have access to quality food.”

With its new business model, Harvick Farms hosts what is essentially a weekend-long, indoor farmers’ cooperative market.

“Area residents can buy fresh produce, eggs, milk, meat and other items here, directly from the farmers who produce them,” she said.

In addition to other forms of payment, Harvick Farms accepts SNAP and WIC benefits.

CONTINUED ON PAGE XX



Harvick Farms, in Cassville, offers a variety of food from local producers. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com



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FARM AND RANCH

Harvick: Hosts educational, practical gardening classes at Hwy. 112 location

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Lainey Harvick and her husband, Joseph Harvick, own and operate Harvick Farms in conjunction with their sons, Sam and Alex, and Joseph's father, Carlton Harvick. The couple purchased the 1.2-acre property after relocating to Eagle Rock from Fort Worth, Texas. With limited agricultural experience but a strong desire to learn, the couple dove in, renovating long-abandoned structures to open a nursery and bedding-plant business just in time for spring, five years ago.

Since then, the garden center has also become a community educational hub, offering practical hands-on classes related to gardening, cooking, canning, and skills important for self-sufficiency in a mass-production world.

"Food production is our main focus this year," Harvick said.

With funds from a USDA food security grant, the Harvicks installed multiple raised garden beds for the production of sweet potatoes, cucumbers, and a variety of greens and herbs.

Through cooperative effort with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Harvick Farms has a new high tunnel on their home farm to accommodate turmeric, ginger and bell peppers.

"We also used a USDA Resilient Food Systems



Cassville Community Gardens organizer, Melissa Hamilton, makes purchases from Harvick Farms. Sheila Harris/sheila-harrisads@gmail.com

Infrastructure (RFSI) grant to remodel our storefront and install refrigerated shelving and coolers," Harvick said.

Harvick Farms is partnering with Roaring River Adventures - the concessionaire for Roaring River State Park — a partnership Lainey Harvick is excited about.

"It's an example of locally-produced food going full circle right here in Barry County," she said.

This summer, Harvick Farms is producing veg-

etables for the kitchen at Emory Melton Inn. In turn, the Roaring River Adventures staff prepare fresh lunches — including salads and wraps — to be sold on consignment at the Harvick Farms storefront on select days.

Harvick Farms also partners with the Carl Junction's ISD Farm-to-School program to help provide locally grown vegetables.

The cooperative concept developed when Harvick realized that it's difficult for one producer to provide a

full variety of food to a community.

"We each have our specialty — the things we like to grow or produce," she said. "So, it only makes sense to transition into a farm-stop model where multiple farmers can offer their products in one place."

Through cooperation with multiple vendors, among Harvick Farms' offerings are A2A2 milk; microgreens, frozen pork, sausage and chicken; eggs; kombucha; fresh mushrooms; fresh greens; floral bouquets; honey; produce; fruits; salsa and pickles; soup mixes; honey products; and handcrafted soaps.

"Teas are my thing," Lainey Harvick said, noting that she uses her own dried herbs to create blends sold under the Harvick Farms label.

Joseph and Carlton Harvick contribute to bak-

ing operations. Their fresh-baked bagels, cookies, and other baked goods will be available in limited quantities.

Another project underway is the conversion of an outbuilding into a commercial kitchen that local producers can rent to create value-added products.

"The health department requires that items like salsa be processed in a commercial kitchen if intended for public sale," Harvick said. "Right now, there are very few options nearby for small producers."

Harvick Farms will continue to host educational classes, with practical gardening classes such as "Composting" and "Pest and Disease Management" making regular appearances, as well as more whimsical tutorials for building a birdhouse and making a barn quilt.

For more information

about classes and events, visit the Harvick Farms Facebook page.

This year, Harvick Farms hosted its first "Baker's Exchange," an event so popular that it will be hosted the third Saturday of every month, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., through November.

"We're looking for small-batch bakers to join us," Lainey Harvick said.

The storefront at Harvick Farms is staffed Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

"We are continuing to work on a self-serve option for the entire building to be more accessible throughout the week," Harvick said.

Information about partnering with Harvick Farms can be found at HarvickFarms.com.

Harvick Farms is located on the south edge of Cassville, at 16062 State Highway 76.

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FARM AND RANCH

Clifton: Playing Convoy of Hope benefit opened doors for band Route 3

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

unless they Googled his name to find his phone number, is that he's semi-famous.

Clifton has been playing the bass guitar since he was a teenager, where he often played along with a group at Macedonia Freewill Baptist Church, northeast of Purdy, a church he's been a member of since childhood.

Music is now Clifton's hobby, one that takes him farther afield than the cattle pasture behind his house.

"Ten years ago, or so, I started inviting some fellow musician friends over to play Gospel and Bluegrass music in my garage, just for fun," Clifton said.

The friends had so much fun that in 2018, they decided to form a band.

"We call ourselves Route 3, because at various times, each of us has received mail on a Route 3," Clifton said.

Fellow Route 3 mem-



Purdy farmer, Doug Clifton, raises cattle and chickens by day, and travels the Midwest with the Route 3 bluegrass band in his spare time. Contributed photo

bers include lead singer and song-writer, Jason Jordan, of Aurora, who plays the guitar; Craig Potter, of Ava, on the mandolin, and J.R. Freeland, of Ava, on the banjo.

Dobro player, Joshua Ulbrich, joins them when they perform in Nashville.

Since the group's inception, their demand has spread mostly by word of mouth, Clifton says.

Clifton says the attention started when somebody posted a video of one of their performances.

Afterward, the calls started coming in.

Clifton says each appearance often led to other appearances in different venues.

"Playing at an annual Convoy of Hope benefit opened a lot of doors," Clifton said.

"Now, we play at Bluegrass venues throughout the Midwest."

Clifton says Route 3 usually performs at a bluegrass venue in Nashville two or three times a year, as well as in Silver Dollar City.

In 2022, the group signed with Pinecastle Records and released three albums, including a Number One song titled, "Just Believe."

This October, for the first time, Route 3 will perform in Dollywood, an invitation they were honored to accept.

Clifton says Route 3 usually books about 12 to 15 performances a year.

"Each of us holds down another full-time job, so that number keeps us busy," Clifton said.

When asked if he was ready to cash in the farming to play music full-time, Clifton's answer was prompt.

"If we were playing music for a living, it would be work, and that would take the fun out of it," he said.

Clifton says he'll stick with being a farmer, one who plays music on the side.



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Conference: Boyd said solving case has been a priority since taking office

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

istration began a comprehensive reexamination of the case in the fall of 2025, with investigators reviewing every report, document and piece of evidence collected during the original investigation.

“As we reviewed the original case, it became clear that investigators faced more than passage of time,” he said. “We identified significant deficiencies in the original investigation that required us to revisit evidence, locate witnesses, verify information and reconstruct large portions of this case.”

Boyd emphasized that while law enforcement could not change what happened in 1999, investigators were determined to ensure every available lead was pursued using modern investigative techniques.

Boyd credited Lt. Gary Allen, Evidence Technician Sarah Miner, Maj. Angela Cole, Sgt. Abby Parsons, Det. Jeremy Berner and Det. Billy Forester for dedicating hundreds of hours to reviewing evidence, re-interviewing witnesses and rebuilding the case.

“We believed from the very beginning that this case could be solved,” Boyd said.

In February 2026, the sheriff’s office requested assistance from the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

“We brought the Highway Patrol in because we knew we had some [involved in the case] that lived out of state, and it was hard for us to interview them,” Boyd said. “So, we brought in the Highway Patrol to help us with that.”

Master Sgt. J.L. Mason, with the Patrol, said investigators essentially started over.

“At that time, we started from square one,” he said. “Any individual that was identified as a previous witness or suspect in the investigation, we went out and conducted additional interviews with all those individuals.”

Although the Scott brothers are now in custody, with two awaiting extradition form Arkansas, Mason stressed the investigation remains active.

“We’re looking for any additional witnesses, anybody that’s willing to provide information or evidence in the case,” he said.

One of the biggest obstacles, Mason said, was overcoming fear among potential witnesses.

“I will tell you that the Scott family has been a big part of the Seligman community for a long time,” Mason said. “They were known to be violent individuals, and I can tell you that some of those witnesses were afraid to come forward.”

Since the arrests were announced, investigators have already begun hearing from additional people willing to cooperate.

“I received a phone call the day after that they were arrested, and somebody is willing to cooperate in the investigation,” Mason said.

Boyd also said fear complicated the investigation when detectives attempted to revisit witnesses.

“A lot of the people we contacted are like, ‘Do I have to come to court? Because these guys are out. I worry about fear for me and my family,’” he said. “But once we got them arrested, I think folks realized that yes, we are legit and we are going to arrest them and we are going to seek justice for Justin.”

Investigators said advances in investigative practices also played a major role in the recent arrests.

While some physical evidence was resubmitted to crime laboratories using modern testing methods, Boyd said the available evidence remains minimal after more than two decades.

“We had to resend



Barry County Sheriff Danny Boyd, left, speaks at a press conference on July 28 about the charges filed in the alleged murder of Justin Hocutt in 1999 in Seligman. Also pictured, from left, are Sgt. Abby Parsons and Billy Forester, a well as Maj. Angela Cole. Boyd also thanked individuals not pictured who were key in the investigation efforts, including: Lt. Gary Allen, Det. Jeremy Berner and Evidence Technician Sarah Miner. Also attending the conference was Skip White, Barry County coroner in 1999; Master Sgt. J.L. Mason, with the Missouri State Highway Patrol; and Amy Boxx, current Barry County prosecutor. Kyle Troutman/kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

some stuff back to the lab because, over 26 years, things changed,” Boyd said. “We do have some stuff there, but it’s very limited.”

In response to another question from the crowd later in the conference, Mason said he is not aware of any DNA evidence playing any role in the case now versus the original investigation in 1999.

Jordan Troutman, current co-owner and General Manager of the Cassville Democrat who wrote a four-part series on Hocutt’s murder in October 2020, asked specifically about the lack of blood on the train tracks, as originally reported in her series. That lack of physical evidence led authorities at the time to believe Hocutt was already deceased when placed on the train tracks, but the probable cause statement in David Scott’s case says, “While reviewing the autopsy report, the doctor determined that based on medical evidence observed at the time of the autopsy, Hocutt was alive at the time he was placed on the railroad tracks and struck by a train.”

“I am not at liberty to discuss the current investigation or the pending charges against those individuals; there was certainly blood on the on the train tracks,” Mason replied. “There’s no doubt about that. But, I certainly wouldn’t dispute the amount of or lack thereof, or the amount of blood that was located on the tracks at the time of Justin’s death.”

Mason said today’s investigative standards also allowed officers to gather more comprehensive witness statements than were documented during the original investigation.

“What we found during the original investigation is that many witnesses were contacted,” he said. “I think there was a tremendous amount of effort that was put into the original investigation. However, the reporting process that was in place back then did not capture detailed information that would help in prosecuting these individuals.”

Mason added that investigators relied on prior reports as a starting point but sought fresh interviews with nearly everyone connected to the case. Mason also noted the original investigation was led by the railroad police because Hocutt’s body was found on railroad tracks.

“This is not an investigation that I believe would typically be investigated by the railroad,” Mason said. “This is probably an incident that should have been investigated by the local agency here, and I think that may have played a role into why we’re here 27 years later.”

Barry County Prosecutor Amy Boxx said charges were filed after her office reviewed the newly completed investigation and probable cause statements.

“Thanks to the joint efforts of the Barry County Sheriff’s Office and the Missouri State Highway Patrol, we are finally able to seek justice for the Hocutt family,” she said.

David Scott, born 1977, of Pineville, is currently being held in the Barry County Jail on no bond after being arraigned, and

interview [with David Scott], but the other [two’s reactions were] pretty typical,” he said. “They’re denying any part of it. But, that’s pretty common. And after 26 years, I would think that if I got by with it this long, nothing’s going to happen. But they’re wrong.”

Skip White, former Barry County coroner, praised Boyd for fulfilling a campaign promise to reopen the investigation.

“When Danny ran for sheriff, he made the promise that he would open this case up, and he did exactly that,” White said. “I always thought this case was solvable.”

Boyd said solving the case has been a priority since he first took office.

“I got elected in 2020, and the very first thing they asked is, ‘Are you going to open this case up?’” Boyd said. “Yes, we were willing to do that.”

Though it ultimately took six years, Boyd said investigators never stopped believing justice was possible.

“This is a huge accomplishment, not only for the Sheriff’s Office, but for the Hocutt family,” he said.

Multiple members of the Hocutt family were in attendance at the press conference.

Boyd concluded the news conference by reminding those in attendance that criminal charges are allegations and that all three defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in court.

Still, he said the case sends a message that violent crimes will not simply disappear with time.

“Time does not ease responsibility,” Boyd said. “No matter how many years have passed, this sheriff’s office will continue to pursue justice for victims and their families.”

Boyd said though he was not present for all the interviews with the three Scott brother, their reactions to being charged were similar.

“I wasn’t there for that

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WILDCATS AIMING HIGH



Cassville's Hugh Thao escapes a defender in a contest last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville's Noah Driskill eyes a ball coming out of the air during a home game last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville boys soccer returns loads of experience

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

The Cassville boys soccer team returns an experienced group this fall with aspirations of building on the 2025 campaign by converting more scoring chances and making a run to the district championship.

Curtis Ray, Cassville boys soccer coach, said the Wildcats created opportunities throughout last season, finishing at 9-13, but want to be more dangerous in the final third.

"We are looking to pick up what we left off last year," Ray said. "Last year we did a great job attacking, getting into the box and getting a lot of shots. However, we were not able to finish a lot of those. We actually outshot a major portion of the teams we

faced, even ones we lost to, on frame, but just could not finish them. So the huge goal is obviously, put them in the back of the net and putting a number on the board. That's been a big point of emphasis during the July camp. Another goal is to find ourselves into the district championship game."

Cassville returns a veteran nucleus led by senior attacker David Rehbach.

"David brings vision and just a great IQ," Ray said. "He's got the ability to split balls. He's got the ability to score. He's quick. He's got that quick twitch, and he brings a lot of attacking mentality to the team."

Diego Ibarra also returns after providing creativity on both ends of the field.

"Diego brings some great creativity," Ray said.

"Every time he gets the ball on his foot, you kind of watch and wait to see what kind of creative movement he's going to put into it on the attack. He's very intense and brings an intense level of defending."

Preston Driskill gives the Wildcats another experienced option with versatility.

"Preston brings some size to the table," Ray said. "His touch has gotten a lot better and he's got the ability to score from anywhere 20-25 yards. He also has great conditioning, so defensively he can help back and provide help on the wing or forward position."

After battling injuries last season, Noah Driskill is expected to provide an energetic presence.

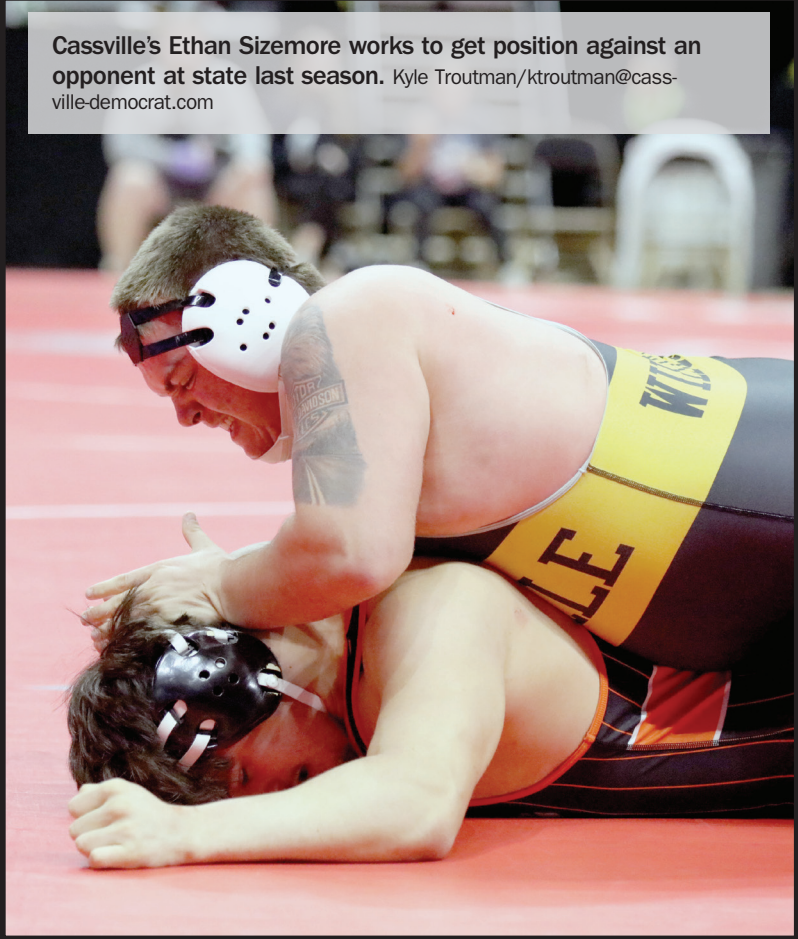
"Noah brings just an all-out intensity that only he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8B

Year in Photos — Cassville boys wrestling



Cassville's Colton Roark finishes off his opponent in the state championship bout last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville's Ethan Sizemore works to get position against an opponent at state last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



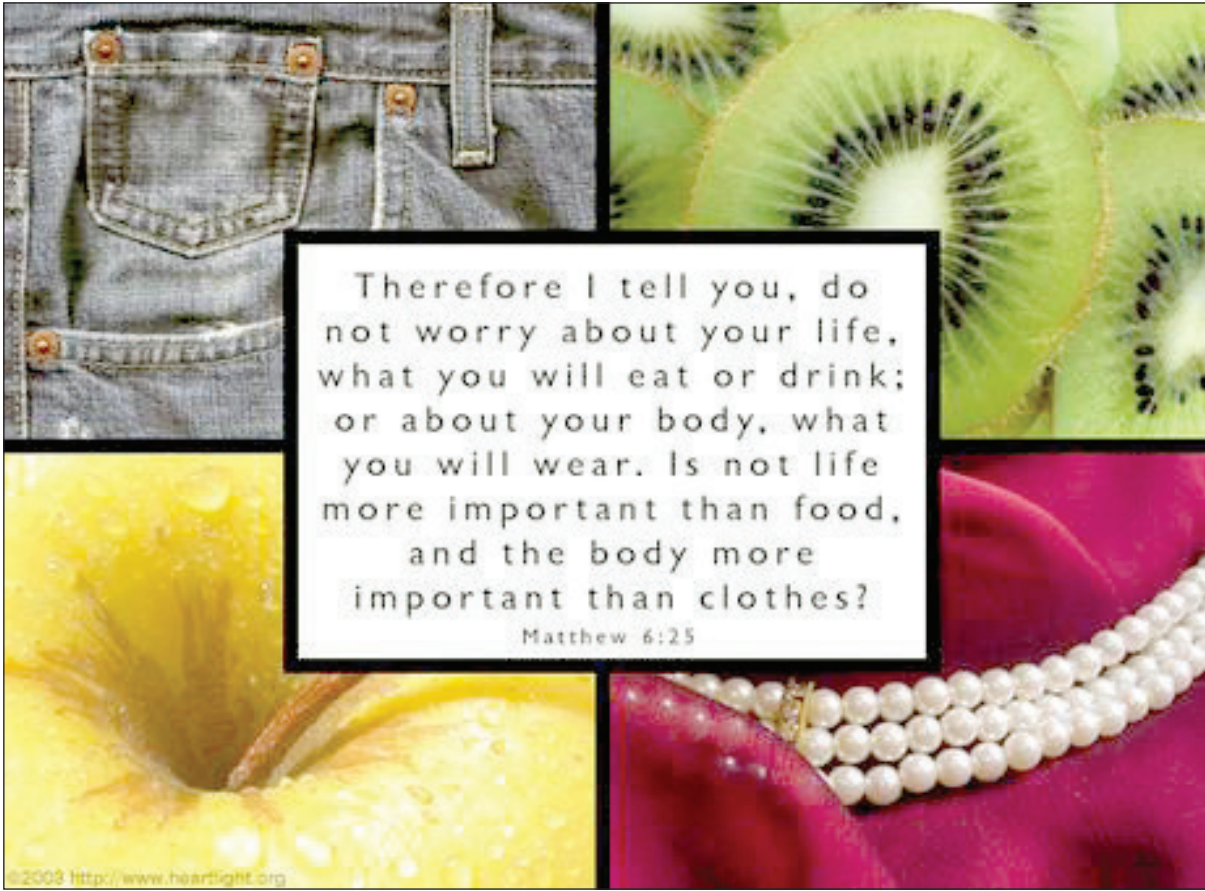
Cassville's Tristan Thompson battles his opening-round opponent at the state championships last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville's Boni Lopes battles an opponent in a match at the state championships last season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

CASSVILLE AREA DEVOTIONAL PAGE

This devotional and directory is made possible by these businesses who encourage all to attend worship services.



BIBLE VERSE:

“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

— 1 SAMUEL 16:7

CHURCH DIRECTORY

ANGLICAN ST. MARY MAGDALENE 205 Commercial St., Exeter 835-2102	602 West. St., Cassville 847-2965 FIRST BAPTIST Wheaton FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST Exeter, 835-5433 FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST 104 W. Hwy. J, Golden 271-3605 GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 14970 F.R. 1150, Cassville, Mo. GRACE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP P.O. Box 352, Shell Knob 858-6868 GRACE SOUTHERN BAPTIST 1/2 mi. off 248 corner of FR 2150 & 1150, Cassville; 847-4691 HIS WAY FELLOWSHIP Highway 62, 1 mi. N. of Garfield 847-9289 MINERAL SPRINGS BAPTIST HC #64, Cassville; 846-1115 MISSION SOUTHERN BAPTIST RR 1, Washburn 826-5232 MT. OLIVE SOUTHERN BAPTIST FR. 2188, Cassville, 417-847-1245 MT. ZION BAPTIST Hwy. 37 S., Washburn 826-5840 NEW HOPE BAPTIST 3 mi. W. of 37 on W Hwy. then 3/4 mi. N. to FR 1052, Exeter 652-3885 OAK RIDGE MISSIONARY BAPTIST 16722 State Hwy. 248, Cassville Pastor- 501-538-6261 Local- 417-847-4597 PLEASANT HILL BAPTIST RR 1, Box 1710, Washburn 435-2319 PURDY FIRST BAPTIST 3rd & Washington St., Purdy 442-7435 SHILOH BAPTIST Hwy. 248, Jenkins 574-6466 PROSPERITY BAPTIST CHURCH Rocky Comfort PRAIRIE HILL BAPTIST RR 1, Box 1956, Washburn 826-5158 RIDGLEY BAPTIST CHURCH Rt. 1, Box 931, Exeter 652-7884 ROARING RIVER BAPTIST	HC #881 - Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-3142 ROCK SPRINGS BAPTIST RR 1, Seligman; 826-5770 SOLID ROCK SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH Rt. 1, Exeter, 652-3592 VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH Business 37 N., Cassville 826-5295 VIOLA BAPTIST Hwy. 39, Shell Knob 858-2597 WASHBURN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH 618 N. 2nd Street, Washburn 826-5000 WAYMARK CHURCH 2581 State Hwy 37 235-7466 WHEATON FIRST BAPTIST Hwy. 86 & Hwy. A, Wheaton 652-3898 WHEATON SOUTHERN BAPTIST 11676 State Hwy. 86, Wheaton PO Box 175, 652-3186	Hwy. 86, Golden 271-3134 SPIRITUAL STREAMS FELLOWSHIP Hwy. 112, Cassville 846-6339 EPISCOPAL ST. THOMAS Á BECKET Hwy. 112 and State Hwy. AA, Cassville 846-2155 LUTHERAN COMMUNITY LUTHERAN Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-4383 PEACE LUTHERAN N. Hwy. 39, Shell Knob 858-3900 METHODIST ALL FAITH UNITED METHODIST Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-3737 CASSVILLE UNITED METHODIST 7th & Gravel, Cassville 847-2328 UNITED METHODIST Hwy. YY, Shell Knob 858-6707 WASHBURN UNITED METHODIST Washburn Corner of 1st and North, Washburn WHEATON UNITED METHODIST 101 Santee St., Wheaton 652-3858	NEW LIFE TEMPLE Business Hwy. 37 N., Cassville 847-3106 GRACE POINT FELLOWSHIP Washburn Community Building 479-366-2561 NEW LIFE TABERNACLE 30755 State Hwy. 37, Seligman 662-0076 PRESBYTERIAN TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN Hwy. 39 N., Shell Knob 858-3902 WALDENSIAN PRESBYTERIAN 1 mi. S. of Monett 235-3337 OTHER BELIEVERS FULL GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP 1st. & South St., Washburn 826-5875 BLESSING HEIGHTS WORSHIP CENTER 1107 Farm Rd., Cassville 847-4061 CASSVILLE SDA Old Exeter Rd. & Hwy. 37, Cassville 847-3622 BODY OF CHRIST Wheaton, 417-652-3709 COMMUNITY FAITH CHAPEL 13372 State Hwy. 248, Cassville 847-4643 GOD'S HEALING CENTER Seligman, 662-3118 EAGLE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 342-0516 FIRST CHRISTIAN Hwy. 39 N., Shell Knob 858-8200 FIRST CHRISTIAN Old Exeter Rd. & Hwy. 37, Cassville 847-2460 GOD'S HEALING CENTER Seligman, 662-3118 LAKEVIEW CHRISTIAN CHURCH 22321 Oak Ridge Drive, Shell Knob 278-6674 OZARK CHRISTIAN CHURCH Hwy. 37, N. of Purdy 442-3361 REAL LIFE WORSHIP CENTER 709 W. 10th St., Cassville
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SPECIAL NOTICE
IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Please check your ad the first day of publication. If it contains an error, report it to the *Cassville Democrat*. Errors will be corrected, and credit will be issued for the first day of publications only. The Cassville Democrat shall not be liable for any loss or expense that results from the publication (whether published correctly or not) or omission of an advertisement.

HELP NEEDED
HELP: Seeking handyman in Cassville. One day per week, \$15 per hour. 951-288-9996.

LOST AND FOUND
LOST AND FOUND: To the lady that helped me when I fell in the street in Cassville, please call me. I think you have my car keys. Karen, 316-755-6043.

HOUSING SOUGHT
SEEKING HOUSING: Retired man, good health, clean and quiet seeks sleeping room or basement/garage apartment. Easy-going and able to help with yard and house chores. References available on request. Call Steve at 417-896-0015.

MISCELLANEOUS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI

JARED KING
PLAINTIFF,
VS.
JUSTIN KING
DEFENDANT.
CASE NO. 24BR-CC00002

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE IN PARTITION

By virtue and authority of a certified Copy of an Interlocutory Judgment and Order of Sale in Partition issued out of the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri, on the 6th day of June, 2025, in the above-captioned cause, wherein the Court

found that the real estate hereinafter described cannot be divided in kind without great prejudice to the owners thereof, and directed the undersigned Sheriff of Barry County, Missouri, to sell said real estate at public venue to the highest bidder for cash.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I, the undersigned Sheriff of Barry County, Missouri, will on the 17th day of August 2026, at 1:00 p.m., at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, located at 700 Main Street, in the City of Cassville, Barry County, Missouri, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash (or certified funds), all the right, title, and interest of the parties to said suit in and to the following described real estate, situated in the County of Barry, State of Missouri, to-wit:
Tract 1: Lot Fifteen, Block Five in Chain-o-Lakes Subdivision No. 2, Barry County, Missouri, as per the recorded Plat thereof; and Tract 2: Lot Seventeen in Block Five in Chain-o-Lakes Subdivision No. 2, Barry County, Missouri, as per the recorded plat thereof, situated in the County of Barry, Missouri.
Parcel ID/Tax ID Number: 29-6-0-14-002-006-0007.000/3-1254-0
Commonly known as: 27274 Hickory Drive, Eagle Rock, Missouri
Terms of Sale: Cash payable at the time of sale. The sale is subject to confirmation by the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri.
Given under my hand this 9th day of July 2026.
Danny Boyd
Sheriff of Barry County, Missouri
1st insertion 07/22/26
28-31

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

FREEDOM BANK OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI, Plaintiff,
vs.
CHRISTOPHER R. ROSS, Defendant
Case No. 22BR-CC00048

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue and authority of a Writ of Execution issued from the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri at Cassville, Missouri: Take notice that on August 17, 2026 at 1:00 pm the Sheriff of Barry County, Missouri, will sell at the East Door of the Barry County Courthouse in Cassville, Missouri, to the highest bidder for cash, all right, title, interest of the above-named Christopher R. Ross and Jackie Ross and in and to the real property described as:
The West half of the Northwest Quarter AVD the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest

Quarter of Section Twenty-two (22), Township Twenty-three (23), Range Twenty-nine (29), Barry County, Missouri. EXCEPT a tract of land described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter, thence North 1448 feet, thence running West 900 feet, thence running South 1448 feet, thence East 900 feet to the point of beginning.
situate in the County of Barry, State of Missouri, to satisfy said execution and costs.
Dated: July 8, 2026
Published in the Cassville Democrat on: July 15, 22, 29, August 5 and 12, 2026.
DANNY BOYD,
Barry County Sheriff
1st insertion 07/15/26
27-31

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of an execution issued by the Office of the Circuit Clerk of Stone County, Missouri, arising out of a judgment entered by the Circuit Court of Stone County, Missouri, in Case No. 25SN-CC00164, and to me, as sheriff, directed and delivered, in favor of the plaintiff Nationstar Mortgage LLC and against the defendants Amber Atkisson, et al., I have levied upon and seized all of the right, title, interest, and estate of the defendant Amber Atkisson, in and to the following described real estate, situate in Stone County, Missouri, to wit:
All of Lots Six (6) and Seven (7), Walker Olde Towne Addition Phase I,

REAL ESTATE AUCTION

Friday, August 14, 2026 — 1 PM

Location: Cassville, MO. From Cassville, MO go East on Hwy 248, 5.2 miles then turn right on FR 2150. Go 1.5 miles, turn left on FR 2155 go 2/10 mile. Stay straight on dead end road. Last home on left. (16457 FR 2162, Cassville MO)



Real Estate: 2017 Double wide home, 1568 sq ft, 3 bedroom, 2 bath. Enter this home under a big covered front deck into a nice size living room, with ceiling fan & large windows. Open floor plan, open to the kitchen and dining area. The kitchen features SS dishwasher, double SS sink, Frigidaire cook stove, Frigidaire Refrigerator/Freezer, granite top kitchen island & lots of cabinets. Just off the kitchen is the utility room/pantry with a door leading out back. The master bedroom has large windows, master bathroom with nice onyx step in shower & walk in closets & windows and shared full bathroom. **Outside Amenities:** Covered front deck, small back deck, nice little shop/one car garage with concrete floor, electric & a lean to on each end. Also, a nice storage shed to be sold separate. All this on a beautiful country setting, 2 ac m/l. **Note:** Country living, close to Cassville, great views of the country, quiet, at the end of a dead end road, very clean, well maintained, home and small detached garage/shop with option to buy nice storage shed being auctioned off right after the real estate. **Real Estate Terms:** Qualified buyers only w/pre-approved bank letter of approval. Nonrefundable 10% paid day of auction w/balance due in cash or certified funds within 30-45 days. Buyers and sellers will be responsible for their own portion of their closing cost. Taxes will be prorated to the date of close. Sells as is where is with no warranties or guarantees. Bidders, buyers, or agent of the buyer is responsible for conducting own inspection of property prior to auction and should rely solely upon their own due diligence and inspection. This property is offered with absolutely no contingencies of any kind, no contingencies on financing, surveys, appraisals, or final walk throughs. Seller has the right to accept or reject final bid. A 10% buyer's premium will apply on Real Estate. Any announcements made day of auction supersede any and all printed material.



Auctioneer:
Donnie Stumpff
MO & AR State Champion Auctioneer
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Owners: Lance & Kayla Larson



www.stumpffauction.com

417-847-2507



Auctioneer:
Parker Stumpff
AR State Champion Auctioneer
#2352

according to the recorded Plat thereof, in Book 20, Page 38, Stone County Recorder's Office, Stone County, Missouri, commonly known as 403 Kadee Dr., Crane, MO 65633
which I shall expose at public sale to the highest bidder for certified funds on the 17th day of August, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at the North Front Door of the Stone County Courthouse located in Galena, Missouri to satisfy said judgment and costs.
Date: June 26, 2026 Doug Rader, Sheriff of Stone County, Missouri
1st insertion 07/22/26
28-31

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE CITY OF CASSVILLE,

Plaintiff,
Vs.
WILLIAM J. HENBEST, and his Unknown Heirs, Grantees, Deviseses, Successors, Consorts, and Assigns,

CHARLES H. LANEY, and his Unknown Heirs, Grantees, Deviseses, Successors, Consorts, and Assigns, and

CHARLA MURPHY, Defendants.

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE THE STATE OF MISSOURI TO.

Defendants,
26BR-CC00116
William J. Henbest and Charles H., Lancy, their unknown heirs, grantees, devisees successors, consorts and assigns.
YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action has been commenced against you in the Circuit Court for the County of Barry, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is for pursuance and condemnation for the following described property in Barry County, Missouri:
All of Lots Four (4), Five (5) Six (6). Seven (7). Eight (8) and Nine (9)
Block Four (4) Smith and Hayes Addition to the City of Cassville, Missouri.

The names of all the parties to said suit are stated above in the caption hereof and the same and address of the attorney for Plaintiffs is Cordelia F. Herrin. P.O. Box 276, 702 West Street, Cassville MO 65625.
YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or shall otherwise appear and defend against the aforesaid Petition within 45 days after the 5th day of August, 2026, judgment by default will be rendered against you.
IT IS ORDERED that a copy hereof be published according to law in the Cassville Democrat a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Barry, State of Missouri.
A true copy from the record.
WITNESS my hand and seal of the Circuit Court this 29th day of July, 2026.
CRAIG WILLIAMS, Circuit Clerk,
By Kami Stanton Clerk

1st Publication: August 5, 2026
2nd Publication: August 12, 2026
3rd Publication: August 19, 2026
4th Publication: August 26, 2026
1st Insertion 08/05/26
30-33

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

In the Matter of:
L. J. M.
A female minor child.
Estate No.
25BR-DR00142

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to Chloe Miles natural mother

and the natural father Joseph Hall:
You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Circuit Court of the County of Barry, State of Missouri, the object and general nature of which is Petition for Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption.
The names of all parties to the said suit are stated above in the caption hereof and the name and address of the attorney for petitioner is James J. Randall, 405 Broadway, P.O. Box 151, Monett, MO 65708.
You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or pleading or shall otherwise appear and defend against the aforesaid petition within forty-five (45) days after the 5th day of AUGUST, 2026, judgment by default will be rendered against you.
It is ordered that a copy hereof be published according to law in The Cassville Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Barry, State of Missouri.
Witness my hand and seal of the Circuit Court, State of Missouri, the 28th day of July, 2026.
Craig Williams
Circuit clerk
By KATIE CORREIA D/C
First Publication: AUGUST 05, 2026
Second Publication: AUGUST 12, 2026
Third Publication: AUGUST 19, 2026
Fourth Publication: AUGUST 26, 2026
1st insertion 08/05/26
30-33

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

In re THE MARRIAGE OF: VUE VANCHAL, Petitioner, and PA HOUA VUE, Respondent.
Case No. 26BR-DR00105

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF MISSOURI TO:
The Respondent PA HOUA VUE
You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is to obtain a Dissolution of Marriage.
The names of all parties to said action are stated above in the caption hereof and the name and address of the attorney for Petitioner is Blake B. Fields of the Law Office of Blake B. Fields, LLC, 605 Main Street, Cassville, Missouri 65625.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4B

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*Especially for Seniors 62 and Older or Disabled Households Regardless of Age

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- Rental Assistance Available

FOR MORE DETAILS CALL:

**417-390-3921
RELAY #711**



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WIC NUTRITIONIST FULL-TIME

The Barry County Health Department is seeking a full-time non-exempt WIC Nutritionist to join our Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) team. The successful candidate will provide nutrition education and counseling to pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children while promoting healthy lifestyles and breastfeeding support. Minimum qualifications apply. Complete job description, qualifications, application, and instructions for applying are available on our website: www.barrycountyhealth.com Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Barry County Health Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

HELP WANTED PART-TIME POLICE OFFICER

The City of Washburn is accepting applications for the position of a **Part-Time Police Officer.**

Requirements:

- Current Missouri POST certification.
- Valid driver's license.
- Ability to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends.
- Must pass required background check.

Applications may be submitted in person to **Washburn City Hall, 321 Main Street, Washburn, MO 65772, or emailed to cityofwashburn39@gmail.com.**

For questions, please contact **Washburn City Hall at (417) 826-5242.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3B

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or otherwise appear and defend against this action within forty-five (45) days after AUGUST 05, 2026, judgment by default will be entered against you.

IT IS ORDERED that a copy hereof be published according to law in the Cassville Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Barry, State of Missouri.

A true copy from the record. Witness my hand and the seal of the Circuit Court this 28th day of JULY 2026

Dated: JULY 28, 2026
 Craig Williams
 CIRCUIT CLERK
 BY KATIE CORREIA/DC
 First Publication: AUGUST 05, 2026
 Second Publication: AUGUST 12, 2026
 Third Publication: AUGUST 19, 2026
 Fourth Publication: AUGUST 26, 2026
 1st insertion 08/05/26
 30-33

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

County of Barry of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adapt 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at Barry County Courthouse at 9:20 a.m. On Monday, August 10, 2026.

2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are, Real Estate \$514,788,009. Personal Property \$204,488,485. Total \$719,276,494. 2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations were: Real Estate \$506,111,638. Personal Property \$198,765,789. Total \$704,877,427. 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was 0.0000. 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling 0.0000. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Cassville Fire Protection District of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adapt 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at 393 Sale Barn Road, Cassville at 6:30 p.m. On Monday, August 10, 2026

2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are, Real Estate \$72,943,430. Personal Property \$27,788,330. Total \$100,731,760. 2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations were: Real Estate \$71,694,472. Personal Property \$27,506,506. Total \$99,200,97. 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was .2943 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling .2943 Only insertion 8/5/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Liberty Common SRD 34of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adapt 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at Barry County Courthouse at 9:15 a.m. On Monday, August 10, 2026.

2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are, Real Estate \$742,361. Personal Property \$232,094. Total \$974,455. 2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations were: Real Estate \$819,878. Personal Property \$223,354. Total \$1,043,232. 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was 0.1207. 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling 0.1304. Only insertion 8/5/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The North Stone Northeast Barry County Fire Protection District of Barry, Lawrence, and Stone County will hold a public hearing to adopt their 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at Fire Station 23, 508 Airport Road, Crane, MO at 6:30 pm on Thursday, August 20, 2026. The 2025 Assessed

Valuations were: \$36,520,758.00 Real Estate; \$14,837,044.00 Personal Property; \$51,357,802.00 Total Valuation. The 2026 Assessed Valuations are \$37,263,267.00 Real Estate; \$16,455,900.00 Personal Property; \$53,719,167.00 Total Valuation. The 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was .2844. The 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling is .2859. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Pleasant Ridge Special Road District of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adopt their 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held in the basement of the Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Pleasant Ridge, MO at 6 pm on Monday, August 17, 2026.

The 2025 Assessed Valuations were: \$5,708,136.00 Real Estate \$1,979,747.00 Personal Property; \$7,687,883.00 Total Valuation. The 2026 Assessed Valuations are \$ 5,650,117.00 Real Estate; \$ 2,083,641.00 Personal Property; \$ 7,733,758.00 Total Valuation. The Road and Bridge and Special Road and Bridge Combined 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was .2927. The combined 2026 Road and Bridge & Special Road and Bridge Tax Rate Ceiling is .3000. Only Insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Purdy of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adopt their 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at City Hall, 401 East St. Hwy C Purdy, MO at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

The 2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are 5,961,511 Total Valuation. The 2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations are 6,002,135 Total Valuation. The 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling was 0.4054. The 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling is 0.4026. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Wheaton Special Road District #29 of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adopt their 2026 tax rate. The meeting will be held at Wheaton Road Barn on HWY A at 5pm on Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are, Real Estate \$15,744,856; Personal Property \$5,880,369; Total Valuation \$21,625,225.

2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations were, Real Estate \$15,063,169; Personal Property \$ 5,123,558; Total Valuation \$ 20,186,727. The 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was 0.1872. The 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling is \$ 0.1872. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Washburn Fire Protection District Washburn Fire Protection District of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adopt their 2026 tax rate. The meeting will be held at 219 N. Old Wire Road, Washburn, MO 65772 (Station #1) at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 10, 2026.

The 2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are: Real Estate - \$ 23,829,049 Personal Property - \$ 9,676,599 Total Valuation - \$ 33,505,648 The 2025 Prior Year Assess Valuations were:

CLASSIFIEDS/LEGALS

Monett R- I School District Tax Rate Hearing Notice

A hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m., August 20, 2026 at Monett Administrative Offices, Monett, MO at which time citizens may be heard on the property tax rates proposed to be set by the **Monett R-I School District**, a political subdivision. The tax rates are set to produce the revenues from the property tax required by the budget for the fiscal year beginning **July 1, 2026**. Each tax rate is determined by dividing the amount of revenue needed by the current assessed valuation. The result is multiplied by 100 so the tax rate will be expressed in cents per \$100 valuation. (*Estimates reflect the most accurate information at the time of posting. If necessary, changes can be made by the Board of Education at the Tax Rate Hearing.)

Assessed Valuation (AV) (by categories)	2026-27	2025-26
Real Estate	\$167,928,994	\$166,943,886
Personal Property	\$72,794,178	\$71,598,180
Combined Real Estate & Personal Property	\$240,723,172	\$238,542,066
Less AV in Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	\$0	\$0
Adjusted Assessed Valuation on Which Tax Revenue is Received	\$240,723,172	\$238,542,066

New Construction & Improvements (Included in AV Total above)	\$1,495,001	\$1,327,882
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The following Tax Rates are Proposed by Fund:	Amount of Property Tax Revenues Budgeted (assumes 100% collection)	Proposed Property Tax Rate (per \$100)	Amount of Calculated Property Tax Revenue From Prior Year	Property Tax Rate (per \$100)
Incidental	\$6,970,862	\$2.8958	\$6,891,957	\$2.8892
Teacher	\$0		\$0	
Debt Service	\$1,998,965	\$0.8304	\$1,980,853	\$0.8304
Capital Projects	\$481,446	\$0.2000	\$477,084	\$0.2000
Total	\$9,451,273	\$3.9262	\$9,349,895	\$3.9196

Total New Revenue (operating funds only):	\$83,266
New Revenue from New Construction and Improvements:	\$83,308
New Revenue from Reassessment:	(\$41)
Percentage of New Revenue from Reassessment:	0.00%

Board of Education
 Monett R- I
 Ken Gaspar , President
 Ana Espinoza , Secretary

Real Estate - \$ 23,224,168 Personal Property - \$ 8,944,625 Total Valuation - \$ 32,168,793 The 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was .2814. The 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling is .2821. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Purdy Special Road District of Barry County will hold a public hearing to adapt 2026 tax rate.

The meeting will be held at Purdy Road District Barn at 4:00 p.m. On Monday, August 10, 2026

2026 Current Year Assessed Valuations are, Real Estate \$20,044,131. Personal Property \$9,867,271. Total \$29,911,402. 2025 Prior Year Assessed Valuations were: Real Estate \$19,898,134. Personal Property \$9,843,907. Total \$29,742,041. 2025 Tax Rate Ceiling was 0.3335. 2026 Tax Rate Ceiling 0.3350. Only insertion 08/05/26 30

PROBATE

IN THE 39TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI JUDGE OR DIVISION: PROBATE

In the Estate of COY E CUMMINS, Deceased. Case Number: 26BR-PR00089

NOTICE OF LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION GRANTED (SUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION)

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of COY E CUMMINS, Decedent:

On JULY 13, 2026, the following individual was appointed the personal representative of the estate of COY E CUMMINS, decedent, by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri.

The personal representative's name and business address is: JOCELYN A CUMMINS, PO BOX CASSVILLE, MO 65625

The personal representative's attorney's name, business address and phone number is: HARRY DANIEL SCHWARTZ, 702 WEST ST, PO BOX 276, CASSVILLE, MO 65625, 417-847-2734.

All creditors of said decedent are notified to file claims in court within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or if a copy of this notice was mailed to, or served upon, such creditor by the personal representative, then within two months from the date it was mailed or served, whichever is later,

or be forever barred to the fullest extent permissible by law. Such six-month period and such two-month period do not extend the limitation period that would bar claims one year after Decedent's death, as provided in Section 473.444, RSMo, or any other applicable limitation periods. Nothing in Section 473.033, RSMo, shall be construed to bar any action against a decedent's liability insurance carrier through a defendant ad litem pursuant to Section 537.021, RSMo.

Date of the decedent's death:

25-JAN-2026
 Date of first publication: JULY 29, 2026
 Date of second publication: AUGUST 5, 2026
 Date of third publication: AUGUST 12, 2026
 Date of fourth publication: AUGUST 19, 2026
 Craig Williams, Circuit Clerk
 By S. Parker, Probate Clerk

Receipt of this notice by mail should not be construed by the recipient to indicate that the recipient necessarily has a beneficial interest in the estate. The nature and extent of any person's interest, if any, can be determined from the files and records of this estate in the Probate Division of the above referenced Circuit Court. 1st insertion 07/29/26 29-32

THE CIRCUIT COURT PROBATE DIVISION BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI

In the Estate of:

Lilly Petersen Deceased. Estate No. 26BR-PR00002

NOTICE OF FILING OF FINAL SETTLEMENT AND PETITION FOR DISTRIBUTION

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF Lilly Petersen, Deceased:

You are hereby notified that the undersigned Personal Representative will file a Final Settlement and Petition for determination of the persons who are the successors in interest to the personal / real property of the decedent and of the extent and character of their interest therein and for distribution of such property, in the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri, on July, 2026, or as may be continued by the Court, and that any objections or exceptions for such Final Settlement or Petition or any item thereof must be in writing and filed within twenty days after the filing of such Final Settlement. James Randall Attorney 1. Jarrell David Rhea Personal Representative 405 E Broadway. Monett, Mo 65708 Address

Service of the within notice is acknowledged at July 15.22, 29 and August 5.2026

Dates of Publication ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SERVICE OF NOTICE

Monett on July 7, 2026. PROOF OF MAILING OF COPYOFNOTICEOFFILING OF FINAL SETTLEMENT AND PETITION FOR DISTRIBUTION

Samantha Prescott, on that state(s) that a copy of the above Notice was mailed by the undersigned on July 7, 2026 by ordinary mail, according to law, to: Heirs Kelly Rhea 236 South 485 West, Providence, Ut 84332 Karren Stonehouse 5094 FR 1090, Monett, Mo 65708

Kimberly Sprague PO Box 97, Blue Grass Ia, 52726 Kurtis Stonehouse 9602 Cypresss Brook Rd, Tampa Fl 33647 Kathryn Swanson 528 1" Ave, Silivis, Il 61282 Kris Haley 2007 W George Washington, Davenport, Ia 52804

The foregoing is made under oath or affirmation and its representations are true and correct to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, subject to the penalties of making a false affidavit or declaration. 1st insertion 7/29/26 29-32

TRUSTEE’S SALES

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

Default having been made in the payment of that certain note secured by Deed of Trust executed by Jonathan L. Reed And Amber R. Reed, Husband And Wife, dated 11/8/2021, recorded on 11/9/2021, as Instrument No. 202107685, in Book 21, Page 7569, Rerecorded on 2/14/2022 as Book No. 22, Page 958, Office of Recorder of Deeds, Barry County, Missouri. The Successor Trustee will on 8/31/2026, between the hours of 9:00 o'clock A.M. and 5:00 P.M. more particularly at 1:15 PM, at the East Door of the Court House, City of Cassville, Barry County, 102 West Street, Suite 2, Cassville, Missouri 65625, sell at public venue to the highest bidder for cash, the following real estate:

ALL OF THE WEST SIXTY-TWO AND ONE-HALF (62 1/2) FEET OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED TRACT OF LAND, TO-WIT: BEGINNING TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY (270) FEET EAST OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF OUT LOT NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT (38) IN THE CITY OF CASSVILLE, MISSOURI, LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION TWENTY-NINE (29), TOWNSHIP TWENTY-THREE (23), RANGE TWENTY-SEVEN (27), BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, THENCE EAST ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE (125) FEET, THENCE IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION TO THE

SOUTH LINE OF OUT LOT NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT (38), THENCE IN A WESTERLY

DIRECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE (125) FEET, THENCE THE SOUTH LINE OF OUT LOT NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT (38), THENCE IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION ONE

HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE (125) FEET], THENCE IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION TO THE

PLACE OF BEGINNING, SAME BEING A STRIP OF LAND SIXTY-TWO AND ONE-HALF (62

1/2) FEET WIDE EAST AND WEST AND TWO HUNDRED (200) FEET, MORE OR LESS IN

LENGTH RUNNING

NORTH AND SOUTH. ALSO A STRIP OF LAND THREE (3) FEET WIDE OFF THE ENTIRE EAST SIDE OF THE

F O L L O W I N G DESCRIBED TRACT OF LAND: BEGINNING 200 FEET EAST OF THE

NORTHWEST CORNER OF OUT LOT THIRTY-EIGHT (38) IN THE CITY OF CASSVILLE,

BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE

NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION TWENTY-NINE (29), TOWNSHIP TWENTY-THREE SOUTH LINE OF

OUT LOT THIRTY-EIGHT (38), THENCE WEST 70 FEET, THENCE NORTH

TO PLACE OF BEGINNING AND BEING A STRIP OF LAND 70 FEET WIDE RUNNING EAST

AND WEST AND 200 FEET LONG, MORE OR LESS, RUNNING NORTH AND SOUTH. LESS

ANY PART THEREOF, IF ANY, TAKEN OR USED FOR ROAD PURPOSES SUBJECT TO

ANY EASEMENTS, RIGHTS OF WAY OR RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD OR FACT. THE

I N F O R M A T I O N CONTAINED IN BRACKETS HAS BEEN ADDED TO MORE ACCURATELY

REFLECT THE LEGAL DESCRIPTION)

For the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness and the costs of executing this trust.

Vylla Solutions - Missouri, LLC

Successor Trustee TS No.: 26-40447 Pub Commences: 7/1/2026

By: NFPDS Website: www.xome.com Purported address: 304 W 14TH ST, CASSVILLE, MO 65625

Please be advised that the trustee may require entity or trust bidders at this trustee's sale to provide information, documentation and/or certification of the vesting instructions and the data required to be reported pursuant to FinCEN regulations effective for transfers of residential real property to covered transferees on or after March 1, 2026. The required information must be provided

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4B

to the trustee before a trustee's deed will be issued for covered transfers. The Buyer may be required to pay charges associated with the gathering and reporting of information to FinCEN. Additional information regarding these regulations and the required transferee information and certifications can be found at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/08/29/2024-19198/anti-money-laundering-regulations-for-residential-real-estate-transfers> and https://www.fincen.gov/rre-faqs#D_1stinsertion 07/01/26 25-33

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

A default has accrued on a certain note secured by a deed of trust executed by, MICHAEL J. ADAMS dated 3/10/2006 and recorded on 3/13/2006 in BOOK 06 PAGE 1843, in the Recorder's office for Barry County, Missouri. The successor trustee will on August 10, 2026 between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, more particularly at 12:00 PM, at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, 700 Main Street, Cassville, Missouri sell at public venue to the highest bidder for cash (certified funds only), the following real estate:

ALL THAT PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER THAT LIES SOUTH AND WEST OF STATE HIGHWAY NO. 44 IN SECTION 2, TOWNSHIP 23, RANGE 29, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI.

for the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness and the costs of executing this trust. CSM Foreclosure Trustee Corp. Successor Trustee (800) 652-4080 4x 07/15/2026, 07/22/2026, 07/29/2026, 08/05/2026 CSM File 26-26-01091 NOTE: This office is a debt collector. 1st insertion 07/15/26 27-30

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

For default in the payment of debt secured by a deed of trust executed by Kelly M. McKee, dated December 6, 2019, and recorded on December 6, 2019, in Book No. 19, at Page 6818 in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Barry County, Missouri, the undersigned Successor Trustee will on August 19, 2026, at 3:15 PM, at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, Cassville, Missouri, sell at public venue to the highest bidder for cash:

BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF A PUBLIC ROAD, SAID POINT BEING 779.4 FEET SOUTH AND 36 FEET WEST OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 21, RANGE 26, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, THENCE NORTH 69 DEGREES 24 MINUTES WEST 307.5 FEET TO AN EXISTING CORNER FENCE POST, THENCE SOUTH 28 DEGREES 30 MINUTES WEST 280.6 FEET TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF A PUBLIC ROAD, THENCE NORTHEASTERLY 446.3 FEET ALONG THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF SAID PUBLIC ROAD TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, BEING PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 21, RANGE 26, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, THENCE NORTH 69 DEGREES 24 MINUTES

WEST 307.5 FEET TO AN EXISTING CORNER FENCE POST, THENCE SOUTH 28 DEGREES 30 MINUTES WEST 280.6 FEET TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF A PUBLIC ROAD, THENCE NORTHEASTERLY 446.3 FEET ALONG THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF SAID PUBLIC ROAD TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, BEING PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 8 TOWNSHIP 21, RANGE 26, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, commonly known as 16898 Farm Road 2260, Eagle Rock, MO, 65641

subject to all prior easements, restrictions, reservations, covenants and encumbrances now of record, if any, to satisfy the debt and costs. SouthLaw, P.C. Successor Trustee First Publication: July 22, 2026. For more information, visit www.southlaw.com NOTICE Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §1692c(b), no information concerning the collection of this debt may be given without the prior consent of the consumer given directly to the debt collector or the express permission of a court of competent jurisdiction. The debt collector is attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose (Casefile No. 257333-1084254). 1st insertion 07/22/26 28-31

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

A default has accrued on a certain note secured by a deed of trust executed by, JAMES L PETERS dated 2/4/2025 and recorded on 2/18/2025 in BOOK 25 PAGE 745, in the Recorder's office for Barry County, Missouri. The successor trustee will on August 21, 2026 between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, more particularly at 10:00 AM, at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, 700 Main Street, Cassville, Missouri sell at public venue to the highest bidder for cash (certified funds only), the following real estate:

THE FOLLOWING-DESCRIBED REAL PROPERTY, LYING, BEING AND SITUATE IN THE COUNTY OF BARRY AND STATE OF MISSOURI, TO WIT: ALL OF LOTS SEVEN (7), EIGHT (8), NINE (9), TEN (10), ELEVEN (11) AND TWELVE (12), IN ELKINS ADDITION TO WHEATON, BARRY COUNTY AS PER RECORDED PLAT THEREOF. EXCEPT:

ALL THAT PART OF LOTS 12, 11, 10, 9, 8 AND 7 ELKINS ADDITION TO WHEATON DESCRIBED AS: BEGINNING AT A POINT THAT IS 60 FEET WEST AND 62 FEET SOUTH OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 12 IN ELKINS ADDITION TO WHEATON, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI THENCE NORTH 62 FEET TO THE NORTH LINE OF LOT 12; THENCE WEST 63 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 12; THENCE SOUTH ALONG THE WEST LINE OF LOTS 12, 11, 10, 9, 8 AND 7 A DISTANCE OF 150 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 7; THENCE EAST ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOT 7 A DISTANCE OF 104 FEET; THENCE LEAVING SAID LOT LINE NORTH 52 FEE; THENCE IN A NORTHWESTERLY DIRECTION 54.5 MORE OR LESS TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

for the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness and the costs of executing this trust. CSM Foreclosure Trustee Corp. Successor Trustee (800) 652-4080 4x 07/29/2026, 08/05/2026, 08/12/2026, 08/19/2026 CSM File 26-26-01206 NOTE: This office is a debt collector. 1st insertion 7/29/26 29-32

Soccer: Home opener on Sept. 3 against Bolivar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

can bring,” Ray said. “He can put a lot of pressure on backs very quickly and can quickly convert those into goals for us.”

Ray called Hugh Thao the team’s anchor.

“He is that set-it-and-leave-it piece,” Ray said. “You can put him anywhere you want on the field, and you don’t have to worry about him anymore. You know he’s going to play his position and play it well. He’s going to win in his position. He can attack, he can defend, he can shoot, he brings an IQ to the table. He’s the anchor for the team. He doesn’t have a lot of talking behind himself, but everything he does on the field physically does enough talking for him.”

Daniel Frazier brings experience and soccer intelligence to the midfield.

“He’s got a big leg, he’s played a lot of years, and he’s got a high IQ and just knows the game,” Ray said. “We rely on him for some soccer intelligence because he knows the game well.”

Defensively, Ray believes Zeb Blankenship is among the area’s best.

“I think personally he’s the best defender we will see all season, and he’s on our team,” Ray said. “He is absolutely quicker than lightning. He reads the ball off somebody’s foot, the spin, the trajectory. He is able to put so much support in front of a keeper. He probably saves by himself from blocking 10 to 15 shots a game. He’s just that good.”

Other returning contributors include Mason Rillstone, Colton Beebe, Dade Zajac, Ian Quick, Aiden Mendoza, Spencer Essary and Crosby Harmon. Ray said Mendoza has taken a significant step forward.

“Aidan is returning as a senior this year, and he’s playing like one,” Ray said. “He’s got good vision, a great first touch and can take a shot from deep if need be. He sees the field well enough to make that diagonal pass for an assist. He has really developed over the offseason, and we look forward to good things from him this year.”

The Wildcats also welcome a number of newcomers, particularly at goalkeeper after graduating Logan Wingo.

“Carson Cash has stepped in, and he’s got height, athleticism, great hands and is learning the game real quickly from a keeper position,” Ray said. “I think Carson is going to make an impact on the keeper position.”

Wyatt Hollingsworth is also competing for time in goal.

“Wyatt brings some crazy athleticism,” Ray said. “He’s brave enough to come out and go win a ball, sacrificing his body for the benefit of the team. He’s got good hands, has added some length to his goal kicks, and it’s going to be fun to watch those two compete.”

Ray also praised injured goalkeeper Kingston Nichols for mentoring the team’s young keepers while recovering from a torn ACL.

“He’s already making an impact even in the offseason, even though he’s not able to play just yet,” Ray



Cassville's Daniel Frazier looks to send a ball upfield during a game last season. Kyle Troutman/kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

said. “He’s encouraging those guys, teaching those guys and just kind of being an assistant right now to those guys.”

Among the freshmen, Carson Driskill, Jaxon Anderson, William Ray and Brayden Jack have already impressed during summer competition.

“Carson Driskill has already made an impact in summer,” Ray said. “He’s got great size, a great touch, he’s physical and he embodies our mentality of respecting everyone but fearing nobody.”

Ray said leadership will be one of the team’s biggest strengths.

“When the players lead, now you have a championship-caliber team,” Ray said. “I feel like my seniors are starting to step up and find their way. My expectations are that they don’t just say things, but do them and back them up. They should be the leaders on the field and be able to make adjustments because they all have a high IQ.”

Technically, Ray believes the Wildcats are well positioned entering the season.

“I think technical skills are where we’re very proficient,” Ray said. “These kids all love futsal, and in tight spaces and being technical, that’s where they excel. I also believe we have endurance, and I think that’s an area we’ll be able to use to our advantage the longer the game goes.”

The primary area of improvement remains creating and finishing quality scoring chances.

“I want to have a better attack in the sense of people finding their positions on the attack,” Ray said. “I want to increase the numbers on attack and

fill those positions so that we have multiple options in the final third, not just simply pull up from 25 or go one-versus-two against the back line.”

Ray expects another challenging schedule after adding the Webb City Tournament.

“We added the Webb City Tournament this year because the kids wanted to play harder teams,” Ray said. “We’d rather face a couple of tough losses early in the season, find out about ourselves, grow from those areas and end up winning when we get to district time.”

If fans attend one match this season, Ray pointed to the rivalry with Monett.

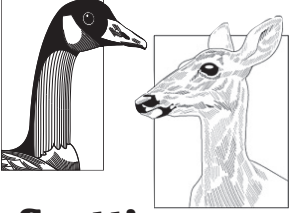
“Anytime Monett’s in town, they’re the rivalry up the road,” Ray said. “That’s a conference game. It could possibly be for the championship if we play the way we’re supposed to.”

Ultimately, Ray believes his team’s passion for the sport separates it from others.

“I think as a whole, their love for the game of soccer sets them apart,” Ray said. “They’re willing to listen

and be coached because they earnestly want to get better. They love competing, and I think that’s going to be a big strength for us as well.”

Cassville’s season begins in the Webb City Shootout Aug. 27-29. The home opener is against Bolivar on Sept. 3.



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WILDCAT PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

Brody Howell



Lialiana Ruiz



Keely Bailey



Mace Bredeson





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