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PHOTOS: SOUTHWEST HONORS AREA VETERANS — PAGE 2A



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CASSVILLE Democrat
NOVEMBER 18, 2026 | CASSVILLE-DEMOCRAT.COM

FELONY CHARGES
Who: Amanda Ross, 42, of Cassville; William Ross, 52, of Cassville; and Donald Erwin, 51, of Barry County
What: Charged by Attorney General's office with multiple counts of stealing, deceptive business practices and financial exploitation of elder/disabled persons
More: All three individuals have been arrested and each are being held on cash-only bonds of $1.3 million

AG charges local trio for millions in theft, fraud

Multiple victims of contracting companies are disabled, elderly

BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Three Barry County residents have been charged by the Missouri Attorney General's Office for allegedly stealing more than $5 million from at least 45 people — including multiple disabled or elderly individuals — after allegedly taking payments and entering construction contracts but providing either no work or incomplete work.

Donald Erwin, 51, of Barry County, is charged with three counts of stealing $25,000 or more, four counts of deceptive business practices and two counts of financial exploitation of elder/disabled person, one of which is a Class A felony.

Amanda Ross, 42, of Cassville, is charged with four counts of stealing $25,000 or more, eight counts of deceptive business practices and four counts of financial exploitation of elder/disabled person, two of which are Class A felonies.

William Ross, 52, of Cassville, is charged with two counts of stealing $25,000 or more and two counts of deceptive business practices.

Erwin was arrested on Nov. 10, and Amanda Ross and David Ross were arrested on Nov. 12. All three are being held in the Barry County jail on cash-only bonds of $1.3 million each.

According to a probable cause statement filed by Jim Garrett, an investigator with the Missouri Attorney General's Office, Erwin was a managerial agent for Endless Concepts Contracting, LLC (Endless Concepts), owned by Amanda Jane Ross and William David Ross, and he was co-owner of Boss Hog Barndominiums, LLC and Boss Hog Contracting, LLC. Records show Erwin owned 25% of Boss Hog and represented himself with titles such as Vice President of National Construction and co-owner.

Garrett said the Attorney General's office has received at least 45 complaints from consumers regarding Endless Concepts and Boss Hog, alleging that in

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SALUTE TO LOCAL SOLDIERS



Mike Krallman accepts a certificate of recognition from Taylor Yarnall at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville recognizes centenarian with U.S. Flag

BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

The Cassville school district held its 38th Annual Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11, welcoming a guest speaker who served in the Marines and is currently on the Cassville School Board, and recognizing a local veteran who turned 100 years old this year.

The event opened with an address from Cassville High School Principal Tyler Willis, recognizing veterans' sacrifices at home and abroad, and encouraging all to help veterans in need with compassion and efficiency.

Following a recitation of "My Name is Old Glory" by sisters Taylor and Abbigale Yarnall, JROTC Color Guard members presented the colors, the pledge of Allegiance was recited and the Star-Spangled banner played by the high school band.

The guest speaker was Steven Henbest, Cassville School Board member and former Marine who served as a Tactical Network Specialist and was stationed in Japan before being deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CASSVILLE SCHOOLS
What: Annual Veterans Day Celebration held. Nov. 11
Recognized: 59 total veterans receive certificates
More: Charles Whitcomb receives special recognition flag; School Board Member and former Marine Steven Henbest is guest speaker

"I am a former Marine, and Marines are little different," he said. "We speak our own language, we are aggressive, our sense of humor is dark and every Marine has an ego. Notice I said "former" — that is because once you are a Marine, you are always a Marine, that title never leaves you. A challenge excites us, we never back down from a fight, we actually invent things to fight about.

"For 13 weeks, we are screamed at and told how unsatisfactory we are until we earned the right to be a Marine. Once you are a Marine, you are told again and again how great you are, how great the marines before you were, that you are the elite, you are the first to fight. Our motto is Semper Fidelis, which is Latin for Always Faithful, and our core values are honor, courage and commitment. We approach every obstacle with the mindset of adapt and overcome. And lastly, we break rules, we have a good time, and everything...is about us."

A 2000 graduate of Cassville, Henbest was inspired to join the service by some of his fellow classmates, as well as his grandfathers, both of whom served in WWII.

After trining and schooling, Henbest volunteered to be stationed at Camp Hanson in Okinawa, Japan.

"Oddly enough, this was the best time I had in the Corps," he said. "My grandfather fought the Japanese face to face in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8A

Man charged following chase through county

Road rage incident leads to chase through Wheaton to Anderson

BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

A Monett man is facing a felony charge in McDonald County after allegedly leading police on a high speed chase through portions of Barry County.

Jeremy Barnes, 43, is charged with aggravated fleeing in McDonald County.

According to a probable cause statement filed by Trooper M.J. Hickman, with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, on Nov. 5 at about. 8:48 p.m., the Patrol was contacted regarding a pursuit occurring in Barry County, with officers attempting to contact the vehicle because of a road rage incident.

Hickman said he was attempting to set spike strips on Highway 97 and Farm Road 1015, but was unable to set them up in time before he aw a gray SUV matching the vehicle description allegedly passing multiple cars at a high rate of speed.

FELONY ARREST
Who: Jeremy Barnes, 43, of Monett
What: Charged with aggravated fleeing
More: Man allegedly fled police through Barry County into McDonald County

Hickman caught up to the vehicle and activated his emergency equipment. He said the vehicle failed to stop and allegedly traveled at high rates of speed through Wheaton, Rocky Comfort and Longview, traveling over 100 miles per hour and into the oncoming traffic lane. Hickman also said the vehicle allegedly ran a stop sign, brake-checked the trooper's patrol car multiple times and passed multiple vehicles.

Hickman said as he saw the vehicle approaching Anderson, it got onto the interstate with multiple vehicles around, and Hickman got into a position to use a tactical vehicle intervention to end the pursuit. Hickman used the tactic, but the vehicle was able to regain control and allegedly traveled northbound in the southbound lane.

Hickman moved his vehicle in front of the suspect's vehicle, and he returned to the northbound lane. The driver then pulled over and was removed from the vehicle.

Hickman said at about 9:17 p..m., he made contact with Barnes, allegedly observing indicators consistent with alcohol impairment, including a strong odor of intoxicants emitting from Barnes' breath and bloodshot, watery eyes.

Hickman said Barnes allegedly said he'd consumed four or five beers, and that was why he was running. Empty beer cans were allegedly located in the vehicle.

Hickman said he conducted a horizontal gaze nysagmus test, and Barnes allegedly performer poorly. Barnes was then arrested and placed on a 24-hour hold in the McDonald County jail.

Hickman's statement requested charges of aggravated fleeing, DWI-alcohol, speeding, failure to signal, careless and imprudent driving, failure to stop at a stop sign and driving the wrong direction on a highway.

Barnes is not listed on the McDonald County jail roster. His bond is listed as. $2,500, cash only. No court date has been scheduled.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Free Pancake Breakfast on Dec. 5

A Free Pancake Breakfast will be offered at First Christian Church in Cassville on Dec. 5 from 9-11 a.m. Free coats will also be available. The church is located at 905 Old Exeter Road in Cassville.

Lawrence and Barry County Democrats to meet

The Lawrence and Barry County Democrats will meet on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Angus Branch Steakhouse, located at 114 Chapel Drive in Monett. Those who wish to eat should arrive by 5:45 p.m., with each person paying for their own meal.

Extension Council nominations sought

Nominations are being accepted for the January 2027 election of the University of Missouri Extension Council in Barry County. Council members are elected or appointed to two-year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Nominees must be at least 18 and must reside in the district from which they are selected. Nominations must be made prior to Dec. 7. "We want nominees who are interested in improving our community and the education of our youth," said Carolyn Kilts. "The resources of the University of Missouri System are available to us through this statewide partnership. We need active council members who recognize the needs in the community and can help plan, locate funds and promote educational programs with University of Missouri Extension specialists." MU Extension offers educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, families, business and workforce development, community development, youth development, community health and various continuing education courses, seminars and workshops. Nominations may be made through the Council Chair Carolyn Kilts or the county extension center at 417-847-3161 or Barryco@missouri.edu. Nominees will be contacted to secure their permission to place their names on the January 2027 ballot.

Cassville Branch Library hosting events

The Cassville Branch Library will host the following events in the coming week: Today (Wednesday), Chair Yoga, 9 a.m., Tween Book Club, 3:30 p.m.; Thursday, Teen Craft, 3:30 p.m. Refit, 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, Crochet/ Knitting Class, 10 a.m. to noon, Watercolor Christmas Cards, 10 a.m. to noon; Monday, Majong, 1 p.m., Autumn Leaf Paint at Zone 4 Mini Golf & More, 5:30 p.m. (registration and $5 supply fee required); Tuesday, Tot Time, 9:30 a.m., Storytime, 10 a.m., Home school, 11 a.m., Scrapbook Club, 5 p.m.

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.

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.

Southwest honors area veterans



Several middle school band members dressed up as servicemen and servicewomen during the Armed Forces Medley, played for veterans in attendance at the annual Veterans Day ceremony at Southwest High School on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Bella Myers performs with the color guard during the Southwest Veteran Day assembly, which featured recognition of area veterans in attendances, multiple band and color guard performances, the folds of the flag, a white table ceremony and the Armed Forces Medley. Kyle Troutman/ ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Baliegh Shelton, high school at teacher at Southwest, assists in the table ceremony at the Southwest school district's Veterans Day assembly on Nov 11. Kyle Troutman/ ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Steven Hill, of Butterfield (formerly of Washburn) spent some time with Gabriella Hill, 2, of Washburn, as they watched the folds of the flag being completed at the Southwest school district's annual Veteran Day assembly on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Charges: Amanda Ross was arrested in April for warrant

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

exchange for up-front payments, the companies would provide architectural and engineering plans upon which house could be built, as well as agreements for construction of barndominium homes.

However, consumers allegedly received shoddy plans upon which homes could not be safely built, and in some cases bore forged architect or engineering stamps. Garrett also said most complainants never received any work on the barndominiums, and the few who received any work received shoddy work.

The total amount of money received by Endless Concepts and Boss Hog entities from the Attorney General complaints is approximately $5,001,799.

Funds were allegedly deposited into Endless Concepts bank accounts maintained at banks in Barry County and controlled by Amanda Ross and William Ross. Money fro those accounts was then sent to Boss Hog's JPMorgan Chase accounts, of which Amanda Ross and Erwin were signatories.

Garrett's probable cause statements listed five complainants specifically, all of whom signed agreements with the companies in 2024 and 2025.

On Feb. 25, 2025, a complainant paid Boss Hog $4,500 for architectural plans, and on April 3, 2025, a contract was signed for Boss Hog to build a home for $449,291.74. From April 2025 through February 2026, the complainant paid $327,419.04 to Endless Concepts but allegedly received no labor, materials or refund.

On Dec. 31, 2024, a complainant paid Boss Hog $5,195 for architectural plans, and a contract was signed on March 4, 2025 to build a barndominium for $429,493.92. On March 10, 2025 the complainant paid $128,848.18 to Endless Concepts, which allegedly did not provide labor or materials, nor honor its termination agreement promising a refund.

On or about Dec. 31, 2025, another complainant disabled by severe leg injuries resulting in mechanical reconstruction paid Boss Hog $5,195 for architectural plans, and a contract was signed on March 4, 202, to build a barndominum for $212,858.94. On March 10, the complainant paid $63,857.68 to Endless Concepts, which allegedly did not provide labor or materials, nor honor its termination agreement promising a refund.

On Jan. 8, 2025, a complainant signed a contract with Boss Hog to build a barndominum for $943,288.18, and on Sept. 3, 2025, the complainant paid $96,301.07 to Endless Concepts, which allegedly did not provide labor or materials, nor a refund.

On May 24, 2024, a complainant who is a veteran and hose wife is a disabled veteran paid Boss Hog $6,234 for architectural plans which later turned out to be unusable. On Oct. 23, 2024, a contract was signed to build a barndominum for $532,076, and from October 24, 2024, through Nov. 7, 2025, the complainant paid $400,488.52 to Endless Concepts, which allegedly abandoned the incomplete project and failed to pay subcontractors and vendors $116,085.27 for work and materials, which the complainant had to pay despite having already provided the money to Endless Concepts. Additionally, the complainant also had to pay $24,000 to fix shoddy work allegedly caused by Boss Hog's shoddy plans. Endless Concepts did not refund the complainant.

The total amount lost for all victims listed is approximately $910,672,.49.

In another probable cause statement filed by Garrett against Amanda Ross, she is identified as co-owner of Endless Concepts and CEO of Boss Hog Barndominiums.

The statement included all complainants listed in Ewrin's statement, plus three more.

On or about July 2, 2024, a complainant paid Boss Hog $4,156 for architectural plans they later learned were too shoddy for building. On June 12, 2024, the complainant signed a contract to build a home for $353,504.84. On Sept. 26, 2024, the complainant paid $36,544.95 to Endless Concepts, which did not provide labor or materials, nor a refund.

In approximately June 2025, married complainants over the age of 60 purchase plans from Boss Hog later determined to be un usable. On Aug. 4, 2025, they signed a contract to build a home for $600,000. The complainants paid $180,000 to Endless Concepts, which did not provide any labor or materials, nor a refund.

On Dec. 23, a complainant who is a disabled U.S. Air Force veteran paid Boss Hog $4,675 for architectural plans later determined too shoddy to use. On July 7, 2025, the complainant signed a contract to build a home for $714,562.34 and paid $71,456.23 to Endless Concepts, which did not provide any labor, materials, nor a refund.

The total amount listed for all victims in Amanda Ross' probable cause statement is $1,207,505.17.

A separate probable cause statement for William Ross identifies him as co-owner of Endless Concepts and Superintendent of General Contracting for Boss Hog. His statement listed two of the previously identified complainants, with a total amount lost by victims of $368,119.99.

The statement also said William Ross' previous arrests include assault on special victims, resisting arrest, interference with the legal process and unlawful use of a weapon.

Amanda Ross was arrested in April on an out-of-state warrant for felony fraud. At that time, she had active felony fraud cases in at least three states — Georgia, New York and Colorado — as well as an investigation into alleged theft from H&H Pool Hall, for which charges were never filed. The victim in that investigation provided court documents from other states where Ross had been summoned to court.



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'Tis the season for shopping local



Dana Kammerlohr, left, visits with Leona Keeling, of rural Purdy, as Keeling registers for a drawing at Tomblin's Jewelry, during the Holiday Open House in Cassville on Saturday. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com



Mary Richmiller and Judie Starchman, of Cassville, visit with Valerie Bennett, of Purdy, at Tomblin's Jewelry during the Cassville Area Chamber's Holiday Open House on Saturday. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com



Michelle Swearengin, left, of Whitley's Pharmacy, presents guests Zachary Henderson, center, and Cadence Hughes with tree ornaments at the Cassville Area Chamber's Holiday Open House on Saturday. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com



Quinn Richards, of Joplin, entertains a stuffed bear while her grandmother shops at Twin Sisters Flea Market, during the Cassville Area Chamber's Holiday Open House on Saturday. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

Merry Christmas candidates named



Cassville High School has named its Miss and MR. Merry Christmas candidates, students who will be collecting donations this month to support. Share your Christmas, a local effort to help families in need provide Christmas gifts for their children. Candidates include, from left, Scoti Blankenship, freshman, daughter of Bobbi and Clint Blankenship; Crosby Harmon, sophomore, son of Roxie and Scott Tucker and Nikki and Andy Harmon; and Aubrie Atkinson, junior, daughter of Tina and Brian Atkinson. Contributed photo

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COMMENTARY

STAFF VIEW



SHEILA HARRIS

Lying together

Although my family moved here from Iowa when I was 12 years old, I'm not a native of the Ozarks.

Maybe that's why I didn't learn of this area's violent Civil War history until fairly recently. Local history wasn't taught in the public schools I attended, either here or in Iowa, and, to my own shame, I didn't take the time to educate myself during the years after I moved to Missouri.

That's why my first visit to the George Washington Carver National Monument, in 2019, caught me off-guard. For the first time, I became acutely aware of the Civil War's devastating impact on southwest Missouri. Union and Confederate troops clashed in Missouri, at Carthage, on July 5, 1861, less than three months after Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter and triggered the saddest conflict in US history on American soil.

My visit to the G.W. Carver Museum taught me that the Missouri/Arkansas border had been a hotbed of strife during the Civil War — right here. Right where I'd been living for almost 50 years.

The Civil War, although long past, was not an abstract concept for residents who could trace their lineage back to the founding of Barry County, whose families had passed down stories of atrocities from the past.

I came home from the G.W. Carver Museum determined to learn more.

A naïve question led me, first, to a few historic Barry County cemeteries, where I wondered if I'd find the graves of any Confederate soldiers. A more valid question, I learned, would be whether there's any cemetery in Barry County that isn't the final resting place of both Union and Confederate soldiers.

After tromping around multiple cemeteries, a pastime I enjoy (after the snakes and ticks go into hibernation), I discovered Rootsweb.com. Donna Cooper and her crew have done some incredible work documenting the names — and even tidbits of the history — of every single person buried in every cemetery in Barry County (up to a point, I suspect) on the website. When I discovered Rootsweb, my search became much easier.

With my original question laid to rest, a friend gave me impetus for another search: This one more challenging. Where were Barry County's slaves buried? Where are they buried? I had to know.

In the telling of local history, slavery is not often touched on. For good reason, for a while, I'm sure.

But here we are, 161 years past the Civil War. Has enough time passed, do you think, to acknowledge the part that enslaved people played in the formation of Barry County? Can we accept our own history as it was, by now, without feeling the need to whitewash the past?

According to census records on file with the Missouri Secretary of State's office, Barry County had a total population of 7,995 residents in 1860. Of those, 247 residents — about 3% — were enslaved. Not many compared to areas of the state along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, but comparison is irrelevant when people are held against their will.

Some 56 households in Barry County owned slaves in 1860. The majority of slaveholders owned a single enslaved person, but a handful kept anywhere from 9-22 people as property.

Because owners of slaves, especially multiple slaves, had to be able to feed and clothe those who were under their care, they were members of the wealthiest families in Barry County — our city-founders and county office-holders.

I've since discovered the graves of many former slaves in a few Barry County cemeteries. Perhaps the most unique is the Washburn Prairie Cemetery, where I've heard two different versions of the rationale for the slaves' distinctive grave-markers, which have long outlasted the tombstones of the city fathers — an irony that can't be overlooked.

Barry County cemeteries teach their own lessons, if we're willing to learn from them. In the end, the color of our skin and our uniforms will be lost to the graves we're destined to inhabit alongside those we disdained in life.

Sheila Harris is a long-time Barry County resident and a sales executive and investigative reporter for the Cassville Democrat with a particular interest in environmental topics. She may be reached at sheilaharrisads@gmail.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.

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STAFF VIEW

The state of public education in Missouri: A crossroads for our schools and communities

As I reflect on the current condition of public education in Missouri, I find myself increasingly concerned — not simply about the financial challenges facing our schools, but about the direction of public education itself.

After years of serving students, supporting educators, working alongside families, and navigating the complexities of school leadership, I believe we are approaching a defining moment in the history of public education in our state.

The questions before us extend far beyond test scores, accountability systems, and school budgets. They challenge the very foundation of what public education represents, particularly for small rural communities where the local school district is not simply an educational institution but a cornerstone of community identity, opportunity, and economic stability.

Are we genuinely working to improve public education, or are we witnessing the gradual deconstruction of the very system Missouri has a constitutional responsibility to maintain?

I do not pose this question lightly, nor do I suggest that every decision being made in Jefferson City is part of a coordinated effort to dismantle public schools. However, when we examine the cumulative effects of funding decisions, leadership changes, new accountability expectations, and increasing financial pressures, we must consider where this trajectory could ultimately lead.

The State Board of Education: Leadership, transparency and public trust

Missouri's State Board of Education was established to provide stability, continuity, and a degree of independence from the political pressures that naturally accompany changes in elected leadership. Its responsibility is to oversee and support a public education system that serves students across our state, regardless of geographic location, economic circumstance, or political affiliation.

Recent developments have raised important questions about the independence, transparency and priorities of that governing body.

The departure of Commissioner Karla Eslinger, followed by the October 2026 resignation of Interim Commissioner Stacey Preis after only four months, has created a period of significant leadership transition. At the same time, Governor Mike Kehoe has had the opportunity to appoint a substantial majority of the State Board's membership.

These developments do not, by themselves, demonstrate improper conduct. Nevertheless, they underscore the importance of maintaining public confidence in the independence of educational governance.

Additional questions emerged surrounding the use of private philanthropic funding for the search for Missouri's next Commissioner of Education and the development of the State Board's strategic plan. While private contributions may reduce direct taxpayer expenditures, the public deserves transparency regarding who is funding efforts that could influence the future direction of public education. The subsequent identification of funding organizations is an important development, but transparency must extend to the processes, expectations, and safeguards governing those relationships.

Public education is a public responsibility. Its direction should be determined through transparent processes that place the interests of Missouri's children above all other considerations.

Perhaps even more concerning is the apparent disconnect between the expectations being placed upon public schools and the financial resources being requested to support them.

In September 2026, the State Board of Education declined to request approximately $300 million in additional funding needed to fully fund Missouri's school foundation formula for the coming fiscal year. Instead, the Board elected to maintain a flat funding request despite increasing costs and the requirements established by state law.

I recognize that Missouri faces legitimate budget constraints and that requesting additional funding does not guarantee legislative appropriation. Nevertheless, there is an important distinction between acknowledging fiscal realities and fully communicating the financial needs of public education.

If the very body charged with overseeing Missouri's public schools does not advocate for the resources calculated under the state's own funding formula, who will?

The A–F report card: Accountability without adequate support?

Governor Kehoe's Executive Order 26-01 introduced a new A–F school and district grading framework intended to provide parents and communities with a clearer understanding of school performance.

Let me be clear: I believe in accountability. I believe in high expectations, measurable student growth, instructional improvement, and transparency. At Purdy R-II, our district vision is Excellence is the Standard, and we take that commitment seriously.

However, accountability must be accompanied by the capacity to improve.

Missouri already operates an extensive accountability system through the Missouri School Improvement Program, Annual Performance Reports, state assessments, graduation measures, and other performance indicators. The addition of an A–F rating system raises a fundamental question: Are we providing schools with meaningful tools to improve student learning, or simply creating another mechanism for labeling their performance?

The proposed framework incorporates academic achievement, student growth, literacy, graduation rates, and college and career readiness measures. These are important indicators. However, no single letter grade can adequately communicate the full complexity of educating children.

A letter grade cannot fully capture the challenges of educating students living in poverty, supporting children with disabilities, serving English language learners, addressing chronic absenteeism, or overcoming barriers that exist outside the classroom.

Nor can it capture the relationships, personal growth, safety, extracurricular opportunities, and sense of belonging that make schools so important to their communities.

The implementation of this new accountability system also places additional expectations upon educators and administrators who are already navigating significant responsibilities with limited staffing and resources.

There is an uncomfortable contradiction in asking schools to produce greater results while simultaneously limiting the resources available to achieve those results.

Accountability without meaningful support risks becoming a system of identification rather than improvement.

If schools receive low ratings, what happens next? Will the state provide instructional specialists, targeted funding, intervention resources, professional development, and sufficient time to improve? Or will struggling districts simply be identified publicly and expected to solve increasingly complex problems with the same limited resources?

These questions deserve answers before the consequences of the new accountability system become entrenched.

Are we witnessing the gradual deconstruction of public education?

Perhaps my greatest concern is not any single policy decision, but the possibility that multiple decisions, when considered collectively, could fundamentally alter the structure of public education in Missouri.

Consider a hypothetical sequence.

State funding fails to keep pace with increasing operational costs. School districts become increasingly dependent upon local taxpayers to sustain existing programs. Additional accountability systems publicly identify schools as underperforming, even when those schools face substantial resource limitations.

Over time, financially vulnerable districts struggle to retain qualified teachers, maintain facilities, provide transportation, and offer the breadth of educational opportunities expected by the state.

Enrollment may decline as families pursue other options, further reducing revenues for districts already operating with limited financial flexibility.

Eventually, discussions emerge about financial viability, school consolidation, and the possible closure of smaller districts or individual school buildings.

Is this an inevitable outcome? Certainly not.

Is it a possibility that deserves serious consideration? Absolutely.

I am not suggesting that Governor Kehoe's A–F report card is an announced plan to consolidate or close public schools. The documents establishing the framework do not demonstrate such an objective. However, we must examine how accountability policies could interact with persistent funding shortages, enrollment changes, and increasing operational demands.

For small rural school districts, the consequences could be especially significant.

School consolidation is often discussed through the language of financial efficiency. Yet schools cannot be evaluated solely through a financial spreadsheet.

When a rural community loses its school, it potentially loses far more than classrooms. It loses a major employer, a gathering place, a source of community pride, athletic and extracurricular traditions, and an institution that connects generations of families.

Students may face longer transportation routes. Families may become less connected to school activities. Communities may struggle to attract new residents and businesses.

The long-term consequences extend well beyond any immediate financial savings.

We should be cautious about creating circumstances in which consolidation becomes the only remaining financial option and then presenting it as a voluntary or necessary local decision.

The reality of operating a small rural school district

From the perspective of a rural superintendent, decisions made at the state level are not abstract policy discussions. They have immediate and lasting consequences inside our classrooms, offices, cafeterias, and school buses.

When state funding does not keep pace with rising costs, we cannot simply stop transporting students, heating buildings, providing special education services, or meeting the numerous requirements established by state and federal law.

We must continue operating.

The cost of transportation increases. Insurance premiums rise. Utilities become more expensive. Technology infrastructure requires ongoing investment. Facility maintenance cannot be postponed indefinitely. Qualified educators must be recruited and retained in an increasingly competitive employment environment.

Meanwhile, smaller districts often lack the economies of scale available to larger school systems.

A rural district still needs a superintendent, principals, teachers, counselors, nurses, food service personnel, transportation services, technology support, and specialized student services. Many of these responsibilities exist regardless of whether a district serves a few hundred students or several thousand.

When funding is constrained, smaller districts are frequently forced to make difficult decisions involving staffing, instructional materials, extracurricular opportunities, facility improvements, and employee compensation.

At Purdy R-II, we remain committed to providing students with a safe, supportive, and challenging educational environment. Our faculty and staff continue to demonstrate tremendous dedication, often doing more with less while maintaining high expectations for student achievement.

But dedication does not eliminate financial realities.

Passion cannot replace adequate staffing. Commitment cannot pay utility bills. Excellence cannot be sustained indefinitely through the continued depletion of financial reserves.

Our educators should be focused on improving student learning, not constantly wondering whether sufficient resources will exist to sustain the programs and services their students deserve.

The future of rural Missouri depends on the future of its schools

For generations, public schools have served as a foundation for opportunity in rural Missouri.

They have educated future teachers, farmers, business owners, healthcare professionals, skilled tradespeople, military service members, and community leaders.

They have provided children with opportunities that might otherwise have remained beyond their reach.

They have also represented something fundamental about our state's commitment to its citizens: that a child's opportunity to receive an education should not depend entirely upon the wealth of the community in which that child lives.

As we consider the future of public education, we must ask whether our current direction strengthens that commitment or gradually weakens it.

Accountability is important, but so is investment.

Fiscal responsibility is essential, but so is recognizing the true cost of edu-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5A

50 years ago

Nov. 24, 1976

– RATED TOP IN ROARING RIVER FAMILY CAMPERS

There are interesting statistics involving Missouri State Park leaders in attracting campers. Bennett Spring with a larger number of campsites, just barely nosed out Roaring River for leadership in this department. According to park office records in Jefferson City, Bennett attracted 102,418 campers during the season past. Roaring River recorded 102,410, eight behind the leader. Park officials said the numbers further show that Bennett had 31,000 camping units during the year March through October. Roaring River had 25,000 units, rounded off in even numbers. This indicates that Roaring River had more people per unit than did the leader. Recreation officials said the larger number per unit statistic indicates Roaring River probably attracts more family vacationers to this area than does Bennett. The park near Lebanon also leads Missouri statistics in number of fishermen each year. Installation of additional camping units at Bennett probably swung the year's record their way. In 1975 Roaring River recorded 800 more campers than did Bennett. The eight month fishing season was expanded this year for Bennett by the Missouri Conservation Commission. Anglers can still fish the stream for the remainder of the year, but they will only be practicing since they cannot keep fish taken. While statistics for overall operations at Roaring River for this season have not been completed, park officials at the state headquarters said indications are that a highly successful year was accomplished in all departments. As previously reported 85,748 trout tags were sold, compared to 76,210 in 1975. This year's figure is an all-time record for the park. The previous high year was 1975 when 79,231 tags were purchased by trout anglers.

40 years ago

Nov. 26, 1986

– LOAD RATING FOR BRIDGES UNDER STUDY

Barry County Commission, in session Monday with representatives of the Missouri Highway Department, went on record as taking a load posting project for county bridges under advisement. Meeting with the commission were R. K. Stalcup, district seven engineer; and John Campbell, coordinator with counties. Presiding commissioner Lloyd Dilbeck said the three-member group would take the program under advisement, probably making a decision after the first of the year. Northern commissioner Vedes Davis, southern commissioner Bill Chappell, and Davis's replacement, Rodney Sisco, were in the meeting. Involved would be the commission hiring a consulting firm to rate approximately 93 bridges in the county and their load limits. They would then be posted for a load program. Campbell and Stalcup said the $20,000 project would be on an 80-20 basis, through the federal bridge program. Purpose of the plan is to provide a safety factor and liability standing for the public and the county. Dilbeck said further deliberations would decide as to whether the county would seek an engineering firm. He said the cost of $134 to $150 per bridge might be applied to a total of 109 crossings if all were included in the program. After the survey would be completed, the county would place signs on bridges notifying the public of recommended load limits. Signs accomplishing this, required the program, could cost $60 each, two required for each bridge. Stalcup told the commissioners the program was devised under federal and state guidelines. Originally expired in October, the program was extended. Sisco, who replaces Davis on January 1, 1987, has been attending commission sessions the past two weeks.



40 YEARS AGO: STUDENTS AT DIGGINGS — Cassville school pupils were permitted to visit artifacts diggings at city park last week. Seated on the edge of an excavation, Jack H. Ray of the Center for Archaeological Research at SMSU in Springfield, explains the process to a couple of classes. Ray's department will make their findings known to the city and Missouri Department of Natural Resources soon. The search for artifacts follows some findings in the area after survey in connection with a grant for park purposes. The SMSU researcher said initial discovery at the site indicates early Indian involvement in the area. However, artifacts have long been scattered by natural and human means. Democrat file photo

30 years ago

Nov. 20, 1996

– ALDERMEN REJECT REQUEST TO RAISE CITY'S TRASH SERVICE RATES

Cassville City Council members rejected a request from the city's trash service provider that would have substantially raised trash pick-up rates for about 120 commercial customers. B.F.I., who has an exclusive contract with the city, asked aldermen to consider granting a rate increase because of a rise in the company's operating costs. Terry Stone, B.F.I.'s district vice president, said his company hadn't asked for a rate increase since 1994. Under their current five-year contract, which expires June 1, 1998, B.F.I. has the right to ask the city for a 5 percent increase each year. The council is under no obligation to grant the request. The change in rates would have affected those customers who collect their trash in one- to four-yard containers. According to B.F.I. tabulations, there are 28 one-yard customers in the city, 61 two-yard customers, 15 three-yard customers and 16 four-yard customers. One-yard customers would have been hit hardest by the increase. Their monthly rates would have risen by 113 percent from $14.21 a month to $30.31 a month for once-a-week service. Stone explained that B.F.I. chose to raise rates in the area where the company's operating costs were the greatest. "This is the area where we're affected the most because of the time it takes us to dump the containers," Stone said. He said a truck costs B.F.I. about $80 to $90 an hour to run, and it takes five to six minutes to dump one large, metal trash container, which costs the customer only $3.28 a week to use. "There's not much margin there," Stone explained. He added that the cost of service was also impacted by the fact that many customers served by one-yard containers overloaded their receptacles. "We honed in on where we are being hit the hardest," Stone said. Alderman Darrell Ledenham asked Stone what would happen if the city refused their request. Stone answered: "There's not a thing we can do." He admitted that the contract between B.F.I. and the city of Cassville was an agreement "without room for escalation." Stone said Cassville had the lowest rates of any city served by B.F.I. The low rates are in exchange for an exclusive service contract, which keeps other trash companies from serving residences or businesses within the city limits. Discussion about rate adjustments continued for well over an hour. Council members finally decided that they were uncomfortable with a large increase that affected a small number of customers. "I'm just bringing you the facts," Stone said. "I can only tell you my problem and you can either agree with me or disagree with me." Alderman Gene Schlichtman made the motion to deny B.F.I.'s request. "I move we live with the contract," Schlichtman said. "I'm not in favor of just randomly picking one segment of the community and increasing their rates and not explaining it." Linebarger provided the second. The council voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Even though council members rejected the request for a rate change, Stone indicated that a rate increase was coming. He said he would approach the council at its next meeting and ask for a 5 percent "across-the-board" increase on commercial and residential rates. If that request is denied, an increase will most likely come during contract negotiations in 1988. In other business, the council: Paid bills in the amount of $20,932.06. Passed an ordinance annexing the right-of-way on Highway Y in front of the high school and a parcel of property owned by Jim and Tyne Rabourne. Annexation of the right-of-way will allow the city to reduce the speed limit in front of the school. Shifted responsibility for choosing engineering services for Phase II of the Cassville Greenway project to the city's Park Board. The board will choose from three engineering services agreements submitted by Richard Yates of Bucher, Willis and Ratliff, Miller-Newell and Associates of Cassville and Sprinkle and Associates of Monett. Approved an invoice of $7,700 to Decker & DeGood for auditing services. Discussed how drug seizure money in the amount of $7,200 would be spent. The money will be used to purchase a 24-hour monitoring tape machine and a still photography camera for the police booking room and to install a file server in the police department's computers that will allow the system to be networked. The drug money will also be used to provide other miscellaneous surveillance and security items for the police department. Extended the application deadline for the police chief's position from Nov. 22 to Jan. 1. Beavers said the city had received 17 applications as of Nov. 18.

– COMMISSION APPROVES CHRISTMAS LIGHTING PROJECT FOR COURTHOUSE

Christmas in Cassville could get a little brighter this season thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and Barry County office holders. Chamber representatives and members of the county commission came to an agreement Monday that will allow the chamber to proceed with plans to light the courthouse for Christmas. J.B. Nations presented the commission with the request, asking that the county provide half the funds needed to accomplish the $3,500 project. A similar request was made in September of last year and declined by the commission. "I think it's (lighting the courthouse) something that is a definite benefit to the entire county not just the city," said Nations. "We feel the court ought to rethink the county's position on it." Commissioners Red Edens and Cherry Warren said they could not allocate funds from general revenue for the project but would try to raise the county's portion of the money through donations from office holders and employees. The chamber will also initiate a fund raising effort to generate its half of the project cost. Nations reported that Sound & Lighting Specialists of Springfield will be available to install the lights the week after Thanksgiving. The lights, which will highlight the windows and roof perimeter of the courthouse, will be attached to the building with silicone, eliminating the need to drill holes into the structure, a concern of the commission's. In discussing the Christmas lighting project, Warren shared commission plans to light the exterior of the courthouse "12 months of the year." Warren told chamber representatives that the county was currently working with a lighting company to design a lighting system that would accentuate the outside of the courthouse. The project, which carries a $7,500 price tag, will be considered in the 1997 budget. Warren added that lights were part of the commission's plan to improve the overall appearance of the courthouse. Exterior lighting is also being considered for security purposes

Graham: Students deserve nothing less than quality education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4A

cating children.

School improvement must remain a priority, but improvement requires more than identifying shortcomings.

And local control matters, but local control becomes increasingly hollow when local leaders have little financial flexibility to meet state expectations.

I believe Missouri can pursue higher academic standards, meaningful accountability, transparent governance, and responsible budgeting while also maintaining a strong commitment to rural public schools.

These objectives should not be mutually exclusive.

However, achieving them requires honest conversations about funding, policy priorities, and the long-term consequences of decisions being made today.

A final reflection: What are we willing to preserve?

As Superintendent of the Purdy R-II School District, I remain deeply committed to the students, families, employees, and community we serve.

Our commitment to excellence has not changed. Our belief in the value of public education has not diminished. Our determination to prepare students for college, career, and life remains unwavering.

Our theme for the 2026–2027 school year is ALL IN, and that is precisely what our faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Education continue to demonstrate.

But being ALL IN should not mean that local school districts must carry an ever-increasing financial burden without adequate support from the state.

It should not mean that educators are asked to accomplish more while receiving less.

And it should not mean that rural communities are left wondering whether their schools will remain financially sustainable for future generations.

I believe we must have the courage to ask difficult questions about the direction of public education in Missouri.

Are we building a system designed to help every school improve, or one that increasingly distinguishes between communities with sufficient resources and those without?

Are we strengthening the state's commitment to free public education, or gradually transferring more of that responsibility to local taxpayers?

And if continued financial pressures ultimately contribute to school consolidation and closures, will we recognize those outcomes as consequences of decisions made long before the doors were closed?

These are not questions of political affiliation. They are questions of educational opportunity, public responsibility, and the future of Missouri's children.

The condition of public education today will help determine the condition of our communities tomorrow.

We cannot continue to raise expectations while diminishing the resources necessary to meet them and expect the system to remain unchanged. As a superintendent, I will continue to advocate for responsible stewardship, meaningful accountability, transparency, and the resources necessary to provide every child with a quality education.

Our students deserve nothing less. Our communities deserve nothing less.

And the future of public education in Missouri deserves more than another report card.

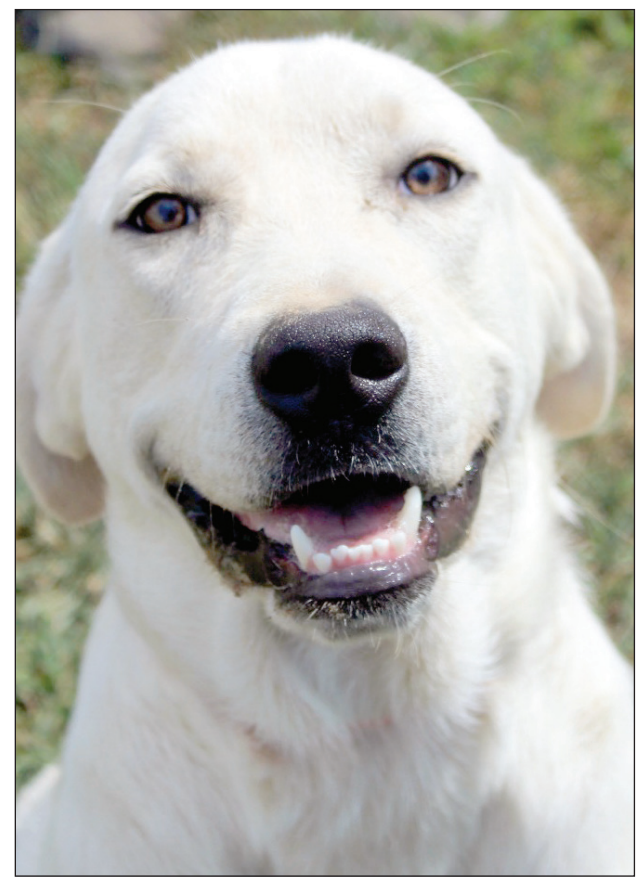
It deserves a sustained commitment to the schools, educators, and children who represent the future of our state.

Excellence is the Standard. But excellence requires more than expectations — it requires commitment, investment, and action.

Dr. Travis Graham superintendent of schools at the Purdy R-II School District. He may be reached at tgraham@purdyk12.com.

Haven of the Ozarks Pet of the Week

I'm Armani, a handsome 10-month-old Great Pyrenees mix with a snowy white coat and a playful spirit! I'm already neutered and ready to join your family — I do great with dogs, kids, and cats, so I'm a fantastic fit for a multi-pet household. I'm still growing into my gentle giant potential, and my adoption fee is just $90. Come meet me and let's start our adventure together! Adopters can complete an application at www.havenoftheozarks.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



Helen Louise Catron

Helen Louise Catron, age 84, of Seligman, Missouri passed away Sunday, November 8, 2026 at her home.

She was born August 14, 1942 in McDonald County, Missouri, the daughter of Clyde and Opal (Weston) Carden. On March 24, 1959 in Miami, Oklahoma she was united in marriage to Raymond Catron, who survives. Also surviving are her son, Donald Catron and wife Kelly of Seligman, Missouri; daughter, Penny Hall and husband Marty of Washburn, Missouri; brother, Junior Carden of Fayetteville, Arkansas; sister, Bonnie Morgan of Washburn, Missouri; eight grandchildren, Sketer (Amanda) Hall, Dustin Hall, Colt (Stacy) Hall, Keith (Kaylee) White, Kathy (Zack) Williams, Mickie (D.J.) Fletcher, Sarah Catron, and Keisha Catron, and 13 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were her parents and son, Doug Catron.

Helen attended school in Washburn and graduated from Southwest High School. She spent most of her life in the Seligman area, where she and her husband, Raymond, made their living as dairy farmers. Alongside their farming life, Helen was a devoted homemaker who enjoyed caring for her home and family. In her spare time, Helen loved making wood crafts, painting, browsing thrift stores, and visiting garage sales.

She was a member of the Church of Christ in Washburn, where her faith was an important part of her life. She will be remembered and deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Graveside services were held at 2:00 P.M. Thursday, November 12, 2026 at King Cemetery in Seligman, Missouri, under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville. Rick Hendrix conducted the services.

The family received friends from 5:30 until 6:30 P.M. Wednesday at Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

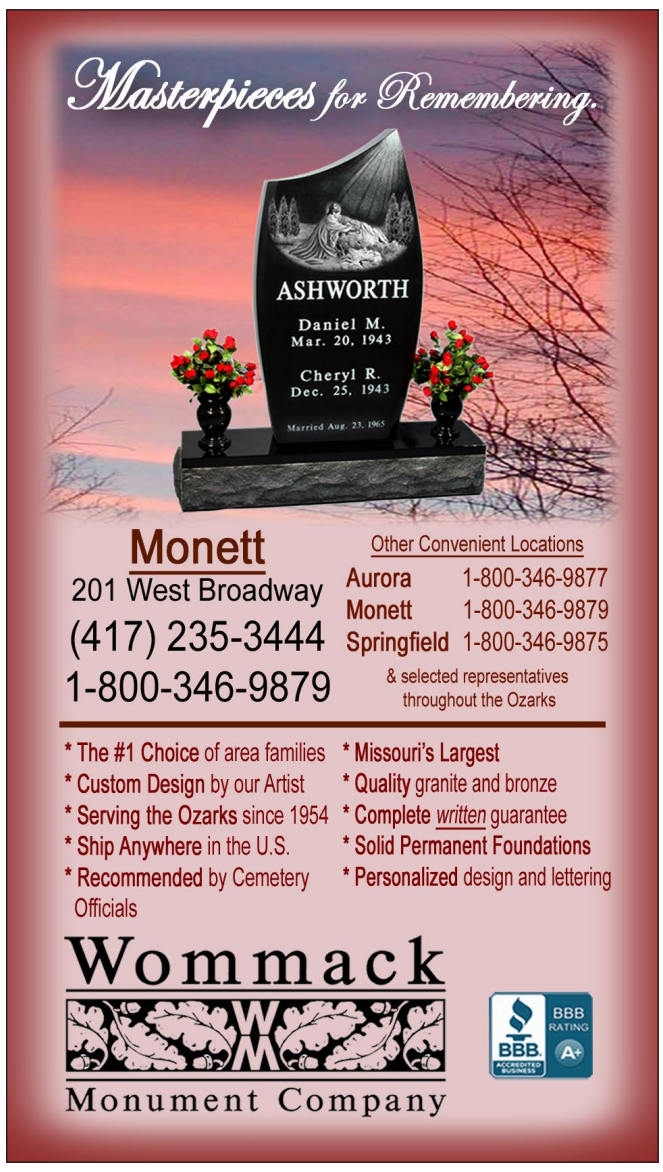
Contributions may be made to King Cemetery in memory of Helen.

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Crematory on site

To view obituaries, go to
www.whitefuneralhome.org



PAID OBITUARY

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Lewis Wayne Frantz

Lewis Wayne Frantz passed away on November 7, 2026, at Cox South Hospital in Springfield, Mo.

He was born June 29, 1946, the eldest child of Lewis Ray Frantz and Geneva Smith Frantz in the San Francisco Bay Area of Calif.

He worked for many years as an automobile mechanic before teaching himself computer programming. He later worked as a computer programmer for Kaiser Permanente in Calif., until his retirement in the early 2000s.

In 2008, he moved to Barry County, Mo., where he lived for the remainder of his life. He was a member of Monett Church of Christ.

Wayne, following a short hospitalization after a heart attack.

He was preceded in death by his father, Lewis Ray Frantz, and his son, Timothy Wayne Frantz.

Survivors include his daughter, Billie Jolene Thompson of Springfield, Mo.; his sons, Alan Matthew Frantz and wife, Marissa, of Washburn, Mo., and James Stewart Sowles of Mass.; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

His family also includes his mother, Geneva Darchuk, and his sister, Jeannie Ray Frantz, whose current circumstances are unknown.

Services will be held at Monett Church of Christ at 2pm.

Arrangements are under the direction of White Funeral Home and Crematory.

White Funeral Home
and Crematory
Online condolences and webcasting of the funeral services may be found at www.whitefuneralhome.org
417-847-8100 or 417-858-8400



Cora Lorene "Fran" Irwin

Cora Lorene "Fran" Irwin, 86, of Cassville, Mo., formerly of Ocean View, Hawaii passed away Saturday, November 7, 2026, at Oak Pointe of Monett in Monett, Mo.

She was born November 9, 1939, in Lawrence, Mo. to Bud and Blanche France who preceded her in death.

Also preceding her in death was her husband, Donald Albert Irwin.

Survivors include her niece, Merri Magula of Cassville, Mo.; two great nieces, two great-great-nephews, and two great-great-nieces.

She graduated from Bakersfield High School. Following graduation, she proudly served four years in the United States Navy. She continued her education, earning her bachelor's degree. She worked as a civilian employee for the United States Navy, conducting sleep studies at the Naval Hospital in San Diego, Calif.

After retirement, she and Donald moved to Hawaii, where they made their home for the next 35 years. Following Donald's passing, Fran moved to Cassville to be closer to her nieces and nephews.

A private memorial service to celebrate and honor Fran's life will be held at a later date in Hawaii, a place that held special meaning in her life. Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

Fohn Funeral Home
Cassville, Missouri
417-847-2141
Visit www.fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbooks and private condolences



Carlin Thomas "Tom" Hollopeter

Carlin Thomas "Tom" Hollopeter, age 84, of Cassville, Missouri passed away Thursday, November 12, 2026 at his home.

He was born November 23, 1941 in Sublette, Kansas, the son of Samuel and Fern (Derby) Hollopeter. On October 31, 1961 in Sublette, Kansas he was united in marriage to Jean Cook, who preceded him in death on October 2, 2011. Also preceding him in death were his parents; a son, Thomas Eugene "Tom" Hollopeter; beloved friend, Karlene Hodge, and sister, Denise "Sis" Hargett and husband Wendell.

Surviving are his children, Linda Schaefer and husband Scott of Arvada, Colorado, Paula Norberg of Lindsborg, Kansas, Cathy Macklin and husband Hunter of Lakewood, Colorado, Tessie Hollie and husband David of Monett, Missouri, Gary Hodge and wife Jeannette of Monett, Missouri, and Tony Hodge and wife Tammie of Purdy, Missouri; brother, Samuel Hollopeter and wife Sandi of Pueblo West, Colorado; 15 grandchildren; 18 great grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews, and his companion, Verna Charter.

Tom grew up and attended school in Sublette, Kansas where he graduated from Sublette High School. He served in the United States Army with the 193rd Military Police Company in Germany. Throughout his life, Tom had many jobs from an auto mechanic to his last position as school custodian at the Cassville School System. He loved to mow his yard (and his neighbor's yards!), attend his grandkid's ballgames, and go to church. His Bible, his faith, his family, and his sweetheart filled his heart. Tom will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Services were held at 10:00 A.M. Monday, November 16, 2026 at Corinth Baptist Church in Cassville, under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville. Pastor Wyatt Clevenger conducted the services. Burial with military honors was at Corinth Cemetery in Cassville, Missouri.

The family received friends from 3:00 until 4:00 P.M. Sunday at Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

Contributions may be made to Mercy and Grace Fellowship or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in memory of Tom.

PAID OBITUARY

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Luncheon raises funds for Imagination Library



Marolyn Wood, left, Teresa Phillips, center, and Morgan Williams, right, pose with Dolly Parton at a fundraiser for the Barry County chapter of Parton's Imagination Library. The fundraiser — headed up by Wood — was hosted by the ladies of the United Methodist Church, where a potluck-style buffet was served and raffle tickets for handmade quilts were sold. The potluck fundraiser brought in over $3,000 to benefit the cause, said Morgan Williams, Imagination Library volunteer. Raffle tickets for the quilts will be on sale at Tomblin's Jewelry in Cassville, through Dec. 19. Teresa Phillips, who initiated and is heading up funding efforts for the Barry County chapter of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, says she's very, very grateful for all of the help with fundraising and for everyone who has donated toward the local chapter. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com



Carolyn Bishop, of the United Methodist Church in Cassville, looks over the potluck buffet served by the church ladies as a fundraiser for the Barry County chapter of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library last week. The meal netted over $3,000 in donations for the library. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com

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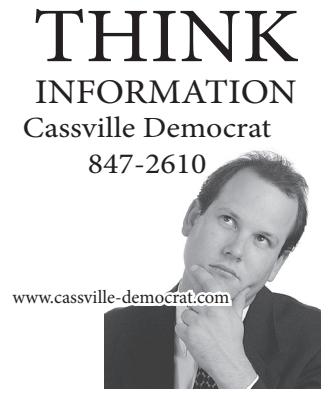


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www.fohnfuneralhome.com



Darci Englin, left, and Sidney Caldwell, right, sold raffle tickets for their handmade quilts at the Barry County Imagination Library potluck fundraiser, hosted by the ladies at the United Methodist Church last week. The quilts will be on display at Tomblin's Jewelry, in Cassville, through Dec. 19, when the drawing will be held. Raffle tickets are available for purchase at Tomblin's: one for $1, or six for $5. Sheila Harris/sheilaharrisads@gmail.com





CASSVILLE AREA DEVOTIONAL PAGE

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

Speaking Truth: God's Standard or Yours?

If a student does not have at least a 59% grade, they will fail their class. If a person does not have an airplane ticket, they cannot board a plane. If someone does not have a driver's license, they cannot drive their vehicle on the road. Standards. Expectations. They are everywhere. Including in mankind's relationship with our Creator.

The Bible is God's revelation to us. If anyone wants to know more about God, that is the first place to go. It contains many descriptions of Him. In 1 John 4:8, it says, "...God is love." Revelation 4:8 states, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty..." Psalm 47:7 declares, "...God is the King of all the earth..." The Bible also describes God as "righteous." In Isaiah 45:21, God says, "And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God..." Then in another place, the Bible says regarding the gospel, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed..." (Romans 1:17)

What does "righteousness" mean? It is not a commonly used word in our everyday conversations. The root word "right" helps define it. It refers to God's rightness, perfection, guiltlessness, innocence, faultlessness, or justice. Therefore, because God is righteous, He acts righteously. The Bible reveals this through God's commands. They lay out His expectations, not just for His followers, but for all mankind.

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He addressed moral standards regarding anger: "...everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment..." (Matthew 5:22). He also spoke about sexual immorality: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. 5:27-28) Jesus also set the bar high in dealing with our foes: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." (Matt. 5:43-44)

Why is Jesus laying out these standards for us? Because it reveals His own righteousness, and the standard by which He lives. It shows us who He is, and how He expects us to live. In short, Jesus is our righteous standard. He made this clear when He spoke, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) We are to be morally perfect. Not a spot of impurity in any of us. Who can achieve this, can you or even your pastor, rabbi, or priest?

Why this requirement? One might say, "This is God's standard, not mine. I should not have to burden myself with trying to live this way." However, in response, the Bible says, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed..." (Acts 17:30-31) Whether we believe in God or not, or live by His commands or not, all of us will stand before Him at one point and be judged by His righteousness. What if we are found lacking? Then we will face His judgment and the consequences of eternal death.

Where is the hope? Who can live this way and never fail? Only one person. Jesus. He is our singular hope, and this is why He went to the cross. He died and rose again to become our righteousness. We can never live perfectly enough to be accepted by God, and we do not have to. Why? Because Jesus already has. When a person turns from their sin and places their faith in Jesus, Jesus' righteousness is credited to him, and he becomes graciously accepted by God.

A prayer for you - Lord God, I have failed to live according to your ways. I am an imperfect person. I repent and call upon you in faith. Today, may the righteousness of Christ become my own and may I become acceptable in your sight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Speaking Truth by Clint Decker is a nationally syndicated newspaper column. It is formerly known as "Hope for Today with Clint Decker." It began in 2006, first being published by the "Christian Chronicle" in Kansas. Today, the column is sent out to over 300 newspapers in 10 states with over 1,000,000 in combined circulation. And the majority are small town rural papers. To God be the glory for this growing family of newspapers.

BIBLE VERSE:

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

— PSALM 119:18

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Steven Henbest, veteran of the U.S. Marines, as the guest speaker at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Nova Devore performs her part in "Armed Forces: The Pride of America" at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville JROTC members Devin Johns, right, and Carson Thomas stand at attention at the U.S. Flag while the Star-Spangled Banner is played at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Kristi Whitcomb, granddaughter of special honoree Charles Whitcomb, accepts a certificate of recognition from Abbigale Yarnall at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Charles Whitcomb, right, accepts a special honor flag from Paige McClure at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Paige McClure, left, and Carson Thomas complete the Thirteen Folds at the Cassville school district's Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Veterans: 2 Cassville seniors resognized for enlisting in junior year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Philippines, my other grandfather survived Japanese kamikaze pilots — I played pool with the Japanese on the weekends."

Henbest was in Okinawa on Sept. 11, 2201 — when the twin towers in New York were struck in a terrorist attack — and he said that was a surreal moment.

"I'll never forget sitting in that barracks room, watching a movie with some other marines, when a Marine throws the door open and screams, we are going to war," he said. "I remember having this surreal feeling, like the fun and games are over. I enlisted during a time of peace, always knowing there is this chance it could happen, but nothing was on the radar. Then, in a matter of a day, that changed."

Henbest was stationed in Cherry Point, N.C., in February 2003 when he was given orders to deploy to the middle east as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 45 days prior to the campaign with no zero infrastructure established.

"It was 30 days of MREs and no showers until the engineers arrived with that equipment," he said. " My socks could almost stand up on their own."

Henbest said movement as primarily done under cover of darkness and using nightvision. Sandstorms also presented a unique challenge, including one night where he and fellow Marines had to hold their tent down without the opportunity to dress in more than just underwear.

"However, It's pretty awesome to know that my team was the team that established all communication for the initial phase of the offensive in country as we took control of Iraq," he said.

After returning home and being honorably discharged, Henbest's education and connections landed him a job at Jack Henry in Monett.

"I write automation code and host an environment of about 2,000 servers that are the back end for a product that services around 600,000 transactions daily," he said. "I had the picture-perfect experience. I enlisted, I was trained, I traveled, I was honorably discharged and used my skills to build a life and career and I owe that to the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps gave me exactly what I asked for — they gave me discipline, self-reliance, courage, pride, travel, adventure and a family."

Henbest ended his speech with a call to action to the students in attendance.

"Let me encourage you all as you leave high school in the future, you don't have to join the Military, but don't serve yourself and money," he said. "Find a purpose greater than yourself to serve. And, if you are sitting here today, not quite sure what life looks like after school, consider the military. And if you're just a little bit cocky, you might just find a home in the Corps."

Following the speech, Sgt. Morgan Zinn, with the Army National Guard, performed an original song, "Coming Home." The JROTC then completed the Thirteen Folds of the American flag, and the flag was given to special honoree Charles Whitcomb, of Cassville.

Born on September 3, 1926, in Linden, Ala., at 15, Whitcomb left home without finishing high school, and by the fall of 1943 he was working at Petty Tire Company. By that November, at just 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Birmingham, Ala. World War II was on, and he wanted to serve.

The Navy sent him to the naval air stations around Pensacola, Fla., and to Kingsville, Texas, where he served with a night-fighter training unit. He then shipped out across the Pacific to the U.S. naval base on Samar Island in the Philippines, one of the largest bases of the war.

Whitcomb was honorably discharged on Feb. 18, 1946, as a Seaman Second Class. On his discharge papers, under the career he hoped to pursue, he wrote two words: "Aircraft Mechanic." He spent the next 30 years doing exactly that. After the Navy, he settled in San Bernardino, Calif. That's where he met Irene, a young woman from Ohio who was visiting her aunt. They married in Las Vegas on February 21, 1948.

In 1951, Whitcomb joined the Air Force as a civilian jet engine mechanic at Norton Air Force Base. Within two years, he was crew chief over 23 mechanics, but he never forgot the high school diploma he'd left behind. In 1956, at age 29, while working full time and raising two young sons, he went to night school and earned his high school diploma from San Bernardino Evening High School.

He then continued taking night classes at San Bernardino Valley College, and even continued taking Air Force management courses into his fifties.

His hard work and perseverance paid off. With his education, he moved from fixing jet engines to designing the shops that overhauled them, earning a cash award for his work on a $2.5 million expansion.

Next, he worked on the Atlas missile program, including stints at missile sites in Wyoming and Washington. He worked on liquid-fuel rocket engines alongside Rocketdyne, and on the Titan II missile at Hill Air Force Base in Utah.

Back in Santa Monica, he represented the Air Force inside major aerospace plants: Douglas Aircraft, Rocketdyne, where he worked on Atlas and Thor rocket engines for Air Force and NASA space programs, and finally Rockwell International. There, he spent seven years on the B-1 bomber, rising to supervisor and holding a secret security clearance.

His B-1 team earned the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award. He retired in 1977, after 25 years of federal service, the same year the B-1 program was canceled.

Whitcomb and his wife Irene raised two sons, Dave and Kevin. After he retired they set out in their camper across the western states and Canada. On one trip they passed through Cassville, Missouri, fell in love with it, bought seven acres east of town, and built their home there.

In 1993, they began raising their granddaughters, Heather and Kristi. Over the years, they traveled to Alaska, rode 60,000 miles on their motorcycles, and spent winters in Alabama deer hunting and visiting family. Irene passed away in September 2024, after 76 years of marriage.

In September, Whitcomb turned 100. He celebrated with family at the Show Me Plaza. A week later, he drove a go-kart around the Twister Alley Raceway in Butterfield, carrying the American flag to start the race.

These days, he can usually be found sitting outside, catching up on the neighborhood news. He still takes his walk every day, keeps a book close by, and has a story for anyone who asks about the good ole days.

"At 15 with no diploma, no money, and nobody opening doors for him, he left home," the recognition said. "Everything he built, he built himself, one job, one night class and one hard-earned promotion at a time. "His life is proof that where you start doesn't decide where you finish. A boy from a small Alabama town became a World War II veteran, a rocket and missile expert and a leader on one of the most important aircraft programs of his time.

"He was also a husband for 76 years and a father to two generations. He never waited for life to get easy.

At 100 years old, he's still going."

Whitcomb received the flag and gave a short address to his fellow veterans in the Performing Arts Center seating.

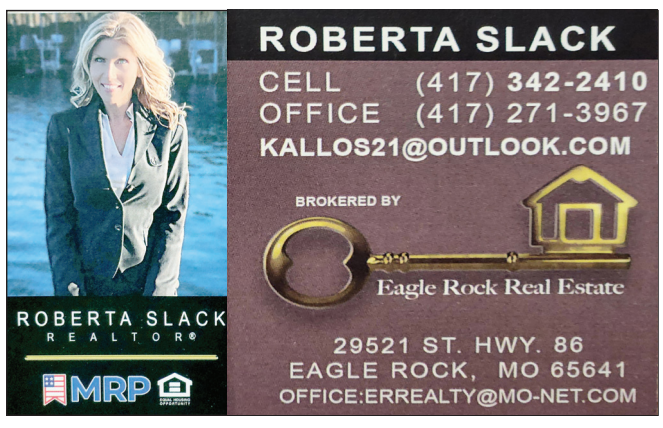
Following the presentation, the Cassville Mass Choir and Cassville Concert Band performed "Armed Forces: The Pride of America." Two Cassville students — Devin Johns and Connor Rogers — were recognized for enlisting in the military, completing training the summer between their junior and senior years.

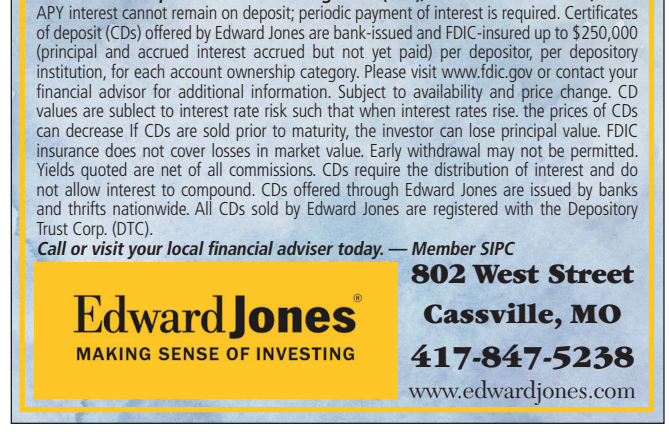
After their recognition, a total of 59 certificates were handed out to veterans in attendance at the event, most of whom live in the Cassville area.

To conclude the Celebration, "Taps" was played, and a prayer was said for all service members.









CASSVILLE Democrat
November 18, 2026

Sports

SECTION B
Publisher Kyle Troutman
417-847-2610
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'CATS CLAIM CHAMPIONSHIP!



Cassville football players celebrate inning the Class 3, District 6 championship as Coach Clay Weldy accepts the trophy from Athletic Director Lance Parnell. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville topples Seneca for first district trophy since 2020

BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktroutman@cassville-demomcrat.com

The Cassville football team made sure there would be no repeat of last season's district championship heartbreak, controlling Seneca on both sides of the ball Friday for a 30-6 victory and the Wildcats' first district title since 2020.

After squeaking by the Indians by a 3-point margin in their regular-season meeting, Cassville turned in a much more complete performance in the rematch, limiting Seneca to one touchdown while forcing multiple turnovers and delivering several explosive plays.

The win was especially meaningful for senior Easton Hughes, who moved from Purdy to Cassville in sixth grade so he could play football.

"This feels amazing," Hughes said. "I've been waiting on this since third grade."

Cassville stopped Seneca on downs at its own 48-yard line on the opening possession of the game. The Wildcats used a methodical drive to take the lead, with Hughes picking up yards between the tackles and converting a fourth-and-1 on a direct snap at the Seneca 22.

After working inside the 10, Kellen Weldy moved the ball to the 1-yard line, and Kamden Beebe finished the drive with a touchdown on fourth down to put Cassville ahead 7-0 with 1:23 left in the first quarter.

Seneca answered with a lengthy drive of its own, moving into the red zone before scoring on a quarterback keeper. The Indians' two-point attempt was stopped, leaving Cassville with a 7-6 lead with 7:32 remaining in the first half.

The Wildcats responded immediately. Wylan Farris recovered the bouncing kickoff at the Cassville 48, and Hughes broke through the defense for a 52-yard touchdown run on the next play. The score extended the lead to 14-6 just 14 seconds after Seneca's touchdown.

Cassville's defense continued to create opportunities. Masin Bryan broke up a pass on Seneca's next possession, and Tyler Hodge blocked the ensuing punt and recovered it at the Indians' 14-yard line. The Wildcats reached the 3-yard line, but a 25-yard field-goal attempt was blocked.

Seneca could not take advantage of the stop. After penalties pushed the Indians back near their own goal line, Bryan returned the punt to the Seneca 32-yard line. On the next play, quarterback Jaren Stearns connected with Mace Bredeson for a 32-yard touchdown pass, giving Cassville a 21-6 advantage with 2:14 remaining in the half.

The Wildcats added another takeaway before halftime when Farris intercepted a pass from Seneca's backup quarterback and returned it to the Indians' 37-yard line. Cassville reached the red zone, but an offensive pass-interference penalty moved the ball back, and the Wildcats ran out the first-half clock with a 15-point lead.

Cassville opened the second half with another strong drive after Seneca's onside kick attempt went awry. Hughes and Beebe helped move the ball inside the 15, but the Wildcats were unable to finish the possession with a touchdown.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6B



Cassville's Mace Bredeson brings in a touchdown catch in the Wildcats' district championship win over Seneca on Friday. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville volleyball content, optimistic

Lady Wildcats grow tactically, coach still hopes for growth in confidence

BY KYLE TROUTMAN
ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville volleyball finished the season with a 12-18-2 record, and Coach Paige Huddleston said the Lady Wildcats made strides throughout the season and continued building a foundation for future program success.

Huddleston said the team enjoyed the season, competed in difficult matches and saw improvement at all three levels of play.

"As a whole, we had a successful season," she said. "We had a ton of fun, battled in some tough matches, and made some big strides as a program. We saw a good amount of improvement at all three levels of play, which ultimately is the goal for us to gain future success."

One of the biggest areas of growth came in the tactical side of the game, particularly when the Wildcats were forced to play out of system. Huddleston said an emphasis on accountability helped improve court awareness and decision-making.

Cassville relied on consistent defense to create more opportunities, then improved at recognizing weaknesses in opposing defenses and finding ways to score without running its preferred offense.

"We held each other to a higher standard of court awareness and encouraged each other to find ways to score out of system," Huddleston said.

While the Lady Wildcats made progress defensively and tactically, Huddleston said offensive confidence remains an area for improvement.

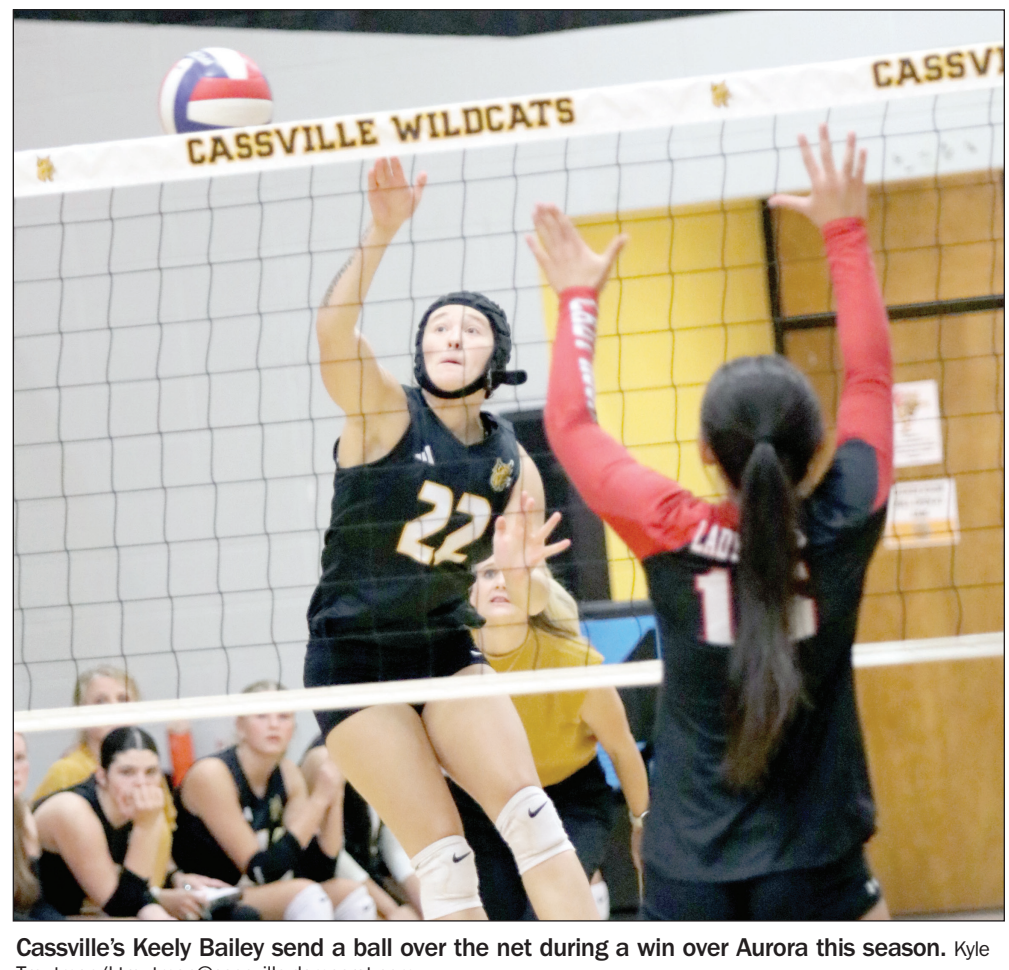
"I would like to see us trust our training, swing more technically sound, and use the tools we've been given to swing fearlessly and confidently," she said.

The season opened with a memorable three-set sweep at Neosho, a Class 5 school. Huddleston said the Lady Wildcats' performance and chemistry made the match a fitting start to the year.

"That wasn't our toughest game of the season, but we played as one unit and had so much fun as a group," she said. "It was a fantastic way to get our season started, and I will remember that game for years to come."

Cassville also said goodbye to four seniors who made contributions over multiple seasons: Audrey Kennedy,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5B



Cassville's Keely Bailey send a ball over the net during a win over Aurora this season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com







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Blake Fields
Attorney at Law
605 Main St., Cassville, MO
(417) 847-9999
email@blakefieldslaw.com

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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

PETS

FREE KITTENS: To good home, 4 months old. In Cassville. Call 479-502-7117.

FREE CATS/KITTENS: Some gentle, some feral. Text only to 417-489-2898.

HELP NEEDED

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

FOR RENT

FOR RENT: Retail Spaces, Westgate Center. 600-900 sqft available. 1-yr lease min, $375-475 per month. Some Restrictions. (417) 847-0025.

FOR RENT: House for rent, two-bedroom country home in Seligman area. Call 479-372-1615.

FOR RENT: 3br/2ba trailer house in Butterfield across the street from George's. $1,200 per month. Call Kurt Hilton at 417-342-2376

FOR SALE

FIREWOOD: Seasoned firewood, $50 per rick, you haul. 479-800-3050.

MISCELLANEOUS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

THOMAS CORN,
PLAINTFF,
VS.
L.B. CORN,
OPAL CORN,
SHIRLEY CORN &
TERRY CORN
their heirs, grantees, devises, successors, consorts, and assigns,
DEFENDANTS,
26BR-CC00151

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

Defendants, L. B. Corn, Opal Corn, Shirley Corn and Terry Corn if they shall be deceased, then their unknown heirs, grantees, consorts, spouses or successors of those of them who shall be deceased.

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 to quiet title to the following described property in Barry County, Missouri:

Part of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 15, Township 21 North, Range 28 West, Barry County, Missouri, being further described as follows:

Beginning at a point East 652.55 feet and South 905.49 feet from the Northeast Corner of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of said Section 15; thence South 138.66 feet to the Northerly right of way line of Missouri Highway No. 37, thence along said right of way line North 86°34'00" West 9.00 feet; thence continuing along said right of way line on a curve to the right, said curve having a radius of 116.30 Feet and an are length of 117.52 feet, thence leaving said right of way line North 12°18'12" East 141.52 feet; thence South 83°11'54" East 96.43 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.36 acres, more or less, and subject to all rights of ways, easements and restrictive covenants of record or fact.

The names of all the parties to said suit are stated above in the caption hereof and the name and address of the attorney for Plaintiff is Harry D. Schwartz, P.O. Box 276, 702 West
Street, Cassville, Missouri 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 28th day of October, 2026 judgment by de fault 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.
1st Publication: October 28, 2026
2nd Publication: November 4, 2026
3rd Publication: November 11, 2026
4th Publication: November 18, 2026
A true copy from the record
WITNESS my hand and seal of the Circuit Court this 20th day of October, 2026.
CRAIG WILLIAMS,
Circuit Clerk
By Kami Stanton
Deputy Clerk
1st insertion 10/28/26
42-45

———————

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

IN THE INTEREST OF
A.O.H.
and A.X.H,
Minors.
Case No. 26BR-PR00148

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to: KAYLEE STEPHENSON

You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Juvenile
Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is guardianship of the minor children:
A.O.H. and A.X.H.
The names of all parties in this action are
LAWRENCE HOUSE,
SHEILA HOUSE and
BRITTEN HOUSE,
and the name and address of the attorney for the Petitioner is
J. Michael Riehn, Attorney at Law,
P. O. Box 324, Cassville, Missouri 65625.
You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or otherwise
appear and defend against this action within 45 days after October 28th 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 on this 21st day of October, 2026.
First publication: October 28, 2026
Second Publication: November 4, 2026
Third Publication: November 11, 2026
Fourth Publication: November 18, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
1st insertion 10/28/26
42-45

———————

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI JUVENILE DIVISION

IN RE: THE ADOPTION OF
O.R D. (DOB: 11/04/2013)

DEE ANN DUBSON, and
JASON ALEX DUBSON, SR,
Petitioners,
VS.
DEBRA KEISLING, and
JASON ALEX DUBSON, JR.
Respondents.
Case No._ 26BR-JU00084

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to:
DEBRA KEISLING and JASON ALEX DUBSON, JR.

You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Juvenile
Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is termination of parental rights and adoption of the minor child, O. R. D

The names of all parties in this action are JASON ALEX DUBSON, SR. and DEE ANN DUBSON, and the name and address of the attorney for the Petitioner is

J. Michael Riehn, Attorney at Law,
P. O. Box 324, Cassville, Missouri 65625.

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or shall otherwise appear and defend against this action within 45 days after October 28, 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 his 20th day of October, 2026.
Craig Williams
By Kami Stanton
CLERK
First publication: October 28, 2026
Second Publication: November 4, 2026
Third Publication: November 11, 2026
Fourth Publication: November 18, 2026
1st insertion 10/28/26
42-45

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NOTICE OF ELECTION: FILING DEADLINE PURDY R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT PURDY, MISSOURI

The Purdy R-II School District will accept Declarations of Candidacy from persons interested in running for a position on the School Board in the April 6, 2027 election. Two vacancies, each for a 3 year term, will be filled at the election. The positions that are currently up for election are held by Reuben Henderson and Josh Conner. Qualified candidates may file in the Superintendent's Office located at 201 S. Gabby Gibbons Drive in Purdy, Missouri. The names of the candidates shall be placed on the ballot in order of Filing. Filing will begin on December 15, 2026 at 7:30 A.M., and will continue thru 4:00 P.M., on January 5, 2027 during the district's regular business hours, which are Monday thru Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. If school is canceled due to inclement weather the office will be closed. The office will be closed for the holidays from December 21, 2026 thru January 1, 2027.

Dr. Travis Graham
Superintendent
1st insertion, 11/04/26
43-46

———————

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

IN RE THE MATTER OF:
J.J.W., by
Next friend REBECCA JEAN WEBB
CaseNo:26BR-DR00142

JUDGMENT

Now on this 30 day of November, 2026, the Court takes up the Petition for Change of Name of Minor filed by REBECCA JEAN WEBB, as Next Friend of J.J.W., a minor child. Petitioner appears by and through her attorney of record, BLAKE B. FIELDS of the Law Office of Blake B. Fields, LIC

The Court, having reviewed the Petition and being fully advised in the promises, finds that the requested change of name is proper sed will not be detrimental to the interests of any other person

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the name of the minor child, J.J.W.,
is hereby changed to
J.J.S.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that notice of the change of name shall be published as
required by law, unless publication is otherwise excused by applicable law or court order

SO ORDERED. This 30th day of October, 2026
1st insertion 11/11/26
44-46

———————

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

IN RE THE MATTER OF:
J.R.W., by
Next friend REBECCA JEAN WEBB
CaseNo:26BR-DR00143

JUDGMENT

Now on this 30 day of November, 2026, the Court takes up the Petition for Change of Name of Minor filed by REBECCA JEAN WEBB, as Next Friend of J.R.W., a minor child. Petitioner appears by and through her attorney of record, BLAKE B. FIELDS of the Law Office of Blake B. Fields, LIC

The Court, having reviewed the Petition and being fully advised in the promises, finds that the requested change of name is proper sed will not be detrimental to the interests of any other person

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the name of the minor child, J.R.W.,
is hereby changed to
J.R.S.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that notice of the change of name shall be published as
required by law, unless publication is otherwise excused by applicable law or court order

SO ORDERED. This 30th day of October, 2026
1st insertion 11/11/26
44-46

———————

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

IN RE THE MATTER OF:
REBECCA JEAN WEBB
CaseNo:26BR-DR00141

JUDGMENT

Now on this 30 day of November, 2026, comes Petitioner, REBECCA JEAN WEBB by and through her attorney, BLAKE B. FIELDS, and submits to the Court her Petition filed herein, which is duly verified by Affidavit, praying for a change, according to law, of said Petitioner's name from REBECCA JEAN WEBB to S REBECCA JEAN SCHALLERT and due consideration being had in the premises, and the Court being satisfied that the desired change would be proper and not detrimental to the interests of any other person; that no money judgments are pending or unsatisfied,

IT IS ORDERED that the prayer of said Petition be granted, and that said Petitioner's name be and hereby is changed from REBECCA JEAN WEBB to REBECCA JEAN SCHALLERT and that a copy of this Order be spread upon the records of this Court which is now accordingly done.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that public notice of such change of name be given by
publication, according to law.

SO ORDERED, this 30 day of October, 2026
1st insertion 11/11/26
44-46

———————

INVITATION TO BID BARRY COUNTY BRIDGE REPAIR BUNDLE

Sealed bids for the Barry County Bridge Repair Bundle will be received at: Barry County Commission, 700 Main Street, Suite 2, Cassville, MO 65625, until 10:00 o'clock A.M. (Prevailing Local Time) on the 10th day of December 2026, at the office of the Barry County Courthouse, and at that time will be publicly opened and read. All bids shall be submitted as a Hard Copy.

The proposed work includes:

Repair plans for four bridges throughout Barry County and a low water crossing replacement. Low water crossing replacement work includes installation of concrete toe walls and paving, installation of corrugated metal pipe and rock blanket. Planned work for bridge repairs generally consists of clearing and grubbing of existing overgrown foliage, concrete collars around existing abutments, formed and unformed substructure repairs, and installation of rock blanket.

A digital copy of the plans and specifications may be purchased through the office of Great River Engineering (GRE), at 417-886-7171 upon payment of $75.00, which is not refundable. All bidders must purchase plans through Great River Engineering and be on the planholder list in order to bid the project.

All labor used in the construction of this public improvement shall be paid a wage no less that the prevailing hourly rate of wages of work of similar character in this locality as established by the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (State Wage Rate).

The Barry County Commission hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, ancestry, or national origin in consideration for an award.

All bidders must be on MoDOT's Qualified Contractor List per Section 102.2 of the Missouri Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, 2026, Second Edition Edition including all revisions. The contractor questionnaire must be on file 7 days prior to bid opening.

Contractors and sub-contractors who sign a contract to work on public works projects shall provide a 10-Hour OSHA construction safety program, or similar program approved by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, to be completed by their on-site employees within sixty (60) days of beginning work on the construction project.

A certified cashier's check or a bid bond in the amount of 5% shall be submitted with each proposal.

The Barry County Commission reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

The project will be awarded to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder.

The DBE Goal for this project is 0.

No 2nd tier subcontracting will be allowed on this project.

Only insertion 11/18/26
45

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

In Re: The Marriage Of:
Eddie Diaz, and Herminia Diaz,

EDDIE DIAZ,
Petitioner,
VS.
HERMINIA DIAZ,
Respondent.
Case No. 26BR-DR00168

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to Respondent, HERMINIA DIAZ

You are hereby notified that there has been commenced an action against you in the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is a Petition for
Dissolution of Marriage

The names of the parties to said action are stated above and the name and address of the Attorney for Eddie Diaz, Petitioner, is
Ryan F. Ricketts, Attorney at Law,
278 S. Hwy. 60,
P.O. Box 517,
Marionville, Missouri 65705.

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 date of first publication; judgment by default will be rendered against you.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Circuit Court on NOVEMBER 13, 2026
Craig Williams
Circuit Clerk
BY KATIE CORREIA/DC
FIRST PUBLICATION: NOVEMBER 18, 2026
SECOND PUBLICATION: NOVEMBER 25, 2026
THIRD PUBLICATION: DECEMBER 02, 2026
FOURTH PUBLICATION: DECEMBER 09, 2026
1st insertion 11/18/26
45-48

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Barry County Commission is accepting sealed bids to provide inmate medical services for the inmates housed in the Barry County Jail, located at 94 Barry County Dr. Cassville, MO 65625. Questions concerning this RFP must be directed to: Danny Boyd, 94 Barry County Dr. ,Cassville, MO 65625, 417-847-6556 sheriff@barrycountysheriff.com

Bids will be accepted at the Barry County Clerk's Office, Monday through Friday 8am to 4pm (700 Main Street, Suite 2, Cassville, MO 65625) no later than 10:00 a.m. December 14, 2026, at which time the sealed bids will be opened and read aloud. All bids will be opened in the County Commission's Office and the bid will be awarded to the lowest or best bidder. All bids shall be marked "sealed bid – (name of item being bid)" and with the "bid opening date". Barry County Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids or any parts thereof.

Only insertion 11/18/26
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THE ROARING RIVER SPECIAL ROAD DISTRICT BIDS

The Roaring River Special Road District is now taking bids for:

Snow removal as needed as a backup to the
districts snow removal plan for 2026-2027 season.

This will include all roads

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4B

PUBLIC AUCTION
NOVEMBER 21ST @ 10AM
-WATCH FOR HOLDER AUCTION SIGNS-
Location: 31837 St Hwy 112 Seligman, MO 65745.
Tools - Machinist Tools - Toolboxes - Shop Items
John Deere Lawnmower
Lawn and Garden
Terms
Cash or good check. No credit cards. Proper ID required for buyer number. Not responsible for sickness, accidents, lost or stolen items on or around auction site. Statements made day of sale superceed any and all printed material.
Sale can be held inside in case of inclement weather
OWNER: RUTH AND THE LATE DON PEAK
HOLDER AUCTION SERVICE AUCTIONZIP ID 35501
HOLDER AUCTION SERVICE
BUTTERFIELD, MISSOURI
BRAD HOLDER 417-689-5582
JEFF HOLDER 417-342-3218
CARL HENDRIX 417-342-4370

HOLDER AUCTION SERVICE
3rd Generation Auction Service
ALL TYPES OF AUCTIONS
Brad Holder 417-689-5582
Brent Ferguson 479-531-3252
Carl Hendrix 417-342-4370

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3B

assigned to Roaring River Road District.

Please mail your bid, with BID written on the envelope to

PO Box 9

Eagle Rock, Mo. 65641

Include your name, bid amount, and phone number

Also a copy of your insurance policy.

Bids will be opened and read on December 8th 2026.

Any questions call Marc Landrith 417 665 9839.

Only insertion 11/18/26

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NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DATES

The Ash Road District

Will have (1) Commissioner available for election

in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

Road Commissioner for a term of 3 (Three) years.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026

and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk,

Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Barry County Clerk's office will be closed December 24-25, 2026

Candidates will be listed on the ballot in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF FILING DEADLINE

FOR THE OFFICE OF

MAYOR

AND

NORTH WARD ALDERMAN

AND

SOUTH WARD ALDERMAN

FOR THE CITY OF CASSVILLE, MISSOURI

The General Election for Mayor and Council Members of the City of Cassville, Missouri,

will be held on Tuesday, April 6, 2027. Candidate filings will be accepted beginning

Tuesday, December 15, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and

will close on Tuesday, January 5, 2027, at 5:00 p.m.

Vacancies will be filled at the April 6, 2027 election for two-year terms. Terms will expire

for incumbents Jon Horner, Mayor; Mike Phillips, North Ward Alderman, and Zane

LeCompte, South Ward Alderman. Candidate Declaration forms are available on the

posted dates at the office of the City Clerk, 300 Main Street, Cassville, Missouri.

Please note: City offices will be closed December 24, 2026 and December 25, 2026 (all

day), in observance of the holidays.

Monzell Hagins, City Clerk (posted 11/13/26 10:00 a.m.)

Published in Cassville Democrat Nov. 18, 2026

45

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NOTICE OF ELECTION AND FILING DEADLINE

Flat Creek Special Road District

The Flat Creek Special Road District will have one (1) Commissioner position available for election in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

One (1) Road Commissioner for a three (3) year term will be available.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026 and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027.

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk, Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm (closed December 24-25, 2026). The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Candidates will be listed on the ballet in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DATES

The Greasy Creek Road District

Will have (1) Commissioner available for election

in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

Road Commissioner for a term of 3 (Three) years.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026

and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk,

Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Barry County Clerk's office will be closed December 24-25, 2026

Candidates will be listed on the ballot in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF ELECTION AND FILING DEADLINE

The Mineral Springs Road District will have one (1) Commissioner position available for election in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

One (1) Road Commissioner for a three (3) year term will be available.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026 and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027.

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk, Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm (closed December 24-25, 2026). The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Candidates will be listed on the ballet in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF FILING DEADLINE

FOR OFFICE OF

MAYOR

AND

EAST WARD ALDERMAN

AND

WEST WARD ALDERMAN

FOR THE CITY OF WHEATON, MISSOURI

Any person interested in filing for election to the office of Mayor, East Ward Alderman, or West Ward Alderman for the City of Wheaton, Missouri may file during normal business hours with the City Clerk from 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 15, 2026, to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 5, 2027, at which time filing for election to said offices will be closed.

Vacancies will be filled at the April 6, 2027 election for two-year terms. Terms will expire for incumbents Ryan Henderson, East Ward Alderman, Suzan Harris, West Ward Alderman, and Luke Stucky, Mayor.

Candidate Declaration forms are available 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, December 15, 2026, to January 5, 2027, at the office of the City Clerk, 219 E. Main Steet, Wheaton, Missouri. Ballot placement of candidates will be the order in which the candidates register.

Published in the Cassville Democrat 11/18/26

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DATES

The Roaring River Road District

Will have (1) Commissioner available for election

in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

Road Commissioner for a term of 3 (Three) years.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026

and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk,

Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Barry County Clerk's office will be closed December 24-25, 2026

Candidates will be listed on the ballot in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DATES

The Seligman Fire Protection District will have (2) Board seats available for election in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

Board members serve a term of 6 (six) years.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026 and the closing filing date is January 5th 2027

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk, Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Candidates will be listed on the ballot in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

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NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DATES

The Washburn Special Road District

Will have (1) Commissioner available for election

in the April 6, 2027 General Municipal Election.

Road Commissioner for a term of 3 (Three) years.

The opening date for candidate filing is December 15, 2026

and the closing filing date is January 5, 2027

Candidates may file for this office at the office of Joyce Ennis, Barry County Clerk,

Cassville, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.

The office may be closed should inclement weather occur.

Barry County Clerk's office will be closed December 24-25, 2026

Candidates will be listed on the ballot in the order in which they file.

Only insertion 11/18/26

45

PROBATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

K.K.S.,

Minor,

Estate No. 26BR-PR00145

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to:

KELEIGH ELIZABETH RAY

You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Juvenile Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is termination of parental rights and adoption of the minor child, K. K. S.

The names of all parties in this action are ROSEMARY WALL and CHARLES WALL, and the name and address of the attorney for the Petitioner is

J. Michael Riehn,

Attorney at Law,

P. O. Box 324, Cassville, Missouri 65625.

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or otherwise appear and defend against this action within 45 days after OCTOBER 28, 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 his 16th day of OCTOBER 2026.

Craig Williams,

Circuit Clerk

By S. Parker,

Probate Clerk

First publication: OCTOBER 28, 2026

Second Publication: NOVEMBER 4, 2026

Third Publication: NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Fourth Publication: NOVEMBER 18, 2026

1st insertion 10/28/26

42-45

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

In the Estate of VIRGINIA A MEEK,

Deceased.

Case Number: 26BR-PR00104

NOTICE OF LETTERS TESTAMENTARY

GRANTED (SUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION)

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of

VIRGINIA A MEEK,

Decedent:

On August 10, 2026, the last will of Decedent having been admitted to probate, the following individual was appointed personal representative of the estate of VIRGINIA A MEEK, decedent by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of BARRY COUNTY, Missouri.

The name and business address of the personal representative is:

PHYNES ANTHONY MEEK,

651 S. BRIDGEWOOD CIRCLE, NIXA, MO 65714

The personal representative's attorney's name, business address and phone number is:

MARC EDMONDSON,

PO Box 491, CASSVILLE, MO 65625,

417-846-0022.

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: January 2, 2026

Date of first publication: October 28, 2026

Date of second publication: November 4, 2026

Date of third publication: November 11, 2026

Date of fourth publication: November 18, 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 10/28/26

42-45

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

P.L.H.B.,

A Minor,

Estate No. 26BR-PR00144

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to:

KELEIGH ELIZABETH RAY

AND

WAYLON LEE BRYSON, JR.

You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Juvenile Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is termination of parental rights and adoption of the minor child, P. L. H. B.

The names of all parties in this action are ROSEMARY WALL and CHARLES WALL, and the name and address of the attorney for the Petitioner is J. Michael Riehn, Attorney at Law,

P. O. Box 324, Cassville, Missouri 65625.

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or otherwise

appear and defend against this action within 45 days after October 28, 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 his 16th day of October, 2026.

Craig Williams,

Circuit Clerk

By S. Parker,

Probate Clerk

First publication: October 28, 2026

Second Publication: November 4, 2026

Third Publication: November 11, 2026

Fourth Publication: November 18, 2026

1st insertion 10/28/26

42-45

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE DIVISION AT CASSVILLE

In the Estate of

JAMES D. SIZEMORE,

Estate Number: 19BR-PR00131

Deceased

NOTICE OF FILING OF FINAL SETTLEMENT AND PETITION FOR DISTRIBUTION

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF

JAMES D. SIZEMORE,

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 estate of the decedent and of the extent and character of their

interest therein and for distribution of such property, on or about December 3, 2026 or as

may be continued by the Court, and that any objections or exceptions to 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.

SAM MADSEN

Personal Representative

DONALD L. CUPPS, Attorney

Ellis, Cupps, Herrin & Schwartz

P. O. Box 276

Cassville, MO 65625

(417)847-2734

Dates of Publication –10/28/2026, 11/04/2026, 11/11/2026, 11/18/2026

THE ABOVE REFERENCED DATE IS NOT A COURT APPEARANCE DATE.

It is an estimated date as to when the Final Settlement will be filed with the court.

1st insertion 10/28/26

42-45

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

In the Estate of ROSA JOAN CHAPMAN,

Deceased.

Case Number: 26BR-PR00151

Notice of Letters Testamentary, Granted (Supervised Administration)

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of

ROSA JOAN CHAPMAN,

Decedent:

On October 28, 2026, the last will of Decedent having been admitted to probate, the following individuals were appointed personal representatives of the estate of ROSA JOAN CHAPMAN, decedent by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of BARRY COUNTY, Missouri.

The names and business addresses of the personal representatives are:

EDWARD JOSEPH CHAPMAN,

1092 PRIVATE ROAD 2019,

PIERCE CITY, MO 65723

CAROL LYNN MORIN,

1105 PRIVATE ROAD 2019,

PIERCE CITY, MO 65723

The personal representatives' attorney's name, business address and phone number are:

CORDELIA F. HERRIN,

702 WEST STREET, P.O. 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:

February 6, 2026

Date of first publication: November 4, 2026

Date of second publication: November 11, 2026

Date of third publication: November 18, 2026

Date of fourth publication: November 25, 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 11/04/26

43-46

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IN THE 39TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE

In the Estate of KEITH SANVERN BRISCO,

Deceased.

Case Number: 26BR-PR00137

NOTICE OF LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION GRANTED (SUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION – NON-RESIDENT FIDUCIARY)

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of KEITH SANVERN BRISCO,

Decedent:

On OCTOBER 30, 2026, the following individual was appointed the personal representative of the

estate of KEITH SANVERN BRISCO, decedent, by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri.

The personal representative's name and business address is:

JENISE E. CASKEY, 245 LAFAYETTE CR 205 , BRADLEY, AR 71826

The personal representative's attorney's name, business address, and phone number is:

DONALD LYNN CUPPS, ELLIS CUPPS AND HERRIN 702 WEST STREET PO BOX 276,

CASSVILLE, MO 65625, (417) 847-2734

The non-resident personal representative's designated agent's name, business address, and phone

number is:

DONALD LYNN CUPPS, ELLIS CUPPS AND HERRIN 702 WEST STREET 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: JULY 12, 2026

Date of first publication: NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Date of second publication:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6B

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4B

NOVEMBER 18, 2026
Date of third publication: NOVEMBER 25, 2026
Date of fourth publication: DECEMBER 2, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
Clerk Signature
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 11/11/26
44-47

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IN THE 39TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE

In the Estate of DIANE FRANCES MCCARTHY,
Deceased.
Case Number: 26BR-PR00107

NOTICE OF LETTERS TESTAMENTARY GRANTED (INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION – NON-RESIDENT FIDUCIARY)

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of DIANE FRANCES MCCARTHY, Decedent:
On AUGUST 24, 2026, the last will of Decedent having been admitted to probate, the following
individual was appointed the personal representative of the estate of DIANE FRANCES MCCARTHY,
decedent, by the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri. The personal
representative may administer the estate independently without adjudication, order, or direction of the
Probate Division of the Circuit Court, unless a petition for supervised administration is made to and
granted by the court.
The name and business address is:
KIMBERLY SOTO, 35801 LINDEN LANE , WILMINGTON, IL 60481
The personal representative's attorney's name, business address and phone number is:
JENNA REED FOGLEMAN, 224 S 2ND ST, ROGERS, AR 72756, 479-621-0006
The non-resident personal representative's designated agent's name, business address, and phone
number is:
ATHENA THACKER, 310 E 5TH STREET PO BOX 412 , PINEVILLE, MO 64856, 479-621-0006
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: FEBRUARY 26, 2026
Date of first publication: NOVEMBER 11, 2026
Date of second publication: NOVEMBER 18, 2026
Date of third publication: NOVEMBER 25, 2026
Date of fourth publication: DECEMBER 2, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
Clerk Signature
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 11/11/26
44-47

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE DIVISION AT CASSVILLE

In the Estate of
MARY LEE SHORTELL,
Estate Number: 26BR-PR00051
Deceased

NOTICE OF FILING OF FINAL SETTLEMENT AND PETITION FOR DISTRIBUTION

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF MARY LEE SHORTELL, 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 estate of the decedent and of the extent and character of their interest therein and for distribution of such property, on or about December 17, 2026 or as may be continued by the Court, and that any objections or exceptions to 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.
/s/ Donald L. Cupps /s/ Barbara White
DONALD L. CUPPS, Attorney BARBARA WHITE
Ellis, Cupps, Herrin & Schwartz Personal Representative
P. O. Box 276
Cassville, MO 65625
(417)847-2734
Dates of Publication – 11/11/2026, 11/18/2026, 11/25/2026, 12/2/2026
1st insertion 11/11/26
44-47

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI PROBATE DIVISION AT CASSVILLE

In the Estate of:
CHARLES WALTER PRESLEY JR,
Deceased
26BR-PR00156

NOTICE OF HEARING

To all persons who claim any interest in the property
CHARLES WALTER PRESLEY, JR.,
deceased, as an heir of said decedent or through any heir of said decedent:
You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in the above court by Patricia
Ormsby, for the determination of the heirs of Charles Walter Presley, Jr., deceased, and of their respective interest as such heirs in and with respect to the following described personal property located in Barry County, Missouri, that the decedent owned at the time of his death:
$23,409.85 in a PEERS Retirement Account
Petitioner's attorney is Harry D. Schwartz,
whose business address is 702 West Street,
P.O. Box 276, Cassville, Missouri 65625.
You are hereby required to appear to answer said petition on December 18th 2026, at
8:45 o'clock a.m. in the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri,
at Cassville, at which time and place said petition will be heard. Should you fail therein,
judgment may be entered in due course upon said petition.

Cassville Democrat Publication Dates:
First Publication: November 18, 2026
Second Publication: November 25, 2026
Third Publication: December 2, 2026
Fourth Publication: December 9, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
1st insertion 11/1/26
45-48

Trustee's Sales

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

Default having been made in the payment of the note described in a certain Deed of Trust made on January 20, 2025 by Grantor,
TERRY A SUMPTER,
an unmarried individual, also known as TERRY SUMPTER, as recorded on January 22, 2025 at 12:35:43 p.m. in Book 25, Page 321, Instrument No. 202500332 in the records of the Barry County, Missouri Recorder and describing the following real property:
Lot 6, Spring Creek, a subdivision in Barry County, Missouri. Subject to all easements, restrictions and reservations, if any, now of record.
Lay Address: 21102 Farm Road 1252, Shell Knob, Missouri 65747
at the request of the legal holder of the note who has elected to declare the entire indebtedness due and payable, and in accordance with the provisions of the Deed of Trust, the undersigned Trustee will on the 1st day of December, 2026, to-wit: at 10:00 a.m., sell the property at public venue to the highest bidder for cash at Barry County, Missouri Courthouse, 700 Main Street, Cassville, MO 65625, to satisfy the note and costs.
ANGELA HARNESS, Trustee
Publication: Cassville Democrat
First publication date: November 4, 2026
Last publication date: November 25, 2026
1st insertion 11/4/26
43-46

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NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

For default in the payment of debt secured by a deed of trust executed by
Charles J. Hamann,
dated May 30, 2025, and recorded on June 2, 2025, Document No. 202502825, in Book No. 25, at Page 2757 in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Barry County, Missouri, the undersigned Successor Trustee will on December 7, 2026, at 10:00 AM, at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, Cassville, Missouri, sell at public vendue to the highest bidder for cash:
Lot numbered Nineteen (19) in Crystal View Addition to the City of Cassville, Barry County, Missouri, as per the recorded plat thereof, commonly known as 101 N Spring St, Cassville, MO, 65625
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: November 11, 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. 258072-1087558).
1st insertion 11/11/26
44-47

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NOTICE OF SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE'S SALE

In re: John Bowman and Sandra Bowman,
husband and wife
Default having been made in the payment of certain monthly installments on a Note described in and secured by Deed of Trust executed by John Bowman and Sandra Bowman, husband and wife, dated August 15, 1996, and recorded August 19, 1996, in Book 96, Page 5444, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for the County of Barry, State of Missouri; the undersigned Successor Trustee, at the request of the legal holder of said Note, who has elected to declare the entire indebtedness due and payable, will on December 10, 2026, at 1:30 P.M., at the at the East front door of the Barry County Courthouse, in the city of Cassville, 700 Main St, Cassville, MO 65625 sell at public vendue to the highest bidder for cash, the following real estate described in said Deed of Trust and situated in the County of Barry, State of Missouri, to wit;
BEGINNING AT A POINT 7.5 FEET SOUTH AND 27.0 FEET WEST OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 11, TOWNSHIP 25 NORTH, RANGE 25 WEST, THENCE NORTH 250.0 FEET, THENCE WEST 200.0 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 250.0 FEET THENCE EAST 200.0 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, BARRY COUNTY MISSOURI.
Together with all improvements thereon known and numbered as Rt. 2, Box 240A, Crane, Missouri 65633 for the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness, the costs of executing this trust, and the present taxes, if any, due and paid by the holder.
singers corp,
Successor Trustee
Michael P. Gaughan
12701 W. 87th Street Parkway, Suite 200
Lenexa, KS 66215
Email: saleinfo@lewisricekc.com
SINGERS CORP, AS SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE, IS ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
1st insertion 11/18/26
45-48



Cassville's Kami Stough keeps a ball in play during a wi over Aurora this season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville's Reagan Truman sets a ball for a spike during a win over Aurora this season. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Volleyball: Taylor Kennedy tops 1,400 career assists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Taylor Kennedy, Kami Stough and Keely Bailey.
Audrey Kennedy made an immediate impact as a freshman on the outside and developed into a six-rotation player. She finished her career with 753 kills, 1,135 digs and 100 aces, while recording 1,579 serve-receive receptions.
Taylor Kennedy took over setting duties partway through her freshman season and led the Lady Wildcats' offense throughout the remainder of her career. She totaled 1,403 assists, 882 digs, 118 blocks and 108 aces.
Stough began in a defensive specialist role before embracing the libero position as a senior. She finished with 947 digs, 1,244 receptions and 77 aces.
Bailey dealt with injuries throughout her career but finished strong as a senior. Huddleston said her statistical contributions did not fully reflect the enthusiasm she brought to the team.
Huddleston said the returning players will have positional openings to fill, but she is encouraged by the development of the younger classes. She credited the growing middle school program with helping incoming high school players arrive with stronger fundamentals, allowing coaches to advance their skills more quickly.
The freshman class also brings height that could help the Lady Wildcats next season.
Huddleston said the program met its broader goal of getting better, with individual players and the team improving in multiple areas. Competition within the gym also continued to increase, pushing players to work harder for playing time.
Looking ahead, Huddleston hopes the Lady Wildcats make significant offensive progress during the offseason.
"I'd like to see us make some big leaps offensively in the off season so we can have a more offensive presence next year," Huddleston said. "We are consistent defensively but we need to maximize second opportunities and learn how to score effectively."

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Cassville's Kamden Beebe tries to avoid a pair of tacklers in the Wildcats' district championship win over Seneca on Friday. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Cassville's Easton Hughes looks for a hole to cut upfield in the Wildcats' district championship win over Seneca on Friday. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Championship: Tickets for next game must be purchased online from MSHSAA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

The defense continued to hold Seneca in check. Hughes intercepted a pass in the third quarter and returned it to the red zone, giving Cassville another scoring opportunity. After the Wildcats moved inside the 10, Dade Zajac converted a 21-yard field goal to make it 24-6 with 9:24 remaining.

Cassville's defense came up with another takeaway on Seneca's next possession when Bredeson intercepted a tipped pass, setting the Wildcats up at the Indians' 43.

The offense worked its way into scoring position behind Beebe and Hughes, and Bryan helped convert a fourth down to keep the drive alive. With 1:31 remaining, Stearns found Bryan open for a 15-yard touchdown reception, putting the finishing touches on the 30-6 win.

Hughes said the Wildcats emphasized staying disciplined and maintaining their energy throughout the game, particularly when a drive or individual play did not go as planned.

"Just stay up on our feet, keep our heads up, keep the energy, don't get down on ourselves," he said. "One bad play goes on, move to the next. There's plenty of plays left to make."

The senior also credited the defensive preparation, saying the team focused on tackling fundamentals and playing with proper pad level.

"We were grinding all week, making sure we stayed low, changing our pad levels, getting through, making tackles and wrapping up," he said.

Cassville Coach Clay Weldy praised the defensive effort, crediting Defensive Coordinator Justin Pflug and the staff for preparing a unit that has played well down the stretch.

"Coach Pflug has done an unbelievable job for the defense this year, and our defensive staff," Weldy said. "We've been playing really well the last two weeks of the season. To hold [Seneca] at 6 points and create some turnovers, it's such a great effort by our kids. I thought our kids played unbelievable. I'm very, very proud of them."

Weldy said the Wildcats entered the rematch with confidence after their earlier close win, but also recognized the improvement both teams had made since their first meeting.

"We gained some confidence with that win [earlier this season]," he said. "We were both better teams than we were in Week 3, but I felt like we took a big jump later in the year. I thought if we got a lead on them, we could probably play better. We played four quarters tonight, so I'm very, very proud of our kids' play."



Cassville's Kellen Weldy reaches for extra yards after being tripped up in the Wildcats' district championship win over Seneca on Friday. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Weldy also pointed to the Wildcats' ability to create explosive plays while preventing Seneca from doing the same. In the first meeting, Seneca had several big receptions that helped produce scores. This time, Cassville limited those opportunities while making several momentum-changing plays of its own.

"In these kinds of games where it's kind of a grinder, you've got to hit some big plays, and we did," Weldy said. "Then, we were able to help keep them from big plays."

For Weldy, the district championship marked another milestone in a season that included an unusual October schedule, multiple disruptions and a five-week stretch between home games. He said the Wildcats have responded well since returning to a more familiar routine.

"I'm very proud of our kids," he said. "We've had two really tough games with them this year, and I figured if we were going to win it, we had to go through them. I'm proud we were able to do it."

Hughes said winning the championship was a goal he had set since deciding to move to Cassville as a middle-school student.

Hughes said in sixth grade, he sat down with his parents and asked to move in with his grandparents to attend Cassville. Though his father, Joshua Hughes, is the longtime baseball coach at Purdy, here his brothers played, Easton Hughes said the opportunity to play football for the Wildcats was a major reason for the decision.

When asked if in sixth grade he thought he's be a district champion in his senior year, there was no hesitation in his answer.

"Yes," he said. "I knew since Mighty Mites our group of boys were something special."

The Wildcats now turn their attention to the state quarterfinals, hosting Mountain Grove on Saturday at 1 p.m. All tickets must be purchased digitally from MSHSAA at https://tinyurl.com/3ebyzs6r. If anyone needs assistance with the process, the high school can help from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. People must pay with a credit or debit card; no cash will be accepted.

The winner will hit the road to face St. Pius X (Kansas City) or Pembroke Hill in the Class 3 semifinals on Nov. 28.

Hughes said the team's approach will remain the same as it has throughout the season.

"If we keep grinding it out, playing as a team and playing as brothers, we're going to get it done," he said.

On Friday, Stearns went 2-for-3 through the air for 48 yards and two touchdowns, adding 13 yards on 4 carries on the ground. Hughes led rushers with 111 yards on 18 carries. Beebe added 38 yards on 9 touches.

Bredeson and Bryan had the two catches, for 33 and 15 yards, respectively, and both for touchdowns.

Defensively, Hughes, Hodge, Farris and Ricky Norris led the way with 5 tackles each. Bryan had 6 tackles assists, and Bredeson and Spencer Drollinger added 5 each. Hughes, Hodge, Bredeson and Farris each pulled in an interception. Hodge also had 2 pass breakups, and Farris and Bredeson had 1 pass breakup apiece.

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CASSVILLE SENIOR CENTER

Weekly Menu

WEEK OF NOV. 23 - NOV. 27, 2026

MONDAY NOVEMBER 23	TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24	WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 25	THURSDAY NOVEMBER 26	FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27
Open Faced Turkey Sandwich Mashed Potatoes Broccoli & Cauliflower Corn Chocolate Cake	Greek Chicken Parmesan Roasted Potatoes Tossed Salad Garlic Stick Yellow Cake	Fish or Chicken Sandwich Sweet Potato Fries Country Veggies Roasted Veggie Medley Assorted Desserts	Closed	Closed

Salad Bar

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

BOWL $2.00

PLATE $4.00

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SERVING HOURS: 11:00 AM — 12:30 PM

Suggested donation:
$4.00 for those 60 and over
$8.00 for those 59 and under

*On days pork is served, and alternate is available upon request