

2015 youth squirrel hunt

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Sights at the Pelahatchie A Southern Christmas parade

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PELAHATCHIE NEWS

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Pelahatchie, MS 39145

Students to perform *Peter Pan Jr.* in March

By: Katie White

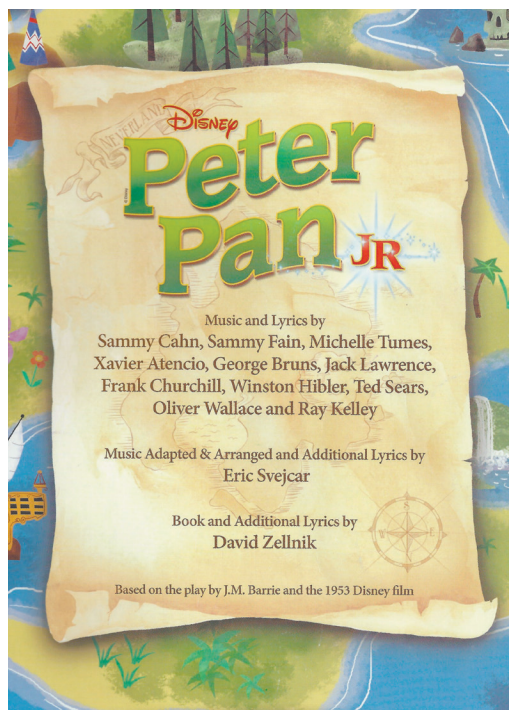
Students and faculty at Pelahatchie Attendance Center (PAC) are vigorously working on the school's next big production, *Peter Pan Jr.* This is PAC's fifth year to perform a musical play.

It hasn't always been easy for the Pelahatchie school to fund the musicals, but they have persevered through *Seussical the Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Willy Wonka Jr.* and *The Little Mermaid*.

"From the beginning of my tenure here, I have wanted our students to have this experience. The school district had obtained a grant to produce three musicals in 2000, but we lost our funding and some personnel after that. In 2010, I decided that it was time to revive them on our own. *Seussical the Musical* was a great success, but was just the beginning. Each year, we got bigger and better," said Vicki

Mercier, Jr. High and High School Choral Director and Elementary Music Teacher.

Mercier is not alone in her quest to successfully give the students at Pelahatchie this great opportunity to perform. Robby Scucchi, Director, volunteers his time with the students to teach them all that he can about on-stage productions and their part in bringing the plays to life for the audience.



(Cover design by Steven G. Kennedy, Kevin Johnson and Kevin Yates)

The following staff, parents and students have also found time in their busy schedules to help out with the play: Donna Bishop, Production Assistant; Tina Gibney, Choreographer; Shawn Richards, Art Director; Jennifer Harris, Parent Liaison; and Jessica Moulder, Student Director.

There are 57 students, third grade to twelfth grade, involved in the musical this year. There

are also many more students and staff working backstage.

Mercier has been a teacher for 32 years, and 16 of those years were spent at PAC. She will be retiring at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

"These students never cease to amaze me. Their talent, enthusiasm, hard work and dedication, along with the support we've had from the faculty, administration and community, have made our musicals a great success. I sincerely hope that what we've started continues for many years to come. *Peter Pan Jr.* promises to be a wonderful night of fun and magical entertainment," said Mercier.

The musical is set to be performed for a live audience on March 26 and 27, 7:00 p.m., at the PAC Auditorium. Tickets will go on sale Feb. 15 through the school office, as well as online. More information will come later on how to purchase tickets.

Resolution? There's an app for that...

By: Stephanie Goss

At the dawn of every New Year, many of us make one or more resolutions. A few that are popular are losing weight, becoming a better person, maintaining better control of finances, or some other promise of self-improvement.

Statistically, most of us have either failed or become incredibly discouraged by the end of January. According to www.statisticbrain.com, only about 8% of people are successful in keeping their resolutions. Nevertheless, most Americans burst out of the gates on Jan. 1 with at least one resolution.

Smartphone users can find a variety of apps for their different resolutions that can help keep them on track for the New Year. One website, www.healthline.com, has the twenty-two best weight loss apps from 2014 to

help resolution makers.

For example, one popular app is Calorie Counter & Diet Tracker by MyFitnessPal. This app uses the long-practiced precepts of diet and exercise to aid the operator in realizing victory with weight loss, using lists of calories as they relate to different types of food as well as giving exercise suggestions. Other apps provide meal plans and support the user in their desire to eat healthier. A couple of apps for this are the Diet Assistant-Weight Loss and Weight Watchers Mobile.

If one desires to become a better person, there are apps to aid with that, as well. One app that could help the user achieve this goal is the YouVersion Bible app. This app allows its users to make God's Holy Word a part of their everyday lives. Lumosity is an app that can assist a person in staying sharp by giving a mental workout through brain teasers.

There are also apps that can be beneficial with time management and organization. Some apps that would be advantageous in these areas are MyLifeOrganized(MLO), Evernote, and Remember the Milk.

If managing finances and better budgeting are your goals, you may want to try the Mint Bills app. Mint Bills provides reminders and shows the user where he or she stands with bill paying and account balances.

So, no matter what resolution one might make, in today's technological world, there is probably an app to increase the possibility of success. Now that the New Year has begun, make a resolution. It is possible to be within the 8% that reach victory each year. By using a search engine or one of the various apps that are downloadable to any smartphone or digital tablet, someone out there may just achieve that resolution goal. Good Luck!

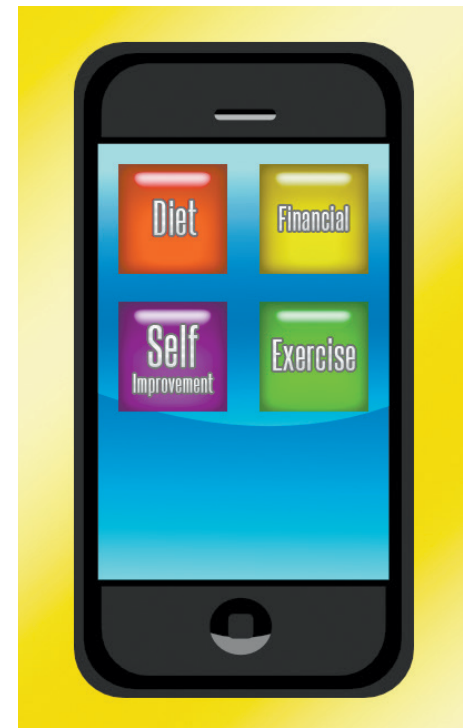


Image special to The Pelahatchie News

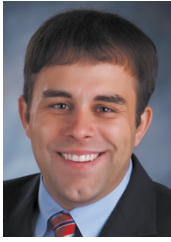


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Legislative Updates: pre-session report



By: Tom Miles, State Representative, House District #75

Pre-session report:

As we approach the start of the 2015 Legislative session on

January 6, our state coffers are full for the first time in many years. In fact, the rainy day fund is completely full, and early revenue projections show we should have over \$120 million extra in the bank. My colleagues and I are hopeful that many of the serious problems Mississippi is facing because of years of short funding can be addressed this session.

State contracts: The subject of state contracts has generated quite a bit of conversation and numerous headlines over the past few weeks. The Governor has appointed a task force to review the way contracts are awarded by the Department of Corrections, and some of those task force members are calling for a comprehensive review of all state agency contracts.

It has been my experience that government operates best when the cold light of day shines on its operations. Things go wrong most often when they are kept out of the realm of pub-

lic view. Apparently, that has been the case with the way some government officials have handled awarding important and necessary contracts. I am in favor of opening up the contracting process so that we can be assured that the taxpayers' investment goes to the best possible vendor.

State Book: It occurred to me recently that with all of the various things that have been designated as state icons – from mocking birds to magnolias – we have not named a book. In my mind, there is only one book that will do – the Holy Bible.

I will be introducing legislation to designate the Holy Bible as the state book during the 2015 session. No matter what a person's religion is, this book outlines the way in which we are to live as a civilization -- principles that have formed the bases of democracies worldwide, and principles that guide us in how we are to treat each other, no matter our race, color or creed.

With all of the upheaval in the world and nation today, I believe Mississippi would be well-served to show that we recognize the Holy Bible as the book most worthy to be recognized as a state symbol. And, that it should be a constant reminder of how we should

strive to live our lives together.

Highways and bridges: It is no secret that roads and bridges need repair in many of the rural areas of our state. Some have estimated that as many as half of our bridges are dangerous to the public; a number have already been closed; and still others are threatening to collapse. The issue of dangerous bridges has been a perennial topic at the State Capitol – since at least 1999; yet, there has been little effort made to insure the full funding of repairs and maintenance.

For those of us who have to travel many miles to and from work, school, church and community activities on state-aid roads and bridges, this is a very important issue. This is a problem that will not get any better without deliberate funding, and will only get worse – putting our citizens' lives and livelihoods in danger. As a member of the House Transportation Committee, I can assure you that I will be working hard to help get the proper funding in place to repair and maintain our state roads and bridges.

Another plus for this effort is the creation of new and sustainable jobs in our rural areas by repairing and maintaining our road system. Working on the road is an honorable service. As I

reported last year, it is said that for every ten miles of road repair, 200 new jobs are created. Providing funding for road and bridge repair and maintenance is a win-win situation for us.

Supporting education: Anyone who has turned on the television or read a newspaper recently knows that education is once again on the front burner for 2015. The failure of the Legislature to make sure every school district serving K-12 has adequate funding has cost our schools \$1.5 billion. Consequently, our local property taxes have gone up. Local people have lost their jobs at the schools.

In addition to the needs of our K-12 public schools, our community colleges and universities have not received the funds necessary to do their jobs without imposing raised tuition on parents and students. We have to continue to invest in education at all levels to make sure they have the funding they need to get the job done of educating our future, our children. The best way to prevent poverty in the future is to make sure every child has a good quality education and a good job. We need to make sure all of our children can graduate high school and make sure they are college ready. Our

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Pelahatchie, MS 39145

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Clay Mansell

Publisher
601-397-4442
claymansell@pelahatchienews.com

Katie White

Managing Editor
601-566-1932 x5
katie@pelahatchienews.com

Photography

Rachael Boyer

Staff Writers

Stephanie Goss
Kristen J. Rials

Sales

601-566-1932 x5

For submission information, email
katie@pelahatchienews.com

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Pelahatchie student council donates toys



Pelahatchie eighth-grade student council sponsored a "Toy Drive" for children at Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital located at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. Faculty and students at Pelahatchie High School donated the toys. (Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*)

American Heart Assoc. urges a focus on health as New Year's resolution

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

2015 is the year. It is the year to make the changes that are needed to bring your body to ideal cardiovascular health. It can't wait another year, because Mississippi's number one killer is heart disease. Yet, 80 percent of cardiac events can be prevented with education and lifestyle changes.

Heart disease is often silent and misunderstood, so now is the time to declare a New Year's resolution that will help you live a longer, stronger, more heart healthy life.

The New Year is the perfect time to reflect on the past 12 months and to identify the habits you want to change. Resolutions are often set to be difficult to obtain and can quickly lose steam and momentum. But resolutions don't have to feel and be hard to keep. Small

changes are often more effective. One key is to begin with an assessment of your overall health.

"I encourage individuals to visit with their physician and learn their numbers, including blood pressure, cholesterol and weight to better understand their overall health," said Dr. Timothy Quinn of Quinn Healthcare. "Individuals can also go online and learn their heart health score at www.heart.org/MyLifeCheck. This free test takes about 10 minutes to complete and will give you an action plan on how to improve your score. Then take the test again in December 2015 and see how you've done."

"The American Heart Association's My Life Check assessment will empower you with tangible information that you can use to set realistic goals throughout the year," Quinn added.

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- 10:00 - Bible Study for all ages
- 11:00 - Blended Worship Service
- 5:00 - Cross Clubs for Children & Students
- 6:00 - Evening Worship

Wednesday Schedule

- 6:00 Family Dinner
- 7:00 - Children's Mission Activities • Student Worship
- Ladies Bible Study • Couples Support Group
- Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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2015 youth squirrel hunt

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is partnering with the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, Mississippi State University Extension Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to host seven youth squirrel hunts throughout Mississippi on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015.

The hunt location closest to those in Rankin County is the Caney Creek WMA location. Caney Creek is located in Smith and Scott Counties near Forest. Other hunt locations include: Canal Section WMA, Copiah County WMA, Howard Miller WMA, O'Keefe WMA, Pascagoula River WMA and Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.

These hunts were developed to introduce youth to small game hunting and conservation. The hunts are provided at no cost to participants.

During the one-day hunts, youth participants will be exposed to principles of hunting and firearms safety, squirrel hunting with dogs and the daily life of squirrels and their habitats. Best of all, youth participants will have the opportunity to participate in a squirrel hunt.



Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*

To apply for a youth squirrel hunt, complete the application at <http://mswildlife.org/events/2013-youth-squirrel-hunt> by Jan. 23, 2015. All applicants must be 10 - 15 years of age.

Each hunt location is limited to 20 youth participants. Applicants will be notified by email regarding space availability for each location. A parent or legal adult guardian is required to accompany youth participants. Guns and ammunition will be provided. Completion of a hunter education course by youth participants is not required.

For more information about the 2015 Youth Participation Initiative Squirrel Hunt, contact Melanie Starnes at (601) 605-1790 or mstarnes@mswf.org.

continued from page 2

Legislative Issues: pre-session report

Community Colleges, are one of the best values for all of our children to get prepared for the future, whether it's a skill job or preparing to enter a University. We as lawmakers and community leaders should support all of our schools systems as much as possible.

State workers' pay: In addition to making sure we fulfill our promise to continue the teacher pay increases, a number of us will be working to help bring our public employees' salaries in line with the private sector. I will say it again: Every person who works for us deserves the dignity of being paid enough to provide for their families.

We made some headway for teachers and state workers last year, but there is still work to be done. Many State employees still haven't had raises in over 9 years, and we will be working to help get them one this session.

Pension protection: Speaking of promises, our state employees have been promised the benefit of a state employee retirement system with certain protections and reliable outcomes.

I believe we should honor those promises, and I will continue to stand strong against any kind of assault on PERS.

Cooperation works: Those of us who have the honor of representing Mississippians should work together for the betterment of our state. When people are reasonable and cooperative with one another, good things happen. As I've said before, the most good is accomplished when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.

I was honored to have been named the most "successful" freshman legislator last year of the term because so many of the issues I fought for were embraced and passed by the Legislature. I was just glad to see good done for the people. Good leadership means being willing to work with others and putting the good of the people over politics.

I'll be sending more updates to keep you informed, and, as always, welcome your input. Please feel free to contact me at tmiles@house.ms.gov, call me at 601-469-7886, via Facebook at Representative Tom Miles.



East Rankin Academy
Sports Calendar
www.eastrankinacademy.org

High School & Junior High Basketball

January 6	Copiah	JH HS	Home	4:00
January 9	Oak Forest	JH HS	Away	4:00
January 10	Simpson	7th JH HS	Home	11:00
January 13	Presbyterian Christian	JH HS	Home	4:00
January 16	Columbia	JH HS	Home	4:00
January 20	Lamar	JH HS	Home	4:00
January 22	Copiah	JH HS	Away	4:00
January 24	Parklane	7th JH HS	Home	12:00
January 26	Lamar	7th JH	Away	4:00
January 27	Jackson Prep	JH HS	Away	4:00
January 29	Oak Forest	JH HS	Home	4:00
January 31	Jackson Academy	HS	Home	2:00
February 3	Lamar	HS	Home	6:00

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Drivers admit to using their phone when behind the wheel

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Though a large majority of drivers support laws prohibiting cellphone use while driving, one thing is apparent: people are still using them. State Farm, a leader in auto safety, surveyed consumers about when they were more or less likely to use their phones when driving. Among drivers who indicated they use their cellphone while driving, this is what they learned:

Percentage of drivers who say they are more likely to use their cellphone when:

- Stopped at a red light – 63 percent
- On an open highway – 30 percent

Percentage of drivers who say they're less likely to use their cellphone under these conditions:

- Dark outside – 75 percent
- Fog – 91 percent
- Snow – 92 percent
- Icy – 93 percent
- Heavy traffic – 78 percent
- Construction zone – 87 percent
- Rain – 88 percent
- School zone – 83 percent

One particularly troubling finding: at least ten percent of respondents reported that driving in school zones and construction zones has no impact on their cellphone use.

"It's interesting to see that many drivers report assessing driving conditions when they make choices regarding using their cellphones," said Chris Mullen, Director of Technology Research at State Farm. "However, we want to remind people that there are demands on their attention when driving whether moving or not, and to please stay 100% focused on their drive."

For six years, State Farm has been conducting this survey of people's attitudes and behaviors when it comes to cellphone use while driving, and trends have emerged.

- There has been a steady reduction in the number of drivers talking on a hand-held cell phone.
- The number of people who report texting while driving has remained stable over six years.
- Smartphone ownership is growing. In 2011, 52 percent of drivers reported owning a smartphone, and by 2014 that number grew to 80 percent, with the greatest increases in smartphone ownership among adults age 40 and older.
- Smartphones create new distractions. There is a significant increase over six years in drivers using their phones for: accessing



Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*

the Internet, reading email, responding to email, programming and listening to a navigation system and reading social media.

- Drivers are more likely to talk on a hand-held phone than they are to text message while driving. Both of these activities are the greatest for drivers ages 18-29 and decreased as the age of drivers increased.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of drivers who say they talk on a hands-free cell-

phone while driving. This is possibly due to advances in hands-free technology and enactment of laws restricting hand-held use.

"These six-year trends make it apparent that smartphones have created many new distractions for drivers to juggle," Mullen said. "While much attention is paid to the dangers of talking and texting while driving, it's critical that we also address the increasing use of other smartphone features and other sources of distraction."

After Christmas Bazaar at Cross Roads

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Saturday, Jan. 10, all are welcome to a After-Christmas Bazaar at Cross Roads Baptist Church (CRBC) in the Fellowship Hall. The event is sponsored by the CRBC Design team.

The donated items that will be available for purchase are: Christ-

mas decorations, unwanted Christmas gifts, toys and other household items.

Donated items will be received in the church fellowship hall on Saturday, Jan. 3, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 4, 8 a.m. to 12 and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; and Monday thru Friday, Jan. 5-9, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, call (601) 546-2297.



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Pelahatchie Jr. Beta members ring the bell



On Dec. 20, the seventh- and eighth-grade Jr. Beta members rang the Salvation Army bell. Jr. Beta members have been ringing the bell for charity for the past five years. Jr. Beta and Beta members are required to earn community service hours each year they are active members. Pictured (l to r) are, Aliyah Fletcher, Amy Till, Anna Sherer and Terri Wiltcher. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Lady Chiefs named Rural Rankin champs



Pelahatchie Lady Chiefs proudly hold their championship trophy. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Friday, Dec. 5, the Pelahatchie High School Lady Chiefs basketball team defeated the Pucket Lady Wolves 66-43 to become the champions of the Rural Rankin County Tournament hosted at Pelahatchie High School.

To get to the championship game, the Lady Chiefs defeated the McLaurin Lady Tigers 42-25 in the first round

of the tournament on Thursday, Dec. 4.

Lady Chief Brittany Thompson was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament. Thompson led the team with 25 points, 12 rebounds and four blocks against Puckett and 13 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks against McLaurin.

Brittany Thompson, Janae Collier, and Jamiyah Stokes were selected to the All Tournament Team.



Pelahatchie Attendance Center Sports Calendar

www.rcsd.ms/Page/26571

2014- 2015 High School Basketball

January 6	MSD	HS	Home	6:00
January 9	McLaurin	HS	Away	6:00
January 13	Cathedral	HS	Away	6:00
January 16	St. Al	HS	Home	6:00
January 20	Pisgah	HS	Away	6:00
January 23	Bogue Chitto	HS	Away	6:00
January 27	Piney Woods	HS	Away	6:00
January 30	Cathedral	HS	Home	6:00
February 3	St. Al	HS	Away	6:00

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2014-2015 Chiefs basketball team announced



On Thursday, Dec. 4, the Pelahatchie High School Chiefs basketball team defeated McLaurin 69-44, and they defeated Pisgah 62-54 on Friday, Dec. 5. The two wins led the Chiefs to become the champions of the Rural Rankin County Tournament. The tournament game was hosted at Pelahatchie High School. The 2014-2015 Pelahatchie High School Chiefs basketball team includes: Lachaz Irvin, 1; Dyllan Taylor, 2; Jalen Hurst, 3; Keldrick Stokes, 4; Jaymon Johnson, 5; Tony Beeman, 11; Noah McCain, 12; Michael Coleman, 13; DeAndre Robins, 20; William Houston, 21; David Jennings III, 22; Zavies Lay, 23; Desmond McGee, 24; DaChawn Kincaid, 32; Woody Winters, 33; and Josh Wilson, 44. Coaches are: Rod Taylor, Head Coach; and Duncan Tucker, Assistant Coach. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT DIRECTORY

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2014-2015 Lady Chiefs basketball team announced



The 2014-2015 Pelahatchie High School Lady Chiefs basketball team includes: Aubree Beeman, 3; Kanosha Holifield, 4; Kandis King, 5; Morghan Hobson, 10; Haley Jones, 12; Janae Collier, 15; Taquila Beeman, 20; Brittany Thompson, 21; Alexis Hobson, 22; Courtney McGee, 23; Jamiyah Stokes, 24; April Ticer, 25; Tillie Mazique, 32; Talieeka Mazique, 11; Pearlene Fairley, Head Coach; Kamelia Green, Assistant Coach; Duncan Tucker, Assistant Coach; and Elisa Walker, Manager. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



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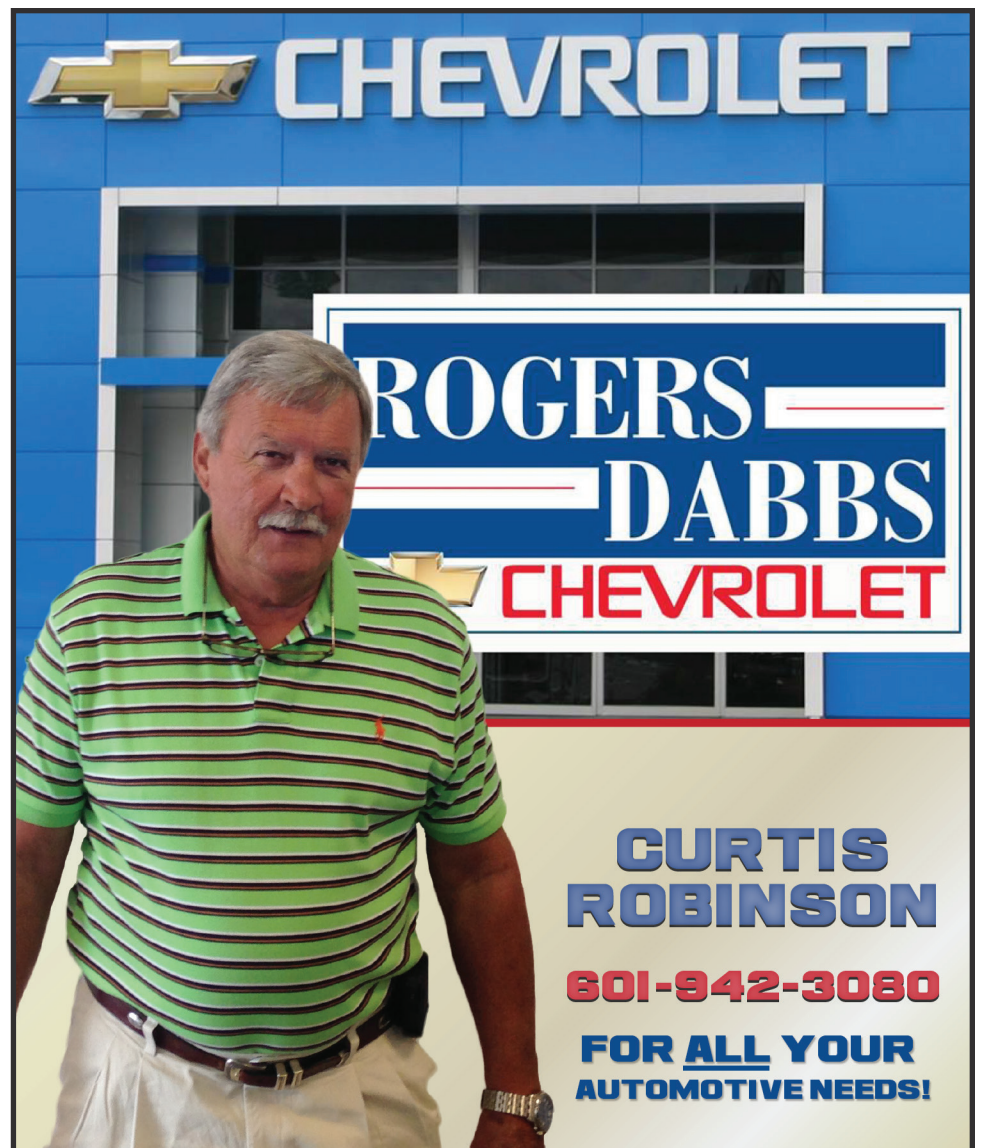
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BBB warns consumers to beware of Social Security scammers

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Better Business Bureau (BBB) serving Mississippi is advising consumers to be on the lookout for scammers pretending to represent the Social Security Administration. Con artists are contacting citizens via phone and requesting personal information, which they use subsequently to commit identity theft.

A Decatur resident received a call asking to update information for her 2015 Social Security benefits. The information the scammer requested included social security number and banking information. The caller claimed to be from the Social Security Administration and sounded very convincing and official, so the consumer complied. The next day, the resident received a call from her bank because someone claiming to be them tried to get a large sum of money from her account. Luckily, the bank employee knew their customer personally and did not comply with the request and contacted the would be victim and prevented the unauthorized transaction.

How the Scam Works: You get a call that appears to be from the Social Security Administration or an organization that is supposedly acting on

behalf of an official government agency. The caller claims that you are eligible for new benefits. The caller asks for basic information such as your name, address and telephone number. However, it will also request details about your job and health, as well as your driver's license or Social Security numbers. Unfortunately, the entire process was set up by scammers who will most likely use any information you provide to commit ID theft. The scammers will then be able to open lines of credit in your name, obtain a mortgage, medical insurance and credit cards, claim tax refunds, commit other types of fraud and potentially redirect your Social Security benefits to an account to their own account.

BBB offers suggestions on how to spot these scams and prevent becoming a victim:

Be skeptical of emails seeking information – Government agencies and financial institutions communicate through the mail, and will never ask for personal information or "updated" information via an email or by telephone. Be very cautious of any unsolicited messages or emails you receive. The government already knows you - If a legitimate government agency is contacting you about your benefits, it



Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*

should already know your basic information, such as your name, address and government ID number.

Don't fall for the bait - Don't click on links or download attachments in suspicious emails. Just delete them. If a caller asks for personal information, just hang up.

You can't trust caller ID - If you receive a suspicious call or email, take

the extra step of calling the government agency to check its legitimacy. Look for the phone number on previous legitimate correspondence or visit the official website. Don't call a number provided in the email or on your caller ID. This information can be spoofed. If an email or call is bogus, a callback number or return email address will be, too.

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Flu activity picked up in December as Mississippi approaches peak season

Special to The Pelahatchie News

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has seen an increase in influenza activity over the past several weeks with flu activity now reported throughout the state.

"While this year's flu season is in the early stages, it's picking up quickly as we approach the typical peak season in Mississippi," said MSDH State Epidemiologist Dr. Thomas Dobbs. "The flu shot takes one to two weeks to produce immunity, so it's definitely not too late to get your flu shot. Everyone should take the threat of flu very seriously and get vaccinated now."

"This year, the flu vaccine is not a perfect match for about half the flu cases nationwide," said Dr. Dobbs. "However, it is still important to get your flu shot. It can shorten the duration and severity of the flu if you get it, and it can also prevent hospitalization and death."

Nationwide, an estimated 36,000 people die, and more than 200,000 are hospitalized each year because of the flu.

Dobbs added that the predominant strain being seen in Mississippi this season is H3N2, which can cause more severe illness in older individuals and



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

young children than other strains, so protection is essential. It is also very important to practice basic personal hygiene such as covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, washing your hands frequently with soap and water, and staying home

when you're sick.

Seasonal flu vaccination is recommended for anyone ages six months and older. Those particularly at risk for influenza complications include young children, adults 50 and older, pregnant women, and those with chronic ill-

nesses.

"However, even young and otherwise healthy people can have complications and die from the flu," said Dobbs.

For adults, the different types of vaccinations available this year are as follows:

- Seasonal flu vaccination for \$30
- Flu nasal mist for \$35
- High-dose flu vaccination for those 65 and older for \$55
- Pneumococcal vaccination for \$83

The MSDH accepts Medicaid, Medicare, and the State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan (AHS). For those 18 and under, the MSDH will bill Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and all private health insurers for children's vaccines. Those who are eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program or CHIP can receive the vaccination for \$10.

The Rankin County Health Department is located at 401 Parkway Dr., Pearl, Miss. For more information on flu and pneumonia, visit the MSDH website at HealthyMS.com/flu or call (866) 459-4948. To contact the Rankin County Health Department directly, call (601) 420-4959.

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Pastor's Perspective: new year, new relationship with God



By: John Vaughn, Pastor
Cross Roads Baptist
Church

Happy New Year! December was a busy month for everyone with all the programs and activities celebrating the birth of Christ. Then there were the family gatherings, gift giving, special meals, and decorations. It all went by so fast! Now we are in 2015, and look forward to all the promise that a new year holds for us.

A lot of people make resolutions to start the year. One person found some journal entries of previous resolutions. 2011: I will get my weight down below 180 pounds. 2012: I will follow my new diet religiously until I get below 200 pounds. 2013: I will develop a realistic attitude about my weight. 2014: I will work out 3 days a week..... His resolution for 2015? I will try to drive past a gym at least once a week.

While New Year's resolutions may or may not work for you, there is a promise from God's word that you can believe and apply to your life. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20 (The Message)..."anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created

new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you."

Do you want things to go well for you in 2015? Following the suggestions in this passage will go a long way towards helping you have a successful year. It starts with getting your relationship right with the Lord through faith in His son Jesus Christ. Once you have that right relationship with God, there is nothing in your past that God will hold against you. As Paul says, you get a fresh start! After you get your relationship with God settled, then you can and should seek to make things right with others. God will help you do that. And you will both be bet-



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

ter for it. Finally, you can have a better year by sharing with others how they too can get things right with God. That is a responsibility God gives to all those who follow Him.

One last suggestion to help you have a great 2015. Resolve today to

have your family in church on Sunday! You may do that already, or you may have never done it. But remember, we're in a new year, and God can make all things new in your life! Why not start the New Year right by seeking Him.

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Upward basketball begins in January



Young Upward basketball players keeping an eye on the ball. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Jan. 10, Upward youth basketball and cheerleading begins at Cross Roads Baptist Church. Children ranging in grades K5 through the sixth grade will show-off their new basket-

ball skills.

According to their website, Upward began in 1995, and today there are approximately half a million players at 2,000 churches in 47 states. The mission of Upward is to promote the discovery of Jesus through sports.

Fourth-grade students learn how harmful tobacco products are

By: Katie White

It's never too early to talk to children about the harmful effects of long-term smoking and chewing tobacco. That is why Ben Barlow, Principal at Pelahatchie Elementary, invited Dr. Nathan Freeman to speak to fourth-grade students about the damaging use of tobacco products.

Dr. Nathan Freeman, a medical student at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), spoke to the students on behalf of the Family Medicine Department at UMMC. His goal was to teach the students about the dangers involved with using tobacco products and how it impacts health.

Dr. Freeman discussed some of the worst chemicals found in cigarettes, which include: acetone (as used in nail polish remover), ammonia (as used in cleaners), lighter fluid, battery-type acids and lead and arsenic (as used in rat poison). These are only five out of approximately 600 chemicals found in cigarettes and other tobacco products.

"You wouldn't open up lighter fluid and drink it," asked Dr. Freeman. The students answered with a resounding "no!"

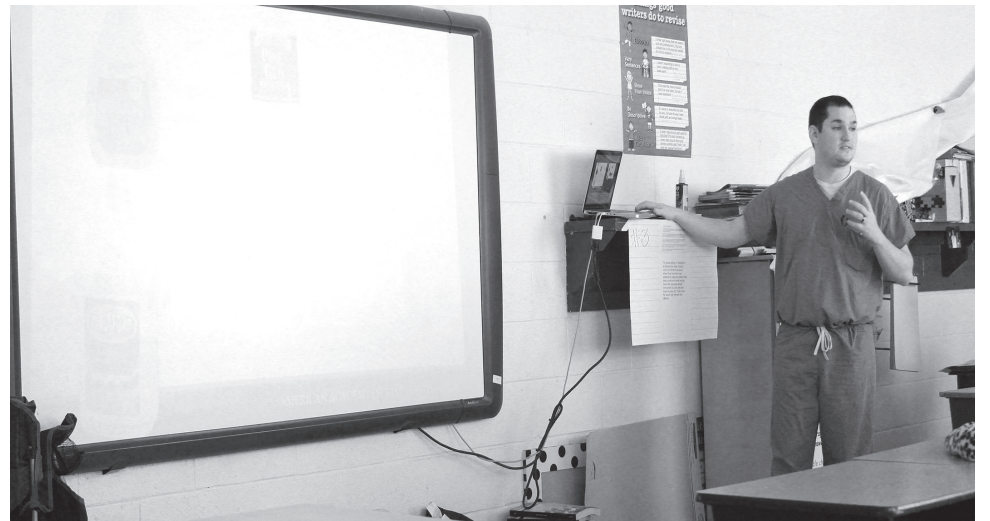
He also discussed the harmful effects of inhaling second-hand smoke from cigarettes and cigars. Dr. Free-

man pointed out that when anyone is around someone who is smoking, they also inhale all the bad chemicals. This is why laws are in place to prevent smokers from smoking in public places.

Dr. Freeman talked about how tobacco companies are clever about how they package their products. They use brightly colored packaging so that consumers notice the product instead of the warning labels, which are printed on such products by law.

When discussing the dangers of tobacco, the topic of nicotine always comes up. Dr. Freeman explained how nicotine is highly addictive. When a person becomes addicted to nicotine, their body begins to need the substance in order to enhance their mood or to keep from shaking. He also mentioned that nicotine slows down the development of the brain, stains teeth and erodes the gums, causes cancer and lung and heart problems. It can cause the arteries to harden, which causes plaque to build up, and this can result in a heart attack or stroke. It also prevents blood from flowing to the muscles properly, which causes frequent pain throughout the body.

Smoking also causes a person to age quicker. Dr. Freeman showed the students a photo of a set of twins. One



On Dec. 10, Dr. Nathan Freeman, a medical student at UMMC, spoke to fourth-grade students about the harmful effects of smoking tobacco and other harmful tobacco products. (Photo by Katie White)

twin looked her age, but the other twin had advanced wrinkles and brown spotting on her face. He also showed the students slides of mouth cancer and a healthy and unhealthy set of lungs.

Dr. Freeman explained how expensive cigarettes are. He wanted the students to understand that other necessary items could be purchased without the need to purchase cigarettes. They were surprised to learn that if a person bought one pack of cigarettes every day for a year, they would have spent approximately \$2,000.

To wrap up the discussion, Dr.

Freeman pointed out that each year in the U.S. about half a million people die, and six million world-wide die, from smoking cigarettes.

The students had many questions for Dr. Freeman regarding their own health concerns from the cigarette smoke they come in contact with from others. They were especially interested in knowing if their health would improve when they were no longer exposed to cigarette smoke. Dr. Freeman's answer was "yes," it is possible for health to improve after the exposure to cigarette smoke is removed.

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New book shares uplifting message on life

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Author Joyce Basso of Brandon, Miss., bares her thoughts and emotions for readers in her new collection of short stories, *Life Seems Simple: On The Surface*.

Life Seems Simple houses 18 short stories, each with an accompanying watercolor image that showcases a snapshot of Basso's life. The stories intertwine passages from the Bible and offer moral lessons with a touch of humor and wit.

"I want the readers to laugh and learn," Basso says. "I want them to enjoy the book so much they want to keep it to read again."

Life Seems Simple



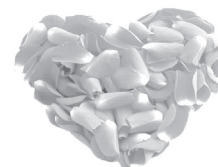
On The Surface

JOYCE BASSO

Cover of *Life Seems Simple: On The Surface*.
(Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*)

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Sights at the Pelahatchie A Southern Christmas parade



Scenes from the town of Pelahatchie's annual Christmas parade. This year's theme was A Southern Christmas. (Photos by: Katie White)

Special to The Pelahatchie News

On Dec. 6, the town of Pelahatchie hosted its annual Christmas parade. The theme this year was *A Southern Christmas*. There were many sights to see as the floats casually drove by one-by-one.

The parade consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards as the Grand Marshalls, Morton High School band and dancers, sports cars with Beauty Queens and Princes, church floats, local business floats, many tractors, the Fire Department

and last but not least, Santa Claus. The Police Department was also on hand to keep the parade moving smoothly.

Tom Miles, State Representative, and Tom McClemore, General Manager at Mississippi Baking Company, were the selected parade judges, and Mayor Knox Ross, official spokesperson for the parade, announced the winners. The winners of the 2014 Christmas parade are: Pelahatchie Baptist Church, 1st Place; Yogi on the Lake, 2nd Place; and Pelahatchie Dental Clinic, 3rd Place. Best Car float prize went to Kaleb Evans, Prince at Pelahatchie Elementary.

MSU landscape artist students display their ideas



In September 2014, Mississippi State University (MSU) students were allowed to survey Ragan St. and Muscadine Park in Pelahatchie to complete a class project and to learn about their field of study, Landscape Architecture. On Dec. 1, at the Community Center in Pelahatchie, the same MSU students returned to display their ideas and designs, showing the town of Pelahatchie all the different landscape possibilities. The plans were professionally designed and displayed on illustration boards and computer-generated models. They had a wide range of ideas for Muscadine Park: fountains, muscadine-themed sculptures, sculpture gardens and unique and modern playgrounds. For Ragan St., most of the students designed a community of housing with finely-structured landscape gardens, streets and fountains. Pictured above (left) is student Hardy Simmons, who shares his ideas, such as a multi-use recreation field, and a train station which could be used for receptions, weddings and community events. He also included a train-themed splash pad for children. Above (right) students explain their ideas to interested attendees. (Photos by Katie White)

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