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May
2023
Volume 12
Issue 5
Pelahatchie, MS

Keeton inducted at the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie resident Rex Keeton, a 1964 graduate of East Central Community College, was among fifteen inductees into the 2023 Class of the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame during ceremonies on April 25, at the Muse Center in Pearl. Keeton, who was inducted into the ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame in 2003, was an offensive and defensive lineman for the Warrior football team during the 1963 and 1964 seasons. He was considered a “60-minute” man – a person who played both offense and defense – and he excelled, as evidenced by his selection as most valuable lineman for 1964 by what was then known as the Mississippi Junior College Athletic Association. He was also named first

team All-State and was selected as a team captain by his ECJC teammates. In addition, he served as vice president of the student body association and was a class favorite. Keeton continued his athletic career at Delta State University, where he was two-year starter as an offensive and defensive lineman. He received the sportsmanship award and was president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. A Morton native, he prepped at Morton High School (MHS), where he received All-Little Dixie Conference honors. He was also a member of the baseball team and selected Mr. MHS. Keeton received his bachelor’s degree in health and physical education at Delta State University and began a career in education that spanned thirty-five years.



Rex Keeton

Special to Pelahatchie News

His career began at Greenwood High School in 1968 as an assistant football coach and head baseball coach. He also had stints as a coach and/or teacher at Morton, Durant, Rosa Scott, Stringer and Bay Springs high schools, before serving five years as principal at Taylorsville High School. He was in private business for four years before returning to the field of education as a teacher at Choctaw Central, where he retired in 2011. Keeton, of the Crossroads Community, was also inducted into the Scott County Sports Hall of Fame at their ceremony on July 24, 2021. Keeton and his wife, Kaye, have four grown children, Kim, Richelle, Ryan and Chase, and eleven grandchildren.

East Rankin Academy students names STAR Students

Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy (ERA) students Dylan Davis and Max Gainey were named as Mississippi Economic Council STAR Students. Dylan Davis is the son of Shannon and Heather Davis. He is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (mathematics honor society) and ERA’s ACT 30 or Above Team. Davis serves as captain of ERA’s Academic Quiz Bowl Team and Science Bowl Team. He has been named a National Merit Finalist and scored 36 on the ACT. Davis will major in chemical engineering at the University of Alabama. His future career plans include attending medical school to become an orthopedic surgeon. Davis chose Mrs. Amy Mood as his STAR Teacher.

Max Gainey is the son of Kevin and Connie Gainey. Gainey is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (mathematics honor society), and ERA’s ACT 30 or Above Team. He is also a member of ERA’s Academic Quiz Bowl Team and Science Bowl Team. Gainey has been named a National Merit Finalist and scored 36 on the ACT. He plans to attend the University of Alabama and major in mechanical engineering as he



Dylan Davis, ERA senior and Max Gainey, ERA senior

Photos special to Pelahatchie News

pursues a career in biomechanical prosthetics design. Gainey chose Mrs. Rachel Stroth as his STAR Teacher.

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Career Technical Education is worth your attention



Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist
Voncille Anderson, Principal,
Pelahatchie High School

Pelahatchie High School is proud to offer opportunities for students to gain experiences that will prepare them for the workforce. Our Career Technical Education (CTE) Programs expose students to job-related skills in technology, business, and industry while also preparing them for college. PHS offers the following programs:

- Health Science Academy
- Engineering Academy
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Resource Management
- Computer Sciences
- Agricultural and Natural Resources

These areas expose students to job-related skills, real-world scenarios, job shadowing experiences, and field trips to help them explore life beyond high school.

This year, because of CTE, our seniors experienced a Reality Fair. During this time, members from business and in-

dustry conducted a real-world scenario for our students. They were provided a career with a salary, monthly expenditures based on their appointed lifestyle, and emergency expenses. Students were expected to budget their money and determine how much they would have left over for savings. This experience demonstrated to our students the importance of choosing the right career for the type of lifestyle they wish to live.

The Resource Management class at PHS, another CTE course, took top prize in the fall 2022 Mississippi Stock Market Game. This competition, hosted by the Mississippi Council for Economic Education (MCEE), is an innovative virtual program implemented by teachers across the state in their classrooms. The simulation is an effective learning tool about the free enterprise system for students in grades four through twelve. The program enables teams to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in the stock market over a thirteen-week period. Winners are determined on the percentage



Special to Pelahatchie News

return above or below S&P 500 growth.

Mrs. Mandy Herrington coached her students to Region 3 recognition in several areas. They were named Region 3 first place and second place winners. The 1st place team consisted of Mac-ey Bowman, Brayden Greene, Jabari Hodges, and Savannah Whiddon. The second place team consisted of Maggi Gilliam, Zion Jennings, and J.J. Hen-

son. The MCEE will recognize the first and second place teams during a Stock Market Game awards ceremony on May 10 at Jackson State University. We are so proud of our students and Mrs. Herrington for achieving these top honors.

Finally, as we near the end of year one of the Engineering Academy, we reflect on the progress Mrs. Nikki Nutt and her students have made. The Engineering I course challenged our students to brainstorm, problem-solve, collaborate, think critically, and create projects throughout the year. They have explored types of engineers, constructed bridges, created 3D models, developed a prosthetic hand and built a robot. The Engineering I group will end the year with a visit to Raytheon Intelligence and Space in Forest.

If your child is interested in designing, building, problem-solving or creating, please have them consider opportunities in our CTE programs. Feel free to contact the school for more information.

Have a wonderful summer! We look forward to seeing you in August! Go Chiefs!



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Hinds CC awards top literary prizes

Special to Pelahatchie News

Three Rankin County high school students won full tuition scholarships for a year to Hinds Community College after placing first place in the annual Literary Festival on the Rankin Campus.

Winning the scholarships were Hannah Robinson of Brandon High School, Dylan Davis of East Rankin Academy and Maddie Hall of Northwest Rankin High School.

Contest winners include:

Poetry

- **First Place** - "Blue Magic," Hannah Robinson, Brandon High School
- **Second Place** - "As Rose Petals Fall," Piper McGraw, Northwest Rankin High School
- **Third Place** - "Future," Shriya Rajan, Northwest Rankin High School
- **Honorable Mentions** - "When do we Wake?," Ellen Burnham, Hartfield Academy; "Mindset," Nia Jones, Hartfield Academy; "Feel of the Bump," Michael Andrew Newman, Hartfield Academy

Essay

- **First Place** - "The Necessity of Practical Classes in School," Dylan Davis, East Rankin Academy
- **Second Place** - "Three Cornerstone Classes," Anna Grace Corcoran, Brandon High School



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Pictured (l to r) are: Hinds employees Carmen Abston and Betsy Martin; first place essay winner Dylan Davis of East Rankin Academy; first place poetry winner Hannah Robinson of Brandon High School; first place short story winner Maddie Hall of Northwest Rankin High School and Hinds employees Larry Martin, Vice President Dr. Thomas Ware, Academic Dean Gary M. Fox.

- **Third Place** - "Three Courses that Should be Included in Schools," Alysia Hill, Pisgah High School
- **Honorable Mentions** - "Three Subjects That Should Be Taught in Schools," Jonas Vining, East Rankin Academy; "Lessons That Last a Lifetime," Lindsey Watkins, East Rankin Academy

Short Story

- **First Place** - "Cicada's Love Song,"

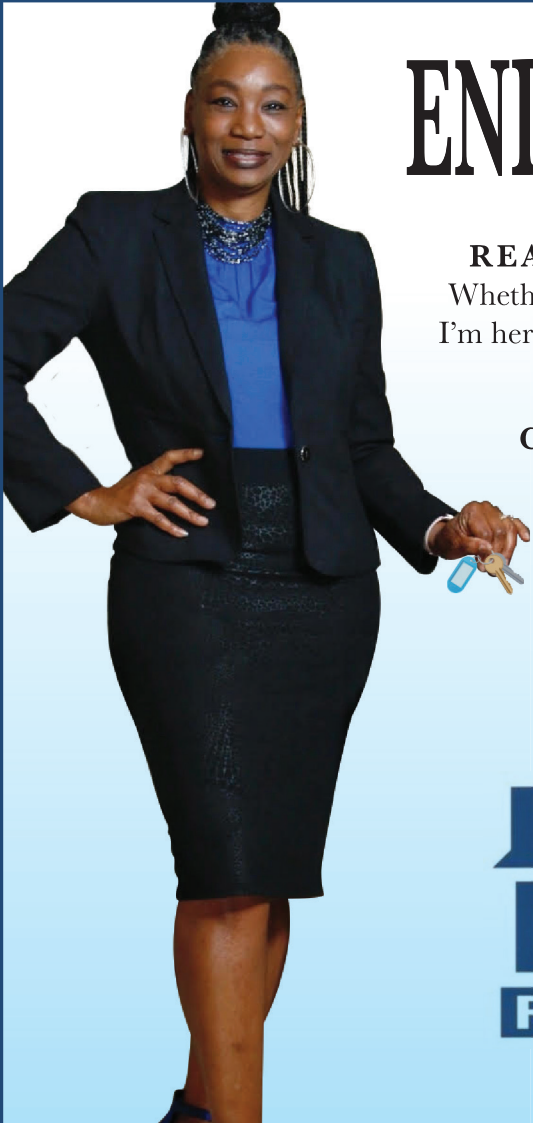
Maddie Hall, Northwest Rankin High School

- **Second Place** - "Just Another Walk," Jacob Smith, Northwest Rankin High School
- **Third Place** - "Mascara," Nora Rayne Edwards, Richland High School
- **Honorable Mentions** - "My Best Friend," John Luke Johnston, East Rankin Academy; "Brother Against Brother," Dylan Wesson, East Rankin Academy



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Mississippi insurance brokers can now sell pet insurance



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Pet health insurance may seem like a joke to some, but it is big business. As of 2020, there were 3.1 million pets insured, which amounts to billions of dollars in premiums - and that big business is coming to Mississippi. With Senate Bill 2228 signed into law this legislative session, Mississippi becomes the second state, after Maine, to adopt a law that will create "a comprehensive legal framework within which pet insurance may be sold" in Mississippi. The bill would amend Mississippi law and would allow health and life insurance agents to sell pet insurance, not just brokers licensed to sell property and casualty insurance.

According to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the pet insurance industry had an increase in annual premiums of over thirty percent from 2020 to 2021, totaling about \$2.8 billion.

Pet insurance, like human health insurance, includes exclusions, various levels of coverage, deductibles and payment limits. Some carriers have different levels of coverage for the customer to choose from, while other carriers have one-size-fits-all type plans. Most pet insurance companies exclude pre-existing conditions and hereditary or congenital conditions. Some insurance companies will not accept pets after a certain age, and

many companies have waiting periods before benefits begin.

Insurance policies are usually broken down by the type of pet being insured. Some companies allow the owner to choose their veterinarian. The actual monthly cost of the policy will depend on many variables, including the species of animal, breed, gender, age, location, and the coverages and deductible chosen. Most policies pay on a reimbursement basis and are not transferable to other pets, but, with written approval and consent, some policies can be transferred to new owners.

Pet health insurance policies mostly cover issues such as cancer and broken bones, and some injuries may have a one-year waiting period. According to findings by Consumer Reports, in 2020, the average accident and illness premiums cost \$594 a year for a dog and \$342 for a cat. Medical treatment for dogs typically costs more than for cats.

The legislation does not apply to life insurance for pets.

Mississippi's Insurance Commissioner will be given the authority to regulate the industry.

The new law takes effect July 1, 2023. Those desiring more information about pet insurance are encouraged to call their local insurance agent or contact the Insurance Commissioner's office at 601-359-3569.

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ERCO works with Hope Rising: Help when it's needed

By Katie White

On April 22, The Ever Reaching Community Outreach (ERCO) held their annual Love Out Loud event at Yogi Bear on the Lake. The event is meant to bring people together and to ensure that hope and helping others is on the forefront of the community's minds. One of the many programs that ERCO works with is Hope Rising Mississippi.

Tammy Brun, Founding Member and Director of ERCO, elaborated on what Hope Rising Mississippi is, "When the programs of Hope are referenced, the "H" is for housing and transportation, "O" is for opportunities for treatment, "P" is for the parent, child and familial support (in which Brun is a co-chair) and the "E" is for economic security. The program finds family support and resources all over the state."

"Right now, the committee is working on a handbook that we give the parents of children who have been involved with the judicial court so that they can understand the whys and hows of the circumstances they are in, and how they can be the best supporter for their child - something that is easier to understand." Brun also states that "It's very confusing [for all parties involved], and also the attorney that is assigned to the child is not assigned to the parents, so they may want to get some advice. But usually the attorney is the advocate for the child. Sometimes it is recommended that the parents go through training. Jennifer Johnson who is also on the Hope Rising committee is an attorney. She is holding such training classes. Sometimes the parents themselves may not have had a mentor to look up to."

"Housing and transportation, we're trying to find a way to get more housing and low income transportation. The Department of Transportation is doing great things. They are trying to make sure that people are aware that they have free transportation for you. They can help you get to that doctor's appointment, and they can help you grocery

shop," said Brun.

Opportunities for treatment helps with rehab and similar services. "Ministries like All Things New and Celebrate Recovery and others, those are great



Special to Pelahatchie News

Tammy Brun, Founding Member and Director of ERCO, stopped to take a quick photo.

services to help you through the program and help you have a better life, as well."

"Economic security is supported by those like Karen Fogel from Tempstaff and other places that connect those who need a job with businesses that are hiring," said Brun. "This is helpful for those who, for example, have been released from prison, and they can give you a second chance, or a third chance or whatever it takes. Those are the areas after two years of research where we could make a difference for our families in Mississippi. We've changed the percentage of children taken from their parents to about 67%-70%. This isn't abuse necessarily. It may just be that their home needs repairs, they may not have enough beds, or a parent may need to go to rehab or get a better job. The federal government has funding so that

we can find ways to not have their children taken away from them."

Baptist Children's Village can provide services such as caring for a child while the parent is in distress. Brun said, "This doesn't involve the courts, it doesn't involve Child Protection Services. You come to them and with no judgment, the child is cared for at a house by other parents in that location. They help make sure they go to school. If they get a job, they make sure that a certain amount goes into a savings account. I've visited the houses and they have a schedule and they help with laundry. When the parent(s) are ready, they can go back home."



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The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services gave out free bicycle helmets for children.

ERCO's Love Out Loud is about giving people an opportunity to find the resources and help from area churches. This is a hope that ERCO has - by using this type of communication, a family will get involved in church.

"God has given all of us talents, but if they aren't in the church using them, where are they using them? God is putting this all together. In John 17, in His last prayer before He (Jesus) was on the cross, He prayed that we would all come together and we would all be one, and that's where my heart is also - that we would all be one," said Brun.

ERCO believes in being "doers of the Word and not hearers only" (James

1:22), and to "love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). They are committed to the teaching in James 2:14-16 and Isaiah 58:7, that calls people to "share your food with the hungry...give clothes to those who need them." ERCO believes they should use their faith by giving and using their actions to meet the needs of those who are less fortunate, at no cost to them.

Hope Rising Mississippi also works with children and families in improving their lives when needed. They state on their website, "Over 41,000,000 people in the U.S. have been exposed to over four adverse childhood experiences. These numbers are so large, they are a struggle to comprehend. That means forty-one million kids were exposed to traumas such as abuse, neglect, or a significant household dysfunction. We have to do something that is both meaningful and makes a lasting difference in their lives. We believe that answer is HOPE."



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Heather Pennypacker represented Pelahatchie City Hall at Love Out Loud.

ERCO is located at 306 North Brooks Avenue. Learn more about ERCO by visiting ERCO@everreaching.net. To learn more about Hope Rising Mississippi, visit online at www.hoperisingms.org.

Continued on page 5



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ERCO works with Hope Rising: Help when it's needed



Mariah McGill and Harmony McGill, Pelahatchie High School Beta Club members, helped with the food that the Ever Reaching Community Outreach prepared.



Kevin Skipper discussed what the Family Health Care Clinic has to offer. The clinic began providing primary health care services to patients in 1977.



There were games and bounce houses for the children who attended.



Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc., who provide services to children and families throughout the State of Mississippi, were there to help out at the event.reach prepared.



All Things New, Inc., who "facilitate the outreach opportunities God continued to put in their path", were there to tell others about their services.



The Center for Children and Families participates in Love Out Loud. They serve a range of areas in Mississippi and Louisiana.



Members of Pelahatchie Baptist Church joined ERCO today to take prayer requests.



H & R Block handed out goody bags.



ERCO's team was on hand to help out and to hold a drawing for a "weekend getaway" at Yogi Bear Park. The funds raised will be used for ERCO to continue their mission of giving to those in need.



Children play a giant game of Jenga.



Pro Life of Mississippi was available to discuss options other than abortion.



Brandon Assembly showed up to offer prayers of hope and healing.

All photos special to Pelahatchie News

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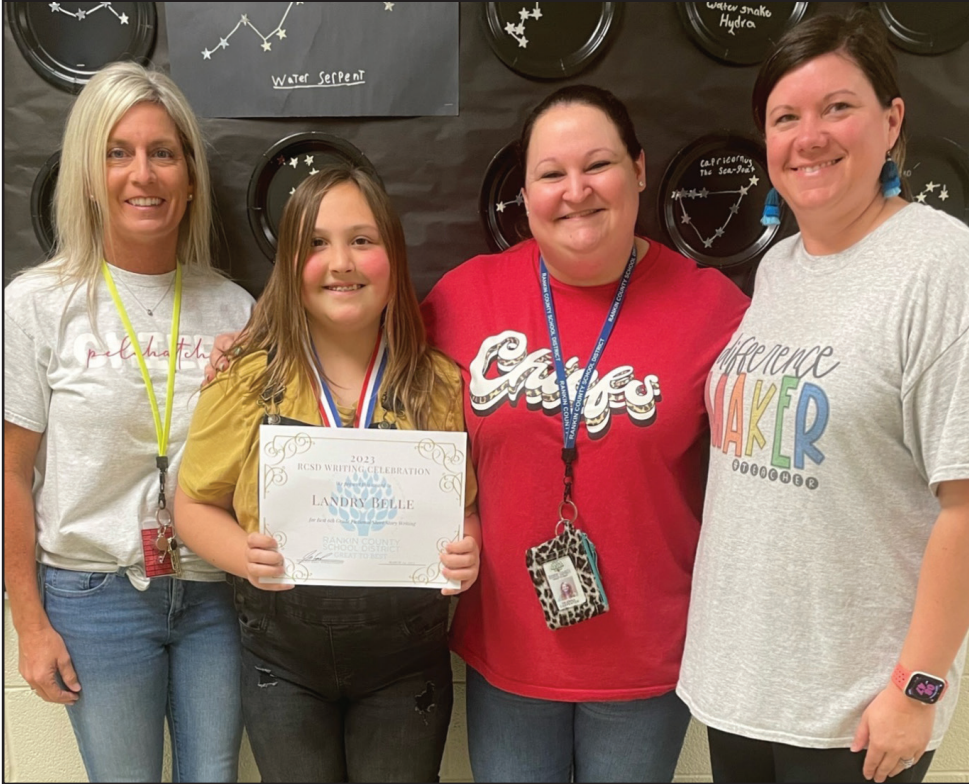
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Pelahatchie Elementary students win in writing competition



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary student Landry Belle McMillan is the Fictional Short Story winner for the sixth grade category in the Rankin County School District Writing Celebration. "Landry is an excellent author who uses descriptive images and suspense to keep her readers interested. She wrote an adventurous story that takes readers to the fictitious Tupa-Chân jungle, where we meet all sorts of mysterious creatures and work with them to solve a suspenseful mystery," said Kimberly Bryant, library media specialist at PES. Pictured (l to r) are: Principal Robin Sanders; Landry Belle McMillan; Deanna Carpenter, sixth grade English language and literature (ELA) and social studies teacher; and Britnee Barnett, sixth grade ELA and science teacher.



Noelle Gardner, fifth grader at Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES), is the 4-5 winner for the Fictional Short Story category in the Rankin County School District Writing Competition. Gardner's story is titled "Her Crystal Necklace." The story is a mix of historical fiction and fantasy. Kimberly Bryant, library media specialist at PES, said, "Gardner is a wonderful author who uses suspense and expressive dialogue to hook her readers." Pictured (l to r) are: Sarah Scaggs, fourth grade English language and literature teacher; Noelle Gardner; and Principal Robin Sanders.

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Pelahatchie HS Track and Field Team wins



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Payton Sanders won first place in the 1600 meter race at the MHSAA District Track Meet.



On April 17, the Pelahatchie High School Chiefs Track Team competed in various track races at the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) District Track Meet. The following students (pictured above) placed as following: Addison Archie, fourth place, long jump; Abby Hemeter, second place, 3200-meter; Payton Wilson, fourth place, 100-meter dash and third place, long jump; Caleb Gray, second place, 1600-meter; Nahgee Hawkins, second place, 400-meter dash; Christian Beeman, second place, 300 hurdles; Laterrion Irvin, second place, long jump; Ashton Jones, third place, long jump; and DaMarion Snow, fourth place, shot put.



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Ross and Spain celebrate merger of railways

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Southern Rail Commission (SRC) Chairman Knox Ross and Co-chair John Spain celebrated the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern merger in Kansas City, Missouri. The two rail companies are now formally named Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC).

Former Mayor and longtime Pelahatchian Knox Ross shared their future plans in regard to the railway merger, "The merger means that CPKC now owns the Meridian Speedway line through Pelahatchie. We will be announcing a grant application led by Amtrak and SRC with the support of the Mississippi and Louisiana Departments of Transportation, and CPKC will begin the study of implementing Amtrak service on the line utilizing the existing Amtrak service from Meridian to Dallas and Ft. Worth, Texas."

"We plan to have a Rankin County stop near the airport at Whitfield. This is one of our projects, which also includes service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast between Mobile, Alabama and New Orleans, Louisiana."



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Chairman Knox Ross and Co-chair John Spain officially break ground on the railway merger.



Southern Rail Commission (SRC) Chairman Knox Ross (right) and Co-chair John Spain (left) celebrated the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern merger in Kansas City.


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Hurricane Preparedness Week April 30 – May 6, 2023

Special to Pelahatchie News

Governor Reeves declared April 30 – May 6, 2023, Hurricane Preparedness Week for the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency urges citizens to prepare for the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Last year, there were fourteen named storms, eight of which formed into hurricanes, two of which became major hurricanes. Mississippi continues to recover from Hurricane Ida, which hit in 2021, resulting in more than \$30 million in damage.

“Over the last few years, our state has confronted hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and more,” said Governor Tate Reeves. “It is critical to have a plan before severe weather strikes. It can make the difference in keeping you and your family safe. I hope Hurricane Preparedness Week can help raise awareness about the upcoming

hurricane season and encourage Mississippians to take the necessary steps to prepare.”

“Don’t wait for a tropical storm or hurricane to get in the Gulf of Mexico to prepare. Protect your families now by getting ready,” says MEMA’s Executive Director Stephen McCraney. “While the State is prepared to respond to a hurricane, the ‘First 72 Hours Are On You.’ That means you need at least seventy-two hours’ worth of food and water for each family member. Take time today to prepare yourself and your family for a storm.”

Every Mississippi family should have a fully stocked disaster sup-

ply kit with necessities like water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, etc. MEMA encourages homeowners to do an insurance check before hurricane season; homeowners should also purchase flood insurance if a home is in a special flood hazard zone. Download the disaster supply kit at www.msema.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/DisasterSupplyKit-Checklist.pdf.

MEMA will highlight key messages, facts, and ways to be prepared on their social media outlets each day of Hurricane Preparedness Week. Here are the key topics for each day:

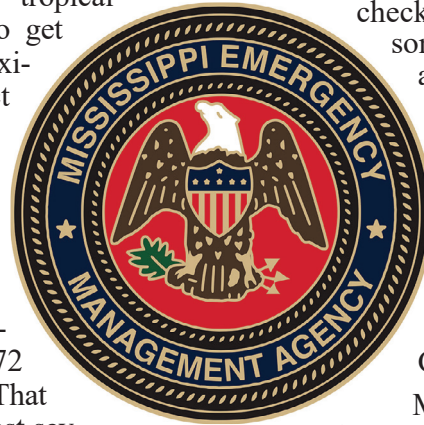
- April 30, 2023 - Know Your Risk: Wind & Water

- May 1, 2023 - Prepare Before Hurricane Season
- May 2, 2023 - Understand Forecast Information
- May 3, 2023 - Get Moving When a Storm Threatens
- May 4, 2023 - Stay Protected During Storms
- May 5, 2023 - Use Caution After Storms
- May 6, 2023 - Take Action Today

The official Atlantic Hurricane Season is June 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023.

Each day of the week, MEMA will share special messaging on their Facebook and Twitter.

Mississippians can also view their MEMA Disaster Guide at <https://www.msema.org/preparedness-2/hurricanes/>. The guide is available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.



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May library events and news

Special to Pelahatchie News

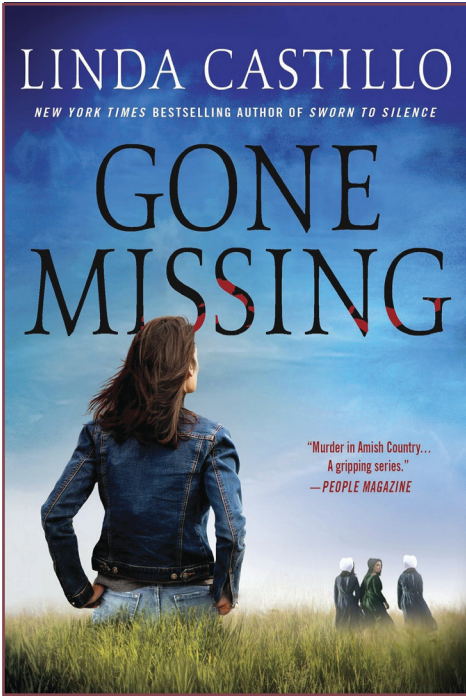
The Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) recently announced that all of their libraries now have wireless printing - including Pelahatchie Public Library.

Pre-registration for the **Summer Library Programs** begins on May 15. Visit cmrls.beanstack.org/reader365 and create an account, or stop by the library to pre-register.

A **Senior Citizen Social** will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 11 a.m. and Tuesday, May 23, 11 a.m.

The **Adult Book Club** will meet on Wednesday, May 17, 11 a.m. The club will be discussing Linda Castillo's novel, *Gone Missing*.

The Pelahatchie Library is located at 718 Second St. in Pelahatchie.



Gone Missing cover

Special to Pelahatchie News

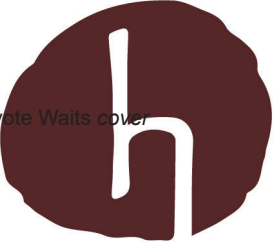


Shamburger is Overall Rankin Chamber Teacher of the Year



Special to Pelahatchie News

In April, Jessica Shamburger, an elementary teacher at Pelahatchie Elementary School, was selected as the Overall Rankin Chamber Teacher of the Year. Her focus is English Language Arts and science. She was nominated by the leadership team. Pictured (l to r) are: Robin Sanders and Jessica Shamburger.



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Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	ARRANGEMENTS
Vanessa Ann Buckner	64	Morton	4/04/2023	Wolf Funeral Services
Andrew Wayne Wicker	82	Pulaski	4/06/2023	Wolf Funeral Services
Ruth Thompson	58	Forest	4/11/2023	Wolf Funeral Services
Jerry Lee Crosby	85	Jackson	4/16/2023	Wolf Funeral Services



PUBLIC NOTICE-FORMER PEARL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED SPECIAL EDUCATION AND THEIR PARENTS

The Pearl Public School District will destroy selected records pertaining to special education beginning July 31, 2023. These records pertain to students who were eligible for Special Services and exited (due to graduation, moving, refusal of service, testing out, etc.) during the 2017-2018 school year.

Parents and students may need these records in the future for other purposes, i.e., Social Security benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility purposes, etc.

These records are available until June 30, 2023 (one month prior to above destruction date) to parents of students eighteen (18) years of age or older with proper identification. Call (601-932-7965) if you are interested in obtaining these records, if you are not sure if you or your child received services during this time period, please call and we can help you with this information.

Robotic device helps straighten bone in pediatric first for Mississippi

Special to Pelahatchie News

While Paul Sykes goes about a day at Bettye Mae Jack Middle School in Morton, spends time with friends or is at home with family, a robotic device is making tiny adjustments to reshape his shin bone.

He is the first pediatric patient in Mississippi to use the Maxframe Autostrut multiplanar correction system. Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2022, the device was installed for the first time in Mississippi on March 21. It is the first fully automated orthopaedic implant in the world.

Sykes' orthopaedic surgeon at Children's of Mississippi, Dr. Kellie Leitch, professor and chief of pediatric orthopaedics and rehabilitation at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, was among a handful of surgeons around the country to train with Johnson & Johnson on the robotics device, which was created by DePuy Synthes, one of the companies that make up Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Group.

Leitch surgically placed the frame around Sykes' tibia during spring break in March. A week later, Sykes was back

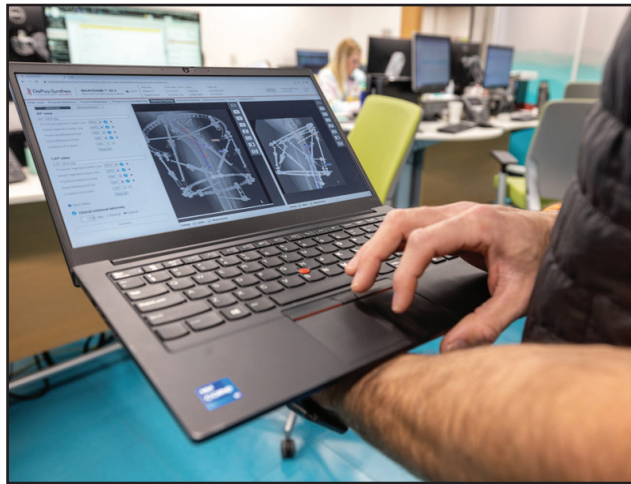
at Children's of Mississippi's Kathy and Joe Sanderson Tower for the Autostrut to be placed for treatment of Blount's disease.

A genetic growth disorder of the shin bone at the knee, Blount's disease causes the growth plate at the inside of the knee to make less bone or stop growing. Since the growth plate at the outside of the knee keeps growing, this can leave children with one or both legs bowed.

When left untreated, the condition can result in chronic knee pain and the need for knee replacements at an early age.

"We thought at first that his growth was normal," said his father, Paul Sykes Jr. While many young children have bowed legs, bowing worsens for children with Blount's disease as they grow. Adolescent Blount's disease occurs in children ten years and older.

"Attachment of the robot allows us to relieve the family of the responsibility of managing a complicated spatial



By courtesy of Jay Ferchaud/ UMMC Communications

X-ray images of Paul Sykes III's leg are shown on the Maxframe Autostrut platform.

frame prescription," Leitch said. "This improves the opportunity for an excellent deformity correction, resulting in a straight leg."

The smaller adjustments are less painful than the larger adjustments that would be made by a parent, caregiver or patient two or three times a day under the former treatment plan.

Once a care plan is set, information on the adjustments needed are downloaded into the Maxframe Autostrut software.

The device is then placed along the framework, where it can make up to twenty microadjustments throughout the day.

"This is easier for parents. They have full schedules with work and family. It's also better for patients," Leitch said. "Studies have shown that these microadjustments also help the new bone grow significantly better."

The lightweight device works quietly, and patients can wear the device even when showering or doing hydrotherapy, said Zach Wade, a Johnson & Johnson consultant who traveled to Children's of Mississippi for the device's installation.

A Wi-Fi connection is needed for a care plan to be loaded into the Autostrut, but, after that, internet service isn't required. The device is armed with enough battery power for the duration of treatment.

A seventh-grader, Sykes is going through forty days of treatment with the Maxframe Autostrut device, as well as physical therapy and gait training this spring. A guard on the Panthers football team at school, he hopes to be back on the football field in the fall.

"Treatment will be done before I start eighth grade," he said.



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A history of the American chestnut tree and the blight



By Doug Carter, Rankin
County Extension Agent

Special to
Pelahatchie News

The American Chestnut once dominated portions of the eastern U.S. forest. The tree was among the largest and fastest – growing trees in the forest. Because it could grow so rapidly and attain huge sizes, the American Chestnut was often an outstanding feature in both urban and rural landscapes.

What many people in Mississippi don't realize is that the American Chestnut was once found along the east-central part of the state, from Corinth to south of Hattiesburg. This population represented the extreme western part of the chestnut's natural range.

Chestnut wood was rot-resistant, straight-grained, and suitable for furniture, fencing and building materials. In colonial times, chestnut was preferred for log cabin foundations, fence posts, flooring and caskets. Later, railroad ties and both



Chestnut tree

Special to Pelahatchie News

telephone and telegraph poles were made from chestnut, many of which are still in use today.

Its nut fed billions, from insects to birds and mammals, and was a significant contributor to rural agricultural

economics. At one time, nut-ripening and gathering nearly coincided with the holiday season. Nineteenth century newspapers often featured articles about railroad cars overflowing with chestnuts to be sold, fresh

or roasted, in major cities.

All of this began to change around 1904, when a fungus was accidentally moved from Asia to New York. The fungus, known as the chestnut blight, ran unchecked through the vast range of the American Chestnut that covered over 200 million acres of the eastern United States. By the late 1950s, an estimated four billion American Chestnut trees were reduced to snags and stumps.

These trees were not ready to give up the fight and continued to sprout from stumps, only to have the growing trees live for a short period before dying back again. The blight cannot kill the underground root system, as the pathogen is unable to compete with the soil microorganisms.

Stump sprouts grow vigorously in cutover or undisturbed sites where there is plenty of sunlight, but inevitably succumb to the blight. The cycle of death and rebirth has kept the species alive.

McKay celebrates 50 years at Pelahatchie Masonic Lodge



Special to Pelahatchie News

On April 10, Pelahatchie local Shelton McKay celebrated fifty years with the Pelahatchie Masonic Lodge. A reception dinner was held for McKay, and he received his fifty year pin for his time dedicated to the lodge and its members. Pictured (l to r) are Shelton McKay and his wife, Peggy McKay.

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Pastor’s Perspective: The “no matter what, whatever it takes” kind of love



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist
Spencer Sullivan, Pastor,
Pelahatchie Baptist

I am always amazed when I hear or read about anniversary celebrations of 50+ years. My own Mom and Dad will celebrate their fiftieth anniversary later this year! What an incredible testimony these celebrations of faithful, longstanding marriages are! They wonderfully illustrate the steadfast and loyal love by both the husband and the wife, which must be foundational in order to keep the sacred vows of marriage. This steadfast and loyal love can be illustrated in a lot of ways, but when I think of this kind of deep love, it’s the kind of love that affirms: “I’m in, no matter what, whatever it takes!”

My wife, Melanie, and I have been married for nearly twenty-three years. Not quite 50+, but, by God’s grace, we’re on our way. When we were declaring our marriage vows to one another, Melanie and I were both a bit choked up in the overwhelming emotion of it all. She just happened to choke up at the

moment when it was her turn to declare: “for richer or for poorer.” We both laughed then, and we still laugh now, as it seemed she was reconsidering for a moment! I’m really grateful she didn’t! But, for a marriage to stand the test of time (and the multitude of challenges along the way), it requires a “no matter what” kind of steadfast love.

The Bible uses the same kind of language when it describes God’s love for those created in His own image. Marriage is actually meant to be an illustration of the love relationship between God and His people. The Psalms are full of praises and declarations regarding the steadfast love of the Lord. Here are a few examples: “Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.” – Ps. 36:5; “Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.” – Ps. 63:3; “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.” – Ps. 136:1.

To be sure, these verses are incredibly meaningful and faith building. But, they



Special to Pelahatchie News

wouldn’t mean as much if the language used wasn’t backed up by the actual, steadfast, loyal, “no matter what” kind of love that God continually shows us. The Bible is absolutely packed with examples of God loving His people, even when they did not reciprocate that same kind of love to Him!

No doubt the greatest illustration of

God’s love to us is through the giving of His Son, Jesus. Romans 5:8 says, “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” If there were ever a display of love that said, “whatever it takes,” it’s the God of Heaven sending His Son, Jesus, to receive and endure the punishment for unworthy sinners like us.

We are all broken. And, in spite of our brokenness and sin, God is patient with us and He still loves us. Some of you know this love because you’ve received it and continue to experience it. Perhaps, some of you have never heard of this kind of love, much less experienced it. Still others likely doubt that what I’ve written could really be true. However, if this kind of love truly is real, everyone would long for and desire to receive it, right?

If you are unsure or doubt, I challenge you to find out for yourself. Ask God to reveal Himself to you today, and may you find and experience this unique love that only God Himself demonstrates perfectly. I pray you find Jesus to be the inexhaustible well of love, joy, peace and satisfaction that He is!

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EEOC Compliance: Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3458 or Email: EEOC@hindscc.edu.

Title IX: Associate Vice President Student Services, Title IX Coordinator, Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3353 or Email: TitleIX@hindscc.edu.

USM to offer new dual enrollment scholarships for students

Special to Pelahatchie News

By taking advantage of new and increased dual enrollment scholarship funds, incoming students at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) can get a significant jump on their college careers.

Dual enrollment is defined as a student who is currently enrolled in high school and is taking collegiate courses. Regardless of academic level, graduating high school seniors accepted and entering USM in the upcoming fall semester with dual enrollment are considered freshmen.

Dr. Randall Langston, Senior Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, said USM is committed to assisting students in lowering incurred debt due to their college enrollment.

“We are excited to offer these new scholarships for freshmen dual enrolled students,” said Langston.

USM offers scholarships for designated students who display academic achievement at a college level before their first semester at the university. These awards can also be combined with other freshmen scholarships offered.

“These scholarships are specifically de-



Special to Pelahatchie News

signed to assist high achieving dual enrolled students realize their opportunity to attend Southern Miss at a much lower cost of attendance as well as shorten the time required to complete a bachelor's degree,” said Langston. “Further, these scholarships are ‘stackable,’ which means that students are permitted to combine this award with others received.”

The new eligible scholarships are as follows:

Incoming Freshmen Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship

- \$12,000 total (\$3,000 for four years)
- Students need to apply in the GO-System (<https://usm.academicworks.com/>) for this scholarship.
- Graduating high school senior from December 2022 or May 2023
- Current members with a transfer cumulative GP of 3.5 or higher

- Final college transcript should be submitted by June 15 to the Office of Admissions.

- Applications should be completed by July 1 in the Go System (<https://usm.academicworks.com/>). Students should upload proof of membership to the online application.

Incoming Freshmen Associate Achievement Scholarship

- \$12,000 total (\$3,000 for 4 years)
- Immediate consideration determined through final college transcript. Students should submit to the Office of Admissions before the published deadline.
- Graduating high school senior from December 2022 or May 2023
- Earned associate's degree with a transfer cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Final college transcript should be submitted by June 15 to the Office of Admissions verifying degree completion.
- Applications should be completed by July 1.

Students need to maintain a 2.5 USM cumulative GPA to keep their scholarships. An advisor or authorized state organization can submit documentation of organized status.

Heard runs for Tax Collector

By Stephen C. Heard

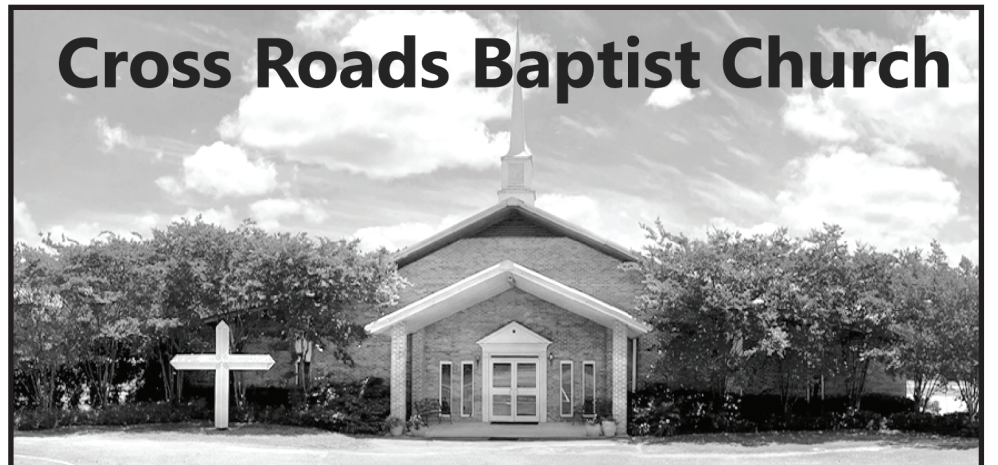
My name is Stephen C. Heard, and I am a lifelong resident of Rankin County. I am a graduate of Pearl High School and received a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University. I am a member of McLaurin Heights United Methodist Church, have volunteered with Scouts BSA for twelve years, and have been employed by the Rankin County Tax Assessor's Office as a residential appraiser for the past twenty-two years. I am married to Candace Heard, who has taught in the Rankin County School District for twenty-four years, and we have three beautiful children: Carter, Jake, and Mina. My parents are Marion and Alice Heard, and my mom is also a lifelong resident of Rankin County who served as the Rankin County Tax Collector from 1980 to 2008.

I humbly announce my candidacy for the office of Tax Collector. Watching my mother serve the citizens of Rankin County with integrity and professionalism fostered my desire to work as a public servant. In the past, the offices



of Tax Collector and Tax Assessor not only worked closely but were one office of professionals who worked together to help meet the needs of the citizens of Rankin County. As you go to the polls, I would appreciate your vote: a vote for a conservative public servant with experience, integrity, and a desire to serve the citizens of Rankin County. I look forward to working with you as your next Rankin County Tax Collector.

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Griffin signs with Hinds CC



Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy senior Hollyn Griffin recently signed to play tennis at Hinds Community College. Griffin is an honor roll student who will be graduating in May 2023. When not playing tennis, she will be working towards a bachelor's degree in nursing, and then she hopes to pursue a nurse practitioner degree. Pictured (l to r) are Scott Herrod, Hollyn Griffin and Mary A. Herrod.

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Students awarded scholarships during Salute to Education



Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy (ERA) student Aiden Boyd, senior, was awarded the Miss Laquita Steen Scholarship and the Cash Medders Scholarship. ERA student Lana Jones, junior, was awarded the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership scholarship. These scholarships and other awards were presented at the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce's Salute to Education celebration. The event is held to honor educators and students across Rankin County and to celebrate the graduation of the chamber's 2022 - 2023 leadership classes.

Harrison runs for Circuit Clerk

By Melissa Harrison

I am excited to announce my candidacy for the position of Circuit Clerk in Rankin County. As a dedicated member of this community, I believe that I have the skills and experience needed to effectively serve as your Circuit Clerk.

I have been married to Mike Harrison for 32 years and we reside in Florence. We have two wonderful sons Marshall and Maverick who both live in Rankin County. Our family owns and operates 4M Farms, LLC. My family and I are members of First Baptist Church of Florence. I am a Delta State University graduate but have also attended Mississippi State University and Belhaven College for post graduate classes and Hinds Community College.

I have been an educator for three decades, influencing and guiding our most precious asset, our children. I am currently a RCSD teacher at McLaurin High School. During my time as an educator, I have served as a high school science teacher, librarian, student tech team leader and have been a member of a multitude of committees: literacy team, teacher advisory board, DECA sponsor, science department chair, and Mississippi Professional Educators member. I also have been a MPE classroom grant recipient for two consecutive years and used the grant to purchase

the supplies needed for students to participate in the first vegetable growing season in the McLaurin High School greenhouse. I had the privilege of being awarded teacher of the year when I was a state tested biology teacher.

During my years in education, I have gained valuable insights into the needs and concerns of our community.

As an Educator I see a desperate need to introduce the local government and the importance of voting to our younger generation. After speaking with several high school graduates, I was surprised to learn they do not realize their vote matters.

I am the working face of Rankin County bringing a New Perspective to the Circuit Clerk's Office. As your Circuit Clerk, I will prioritize transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. I am committed to ensuring that the Circuit Clerk's office is accessible to all residents and implementing new technologies that streamline office procedures. I will work tirelessly to make that a reality.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve my community as your Circuit Clerk. I believe that with my experience and passion for public service, I can make a positive difference in the lives of the residents of Rankin County. I ask for your vote and support in this election.

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