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Carroll County OBSERVER

E-VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2026

BEAR SIGHTING CONFIRMED



NO JOKE — A black bear stands at the edge of a cornfield near the Carroll-Henderson County line on July 4. Photos by David Marlin

Jesse Joseph
Editor

When David Marlin posted photos Saturday afternoon of a black bear standing at the edge of a cornfield, captioned “Look out no joke,” word spread fast.

The images, taken near the Carroll and Henderson County line on July 4, quickly made the rounds on social media. But not everyone was convinced.

Several commenters questioned whether the photos were real, with some suggesting they looked AI-generated rather than an actual wildlife encounter in West Tennessee, where

bear sightings remain rare enough to raise eyebrows.

The skepticism didn’t last long. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency confirmed the sighting, noting that West Tennessee bear reports, while unusual, are not unheard of. The agency typically sees a jump in bear-related calls every summer as the animals range widely across the state.

TWRA explained that black bears travel long distances in search of food, water, and shelter, and that last year alone the agency logged sightings

See BEAR, Page 4

Terry Community Park Draws 4th of July Crowds



CATCHING UP — Community members mingle and catch up with friends while children play games. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*

Kal Reasons
Staff Writer

CEDAR GROVE, Tenn. — Terry Community Park hosted its Fourth of July celebration Friday, July 3, drawing families from across the area for games, a water slide, firetrucks, barbecue, and a fireworks display. It’s the latest sign of life for the park that sat largely unused just a few years ago.

Despite the heat and weather delays, organizers and community members put together the event with help from the Terry Volunteer Fire Department, which provided water for the slide and coordinated the fireworks.

As attendees questioned whether the rain would force them to cancel, a double rainbow broke through the clouds. It was

a moment Rhonda Wright and others pointed to as a sign of what their work had meant to the community.

Concessions offered a variety of options, including barbecue, burgers, hot dogs, nachos, and drinks, alongside a cake walk stocked with handmade goodies.

Wright, who is treasurer of Terry Community Park since 2005, cooked burgers, barbecue sandwiches, and nachos alongside Rickey Lents as part of the event’s fundraising efforts.

“This is what it’s supposed to be,” Wright said. “This is it.”

Children’s laughter and shouting carried across the park as they played games on fields that, until recently, hosted no youth sports at all.

See TERRY PARK, Page 3

Carroll County Celebrates America’s 250th B-Day



SEE COVERAGE ON PAGES 2-3

Sheriff Candidates Share Vision With Voters



SHERIFF FORUM — Carroll County Sheriff candidates Eric Sawyers, Ryan White, and Michael Smith answer questions from the public at Carroll County Civic Center. Retired Judge Donald Parish Moderates. **FULL RECAP ON PAGE 7**

County Budget Passes 17-1

Jesse Joseph
Editor

Carroll County employees will receive a 3% raise across the board in the new fiscal year budget, which also keeps the county’s tax rate unchanged at 88 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

But the budget didn’t pass without Commissioner Barry Mac Murphy raising objections to the spending plan that, for the second year in a row, projects more in expenditures than revenue.

“You can’t spend more money than what you put in,” said Murphy. “Anytime you got more money going out than you got coming in, you got a problem.”

He cast the sole ‘no’ vote on the budget, which passed 17-1.

Budget by the Numbers

According to the budget, Carroll County expects to bring in \$31,768,690 in revenue this fiscal year, against \$34,081,313 in expenditures. That’s a gap of roughly \$2.3 million that will come out of the county’s fund balance.

The largest piece of that deficit comes from the Carroll County School general purpose fund, which is budgeted to lose \$1,347,700. This marks the third year in a row that the school fund has posted deficits, and a few commissioners see trouble ahead.

“It’s going to be a challenge for us to continue to maintain the school system in its current state,” said Commissioner John Austin. “We control their revenue. We don’t control their expenses.”

See BUDGET, Page 5



LONE NO VOTE — Commissioner Barry Mac Murphy was the only commissioner to vote against the FY2026-27 budget Monday night. *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*

Willis Inducted Into NFHS Hall of Fame



HONORED — TSSAA committee member Mark Reeves presents Patrick Willis with his NFHS National High School Hall of Fame medallion during Monday’s induction ceremony at the Hyatt Regency in Salt Lake City. *Submitted photo*

Jesse Joseph
Editor

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Patrick Willis is no stranger to accolades. The Bruceton native is a seven-time Pro Bowler, a five-time first-team All-Pro, a College Football Hall of Famer, and was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2024.

On Monday, June 29, Willis added one more honor to that list when he was inducted into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame at the Hyatt Regency in Salt Lake City.

“High school sports taught me who I was before the world knew my name,” Willis said during a press conference following the ceremony. “They gave me discipline. They gave me focus. They gave me confidence. And the

belief that with hard work, anything is possible.”

Willis spoke about what it means to represent a small town on a national stage.

“Coming from where I come from, a small rural town in Tennessee where not a lot goes on, I just always had that mindset of ‘Why not me?’,” he said. “Why can’t I be the one to represent?”

He said his uncles were his early heroes, and watching them fall short of their athletic dreams shaped his determination.

“I remember just always asking my uncles, ‘How come you didn’t go all the way?’ And the answers they gave me, made me want to make sure I’d do everything I can to give myself the best chance,” he explained. “And one day, I want my own nieces and

See WILLIS, Page 5

Thank you for Reading!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!

Fourth of July Celebrations Take Place County Wide

Jesse Joseph
Editor

The whole country celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence's signing on Saturday, and Carroll County was no exception.

People from throughout the county's various towns and communities braved the hot, humid weather over the weekend to attend one of the several events that took place.

Huntingdon

In Huntingdon, a large crowd attended Eastview Baptist Church's annual festivities at the Carroll County Fairgrounds.

The event featured a Blackhawk helicopter landing. Attendees took the opportunity to tour the aircraft and take photos with its pilots.

After sunset, organizers set off a large fireworks display that could be seen and heard from miles away. "Our best year yet!" exclaimed Eastview Baptist Church on their social media page.

Hollow Rock

Hollow Rock Fire Department held their annual "Giving Back to the Community" Fourth of July Celebration on the practice field at Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central.

Attendees enjoyed a

host of food and beverage options, including Wheely Good Eats, Bealla-Q, Southern Snow, and more.

Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central rising senior, Stella Higdon, set up her Cedar Street Sweets stand. She donated

proceeds from her stand to Carroll County Humane Society.

Children played on inflatable bounce houses,

and also took their chance at "dunking" volunteers in the dunk tank. Carroll County Rescue squad supplied the tank, which Central's Class of 2027 Project Graduation used as a fundraiser.

Hollow Rock Fire Chief Curt Lumley and special guest Jaimi Ivy provided musical

entertainment for the evening.

Ivy sang the National Anthem and helped fill in

on additional music.

At dusk, members of Hollow Rock Fire Department set off fireworks. The show clocked in at 47 minutes long.

In a Facebook post following the event, Lumley thanked the community, sponsors, and volunteers for another successful celebration.

"We look forward to serving our communities in whatever means we can," Lumley wrote.

McKenzie

The City of McKenzie held its Fourth of July celebration at McKenzie City Park, featuring food, drinks, music, and a fireworks show at dusk.

Food vendors included Sweet Heifers (cookies and dipped cheesecake), Burkes (burgers and bologna), Italian Ice, Elevate (mocktails and lemonades), Groovy Glazed Donuts, Bubbas Hot Dogs, and Ryros Lemonade.

The fireworks display was produced by Pyro Shows, Inc., a La Follette-based company that has run Nashville's "Let Freedom Sing!" fireworks show for more than two decades and produces several hundred shows nationwide each year.

Carroll County Observer Staff Writer, Kal Reasons, covered the Terry community's and McLemoresville's events in separate articles.





AMONG FRIENDS — Oakley Lents, Layla Forrest and Caylee Howell spend time together during the celebration. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*

TAKING ORDERS — President Tidwell sits with her granddaughter, Harper Tidwell, while taking orders for the concessions. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*

TERRY PARK

FROM PAGE 1

A Facebook post last year expressing interest in starting a new youth sports league led to almost 100 children now playing soccer, t-ball, and baseball, according to Wanda Tidwell, President of Terry Community Park. Registration for the fall league is open until July 31.

Although the rain meant Jace Hammett's scheduled performance was canceled, he still came out to support his community and describe some of his musical journey.

"We play a lot of gigs in Paris at Blues Landing. We try to play a lot around here and in Milan



some," Hammett explained.

Fans of Hammett can find him on Facebook for updates on upcoming shows, including future performances at the park.

The celebration capped years of work to bring the park back from years of neglect.

Several years ago, Terry Community Park was managed by older generations. When they were unable to continue maintenance, the park sat deserted for extended periods.

Now, younger generations have taken on the work of restoring it.

Running water and a finished electrical system remain top priorities, Tidwell said, and a well

still needs to be dug. Lawn care is handled by

volunteers, and the playground equipment has been donated and installed by

community members.

"Everyone seems to be helping one another, and the community is coming together for the children. That's what it's all about,"

Tidwell said.

Tidwell said seeing the revitalization has been meaningful to her.

"I love to see the elderly in the community bring their families and watch these kids having a good time," she said.

Kenna Wade, the park's secretary, and her husband John Wade, have helped lead the coaching of multiple soccer, baseball and t-ball teams, including Rick's Boat Shop, Castle Car Wash, Autumn Aberle Photography and Kenna's Creations. Brian and Ashley Hudson have been working alongside Grant and Ashley Hammett to coach Newbill's Heating and Air, while Jared and Jenny Mims have coached Nelson's Mortgage Company.

Because the park is a nonprofit that is independently run instead of being managed by any government entity, supporters can give equipment, supplies or monetary donations by contacting Wanda Tidwell.

REFLECTING ON PROGRESS — Rhonda Wright reflects on the park's revitalization and its impact on the community. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*



DOUBLE RAINBOW — A rainbow arcs over Tony Banks' Chevrolet truck. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*



WATER FUN — Terry Volunteer Fire Department provides water for the waterslide, bypassing the need for a well. *Kal Reasons/Carroll County Observer*

McLemoresville Hosts Annual Fourth of July Celebration

Kal Reasons
Staff Writer

Crowds turned out despite the heat for McLemoresville's annual Fourth of July parade and fireworks event Saturday.

More than 50 participants marched in the parade for a chance at a ribbon and a prize.

Parade entries included classic cars and trucks, tractors, motorized Power Wheels, politicians and more.

Barbara Younger, City Recorder, described the hometown feel and setup for the celebration while also detailing some new advancements.

"I always enjoy the parade the most, and the kids always have a lot of fun," Younger said.

There is no criterion to participate in the parade, so there is a spot for everyone to get involved.

This was the first year the celebration featured food trucks.

Food trucks included Archie Parker's barbecue, fries, burgers and pies, AteUp's pizza, nachos, pretzels and cookies, and Small Town Sno's snow cones. Other fundraisers included Sundaes for St. Jude and a cakewalk where

over a dozen homemade desserts were up for grabs.

Planning for the celebration begins sometime in April or May each year and is finalized around the end of June.

After the parade, attendees participated in a cakewalk for a chance at one of the many homemade desserts on display in front of the Activities Center.

Guests also danced to the sounds of The Backroad Truckers, whose set included an array of original tunes and covers such as songs from Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard, Bob Seger and Copperhead. The band features Jeremiah Cole on bass and vocals, his son Jacob Cole on keys, Danny Conger on fiddle and guitar, John Robbins on drums, and Gary Reynolds on lead guitar.

"We love familiar crowds and familiar faces when we perform," Cole said.

As night fell, guests gathered to watch the fireworks light up the sky over McLemoresville.

With the Fourth of July celebration behind them, McLemoresville is looking ahead to its next annual event: a car show scheduled for July 11.



LOCAL

Carroll County OBSERVER | WEDNESDAY, July 8, 2026 | 4

Bleacher Rehab Project Underway at Central

Jesse Joseph
Editor

The red brick facade of the home-side bleachers at Joe T. Herndon Stadium have welcomed Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central Tigers fans for over 50 years. Now, those bricks are coming down.

It's part of a rehabilitation project that the school board approved during a special-called meeting Tuesday night, June 30.

Since April, the board has discussed various solutions for the bleachers, which have fallen into disrepair over the past year, exhibiting cracked concrete, crumbling steps, and separation of the facade from the rest of the structure.

In a letter sent to parents, guardians and taxpayers following Tuesday's vote, the Board of Education and District Administration said a detailed engineering evaluation led to the

decision to move forward with structural repairs, and that the improvements will come with no increase to the local property tax rate.

The full renovation is expected to take about 12 months, with the board aiming to keep the stadium in use throughout the process rather than closing it for a season.

Work will happen in three phases.

Safety shoring will begin this month, with temporary load-bearing support systems installed beneath the stands to stabilize the structure ahead of football season.

During the fall, the top three rows of the stadium will be blocked off and restricted from public use, while the remaining rows stay open for game days.

Major structural repairs are set to begin immediately after the 2026 season, with the goal of restoring full seating access in time for 2027.

L.I. Smith and Associates of Paris is the district's engineering and construction manager on the project.

They will oversee installation of new steps and handrails, reinforced structural supports for the press box, and the removal of sections of brick facade on the east and west sides of the stadium so crews can evaluate and repair the concrete block walls underneath.

The project is split into two separate bidding phases, one covering work ahead of the 2026 season and a second covering completion after the 2027 season.

The board also accepted a separate bid Tuesday for upgrades at Central Elementary School, where crews will replace the ceiling and improve insulation in the gym.



COMING DOWN — A crew with Graves and Graves Construction begins tearing down the brick facade on Central's home bleachers. Photo by Courtney Oatsvall



OLD LETTERING — The letters that once spelled 'Tiger Territory' across the front of the bleachers lay broken at the edge of the field. Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer

BEAR

FROM PAGE 1

in multiple locations statewide.

Officials described the trend as part of a broader recovery. After populations bottomed out roughly 75 years ago, Tennessee's black bears are steadily reclaiming territory beyond their East Tennessee stronghold. The agency has framed this as a conservation success story.

Once a report comes in, TWRA officers and biologists assess the animal to determine whether it's simply passing through or showing signs of becoming a nuisance. The agency also cautioned that when a bear turns up somewhere unusual, like West Tennessee, media coverage

and social sharing of its exact location can draw curious onlookers, which can end up putting both people and the bear at risk.

TWRA's message to residents is to give the animal space. Left alone, a wandering bear will typically move on naturally.

What to Do If You Spot a Bear

TWRA points to guidance from [BearWise](#), a bear-safety education program, for reducing the odds of an unwanted encounter:

- Never follow a black bear or approach it for photos.

- Don't intentionally feed bears, and secure common unintentional attractants — trash, bird feeders, pet

food left outside, greasy grills, and unpicked garden produce.

- Store food, garbage, recycling, and grills where bears and other wildlife can't get to them.

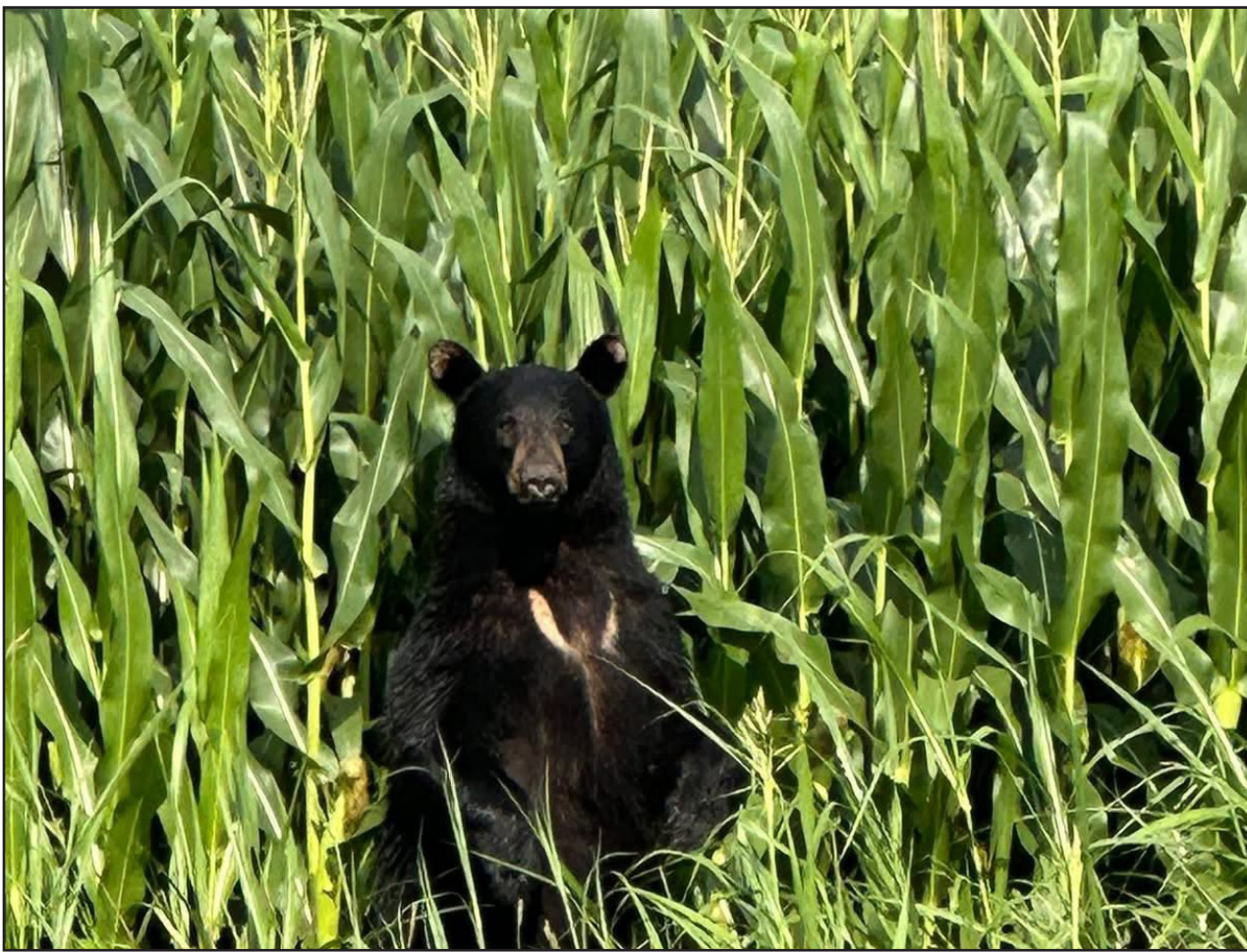
- Let neighbors know if there's been bear activity nearby, and make some noise when heading outside to announce your presence.

Officials emphasized that simply seeing a bear isn't cause for alarm. Bears tend to flee at loud noises or the sight of people waving their arms, and keeping a calm distance is usually enough to avoid any conflict.

More tips on coexisting with bears are available at [bearwise.org](#)



IN THE FIELD — Passersby on Highway 22 were surprised to see this bear at the edge of a corn field near the Henderson-Carroll line on Saturday. Photos by David Marlin



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LOCAL

BUDGET

FROM PAGE 1

He explained that during budget discussions, the finance committee sent the school's budget back for cuts.

"They sent it back and said, 'here, we cut \$60,000,'" Austin Said. "That doesn't help when you're \$1.3 million in the red."

Austin expressed worry that the Comptroller's office will issue a finding against Carroll County in regards to the school fund's annual losses.

"We're going to get a strong, stern letter from the comptroller," he said. "So we're going to accept it, but they're going to slap us on the wrist and say fix it. We've been in the red for three years now."

Commissioner Darrell Ridgely, filling in as chair in Mayor Joseph Butler's absence, said this isn't the first time they've had to send the school's budget

back for revision.

"That's why we met late last year, that's why we're meeting late this year," he said.

"This is the equivalent of giving your 16-year-old a checkbook and expecting you to fund it after they spend it," Ridgely added. "We will get a solution. We won't meet late next year."

The rest of the county's deficit comes largely from grant funds already earmarked for ongoing infrastructure projects, including money for water line replacement through the Cedar Grove Utility District and nearly \$1 million in airport improvement grants.

Nonprofit Donations

In addition to the overall budget, the commission unanimously approved to appropriate \$61,323 to

nonprofit organizations across the county.

The donations include \$8,000 to Carroll County Rescue Squad, \$6,000 to McKenzie Memorial Library, \$25,000 to Carl Perkins Center, \$5,000 to Gordon Browning Museum, \$10,000 to Carroll County Shooting Sports Park, \$3,823 to WRAP Organization, \$2,000 to CASA of Carroll County, and \$1,500 to TN Rehab Center.

Payroll Resolution Finalized

The commission unanimously approved Resolution 4-07-2026, finalizing the county's transition to a biweekly, pay-for-days-worked payroll structure.

"They will get a bonus paycheck on July 10, they'll get their first paycheck on July 17, and then they will get paid every other week

after that," Ridgely explained. "There's not going to be the lag time, and the deductions that come out of their checks will come out every other week, so they're not hit with a massive amount at one time."

Fire Department Procedures Adopted

The commission unanimously approved Resolution 6-1-2026, adopting the Carroll County Fire Department's Standard Operating Manual, Standard Operating Guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedures.

Sheriff Speaks About Retirement Program

Sheriff Andy Dickson used the citizens forum to remind commissioners about the hazardous duty retirement supplement he's

been pursuing for nearly two years. He said he expected it to be on the agenda.

"I thought we had a resolution worked out to where it would be brought for a vote tonight. That's not going to be the case," Dickson said. "I have reassurances from Commissioner Darrell Ridgely that it would be on the agenda to be voted up or down at the next meeting in August, and I'm going to take him at his word."

Dickson said the program would cost taxpayers nothing, pointing to roughly \$800,000 his department has turned back to the county this year.

"I'd say in my 16 years I've never not turned money back in to the commission," Dickson said.

He added the program has the potential to help every full-time law enforcement officer and firefighter in the

county, including jail staff, though it does not currently extend to dispatch. "I wish it did, but it don't."

Other Business

The Commission approved three year-end budget amendment resolutions: Resolution 6-2-2026, amending the general fund budget to cover year-end adjustments to the library, jail, and other county departments; Resolution 6-3-2026, amending the solid waste fund budget; and Resolution 6-4-2026, amending the drug fund budget.

The commission also approved the following notaries: Lisa Brewer, Katie Gergar, Lalonne Gillespie, Karen Moore, and Sheri Singleton.



FILLING IN — Commissioner Darrell Ridgely, standing in for County Mayor Joseph Butler, defended the county's fiscal track record while blaming the school system for the budget deficit. *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*



WARNING SIGNS — Commissioner John Austin warns that the school system's continued deficit spending could lead to a funding crisis. *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*



MAKING HIS CASE — Sheriff Andy Dickson addresses the commission, urging a vote on the hazardous duty retirement supplement at the next Commission meeting. *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*

WILLIS

FROM PAGE 1

nephews to be able to look at me and say, 'It's possible. Somebody from where we're from was able to go on and do special things.'"

When asked about his best high school memory, Willis pointed to his first basketball season. The program had gone 0-72 before his freshman year.

"I remember what it felt like when we won our first game, and it felt so tremendous," he said. "It brought me all the way back to when I was in first grade watching the high

school highlight clips of the 1989 championship football team, saying 'one day I want to be a difference maker like those guys.'"

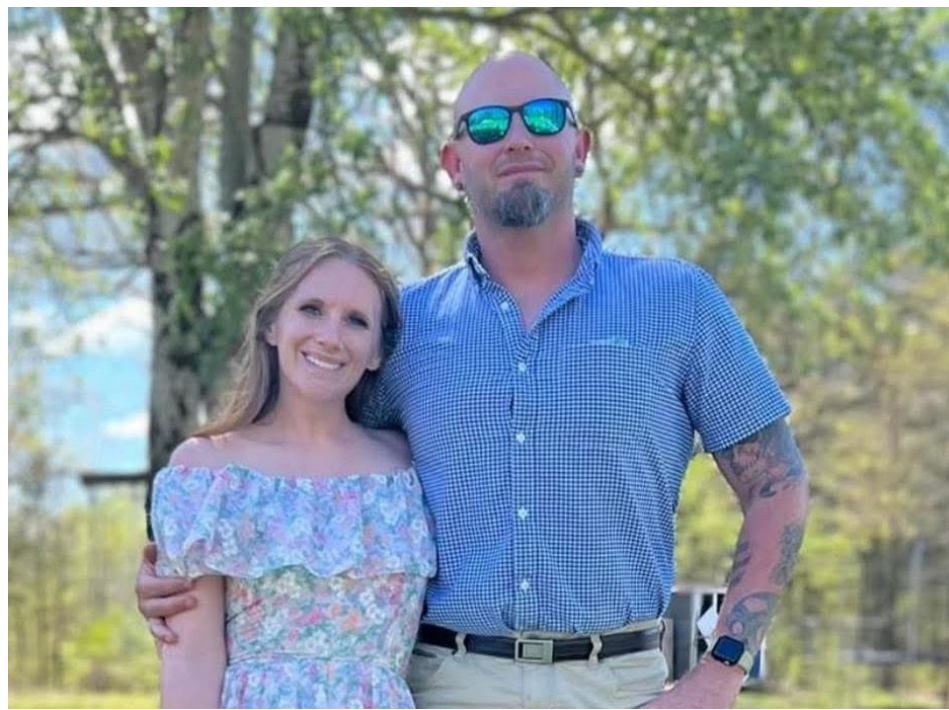
At Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central, Willis earned two All-State football selections and was the first Tennessee high school player nominated for Mr. Football as both a linebacker and a tailback.

He also scored 1,609 career points in basketball, helping transform the team District Champions by 2003, and earned all-

district honors in baseball.

Willis is the 16th Tennessee athlete inducted into the NFHS Hall of Fame. He closed his remarks with a message to anyone still finding their way.

"As long as you are breathing, there's still more that you can do about your situation," he said. "Whether it's high school, college or wherever it may be, just keep on pressing forward."



Above — Joshua Moore, pictured with wife Cheyenne, will participate in the 314-mile Ultra

Below, Left — LAVS racers make their way south along Highway 22 towards Clarksburg (2025). *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*

Below, Right — LAVS racers cross the railroad tracks on Paris Street, as they make their way toward Court Square (2025). *Jesse Joseph/Carroll County Observer*

Vol State Ultramarathon Begins This Week

Jesse Joseph
Editor

It's that time of the year again! Be on the lookout for more than a hundred people on foot this week along State Route 22 through Carroll County.

Runners in the Last Annual Vol-State Road Race (LAVS) will begin passing through Carroll County Thursday, July 9 through Saturday, July 11, as part of the 314-mile annual ultramarathon.

More than 120 runners are entered this year, some from as far away as Australia, making their way on foot from a starting point in Kentucky to a finish atop Sand Mountain in northeast Georgia.

Locally, the course brings

racers through McKenzie, down Highway 22 to Paris Street in Huntingdon, through downtown onto Lexington Street and back onto Highway 22, then south past Clarksburg into Henderson County.

Because the field spreads out over several days, the last runners are expected to clear the county late Saturday morning.

One of this year's entrants is from right here at home.

Joshua Moore, of the Marlboro community, spent years watching Vol-State runners come through the area before deciding to enter himself.

"I used to live on the route and saw the runners come through every year," Moore said. "Once I found out what the race was, I al-

ways wondered if I had the gusto to attempt it."

Moore said the toughest part likely won't be physical.

"I'm worried that I can't shed the thoughts of comforts back at home, or what if something happens and I'm out here chasing improbable pipe dreams," he said.

Because the race runs along active public roads, Moore asks drivers to be extra aware.

"The amount of people you see that don't see you is astounding," he said. "People are out here pushing themselves beyond the limits of what most seem imaginable and will be 24/7 for up to 10 days. Be supportive and respectful."

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ELECTION

Carroll County Sheriff Candidates Share Vision at Civic Center Forum

Jesse Joseph
Editor

HUNTINGDON, Tenn. — Dozens of Carroll Countians spent Tuesday evening, June 30, at the Sheriff's Forum, a town hall style event held at Carroll County Civic Center. *The McKenzie Banner* and *Carroll County Observer* organized the event, in which candidates for Sheriff answered questions submitted by members of the public. Retired Circuit Court Judge Donald Parish served as moderator.

Parish opened the proceedings with a brief history of the office itself. He traced the role of sheriff back to the Anglo-Saxon legal system of the 700s and 800s.

He explained that sheriffs were originally appointed by the monarch, and said that the roles they filled all those centuries ago remain much the same, today.

"Sheriffs are elected in 48 of the states and serve in about every county in the United States," Parish explained. "Those responsibilities remain much what they were in olden times: maintain public safety throughout the county, uphold the rule of law, and ensure the effective administration of justice."

The three candidates seeking to carry out those duties in Carroll County were seated on stage: Eric Sawyers, Ryan White, and Michael Smith.

Opening Statements

Each candidate was given three minutes to make opening remarks.

Sawyers framed his candidacy around community programs as much as law enforcement, outlining plans for a senior outreach program, a summer youth camp, church security assessments and neighborhood watch programs.

"I believe a successful sheriff's office not only focuses on public safety, but also on being of open service," he read from a statement. "These programs can be implemented without any added cost through grants and volunteers that have already come forward."

White drew on his tenure leading the McKenzie Police Department. He detailed his support for zoning to reduce response times, body cameras for deputies, invest in training, and expand programs such as "Shop with a First Responder".

"I believe a sheriff's office should be built on integrity, professionalism, and service," White said. "With 25 years of law enforcement experience and a proven record of leadership, I am ready to serve all of Carroll County as your next sheriff."

Smith touched on his background spanning law enforcement, local government and small

business ownership. He also gave his vision for the department.

"My vision as Sheriff is to put the people of Carroll County first," Smith said. "To lead with integrity, accountability, and transparency; support all deputies, corrections officers, and dispatchers; ensure employees receive proper training and equipment they need; and build a stronger Sheriff's Office through teamwork and professionalism."

Priorities

Parish asked the candidates which duties of the office they anticipated prioritizing, noting the sheriff's responsibilities range from animal enforcement and criminal investigations to prisoner transport, search and rescue, courthouse security and the service of legal papers.

Sawyers listed four areas he would focus on from day one.

"I will make it my mission to aggressively target drug dealers who are poisoning our communities," he said. He added that investing in deputies and corrections officers would be equally important. "When we take care of our employees, they are better able to serve the citizens of Carroll County."

White also put drug enforcement at the top of his list, and tied it to a broader philosophy of visible, proactive policing.

"The more that officers are seen and visible throughout the county, I believe that helps reduce crime," he said. "Training is huge. Deputies, dispatchers, jailers — everyone should go to more specialized trainings."

Smith said community involvement is what ties everything together.

"Putting the citizens first, listening, going out, visiting people — that makes a stronger community," he said. "Drugs is a big problem. My shift has always worked hard on that ever since I've been there."

The Budget

Parish asked the candidates to address how they view the role of sheriff when it comes to competing demands for public money.

Sawyers acknowledged he has not managed the sheriff's office budget as a whole, but said his experience in other roles has prepared him for the responsibility.

"I have managed equipment, training resources and departmental assets in positions such as shift sergeant, criminal investigator and evidence custodian," he said. "My goal is to provide the best possible service to the citizens without placing a burden on taxpayers."

White said his three and a half years managing the McKenzie Police Department's budget gave him a clear sense of where the money has to go first.

"You have to look at your resources — deputies, officers and jailers," he said.

"You've got to make sure that they're paid and taken care of, that way they can take care of the people in this community."

He said grants have made a measurable difference in McKenzie and could do the same county-wide.

"Those grants allowed us to buy equipment that we didn't have the money for otherwise," White said. "Grant money will help the budget go further and not put any kind of burden on the taxpayers."

Smith pointed to his experience running his own business and serving on the Hollow Rock board.

"I've had my own business and been able to budget," he said. "Working with the county commission is going to be the biggest asset."

Recruitment and Retention

Parish asked the candidates to share their views on recruiting and keeping well-qualified deputies.

Sawyers said the answer starts with how the sheriff leads.

"I believe retention starts with leadership," he said. "I will maintain an open-door policy so employees know their concerns are heard and addressed."

He said advancement should be based on merit, and that supporting employees through difficult moments matters as much as pay.

"Recognizing hard work, supporting employees after difficult incidents, treating every employee with respect goes a long way in reducing turnover," Sawyers said. "My goal is to build a sheriff's office where people want to work, want to stay, and are proud to serve."

White said the challenge in a rural department is that you often cannot compete with what larger agencies pay, so leadership has to fill the gap in other ways.

"You have to think outside the box," he said. "I didn't pick our new software [in McKenzie]. The guys in the department did. They're proud. They don't make as much as other people, but they feel like they have a part of it."

He also noted the hidden cost of losing experienced officers.

"When you lose a five-year officer or a ten-year officer, you lose so much institutional knowledge," White said. "It takes approximately nine months to hire and train a new officer."

Smith said the pipeline should start well before the hiring process.

"Starting in the schools, with SROs, reaching out to younger kids, seeing the ones that have potential," he said. "You can never have enough training. If there's free training out there, go seek it out."

Zoning and Response Times

Parish asked what could be done to improve emergency response times in the rural portions of the county.

White has made county-wide zoning a centerpiece of his campaign, and stated his case.

"The whole point of zoning is to get somebody there faster," he said. "Henry County has the same model. Their non-emergency response times are 12 to 13 minutes, their emergency response times are seven to 10 minutes. Everybody deserves a response."

Sawyers said the concept has merit but runs into a practical problem.

"In theory, zoning would be great, but the problem is you have to have more than three or four deputies on patrol at a time," he said. "I just think it ain't safe to put a deputy out by himself and expect him to respond to calls by himself."

Smith said the department has tried it before with mixed results.

"We have tried zoning in the past," he said. "In reality, it would work if you have the manpower."

Jail Programs

Parish asked the candidates to describe their views on programs at the Carroll County Jail designed to encourage rehabilitation and develop work skills in inmates.

Sawyers said the jail represents one of the biggest responsibilities of the office, and described two initiatives he has already been exploring.

"I've already, during this campaign, put a couple programs out there," he said. "A litter pickup crew with inmates — there's a grant that Carroll County already gets from that, so that's at no extra cost. And I've been approached about a Hunters for the Hungry program, where hunters bring their deer to the jail, and then they process it and give it back to the people that need it in Carroll County."

White said work release programs can change the trajectory of an inmate's life after release.

"If they have child support, court costs, fines, stuff like that, their child support comes out, their check comes back, and a certain percentage goes to court costs and fines," he said. "Now your victims are getting their money back, the county's getting their court costs, and these individuals have money to start over. This gives them some hope."

Smith pointed to programs already in place.

"The ministry in the jail goes a long way," he said. "Our GED program, and the second chance where they can go out and work — I think that's going to be beneficial to our county as a whole."

Mental Health

Parish asked the candidates about the growing number of people who arrive at the county jail in mental health crisis or without stable housing, and what can be done to address it.

Sawyers said the response has to start before anyone reaches a cell.

"Not every crisis should be treated as a criminal matter," he said. "Whenever possible, deputies should slow the situation down, use de-escalation techniques, and work to connect individuals with appropriate mental health resources instead of unnecessarily taking them to jail."

White was candid about the limits of what law enforcement can solve on its own.

"There are individuals who commit crimes just to go back to jail because they have mental illness issues and actually need to be somewhere else, but there's no help and no funds," he said. "There has to be more grants out there for mental health. I can't sit up here and give you a good answer, but I can assure you as sheriff I'll get into it and see."

Smith traced the problem to a policy decision made decades ago.

"Mental health has always been a big problem since they closed all the institutions down," he said. "There are people out there that really need long-term care, and they'll end up in our jail. I don't really know what the answer is."

Community Engagement

Parish asked the candidates about the role of the sheriff in community engagement efforts such as neighborhood watch programs.

Sawyers said neighborhood watch programs are a practical necessity given the size of the county and the number of deputies on patrol.

"It's a no-brainer with only three or four or five deputies on patrol in 600 square miles," he said. "As sheriff I will go around to all the communities and meet with you in the churches, restaurants, community centers, fire stations, wherever you want to meet. I'll come to you and I'll lead that."

White said community trust is the foundation of effective law enforcement and pointed to programs in McKenzie as a model.

"When the community can trust you, they're more willing to talk with you, and it just makes for a better lifestyle for everyone," he said. He added that he has already told his sergeant he wants the department to participate in National Night Out this year.

Smith said community involvement has always been a priority for him personally and offered a concrete suggestion.

"I'd like to see a tip line somewhere people can call

in tips," he said. "Most of your crimes, somebody else knows about them, and they're more apt to contact someone if you're involved in your community."

First Responders

Parish asked about the relationship between the sheriff's office and other first responders in the county.

Sawyers said maintaining healthy communication with first responders is crucial, and described one way he hopes to address it.

"I've already talked to our first responders throughout the county, our firemen, rescue squad guys, and it's a lack of communication," he said. "I've talked about putting together an annual first responders banquet for Carroll County, where all of us can get together, get to know each other, and train together."

White said unification is key, and the answer starts with getting everyone in the same room.

"I think we need to have meetings, get the chiefs from the fire departments together," he said. "What are your concerns? How do you think we could fix this? Come up as a collective group and figure it out."

Smith said relations with other first responders have been improving.

"Communication has been the key factor, but I think it's even gotten better," he said. "We've got a new EMA director and I think they're really trying to work towards building that gap between us."

Closing Statements

Each candidate was given two minutes for a closing statement.

White highlighted his training record and outlined a unifying goal for the department.

"Through my training, I have a total of 956 hours of specialized training, 256 of those in leadership," he said. "I would also like to bring dispatch, jailers and the sheriff's department all together as one. I think bringing everybody together would not only help morale and retention, but also help the citizens of this county."

Sawyers closed by returning to the theme that has defined his campaign.

"This campaign has never been about politics for me. It's about service," he said. "I will never forget that the sheriff's badge belongs to the people of Carroll County. I humbly ask for your vote and your support."

Smith thanked the crowd and had a word for the man currently holding the office.

"Our current sheriff has left us in pretty good shape," he said. "I've enjoyed working for him. Most of all I thank God — if it wasn't for him, none of this would be possible. I ask for your vote August 6."

Early voting runs July 17 through August 1. Election day is August 6, 2026.



Eric Sawyers



Ryan White



Michael A. Smith

PUBLIC RECORD

Carroll County General Sessions

General Sessions Judge Michael King heard several cases Wednesday, July 1, in Huntingdon. Cases involved drug-related offenses, probation violations, traffic charges, child abuse, and more.

The following cases resulted in pleas of guilty:

Shelby Bennett of Buena Vista pleaded guilty to failure to carry and exhibit a driver's license. The court assessed a \$100 fine.

Cody Allen Bradley of Huntingdon pleaded guilty to probation violation. The court sentenced Bradley to 11 months and 29 days, to be served in long-term inpatient treatment, including residential transitional living, intensive outpatient, and aftercare as recommended by the treatment facility.

Marlena Flores of McKenzie pleaded guilty to driving without a license. The court sentenced Flores to 30 days unsupervised probation.

Alexander Neal Gilliam of Bruceton pleaded guilty to resisting stop, arrest, or search involving a weapon and simple possession/casual exchange. The court assessed a \$250

fine, sentenced Gilliam to 11 months and 29 days on supervised probation until all conditions are met, then unsupervised probation for the balance. Tampering with evidence and evading arrest charges were dismissed.

Rachel Johnsonius of McKenzie pleaded guilty to probation violation. The court sentenced Johnsonius to two months and placed Johnsonius on supervised probation for the balance. Johnsonius is ordered to report to jail on July 10.

Christopher Maitland of Cedar Grove pleaded guilty to simple possession/casual exchange. The court assessed a \$250 fine, sentenced Maitland to 11 months and 29 days on supervised probation until all conditions are met, then unsupervised probation for the balance.

Ryan Tyler Mileski of Huntingdon pleaded guilty to simple possession/casual exchange and possession of unlawful drug paraphernalia. On each count, the court assessed a \$1,000 fine, sentenced Mileski to 11 months and 29 days on supervised probation. Mileski forfeited a Taurus .38, a Smith & Wesson SD9, and a

Diamondback AR-15 to the 24th Judicial District Drug Task Force. Charges of possession of a firearm with intent to go armed during a dangerous felony and methamphetamine possession or casual exchange were dismissed.

Toni Gail Pearson of Huntingdon pleaded guilty to failure to carry and exhibit a driver's license. The court placed Pearson on unsupervised probation.

Theotis Statin of McKenzie pleaded guilty to driving while license suspended. The court assessed a \$50 fine and sentenced Statin to six days of supervised probation until conditions are complete, then unsupervised probation upon payment of fine and costs. A light law violation was dismissed.

Darryl Walker of Humboldt pleaded guilty to theft of merchandise. The court sentenced Walker to 11 months and 29 days, ordered Walker to pay \$871 in restitution to Walmart Huntingdon at a minimum of \$50 per month, and ordered Walker to have no contact with Walmart Huntingdon. Walker is ordered to report to jail on July 10 at 6 p.m. to

begin serving consecutive weekends. After 90 days, if all conditions are satisfied, Walker may be transferred to unsupervised probation.

The following case was granted judicial diversion:

Kathryn E. Moon of Huntingdon was granted pre-trial diversion on a charge of theft of merchandise up to \$1,000. Moon is ordered to pay \$260.59 in restitution to Walmart, have no contact with Walmart, complete a cognitive behavioral training course, and remain on supervised probation until paid in full. The case is set for review on January 6, 2027.

The following cases were granted pre-trial diversion:

Coteschia Lavay Pearson of Bruceton was granted pre-trial diversion on a charge of attempted child abuse, neglect, or endangerment of a child eight years of age or younger. Pearson was placed on supervised probation for 11 months and 29 days, or until conditions are met, then unsupervised probation for the balance. The case is set for review

on June 23, 2027, and if successfully completed, the charge will be dismissed. A charge of misuse of 911 calls was dismissed.

Matthew Trent Weathers of Huntingdon was granted pre-trial diversion on a charge of attempted child abuse, neglect, or endangerment. Weathers was placed on supervised probation for 11 months and 29 days, or until all conditions are met, then unsupervised probation for the balance. Weathers is required to follow all directives of the Department of Children's Services in a related juvenile case. The case is set for review on June 23, 2027, and if successfully completed, the charge will be dismissed and expunged.

The following case was bound over to the Carroll County Grand Jury:

Dale William Foga of Cedar Grove was bound over on charges of Schedule IV drugs manufacturing, delivery, sale, or possession; possession of unlawful drug paraphernalia; possession of a firearm with intent to go armed during a dangerous felony;

and Schedule VI drugs manufacturing, delivery, sale, or possession.

The following cases were dismissed:

All charges against Robert Lee Bunce III of Milan were dismissed, including driving while license revoked and registration expired.

A probation violation charge against Charles M. Coffman of Cedar Grove was dismissed.

A criminal trespass charge against James Rowland Hinson of Huntingdon was dismissed.

A driving without a license charge against Mario Flores Mendoza of Sparta, N.C., was dismissed.

All charges against Brandon Tylor Smith Jr. of Huntingdon were dismissed, including registration law, driving while license revoked, and littering.

All charges against James Derrick Warbritton of Huntingdon were dismissed across two cases, including a probation violation, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, domestic assault, and interference with emergency calls.



The following marriage licenses were issued in Carroll County in June, 2026.

- Angel Elayne Furst, 22, of Buena Vista, and Fischer-Blake Hayden Wortham, 25, of Buena Vista. (June 23)

- Carter Benton Cary, 23, of Huntingdon, and Anna Claire Batte, 23, of Huntingdon. (June 23)

- Cade Braxton Crews, 23, of Huntingdon, and Macey Elizabeth Culbreath, 24, of Huntingdon. (June 19)

- Madison Paige Morris, 21, of Hollow Rock, and Joseph Raymond Humphreys Jr, 22, of Hollow Rock. (June 26)

Health Inspection Scores

The following health inspections were conducted in Carroll County between July 1 and July 6, 2026:

Heritage Inn Motel, 11790 Lexington Street, Huntingdon — Hotels/Motels Routine Inspection — Score: 96

ABC Romper Room Kitchen, 96 Sycamore Lane, McKenzie — Food Service Routine

Inspection — Score: 99

ABC Romper Room GDC, 96 Sycamore Lane, McKenzie — Child Care Facilities Routine Inspection — Result: Approval

ABC Romper Room GDC #2, 96 Sycamore Lane, McKenzie — Child Care Facilities Routine Inspection — Result: Approval

Carroll County Sheriff's Office Reports

Driving Without a License

Deputy Alex Sherwood reported on 07/05/2026 that a traffic stop was conducted on Highway 22 South in Huntingdon for disregarding a stop sign. The driver, Diego Silvestre, was found to have no valid driver's license and no proof of financial responsibility. Silvestre was determined to be an undocumented immigrant from Guatemala. He was transported to Carroll County Jail and an ICE detainer was placed on him.

Reckless Endangerment Involving a Weapon

Deputy Heather Townes reported on 07/04/2026 that deputies responded to a residence at 5840 Maytown Road in Buena Vista regarding damage to a home. Deputies observed a quarter-sized hole in the back side of the residence that went through the vinyl siding and the OBS board. The hole appeared to be from a falling bullet fired into the air at a downward angle. The bullet could not be recovered due to how far it went into the structure. The hole had initially been noticed on 06/30/2026 but was thought to be lawn mower damage until further inspection revealed the extent of the damage. The suspect remains unknown.

Vicious Dog / Dog Bite

Deputy James Boaz reported on 07/03/2026 that a woman on Main Street East in Atwood contacted the Carroll County Sheriff's Office to report a dog bite that occurred during her morning walk. The victim stated that while walking her seven-month-old blue healer puppy, a brown boxer/pit bull mix from a nearby residence charged and attacked her puppy. While attempting to break up the fight, she fell into a ditch and injured her shoulder, neck, and upper body. Deputies identified the dog's owner, Stephanie Fowler, and noted this was not the first complaint at the residence. Fowler was cited for Vicious Dog and given a ten-day booking notice, requiring her to report to jail no later than 07/12/2026.

Theft / Criminal Trespass — Buena Vista

Deputy Heather Townes reported on 07/02/2026 that deputies responded to a call on Ball Creek Road in Buena Vista regarding a person trespassing and stealing from a property. A farmer hired by the property owner witnessed James Williams drive onto the property in a black GMC pickup and called deputies. Upon arrival, deputies found Williams on the property near an aluminum camper that had been largely stripped of its

metal over what appeared to be multiple visits. Metal cutting materials were found in the cab of Williams' truck and aluminum was found in the truck bed. The property owner confirmed he had not given Williams permission to be on the property. Williams was charged with criminal trespassing, theft of property under \$1,000, vandalism, and driving on a revoked license.

Domestic Assault — Huntingdon

On 06/30/2026, a woman reported to the Carroll County Sheriff's Office that David Pleasant had hit her in the side of the head and spit in her face several times at a residence on Holmes Mill Road. The report stated that she had visible bruising behind her ear. David Pleasant was arrested for domestic assault.

Vandalism — Hollow Rock

Deputy Dillon Crowe reported on 06/28/2026 that deputies responded to a vandalism call on Ephesus Church Road in Hollow Rock. Upon arrival, the Scott Turman stated that toilet paper had been thrown in the trees and around vehicles, and that chairs, toilet paper, and a gas can with gas in it had been thrown into his pool, damaging the pool

pump and contaminating the water with gasoline. The victim estimated the damage at \$600. He believed it was his son, based on live location data. Deputies located the son and a female companion, who both admitted to the incident. The son admitted to throwing items into the pool, stating he intended it as a harmless prank. After speaking with Turman, no charges were filed.

Simple Assault / Resisting Arrest — Huntingdon

Deputy Dustin McClure reported on 06/26/2026 that deputies responded to a report of an assault in progress on Smyrna Road in Huntingdon, with the suspect allegedly armed with a knife. The victim, Shemile Adams, stated that Eric Parker came onto his property following a nearby vehicle accident and pulled a pocketknife on him in a threatening manner during an argument. When deputies located Parker, he repeatedly refused to comply with commands and threw an object into a nearby wooded area. A Smith & Wesson pocket knife was later recovered from that area. Parker was arrested and charged with Simple Assault, Resisting Arrest, and Attempted Tampering with Evidence, with bond set at \$2,500 per charge.

Got any news?

Give us a call!
731-535-1634

McKenzie Police Reports

Theft / Lost Property

Sgt. Kyle Beauchamp reported on 07/05/2026 that a resident on David Street contacted police to report her son's iPad missing after he left it on top of her car while the family went to watch Fourth of July fireworks. The "Find My iPad" feature pointed to the middle of the road, but officers could not physically locate it. It is unknown whether the

device was run over and washed away by heavy rains or picked up by an unknown person. The iPad was entered into NCIC as lost/stolen.

Warrant Arrest

Officer Timothy Dillon reported on 07/05/2026 that a traffic stop on Highland Drive led to the arrest of a passenger, Brian Keith Fair, who was found to have an active Violation

of Probation warrant out of Madison County. Fair was transported to Carroll County Jail to await transfer to Madison County Jail.

Possible Assault

Officer Dalton Raspberry reported on 07/03/2026 that officers responded to a report of a possible assault at a residence on Linden Street. Upon arrival, officers found the victim on the floor of a shop behind the residence with a face

full of blood. No weapon was located, no witnesses observed an assault, and the victim was too intoxicated to recall what happened. He was transported to Baptist Memorial Hospital in Huntingdon. No charges were filed at the time of the report.



Near & Far

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Regional Headlines

Mother arraigned in deaths of two children

KENTON — Jessica Landrie Harris and 11-year-old McKenna Young. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation led the case at the request of the 27th Judicial District Attorney General's office.

School board rejects consolidation plan

TRENTON — The Gibson County Special School District's Board of Trustees voted against consolidating elementary and middle schools in the northern part of the district, opting instead to focus on improving existing school buildings.

Humboldt approves 15-cent property tax increase

HUMBOLDT — The Humboldt Mayor and Board of Aldermen approved a 15-cent property tax increase for the 2026-27 budget, raising the rate from \$1.8725 to \$2.025 per \$100 of assessed value. Mayor Arthur Boykin said the additional revenue is needed to clean up the city, pave streets and address a decade without an increase.

Fatal officer-involved shooting closes I-40 near Jackson

JACKSON — The TBI is investigating a fatal officer-involved shooting on westbound Interstate 40 in Madison County involving Jason Michael Trevino, 37, the suspect in a child abduction. Troopers pursued Trevino's vehicle before an hours-long standoff; the child was released safely before officers shot and killed Trevino after he brandished a weapon.

Utility protections lifted after heat wave prompts disconnect pause

CAMDEN — Benton County Electric System resumed normal Pay As You Go service and disconnects Monday after temporarily suspending them during last week's dangerous heat, a precaution meant to keep customers connected to power during the hottest stretch of the summer so far.

Jackson to receive AARP grant for safer crosswalks

JACKSON — The city has been selected for a 2026 AARP Community Challenge Grant that will fund safer crosswalks at two locations with heavy pedestrian traffic, part of \$163,000 the organization is investing across 15 Tennessee projects this year.

Woman charged in deputy's death waives preliminary hearing

DRESDEN — Khristi Derrick Bonham, has Dawn Cunningham, waived her preliminary hearing, according to court officials. charged with murder in the January shooting death of Weakley County Deputy

Milan hosts community celebration for America's 250th

MILAN — VFW Post families out for food, 4780 held a two-day games and fireworks in celebration for the nation's 250th birthday, drawing Gibson County.

Convenience store owners indicted on drug, weapons charges

PARIS — Jay Sukhadia, 29, and his father, Dharmendra "Tony" Sukhadia, 60, who own Patriot Mart and Fuel Pro in Paris, were arrested Tuesday after a Henry County grand jury indicted them on drug and weapons charges. Jay Sukhadia faces two counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell and a weapons charge tied to marijuana and firearms found during a November search of the stores. Tony Sukhadia was charged with selling a hemp-derived cannabinoid product to a minor as well as drug and weapons offenses. Both were booked into the Henry County jail on \$100,000 bond.

Headlines Across Tennessee

TBI names victim in fatal National Guard shooting

MEMPHIS — The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has identified Tyrin Johnson, 20, of Nashville, as the man killed early Sunday in a shooting involving National Guard members in downtown Memphis. The incident remains under investigation.

Former state senator Jim Tracy dies at 69

NASHVILLE — The Republican, who represented Middle Tennessee in the state Senate, has died. Tributes have poured in from former colleagues across state government.

Heat wave linked to six deaths in Knox County

KNOXVILLE — The Knox County Regional Forensic Center says it is investigating six deaths that may be tied to last week's extreme heat, as officials urge residents to take precautions during ongoing hot weather.

Apartment fire displaces 70 residents

CHATTANOOGA — An "all-hands-on-deck" call brought a large response from Chattanooga Fire Department crews after flames tore through an apartment complex, leaving dozens of residents temporarily without housing.

Love Kitchen closed after fire, leaving residents without meals

KNOXVILLE — A fire residents who rely on it for food are now turning to other organizations for help. Friday morning forced the beloved community kitchen to temporarily shut down, and thousands of Knoxville

Drug bust nets 68 kilograms of cocaine

NASHVILLE — Agents multiple search warrants in intercepted a semi-truck that had traveled from Texas, leading to Nashville and the seizure of cocaine, 36 firearms, body armor and cash.

National Headlines

Trump vows US will "win" standoff with Iran as Khamenei is laid to rest

WASHINGTON — President Trump said the United States will prevail in its confrontation with Iran, one way or another, as Iran held a massive public funeral for its late supreme leader following last month's strikes.

Trump heads to NATO summit amid allied friction over Iran operation

ANKARA, Turkey — The U.S. military campaign against Iran, opening a new dispute over burden-sharing within the alliance. president arrived in Turkey for NATO talks facing pushback from European allies reluctant to back the

China conducts rare submarine ballistic missile launch

BEIJING — China based nuclear capability announced it fired a ballistic missile from a nuclear submarine into the Pacific, a show of sea- that comes just ahead of the NATO summit.

Preliminary hearing held for Charlie Kirk shooting suspect

SALT LAKE CITY — Tyler Robinson, charged with aggravated murder in the killing of the conservative commentator, appeared in a Utah courtroom as prosecutors presented video evidence from the shooting.

Couple who scaled Empire State Building spire arraigned

NEW YORK — month facing burglary, Angela Nikolau and Ivan Kuznetsov, the daredevil couple who climbed to the top of the Empire State Building's antenna and staged a marriage proposal, appeared in court this reckless endangerment and trespassing charges. Investigators believe the pair slept inside the building overnight before the stunt; their next court date is Aug. 24.

Economy shows resilience as Fed prepares for key meeting

WASHINGTON — New energy costs tied to the Iran conflict weigh on consumers. The Federal Reserve's policy committee meets this week to weigh the interest rate outlook. Treasury Department data point to strong business investment and labor market resilience in early 2026, even as elevated