HARDIN

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hands-on activities inside the classroom and out-

"We went and presented to little kids at New Highland (Elementary), Curry said. "We could pick the activity that they did as long as it was educational, but it had to be agriculture-related.'

Lessons and learning is done primarily through hands-on activities rather than lectures, taking notes or watching videos.

Hall, who is the Agriculture Education Department chairman, Farm to School project manager and National Association of Agricultural Educators facilitator and ambassador, provides resources for his students.

Salem, a black cat pops up in various places in the classroom, making herself comfortable just about anywhere. Two kittens are residing in a spacious cage. They love any and all attention, are very playful, and it is not unusual to see them climbing to the top peeping through trying to entice someone with their cuteness overload.

"We have a lot of resources," Sanders said referencing the cats. "We have the cats, the Mars Farms, a bunch of activities we can do.'

Kendall Lambert said another is a hydroponics lab in a separate room, where they are growing tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers that will be served in school lunches.

"With cities growing, we're running out of farm space, so hydroponics allows you to build up and inside," Lambert said.

Sanders is one of the very few in the class that lives on a farm. Her family raises beef cattle.

Curry has plans of becoming a veterinary technician while Lambert is thinking either a veterinarian or a medical doc-

"The way we do things here and what we teach can be applicable for any career you go into," Hall said.

The method of teaching involves problem solving and communication.

"Agriculture is our ship," Hall went on to say, "but it's those critical skills, those soft skills that lead you to think outside the box, to not be held in different constraints."

Hall said the students are given space, freedom and they're allowed to breathe and think the way they want to think.

"Yeah, we're really hands-on," Curry said. "I don't think we've ever taken notes. Yesterday was the first day that we actually wrote in our notebooks.

It's that approach to intellect combination that has made John Hardin's Ag Program so successful, Hall said.

Along one wall is what looks like eight fish tanks with all of the guppies hiding. Instead, those are the Mars Farms, Sanders said.

Inside each tank is a small pod with a tiny plant growing. Each pod is connected to a computer which allows students, through specific coding, to control heat, humidity and lighting inside the tanks.

This is all part of a partnership with NASA whereby the environment of Mars is replicated to study what is necessary for successful plant life.

Hall reminds the students it's their classroom, not his, and he will adapt to them, their needs and how they best learn. Hall doesn't ask them to adapt to him.

"I figure out what works best for them and then I'll do it," Hall said.

Aiyana Cox gives a lot of the state winners there," credit to their instructor.



GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

Saylor Edinger, from left, Aiyana Cox, Kendall Lambert and Kaylynn Curry are checking the pH level in urine specimens Tuesday in Jeremy Hall's ag class at John Hardin High School. The program was recognized Monday as the KAAE State Winner for Outstanding Secondary Agriculture Education Program.



GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

Looking like a rare mushroom, these pods are growing plants inside one of the Mars Farms in the ag program at John Hardin High School. Through a partnership with NASA students are given information to replicate atmospheric conditions on Mars. John Hardin's ag program was recognized Monday as the State Winner of the **KAAE Outstanding Secondary Agriculture Education**



GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

Jaselynn Shelby, left, and Nikyla Stevenson are measuring the pH level in a urine sample that came from a dog at the Hardin County Animal Shelter. They are part of John Hardin High School's ag program which was recognized Monday as the State Winner of the KAAE Outstanding Secondary Agriculture Education Program.



MJ is one of two kittens in a spacious kennel inside the classroom of Jeremy Hall's ag program at John Hardin High School. The program was recognized Monday as the top agriculture education program in the state by Kentucky Association of Agricultural Educators. Students love to hold MJ or his sister.

"The support system region, we'll go up with we have," Cox said. "They want you to do your best in everything, they will push you forward, but it for the wins. It's done they will also support you for the students, to make every step of the way.'

Cox said Hall won't simply give you an assignment and send you off on your own to accomplish the task.

"They're right behind you, giving you ideas. They don't expect you to do your best without being in your corner," Cox said.

With the honor of being awarded and named KAAE State Winner, the Bulldogs move forward to the NAAE Region 4 con-

This region is comprised of state winners from Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan

and Kentucky. "We'll go up against

the five finalists at the national."

Hall said they don't do them better, to help them to grow and become leaders, to gain skills they will use for the rest of their

"We're different, we're a small school," Hall said. "We're an urban school."

The schools John Hardin faces have much larger agriculture programs. John Hardin's ag program, he believes, has redefined what ag programs are supposed to look like.

"I could not be more proud of them," Hall said, "and I think I have the best students in the

Greg Thompson can be reached at 270-505-1414 or gthompson@ Hall said. "If we win the thenewsenterprise.com.

State launches campaign to promote teaching profession

The Kentucky Department of Education has launched a new campaign to elevate the teaching profession, celebrate edueration of teachers.

"Recruiting and retainone of the most important things we can do for Kentucky's students," said Education Commissioner Robbie Fletcher, according to a KDE news release. "Through our latest marketing efforts, we're shining a spotlight on the incredible educators who make a difference every day. We aim to motivate future teachers and ignite a passion for education in those who will shape the next generation of learners."

The campaign, part of the department's GoTeachKY initiative, includes statewide bill-

commercial and a redesigned website offering resources for both current and aspiring teachers.

Billboards feature 21 cators across the state GoTeachKY ambassaand inspire the next gen- dors— educators from across the commonwealth recognized for ing great teachers is their commitment and excellence in teaching. These ambassadors serve as the public face of the campaign, showcasing the dedication and passion that define Kentucky's educator work-

The television commercial highlights the powerful role teachers play in students' lives and will be broadcast on networks and digital platforms across the state.

As part of the campaign, KDE also has launched a redesigned GoTeachKY website. The site serves as a centralized hub for information

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP boards, a new television on teaching certification, scholarship and mentorship opportunities, and pathways for school districts to cultivate future educators from within their communities. It also offers resources for current teachers, including guidance on National Board certification, rank changes and professional development programs.

"We are thrilled to launch our new website, which brings together the best features from both the original Education Professional Standards Board and GoTeachKY websites," said Meredith Brewer, KDE's associate commissioner in the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness. "This consolidation ensures a more streamlined, user-friendly experience, offering easier access to all the information our educator workforce needs."

DRIVE

FROM PAGE A1

Springfield Road connec-

opportunity to get the third quarter next year, new outdoor concert venue open, then we'll have a good ingress, egress from both sides of that park," Gregory said. "We've had some really good discussions so when we get it designed we hope to fund it really quickly."

Gregory noted "really quickly" could mean two to four years. The state legislature is headed for a budget session next year and if the project isn't on the state's list for that session, it would be another two years before ated behind the recent-

another budget session.

With the bid being accepted, Gregory said he expects construction crews to be on site "within the month."

"We hope Commerce "When we do have the Drive is open by the which is when we hope the concert venue will be open as well," Gregory said. "It's a little premature to give a date on when we expect it to be done. More than likely it will be done before the concert venue will be done, but I don't know how much quicker it will be done."

IN OTHER BUSINESS

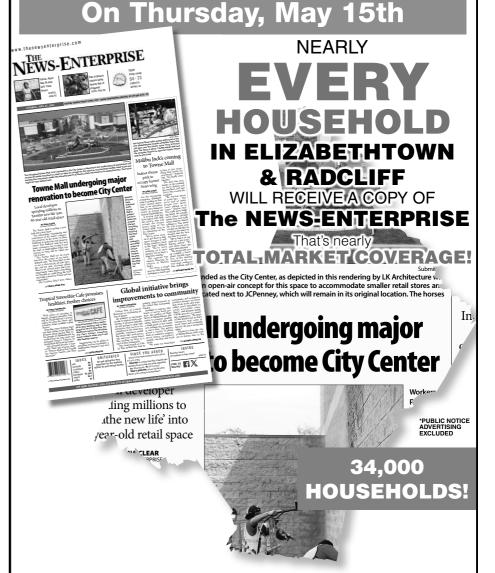
Council approved a zoning amendment to property at 475 Hodgenville Road, which is situ-

ly opened Dunkin on Lincoln Parkway, from regional commercial to high density residential for a planned apartment complex.

It accepted a bid for \$69,900 from Five Star Commercial Roofing to replace the State Theater's roof. It was the only bid but was well below the \$400,000 budget, Gregory said.

The city also accepted a \$756,400 grant from the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority for work completed in its Leitchfield Road sewer lines upgrade near the T.J. Patterson Industrial

Gina Clear can be reached at 270-505-1418 or gclear@thenewsenterprise.



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