

OWEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On July 4, 2026, the United States will celebrate its 250th birthday commemorating two and a half centuries of American history. Inter-twined within that celebration will be the 206th birthday of Owen County. Our own history features Owen Countians who fought in the Revolutionary War for America's freedom from tyranny; and each year on July 4, amidst parades, picnics, and the thunderous brilliance of fireworks painting the sky, each American is reminded of the significance of our cherished history and the obligation to preserve its story for future generations. Owen County's pride in



BONNIE STRASSELL

America and in the men and women who fought and continue to fight for our freedom is demonstrated by their patriotic speeches, their displays of the American flag and in family stories of their ancestors who played a crucial role in establishing America as a free and independent nation. Festivals, bonfires, parades and the firing of cannon and muskets accompanied the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. After the war, Congress lacked money to pay their soldiers and so they granted western lands to those who fought in the War of Independence. Some of those battle-hardened patriots received land in what is today Owen County. In 1781 Jacob Hunter served as an Indian spy and fought under Colonel Daniel Boone at Fort Boonesbor-

ough during an Indian attack. He was part of the reinforcements who helped bury the Kentuckians slaughtered at the Battle of Blue Licks and marched with General George Rogers Clark to attack Indian villages at Old Chillicothe and Piqua. Jacob received land in the Owen County area for his service, and in 1817 he settled his family near Twin Creek. Enos Hardin, Sr., fought in the War of Independence and survived the harsh winter at Valley Forge. He was granted lands in the Owen County area, and as early as 1807, he owned a plantation on the Kentucky river in Monterey. The original Hardin home still stands and remains in the Hardin family. Henry Sparks was a personal guard to George Washington during the Revolutionary War. He accom-

panied Washington and participated in campaigns in the summer and fall of 1777; and after the war Henry was granted 1,000 acres in the Monterey area. This land was eventually known as Sparks Bottoms. William Buck Forsee fought in the Revolutionary War; and in 1807 he moved his family to Owen County on lands he was awarded for his service to the American cause. The Forsees are well-known in the county and much of that same original land grant remains in the family. Other Owen County names such as Searcy, Stamper, Minor, Stivers, Toon, Vallandigham and Maddox are listed on the rolls of Revolutionary soldiers; and many of their descendants remain in the county today. After the Second Continental Congress unanimously approved the final

wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, a handwritten copy was sent a few blocks away to the print shop of John Dunlap. Throughout the night, Dunlap printed about 200 broadsides for distribution. The first formal public readings of the document took place simultaneously on July 8, at noon in three locations: Philadelphia, where it was read in the yard of present-day Independence Hall, Trenton, New Jersey and Easton, Pennsylvania. The 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were all educated men of means. However, they valued their freedom more than their security. The last paragraph of the Declaration is a poignant reminder to all Americans of the firm resolve of these patriots and their determination to conquer or die. "For the support of this

Declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." History is a fragile thing. It can be destroyed by outside forces or by those within a country. It is up to each and every one of us to do our part and to stand firm and defeat those who strive to erase the history of America from the hearts and minds of the people. On the Fourth of July 2025, as we gather with family and friends to celebrate America, its culture, its traditions, and most importantly of all, its rich history, let it be proclaimed throughout all generations that the United States of America shall endure: "one nation under GOD, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

KAYS BRANCH AND BEYOND

BY WANDA NEW

It doesn't seem possible to be July 4 already. Bee Spicer always said it was a fast downhill to the end of the year after this holiday had come. Seems like now the whole year is a fast trip. Chris and Joel and Natalie took Sophie to her new home for four years of college at American university in Washington D.C. over the weekend. She was to move into her dorm on the 29th but I couldn't reach them for details. They probably did some sightseeing there before she could move in. Trina has hopes of getting her house footers in this week if rain or other issues don't prevent it again. She went to Forks of Elkhorn to spend some time with son Eric at his fireworks tent there as the family wasn't having their usual Sunday supper gathering because the family is all in different places. Mark and Jennifer were spending the night at Clifty Falls and celebrating his 58th birthday. On Thursday Mark and 3 other readers took part in a poetry reading at the Library at Frankfort. There was about 70 people in attendance, so it was a successful event. Richard Taylor was also a reader. Hannah missed this event as she was in Jackson, Maine for a wellness retreat. After the pandemic she had taken two online writing classes with the lady who is doing this wellness retreat, so she decided to take a trip up that direction and visit some friends who she had worked with in Frankfort years ago who now live in New York. They took a boat ride on the Erie Canal which was nice. They toured George Eastman Kodak Museum in Rochester, N.Y. which was very interesting. She did have a few glitches in traveling, but she is a very much travelled lady and handled it well. She decided to go through Canada on the way to Maine where they

stopped her at the border and asked to see her passport. She had not originally planned this route, so she did not have her passport on her. She explained to the guy she had been thru there a few years back with her passport, so he was able to look her up on the computer system and see that it was still good, so he let her pass thru. Thanks to the information system on computers just about anything can be documented these days! The person on the exit side wasn't quite as easy to deal with but she was able to leave the country and continue her merry way. She said that 20 years ago she camped her way across country for seven weeks I think, to go out West so she is a seasoned traveler. That was before GPS too. I would not want to travel that far alone! Her cell phone would not work in Canada so it could not show her maps, but some nice people drew her a map where she needed to go. Most of the people there speak French, but she did find someone who spoke English to help her. She and her friends were going to an outdoor music event on Sunday with African music, so she has had a big variety of entertainment. One delicious thing she had was a maple soft serve with maple "dust" which is maple syrup formulated into crystals, sounds yummy. Vermont is where a lot of maple syrup is made. Sounds like a great trip. Fay is happy that her corn and gardens are looking so good. She tried growing Brussels sprouts but some kind of bug likes the taste of them. She has had to water her growing things and her beautiful flowers lately after the dry spell and very hot weather. Noah Ambrose is cutting more of her hay it dried good with almost 100

degrees last week. It was a dangerously hot week for people who had to work outside. Ray, Rick and Tim Jones all survived the hottest week of the year without having heat strokes and finally got all their hay baled and in the barns without any rain on it. Fay finally agreed to get a kitten to grow up to maybe help deter the ground squirrel population she has eating up everything and digging holes in yard. The kitten is slowly getting more adjusted to her so hopefully it will prove to be a good decision to get it. Fay told me she had Never in all the many years, over 50, of raising cattle been to the cattle sale. They had someone haul them. Her brother Gary came and they went to the sale at Owenton market so she got to see how it works. I always liked going to watch when our cows sold. I never was sure what the price was at any time or who bought what, they move so fast! She enjoyed seeing the process and they had a delicious meal at the stockyards. Bridget has been babysitting grandson Xavier who is already 5 months old, hard to believe. She is working at the Frankfort school some days with the Summer Feed program where they hand-out a week's worth of breakfast and lunch for 700-800 kids. It's a big project. Patrick Kennedy finally finished his little pile of wood splitting about 20 minutes a day so he didn't get too hot. Now on to more fun things! Tuesday, he went to N. Ky. to Ludlow-Bromley Yacht club Barge on the river where friends he lived near and went to school with many years ago get together about once a month to eat and catch up with each other. It's always a fun day. One day he helped

Charlie build a casket, they use some Glue and special rose head clinch nails. That afternoon he attended the Hemmings Motor News Magazine's Great Race, A 3,000-mile drive of cars at least 50 years old and some very early 1900's. It's a timed 5- or 6-day race (rally) that made a stop in Frankfort (about half way of the trip) and lined up on Broadway to show off their cars. His first car was a '31 Chevy and later a '48 Ford so he enjoys seeing all the different cars. John and Tona along with grandkids Evan, Maddie, Kitty, Gus and her daughter Beth spent the week at Cowan Creek music workshop event at Whitesburg. It was a hot challenge for sure with the high temperatures but there were some places they could cool off. Maddie sat in on an advanced Jam session, she is doing good. Kitty made it thru the guitar class this year. She is making progress too. Tona had an opportunity sponsored by some company to paint a picture of the stage performance but had not come prepared for that but luckily someone loaned her paint and brushes so she was able to accept the challenge. They had a great week together despite the heat. This next Friday they will be playing a set at AMA on Elkhorn for a fundraiser for a horse rescue, music from 3-9 pm. I am almost finished trimming and mowing all around my cabin and lake. Ray bushhogged everything he could get to, so it is looking so pretty I am calling it my Park. Early morning is the only time to be able to work on it. The 4 ducks I have there are very entertaining. I try to feed them corn and bird seed but when they realize I have

thrown bread in the lake for the fish they go awkwardly hurrying down the bank to be the first to find the bread. It looks like duck aerobics as they try to fast "walk on water" to beat each other to the next morsel and almost fight each other for a bite. When it's gone, they scurry or waddle back up the bank to finish their own snack. They often turn tails to the sky and heads down to find something on the lake bottom; I have to laugh every time they do it. And they take "baths" and splash and splash and loudly flap their

wings to dry. It's fun to watch them. Simple pleasures of life! I stopped at the New Leash on Life store location on St. Clair in Frankfort one day last week. It is set up beautifully and run by volunteers. All proceeds go to support the Humane Society/ dog shelter. They often have 50% off everything in store. Check it out. Look for something positive in each day, even if some days you have to look a little harder! Have a safe holiday weekend.

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**LEGAL NOTICE**

**NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF BUDGET ORDINANCE**  
**OWEN COUNTY FISCAL COURT**  
**Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

**BUDGET SUMMARY**  
AN ORDINANCE Relating to the Annual Budget and Appropriations.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE FISCAL COURT OF OWEN COUNTY, KENTUCKY:

SECTION ONE: The following budget is adopted for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the amounts stated are appropriated for the purposes indicated.

General Fund		
5000	GENERAL GOVERNMENT	2,611,655.99
5100	PROTECTION TO PERSONS AND PROPERTY	2,438,161.19
5200	GENERAL HEALTH AND SANITATION	346,060.76
5300	SOCIAL SERVICES	4,098,336.46
5400	RECREATION AND CULTURE	286,172.00
6100	ROADS	
7100	GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS	95,000.00
7600	OTHER COUNTY LIABILITIES	8,000.00
8000	CAPITAL PROJECTS	1,718,539.66
9100	GENERAL SERVICES	22,425.00
9200	CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS	88,431.68
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	
9500	DISTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER GOVT AGENCIES	
Total		<b>11,712,782.74</b>
Road Fund		
6100	ROADS	3,602,772.46
7500	BORROWED MONEY	26,000.00
9200	CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS	42,900.20
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	
Total		<b>3,671,672.66</b>
Jail Fund		
5000	GENERAL GOVERNMENT	
5100	PROTECTION TO PERSONS AND PROPERTY	389,569.25
9100	GENERAL SERVICES	5,075.00
9200	CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS	
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	
9400	FRINGE BENEFITS- EMPLOYERS SHARE	36,314.00
Total		<b>430,958.25</b>
OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS		
5200	GENERAL HEALTH AND SANITATION	
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	235,629.98
Total		<b>235,629.98</b>
TRANSIENT TAX		
5400	RECREATION AND CULTURE	50,500.00
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	
Total		<b>50,500.00</b>
E-911 CHECKING		
5100	PROTECTION TO PERSONS AND PROPERTY	131,222.45
9200	CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS	
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	
Total		<b>131,222.45</b>
COUNTY CLERK PERMANENT STORAGE FEE		
5100	PROTECTION TO PERSONS AND PROPERTY	39,444.35
Total		<b>39,444.35</b>
MONTERERY FUNDS		
5000	GENERAL GOVERNMENT	47,167.73
Total		<b>47,167.73</b>
CDBG		
5300	SOCIAL SERVICES	
8000	CAPITAL PROJECTS	1,250,000.00
9200	CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS	
Total		<b>1,250,000.00</b>
RESTRICTED FUND		
9100	GENERAL SERVICES	
9300	TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	992,127.16
Total		<b>992,127.16</b>
Total Budget Appropriations		<b>18,561,505.32</b>
Adopted this 24th day of June, 2025		
 TODD WOODYARD, COUNTY JUDGE/EXECUTIVE		
<b>NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY</b> All interested persons and organizations in Owen County are hereby notified that a copy of the county's adopted budget in full is available for public inspection at the Office of the County Judge/Executive during normal business hours.		