

Celebrating 156 years 1869-2024

The Woodford Sun

157th YEAR - No. 12 — 10 Pages

Versailles, Kentucky

March 20, 2025

\$1.00



A BLOOD MOON WAS SEEN IN VERSAILLES during eclipse totality around 3 a.m. on Friday, March 14. The total lunar eclipse — the first in three years — featured a “blood worm moon,” so named for the reddish hue of its glow and the time of year it’s occurring, according to NPR. (Photo by Bill Caine)

Neighbors oppose Nonesuch zone change

By **BOB VLACH**
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

A zone change request in the small community of Nonesuch was met with opposition from neighbors who voiced concern about changing the rural character of the area during a public hearing on March 13.

Describing Nonesuch as a unique and beautiful agricultural community, neighbor Natalie Blake said, “Many of us who live here intentionally chose this area as a place to enjoy nature, farming ... peace, privacy — things that you don’t get with an ongoing development.”

Attorney Bill Moore, representing property owner Bogdon Svintozelsky, described the request to rezone 49.07 acres at 4750 Fords Mill Road from A-1 agricultural to A-4 small community as “a very simple zone change,” because this property is “right in the center of the small community district.”

While the current request only proposes to develop two 1-acre small community residential lots, Blake described rezoning 49 acres as “a backdoor attempt” for more development in the future. Other neighbors shared her concern, describing problems with water pressure and dangerous conditions for motorists who travel on the area’s rural roads. “... Every new development increases

traffic up and down twisting, winding, shoulder-less Fords Mill Road,” said Anne Backe, who lives on nearby Patterson Road. That was also a concern of other neighbors who farm in the area, including Jim Mansfield and Stockton Stivers.

The reality that the acres being rezoned could be developed into multiple residential lots “would, absolutely, start the beginning of the downfall of the quiet Nonesuch community,” Ben Stivers told the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission.

In response, Moore said he understands the heart-felt emotions expressed by the neighbors, but emphasized this zone change allowing residential development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to table a decision on the zone change request to consider what they heard and information they received during the public hearing.

In-family conveyance

The commission unanimously approved an in-family conveyance plat (Jacqueline A. Manzo, wife to Mark Manzo, husband) subdividing 57.752 acres on Carpenter Pike into a 33.635-acre lot at 900 Carpenter Pike and a 24.3-acre lot at 1402 Carpenter Pike.

See **NONESUCH** p. 3

Rail Explorers offices burglarized, vandalized and warning left

By **SCOTT WHITE**
MANAGING EDITOR

Sometime after 7:07 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, the offices at Rail Explorers located in Falling Springs next to the Bluegrass Railroad Museum was broken into, vandalized and the phrase “GET OUT” scrawled on a whiteboard hung on an interior wall. The only known item missing was an office safe.

The office had been vandalized, furniture turned over, shelving knocked down and it was “just a mess,” according to Corinne Simmons, the manager of the company’s Bluegrass division. The dollar amount of damage has yet to be determined.

Simmons said CCTV shows she locked up and at some point later the electrical breakers were shut off disabling the security system’s cameras and alarms. When she and Assistant Manager Brooke Johnson arrived the next morning (Wednesday, March 19), they found the front door open and discovered the break-in. Versailles police were immediately called and by the time the *Sun* arrived, there were three uniformed officers and a detective on site conducting the investigation.

Versailles Police Chief Rob Young said the investigation was very early and that

he was unable to make any further comment.

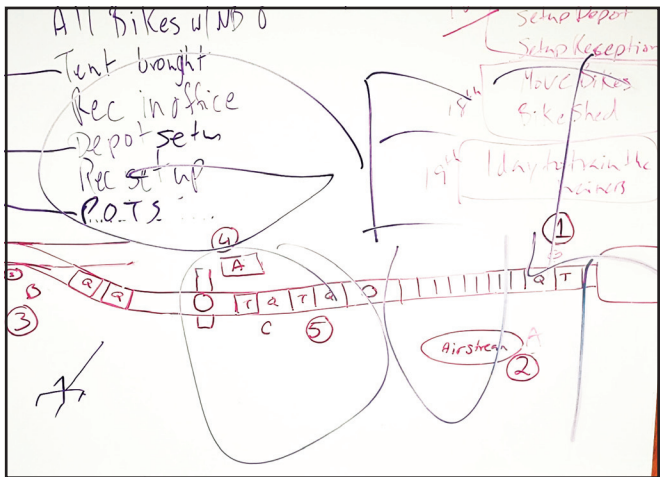
Rail Explorers owners Mary Joy Lu and Alex Catchpole said in a press release:

It is deeply disheartening to share that our Rail Explorers: Bluegrass office was broken into, vandalized, our safe stolen and our power cut. This is not an isolated incident — we have received previous threats, including a letter in just the past couple of weeks. While the vast majority of this community has treated us with kindness and support, this incident is disappointing and unacceptable . . . a black eye for the area. Since opening, we have made a significant economic

impact on local businesses and restaurants, bringing visitors who dine, shop and stay in Woodford County. Our contributions were recently recognized with the 2024 Woodford County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Award, a testament to the positive relationships we have built and the value we bring. As an eco-friendly, family-friendly business, we take pride in employing local residents and creating a unique experience that showcases the beauty of this region.

We have gone to great lengths — and great expense — to address concerns raised

See **RAIL** p. 9



“GET OUT” was written on the white board inside the Rail Explorers office during the break in on the night of early morning of March 18-19. (Photo by Corinne Simmons)

FEMA adds Woodford to list of counties eligible for individual assistance from March floods

By **SCOTT WHITE**
MANAGING EDITOR

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced March 16 that Woodford County has been added to the disaster list of counties in which governments, businesses and individuals can receive assistance with the damage caused by the Feb. 14 storms and the resulting floods.

According to FEMA, the assistance can include rental assistance and repairs. The types of assistance eligible can be found at fema.gov/disaster/4860.

Tiana Suber with FEMA told the *Sun*, “FEMA is here to inform residents of Woodford County who were affected by the flooding that they are now eligible to apply for disaster assistance. There are Disaster Recovery Centers available for in-person help for those who were affected by the storm, but if you can’t make it to a DRC you can apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by phone 1-800-621-3362.”

Currently, there are no recovery centers located in Woodford County, but there are some operating in Kentucky. The specific locations can be found at this website: <https://egateway.fema.gov/ESF6/DRCLocator>.

Woodford Theatre bringing male, female versions of Neil Simon’s ‘The Odd Couple’ to audiences

By **BOB VLACH**
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Audiences coming to Woodford Theatre can see two versions of “The Odd Couple” — a male version set in the 1960s and a female version set in the 1980s.

Having four actors — Steven Maddox, Esther Neel, Claire Gilbert and Mead Ryder — play the four lead characters in the male and female versions of the show was an opportunity to turn “The Odd Couple” into “a joyful battle of the sexes,” says Woodford Theatre Artistic Director Daniel Ellis, who is also directing the shows.

By doing both versions, he is confident the male and female characters are able to “have their say,” but that wouldn’t be possible if these four leads couldn’t handle the hefty job of embodying eight characters.

“It’s fascinating to watch,” he says, “and it’s delightful to be in a place where we can offer an opportunity like that to local talent.”

Gilbert describes playing two very different characters, Cecily Pigeon and Florence Ungar, as appealing to her. “It makes it a very juicy project for me as an actor,” she says.

Speaking in a British accent as the fun-loving Cecily and also portraying a much more dramatic Florence has required hours and hours

of running lines with Neel, which Gilbert says has allowed her to get to know an accomplished actor and director as a person too.

“The thing that I also really enjoy about it,” she says, “is getting to work with both casts,” including a young actor like Noah Boos, who plays Vinnie in the male version.

Boos, 24, says his mom urged him to audition for “The Odd Couple” and he’s glad she did because he’s working with four “incredible actors” who seamlessly transition from being one character to another.

Ellis wasn’t supposed to direct or act, but out of necessity, he does both (something he has never done before). He credits his assistant director Evender Hodges Sanders for making it possible for him to play one of Oscar’s poker-playing buddies, Speed, in the male version of the show.

“The idea was to bring her onboard to kind of spearhead the female version and I would spearhead the male version,” says Ellis. Instead, he has focused on directing the female version and she

has taken on much of those responsibilities for the male version, “and it’s really worked out,” he says. “... She’s my rock” — describing her as more of a co-director than his assistant director — “and I really couldn’t have done it without her.”

“The Odd Couple” opens

tonight, March 20 with the female version and continues through March 30, with alternating performances of the female and male versions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets are available by visiting woodfordtheatre.com

or by calling the box office at 859-873-0648.

Ticket sales are going well, according to Ellis, but many are choosing to get tickets for only one version of the show. He called that a mistake because of the very different takes on this classic comedy.



FOUR ACTORS are portraying the lead characters in “The Odd Couple” at Woodford Theatre beginning with tonight’s performance of the female version of Neil Simon’s classic comedy. Pictured from left are Steven Maddox as Oscar Madison, Esther Neel as Gwendolyn Pigeon, Claire Gilbert as Cecily Pigeon and Mead Ryder as Felix Ungar. (Woodford Theatre photo)

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GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 25, Fiscal Court at 5:30 p.m.