

## JENNIFER PEREZ OF PAINTSVILLE INDICTED BY FEDERAL COURT IN PIKEVILLE

By ROBERTA CANTRELL BSN Editor

A Johnson County woman was indicted in the United States District Court in Pikeville, Thursday, April 24, on three counts of drug charges.

The indictment states that on the first count, February 10, of this year Jennifer Perez did knowingly and intentionally distribute a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of Methamphetamine, a schedule II controlled substance.

The indictment also stated on the second on Feb. 11, 2025 and third count on Feb. 14, 2025, that Perez did intentionally distribute 50 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of Methamphetamine, a schedule II controlled substance.

The penalty she will be facing is a fine of not more than \$1,000,000 and not more than 20 years imprisonment and at least 3 years supervised re-

If responsible for 50 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing methamphetamine: not less than 5 years and not more than 40 years of imprisonment, not more than \$5,000,000 fine and 4 years supervised release. Plus, a mandatory special assessment of \$100 per count.

A warrant for her arrest was issued the same

# BIG SANDY Briefs

### BRIEFS | From A2

LAWRENCE COUNTY — The Lawrence County High School Choir received the Distinguished Rating from the Kentucky Music Educators Association, District 8, for their performance, in accordance with the standards set forth by the Commission for Performance Assessment on Thursday, March 20 at Morehead State Univer-

The Lawrence County High School Concert Band was presented the same award during their event on April 24-25.

REGIONAL — Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center now accepting people for their Home Repair Program.

If you live in Lawrence or Martin County, or Fort Gay, WV, and need minor repairs, call 606-638-0219, Monday-Friday, 8:30-3:30, to see if you qualify. Roofs, plumbing and electrical work is not available.

Volunteer work will be done now thru August.

LAWRENCE COUNTY — The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has announced that their regional driver licenses office will now be open one Saturday a month, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. No driver and permit testing services will be done during Saturday hours.

Lawrence County will have a Pop-Up event on Tuesday, May 13, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Lawrence County Community Center, 180 Bulldog Lane, Louisa. Registration will open on Tuesday

You will be able to apply for a REAL ID license, renew or replace your license or state ID card or change your address.

Sign up at https://drive.ky.gov/Frvers/Pages/ Popup-Map.aspx. A member of the Pop-up staff will follow up with you to make sure you arrive with the necessary documents. Payment can be made by debit/credit card, check or money order. The program does not accept cash payments. Contact Toni Benedict at Toni.Benedict@ky.gov or call 502-782-3732.

JOHNSON COUNTY —A Spring Festival will be Friday, May 9, and Saturday, May 10, in downtown Paintsville.

Celebrating Spring with local craft vendors, food trucks and live entertainment. There will be a Kids Zone with free activities.

SANDY HOOK — Bridge Day will be Saturday, May 10, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Laurel Gorge Heritage Center.

Multiple demonstrations during the event. Sponsored by Elliott County Tourism Council.

REGIONAL — Life's too short for bad tacos! Let's Taco-about Stroke cooking classes will be held Tuesday, May 13, at the Floyd County Extension office, 3490 KY-321, Prestonsburg, 5-7 p.m.; and Tuesday, May 20, at Johnson County Extension office, 826 FM Stafford Ave., Paintsville, 5-7 p.m.

Each family attending will receive a \$25 Food City gift card. To pre-register, email hsamons@ arh.org.



Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every

1. Use a cat o' nine tails row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9. 2. Hokkaido language

Solution found on page B5

## ASHLAND DOCTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO DISTRIBUTION OF MISBRANDED SEMAGLUTIDE

ASHLAND — An Ashland physician and owner of Lewis Family Care, Matthew Lewis, 44, pleaded guilty on Monday, April 14, before Chief U.S. District Judge David L. Bunning to receiving a misbranded drug and offering it for sale with the intent to defraud or mislead.

According to the charges against Lewis, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved three drugs with semaglutide as the active ingredient - Ozempic, Rybelsus, and Wegovy – to improve blood sugar levels in adult patients with diabetes or, in the case of Wegovy, for weight loss. The FDA did not approve any generic semaglutide drugs. In his plea agreement, Lewis admitted that beginning in May 2023, he purchased non-FDA approved semaglutide from suppliers in California and Georgia to administer to patients at a weight loss clinic. These companies were not registered with the FDA as drug manufacturers or outsourcing facilities of compounded drugs, were not authorized to distribute semaglutide, and were not licensed pharmacies or licensed prescription drug wholesalers. Lewis obtained the semaglutide from these unauthorized suppliers at a significantly lower cost than the legitimate prescription drugs.

This non-FDA approved semaglutide sometimes arrived at Lewis Family Care packaged in a vial that contained a warning that the drugs were intended for lab research and development only. The labels failed to provide adequate directions for use, adequate warnings, failed to contain an expiration date, and failed to list its active and inactive ingredients. Lewis took measures to disguise and mislead others as to the unauthorized sources of the semaglutide. For example, he purchased the semaglutide using Venmo, Afterpay, or via phone, and he described the orders on his Venmo payments as "Meal Prep." Lewis stored the drugs in his office, separate from Lewis Family Care's other legally obtained medications. He did not inform his patients that he was administering non-FDA approved semaglutide to them. Between May 2023 and February 2024, Lewis Family Care's weight loss clinic earned \$249,044.40 from the administration of this unapproved semaglutide.

"Prescription drugs are highly regulated in this country in order to keep patients safe," said Acting U.S. Attorney Paul McCaffrey. "At a time of increased public interest in weight-loss drugs like Wegovy, Lewis chose profit margins over patient safety when he purchased non-FDA approved semaglutide and administered it to his patients."

"Physicians who administer misbranded drugs that come from outside the secure and regulated supply chain—particularly products that are injectable and pose sterility concerns—not only puts their patients' health at risk but also violate their patients' trust," said George Scavdis, Special Agent in Charge, FDA Office of Criminal Investigations, Metro Washington Field Office. "We will continue to pursue and bring to justice those who would disregard and jeopardize public health and safety by selling misbranded drugs."

Acting U.S. Attorney McCaffrey and FDA Special Agent in Charge Scavdis, jointly announced the guilty plea.

The investigation was conducted by the FDA-OCI. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brittany Dunn-Pirio is prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

Lewis is scheduled to be sentenced on August 18. He faces a maximum of three years in prison and any applicable restitution. However, any sentence will be imposed by the Court, after its consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal sentencing statutes.

CROSSWORD

#### Across 1. Unit of electrical capacity F 6. Knicks' org. 9. Herring's cousin 13. City in Belgium 14. \*The Beatles hit "Drive My 15. Monument to Buddha 16. Like beer at a kegger (2 words) 17. Affirmative to captain 18. Like a beaver? 19. \*Che's last name 21. \*Stonewall riots location 23. Division of time 24. West African country 25. Refuse to comply 28. \*The Jackson 5 cofounder 30. \*Don \_\_\_ of Barney Fife fame 35. Soon, to a bard 37. Hyperbolic tangent 39. Sunlight's interference 40. \*Apollo Moon Landing org. 41. Operatic solos 43. Alexander Hamilton/ Aaron Burr incident 44. Deposit the ashes 46. Related to ear 47. Meat in a can 48. Transport onward, as in letter (2 words) 50. Not written 52. Pilot's estimate, acr.

53. Ill-mannered one 55. Hawaiian welcome

57. \*Ford's pony car

\_\_ death do us

66. Down Under runner

69. Moonshine maker

70. \*Spock's was pointy

71. Comforter stuffing

61. \*Assassinated

68. Hindu caste

72. Ruptured

Down

73. Ground cover

74. Coach-and-four

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65. "

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C StatePoint Media

3. Network of nerves 4. Mojave plant 5. Go away

6. March Madness org. 7. \*\_\_\_\_ of Pigs, failed military operation 8. Madison Square

Garden, e.g.

9. Command to Fido 10. Designer Boss

11. Copycat 12. Sinister side in "Star

Wars" 15. Garment-making

24. Hall order keeper

20. Yogurt-based dip 22. Benevolent one

25. \*Joplin of "Summertime" fame 26. Foolish

27. Same as boatswain 29. Tropical tuber

31. Auto pioneer 32. Brownish gray

33. Something yummy 34. \*Certain march

starting point 36. Backgammon predecessor 38. \*Place for a flower

42. Part of mermaid's tale 45. Cricket umpire's call (2 words)

49. Not, prefix

51. Optical devices 54. S-shaped moldings

56. Arctic people

57. Necessary thing 58. Archaic preposition

59. \*Bob Marley's hit

\_ It Up"

60. Fresco piece

61. Kurdistan native

62. Cocoyam

63. Fortune-telling coffee remnants

64. Ready and eager

67. \*Zedong of Cultural Revolution Solution found on page B5