



The Crittenden Press

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10 PAGES | VOLUME 144 | NUMBER 31
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2025

24/7 BREAKING AND LOCAL NEWS / THE-PRESS.COM

AN INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED, LOCAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1879

TWO DOLLARS

Travel direction now limited along Court St.

Due to ongoing construction at the new Crittenden County Judicial Center, Court Street in downtown Marion has permanently transitioned to a one-way street this week. From now on, traffic will flow south to north. Signage will be installed. Striping of new angled parking layout will follow shortly after. City and county officials said the change is necessary to accommodate the new judicial center during construction and afterward. Motorists and property owners along Court Street are encouraged to prepare for the new traffic pattern and directional parking shift. City officials plan to notify affected property owners directly.



\$30 per vote, that's the price we pay

A recent compilation of 2024 election expenses in Crittenden County illustrates the high cost to administer the very foundation of our democracy ... voting. Last year, local county government spent more than \$65,500 to carry out the primary and general elections, which included President of the United States. Expenses range from ballots to poll workers and include annual costs for election equipment and service contracts. The per-voter cost is somewhat shocking:

- For the May 2024 primary, when only 1,020 people voted in the county, the cost was \$30.17 per ballot cast, or \$30,768 total.
- In the November general election, the overall cost went up to \$34,774, but there were 4,041 voters, lowering the cost to \$8.61 per vote.

There are no scheduled elections in 2025.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Marion Code Enforcement Board meets at 5 p.m., Monday, Aug. 11 at city hall.
- Livingston County Board of Education meets at 5 p.m., Monday, Aug. 11 at the board office.
- Caldwell County Fiscal Court meets at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 12 at the courthouse.
- Marion City Council meets Monday, Aug. 18 at city hall.
- Fredonia City Council will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, Aug. 18.
- Marion Tourism and Recreation Commission will meet at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 19 at the Marion Welcome Center.
- Salem City Council will meet at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 19 at the Deer Lakes meeting room.
- Crittenden Fiscal Court meets at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 21 at the county office complex.
- Crittenden County Conservation District will meet at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 21 at its office on East Bellville Street.
- Crittenden-Livingston Water District will meet at 4 p.m., Monday, Aug. 25 at the Deer Lakes meeting room.
- Livingston County Fiscal Court meets at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 26 at the county office complex in Smithland.



Randy Book and Amy Cardwell sit at the kitchen table inside their home in Marion.

With Every Beat

Local carpenter examines life after heart transplant

BY CHRIS EVANS
PRESS EDITOR

At 66 years old, local carpenter Randy Book has swapped his old heart for a new lease on life, and his hometown is cheering him on with every beat. Book, a well-known craftsman and lifelong doer, lives just off the eighth fairway next to Marion's small country club. He's the kind of man who always showed up whether it was for his daughter Brandy's softball games, or neighbors needing a deck built. And, most recently, for a health battle that could have silenced him for good. Book moved to Crittenden County in 2003 from Hobart, Ind., where he had also worked as a carpenter. He raised his youngest daughter in Marion and developed many friendships through his profession and volunteer work.

His companion, Amy Cardwell, has worked in healthcare for decades and was quick to notice when something wasn't right with Book in the spring of 2024. Last July, while roofing their house, Amy saw a concerning change. "He always climbed ladders with no problem, but he stopped going up and down. He'd just stay up there and let the other guys bring him materials," she recalled. Short of breath, Book easily fatigued and was getting dizzy simply bending over to tie up his boots. By day's end, he said, "I was just gassed." Concerned, they went to see local nurse practitioner Marcie Ellington, who saw them

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Three jailed in shooting case from February

STAFF REPORT

Three individuals are being held without bond in the Crittenden County Detention Center on attempted murder or conspiracy to commit murder and other charges following the conclusion of a months-long investigation into a winter shooting in the Mexico community of southern Crittenden County. The arrests stem from a Feb. 10 incident in which a male victim in his 30s was allegedly shot while driving along KY 70 near the intersection with Jackson School Road and County Road 1242 around 4 a.m. The victim sustained a gunshot wound to the left hip but was able to drive himself to Crittenden Community Hospital. The victim has recovered. As a result of an investigation by the West Kentucky Violent Crime Task Force, Lyon County Sheriff's Department and Crittenden County Sheriff Evan Head, arrests were made last Thursday after sealed indictments were handed down two days earlier by the Crittenden County Grand Jury. Jailed are Allison Robinson, 25, of Marion, charged with a Class B felony conspiracy to commit murder; Travis Robinson, 47, of Marion, charged with a Class B felony conspiracy to commit murder, a Class D felony possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, a Class D felony tampering with physical evidence and for allegedly being a persistent felony offender (PFO); and Jonathan Chase York, 40, of Marion, charged with a Class B felony for attempted murder,

a Class D felony for possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, a Class D felony tampering with physical evidence and for allegedly being a persistent felony offender (PFO). The Class B felony charges against the two male suspects are enhanceable to Class A felonies under the PFO indictments. Based on the charges and grand jury indictment records, it appears that investigators believe York was the alleged shooter. Travis Robinson was taken into custody in Kuttawa at 12:44 a.m., last Thursday by Lyon County Deputy Bobby Beeler. York and Allison Robinson were arrested later that evening in Crittenden County by Sheriff Head. Back in February, author-

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T. Robinson

A. Robinson

York

County plans same tax rate

As part of its next regularly-scheduled meeting, Crittenden County Fiscal Court will conduct a public hearing at 8:30 a.m. Aug. 21 at the county office complex to receive input on the proposed 2025 property tax rate. The court plans to keep the real property rate at 11.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the same as 2024. Doing so would generate \$517,322 in additional revenue, about \$23,900 more than a compensating rate would yield.

Last year's rate of 0.114 produced \$493,414 in revenue. The 2025 compensating rate of 0.111 would bring in \$503,708. Projected revenue includes \$23,908 from new property, \$99,735 from personal property, \$102,254 from motor vehicles and \$4,154 from watercraft. Additional revenue above last year's will go toward general government operations. Other local taxing districts that have flexibility to set their rates will be proposing 2025 figures this month.

Roads, bridges, capitol

You learn a lot about a place by the way it takes care of its old things, whether it be old folks, old buildings or old roads and bridges. In Kentucky, we claim to do things right, but judging by the shape of things, what we really mean is we love talking about it while we let everything fall down around us. Then, we act surprised.

For the past few years, I have driven through Lyon County on a stretch of I-24 that looks like images I see on TV from Gaza.

That stretch of interstate near just east of Eddyville shakes you down like a slot machine. Everyone's in the passing lane not to pass, but to survive because the right hand lane beats you to death with craters. You don't drive it, you endure it. Try it on a school bus!

Country roads are no better. Our counties are crying out for help, but what they get is less and less money to fix more and more roads that are dissolving like wet toilet paper. On July 1, the gas tax dropped again. By 1.4 cents a gallon this time. Doesn't sound like much till you realize that means millions of dollars gone from road budgets. That's fewer patches, fewer paving jobs, fewer loads of gravel and a lot more orange cones that stay up all year.

It puts us back to 2015 funding levels, they say. But nothing else costs what it did in 2015, not diesel, not asphalt, not wages and sure as heck not a road paver. Based on what the City of Marion just contracted Rogers Group to pave in town, it's costing about \$500,000 a mile.

Meanwhile, counties are responsible for half the road miles in Kentucky and a third of the bridges. Most of them are holding those roads together with borrowed time and baling wire. I can see creek rock rising through the chip and seal on my road. Counties like Crittenden don't have big budgets. They've got a half dozen guys, a couple of trucks, a track hoe and a lot of prayers.

And while our roads and bridges are falling apart, the state Capitol is being evacuated for a years-long, \$300 million renovation. Lawmakers and justices are moving into temporary buildings, the dome is being rebuilt with imported tile, and the wiring's being swapped out. It's needed work no doubt, but you can't help but wonder how the marbled halls in Frankfort can find a quarter-billion dollars while our counties can't get enough to fix a washed-out culvert. I guess it's the same Monopoly game that provides millions for a new courthouse, but less and less for the road department. States hold all of the cards when it comes to road funds, which are backed by the fuel tax (which just dropped).

In Kentucky, we have a maintenance problem. We wait for things to rot before we put on a coat of paint. Look at our water infrastructure. Same shape as the roads and bridges.

Our grandparents knew better. They fixed things

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The Crittenden Press

USPS 138-260 / Marion, Ky.



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