

Fingers Crossed!

So far, no fatal auto crashes in county

With just weeks remaining in 2025, Crittenden County has yet to record a single automobile-related fatality this year. If that holds through December, it would mark the second time in four years the county has gone an entire calendar year without a fatal crash. There were no fatal wrecks in 2022, three in 2023, and one in 2024.

Over the past two decades, Crittenden County has averaged 2.6 traffic-related deaths per year. That long-term rate has steadily declined in recent years, dropping to an average of 1.8 over the past five years and just 1.3 over the past three.

Tax bills due this month

Crittenden County taxpayers who missed the November dis-count period will now pay face value of their tax bills throughout December. In January, there is a 5% penalty. After Jan. 31, there is a 10% penalty and an additional add-on fee to the sheriff for late collection. If you have not received your tax bill, contact the sheriff's department.

No parking on Main St.

There will be no parking along Main Street in downtown Marion from 3 p.m., until after Saturday's Christmas Parade. Both sides of Main Street from Depot Street to the traffic light at Bellville Street will be coned off starting two hours before the 5 p.m., parade. Local law enforcement cautions parents to be especially attentive to children seeking candy by going into the street as motorized vehicles pass by. Judges and Master of Ceremonies Cutter Singleton will be located on the balcony of Frazer Law Office. The Chamber of Commerce and Integrity Insurance are organizing the parade. Judges will select the top three entries in categories of Business, Church and Organization.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Crittenden County Local Emergency Planning Committee will meet at 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 4 at the county office complex.
- Community Prayer will meet at 10 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 6 at Rocket Arena.
- Marion Code Enforcement Board will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 8 at city hall.
- Livingston County Board of Education will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 8.
- Crittenden County Chamber of Commerce will meet at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 9 at Rocket Arena conference room.
- Caldwell County Fiscal Court will meet at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 9 at the courthouse.
- Marion City Council will meet at 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15 at city hall.
- Fredonia City Council will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15 at city hall.
- Marion-Crittenden County 911 Board will meet at 3:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15 at city hall.
- Marion Tourism and Recreation Commission will meet at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 16 at the Marion Welcome Center.

Legacy of Liberty

Local leaders planning June celebration to mark Quarter Millennium anniversary

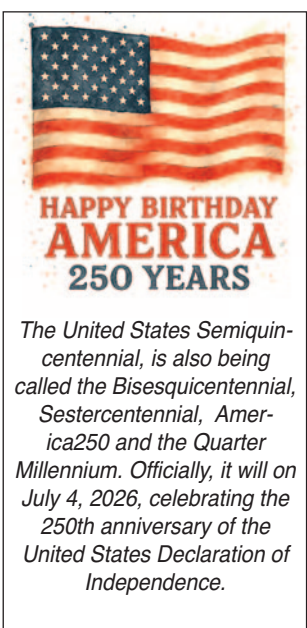
STAFF REPORT

Planning is underway for a communitywide celebration marking the nation's 250th anniversary, and the Community Arts Foundation (CAF) is spearheading the effort to coordinate a two-day event that organizers hope will highlight history, patriotism and local participation.

Kim Vince of CAF said an initial planning session held recently generated a broad range of ideas for "Legacy of Liberty," set for June 26-27, 2026 in Marion.

"I want to stress that the only thing set in stone is the date and location," Vince said, explaining that planning is in its earliest stages, but almost certainly an opening ceremony with reading of the Declaration of Independence, vendors, a Chautauqua interpreter, children's activities and museum tours will be among the features.

"Much of it is really still



up in the air because of budget," Vince said.

Sponsorships and donations would be readily accepted to help fund the celebration.

The committee will meet again at 5 p.m., Dec. 8 at Fohs Hall to continue brainstorming and orches-

trating a plan. Anyone interested in helping or having ideas should attend the meeting.

Preliminary discussions include a week of window painting on downtown businesses to build anticipation leading up to the celebration.

Events on Friday, June 26, might include a parade featuring veterans, Americana-themed floats and historic vehicles. Other activities under consideration are an American-history trivia competition and a movie night with a historical film.

Saturday's potential activities center around an outdoor opening ceremony. Suggestions for the program include a color guard, community choir, presentation and reading of the Declaration of Independence and a keynote speaker. Additionally, a vendor fair with food and other wares, pedal-tractor pull, pet show or parade, a

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At Lake George are Division of Water Director Sarah Marshall and her team along with engineer Ben Webster who helped develop the plan to stabilize Marion's hobbled reservoir. The group was here late last month and visited the county water district, too.

State's team visits area to survey water infrastructure

STAFF REPORT

Kentucky Energy and Environmental Cabinet officials spent a full day before Thanksgiving in Crittenden and Livingston counties for a comprehensive review of local water infrastructure improvements and upcoming needs.

Sara Marshall, director of the Division of Water, and members of her staff met with local leaders in Marion before touring several key sites. The group reviewed dam rehabilitation work at Lake George, visited Old City Lake and Marion's water plant, and later traveled to the Crittenden-Livingston Water District's treatment

■ CLWD approves rate increase that goes into effect this week. See page 3.

facility on the Cumberland River south of Salem.

Participating in the day's discussions and tours were Crittenden County Judge-Executive Perry Newcom, Livingston County Judge-Executive Michael Williams, Marion Mayor D'Anna Browning, Marion Water Plant Superintendent

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Football field, track among plans

STAFF REPORT

Crittenden County Schools has released a comprehensive District Facilities Plan that calls for significant renovations and new construction across all campuses, addressing aging infrastructure, safety needs and long-term instructional priorities.

A public hearing on the new blueprint for on-campus development and maintenance will be held at 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at Rocket Arena.

The plan maintains the

district's current configuration of P-5 elementary, 6-8 middle and 9-12 high school grades. Enrollment projections over the next six years show slight increases at the elementary and high school levels, with totals expected at 579 students for the elementary school, 278 at the middle school and 385 at the high school.

The most extensive work is planned for the combined middle and high school campus, where several building sections date back as far as 1960.

Major renovations would replace failing roofs, upgrade HVAC systems, modernize electrical service, install new windows and doors, improve interior finishes and replace aging plumbing fixtures and water heaters. Additional projects include renovated administrative areas at the middle school, updated restrooms near the gym lobby and new covered canopies for parent drop-off and for the connector to Rocket

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Where do you find it?

There are moments when quiet feels like a gift. In Crittenden County, where gravel roads give way to tree-lined ridges and forgotten fencerows, peace still exists in its truest form. From my office in town to my home tucked deep in the netherlands, there's a distance not just in miles but in spirit, the kind of remoteness that invites thought and clears the mind. You'll find me working remotely more these days, where production is increased at least threefold.



Where I live, there's no house in sight. My nearest neighbor is more than half a mile away. For years, until the ice storm broke a swath through the trees, I couldn't even see a distant porchlight. Now, on clear nights, I sometimes catch a faint glimmer of Fredonia – a reminder that civilization is out there, though mercifully not too close.

Just under 15 minutes gets me to Marion. I can run – yep like "Run Forrest, run" – from town to home in an hour and a half, if I had to. Or the walk would take a little more than two. I've threatened to do both because running, or walking, (like driving) provides a stretch time for introspection, for sorting through ideas, for simply breathing. There's a kind of stillness in rural Crittenden County that feels rare in a noisy world. That's why I love it so.

But even our most secluded corners – the ones that feel utterly alone – are nowhere near the most remote place on Earth.

That distinction belongs to Point Nemo, a spot in the South Pacific Ocean so far from land that astronauts passing overhead in the International Space Station are often the nearest human beings. Its coordinates, 48°52.6' S, 123°23.6' W, lie roughly halfway between New Zealand and Chile. The nearest specks of land, tiny islands barely big enough to name, are about 1,670 miles away in every direction.

No one lives there. There's no island, no reef, nothing but endless rolling water. Believe it or not, it's where old spacecraft are sent to die, the so-called "spacecraft cemetery," because there's virtually zero chance of debris ever bothering anyone. When the ISS arcs above every ninety minutes, its crew of six or seven people, which are about 250 miles up in orbit, become, for a few brief moments, the closest humans to that desolate patch of ocean.

Never had heard about until listening to an off-beat podcast last week.

If you wanted to visit Point Nemo, though almost no one ever does, you'd likely launch from Punta Arenas, Chile, the southern tip of South America. From there it's nearly 1,700 miles of open water. A sailboat might take two weeks; even a fast research vessel would need five to seven days to reach the coordinates. You'd find nothing but sea and sky – the ultimate place to be alone.

When I think of that, I can't help but compare it to our own quiet corners of western Kentucky. My little clearing in the woods feels remote enough to hear my own thoughts, yet in truth, I'm never more than a half mile from traffic, about 2 miles from the nearest water tower or a quiet afternoon from a neighbor's voice if I really need it. Astronauts over Point Nemo glide silently above a planet that can feel both vast and intimate, depending where you are at any given moment.

There's comfort to be found in isolation. Whether in a cabin outside Marion or on a research vessel in the Pacific, solitude doesn't have to mean loneliness. Sometimes it's simply the space we grant ourselves to listen... to nature, to memory, to the slow thump of our own heartbeat in a world that rarely pauses or quietyens down.

Chris Evans, a newspaperman since 1979, has been editor of The Press for more than 30 years and is the author of South of the Mouth of Sandy, a true story about crime along the Tennessee River. You can find it on Amazon or wherever books are sold.