



**JACKSON PURCHASE DISTILLERY EMS CONTRIBUTION** – Hickman’s Jackson Purchase Distillery recently presented Ken-Tenn EMS staff with proceeds generated from an online auction for a 53-gallon barrel of premium bourbon. The winning bid receives the 53-gallon barrel, to be aged four years in the Jackson Purchase Distillery new rickhouse, as well as bottling, labeling and custom barrel top. Lloyd Jones, CEO and President of Jackson Purchase Distillery made the presentation of the auction proceeds check, in the amount of \$10,000, to Ashley Fortner, Ken-Tenn EMS office manager. The auction funds, in conjunction with Fulton County ARPA funding, will go toward the purchase of the new ambulance just received. The ambulance total cost was just under \$236,000. Fulton County provided \$200,000, which had been placed in an interest bearing account and totaled nearly \$209,000 when Ken-Tenn EMS was provided with those funds. After the receipt of the ARPA funds, and the contribution from Jackson Purchase Distillery, the actual cost of the ambulance was covered except for \$17,000. (Photo submitted)

# Jowers expresses doubt over flood assistance from FEMA

Megan Dame

The Obion County Commission convened for a special called meeting on Mon., May 12, prior to a heated meeting of the Obion County Budget Committee at the Obion County Mayor’s Office in Union City.

Commission chairman Ralph Puckett, vice chair Allen Nohsey, Commission members Eugene Hudgins, Kenny Mayo, James Gray, Shane Sanford, Terry Roberts, Steve Goodrich, Dale Frazier, Ryan Ellegood, Rob Holman, Taylor Pierce, James Beasley, Sam Sinclair and Heath Cunningham were present. Commissioners Larry Sherwood, Phillip Dunlap and Blake Cheatham were absent. Commissioner Kenneth Barnes was initially absent for roll call but arrived shortly after, stating he had received no notice of the meeting date change.

After the meeting was opened in prayer by Obion County Mayor Steve Carr and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by commissioner Jowers, the commission approved the minutes of the April meeting.

Commissioner Sinclair presented a personnel policy update for the highway department, which the commission approved. This included several changes that will take effect starting July 1.

One of the most significant updates is that employees will now accrue 10 hours of sick time per month, providing them with a reliable safety net in case of illness or medical needs. The vacation time policy has been revised, with each employee now being allotted a generous 288 hours of paid time off per year.

To ensure that employees are taking adequate breaks and to prevent excessive accrual of unused time off, any vacation hours accumulated beyond the 288-hour threshold will automatically be converted into additional sick time.

The speaker then delved into the specifics of the budget, as the Obion County Highway Department has proposed several budget amendments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

The amendments include both increases and decreases across various budget lines to optimize the allocation of funds.

Communications will be decreased by \$4,000, while travel expenses will be increased by \$5,100. To offset this increase, crushed stone will be decreased by \$5,100.

The budget for foremen will be increased by \$50,000, with a corresponding decrease of \$50,000 for equipment operators.

Cold mix will see an increase of \$5,700, balanced by a decrease of the same amount for hot mix. Workers’ compensation will be increased by \$13,000, with a decrease of \$13,000 for pipe.

Truck driver salaries will be increased by \$4,500, offset by a decrease of \$4,500 for laborers. District employee expenses will increase by \$15,000, with a

corresponding decrease in crushed stone by \$15,000.

The Highway Department budget will see an increase of \$61,000, balanced by a decrease in the fund balance.

Finally, state retirement contributions will increase by \$7,000, also offset by a decrease in the fund balance.

Line items 726 and 735 will both be increased by \$735,000, with a corresponding increase in revenue from a program to maintain a balanced budget.

These amendments aim to strategically allocate resources to optimize the Highway Department’s operations and ensure fiscal responsibility.

After thorough discussion and consideration of the financial implications, a motion was made to approve the proposed budget amendment, which was then approved by the commission.

Commissioner Sinclair brought forward a revision to a Highway private act the commission had approved in April 2023.

The state had adopted the act, granting the commission the ability to appoint a Highway Superintendent and possibly appoint an advisory committee, but had been returned to the commission requesting supporting changes for CTAS.

There was some confusion expressed by Commissioner Eugene Hudgins regarding a section of the act, which granted the commission the ability to appoint an advisory committee to assist in the selection.

Hudgins said he believed the section granted the advisory committee the ability to choose the superintendent, superseding the ability granted to the entire commission, but it did not.

Mayor Carr tried to explain that the act granted the commission the option to appoint an advisory committee and the committee was only to advise the commission, not remove the commission’s final vote.

Ultimately, the commission approved the act, voting 17-1. Hudgins was the only vote against the changes.

The commission approved budget amendments and transfers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, including a debit of \$118,502 from other charges, water and sewer, and transferred to preservation records maintenance, a credit of \$218,500 from the county coroner’s contract, reallocated, with \$3,500 being transferred to county coroner, other fees, to cover additional expenses incurred by the coroner’s office, and finally, \$3,000 transferred from other charges, water and sewer, to public safety grant, other equipment, to support the acquisition of necessary equipment for public safety initiatives.

Commissioner Sinclair requested and was granted approval to combine three requests, all related to three-year leases for software and hardware for Obion County Schools.

The commission approved all three of the lease

agreements with Linewize on three-year subscriptions with their Classwize, Linewize Monitor and Linewize Filter software.

The commission then approved Mayor Carr’s appointments of Phillip Dunlap, James Gray, Heath Cunningham, Kimmy Butler and Dana McDonald to one-year terms to the insurance committee, Dana Parker, Roger Williams, Kathy Forrester, Patrick Smith, Greg Ferguson, Patsy Barker and Sonny Yarbrough to one-year terms on the county nursing home board, Sam Sinclair and Steve Carr to three-year terms on the Obion County Industrial Development Board, James Gray, Beth Micke, Jason Daniel and Cody Caksackkar to one-year terms on the Parks & Recreation Board and finally, Ed Sims and Steve Carr to two-year terms on the West TN Rail Road Authority.

The commission also approved the notary applications of Marlin Bumpus, Cynthia Fox, Courtney Dozier, Steve Fields, Penny Hepler, Jessica Volpe, April Stevens and Katie Washburn.

Highway Department Superintendent Kevin Dunn presented the commission with his monthly activity report, citing flood damage repair as the primary focus of his crews.

Commissioner Jowers asked Dunn for an estimate of the damage repair so far, with Dunn response being upwards of \$600,000.

Jowers, who had just recently vacated his position as Obion County’s Emergency Management Director, expressed his doubts that Obion County will be compensated for flood repair costs as FEMA still hasn’t declared the county’s recent floods as a catastrophic level.

Dunn said he wasn’t surprised and voiced his doubts regarding the declaration and being reimbursed for repair expenses.

County attorney Steve Conley reminded the commission that when delinquent tax properties are not sold, the county must step up and purchase those properties, emphasizing the

need to get these properties back on the tax rolls. Conley said this is something he and Mayor Carr are currently working to take care of.

In terms of legal matters, Conley reported that no new lawsuits have been filed against the county in the past three weeks.

Before adjourning, Commissioner Jim Bondurant expressed his concern regarding the system of notification being used to notify commissioners when there is a change of meeting date or time, after some commissioners claimed they were notified of this special called session.

Several commissioners agreed, saying sometimes they do not receive their agenda and packet of supporting documents weeks later, if at all.

Possible ways to fix the issue were discussed, with most commissioners saying they would like to get their packets and schedule changes electronically.

The agenda and meeting notifications email list has approximately 65 recipients and could use an update.

The meeting was then adjourned.

# Railroaders 0-3 to start season

**Miners 10, Railroaders 4**

Even though Fulton Railroaders collected nine hits to Madisonville Miners’s eight, they still fell 10-4 on Mon., June 2 at Madisonville City Park. Shane Carnes, Jacob Lott, and Austin Phillips each collected two hits for the Railroaders.

The Miners got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Pete Britton doubled, scoring two runs, and Cooper Wright grounded out, scoring one run.

The Railroaders scored one run in the top of the seventh on a solo home run to right field by Chris Henson.

Grant Baskin led things off on the bump for the Railroaders. The hurler gave up one hit and three runs over four innings, striking out three and walking two.

Railroaders’ Henson, Elijah Nickell, and Jady Perez each drove in one run, and the Railroaders turned one double play in the game. The Railroaders were sure-handed in the field and didn’t commit a single error. Carnes had the most chances in the field with nine.

**Chiefs 11, Railroaders 5**

Fulton Railroaders had trouble keeping up with Paducah Chiefs in an 11-5 loss on Sun., June 1 at Lohaus Field.

The Chiefs got on the board in the first inning after Easton Denning hit a sacrifice fly, scoring one run.

In the bottom of the first inning, Fulton Railroaders went back into the lead after Paducah Chiefs committed an error, and Caleb Warren singled down the left field line, each scoring one run.

The Chiefs would recapture the lead, 5-2, in the top of the second when an error scored two runs, Denning singled, scoring one run, and Dawson Griffith doubled, scoring one run.

The Chiefs would add one run in the third after Javin Gauthier scored after tagging up.

Maxwell Snyder took the loss for the Railroaders. The reliever went four innings, allowing zero runs on two hits, striking out three and walking three. Taylor Hughes started on the bump for the Railroaders. The righty gave up three hits and five runs (two earned) over two innings, striking out two and walking three.

The Railroaders piled up nine hits in the game. Johnny Bloom, Wade Sabo, and Owen Sullivan each collected two hits for the Railroaders. Owen Phillips and Warren each drove in one run for the Railroaders.


**Rhythm 4, Railroaders 2**

The Railroaders fell to the Full Count Rhythm 4-2 on Sat., May 31 in the 2025 season opener. The Rhythm were the first to get on the board in the first when one run scored on another play, and would add one run in the third inning.


Brady Davis pitched three and two-thirds innings in relief for the Railroaders. The righty surrendered one hit and zero runs while, striking out four and walking one. Hayes Melville took the loss for the Railroaders. The starter went three innings, allowing two runs on two hits, striking out five and walking two.

Jacob Lott went 2-for-5 at the plate to lead Fulton Railroaders in hits. Shane Carnes and Elijah Nickell each drove in one run for the Railroaders. AJ Armstrong led the Railroaders with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, piling up 11 walks for the game. Matthew Rienhardt and Lott each stole multiple bases and the Railroaders stole six bases total in the game. The Railroaders also turned one double play in the game.

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