

CENTENNIAL

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Mountain Settlement School Director Jason Brashear said one of his most profound memories was seeing the chapel for the first time. "I will never forget my first visit to the chapel during my interview process for program director in 2021," Brashear said. "I was awestruck by the natural beauty, the history seeping out of every stone, and the way the wood brought life and warmth to the space." Brashear, like an untold number of people, got married in the chapel, so the historic structure now has a personal connection for him. It has a personal connection for thousands.

"Many things make the chapel magical," Brashear said. "The fact that it's kind of unexpected, how it blends in with the mountain until you are upon it, the history, the craftsmanship, the organ, the angle above the windows, the true authenticity it holds."

While the chapel, which was constructed in 1924, marked its centennial last year, Pine Mountain Settlement School has been working on a unique, artistic project in 2025 to memorialize its value to the area and its people. Actually, according to Brashear, the Pine Mountain Chapel Centennial project was launched in the fall of 2023 by cultural educator Jenn Noble with the purpose of creating a tapestry that illustrates how the chapel is the "thread that ties us all." For over 100 years, the chapel has been the site of numerous weddings, community gatherings, special programming, worship services, as well as the well-known and traditional Pine Mountain Nativity Play during Christmas.

Noble collected fabric, held community weaving and block printing nights, and completed the body of the tapestry before transitioning back to a full-time artist. Cyan Cox, a current artist in residence at Pine Mountain Settlement School, is finishing the tapestry, collecting oral histories, and will be curating the settlement

school's centennial exhibit during this year's Nativity Play, which will be held on Dec. 14.

"The chapel holds a very special place in my heart," said Coots, who has been tirelessly working on the centennial tapestry exhibit. "It represents a history I love - Appalachian culture and spirit, education, the mountains, and now, a part of my husband's and my love story."

Like Brashear, Coots was also married in the chapel. She said people constantly messaged her when her wedding photos came out, asking her where this place was because the venue was so beautiful.

"So, I guess I feel kinda special," Coots said. "People didn't know about it and I found this diamond in the rough. It's tucked away in this little holler. If you don't know about it, you would never know about it."

Once you happen upon the chapel, its enchantment stays with you, Coots said.

"I don't think anyone will ever forget this chapel," she said.

According to Pine Mountain Settlement School archives, it took two and a half years to build the chapel, and those who worshiped there were the builders of it. "The stone masons who laid its beautiful walls, the carpenters who fitted its beams and oaken woodwork and made its heavy paneled doors are our neighbors and learned their craft at this school," some of the documentation about the chapel's construction reads. "So the day when we gathered to dedicate this work of our hands was a high and holy one."

The chapel is officially named the Charlotte F. Hedges Chapel after its donor. Mary Rockwell Hook, the designated school architect, designed the chapel. Luigi Zande, a stonemason and educator, helped construct the chapel. He was married to Ethel de Long Zande, who founded the school and played a major role in the American settlement school movement of the early 1900s.

The Pine Mountain Chapel is also known for its exquisite Holtkamp pipe organ that was also made possible through



PINE MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENT SCHOOL

A fresh blanket of snow covers the historic Pine Mountain Chapel, which was constructed over 100 years ago.



JENNIFER MCDANIELS

Students have been learning about traditional Appalachian customs such as weaving while helping to create a tapestry that will artificially reflect the centennial celebration of Pine Mountain Settlement School's Chapel.

the generous contribution from Charlotte Hedges during the depths of the Great Depression. The pipe organ is perhaps the showpiece of the chapel and visitors can hear its grand sound during the annual Nativity Play.

"Knowing the chapel was designed by Mary Rockwell Hook makes it even more meaningful, especially alongside the legacy of Katherine Pettit and Ethel de Long, the remarkable women who led the school," Coots said. "Their vision is remembered and woven into every part of the campus - especially the chapel."

A major thread that is woven into the tapestry of Pine Mountain Settlement School is one of faith. Appalachians have long been known for their deep-rooted faith, and that is symbolized in the sacred design of the chapel. The chapel may be isolated, but its symbolism of faith has inspired people from all over the world who have stepped onto its hallowed ground. Coots and Brashear, as well as others who have worked on the Pine Mountain Chapel tapestry, hope the project will reflect strong fibers of grit and determination that have tightly knitted mountain folk together to rise above adversity.

Brashear said people

should visit the Pine Mountain Chapel because of its incredible craftsmanship that he said was done well before modern tools. He encourages everyone to attend this year's Nativity Play on Dec. 14 to experience the magic of the chapel and to also enjoy the Chapel Centennial Exhibit that will be on display Dec. 14 at the Laurel House. Nativity Play showings are at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

"It is a wonderful place to sit, think, and reconnect with yourself and the world around you," Brashear said. "Our chapel is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for quiet contemplation."

DEATH NOTICES

Judy A. Reynolds, 75, of Wallins, died Nov. 24, 2025.

Raymond Bob Chasteen, 90, of Harlan, died Dec. 1, 2025.

Sue Elizabeth Hubbs, 74, of Corbin, died Nov. 27, 2025.

Agreed-upon procedures engagement Harlan Sheriff's Office Audit

Special to the Enterprise

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Allison Ball today released the 2024 agreed-upon procedures engagement of Harlan County Sheriff Chris Brewer. State law requires the auditor to annually audit the accounts of each county sheriff. In compliance with this law, the auditor issues two sheriff's reports each year: one reporting on the audit of the sheriff's tax account, and the other reporting on the audit of the fee account used to operate the office. In 2018 the Kentucky General Assembly, following a recommendation by the State Auditor, passed legislation that allows county sheriffs and clerks that met certain criteria to apply for an Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUP) engagement in lieu of an audit of their fee account. The intent of the change, which became effective in July 2018, was to reduce audit costs for sheriffs and clerks that have a history of clean audits, while still maintaining an appropriate level of accountability.

The Harlan County Sheriff applied for and received approval from the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) to obtain an AUP engagement for calendar year 2024 in accordance with KRS 43.070(1)(c). AUP reports present the procedures performed and the results of those procedures, called findings. Auditors performed the procedures, which were agreed to by the Harlan County Sheriff, on receipts and disbursements, excess fees, recordkeeping, and leases, contracts, and liabilities for the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. A summary is provided in the report to present findings for which an exception was identified during the AUP engagement. However, no exceptions were identified in the AUP engagement of the Harlan County Sheriff.

AG Coleman announces East Ky. Power Cooperative settlement

Press Release

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Attorney General Russell Coleman announced a proposed settlement with East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) to preserve affordable and reliable electricity for more than 570,000 Kentucky homes, farms and businesses across 89 counties.

The proposed settlement, which must be approved by the Public Service Commission, protects Kentuckians from double-digit rate increases that are facing families in other parts of the country. According to the settlement terms, residential customers will see an increase of less than \$5 on their monthly bills. EKPC also agreed not to seek another rate increase on families for at least three years.

Attorney General Coleman prioritized both keeping Kentuckians' rate increases as low as possible and preventing another rate increase for multiple years.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the average American residential price for electricity has risen nearly 34% since 2020. Kentucky's residential rate increases are far below the national average, and Attorney General Coleman is fighting to keep double-digit increases out of Kentucky.

"Affordable and reliable energy is Kentucky's competitive advantage, and it's the reason so many families are proud to call the Commonwealth home," said Attorney General Coleman. "This settlement will preserve affordability while also building out our energy capacity to fuel new jobs and economic growth for a generation."

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