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Thursday, December 25, 2025

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\$1.00 (tax included)

# Happy Howlidays



Photo Submitted

## Santa Has Time for All Good Boys and Girls ...Even the Furry Ones

Pets across Mercer County took time to share their Christmas wish list with Ol' Saint Nick at Bed and Biscuits Pet Retreat over the weekend.

## County hires new animal control officer

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The Mercer County Fiscal Court has hired a new animal control officer.

At their regular meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 22, the fiscal court hired Cody Stumph as animal control officer effective Jan. 5, 2026, at \$20 an hour.

Marty Hurst resigned as animal control officer earlier this month. Hurst was hired in September 2024 and

became full-time animal control officer in June. He was recognized by the fiscal court in October for handling a local homeowner's deceased pet when the homeowner was away. Hurst's resignation goes into effect Dec. 26, 2026. He will help train his replacement before he leaves.

Last month, the fiscal court hired Carson Cutts as the new director for the Mercer County Animal Control Center.

The magistrates also agreed to hire an addition-

al part-time position at the shelter. On Tuesday, Judge-Executive Sarah Steele said there is room in the budget to hire someone. The county will post the position and start the application process. Steele said they probably won't make a hire until the end of January 2026.

There have been many changes at the county animal shelter over the last few months. In November, the fiscal court hired Carson Cutts as the new director.

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## December indictments include incest, vehicular manslaughter

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A Harrodsburg man has been indicted on multiple charges of incest.

Matthew F. Hughes, 75, of 1744 Perryville Road, was indicted on three counts of incest as well as 1st degree rape, 1st degree sodomy and 1st degree unlawful transac-

tion with a minor, all class B felonies, and one count of 1st degree sexual abuse, a class D felony.

On or about Jan. 1, 2014, to Dec. 31, 2019, the defendant is accused of engaging in deviate sexual intercourse with two children, according to the indictments. Between the dates of Jan. 1, 2017, and the Dec. 14, 2020, the defendant is also accused of

engaging in sexual intercourse by forcible compulsion with another child on multiple occasions and inducing the child, who was less than 16 years of age, to engage in illegal sexual activity, according to the indictments.

Bail bonds of \$200,000 were set, with the conditions the defendant has no contact

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## 'BIG' news: Wilkinson farm becomes 'Bluegrass Innovation Gateway'

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Big news, everyone. The Harrodsburg-Mercer County Industrial Development Authority has given the Wilkinson Farm megasite a new name. Pending county approval, the industrial park will be known as the "Bluegrass Innovation Gateway," or the acronym "BIG."

The new name and acronym leverage the Bluegrass region's unique and recognizable identity, Greyson Evans, executive-director of the industrial development authority, told the Harrodsburg Herald via email after

the meeting. Evans said the new name emphasizes that innovation is happening right here in Harrodsburg.

"Gateway" signals that we are open for business, and that we provide businesses with a gateway to exactly what they need for the future: great people and a talented workforce, great quality of life, US highways, high-voltage electricity, mainline rail, and so much more," Evans said.

"The acronym, "BIG," pretty accurately sums up our board's objective to make the site compete internationally for the best economic opportunities out there," he said.

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## School board adds athletic stadium to district facility plan

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The Mercer County Board of Education is moving forward with planning for the Mercer County Senior High School Athletic Venue.

At their last regular meeting of the year, on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, the school board approved adding the stadium to the current District Facilities Plan. The amended plan will be

submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education. When it comes time to apply for funding, they have a project to reference.

"This is the best way to go about it," said Chief Finance Officer Amber Minor. "This is an unmet need."

The estimated cost of the project is \$18 million, according to the District Facilities Plan. The scope of the project includes a new

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## County fire department will hire new chief in 2026, board says

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The Mercer County Fire Protection Board will not hire a permanent chief until next year. Glenn Phillips resigned as chief back in August for health reasons.

Chris Dean is currently serving as interim chief. Dean has been with the district for more than 30 years.

The board held a special-called meeting on Friday, Dec. 19, 2025. Immediately

after calling the meeting to order, they went into executive session to discuss hiring a new fire chief.

After the executive session, no action was taken. The board will interview each candidate for the fire chief position at the beginning of the year.

Board member Dan Eades said all of the candidates will be provided with a job description. Volunteers man the county fire depart-

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