

NOTES

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JUNE

Lights Up! event offers theater performance and activities for kids, adults with exceptional needs

On June 13, the Stephen Foster Drama Association will continue its tradition of hosting a distinctive and inclusive performance of “The Stephen Foster Story” specifically tailored for children and adults with exceptional needs. Thanks to the generous support of LG&E and KU, this special showing is offered free of charge and creates an opportunity for attendees, along with their families, caregivers and support community, to experience the show in a safe and accommodating setting.

Traditionally, Lights Up! takes place during the final dress rehearsal of the show, just before opening night. Now in its seventh year, the event will commence at 6:30 p.m. with pre-show activities, leading up to the performance at 8 p.m. For reservations to attend Lights Up!, or if you have questions, call (502) 348-5971.

PSC announces public meetings on 502 area code

The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) will hold meetings across central Kentucky to receive public input on options for addressing the shortage of new numbers in the 502 area code.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) notified Kentucky that the 502 area code would exhaust available phone numbers by the third quarter of 2027. The NANPA submitted five relief alternatives but recommended an all-service distributed overlay of the 502-area code with a new overlay area code. A new area code must be created in northwestern Kentucky prior to the number exhaustion date, and the PSC must hold public informational hearings throughout the 502 area code region. The public meeting will be 6 p.m. June 2 at the Nelson County Fiscal Court Room in Bardstown. PSC Chair Angie Hatton said the Commission is committed to an open process as it considers the creation of Kentucky’s sixth area code.

New area codes can be established in one of two ways: geographic split or overlay. Until the last new area code implementation, the geographic split has been the norm in Kentucky. However, a new area code also can be created as an “overlay” on an existing area code which utilizes a new area code on all new numbers in an existing geographic area. This option then requires 10-digit dialing for local calls.

Documents in the 502 area code case can be found on the PSC Web site. The case number is 2024-00333. <https://psc.ky.gov/Case/ViewCaseFilings/2024-00333>

DFP

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Ultimately, she said the two-campus 6-12 model does not eliminate the district’s battle over resources. She said dividing the county’s resources would not be equitable — wanting a future where every dollar they put into a high school benefits each student.

“I have concerns about investing \$100 million-plus into something that is counting on growth that just isn’t necessarily going to be realized,” she said. “Perhaps it will — more students would be a wonderful thing, but I have concerns about that. ... While there’s wonderful things on (the DFP), the model that’s presented I still have reservations about that.”

Norman said his primary concern with the 6-12 model is having sixth-grade students and seniors in the same building, stating students learn differently across the grade levels. He did agree that action needed to be taken to address the feeder pattern and student academics, but the proposed DFP is not the solution to those issues.

Lee, who voted in favor of the DFP, said she had truly not made up her mind until the meeting Tuesday evening. She spoke heartily about connecting with community members from across her district during the campaign and hearing their concerns. She said every email she receives is read and she wants to listen to those she represents.

She said the vote on the DFP is one of the most important they are going to make as a board. Lee said she did her own independent research throughout each step of the process, wanting to ensure she knew every detail along the way.

She said the proposal of the Build Up programs in the space of Bloomfield Middle School is something outside entities already have interest in. Lee said this would be a benefit for both the community and the district’s students.

“Whatever the outcome is of this, I hope we can continue that, honor and respect one another,” Lee said. “... We need to stop the division in Nelson County.”

Following Tuesday’s DFP approval, the district will host a public hearing on June 9 at 5:30 p.m. at Central Office for parents, teacher, community members and students to voice their opinion on the facility plan moving forward.

In other news from Tuesday’s meeting, the district presented the Fiscal Year 2026 tentative budget for the district. FY2026 is set to begin on July 1.

Chief Financial Officer Jessica Rogers said they are focusing on salaries and investing in people, working hard to decrease operational expenses. As a portion of the tentative budget, \$13 million has been allocated for certified school staff salaries. \$4.4 million is focused toward the district’s diverse learning program for its expenses and staffing.

NCS is moving forward with increased efforts for numeracy and literacy efforts, on the tentative budget, \$3.3 million is currently allocated toward the curriculum investments. Another \$2.8 million has been budgeted for program and teacher additions.

On the district’s operational end, \$8.2 million has been allocated toward operations and facilities. The school district’s transportation had \$4 million budgeted for the tentative document.

However, Rogers said at this time there are still many unknowns of the district. She said as they increase and hire staff, they will be able to get a better handle on salary. Additionally they will know that inflation and an increase in insurance is to be expected.

For their unknowns, the district does not know the property assessment at this time, nor will it know the ending balance for FY2025. With all school districts the biggest unknown is final SEEK formula allocations.

The Nelson County Board of Education will meet next month on June 10 at 5:30 at Central Office.

BUDGET

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fund, is estimated at \$41,768,545 for FY2026, which is set to begin July 1.

On the revenue side, Director of Finance Tracey Rogers explained BCS will start with a beginning balance of \$3.6 million. Current SEEK predictions are expected to generate \$597,480 in state revenue, and the base funding also increased to \$260 per pupil.

On the expenditure side of the tentative budget, Bardstown City School will see a step increase for staff with potential raises in salary. Teachers, administrators and other staff salaries, including their benefits, make up 83% of the district’s general fund.

Debt services schedules for BCS for bonds and KISTA, amount to \$3.26 million in the tentative budget. Additional line items have been adjusted to keep with current programming, facilities and requests with increases expected based on projections and historical data.

In the tentative budget, BCS has \$2.2 million in its contingency fund — 5.7% of the overall document.

Rogers said there are many unknowns at the time for the next fiscal year’s budget; as with every school, SEEK funding final numbers will not be available until next school year. She said federal funding is also up in the air, with the district possibly seeing reductions in grants and the Medicaid Reimbursement program.

Additionally, a tax protest by a distilled spirits producer that Rogers said is looming heavy over the district is presenting a big challenge. She said she has reached out to the undisclosed distillery’s representative to get status update on paying their bill, but had not heard back as of Tuesday’s meeting.

At this time, the process is still ongoing with the Kentucky Department

of Revenue and there is potential for appeals.

“We have big decisions to make really soon in the next few months, and so we’ll see what we hear back from that,” she said. “But if they if they do not pay, we’re prepared for that. We’ve discussed some contingency situations in the budget that we may look at. ... I just want you all to know that it is something that we’re paying attention to, that we talk about and think about a lot.”

In other news from Bardstown’s Board of Education meeting, the district approved the construction documents as they begin the next phase of construction. Jennifer Cash, Associate Principal Architect at Sherman Carter Barnhart Architects, spoke with the Board about what will be occurring over the summer as Bardstown High School begins renovations.

Over the last six months, critical infrastructure work has taken place under the school to get plumbing up-to-date.

The next steps in construction will begin with demolition of the bridge connecting the two halves of the high school. Additionally, Cash said part of the A Wing of BHS will be taken down as they prepare for a new arts program wing.

Cash said bid packages are expected to be out to the public in mid-June, with a bid date set for some time in July. However, she said the timeline, due to the complex nature of the project, may be lengthened to give contractors time to evaluate all packages.

“This is a very complex project,” she said. “It has a lot happening to it ... the more time you can give contractors, the better opportunity. They can ask questions and have a clear understanding of the scope that’s out there within reason.”

Bardstown Board of Education is expected to meet next month on June 17 at noon at Central Office.

FISCAL

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floor has received extensive renovations over the past year-plus — as well as replacement of the heating and air conditioning units.

While construction is ongoing, the first-floor offices have been relocated elsewhere downtown, while the second-floor offices will be relocated to office space on Parkway Drive. Fiscal Court meetings will be held at the Nelson County Public Library’s Bardstown branch during the construction, until at least Jan. 1, 2026, unless the construction is completed before then.

In other news:

- PLG-TV 13 reporter Ginger Dereksen was recognized with a certificate of appreciation by Nelson Fiscal Court and the Kentucky House of Representatives at Tuesday’s meeting for her and PLG’s efforts toward providing news

coverage for Nelson County. With the sale of Bardstown Connect cable and internet service to Spectrum, PLG-TV 13 will be going off the air May 31. In upcoming issues, The Kentucky Standard will be putting together a retrospective story on the TV station, which has served Nelson County since the 1990s.

- Fiscal Court held a public hearing Tuesday to provide residents with an opportunity to comment on how the county is spending its Local Government Economic Assistance and County Road Aid funds. No residents offered to comment.

Treasurer Rhonda Fenwick said there is about \$1.7 million in road aid funds — which are generated by state gas taxes — budgeted for Fiscal Year 2026. Money from the LGEA fund is generated through mineral sales taxes out of the quarry.

- Fiscal Court tabled a vote on a planned unit development for

Woodlawn Springs that changed the zoning from A-1 agriculture to R-4 multi-family residential district. The measure passed the Joint City-County Planning and Zoning Commission, but Fiscal Court sought to wait to vote on the matter until all members were present at the next meeting. Magistrate M.T. Harned was unable to attend Tuesday’s meeting.

- Spalding reported that the county received bid openings for replacement of a bridge on Woodlawn Road. Hornback Construction was the low bidder at \$213,466, and Fiscal Court approved the bid. Grant money will pay for the project; construction will begin in June.
- Solid Waste Coordinator John Greenwell reported that his department hauled away 153 tons of tires during the spring tire amnesty event. The department also received \$76,437 to purchase a skid-steer.

Fiscal Court also

approved a \$5,000 monthly lease for a new backhoe to replace one for the landfill that has a failed transmission. The county can decide to purchase the backhoe after six months with the lease payments going toward the purchase, and the old backhoe is being traded in.

- Emergency Management Director Brad Metcalf reported that the new Verizon tower at the Culvertown Ballpark has been installed, and county dispatch relay equipment will be installed on the tower soon, aiding emergency response radio coverage in the southern end of the county.

Metcalf also reported that the expected FEMA disaster recovery center for the Boston Community Center has not yet been set up. Others are up and running in Hardin, LaRue and Bullitt counties, or people can apply through the FEMA website.

- The county discussed Senate Bill 63, which passed out of

the General Assembly approving special purpose vehicles such as ATVs outfitted with safety equipment to be legally used on the roadways. That includes headlights, turn signals, horns, brake lights, seatbelts, windshields, roll cages and a speedometer. The vehicles would need to pass safety inspections and be issued insurance and a state license plate.

Cities and counties have the option to set their own ordinances regarding whether or not ATVs could be used on the roadways, but Fiscal Court took no action on the matter.

- The Nelson County Sheriff’s Office is gathering donations for the recent tornado victims in Laurel and Pulaski counties. They were planning to deliver two truckloads last week, and could

make another delivery depending on the public response.

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