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THE LARUE COUNTY HERALD NEWS

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Judge reverses zoning denial, orders redo

Public hearing set for June 26

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

The LaRue County Fiscal Court has been parties of multiple lawsuits for more than two years, accused of erroneously denying two industrial property rezoning requests. A ruling by the LaRue Circuit Court has determined the agency did indeed violate

the applicant's procedural due process right and has ordered the fiscal court to conduct a trial-type public hearing to reconsider the matter.

Originally brought before the fiscal court in April 2023, the lawsuits refer to the denial to rezone over 230 acres from A1, agriculture, to I2, heavy industrial. The first property,

owned by TDA Properties Inc., is comprised of 118.315 acres at 3116 Tonieville Rd., Hodgenville; the second, owned by Pence Leasing LLC., is comprised of 118.288 acres also along Tonieville Road.

Although the Land of Lincoln Planning and Zoning Commission recommended the rezonings be approved due to "a substantial change of an economic, social or cultural nature which justifies the zone change," the

court voted in a 4-1 decision to overturn the requests. The vote was conducted after more than two dozen community members spoke in opposition of the rezoning; data from the Kentucky Division of Water was also shared by Oakes Routt, showing "dense karst dominates the area posing a high risk for lessened water quality."

A lawsuit for each property to overturn the denials began

shortly after. Per advisement by former LaRue County Attorney Kyle Williamson, the fiscal court reconsidered both rezoning applications in May 2024. The pair were once again denied, with District 1 Magistrate Darin Williams citing an eight-item list as cause. Per the fiscal court minutes, Williams also referenced the Division of Water map in his motion.

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Lawson found guilty of both charges in Rogers case

Testimony wraps on Friday with Lawson on the stand

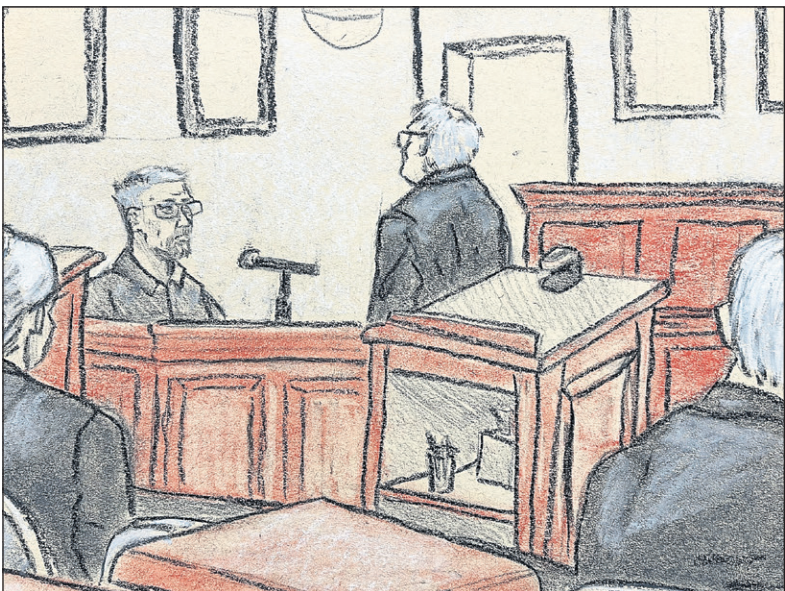
BY FORREST BERKSHIRE
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

BOWLING GREEN — A jury in Warren Circuit Court handed down a guilty verdict against Steven Lawson on Friday, May 30 for conspiracy to murder and complicity to tampering with physical evidence in the 2015 disappearance and presumed death of Crystal Rogers.

The jury recommended a sentence of 17 years in jail for the crimes.

The final day of the Steven Lawson trial brought a surprise witness — Steven Lawson.

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SYDNEY YOUNG/Special to Paxton Media Group

Steven Lawson, depicted here in a courtroom sketch, took the stand during Friday's arguments at the Warren County Justice Center. Lawson is an accused co-conspirator in the disappearance and presumed death of Crystal Rogers in 2015.

Puyear ready to serve community

BY ALLISON SHEPHERD

William 'Chad' Puyear has been appointed by the Governor's office as the next LaRue County Property Value Administrator.

Puyear was sworn into office on May 28 by LaRue County Magistrate Ricky Whitlock.

The position became available due to the vacancy created by the retirement of former PVA Scotty Lee. To qualify prospective candidates vying to fill the role, a special examination was held in Frankfort on April 22. Individuals were allotted 3.5 hours to com-

plete the test, which consisted of questions that tested the applicant's general knowledge, and were required to score 70% or higher to qualify.

Puyear was among nine eligible individuals who received a passing score, which is nothing new for Puyear who has taken the test a total of four times, passing each time. He ran for the office in 2014 against Scotty Lee who has served from then until his mid-term retirement on Feb. 28 of this year.

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William 'Chad' Puyear

Valedictorian/Salutatorian eliminated

Traditional policy replaced with Latin Honors

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

Attendees of the LaRue County High School's Class of 2025 graduation were in for a surprise when Ella Thomas and Jenna Rutledge stated they would

be the district's last Valedictorian and Salutatorian. While unexpected, the change stems from a policy change implemented three years ago.

As reported by *The LaRue County Herald News*, the LaRue County



Board of Education was asked to change the

district's Academic Honors Policy in June 2022. The revision requested removing the Valedictorian and Salutatorian tradition — which honors the seniors with the highest and second-highest class rank — and implementing Latin Honors in their place.

SEE HONORS/PAGE A8

'Touch A Truck' event to benefit HES playground

BY ALLISON SHEPHERD
PUBLISHER

The school year might have ended but a special event is being held to benefit an upgrade to the Hodgenville Elementary School playground.

Savannah Boone, Director of Special Education with LaRue County Schools, shares the

idea behind the playground upgrades is that students with moderate to severe disabilities can access the playground with their peers. "The playground is big and it's fun, but there are students that just cannot use it", Boone stated. She noted that the school has students who are in wheelchairs, stating

students with autism, epilepsy, and students with just significant motor delays, some that are blind, visually impaired or hard of hearing, could then interact with their classmates if certain upgrades were completed.

SEE TRUCK/PAGE A5

Summer Concert Series kicks off this weekend

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

Bring your chairs and bring your friends to downtown Hodgenville this summer for the 2025 Summer Concert Series. Hosted by the LaRue County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the City of Hodgenville, monthly events are planned throughout the season.

Utilizing the idea formerly known as First Friday, the series will kick off this Saturday, June 7 on Lincoln Square. Bitter Sweet will begin the live music at 5:30 p.m., opening for Casey & Romy, which will play from 8 to 11. Food will be available from several vendors.

The next event will be

held at Creekfront Park on Saturday, July 5 to celebrate Independence Day. Festivities are expected to run throughout the day, with food and beverage options, a vendor's area, door prizes and a large variety of kid-friendly activities available. Last Call will open the live music for Old Soul Remedy, and the night will conclude with a fireworks show.

The annual Back to School Bash will be held on Saturday, Aug. 2 on Lincoln Square. The event will begin with the giveaway of free school supplies, until they run out, and end with live music performed by Miles Apart.

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