

Gov. Beshear provides Team Kentucky update

FRANKFORT — Last Thursday, Gov. Andy Beshear provided an update on declining overdose deaths in the commonwealth, the booming labor market, economic development, REAL ID and driver’s license renewals and severe weather recovery. Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman joined the Governor to provide an update on the Our Healthy Kentucky Home initiative and how to recognize and report human trafficking. The Governor named everyone who has worked to decrease the number of drug overdose deaths as this week’s Team Kentucky All-Stars.

Overdose Report
Gov. Beshear announced that overdose deaths in the commonwealth decreased for the third year in a row, with a 30.2% decrease in 2024 compared with the previous year. See the full release for more.
“I am thankful that more Kentuckians are alive and in recovery today compared with last year,” Gov. Beshear said. “But we still mourn and grieve our 1,410 Kentuckians who lost their life last year to addiction and the many more who we lost before that. Every life lost is a child of God, and someone’s mom, dad, son, daughter and loved one. We won’t stop until every Kentuckian is saved from addiction.”

Labor Market
The Governor provided an update on Kentucky’s labor market. He reported that not only have labor force numbers fully rebounded from the pandemic, but they are at their highest levels in the history of the commonwealth.
As of March 2025, the number of people employed in Kentucky is 2,006,555. This represents an increase of 32,718 compared to February 2020 – just before the pandemic. Additionally, jobs filled, representing total nonfarm employment, has increased by 99,600 jobs or 5.1%. The number of nonfarm jobs in Kentucky has grown at a faster rate than jobs nationally. The civilian labor force is also at the highest in Kentucky history: it has increased by 58,611 Kentuckians.
“This is a really good statement about the health of Kentucky’s workforce,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are getting people to work and we’re filling more jobs than ever before. It’s great for our people and it’s very attractive to companies looking to invest in the commonwealth.”
Economic Development
Tuesday, Gov. Beshear joined local leaders in Mercer County and executives from Earth Breeze, a producer of environmentally

friendly laundry detergent sheets, to cut the ribbon on an approximately \$5.9 million operation in Harrodsburg that is creating 226 full-time Kentucky jobs.
The Governor noted that Kindeva Drug Delivery, known as a global leader in drug-device combination products, celebrated the grand opening of their new Lexington location Thursday morning, which houses the company’s nasal spray development and manufacturing operations. Milton Boyer, CEO of Kindeva Drug Delivery, joined the Team Kentucky Update to talk about the company’s move to the commonwealth.
Gov. Beshear said that yesterday, Ford announced the launch of the 2025 Expedition at the Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville. The Governor’s senior advisor, Rocky Adkins, joined the company to celebrate this exciting announcement.
Our Healthy Kentucky Home
Lt. Gov. Coleman provided an update on Our Healthy Kentucky Home, a one-year initiative to promote simple, positive and attainable goals to inspire and motivate Kentuckians on a journey to health and wellness. In May, the focus is women’s health. The Lieutenant Governor emphasized the importance of wom-

en prioritizing their health: scheduling regular checkups and routine screenings, as these can lead to early detection and prevention of various diseases.
“During the month of May, Our Healthy Kentucky Home focuses on women’s health,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “Women face unique challenges covering our physical, mental and emotional health. Understanding these specific health needs is incredibly helpful to promoting long-term wellness.”
REAL ID and Driver’s License Renewals
With Real ID enforcement beginning on May 7, Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians that this is not a deadline, but a federal enforcement date. Kentuckians can still get a REAL ID any time after that date. Additionally, there are other options for those who need to fly and don’t yet have a REAL ID. A passport, passport card, global entry card, military ID and Veteran Health Identification Card are among the several forms of REAL ID compliant identification. Learn more at realidky.com. The Governor also reminded Kentuckians of ways they can “skip the line” and avoid waiting at Driver Licensing Regional Offices when renewing their driver’s license. For more, see the full release.

Severe Weather Recovery
Gov. Beshear provided an update on severe weather that’s brought historic flooding to many parts of the state. Friday, the Governor announced that President Donald Trump approved part of his April 11 request for a Major Disaster Declaration, which includes Individual Assistance for Kentuckians in 13 of the counties affected by the most recent flooding. Tuesday, the Governor requested that 16 more counties receive Individual Assistance and that 64 counties receive Public Assistance. The Governor also renewed his request for hazard mitigation for the entire state.
Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance at DisasterAssistance.gov, by calling the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at 800-621-FEMA (3362) or by using the FEMA App. Anyone using a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or other similar service, can give FEMA the number for that service.
FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) are open in the first 13 counties approved for Individual Assistance. Click here to view the

hours and locations of the Disaster Recovery Centers for both February’s and April’s floods.
As of 9 a.m. Thursday, under 32 state roadways were closed, 20 by high water and 12 by mudslides or rockslides. This is down from more than 550 roads closed at the peak of the flood. Bridge inspections and highway damage assessments are under way. For your safety, do not pass barricades, signs or cones. Do not drive through standing water. For a full list of state highway closures and detours, visit GoKy.ky.gov.
Kentucky State Parks is sheltering 109 people at General Butler and Pennyryle Forest state resort parks. Those who want to help can donate to the Team Kentucky Storm Relief Fund here.
Team Kentucky All-Stars
The Governor named everyone who has worked to decrease the number of drug overdose deaths as this week’s Team Kentucky All-Stars.
“Our Team Kentucky All-Stars this week have to be everybody who work in law enforcement, in recovery, in treatment – everybody who has worked so hard to secure such a significant decrease in drug overdose deaths last year,” said Gov. Beshear. “Your work is saving lives. We are grateful.”

TEACHER: Continued from A-3

jeopardizing the future of our children. In 2024, there were more than 2,000 teacher vacancies across Kentucky, according to a report by the Annenberg Institute. Data shows that over the past year, little has been done to improve teacher pay in Kentucky. When teachers don’t feel supported, especially financially, it becomes nearly impossible to address the teacher shortage plaguing the commonwealth.
Data highlights and trends
• The average Kentucky public school teacher salary increased 3.6%

from the previous year to \$58,325, but nationally Kentucky ranks 42nd in the nation, down from 41st last year.
• The average beginning teacher salary rose 2.4% in Kentucky to \$40,161, ranking 48th nationally down from 45th last year.
• Classified support staff (bus drivers, janitorial workers, cafeteria services, administrative staff) make, on average, \$28,088 per year in Kentucky, a 3.7% increase from the previous year, and ranks 49th across the country (44th last year).
• Competitive pay among

bordering states is plaguing the teaching profession in Kentucky. Of the seven states surrounding Kentucky, only Missouri ranks lower at 49th on both average starting salary and average teacher salary.
• SEEK funding (Support Education Excellence in Kentucky), which is the funding formula the legislature uses to provide resources to schools per student, is below 2008 levels in Kentucky, when adjusted for inflation.
• Teacher pay gap. Compared to other college-educated professionals with similar

experience, teachers in Kentucky only earn 75 cents on the dollar in comparison. (Economic Policy Institute, September 2024)
The Union Advantage
Teachers earn 24% more on average in states with collective bargaining.
There is a clear need for change in Kentucky. Teachers already spend their own money on school supplies for their students. If they can be expected to use their own paychecks on others, the least we can do is increase their pay. If Kentucky’s teachers can expect any change, then

the students, parents, teachers, and neighbors must unite to call on their legislators to support the teachers who are the bedrock of their communities. Without an increase in teacher pay, the educator shortage crisis cannot be resolved. It takes all of us to stand up for teachers in the fight for better pay.
“It’s no secret that educators in Kentucky are not competitively compensated for educating our children, and KEA is deeply concerned about the general assembly’s lack of investment

in Kentucky educators’ pay,” said KEA President Eddie Campbell. “Every school district across the commonwealth faces shortages of teachers, substitutes, bus drivers, custodians, and office staff nearly every day of the school year. Properly investing in our teachers’ pay could help remedy this critical shortage and make Kentucky a competitive destination for educators working in our neighboring states. Until then, Kentucky will continue to struggle with staffing our public schools.”

How to contact your elected officials:

U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell
241 E. Main Street, Rm. 102
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-781-167

U.S. Rep. Brett Guthrie
996 Wilkinson Trace, Suite B2
Bowling Green, KY 42103
270-842-9896

State Sen. Craig Richardson
702 Capital Ave., Annex Room 228
Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-8100

Muhlenberg County Fiscal Court
Judge/Executive Mack McGehee
P.O. Box 137
Greenville, KY 42345
270-338-2520

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul
1029 State Street
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-782-8303

Gov. Andy Beshear
700 Capitol Ave., Suite 100
Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-2611

State Rep. Rebecca Raymer
702 Capital Ave., Annex Room 329G
Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-8100

LEADER-NEWS

Serving Muhlenberg County Since 1912

1730 W. Everly Brothers Blvd. - P.O. Box 471
Central City, KY 42330
270-754-3000

Hours: Monday and Tuesday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE
www.ky-leadernews.com

EDITOR -
ADVERTISING - Amanda James
CIRCULATION - Lisa Sullivan
PLANT MANAGER - Bill Hinton

CORRECTIONS

We strive for accuracy.
To suggest a correction or clarification, email editor@ky-leadernews.com

CONTACT THE NEWSROOM

to submit or suggest a news story or photo.
Email editor@ky-leadernews.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the editor. All letters must be signed with a phone number for verification, not publication.
Letters are subject to editing for space.
Letters containing profanity, knowingly inaccurate information or that are libelous in nature will not be published.
The opinion of the writer does not reflect that of the Leader-News.

DEADLINES

Advertising, Legal Notices, Obituaries and Classifieds should be sent by 4 p.m. Mondays.

Published every Tuesday by the Andy Anderson Corporation
Periodical Postage Paid at Greenville, KY 42345
USPS 229-260

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Leader-News, P.O. Box 138
Greenville, KY 42345

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In Muhlenberg County - \$27.50 (tax included)
Elsewhere in Kentucky - \$29.70 (tax included)
Outside Kentucky - \$32
We accept MasterCard, Visa and Discover

MEMBER

KPA
KENTUCKY PRESS ASSOCIATION

ISWNE
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
OF WEEKLY NEWSPAPER EDITORS