

## Court ...

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county clerk’s office would keep \$6 from every \$10 registration, and that the sheriff’s office would collect \$25 for the state-required vehicle compliance inspections before noting the legislation’s wider impact.

“This is an economic development plan meant to provide smaller communities with a source of adventure tourism revenue,” Pack said. “It’s about getting people off the trail and into stores, cabins, repair shops, etc. Getting them to those places is the real goal, to have them bring their vacation dollars to Morgan County and spend a week here.”

County Attorney Myles Holbrook also spoke about a resolution he prepared related to Senate Bill 63.

“I just wanted to clarify a couple of things,” Holbrook said. “It might be mandatory that we vote on [the resolution], but it’s not mandatory that we pass it. We can vote for it or against it ... This takes nothing away from [side-by-sides] or off-road vehicles.

“This just allows an avenue for them to have road access ... Your vehicle has to be road-worthy and you have to know the rules of the road, and be able to show when you’re turning, etc. If you’ve got one of these [side-by-sides] that complies with the new law, the you can use them to travel up to 20 miles [to the trails].”

Following Attorney Holbrook’s comments, Pack told the court that a group from Iowa recently traveled to Morgan County ride trails in the Sand Lick area and noted that they put “several thousands of dollars” into the local economy during that time.

Pack also reiterated that Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife officers patrol paths that are part of the First Frontier Appalachian Trails system before noting that an ATV rally is planned for July 1 to celebrate the Senate Bill 63 rollout in Morgan County on Sand Lick and Bolin Ridge.

Attorney Holbrook told the court that a vote on the resolution would not be required until the second reading at next month’s meeting.

As per the resolution, vehicles must be equipped with all safety features required by Senate Bill 63 – including but not limited to headlights, brake lights, mirrors, turn signals, windshields (or driver eye protection) roll bars, seat belts and appropriate tires.

The document encompasses other requirements discussed by Pack during the meeting including registration, insurance, inspections and distance,

and also states that fiscal court reserves the right to impose additional regulations or restrictions to protect public safety and welfare.

The complete resolution can be obtained by contacting Judge Executive Jim Gazay at 743-3897 or visiting his office in the Wellness Center on Route 7.

For additional information regarding the First Frontier Appalachian Trails system, contact Lara Pack at 606-225-2510 or at Mitchellgirl6@gmail.com.

**Mold Update**

Judge Gazay discussed several items in his monthly report, including the results of a site survey of his office suite in the county government building following mold issues that emerged last October.

The judge executive provided a 31-page report issued by Air Source Technology, Inc., which states the following on page nine and ten:

...

*“Within the limits of the survey, conditions in the Morgan County Court Clerk Building at 450 Prestonsburg Street in West Liberty, Kentucky require attention to address indoor air quality issues. The northwest crawlspace under the office space of concern has issues that affect air quality in the space above. Corrective action is warranted for exterior perimeter drainage patterns and the original crawlspaces.*

*“... Without corrective action, the Judge Executive office suite is not suitable for occupancy. Poor perimeter drainage issues and the crawl-space directly under the office are affecting that office’s air quality. Refer to the peer-reviewed technical papers and literature in the Resources section for additional information regarding the uncertainties associated with small sample set air sampling. Fortunately, in this particular case, OSHA air sampling results agreed with onsite observations.”*

...

The judge executive’s office was relocated to the Wellness Center last November, while the offices of Sheriff Greg Motley, County Clerk Randy Williams and Property Valuation Administrator Darby Franklin remain in the county government building.

**Other News**

Visitor Ricky Pennington of Mountain Telephone informed the court of the availability of Local Economy Lab Grant funds to promote economic development in coal communities experiencing distress as a result of coal plant and /or mine closures.

As per literature provided by Pennington, The Just Transition Fund (JTF) fund will select 5

to 10 economic development projects that “have the ability to transform the local economy” to be funded with flexible, one-year grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Following Pennington’s presentation, court members voted to apply for JTF Local Lab grant funds.

Wellness Center Director Cathy Kemplin asked that long time employee Thomas Davis be moved from part-time status to full-time status due to staffing issues at the facility.

The court granted Kemplin’s request and also heard an extensive report from Animal Shelter Director Kathy Sexton, who discussed annual dog adoption statistics and improvement efforts at the facility.

Following a presentation by County Treasurer Shenea Easterling, the court approved a resolution regarding County Road Aid from the state for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Easterling said that the initial amount of County Road Aid funds totals \$826,982.

In other road-related news, Judge Gazay announced that Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 10 officials have made the following recommendations for state road repairs:

- **KY 705 (Grassy Creek Road)**—4.752 miles. (\$316,863)
- **KY 3089 (Caskey Fork Road)**— 2.9 miles. (\$272,659)

The court unanimously approved the above recommendations.

Judge Gazay also indicated that KYTC is actively working on several other state roads in Morgan County at this time.

Court members also held an advertised public hearing regarding County Road Aid and Local Government Assistance funds with no comment from the public.

Other approved items included the following:

- The purchase of a 2025 Ford F-350 truck for the road department in the amount of \$87,844.
- Authorization for the county attorney to negotiate with Kentucky State Reformatory for lower housing fees for a county inmate. (As per meeting minutes, Rowan County Detention Center had refused to house the inmate due to violent tendencies.)
- Authorization for the county attorney to negotiate with Breathing Air Systems for a lower rate. (This pertains to equipment utilized at Hwy. 172 Fire Department as per Magistrate Donnie Keeton.)
- Approval give a \$1 per hour raise to Shawn Ratliff, Scott Patrick and Shannon Bowman for obtaining their CDL licenses, and to back pay the raise to Jan. 1, 2025.
- Approval to expend funds

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## Tourney ...

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and Randy Seemiller. Their dedication and support were instrumental in achieving this unprecedented level of success.

"The Dan Seemiller Classic 2 exceeded all expectations, setting new benchmarks for table tennis in our state," stated Risner. "The commitment and passion of Dan, Dan Junior, Chip, and Randy were absolutely crucial in making this happen. We are incredibly thankful for their involvement."

The highlight of the tournament saw Dan Seemiller Jr. clinch his second Dan Seemiller Classic Open Championship in a thrilling final against Randy Seemiller. The open singles matches showcased remarkable action, athleticism, and elite skill, captivating everyone in attendance.

Looking ahead, Risner offered an exciting glimpse into the future, announcing the Butterfly Dan Seemiller Classic 3, slated for 2026. With palpable enthusiasm, he declared, "You haven't seen anything yet!" hinting at an even larger and more impressive event on the horizon.

The overwhelming success of the Dan Seemiller Classic 2 underscores the growing enthusiasm and talent within the Kentucky table tennis community. With the promise of an even grander tournament in 2026, the future of the sport in the state looks exceptionally bright.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to all the players, coaches, and supporters who made this event possible. We can’t wait to see you all next year for more unforgettable moments and fierce competition!

**Tournament Results**

- **Open Singles Championship** – First place, Dan Seemiller Jr.; second place, Randy Seemiller; third place (tie), John Allen and Steve Banet.
- **Women’s Open** – First place, Indra Herrera; second

place, Lily Jiang; third place, Hannah Brown.

- **Under 2300** – First place, Dan Seemiller Jr.; second place, Randy Seemiller.
- **Juniors Under 18** – First place, Arnav Mairal; second place, Wiyen Tun.
- **Under 2000** – First place, Babak Fakharpour; second place, Brian Jortner.
- **Under 1600** – First place, Doug Hopwood; second place, Elijah Cardona
- **Under 1300** – First place, Jay Nelson; second place, Caleb Lemaster.
- **Under 500** – First place, Fletcher Hammonds; second place, Dustin Hall.
- **Under 1800** – First place, Babak Fakharpour; second place, Antonio Dominguez.
- **Under 800** – First place, Riley Yost; second place, Dustin Howard; third place, Daniel Arnett and Dickie Williams (tie).
- **Under 1000** – First place, Nathan Perkins; second place, Tom Salyer;
- **Under 18 Juniors Consolation** – First place, Matthew Hall; second place, Benjamin Hall.
- **Under 3600 Doubles** – First place, Dan Seemiller Jr. and Jay Nelson; second place, Dan Seemiller and Ronald Arcaro
- **Under 3000 Doubles** – First place, Royce Zuniga and Win Tun; second place, Lily Jiang and Paul Yost.
- **Under 2000 Doubles** – First place, Dennis Durst and Tom Salyer; second place, Dickie Williams and Dave Sammons; third place, Dan Arnett and Nathan Perkins.

**Sponsors**

- Mega Sponsors – West Liberty ARH and Mi Hacienda of Salyersville.
- Corporate Sponsors – Kewanis of West Liberty, Bank of the Mountains, Licking Valley Courier, Tropical Isle Tanning of Salyersville, Ison Insurance Agency of West Liberty and Allen Construction of West Liberty.
- Platinum Sponsors – Commercial Bank of West Liberty and On Deck Apparel.

- Silver Sponsors – Dr. Edward and Patricia Ward, Janie Scott, Stay Rustic Clothing Company, Giovanni’s Pizza of West Liberty.
- Bronze Sponsors – Eastern Kentucky Veterinary Clinic.

**Special Thanks**

Judge Executive Jim Gazay, Cathy Kemplin and Robin Pelfrey of the Morgan Co. Wellness Center, Morgan Co. Wellness Center staff (special thanks to Thomas), Dan (for fixing our windows), West Liberty Tourism Commission, Kumar (Umpire) and Stan Kobylanski (Referee) for tournament operations, Allen Dulen (photographer and media), Steve Banet (assisting with clinics), Dickie Williams (equipment and setup coordinator) EKTT Club Manager Dustin Howard, Linda Bradley, Board Member Dan Arnett (event planning) Janie Scott and Scott Hammonds (technology).

**Tournament Organizers**

- **Tournament Committee** – Dickie Williams, Dan Arnett, Caleb Lemaster and Dustin Howard.
- **Executive Consultant** – Dan Seemiller.
- **Tournament and Event Director** – Byron Risner.

**Additional Information**

For additional information regarding upcoming table tennis events, follow the Eastern Kentucky Table Tennis Facebook page or contact Byron Risner via Facebook.

## Events ...

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gifts and a dinner to ensure that Morgan County’s youth have a wonderful Christmas. Our organization is comprised of emergency service personnel and their friends and families.

All Christmas gifts are purchased with donated funds!

For additional information regarding the Morgan County Cops For Kids or the above-mentioend events, contact Lowell Adkins at 606-495-5566.

### INSPECTION PERIOD FOR THE PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT ROLL

The Morgan County real property tax roll will be opened for inspection from May 5 through May 19, 2025. Under the supervision of Darby Franklin, Morgan County Property Valuation Administrator, or a designated deputy, any person may inspect the tax roll.

This is the January 1, 2025, assessment on which state, county, and school taxes for 2025 will be due on or about October 1, 2025.

The tax roll is in the office of the Property Valuation Administrator in the Morgan County Office Building and may be inspected between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and Saturdays by appointment.

Any taxpayer desiring to appeal an assessment on real property made by the PVA must first request a conference with the PVA or a designated deputy. The conference may be held in person or remotely via telephone, email or fax. Please visit the PVA office or call for an appointment. The conference may also be held prior to or during the inspection period.

Any taxpayer still aggrieved by an assessment on real property, after the conference with the PVA or designated deputy, may appeal to the county board of assessment appeals.

The taxpayer can appeal his or her assessment by filing in person or sending a letter or other written petition stating the reasons for appeal, identifying the property and stating the taxpayer’s opinion of the fair cash value of the property.

The appeal must be filed with the county clerk’s office no later than one work day following the conclusion of the inspection period.

A taxpayer failing to appeal to the county board of assessment appeals, or failing to appear before the board, either in person or by designated representative, will not be eligible to appeal directly to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Appeals of personal property assessments shall not be made to the county board of assessment appeals. Personal property taxpayers shall be served notice under the provisions of KRS 132.450(4) and shall have the protest and appeal rights granted under the provisions of KRS 131.110.

The following steps should be taken when a taxpayer does not agree with the assessed value of personal property as determined by the property valuation administrator.

He must list under protest (for certification) what he believes to be the fair cash value of his property.

He must file a written protest directly with the Department of Revenue, Office of Property Valuation within 30 days from the date of the notice of assessment.

This protest must be in accordance with KRS 131.110

The final decision of the Department of Revenue may be appealed to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Darby Franklin  
Property Valuation Administrator  
Morgan County  
Phone 606-743-3349 Fax 606-743-9395  
Email: darby.franklin@ky.gov

## Council ...

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is awarded to WLF.D.

Chief Phipps told the council that he expects to know the status of the grant award within 30 days.

Mayor Risner also opened bids on a surplus 2008 Ford F-250 pickup truck the council had recently offered for sale:

- **Tony Wireman** – \$1,201.
- **John Beasley** – \$1,675.50.

The council voted to accept Beasley’s bid.

Additionally, council members approved a gun surplus sale of decommissioned police firearms to West Liberty Police Department officers at \$300 per rifle and \$150 per shotgun.

Mayor Risner, a licensed firearms dealer, reported that he had checked various sources to determine fair market value of the guns – some of which

Police Chief Wayne Lewis said were purchased in the 1990s during the administration of former Mayor Bob Nickell.

In other news, the council held the second reading of an amendment to the city’s gas rate ordinance previously discussed at the March 24 meeting, during which members opted for the following rates per metered cubic foot (MCF):

- **Residential Rates** – \$20 minimum (includes one MCF), and \$4.36 per additional MCF.
- **Commercial Rates** – \$24 minimum (includes one MCF), and \$6.43 per additional MCF.

The council unanimously approved the above-listed rates.

Other approved items included the following:

- A \$500 contribution to Morgan County High School’s Project Graduation event.
- An amendment to the pay scale ordinance for water treatment plant employees.

- The acceptance of a \$75,159.13 annual allotment from the state as per a mutual road aid agreement.

The council also heard a presentation from Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky 2025 Deborah Robbins, of West Liberty, who discussed her campaign to normalize wheelchair usage as she prepares to compete in the Ms. Wheelchair America event in Grand Rapids, Mich., in August.

Before adjournment, Councilman Mark Walter offered his condolences to the families of Donnie McKenzie and Jay Richard Caskey, and to all who have lost loved ones in recent weeks.

**Additional Information**

The West Liberty City Council meets at 5:30 p.m. the fourth Monday of each month in the upstairs council room at City Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

## Forum ...

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Wright spoke at the event.

“We’ve gathered here today for something powerful,” Wright said. “A space where voices that don’t always get heard are given the mic. This isn’t just a meeting, it’s a movement towards understanding, healing, and real solutions. This is a judgement-free zone. It’s about listening, speaking with respect, and finding common ground. We may come from different paths but we all have something valuable to say and something to learn.”

New Vision Recovery Center Director Amanda Nichols also noted the importance of communication between those in recovery and law enforce-

ment officers.

“Today is about connection, understanding, and building a bridge between law enforcement and the recovery community,” Nichols said. “Also between support systems and those in needs, and between individuals walking different paths but sharing the same goal: A safer, healthier and more compassionate community.

“To our police officers- thank you for showing up, not just in uniform, but as partners in progress. And to everyone here affected by substance use – your strength, courage and resilience are seen and deeply respected.

“Together, we are stronger. Together, we can build a future where healing, support, and safety go hand and hand.”

New Vision Recovery Cen-

ter officials would like to express thanks to KSP Public Affairs Officer Zach Haney and Detective Ethan Crouch for taking time out of your day to discuss the perspective from the law enforcement side, along with West Liberty Police Department Deputy Chief Robbie Perry and Sgt. Micheal Williams.

Additionally, New Vision Recovery Center would like to thank Walker Case, owner of Giovanni’s, for allowing us to host this special event there.

New Vision Recovery Center does plan on having another "Say Your Piece Forum" and would love to see your presence.

For additional information contact New Vision Recovery Center Assistant Director Amy Wright at 606-743-2107.