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The

Licking Valley Courier


(USPS:312-040)

West Liberty, Kentucky 41472

Thursday, June 26, 2025



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Vol. 117 — No. 15

SPEAKING OF AND FOR MORGAN, THE BLUEGRASS COUNTY OF THE MOUNTAINS

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**VACATION NOTICE**

**NO PAPER NEXT WEEK**

There will be no paper next week as the Courier office will be closed Monday, June 30, through Friday, July 4, for vacation.

The office will open for business again on Monday, July 7.

We would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Independence Day!

**Calendar for 2025-2026 schl. year is released**

Morgan County school district officials have released a tentative calendar for the 2025-2026 school year:

- Aug. 13 – First day of school.
- Sept. 1 – Labor Day. (No school.)
- Sept. 26-29 – Sorghum Festival. (No school.)
- Oct. 17 – Break. (No school.)
- Nov. 24-28 – Thanksgiving break. (No school.)
- Dec. 22 to Jan. 2 – Winter break. (No school.)
- Jan. 5 – Return after winter break.
- Jan. 19 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day. (No school.)
- March 30 to April 3 – Spring break. (No school.)
- May 19 – Tentative last day for students.

For additional information regarding the 2025-2026 school calendar, contact your child's school or call the Morgan County Board of Education Central Office at 743-8002.

**MOVIE NIGHT AT HORSE PARK**  
**FRI., JUNE 27:**  
**MINECRAFT**  
**SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS**



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**Independence Day Festivities Planned For July 3rd And 4th**

*Taylor Swift Tribute Show, Taylor Austin Dye, And Fireworks At Old Mill Park; Kiwanis Club Main Street Activities On Tap*

**By Miranda M. Cantrell**

The West Liberty Tourism Commission will host a Taylor Swift tribute group and a rising country star on Thursday, July 3, at Old Mill Park ahead of the annual Independence Day fireworks display.

The event – which is part of the free admission Live on the Licking concert series – will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a performance by opener Taylor Austin Dye, a Nashville recording artist who has released two albums including Out Of These Hills (2023) and Sick Of Me (2024).

Dye's most popular songs on Spotify include "Rest In Peace," "Bible Belt" and "Damage Control."

A video for her latest single, "Echo" was recently released on YouTube and is also receiving airplay on CMT.

Following Dye's performance, the Illinois-based group Taylor Made will present "Live Long: The Journey Of Taylor Swift," a tribute to the global pop superstar.

A promotional video on the Taylor Made website shows band members performing Swift's songs live while wearing costumes inspired by the music icon.

Swift debuted as a country artist in 2006 with the single "Tim McGraw" and charted several other country hits including "Teardrops On My Guitar", "Love Story" and "You Belong With Me."

Since 2006, Swift has released 11 original studio albums contain-

*See EVENTS , Page 3*

**Emmalyn Prater Qualifies For Junior Olympics**

Emmalyn Prater, along with other members of the Gym Dandy's team, represented team Kentucky at the AAU Nationals in Ft. Lauderdale Florida on June 18-21. Emmalyn received four medals and qualified for the National Team for the Junior Olympics.

Emmalyn will be competing at the Junior Olympics in Houston Texas in July. Emmalyn is the daughter of Zach and Kayla Prater of West Liberty.



**Senior commodities giveaway will be Wednesday, July 2**

Commodities for Seniors from God's Pantry will be distributed Wednesday, July 2, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the active list, and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for the waiting list. Please bring a box, bag, tote or basket to put your items in. For additional information call 606-522-3988 or 606-495-5631. See you then!

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**School bd. approves facilities plan to close middle school**

*Vote was 4-1 on both readings; Gevedon cast lone "no" vote; no speakers voiced any opinions at June 19 public hearing hosted by planning committee*

**By Miranda M. Cantrell**

The Morgan County Board of Education approved a District Facilities Plan (DFP) including the closure of Morgan County Middle School following a series of meetings last week.

School board members approved the plan on first reading during their regular June 17 meeting, which was followed by a public forum hosted by the district's Local Planning Committee (LPC) on June 19.

The LPC is charged with developing a four-year DFP as required by state statute.

The DFP states that sixth grade students will remain in elementary schools, while seventh and eighth grade students will be placed at the high school following the middle school's closure.

Should the DFP be approved by Kentucky Board of Education, the above-mentioned changes would not occur until the 2026-2027 school year.

Kentucky Board of Educa-

tion members are expected to consider the DFP at their next meeting.

No speakers took the floor during the June 19 public forum neither in support of nor opposition to the DFP, which had been unanimously approved by LPC members during a June 5 meeting.

During the June 5 meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ralph Hamilton noted that a significant drop in district enrollment prompted the middle school closure proposal.

"In 2014, I came over to the board [office] and we were at 2,000 kids," Dr. Hamilton said. "Since then, we have dropped to 1,670, and it is right along with the [University of Louisville] census data. We're right with that projection.

"We're built for 2,500 [students], and the fact of the matter is we have to have kids to have revenue to be able to operate at that level. If we continue to have that operational cost,

*See PLAN , Page 3*

**Grand Jury hands down indictments against 10 people in recent session**

The Morgan Circuit Court Grand Jury handed down indictments against 10 people in a recent court session:

1.) Levi Cantrell, 44, of West Liberty, Ky. – Receiving stolen property over \$1,000 (Polaris RZR).

2.) Zachary Marchal #333903, 23, Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex inmate – Promoting contraband (first degree; drugs), trafficking in a controlled substance (second degree; suboxone), trafficking in a controlled substance (first degree; methamphetamine), trafficking in a controlled substance (first degree; oxycodo-

ne), persistent felony offender (second degree).

3.) Austin Passmore #325605, 21, Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex inmate – Assault (first degree), persistent felony offender (second degree).

4.) Terry Davis, 45, of West Liberty, Ky. – Assault (fourth degree; domestic violence), wanton endangerment (first degree), terroristic threatening (third degree), strangulation (first degree), public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, tampering with physical evidence, possession of a controlled substance (second degree).

*See INDICTED , Page 3*