

FROM THE FRONT

LCADD RECEIVES NADO IMPACT AWARD



Photo Submitted

Lake Cumberland staff and board members recently attended NADO's Annual Training Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. LCADD received a NADO Impact award for their Project Work, an opioid abatement grant-funded program that provides training opportunities to individuals coming through coming out of recovery. Pictured left to right: Lyndsey Brown-Deputy Executive Director, Jimmie Greene-McCreary County Judge Executive, Waylon Wright-Executive Director, Robert Lawson-Burnside Mayor, Laurel Irby-Burkesville Mayor, Allan Chapman-Board Member, Eddie Thomas-Russell Springs Mayor, Sharon Payne-Board Member.

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McCreary Journal

JAILHOUSE BLUES ARE NEARING A CONCLUSION

By Eugenia Jones
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In what was called a “momentous” occasion for McCreary and Whitley Counties, state and local officials from both counties took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for the \$10 million, state-funded expansion of Whitley County’s current Detention Center, with work set to start immediately. The facility, located just off KY Hwy 92 before Walmart and Goodwill when heading east from McCreary County, will, once the expansion is finished, house all future McCreary County inmates. The 100-bed expansion incurs no construction costs for McCreary County.

Whitley County Judge Pat White, Jr. served as Master of Ceremonies for last Tuesday’s (11-25-25) ground-breaking ceremony, welcoming attendees and introducing speakers including KY State Police Trooper Matt Ridener (who led the prayer), Whitley County Jailer Jason Wilson, McCreary County Judge Executive Jimmie “Bevo” Greene, KY Senate President and elected Senator for McCreary/Whitley Counties Robert Stivers, and Whitley County State Representative Nick Wilso. Wilson is a former public defender for McCreary County.

McCreary’s Judge Executive Greene called the expansion a game-changer for McCreary County, noting that the current transport drive to Knox County takes approximately one hour and ten minutes.

“This will significantly cut down on the drive time, saving money and making trips safer for both inmates and transport officers,” Greene observed. “Additionally, we will now be able to use eligible inmates for supervised work details in McCreary County.”

Greene continued, noting that it will also be much more convenient and lessen the drive time for family members when visiting incarcerated loved ones.

Noting that both Whitley and McCreary County Fiscal Courts and Judge Executives worked together to secure the project, White said he looks forward to continuing the growing partnership between himself and Judge Greene.

Senate President Robert Stivers played a key role in securing state funding for the project. Both Whitley and McCreary Counties were redistricted into Stivers’ 25th state Senate District at different times due to population changes in the U.S. Census.

“When Whitley County was redistricted into my 25th District, I saw there was a need with the jail,” Stivers explained, addressing the audience. “When redistricting occurred a second time, putting McCreary County into my District, I learned that McCreary County is without a jail and transports its inmates to places, sometimes, as far away as Leslie and Knox Counties. This plan between the two counties just clicked.”

Stivers continued, noting the benefits for both counties, including making the court system run more smoothly, as it will now be easier for attorneys to meet with their clients, and it will be less time-consuming and easier to transport inmates to their court appearances.

“It has taken mayors, judges, the court system, everyone looking at the best way to provide services while, at the same time, keeping citizens protected, in addition to saving money for both counties,” Stivers declared. “This is how government should work.”

“This is a great partnership,” reiterated Representative Nick Wilson. “This is a good day for both McCreary and Whitley Counties.”

McCreary’s Judge Executive Greene told the McCreary Journal that the only cost to McCreary County from Whitley County will be the state-mandated daily meal and housing



Photos By Eugenia Jones

McCreary County officials joined Senator President Robert Stivers during the ground breaking ceremony.

per diem, which is currently \$35.34. Greene also stated that Judge White assured him that McCreary will be allocated 100 beds, with more as needed. Greene mentioned that a written contract between the two counties will detail the specifics.

Whitley County’s 100-bed jail expansion specifically includes 90 cells with bunks, 10 isolation cells, community space, and indoor and outdoor recreation areas. Codell Construction was awarded the construction bid, with completion expected within 18 months.

Currently, McCreary County inmates are transported to Knox County and housed at the Knox County Detention Center in Barbourville, KY. McCreary County has been transporting its inmates for over a decade since the Kentucky Department

of Corrections closed the McCreary County jail in 2013, citing multiple facility issues. Those incarcerated at the McCreary County Jail when it closed were moved to the Laurel County Correctional Center. Since then, McCreary County has contracted with several counties, including Wayne, Leslie, and Knox, to house its inmates.

Jail costs across the Commonwealth have reached a crisis point. Like McCreary County, more than a third of Kentucky’s counties lack their own jails; instead, they contract with other counties to house inmates. Since these counties cannot afford to build and maintain their own jails long-term, transporting inmates remains the only practical option, offering significant savings for those counties.

Currently, there are no statewide plans for new jails; instead, much of the focus has shifted to expanding existing jails and establishing regional jails, in which multiple counties in a region share a facility. To build a new county jail, the state must approve, typically requiring at least

150 beds. Whereas the cost of a 100-bed expansion at Whitley County (to include McCreary County) is anticipated at \$10 million, the estimated cost to build a new 100-bed jail for an individual county is between \$25 and \$45 million, depending on location, security level, etc.

CANDIDACY

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and a small portion of Pulaski County. Jones said his decision comes after several weeks of conversations with residents, community leaders, and local stakeholders who encouraged him to bring a strong, solution-focused voice to the Legislature.

“I’m running because I believe the people of the 52nd District deserve representation that works hard and works to deliver results,” Jones said.

“I’m committed to ensuring that our district’s priorities are heard and respected.”

Jones is a husband and father of two who has served 31 years to the students and staff of the Wayne County School District, serving as a teacher, coach, and, currently, the District Athletic Director.

The 52nd District State Representative seat is wide-open following incumbent Ken Upchurch’s announcement earlier this year that he is not seeking re-election.