

BABY, from 1

“It’s a temperature-controlled space that is accessible only by staff through a keypad,” explained Middlesboro ARH CEO Michael Slusher. “When the door is closed, it triggers alarms in the Emergency Department and in the med-surg unit. Staff then go in and immediately take the baby to the ED for assessment and also contact Child Protective Services.”

There are cameras inside the box, but to ensure anonymity, there are no cameras on the outside of the box or in the area of the parking lot where the Safe Haven Baby Box is located.

Friday’s event, officially titled a “Safe Haven Baby Box Blessing” featured speakers from throughout the community, as well as a blessing from ARH clergy.

Though officially a partnership between Middlesboro ARH and Safe Haven Baby Box, it was the idea of Middlesboro native Olivia Johnson, who, as a 16-year-old, made it her mission to raise the \$25,000 necessary for the installation.

“I remember sitting on my bed one day and my mom came in and showed me this ad she had seen for the baby boxes,” Johnson recalled. “I said that is such a neat thing and a good idea, but I just kind of left it at that.”

That conversation, however, triggered a memory from years earlier, when Johnson, now 18 and a freshman at Eastern Kentucky University, learned of a baby who died after being abandoned in a dumpster.

“I never forgot that story,” she said.

Two weeks later, she told her mom she planned to raise the money for a box in

Middlesboro.

“From that point on, we hit the ground running,” Johnson said, adding though she was behind the fundraising, her mother Joy Goins, had to help with the legal end of things as she was still a minor.

Over the next two years, Johnson spoke at meetings and events, posted flyers and hosted fundraisers until she met her goal.

Johnson, who in 2024 was named SOAR’s Appalachian Student of the Year for her efforts, said the recognition was nice, but was not the important part of the project.

“This is such an important thing to have here in Middlesboro,” Johnson said. “Hopefully, the Safe Haven Baby Box never has to be used. In a perfect world, every woman is able to get pregnant on her own time, with a loving family to provide support. But that isn’t realistic.

“And so, if mothers in Middlesboro or surrounding areas need it, they know there is a safe, anonymous way they can surrender their child and know that they will be loved and cared for.”

Both Slusher and Jessi Getrost from Safe Haven Baby Box thanked Johnson for her work.

“We are very grateful to Olivia for her hard work,” Slusher said. “To have that level of commitment as a 16-year-old high school student, is truly amazing.”

Getrost added, “We’re blessed to have outstanding citizens like Olivia in communities that see a need for another option for parents. We couldn’t be more grateful to her for her diligent work in fundraising for this Middlesboro Safe Haven Baby Box.”

State Rep. Adam Bowling and Sen. Scott Madon also attended and spoke at Friday’s event.



Olivia Johnson demonstrates how the Safe Haven Baby Box works during Friday’s ceremony. Johnson was instrumental in raising \$25,000 for the installation of the baby box while she was a student at Middlesboro High School. (Photo by Emily Cole)

HOPE, from 1

In 2019 Crater of Hope painted their downtown mural and there are plans to refresh that mural this summer with the help of students who pledge not to do drugs.

2019 was also the first year of the group’s Christmas Toy Drive which continues to this day. The toys collected are used to provide a Christmas for children

whose mothers are incarcerated in the Bell County Detention Center.

Also in 2019 Crater of Hope partnered with Toyota Tshusho and became a 501c3. They started an after school program and rented their first building. In 2020 they started to partner with Save the Children.

In 2021 they started the ready to work program in partnership with South-

east Community College.

Friday members of the board of directors: Jessie Mobert, Michael Slusher and Redmond, and members of the Crater of Hope Board: Pam Sulfridge, Becky Akers, Merlie Lane, Sherri Clark and Kayla Grubb were all recognized along with past board members in attendance like David King.

“For the past decade at Crater of Hope we have

been a guiding light of support and hope in our community. We offer prevention, recovery and after care services that pave the way to a brighter future for Bell County,” Sulfridge said.

“Each year has presented its challenges, but its also presented remarkable growth, resilience and success — made possible by the unwavering dedication and passion of everyone that is here today.”

Ready to Work student Alycia Rhymer shared her recovery story and Tom Vincini from Operation Unite spoke about working with the Crater of Hope.

The group’s next meeting will be on April 28.

KFC, from 1

Middlesboro Interim Superintendent Dr. Jamie Johnson put out a message on the district’s Facebook page informing parents of the soft lockdown and clarified that nothing had happened at any school location. She later shared

that the suspect had been apprehended and that the soft lockdown had been lifted.

“All students and staff remain safe, and we continue to work closely with the Middlesboro Police Department to ensure the ongoing security of our schools,” she said.

“The safety of our students and staff is always our highest priority. We take every precaution to protect our school community and will continue to maintain strong safety protocols. I appreciate your patience, cooperation, and trust as we navigated this situation.”



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PUBLIC NOTICE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Appalachian Wildlife Foundation
110 S. Main Street
Corbin, KY 40701

Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of the **Boone’s Ridge Tram Road and Accessible Nature Trail** project will be received by the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation at the **office of JMT, 109 South 24th Street, Middlesboro, KY 40965** until **2:00 p.m. (Local Time), Tuesday, April 29, 2025**, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

Project Description:
The project consists of construction of a new 2.6 mile long paved tram road and 1.5 mile long paved accessible nature trail, including approximately 5,975 cubic yards of excavation, 9,100 cubic yards of embankment, 9,750 tons of asphalt paving, 10,500 Tons of DGA, 1,328 Square yards of concrete pavement, and 460 linear feet of culvert pipe at the Boone’s Ridge development of Bell County, Kentucky.

The CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be examined at the following locations:
Appalachian Wildlife Foundation, 110 South Main Street, Corbin, KY
JMT, 109 S. 24th Street, Middlesboro, KY
Builders Exchange, 2300 Meadow Drive, Louisville, KY
Knox Builders Exchange, 300 Clark Street, Knoxville, TN

Copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be obtained from:
JMT
109 S. 24th Street
P.O. Box 1425
Middlesboro, KY 40965

from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, upon payment of a **non-refundable cost of \$200.00 for each set**. Bidders must purchase plans from the Engineer and payment shall be made via check in the name of the Bidder. Plans purchased by one party and bid by another party will not be accepted.

The Contract will be awarded to the lowest, responsive, responsible Bidder based upon Owner’s selection of Base Bid and/or any alternates so chosen.

Federal wage and hour provisions **do apply** to this project.

No bidder may withdraw his/her bid within 90 days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

The Contractor and Subcontractors shall be subject to all provisions of the Federal Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) and shall be required to pay not less than the prevailing wages established by the U.S. Department of Labor, and which are included in, and made a part of, the Contract Documents.

The Contractor must comply with the requirements of the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, 41 USC 8301 note, and all applicable rules and notices, as may be amended.

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap, and sex in this project. Minority contractors are encouraged to bid the project. Prime contractors are encouraged to use minority sub-contractors.

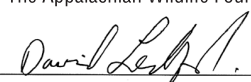
The OWNER reserves the right to reject any and all bids with proper justification, or to let a contract in whole or part and to waive formalities. Any bid that is obviously unbalanced may be rejected.

Attention of Bidders is particularly called to the requirements as to conditions of employment to be observed and minimum wage rates to be paid under the contract. These include Segregated Facility, Section 109 and. Further Title VI Minority bidders are encouraged to bid.

Special Notice to Bidders - This project is funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission. As such, this project has several requirements that must be strictly adhered. General and Supplemental General Conditions are included as part of the Contract Documents. These Conditions have special instructions and regulations that shall be part of the Contract, such as the following:

1. Procurement of a Contractor for this project shall be subject to regulations contained in 40 CFR Part 31.36, CDBG requirements per 24 CFR and KY CDBG Procurement Policy, and with the Division of Water Procurement Guidance.
2. Bidders shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Anti-Kickback Act, and the Contract Work Hours Standard Act and 40 CFR 31.36 L (3, 4 & 6).
3. The Contractor/Subcontractor shall comply with 41 CFR 60-4, in regard to affirmative action, to insure equal opportunity to females and minorities and shall apply the time tables and goal set forth in 41 CFR 60-4 if applicable to the area of the project.
4. Bidders shall make positive efforts to use small, minority, women owned and disadvantaged businesses.

“The Appalachian Wildlife Foundation is an Equal Employment Opportunity Agency”


President/CEO
Appalachian Wildlife Foundation
4-1-2025
Date