

Local Feeding America agency participates in virtual hunger free day

Event provides opportunity to advocate for programs, initiatives combating food insecurity

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

Feeding America, Kentucky's Heartland took part in the annual Hunger Free Kentucky Day virtually, joining food banks, community leaders and advocates from throughout the commonwealth in a show of solidarity.

Despite the challenges posed by the recent flooding that have impacted thousands across the state, the event Tuesday highlighted the ongoing mission of organizations and advocates from across Kentucky to ensure that neighbors have access to nutritious food.

This year's event took on a deeper significance as the recent floods served as a reminder of how suddenly disaster can strike, and how these disasters exacerbate the already prevalent issue of food insecurity. It's a stark reminder

that hunger can affect anyone, at any time, and that collective advocacy is crucial in combating it.

While the event's in-person gathering in Frankfort was canceled because of these unforeseen circumstances, the mission of Hunger Free Kentucky Day remained steadfast: ensuring those who need food the most in communities across the Commonwealth can access it.

"We at Feeding America, Kentucky's Heartland provide millions of meals to area families every year through our extensive network of agency partners," FAKH Executive Director Charles Dennis said in a news release. "This work is not possible without consistent and robust support. This day is all about joining other advocates throughout our commonwealth to ensure lead-

ers and community members understand the urgent need to support initiatives that combat food insecurity."

As a regional partner food bank within the Feeding America network, the local agency works tirelessly to combat hunger by distributing approximately 20 million pounds of food annually across central, south central and western Kentucky. This critical work is made possible by the dedication of the organization's staff, volunteers and a network of 190 agency partners operating 260 programs throughout the region.

To effectively carry out this mission, advocacy among staff members, volunteers and supporters is essential. The organization's legislative priorities focus on safeguarding and expanding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits, strengthening child nutrition programs through Child Nutrition Reauthorization and protecting and

enhancing key federal nutrition programs through the reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as of 2022, SNAP provided critical food assistance to 225,000 children, 73,000 individuals older than 60, 61,000 people with disabilities younger than 60 and 42,000 adults aged 18 to 49 in Kentucky.

According to Feeding America's most recent Map the Meal Gap study, 54,710 children within the agency's 42-county service area faced food insecurity. This statistic translates to approximately one in five children within the region. According to the study, a staggering 36 counties within the organization's service area report childhood food insecurity rates surpassing 20%.

In 2022, 176,270 people in FAKH's service area were food insecure, an alarming increase of 35,250 individuals from the previous year. The overall food insecurity rate of

the service area is 16%.

While government programs and corporate partnerships play a crucial role in the organization's fight against food insecurity, individual giving remains a vital component of the agency's efforts. Donations from community members provide the flexibility needed to respond to urgent needs and expand programs that help provide food and resources to families struggling with hunger.

"Hunger is an issue that affects every corner of our state and every county in our service area," said Jeremy Hinton, FAKH board chairman, in the release. "When it comes to addressing this issue, every conversation, every advocate and every dollar or food item donated makes a difference."

To learn more about Feeding America, Kentucky's Heartland and its mission to end hunger, go to feedingamericakentucky.org.

TREE

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rights-of-way," city Stormwater Director Rita Davis said in announcing the designation. "To follow up with this, we will have some tree ordinances to further regulate some of the tree removals and have some offsetting as far as if a tree of a certain size is removed; we would want additional trees at a ratio to be replaced based on the size of that tree."

The ordinances, which include developers to do a tree survey, are expected to be presented to city council sometime in March as they are under final review with administration, Davis said following the meeting.

Davis was part of a team who drafted the application to include Stormwater Inspector James Gray and Parks and Recreation Director Seth Breitner, and Senior Park Manager Jason Dailey.

"Being a tree city basically shows that you are a green city," Gray said. "We're all about sustainability and future planning."

The designation is a return for the city as it once held it prior to the pandemic, and previously established ordinances was part of what Gray believes helped secure it this time around.

"Getting back into tree city is mainly for doing what we can to prevent greenhouse gas and get as much carbon collected as possible," Gray said.

The designation goes beyond the scope of the tree canopy for the city, of which Elizabethtown is at 16.9% but has goals



City of Elizabethtown

Trees surround the golf course at American Legion Park in Elizabethtown as golfers play a round. The city of Elizabethtown recently was awarded the designation of Tree City USA from the Arbor Day Foundation for its conservation efforts.

of reaching 33%, Gray said.

"We've got a ways to go," Gray said.

In order to become a Tree City, the foundation requires personnel or citizen-led tree boards to be established; ordinances in place to create consistent guidelines around planting, maintaining and removing trees in public spaces; money in the budget for conservation; and celebrating tree management efforts.

"What got us the designation are the ordinances that are already in place with having diversity with trees, having a tree board — we're about to officially establish that as soon as the new ordinances pass," Gray said. "With the tree board meetings, we're going to have big education events for the public to come in so people get more invested in the trees in the community."

After the ordinances are passed by city council, the city will accept applications from residents to join the board, Gray said. Availability of those applications will be advertised on the

city's website and social media channels.

As stormwater director, Davis said trees provide benefits outside of their beauty and greenhouse gas preventions.

"It aligns very well with our mission," Davis said. "The trees take up a lot of the storm water. They are very valuable at reducing our storm water runoff and they also help with bank erosion when they're planted along drainage ways along creeks."

On Keeneland Drive, one project the department is working on is live-staking trees along an eroded creek bed to prevent further erosion. Live-stakes are created

from cuttings of certain species of trees which can be planted into the ground to propagate and grow.

"These live-stakes, within the next year or two, we're hoping to harvest them and live-stake more creeks," Gray said.

"Once those start to propagate and are thriving, we'll harvest new live-stakes and create more live trees from the cuttings," Davis said, adding those will be planted along other drainage ways in the city to prevent erosion.

Those areas have yet to be identified, but Davis said she is hoping to get community input

and participation in other areas of the city in need of erosion control.

Breitner said the city's conservation efforts in its parks are not and the public has joined in sustainability efforts.

"We have a lot of people who come to us and say they would like to plant a memorial tree or we would like to donate trees," Breitner said. "What this helps us do is to have distinct varieties that we're looking at within our parks. It establishes the quality of the trees that we have."

It also provides for education opportunities as all programs will use native Kentucky species, Breitner said.


"For instance, last year we had a day when people came in and we gave out hundreds of trees and we just gave those out for free,"

Breitner said. "It's an opportunity to educate the public, so they can learn a little bit more about the parks and we can have a quality trees throughout the parks."

A list of native trees suitable to plant will be kept with the tree board, Davis said. The city now joins the 3,577 recognized tree cities which plan nearly a million trees annually, an investment of \$1.7 billion, according to the Arbor Day Foundation website. Nearly 47% of Americans live in a designated Tree City.

Elizabethtown joins Fort Knox and other Kentucky cities, to include Bowling Green, Danville, Frankfort, Louisville, Owensboro and Paducah, as tree cities.

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LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board wishes to contract with an entity(ies) or person(s) to serve as the One Stop Operator (OSO) for the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Area. Parties interested in contracting for services can download the Request for Proposal packet from two websites: www.ltadd.org or www.ltcareercenter.org after February 24, 2025. Deadline for submission of proposals is 4:30 p.m. (EDT) on March, 24, 2025. The Lincoln Trail Area Development District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or religion, and provides upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs and activities of the agency.

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THIEF

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not take money out.

Police also report having three receipts showing Worner had cancelled Pick 3 games but no money was entered for the game played.

Worner was taken into custody Wednesday charged with lottery influence — winning prize through coercion, fraud; first-degree unlawful access to computer; theft by unlawful taking — over \$500 but less than \$1,000.

Lottery influence — winning prize through coercion, fraud is a Class B felony punishable by 10 to 20 years in prison.


Worner is in the Hardin County Detention Center in lieu of a \$50,000 cash bond.

Greg Thompson can be reached at 270-505-1414 or gthompson@thenewsenterprise.com.


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