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17th Annual Fish Fest

Over 150 kids participated in this year's event

MIDDLESBORO — Over 150 children gathered at Middlesboro City Park on Saturday for a day full of fishing, fun, and family memories during the 17th annual Fish Fest.

The beloved event, which has become a local tradition, was started 17 years ago by former Bell County Attorney Neil Ward. After Ward's retirement, current Bell County Attorney Chris Douglas continued the tradition, ensuring that children in the community could keep enjoying a day devoted to outdoor activities and friendly competition.

Fish Fest has grown steadily over the years, offering young anglers the chance to experience the joys of fishing while spending quality time with their families and neighbors.

Organizers say they are proud to see the event thrive and are already looking forward to next year's festivities.

"It was a wonderful day of fishing, fun and fun. Thank you to all those that made it possible."

- Chris Douglas

See more pictures on pages 10,11 and 12



New operation in Bell County with \$2.1 Million Investment, creating 37 New Jobs

Thursday April 24, 2025 - Gov. Andy Beshear announced an exciting project within the state's manufacturing industry as E & E Hardwoods Inc., a full-grade sawmill operation supporting the local logging industry and lumber production industry, plans to add 37 new jobs and invest \$2.1

million to expand its Bell County operation following a December 2024 fire that destroyed the company's previous location.

"Kentucky has always been home to some of the hardest-working and most resilient people I have ever met. When tragedy strikes or obstacles come

our way, Kentuckians don't blink," said Gov. Beshear. "E & E Hardwoods' leadership wasted no time getting back on their feet, rebuilding less than six months after losing the business in a fire. The company has been a staple in Bell County for over six decades, and this announcement is an incredible testament

to their commitment to Kentucky."

E & E Hardwoods is rebuilding and expanding its Bell County operation by relocating to a larger, more advanced building. The 30,000-square-foot facility will help accommodate the company's growth, increase capabilities and improve

operations. The \$2.1 million investment is expected to create 37 jobs for the Bell County community and surrounding areas.

"E & E Hardwoods Inc. is excited about the opportunities ahead and seeks your continued support to strengthen our local economy," said E & E Hardwoods

President Paul C. Elliott. "Together, we can create a brighter future for our community!"

Founded in the early 1960s in the heart of Bell County, E & E Hardwoods Inc. began with a mission to support the local mining sector. The company began as a modest saw-

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