

THE

PIONEER NEWS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2025

WWW.PIONEERNEWS.NET

VOL. 142, No. 43 \$2

BACK TO SCHOOL: Classes begin Aug. 12

BY THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – How does the Bullitt County Public School System graduate young adults who are ready to tackle the needs of the community? How does that learning involve everything the student might need to thrive – whether it is at a collegiate level or in the workforce? And how does the school system work with students to find the future in which they might find passion?

As BCPS prepares to open school on Aug. 12, those are questions which have been the focus the past 10 years. Superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon believes that the Graduate Profile is finally coming together. The goal is to find out what skills students will need to take the next step in life. A community advisory board has been formed. Bacon said the goal is to find out what the community, especially those in business, want from the graduates and what skills they are looking for.

Another part of the program is to identify what students might be passionate about when they graduate. Bacon said that the path could be into college or it could be involved with a trade. In either case, the superintendent said the district must focus on preparing students for their future. In the past year, the district has formed career labs in the middle school level to help students see a glimpse into the possible professions. There are currently 16 pathways at the middle school level. That continues onto the high school level as Bacon believes an expansion and modernization of the current area technology program is a must. On several occasions, the school board has heard presentations about the current offerings and the need for more pathway programs. Part of that is also a new or expanded facility. “We have to continue to grow the offerings for the students,” Bacon said of the technology center. “We can become the work force development partner in the county.” There is certain content teaching that must be mastered; however, there are career options that must also be part of the learning package. As this continues to be an ongoing focus, Bacon knows the most pressing issue is getting schools ready to accept students next Tuesday. From a staffing perspective, Bacon said the district is in the best

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Thomas J. Barr

The ribbon is cut on the \$2.4 million animal control facility.

New animal control facility unveiled

BY THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

CHAPEZE – Going from an outdated facility to a state-of-the-art structure, it was reason to celebrate for the staff of the Bullitt County Animal Control. More importantly, the opening of the \$2.4 million facility will be welcomed by the dogs and cats which are housed by animal control. Bullitt County Judge/Executive Jerry Summers was joined by members of fiscal court and others from the community to cut the ribbon on the facility located off Highway 61 at Chapeze Lane. The old site off Highway 245 has been patched together for the past 30-plus years. Animals were moved on Wednesday and Thursday to their new quarters. In addition to the facility, which has 7,500 square feet on the first floor and another 2,000 square feet on the second, Summers said the department now has a new transport van and several pickup trucks, all air conditioned for the comfort of the animals. “Everything in here is brand new,” said Summers. Thirty kennels are in the facility, including several for dogs in isolation. The area for adoptions is much better, which he said should increase the rate of finding new homes for the dogs and cats. Summers said it was first new building built by the county in the past 20 years, when the AOC facility was constructed. Animal control director Tony Wilson praised the work of Sweat Construction and the ability to construct the building through the eyes of his staff. “This is definitely a meaningful step

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Stephen Thomas

LJ Ministerial Association provides backpacks, family fun

BY STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

LEBANON JUNCTION — Kids trying to get back on track to go back to school could always use a new backpack. The Lebanon Junction Ministerial Association hosted its annual community backpack giveaway event at the Lebanon Junction City Park. The Association is made up of local churches including Church of God of Prophecy, Dennie Memorial Methodist, Faith Assembly of God, LJ First Baptist, LJ First Christian, and St. Benedict Catholic. They were assisted by The Driven Church, located in Elizabethtown, who

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Proposed MW Bypass rezoning raises concerns

BY STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

MOUNT WASHINGTON — A 10-star issue was presented to the Mount Washington City Council for their approval. A new Five Star Food Mart could potentially be placed across the street from a current Five Star Food Mart along the Mount Washington Bypass. City attorney Scott Wantland presented the first reading of a proposed ordinance to rezone 46 acres located along the Highway 31 East Bypass from R-1 Residential to B-1 Highway Business. Owners James Melvin and Company, LLC, are seeking the change to sell the property to Five Star, who planned to open the second location directly across the bypass from the existing location. Resident Lynn Martin, whose property borders the property in question, provided the city with a letter addressing his concerns, which mayor Stuart Owen shared with the council at a previous meeting. In response to Martin’s concerns, the Bullitt County Planning and Zoning Commission provided a favorable recommendation with an additional stipulation of 75-foot side buffer and 100-foot back buffer zones. Attorney Hayden Sweat, representing the owners, said he understood Martin’s concerns regarding countywide comprehensive plan issues. However, he said the property’s proposed B-1 zoning fell into compliance in the area based on the county’s mixed use designation. Sweat added that the back portion of the property was steep and remained unsuitable for further development. Council member Layne Abell stressed his concern that if the council allowed the B-1 rezoning, then anything could be built on the property in the future without the city having a say in the matter. Sweat said the owners would agree with many restrictions, adding that Mount Washington was among the most restrictive areas in Bullitt County. “My problem is with what goes on in the future and this council would have absolutely no control over it,” Abell reiterated. Sweat reminded that the property was located along the bypass, which would eventually include commercial development along the bypass side. Abell countered that the bypass was originally created to avoid such development. Council member Dustin Armstrong asked how much of the property would be developed. Sweat estimated about one-third. Maintaining a vegetation berm was a concern for council member Greg Gentry, who added that a berm request was normal and listed in the city’s ordinance. Sweat mentioned that the added berm stipulation placed by the planning commission was “one of the biggest I’ve ever seen.” Abell shared further concerns about rezoning 46 acres without a visible site plan. Sweat said the owners were not part of a large corporation and were just following governmental regulations and procedures. Martin informed the council that he was not opposed to the rezoning as long as the owners maintained adequate protection for the neighboring residences. He hoped the city and the business would “stay in step” with the county’s comprehensive plan. “All kinds of things can happen between plans and development,” he said, adding that the property in question did not include sanitary sewer lines. Council member Troy Barr mentioned that Martin’s property, first purchased in 1989, was put into an unusual situation once the bypass opened in the 1990s. “Most of our zoning protects residential areas, but not here,” Barr said. Gentry said he preferred natural buffer zones over walls and fences. However, Martin mentioned other area businesses that were supposed to maintain buffer zones but were not. Owen informed Martin that city code enforcement officials would investigate those issues. “Mount Washington needs a lot of things,” Martin said. “Two things we don’t need... dollar stores and gas pumps.” A second reading of the ordinance, along with a vote to approve or deny, are scheduled to take place at the city’s next business meeting, scheduled for Monday, Aug. 11, 6:30 pm, at Fick Hall. The public is invited to attend.

Annexation could add apartment units

BY THOMAS J. BARR
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SHEPHERDSVILLE – The city of Shepherdsville is in search of more residential housing opportunities. And a firm that has been constructing new homes and apartment buildings in Shepherdsville for years is looking to provide some relief for the city’s quest. Rhonda Dennison is the latest property owner who is seeking annexation of her property off South Preston Highway. The five-acre tract would be purchased by CDF Builders, who are currently developing the Helen Heights subdivision a little further south on Preston Highway. Real estate agent Lou Ann Moore said that the property owner is looking to sell a five-acre tract and the builders would like to be annexed into the city limits so that sewer service would be available. The tract is located just south of Highway 245 on Preston Highway. For the past couple of years, Moore said the developers had built about 35 of the 90 homes slated for Helen Heights, which was annexed into the city and CDF worked with Shepherdsville to have an upgraded sewer line run. If annexed and rezoned, the new development would also be hooked into the sewer system. David Greenwell, a partner in the firm, said the plan would be to build 80 apartment units, with three 24-plex buildings and two four-plex structures. The property is currently zoned B-1 highway business but would need to be rezoned R-3 Residential for the apartments.

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