

## Benton gathers for Christmas as events continue to grow

BY GRACE  
BOATRIGHT JACHIM  
GBOATRIGHT@TRIBUNECOURIER.COM

Despite the low temperatures, crowds covered Benton's Main Street for the annual "A Benton Christmas" festivities and lighted Christmas parade on Dec. 13.

With a variety of family friendly activities beginning in the afternoon, hours of fun was available to the community. The events kicked off at 1 p.m. when the Benton branch of the Marshall County Public Library held the annual Merry the Christmas Fairy book signing, where the fifth grade student illustrators were available to sign copies of the 2025 book.

Shortly after, The Benton Partnership's court square focused activities began. A variety of activities were available, including a station to write letters to Santa, free hot chocolate, milk and cookies, carriage rides, a vendor market, and a variety of shopping opportunities.

Each activity was sponsored by a different business or organization. Riverwoods Church offered gingerbread house making, Puckett's Jewelry hosted Santa himself, and Benton Gas offered a Candyland walk-through activity.

As new businesses come to the square, new activities and opportunities are added to the growing roster of activities. Among the recently opened stores were Birdies Books and Beans, which offered a free hot chocolate stand, while Semper Sweets Chocolate Moonshine offered mulled cider. Grapple and Grace Jiu Jitsu, which has yet to open, offered coloring pages and demonstrations.

For Benton Partnership member and City Clerk Beth Cooper, the growth each year is one thing she hopes to continue.

"We would love to [continue growing], because we've kind of moved it out of the alley to around the square," said Cooper. "Every year, it seems like we get a couple more businesses that participate, so it's good."

As for immediate plans to expand, Cooper said Benton Gas has begun considering a new activity to replace Candyland, and each new business is often eager to participate. While the event allows the community to come together, it also allows the community an opportunity to support those local businesses. Cooper said that support is vital to local businesses.

"[The support helps] to keep our businesses running, and you know, it's tough for everybody, but especially our locals," said Cooper.

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Fifth grade student illustrators held a book signing for the annual Merry the Christmas Fairy book produced by the library.



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Among the pre-parade activities on the square was gingerbread house building at Riverwoods Church.

"That's important to keep our town thriving, and, you know, not see empty buildings."

The festivities ended at 5 p.m., giving the community time to settle down Main Street for the parade. The theme for 2025 was "Christmas Across the Decades," and while floats were encouraged to follow

the theme, it was not required. Floats were not judged.

A number of churches, government organizations, and civic groups participated in the parade, in addition to a number of political candidates. Unlike previous years, the marching bands were not present.

## Fiscal Court discusses road maintenance and day use parks

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The Marshall County Fiscal Court approved the advertisement for bids for a boat dock, approved the application for TVA license renewals at the county day use parks, and adjusted the terms of the Convention and Visitors Bureau board during the Dec. 16 meeting.

Among the topics covered in the meeting, the court discussed the need to clarify the county's position regarding a portion of Warnick Road. County Attorney Jason Darnall shared that the involved portion of road was not, and had never been, a county road.

J.P. Lovett, who owns land on the portion of Warnick Road on the north side of U.S. 62, made a request to clarify the position of the court. Lovett addressed the court, stating that, to his knowledge, the road had not ever been a county road, but that he was requesting the court's action for clarity. Lovett stated that he was asked to submit the road petition to "clean the records up."

The court scheduled the necessary road hearing for 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 6, to coincide with the court's regularly scheduled meeting. Deputy Judge/Executive Andy



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The Marshall County Fiscal Court regularly meets at 9 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Pagel and Information Technology Director Andy Lepisto were assigned to serve as road reviewers alongside Wadkins.

The court also approved a request to advertise for bids for a new boat dock at the Buckhorn Bay Day Use Park. There was no discussion. Road Department Superintendent Roy Wadkins shared that the department was awaiting a permit to work on the boat ramp at the same park.

The court also approved the application for the TVA license renewal for the county's day use parks. This renewal is not an annual process, but must be completed approximately every five years. The application fee comes at a cost of \$1,500 per park, and is necessary for three of the county's day use parks, totaling \$4,500. The court also had to approve Judge/Executive Kevin Spraggs's signature

on the applicant disclosure form, in order to transition the documentation out of the previous judge/executive's name.

The court then approved a six month extension to the terms of four Convention and Visitors Bureau board members, at the request of the CVB. The change allows the bureau to align the board's terms with the fiscal year, changing the expiration date from Dec. 31 to June 30. The court also approved the appointment of two new board members to fill terms expiring on Dec. 31, 2025.

The court also approved a resolution to establish the regular meeting time for 2026, which was kept at 9 a.m.

The court regularly meets at 9 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday each month. The next regularly scheduled meeting is set for Jan. 6.

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4 lb.	8 lb.	Chopped Sirloin Patties
4 lb.	8 lb.	Beef Patties
4 lb.	8 lb.	Arm Roast
2.5 lb.	5 lb.	Round Steak
2 lb.	4 lb.	T-Bone Steaks
2 lb.	4 lb.	New York Strip Steaks
2.5 lb.	5 lb.	Boneless Top Sirloin Steaks
8 lb.	16 lb.	Boneless Pork Chops
6 lb.	12 lb.	Center Cut Pork Chops
10 lb.	20 lb.	Mixed Cut Chops
11 lb.	22 lb.	First Cut Pork Chops
5 lb.	10 lb.	Ozark Pride Ham
8 lb.	16 lb.	Boneless Pork Loin Roast
8 lb.	16 lb.	Pork Steak or Pork Roast
8 lb.	16 lb.	Pork Cutlets or Pork Patties
10 lb.	20 lb.	Country Style Ribs
4 lb.	8 lb.	Platter Sliced Bacon
7.5 lb.	15 lb.	Pork Sausage
2.5 lb.	5 lb.	Minute Steaks
10 lb.	20 lb.	Whole Fryers or 8-pc Cut-Up Fryers
20 lb.	40 lb.	Chicken Leg Quarters (4 Pk)
5 lb.	10 lb.	Breaded Chicken Strips (5 Lb. Pk)
5 lb.	10 lb.	Breaded Chicken Patties
5 lb.	10 lb.	Ozark Pride Deli Sliced Ham (1 Lb. Pk.)

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