



Meet The Green Dragons
With Photos by Jon Dickenson
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Dragon Slayer Attracts Motorcyclists From Throughout US

A group of bikers from Iowa stopped by the Dragon Slayer Welcome Center in Lynch during their Kentucky adventure last week. The group was attracted to the 225 curves in the Dragon Slayer portion of Backroads of Appalachia. The Dragon Slayer continues to draw motor enthusiasts from throughout the country who are looking for a challenging and beautiful ride.

Three Killed In Tragic Crash On Harlan By- Pass

BY: JENNIFER MCDANIELS
Tri-City News Contributor

What some authorities are calling one of the worst bypass crashes occurring in Harlan has claimed the life of three people. Two were pronounced dead at the crash site on Wednesday,

Aug. 13, by the Harlan County Coroner's Office. The third crash victim lived for a few days, but succumbed to injuries on Sunday, Aug. 17.

"It was bad – very tragic and scary," said Harlan County Sheriff Chris Brewer, whose department assisted at the scene of the crash. "It was a tragic day in Harlan – one of the worst wrecks I've heard about occurring on the Harlan bypass. Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with the families who lost their loved ones in this crash. Deputy Josh Lewis assisted KSP at the scene. It was traumatic, and we grieve right along with the victim's loved ones."

According to the Harlan County Coroner's Office, Phyllis Frazier of New Tazewell, Tenn., and Franklin D. Saylor, Jr., of Baxter, were declared

dead at the scene of the crash, which occurred at red light #1 at the intersection of U.S. 119 and U.S. 421. The location is best known as the Sukey Ridge bridge intersection located near Arby's restaurant. Frazier's husband, Harold, passed away four days later, according to Harlan County Coroner Derrick Noe.

"Please join us in prayer for the Frazier and Saylor families at this time," Noe said. "This crash ended up being a triple fatality, and that certainly is tough news for many right now."

The crash remains under investigation by the Kentucky State Police (KSP). Investigators say KSP Post 10 was notified of the crash at approximately 11:26 a.m. on

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Special Judge To Rule On Former Sheriff's Bond Request In Letcher Judge's Murder Case

WHITESBURG, Ky. — Nearly a year after District Judge Kevin Mullins was shot to death in his courthouse chambers, a decision on whether former Letcher County Sheriff Shawn "Mickey" Stines will be granted bond remains unresolved.

At a hearing held in Letcher Circuit Court on Friday, Stines's attorney asked the court to consider a \$50,000 cash or property bond, arguing that the former sheriff is not a flight risk and poses no danger to the public. Prosecutors opposed the request, citing a provision of the Kentucky Constitution that denies bail in capital cases where the evidence is strong.

Stines has been in custody without bond since Sept. 19, 2023, when Mullins was fatally shot inside the Whitesburg courthouse. Stines surrendered to law enforcement at the scene. He has pleaded not guilty to one count of murdering a public official.

Special Judge Christopher Cohron, who is overseeing the case, did not rule immediately on bond. Instead, he ordered both sides to file additional arguments by Sept. 2 on several pending motions, including whether Stines's psychological evaluation should be unsealed and whether the indictment should be dismissed. Cohron said he will move toward setting a trial date once those issues are resolved.

Defense attorney Kerri Bartley told the court her client would be "the lowest possible risk level" if released pending trial. She followed with telling to court that Stines had a "great respect for the law" which prompted gasps from family members of the slain judge who were in the courtroom.

Judge Kevin Mullins' widow, Kimberly Mullins, and his sister, Kim Mullins Bledsoe, were surrounded by family members during the hearing which lasted less than an hour.

Bartley pointed to Stines's long-standing ties to the community and support from his family. "There's nothing to convince the court that he would be a danger to himself or others," Bartley said.

Special prosecutor Jackie Steele countered that the seriousness of the charge outweighs those factors.

"What he did in the community ... is irrelevant," Steele said. "The only thing that's relevant is, in fact, the charges themselves."

Judge Cohron said that after his years as a Commonwealth's Attorney and on the bench as a circuit judge, he did not have the utmost faith in the pretrial reports submitted to assist judges in setting bond.

"This is not a case of who done it," Cohron said. "His actions are very evident."

At a prior hearing, prosecutors introduced courthouse surveillance footage of the shooting. The video, without audio, clearly showed Stines pulling a gun and firing at Mullins, who was seated at his desk. Though Mullins attempted to shield himself behind his desk after being wounded initially, Stines circled the desk and fired again.

Prosecutors have not yet said whether they will seek the death penalty. Though Steele made reference to death penalty cases during Friday's hearing.

The defense also argued its motion to dismiss the indictment, alleging that it had not been provided documentation of a grand jury proceeding where it issued subpoenas in the case. However, the Commonwealth maintained that its actions were proper in that there was no testimony taken before the grand jury during that session.

Stines, who was present in the courtroom on Friday, remained largely stoic throughout the proceedings, however, court cameras did capture him engaging, even laughing, with members of his defense team after the public hearing ended, and the courtroom was being cleared for an ex parte hearing on the matter of the defense motion to unseal Stines's psychological evaluation.

Stines and Mullins had known each other for years. Stines had worked as Mullins' bailiff before becoming Sheriff. Hours before the shooting, the two had lunch with several others, and Mullins reportedly asked Stines if they should meet privately. The reason for that meeting remains unclear.

Stines resigned as sheriff shortly after the shooting and reportedly remains held in the Leslie County Jail.



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