

Cats defeat Vandy. B1.



# The Winchester Sun



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## Fiscal Court gets update on regional plan, Red River Road bridge

BY: MATT CIZEK

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Early on a Wednesday morning to begin the month of February, the Clark County Fiscal Court met at the Clark County Courthouse. While there, among other agenda points, they hosted a presentation about the Commerce Lexington Regional Competitiveness Plan.

The discussion was led by Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer and Director of Regional Engagement

at Commerce Lexington, Inc. "We appreciate the opportunity to share with you how this plan got started, some of the accomplishments of the last year and where we are headed in 2025," she said. "We want all you here in Clark County to be engaged in that. You have been here as we've been trying to get this off the ground."

The regional competitiveness plan functions with several goals in mind, including the emphasis of strategies that make the region more economically suitable for

jobs and talent.

The plan incorporates a number of counties, such as Fayette, Clark, Bourbon, Franklin, Jessamine, Madison, Montgomery, Scott, and Woodford.

Along with measurable goals, seven action items - such as creating a regional brand identity, providing economic development education to key community leaders, and developing a regional talent recruitment and attraction marketing campaign - were determined by regional leaders.

Johnson mentioned mixed results.

"While we are growing in certain areas and certain communities, we are still...ans a nine county region...below the national average," she said.

Specific to Clark County, decisions for how economic development can continue to show growth were mentioned.

These included the strategic marketing of community assets to site selectors, industry targets, and workers to increase awareness of Winchester and Clark

County.

It also mentioned having regional job sites included in consultant Requests for Information (RFI) and Requests for Proposal (RFP), as well as accessing data and reports in addition to utilizing economic impact models and marketing resources.

In other news, further discussion about the Red River Bridge occurred.

Previously, questions about needed repairs have taken place.

See **FISCAL**, on A2

## Celebrating Winchester's Black Trailblazers: Part 1

BY HARRY ENOCH

Contributing Writer

An event at Whiskey and Wiles, "Celebrating the Trailblazers of Black Excellence," kicked off Black History Month in Winchester on February 1. Twelve banners honoring thirteen Black Trailblazers in Clark County were unveiled. Living recipients and their families joined the celebration. The event was well attended by the community and was followed by a luncheon. The banners have been installed on Main Street and will remain up until the end of February.

This year's celebration represents a continuation of Deatra Newell's banner project to recognize local Black achievers. The project began in 2020 when five banners were installed. Four more were added in 2021. This year Newell planned to add five new banners and to have the first nine redone in the same format. She went to the Winchester City Commission to request funding and was turned down. After the meeting she was approached by Adam Kidd who agreed to pay for the project.

Newell researched the text and designed the banners. Jon Paul Martin of Whiskey and Wiles arranged for their fabrication. Newell and Cicely Dore organized a reception at the kickoff event. Two of the



Banners 1 (Photo submitted)

banners remain unfinished but are expected soon.

This article about the project lists six of the Trailblazers and their barrier-breaking achievements supplemented by a brief biographical statement. The other Trailblazers will be featured in a subsequent article.

### MRS. MARY BELL

Mary Bell (1907-1999) was a

Clark County native and wife of George Bell. After graduating from Oliver High and Kentucky State Teacher's College (now KSU), she came home to commence her long teaching career. She began at Midway Elementary School in 1939. In the 1950s she opened Mary Bell's Kindergarten on Oliver Street and operated it continuously until 1979.

See **TRAILBLAZERS**, on A2

## \$500,000 grant approved for Jackson Street Bridge work

BY: MATT CIZEK

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The Jackson Street Bridge has long stood in Winchester.

However, after a sinkhole appeared in the fall, it became clearer than ever that the already existing repair plans needed to be updated and completed.

Fortunately, good news has arrived.

A \$500,000 grant was approved for work on the Jackson Street Bridge removal.

"We...heard...that we are being granted the \$500,000 from the state for the Jackson Street bridge removal," said Winchester Mayor JoEllen Reed at February 18th's City Commission meeting. "Of all the awards that were made, we were the only city in the state of Kentucky that received a bridge award. The rest were counties. I'm happy and proud for us."

The grant comes through Governor Andy Beshear's County and City Bridge Replacement Program, with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Department of Rural and Municipal Aid being thanked as well.

State representative Ryan Dotson and senator Greg Elkins advocated throughout the process.

"The city and the legislature have been working on it...I was very happy to be supportive," said Elkins.

On a Facebook post from February 6 via the "City of Winchester, KY Community Information" page, Mayor Reed was quoted further elaborating on the following steps.

"The monies will be utilized to remove the Jackson Street Bridge that is currently in disrepair and has required closing of the roadway to ensure vehicle and pedestrian safety of our community. Once this project is completed, the roadway will be reopened in this highly traveled corridor", she said.

See **BRIDGE**, on A2

## GRC girls' wrestling produces strong results at regionals

BY: MATT CIZEK

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The sports scene for George Rogers Clark High School teams has been particularly active lately.

During the weekend of February 15, the Lady Cards' wrestling squad made the most of its opportunity to shine.

At Walton-Verona High School, the

team competed at the Region 3 tournament with junior Bailey Fletcher and 8th grader Danica Patrick competing on the mat.

"As a coach, I can not ask for a better two individuals to build our [girls'] team around," said Head Coach Alex Wright. "Both of these girls have progressed leaps and bounds throughout this past season and we are extremely proud of how both ladies faced ad-

versity...[t]hese [l]adies embody the toughness, hard work, and dedication that we [strive] to promote at GRC wrestling."

After securing two pins, a finals match, and a spot in 2025 KHSAA Girls' State Championship on February 27th, Fletcher - who wrestles at 120-lbs. - placed 2nd.

See **REGIONAL**, on A2



Lady Cards' wrestler Bailey Fletcher competes at the Region 3 Tournament at Walton-Verona High School. (Photo submitted)

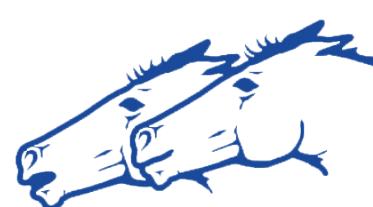
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