



Local law enforcement met Mayor Pamela Hoots last Friday at City Hall (from left): Officer Elliot Smith, Deputy Hunter Tweety, Deputy Ricky Eastham, Mayor Pam Hoots, Chief Evan Burton, Sergeant Trevor Foster, and Officer Travis Bell.

## City of Columbia Proclaimed Jan. 9 as Law Enforcement Day

By Mig Feuser

The City of Columbia officially recognized Friday, Jan. 9, as Law Enforcement Day, honoring the men and women who serve and protect the community each day.

In a proclamation issued this week, Pamela Hoots, Mayor of the City of Columbia, highlighted the importance of acknowledging local law enforcement and their role in keeping neighborhoods safe.

"Each year on the date of January 9, various towns, counties, and communities in the United States recognize the men and women in our neighborhoods that keep each of us safe," Hoots said in the proclamation. "On this date we want to recognize the law enforcement in our community... Therefore, we proclaim January 9, 2026, Law Enforcement Day in our community."

Adair County Sheriff Gary Roy echoed those sentiments, emphasizing that appreciation for law enforcement should extend well beyond a single day.

"Every single day should be National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day," Roy said. "Thank you to all of our deputies and

their families. I appreciate your sacrifice and service. Your courage, integrity, bravery and commitment does not go unnoticed. I appreciate you not just today, but everyday. I am blessed to know you, to stand with you, and to work beside of you. Be brave, be bold, and be blessed!"

Columbia Police Chief Evan Burton also offered remarks recognizing both city and county officers and the close-knit nature of policing in a small community.

"On National Law Enforcement Day, I want to recognize the dedicated men and women of the Columbia Police Department and the Adair County Sheriff's Office who proudly serve our community every day," Burton said. "In a small town like ours, policing is personal. Our officers and deputies protect their neighbors, friends, and families, often going far beyond the call of duty."

Burton also thanked the public for its support. "Public safety in Adair County is strongest when we work together. Today, we honor those currently serving, remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and reaffirm our commitment to protecting and serving Adair County with integrity and respect."

National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day was created in 2015 by Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) as a way for communities to show support for law enforcement officers nationwide. Observed each year on January 9, the day recognizes more than 900,000 men and women who serve in law enforcement across the United States.

The observance began in response to growing negativity toward law enforcement following events in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. Organizers sought to provide a positive way for citizens to express gratitude for the work officers do every day. Now in its 11th year, Law Enforcement Appreciation Day is supported by organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police, FBI National Academy Associates, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Local officials said the proclamation serves as a reminder of the dedication, sacrifice, and professionalism shown daily by law enforcement officers throughout Columbia and Adair County.

## Arts Council Looks Ahead to Hands-On Programs, Community Sharing

By Mig Feuser

The Adair County Arts Council is easing back into a familiar rhythm, with renewed monthly meetings, hands-on activities, and a growing calendar of creative gatherings planned for 2026.

That was the takeaway from last week's meeting held at the Genealogy & History Research Center, where Arts Council members met informally to share ideas, reconnect, and talk about what lies ahead.

"We had a good group," said Mike Watson, noting that around ten people attended the meeting. "We're trying to get back into that mode again where individuals can talk about something in their area of expertise."

Watson volunteered to lead the discussion after sensing the group needed a spark. Rather than a formal presentation, the meeting turned into an open exchange focused on how the Genealogy & History Research Center can be used not only for family history, but also for researching buildings,

institutions, organizations, and broader community stories.

"It was more of a back and forth," Watson said. "I didn't just present. We talked about various things, and I learned several things about the community just listening to responses from people."

The relaxed setting, he added, helped re-establish the sense of fellowship that once defined the group's regular meetings. Members discussed future meeting locations as well, including the possibility of continuing to meet at the research center when space and atmosphere make it a better fit.

Looking ahead, the Arts Council has begun shaping its 2026 schedule. February will feature a vintage Valentine display, with members invited to bring old cards to be exhibited in a style similar to the popular historic photo displays held each October. That meeting will also include a hands-on workshop, with members creating Valentines using shared supplies in a well-lit conference space.

March will focus on writing, leading up to the

annual Writer's Day event, now expected to take place on Saturday, March 28. Plans are also underway for a writing-centered session at the Arts Council's March meeting.

April is slated for a lighthearted "show and tell," where members are encouraged to bring an item to share — "the weirder, the better," Watson said — while May will include a visit to the Trabue-Russell House to view portraiture and artwork.

If weather cooperates, June's meeting may be held outdoors at Joyce Coomer's home, where gardens and flowers will provide a natural backdrop for the gathering.

Beyond those plans, the council's annual book fair remains scheduled for November.

"Nothing earth-shattering," Watson said, "but things are moving."

After a period of transition, the Arts Council appears to be finding its footing again — one conversation, one shared idea, and one creative gathering at a time.

## Audit of Adair County Sheriff's 2023 Taxes Notes Internal Control Finding

By Mig Feuser

State Auditor Allison Ball has released the audit of the 2023 sheriff's tax settlement for the department, covering the period from Sept. 1, 2023, through Aug. 31, 2024.

Under state law, the auditor is required to conduct annual audits of each county sheriff's accounts. Two reports are issued each year—one reviewing the sheriff's tax account and another examining the fee account used to operate the office.

According to the auditor's report, the sheriff's financial statement fairly presents the taxes charged, credited, and paid during the audit period in conformity with the regulatory basis of accounting. Regulatory basis reporting is an accepted methodology and is used for all 120 sheriff settlements across Kentucky.

However, the audit identified a finding related to inadequate segregation of duties within the former Adair County

Sheriff's Office. The report states that one employee performed multiple functions, including collecting tax payments, assisting with deposits, preparing daily collection reports, maintaining records, posting to ledgers, preparing monthly tax reports, signing checks, filing documents, and completing monthly bank reconciliations.

While reports were signed by the former sheriff, the lack of separation in duties led to several errors. Among the issues cited were a tax bill that was collected but not paid out to the appropriate districts, a taxing district that was overpaid by \$1,000 due to a computation error, and two monthly reports in which the sheriff's commission was paid to a taxing district instead of the taxes owed to that district.

The audit also noted that in one month, school commissions were not paid to the school district as required. The school district later refunded those commissions to the sheriff's office. In addition, some

bank statements could not initially be located and had to be obtained directly from the bank.

The auditor recommended that the sheriff's office separate duties related to receipts, disbursements, recordkeeping, and reconciliations. If staffing or budget constraints prevent full separation, the report advises strong oversight by the sheriff or another employee not involved in those functions, with documentation of review.

In a written response included in the audit, the former sheriff stated that additional staff would be required to fully correct the issue, but limited funding made hiring additional personnel difficult.

The sheriff's office is responsible for collecting property taxes, providing law enforcement services, and performing duties for the county fiscal court and courts of justice. Funding for the office comes from statutory commissions and fees collected in conjunction with those responsibilities.

## Dan Held Named Kentucky Fair Person of the Year

By Mig Feuser

The Adair County Fair is celebrating one of its own, as Dan Held has been named Kentucky Fair Person of the Year for 2025.

The honor recognizes Held's years of tireless service and unwavering commitment to the local fair, where he has become known as a model volunteer, board member, and club supporter. From working fair events and improvement projects on the grounds to providing equipment, labor, financial support, and even a bit of much-needed comic relief, Held's contributions have touched nearly every aspect of the fair's success.

"Dan sets the example of what the perfect fair volunteer, board and club member encompasses," said Daniel Scott, noting that Held's dedication has played a key role in the fair's continued growth and improvement.

Scott added that Held's commitment to giving the community the very best



Daniel Scott (right) honored Dan Held with a plaque as Kentucky Fair Person of the Year. (Photo source: Adair County Fair)

each year has not gone unnoticed, calling the award "well deserved" and expressing gratitude on behalf of the entire club.

With this statewide recognition, Held's behind-

the-scenes work is now firmly in the spotlight—an acknowledgment of service that has long strengthened the Adair County Fair and the community it serves.

## Late-Night Threat Report at ACHS Investigated, Deemed Unsubstantiated

By Mig Feuser

Adair County Public Schools issued a statement late Thursday night regarding a reported threat at Adair County High School, emphasizing that the situation was taken seriously and thoroughly investigated, with no credible danger found.

According to Jason Faulkner, superintendent of Adair County Public Schools, the report was brought to the district's attention Thursday evening and immediately addressed

by school officials in coordination with law enforcement.

Administrators worked closely with the Columbia Police Department, the Adair County Sheriff's Department, and the Kentucky State Police to conduct what the district described as a thorough investigation. After careful review, the reported threat was determined to be unsubstantiated.

"Based on the findings of this joint investigation, it is our determination that our schools are safe," Faulkner said, expressing

appreciation for the swift response and cooperation of local and state law enforcement agencies.

Faulkner noted that the safety of students and staff remains the district's highest priority and encouraged parents, students, and community members to report any potential concerns so they can be addressed promptly.

"Working together, we can continue to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment for all," he said. The statement was sent to families and the community last Thursday.

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