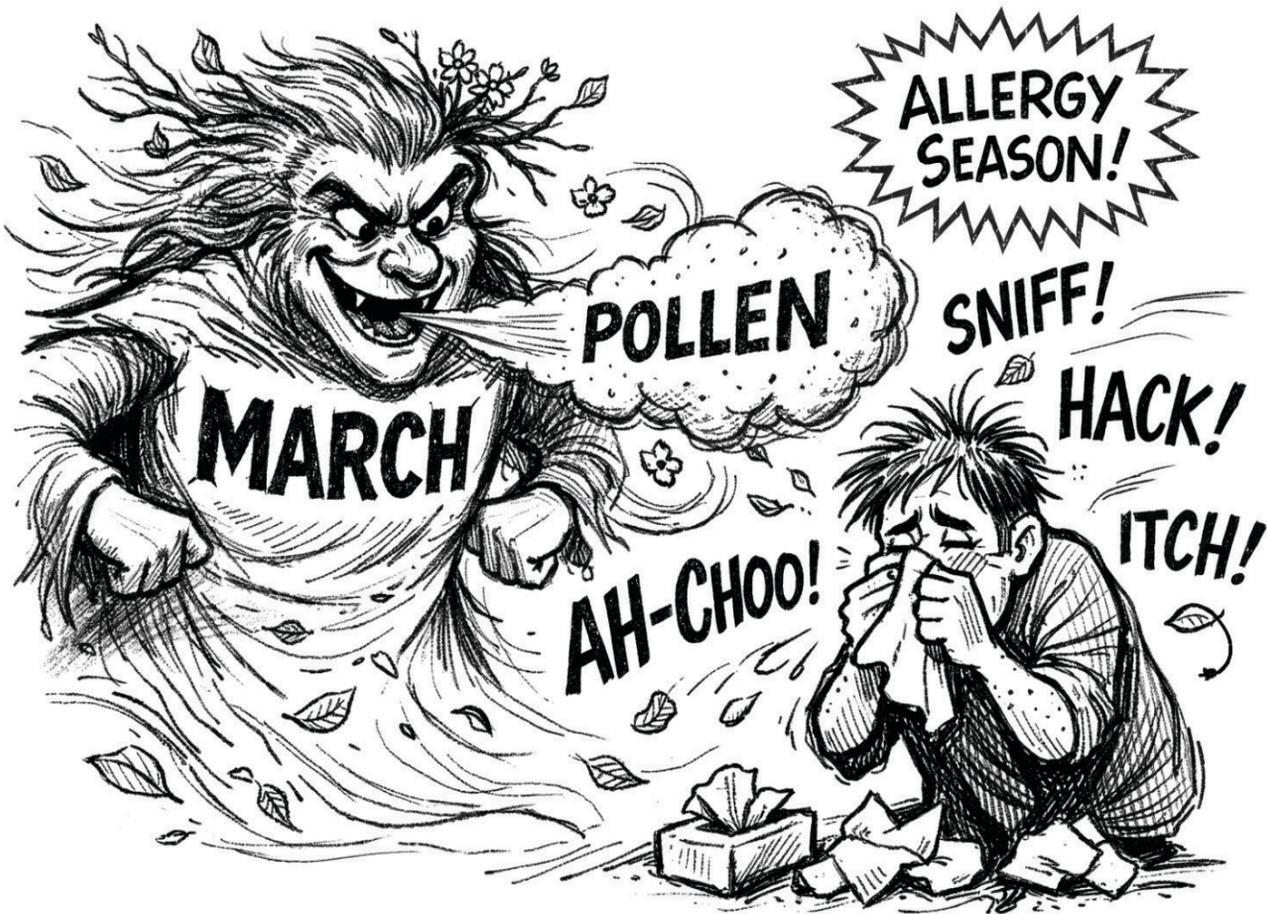


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The Banner/Republican

# OPINION

MARCH 11, 2026



## Butler County Students Named to ECU Dean's List

Students from Butler County have been recognized for academic excellence at Eastern Kentucky University, earning placement on the Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum number of credit hours while maintaining a strong grade point average. Students taking 12 credit hours must earn at least a 3.75 GPA, those taking 13 credit hours must earn at least a 3.65 GPA, and students taking 14 or more credit hours must achieve at least a 3.5 GPA. All grade point averages are calculated on a 4.0 scale.

Butler County students recognized on the Fall 2025 Dean's List include:

Juliana Grace Riley, Morgantown

Reese Ray Smith, Roundhill

Lydia Beatrice Wilcox, Morgantown

Eastern Kentucky University, located in Richmond, serves students from across the Commonwealth and beyond. The university reports that a majority of its students are from Kentucky, and many remain in the state for employment after graduation.

## PART I: Comer Backs President's Handling of Iran, Warns of Global Consequences

BY JOBNEWS

Following the Barren County Lincoln Day Dinner, JOBNews reporters asked Congressman James Comer for his assessment of rising tensions involving Iran and the broader geopolitical risks.

Comer said global powers are closely watching developments in the region, including Russia.

"Of course they're watching Russia," Comer said. "But the good thing is Ukraine is keeping Russia busy right now. I don't think Russia wants any part of the United States. If you've watched the first 24 hours and the video, you know our military is superior. We have the best equipment and the best forces in the world."

Comer noted he is not a supporter of American-led regime change efforts overseas but acknowledged serious concerns about Iran's leadership and nuclear ambitions.

"I'm not a big fan of American-led regime change," he said. "But there's clearly a problem in Iran, and it started during the Obama administration. President Trump is having to go in and clean that up."

Comer said Iran was dangerously close to



obtaining a nuclear weapon and posed a direct threat to Israel.

"They were very close to having a nuclear weapon and threatening to fire that weapon at Israel — and potentially being able to penetrate the Iron Dome," Comer said. "If the Middle East breaks out into war with Israel, you're talking about the potential for World War III."

He warned that a broader conflict would have severe economic consequences for the United States and the global economy.

"That would be a major detriment to the economy, and American lives would be lost," he said. "We don't want to see that."

While calling the situation unfortunate, Comer said he supports the president's actions.

"It's unfortunate what the president had to do, but I support the president," he said.

This is the first

**COMER**  
CONTINUED ON PAGE EIGHT

## From Gardens to Green River: Fiscal Court Covers Key County Projects



▲ PHOTO | SUBMITTED  
**Sherry Johnson presents Butler Fiscal Court with county clerk audit and excess fees in the amount of \$334,091.61.**

### Staff Report

The Butler County Fiscal Court held its regular meeting on February 23, 2026, with all magistrates present. The agenda included community project proposals, financial updates, departmental reports, and property actions.

Justin Poland attended on behalf of Congressman Andy Barr, informing the court that Barr's office is available to assist with any issues or challenges the county may be facing.

Laura Crafton and Leann Daugherty, representing the Butler County Teachers Association, requested permission to use unused space located between the Senior Center and the Health Department. Their goal is to apply for an AARP grant to install raised garden beds, a mural, and a seating area.

To qualify for the grant, the space would be used as an in-kind donation, with no set percentage required. The project would involve collaboration with the local Art Guild and Girl Scouts. The Fiscal Court approved designating the space for the garden, mural, and seating area and agreed to provide a letter of support for the grant application.

Dave Paul with Air Evac Lifeteam spoke to the court about the organization's air ambulance membership program. The coverage is available to anyone and applies to the entire household.

Tyler Hopkins of the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD) discussed ongoing planning efforts for Butler County, including the

county's Strategic Plan and the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. He highlighted several priority areas:

- Tourism
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Hazard mitigation
- Workforce development
- Additional longterm project opportunities

These efforts aim to help the county identify funding opportunities and shape future development priorities.

Sherry Johnson presented the 2025 final settlement, pending audit. The county clerk reported \$7,942,332.47 in total receipts and \$7,680,240.86 in expenditures. Excess fees totaled \$334,091.61, which were submitted to the county.

The court approved moving forward with removing a 0.12mile section of Belcher Road from county maintenance. A public hearing is scheduled for March 23 at 4:00 p.m.

The Fiscal Court approved accepting the final deeds for Lock 4 and Lock 5 on the Green River, completing the transfer process.

The court approved:

- The 5th District Volunteer Fire Department treasurer's report
- Bond renewal for Angie Pendley in the amount of \$646.43
- The Treasurer's monthly report

Financial transfers included \$10,000 to the E911 fund and \$35,000 to the Jail Fund from the General Fund, along with approval of all other routine bills and transfers.

## Cities Drive Kentucky Plate Supports Disaster Relief



### Staff Report

LEXINGTON — The Kentucky League of Cities' new Cities Drive Kentucky specialty license plate officially entered production Feb. 27 and is now available for purchase online. The plates are expected to arrive at county clerk's offices across the state next month.

Proceeds from the specialty plate will benefit the KLC Cities Helping Cities Fund, a disaster-relief initiative that assists Kentucky cities in responding quickly when natural disasters occur. The fund provides immediate support to communities impacted by tornadoes, flooding, hail, severe storms and other disasters.

Kentucky cities play an important role in everyday life by providing essential services such as utilities, public safety and emergency response. When disasters disrupt those services, recovery efforts are critical for the entire community.

"Cities are often the first to respond after a disaster," said KLC President and Beaver Dam Mayor Paul Sandefur. "When utilities, public safety and city facilities are disrupted, it affects everyone — not just city residents. This license plate is a meaningful way for Kentuckians to support the cities that keep their communities moving, especially in moments when help is needed most."

"Cities truly drive Kentucky," added KLC Executive Director and CEO J.D. Chaney. "We are proud to provide this and thank the Department of Transportation for working with us to offer this new

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