

JOBE PUBLISHING, INC.

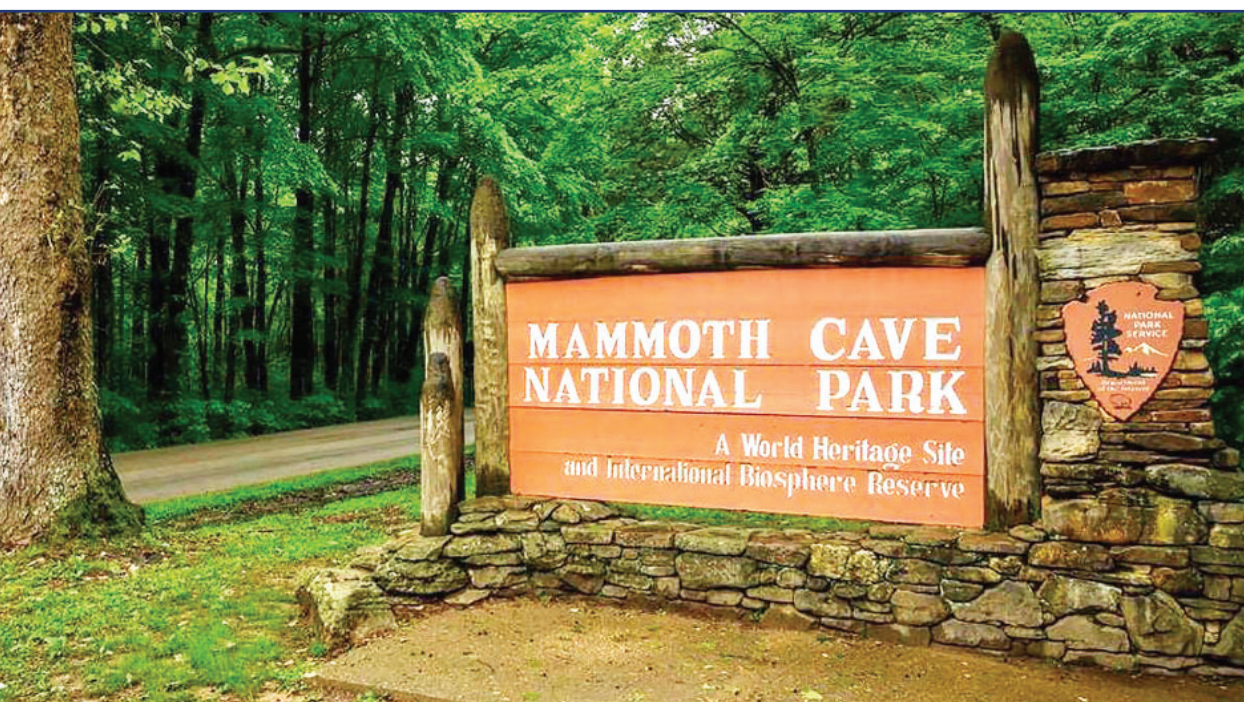
OPINION

The opinions of writers on this page are not necessarily those of the newspaper, or management. We encourage our readers to share their views for publication. Thanks so much for choosing the Barren County Progress.

July 8, 2026



Mammoth Cave National Park Celebrates 85 Years



JEFF JOBE
COMMUNITY PUBLISHER

South Central Kentucky is celebrating a milestone as Mammoth Cave National Park marks its 85th anniversary as one of the nation's most treasured natural landmarks.

Established on July 1, 1941, Mammoth Cave National Park was created to protect the world's longest known cave system and the unique landscape surrounding it. Eighty-five years later, the park continues to serve as one of Kentucky's leading tourism destinations, welcoming visitors from all 50 states and countries around the globe.

The park encompasses more than 52,000 acres of forests, rivers, rolling hills and sink-hole plains that make up one of the world's most significant karst landscapes. Beneath the surface lies more than 430 miles of surveyed passageways, with exploration continuing as researchers regularly discover and map additional

sections of the vast underground system.

While the cave is the park's signature attraction, visitors also come to enjoy hiking, camping, canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and educational programs throughout the year. The park offers a variety of guided cave tours ranging from easy walking tours to more strenuous adventures that highlight the cave's geology, history and unique ecosystem.

The history of Mammoth Cave stretches back thousands of years. Archaeological evidence shows Native Americans explored portions of the cave more than 4,000 years ago. During the War of 1812, the cave became an important source of saltpeter used in the production of gunpowder, and by the early 1800s it had emerged as one of the nation's earliest tourist attractions.

The park has also earned international recognition. In 1981, UNESCO designated Mammoth Cave

a World Heritage Site, recognizing its outstanding natural value. It was later named an International Biosphere Reserve, reflecting the importance of protecting its diverse ecosystems and biodiversity.

Tourism generated by Mammoth Cave National Park continues to have a significant economic impact across south-central Kentucky, benefiting hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, retail businesses and other attractions throughout the region. Communities including Cave City, Park City and Glasgow have long served as gateways for millions of visitors traveling to the park.

As it celebrates its 85th anniversary, Mammoth Cave National Park remains both a symbol of Kentucky's natural heritage and an ongoing center for scientific research, conservation and outdoor recreation. Park officials continue to balance preservation of one of the world's most remarkable cave systems with providing memorable experiences for future generations of visitors. The anniversary serves as a reminder of the park's enduring role not only in preserving a global natural treasure, but also in supporting tourism, education, and economic development throughout the region.



ORDINANCE,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

to comply with Kentucky's annexation laws when it annexed approximately 245 acres for industrial development.

According to the lawsuit, the dispute centers on a 0.09-acre Shaw Cemetery parcel that KIA alleges was omitted from the legal description of the annexed property. The complaint contends the owner of the cemetery neither consented in writing to the annexation nor received the statutory notice required under KRS Chapter 81A.

Court records state Branstetter Family Holdings executed a consent to annexation on April 1, 2024, covering approximately 245 acres adjacent to Cave City. Following a public hearing, the Joint City-County Planning Commission recommended I-2 Heavy Industrial and B-3 Highway Service Business zoning. The Cave City Council approved Ordinance No. 24-9-9C on Sept. 11, 2024, and the ordinance was later certified with the Kentucky Secretary of State.

The complaint states the Shaw Cemetery, established in 1902, remained under separate ownership and was not included in the annexation description. KIA says it later acquired ownership of the surrounding property and, through a separate court action, became the successor in title to the cemetery parcel.

KIA argues the omission created an 'island' surrounded by annexed property and that Cave City failed to follow required consent, notice and boundary-description procedures. The lawsuit asks the court to declare the ordinance void, arguing the alleged defects cloud title to the property and create uncertainty over municipal taxing, zoning and regulatory authority.

The complaint also argues the cemetery parcel cannot be separated from the remainder of the annexation because the city intended to annex a single, contiguous industrial tract. On that basis, KIA contends the entire annexation ordinance should be invalidated.

The filing reflects only the allegations made by Kentucky Industrial Alliance. Cave City, the Cave City Council and the Joint City-County Planning Commission will have an opportunity to respond through the court process. No ruling has been issued on the merits of the case.

Key Allegations in the Complaint

- Shaw Cemetery (approximately 0.09 acres) was omitted from the annexation.
- The cemetery owner allegedly did not consent to annexation.
- KIA claims statutory notice requirements were not followed.
- KIA seeks to have the annexation ordinance declared void.
- The defendants have not yet responded in court, and the allegations remain unproven.

~~~~~

**Statement Regarding Filing of Annexation Challenge by Kentucky Industrial Alliance, LLC. No statement has been received or comments by the City of Cave City.**

**"Kentucky Industrial Alliance, LLC has filed a verified complaint challenging the City of Cave City's annexation of its property after recently discovering information that raises significant questions about whether the annexation complied with Kentucky law.**

**This case concerns whether the City followed the procedures required by law when it annexed the property. Kentucky's annexation statutes exist to protect property owners, promote transparency, and ensure that local governments exercise only the authority granted to them by the General Assembly.**

**Our complaint asks the Court to determine whether the annexation was lawfully completed and, if it was not, whether it should be declared invalid.**

**We have great respect for the judicial process and are confident that the Court will carefully examine the facts, consider the evidence presented by all parties, and apply Kentucky law as written. Questions involving property rights and the lawful exercise of governmental authority are appropriately resolved in the courtroom.**

**Because this matter is now pending before the Court, we will have no further comment while the litigation is ongoing," Kentucky Industrial Alliance, LLC. Records show Jared Whitworth, Mike Jones and Joey Crist as owners.**