



VALENTINE DELIVERY – Etheridge House Memory Care, in Union City, Tenn., was recently overwhelmed by South Fulton Elementary students. Students from classes pre-K through sixth grade made Valentines for each of our residents. 294 Valentines were passed out along with boxes of candy. Misty Tibbs, a teacher at South Fulton Elementary School, along with one student representative from each class, came to pass out these wonderful Valentines. (Photo submitted)

Jail funding concerns, search for Treasurer highlight monthly Fiscal Court meeting

Megan Dame

The Fulton County Fiscal Court convened for its regular monthly meeting Mon., Feb. 16 with Judge Executive Jim Martin, Magistrates Matt Moss, Wade Adams, Butch Busby and Milton Dean, county attorney Amanda Major, deputy judge-executive April Gallimore, Sheriff Chad Parker, and county clerk Naomi Jones were all present.

Judge Martin called the meeting to order, followed by the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Magistrates approved the minutes from the Jan. 20 and Jan. 27, 2026, meetings as presented by Naomi Jones.

Jones presented a budget amendment for the clerk's office, explaining that personnel changes created flexibility in her office budget.

"We had an employee that quit in April, and then I did not hire a part-time replacement," Jones said, noting that savings in payroll factored into the amendment request.

She also referenced adjustments related to financial software and reporting, telling the court, "This is a much, much better way, I think, of the fiscal court reporting than the old way."

She described the transition as "just the beginning of that process," and said the changes would allow officials to "have a better understanding of what we're talking about."

Jones then reviewed her 2025 year-end report, stating there were no additions beyond what had already been submitted.

She also noted upcoming training opportunities, including a workshop with DMG scheduled for March 3-30, and said "whoever the

treasurer is, they need to be there," citing the volume of information disseminated during those sessions.

Amanda Major delivered the county attorney's report. No formal action was required, as everything she

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NEW EQUIPMENT PRESENTED – The Ken-Tenn Amateur Radio Association was recently honored to present the Fulton County Dispatch with an Explorer QRZ-1 radio. Communication is the backbone of safety. This new equipment ensures that if disaster strikes, dispatchers have a direct line to relay critical information over the amateur repeater network, and monitor amateur radio traffic in real-time during emergency events. The Ken-Tenn Amateur Radio Association believes in a "neighbors helping neighbors" approach to public safety. The Ken-Tenn Amateur Radio Association's goal is to continue this initiative and provide additional dispatch centers within their coverage area with these vital tools as resources allow. (Photo submitted)

Hobbs set to retire Feb. 27

With 40 years of bank experience, Lea Ann Hobbs, has decided to retire.

Her banking career started with Fulton Bank, which was purchased by Reelfoot Bank.

She came to work at The Citizens Bank in July 2016 and over the last 9 1/2 years has serviced as Loan

Officer, Vice President and Branch manager at our Fulton location. She has truly been an asset to the Citizens Bank and she will be greatly missed by customers and fellow employees.

Her last day will be Fri., Feb. 27, 2026. The Citizens Bank will have a reception for her on that day and the public is invited to attend.



Hobbs

Phillips selected as Gibson Electric President-Elect

The Gibson Electric Membership Corporation and Gibson Connect, LLC Board of Trustees recently selected Charles Phillips as President-Elect to succeed President and CEO Dan Rodamaker upon his May 1, 2026, retirement after 23 years of service.

Phillips has worked for Gibson Electric since July 1997. He has held dual roles as Vice President of Technical Services for Gibson Electric and Vice President of Operations for Gibson Connect since September 2017. As Gibson Electric's Vice President of Technical Services, Phillips has managed the cooperative's technical service activities, including information technology and cybersecurity. As Gibson Connect's Vice President of Operations, he has managed its fiber optic network, including its middle-mile infrastructure and service delivery.

Phillips is a registered professional engineer. He graduated from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Management

Internship Program.

"We are fully confident that Charles will do an excellent job," said Wray Pulliam, Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect Board Chairman. "He brings a unique combination of proven leadership, deep technical expertise, and a clear vision for the future of the cooperatives," said Pulliam. "Charles understands both where Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect have been and where we need to go; and he has earned the respect of board members, employees, and partners alike."

"I am grateful for the confidence and trust the board has placed in me," said Phillips. "I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve in this leadership role and will strive to continue Gibson Electric's and Gibson Connect's important work in supporting and providing excellent service to our members, subscribers and communities."

Gibson Electric is a local, not-for-profit, member-owned and member-controlled electric cooperative serving more than 40,000 homes and businesses in eight west Tennessee counties (Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Haywood, Lake, Madison, Obion and Weakley) and four west

Kentucky counties (Carlisle, Fulton, Graves and Hickman). Gibson Connect is a wholly owned, not-for-profit subsidiary of Gibson Electric, providing high-speed, fiber-based broadband service access to the cooperative's members and to neighboring communities through partnerships with their utility providers.



Charles Phillips has been chosen as President-Elect for Gibson Electric Membership Corporation and Gibson Connect, LLC. He will become President and CEO upon Dan Rodamaker's May 1, 2026, retirement. President and CEO Dan Rodamaker has led Gibson Electric since August of 2003. Phillips will be the fifth President and CEO in Gibson Electric's 89-year history. (Photo submitted)

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Editor's Note: The following was submitted by Mike Hamilton, of Noblesville, Ind.)

My name is Michael Hamilton, and I grew up in South Fulton, Tenn. The Hamilton family, Greg, Patricia, and Juanita, was born in Detroit, Mich. We were city brats, so we weren't around chickens and country people. South Fulton gave us friends for life, and I am grateful to God.

After my mom left our dad, we moved to South Fulton to live with our grandparents, Albert and Lena Featherstone, until they passed. When our mom, Arcola Hamilton, passed, our new mom was "Mah" Ethel Featherstone, our aunt. She enrolled us in the Rosenwald School.

I started at Rosenwald in 1954 under the stern teacher, Mrs. V.O. Mason. While she was strict with all students, she was fantastic and dedicated to helping us learn. We would pray, then recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Learning was fun, with many friends and love for the school. Even though the county did not fund Rosenwald to have a cafeteria when I was there, we had support from Vick's Store and Hopkins Cafe for great lunches. Every year, there was a Field Day, and that was wonderful for us.

Now, as I look back on Rosenwald School, there were fantastic teachers like Professor Dumas, the Principal and his wife, Mrs. Dumas, the English teacher, Mrs. Cassidy, the 3rd- and 4th-grade teacher, Professor Bond, and the 5th- and 6th-grade teacher (who did not tolerate talking after he quieted the class). He did not hold back on spanking the kids for talking. Mr. Harrison, the 7th- and 8th-grade teacher, and the shop teacher, Mrs. Bean, taught Home Economics.

Rosenwald helped me adjust to South Fulton High School, gave me the courage to attend Murray State University (where I earned a BS and a master's in education), helped me earn a 2nd Lt. Commission through the Army ROTC, and thus have a career in military reserves while becoming a hospital administrator in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Rosenwald made a huge difference in the community I lived in and me; it was a steady force for meetings, education, Sunday church teas, school plays, and great basketball games. I loved this school.

I am thankful to Mr. Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist, and to Mr. Booker T. Washington for their vision to establish over 5,000 schools to educate African American children in the South. Rosenwald School in South Fulton, made a difference in my life. Thank you, God Almighty.

Now, I am a member of a subcommittee of KenTenn Reunion Inc., planning to solicit funds to develop the area where the gym was located into The Rosenwald Memorial Park. Last year, the State of Tennessee installed a Historic Marker recognizing Rosenwald's significant contribution to the community. Anyone interested is asked to contact John Algee of South Fulton.