



The Crittenden Press

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026

TWO DOLLARS

Digital marketing talking point for Chamber breakfast

Start your morning with breakfast, coffee, conversation and practical insight at Crittenden County Chamber of Commerce's Tuesday, Feb. 3 Leadership Breakfast. Chris Evans, editor of The Crittenden Press, and Shana West of H&H Home and Hardware will lead a discussion on Social Media and Digital Marketing. The breakfast is sponsored by The Crittenden Press. Tickets are available at CrittendenCountyChamber.org. Cost is \$20 for nonmembers and \$15 for members.



Town Halls scheduled ahead of May election

A series of public town hall meetings are being planned ahead of the May primary election and will feature local candidates. Meetings will take place at volunteer fire departments in each community, with the exception of the Marion event, which will be at Fohs Hall. Following is the schedule. • Caldwell Springs Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. • Shady Grove Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. • Mattoon date and time TBA. • Tolu April 18 at 2 p.m. • Marion May 9 5:30 p.m.

Marion has a birthday coming up next month

The City of Marion has a birthday coming up one month from today. On Sunday, Feb. 22, the city will celebrate 182 years. The town was incorporated two years after Crittenden County was formed out of Livingston County. Marion was first laid out on land donated by Dr. John S. Gilliam.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Marion City Council meets at 5 p.m., on Monday, Jan. 26 at city hall.
- Crittenden-Livingston Water District will meet at 4 p.m., Monday, Jan. 26 at the Deer Lakes meeting room.
- Livingston Fiscal Court will meet at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 27 at the County Office Complex in Smithland.
- Caldwell County Fiscal Court will meet at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 27 at the courthouse.
- Crittenden County Board of Education meets at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 27 at Rocket Arena.
- Crittenden County Public Library Board will meet at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 29 at the library.
- Community Prayer will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 7, at Rocket Arena. Residents are encouraged to gather on the first Saturday of each month for community prayer.

LISTEN ONLINE - Monday | Thursday

Have you heard The Press News Podcast? Our news and sports program is on Mondays and Thursdays. Find it two mornings each week at The Press Online.



The Crittenden Press

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Before & After

From 425 to 205: It wasn't easy and it is not fully finished

STAFF REPORT

When Micki Crider stepped on the scale at 425 pounds, she knew the number was more than a measurement, it was the physical toll of a lifelong struggle with weight, genetics and habits she no longer wanted to carry.

"The day I came out of the womb I was wearing plus size," she said.

Now 47, Crider lives in Marion and works in Dixon as a national program specialist in the Conservation Reserve Program for the USDA Farm Service Agency. She is also down 220 pounds, weighing 205

pounds this week, and within striking distance of a goal she once believed was unattainable.

"I have struggled with my weight as long as I can remember," Crider said.

Crider grew up moving frequently and spending much of her youth around livestock. She attended school in Trenton, Tenn., and showed cattle across the country. Her family moved here after she got out of high school and later she followed. She has a college degree in agricultural science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has spent much of her pro-

fessional career in agriculture, including a stint in the FSA office in Salem.

Along the way, she milked cows, substitute taught, worked for Pepsi and in child support services for local attorney Rebecca Johnson. Through it all she's faced personal challenges with her weight and health.

"Both sides of my family struggled with it," she said. "On my dad's side there's insulin resistance and diabetes everywhere. Genetics were always there, and my lifestyle didn't help. I liked

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Committee formed to explore EMS options

STAFF REPORT

Crittenden County Fiscal Court last week during its regular monthly meeting formed an ad hoc ambulance committee to guide decisions on developing a new emergency medical service agreement. The county's current contract with ComCare expires in June.

The committee will include Magistrates Chad Thomas and Matt Grimes, Judge-Executive Perry Newcom, County Attorney Bart Frazer and two citizen members yet to be appointed. The group is expected to meet in the coming weeks to evaluate options, review finances and help shape recommendations as the county prepares to rebid its ambulance contract.

The action follows last month's determination that the county's existing EMS agreement had not been properly termi-

minated. As a result, ComCare will continue providing ambulance service in Crittenden County through at least June 30, ensuring uninterrupted coverage while the committee completes its work. The temporary agreement was reached by mutual consent and was satisfactory to both parties.

Beyond the ambulance discussion, fiscal court conducted a public hearing on multiple ordinances, including updates to the county's drone administrative code and a new solar energy licensing ordinance that was later approved unanimously.

During discussion of the solar ordinance, Nathan Ratley, a candidate for

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Jury gives man 1 year for marijuana cultivation

STAFF REPORT

A Crittenden County jury worked into the night last Friday and found a local man guilty on three drug-related charges following a circuit court trial presided over by Daniel Heady.

John Henry, 48, of Marion was convicted of felony cultivation of marijuana involving five or more plants first offense and misdemeanor charges of possession of a controlled substance in the second degree involving hallucinogenic mushrooms and possession of drug paraphernalia.

The 12-member jury deliberated about 35 minutes before returning the verdict around 8:40 p.m., following more than 12 hours in the courtroom. The jury recommended the minimum sentence of one year on the felony and \$100 fines for each misdemeanor. Henry was taken into custody and will be back in court on Feb. 12 for formal sentencing by Judge Heady.

The case stemmed from a Nov. 5, 2024,

investigation after a Kentucky State Police trooper responded to a follow-up call at the Henry residence on Hebron Church Road. Sheriff's deputies had been there

State Police Sgt. Justin Cornett and prosecutor Chad Nelson examine a duffle bag of marijuana entered as evidence.

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Yumm... Stone Soup

It is often said the more things change, the more they stay the same. This column first appeared in The Press in 2006 – 20 years ago – and yet its message remains strikingly relevant. It feels like an appropriate time to take another look at the message.

It is not often that you read anything on this particular page of the newspaper about recipes. Cooking stories are usually reserved for the Lifestyles pages in the B section of The Press. Occasionally, when a well-known local cook such as Ms. Ethel Tucker is in the news, food makes its way to Page One.

This week, however, it seems fitting to talk about something that has been on my mind.



Chris EVANS
Press Editor & Publisher
About Town

In Marion, as in any small community, it takes the whole village pulling in the same direction to truly make things happen. From my perspective as a reporter who spends a great deal of time sitting in meetings and gathering information about what is happening around the county, it often feels like we are doing more pushing than pulling.

I am not talking about one issue alone. Several recent situations prompted this column. It may be helpful for all of us to step back and think about the recipe for good, old-fashioned stone soup. It is a recipe with a moral.

As the story goes, a Southern soldier wandered into a small Georgia town shortly after Sherman's March to the Sea. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman famously believed that war should be taken directly to the populace, and his campaign reflected that belief. Buildings were burned, crops destroyed and food supplies depleted. The strategy did not crush Southern morale, but it crippled it.

With the countryside laid bare, the weary soldier arrived one morning at the courthouse square and lingered there. Townspeople passed by, thanking him and "Marse Lee" for their sacrifices and offering support for the Cause. Each one, however, explained there was no food to spare. "Not a bite in town," one shopkeeper told the hungry private.

At last, the soldier assured them he did not need their help. In fact, he said, he was there to help them.

From his pack, he produced a kettle and announced that inside was a stone capable of feeding the entire village. With great ceremony, he dropped the stone into the pot, filled it with water from the well and built a small fire beneath it using straw and sticks.

Word spread quickly. Villagers gathered around, peering into the kettle from the sidewalks and windows. As the soldier sniffed the broth and smacked his lips, hunger spread through the crowd.

"Smells mighty good," the soldier drawled. "Of course, stone soup with a little cabbage – well, that's hard to beat."

One man stepped forward and said he might be able to find a small head of cabbage. The soldier smiled and agreed it would improve the stew. He then recalled a time when stone soup had been made with ham.

The shopkeeper spoke up again. He had a small piece of shoulder he could contribute. Soon others brought onions, carrots and potatoes. Before long, the kettle was steaming,

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