

Council considering street repair list School Board approves SUV

STAFF REPORT

Marion City Council met Monday night for its regular monthly session, advancing infrastructure projects, approving zoning changes and addressing several policy items.

Council members approved an agreement for towing and vehicle storage, with Cooper Towing of Marion listed as the only bidder. The towing rate was set at \$225, with additional daily storage charges.

The council gave first reading to Ordinance 26-06, which would amend city nuisance language related to curbing public nuisances. City Administrator Adam Ledford said the changes would affect sections 9202 and 9204 and would exempt motor vehicles or refrigerators used for display purposes by businesses. Final action will come after a second reading in May.

Braden Locke of the Community Arts Foundation addressed the council to request support for the Crittenden County 250th Legacy Event, planned for June 26-27 near Fohs Hall. Locke said organizers have about \$17,850 of a \$22,000 budget already covered and asked the city to allow use of its liability insurance during the event. Ledford said the city's

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insurance carrier indicated there would be no additional cost, and the council approved providing liability coverage. A possible city financial contribution will be discussed later.

The council also gave first reading to Ordinance 26-01, a year-end budget amendment, and continued discussion on its street and alley paving priority list. Mayor D'anna Browning said Chapel Hill Road has issues, while other members discussed whether North Weldon Street should remain on the list because part of it lies outside city limits. The city has about \$60,000 in state paving assistance and could potentially add general fund money.

Two infrastructure projects related to the city water system were also approved. One would seek bids for a \$300,000 rehabilitation project on clearwell tanks at the city water plant. The other would seek bids for water line repairs and hydrant work along portions of East Depot Street, East Carlisle Street and Kevil Street. Bids on the water line project are due by May 7.

Council members also approved first reading of an or-

dinance to rezone property in the North Industrial Park along Pippi Hardin Drive from light industrial to agricultural. Chris Cook, speaking on behalf of the Crittenden County Economic Development Corporation, said the land was originally purchased more than 20 years ago to create opportunities for business expansion. He said a growing local company wants to expand and add jobs while also providing a market for locally grown products. The rezoning had already been approved by the zoning board.

The council further approved seeking bids for a commercial mowing service to handle overgrown properties that remain in violation of city code after notice periods expire. Ledford said mowing by the city would be a last resort and that hiring a contractor could help the city respond more promptly during the busy mowing season.

In continuing business, the council approved second readings on changes to city personnel policy and demolition permits. The personnel policy update will allow employees to take leave in one-hour blocks rather than only

in four-hour or eight-hour increments. The city is also updating travel and meal reimbursement policies to match state standards.

Council members also heard an update on possible new code enforcement software that would track timelines, store photos and evidence, and help maintain continuity in enforcement cases. Code Enforcement Officer Tanya Byers said the system could be operating within about 60 days if approved.

During department reports, Ledford updated the council on efforts to secure FEMA-funded generators for major city facilities, including the airport, water pumping station and wastewater treatment plant. He said the process is stalled by a federal Homeland Security funding dispute, but the city has a pre-application prepared that could position Marion for about \$350,000 in generators once funding resumes.

The council also issued proclamations declaring April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and May 4 as Firefighters Appreciation Day. Browning noted the fire department will host an open house at 4 p.m. May 2.

School Board approves SUV

Bridge load limits across Crittenden County are forcing the Crittenden County School District to rely on smaller vehicles to transport some students, Transportation Director Wayne Winters told the Board of Education during last week's meeting.

Winters said several bridges cannot support the weight of full-size school buses, requiring the district to use vans and other smaller vehicles on certain routes.

"We have to use vans or other vehicles to transport kids to school on roads where buses can't travel," Winters said.

The situation has also created additional strain on the district's vehicle fleet, particularly after a Ford Expedition was recently totaled in a collision with a deer. Winters said the district has at times been forced to rent vehicles for trips due to a shortage of suitable transportation.

The board approved authorization for Superintendent Tonya Driver to negotiate the purchase of a van or SUV, not to exceed \$40,000. Winters noted that larger SUVs offer flexibility because they can be operated by school personnel without a commercial driver's license. Those vehicles are frequently used by staff and club sponsors transporting students to events such as FFA and HOSA competitions outside the district. Officials said the added vehicle would help address both daily route challenges tied to bridge restrictions and ongoing transportation needs.

PAPERS

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guided by preservation and stewardship.

"Cutter Singleton will be a trusted and remarkable steward of these historic archives that hold the stories of this community and the lives of its people," Evans said.

Founded in 1879, The Crittenden Press is among the oldest continuously operating businesses in Marion and among the longest-running, family-owned newspapers in Kentucky. Evans has served as editor for more than 33 years, more than one-quarter of the newspaper's entire existence. He and his wife, Allison, own and operate the publication today. Allison's grandfather and father had previously served as editors and publishers of the newspaper, dating back to the early 1960s, linking one family's ownership back more than 60 years.

Preserving Marion and Crittenden County's history has long been central to their mission.

"Facing an uncertain future for print journalism, it's highly critical that we make sure the printed pages of our community's past are safely guarded for generations to come," Evans said. "The Press has been a source of weekly news for all or part of three centuries. Yet its mission has been so much more. The newspaper's scribes have for almost 150 years written each week without failure a history of this county in a comprehensive fashion that nothing else can match."

Additionally, Crittenden County School District also has entrusted Singleton with preservation of irreplaceable materials from the FFA program. Longtime ag teacher and FFA Alumni President Larry Duvall was on hand recently during transition of the FFA's official scrapbooks from the school to Singleton. Scrapbooks from 1952 to 2019 are part of the collection. Duvall, who was FFA sponsor for 32 years, said these are community treasures that have found a lasting home for long-term maintenance, preservation and availability.

"I think it's a great place for them," Duvall said. "Cutter will take care of them and make sure they're safe and available for people to see. Basically, these yearbooks hold the history of the FFA charter since its inception."

The newspapers and FFA scrapbooks will be housed at Singleton's downtown antique shop, which is located across Bellville Street from The Crittenden Press and one door down from the Crittenden County Historical Museum.

Local historian and museum board member Brenda Underdown said the proximity of the newspapers and yearbooks to the museum makes it a practical and convenient place.

"Cutter is a young fellow and will be around for a long time. It's great that he is going to be the caretaker of these items," Underdown added.

Under the agreement between The Press and Singleton, the books cannot be used commercially and the historical society and museum will have first option to take the bound volumes should he ever choose to release them.

The newspaper can be viewed by appointment, Singleton said. He is also working on a plan to have them all digitally archived. He said Farmers Bank is interested in being part of the project. The volumes Singleton now has at his shop date from 1879 to 1965. The earliest newspaper that survives is the fourth edition printed in 1879. It's unclear why the first three issues were not preserved.

The history museum currently has among its archives Press volumes from 1966 to 1993.

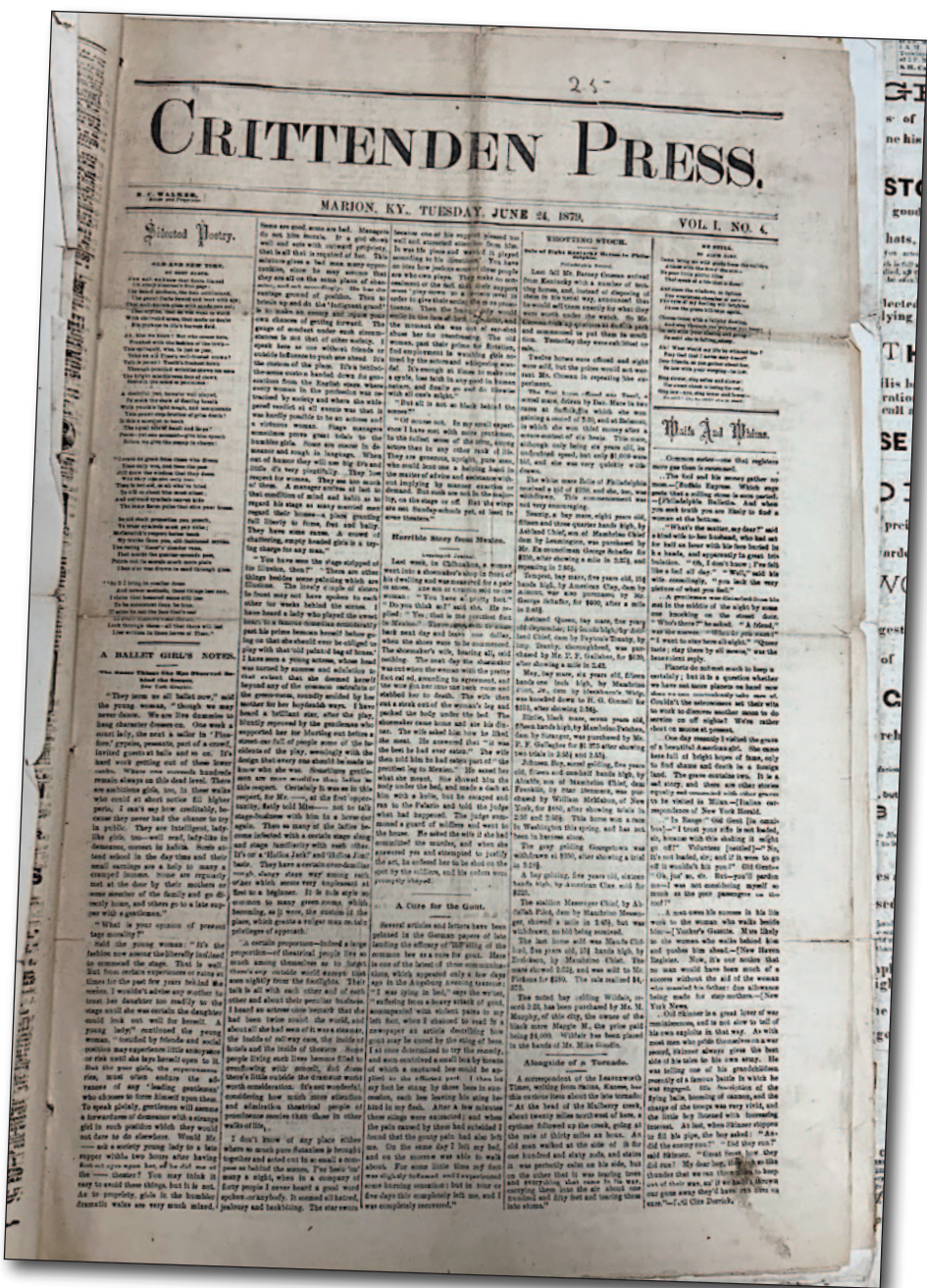
The museum opened for the season on April 1.

The bound volumes document a county formed in 1842 from Livingston County, named for Kentucky statesman John J. Crittenden, and shaped by early settlers, river commerce, iron furnaces and fluorspar mines. They chronicle devastating town fires and rebuilds, the rise and fall of industries, wars abroad and debates at home, births and deaths, triumphs and tragedies, a continuous handwritten and printed ledger of this rural Kentucky community.

Singleton's role as curator places those pages alongside a lifetime of collected artifacts tied to local and regional history, music and culture. While the archives will remain privately held, Evans said their care and preservation are paramount, particularly given their age and vulnerability.

The Press has published a single issue every week except once, in 1999, when it rushed out a rare second edition after a B-1 bomber crashed north of Marion. That unwavering continuity, Evans said, underscores why safeguarding the physical record matters.

In passing its oldest volumes to a fellow local historian and artist, the newspaper is ensuring that the earliest chapters of Crittenden County's story remain intact, protected not only as documents, but as living testimony to the people and place that produced them.



The oldest surviving Crittenden Press dates to June 24, 1879.

Re-Elect

Evan Head

SHERIFF

Paid for by Evan Head

City of Marion/Crittenden County

FREE DUMP DAYS!

City residents: Stop by Marion City Hall to obtain your voucher.

County Residents: Stop by the county offices to obtain your voucher.

MAY 1, 2026 MAY 2, 2026

8am-3:30pm 8am-12pm

Residential waste only, one load per residence.

First come, first serve; until capacity is reached.

Unacceptable waste includes wet paint and petroleum based products.

Waste tires accepted, thanks to a grant through the KY Dept. of Environmental Protection, Div. of Waste Mgt.

Location:

1901 US-60

Marion, KY 42064

Behind Crittenden County Road Department