



The Crittenden Press

Memorial Day Salute to County's Fallen Heroes | Page 9

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AN INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED, LOCAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1879

TWO DOLLARS

COUNTDOWN!

One month until one of Marion's biggest events

Billed as one of Marion's biggest community events in history, the Legacy of Liberty celebration will be held Friday, June 26, and Saturday, June 27, with two days of free public offerings marking America's 250th anniversary. The celebration begins Friday with the Legacy of Liberty Parade at 6 p.m., on Main Street, followed by American Trivia at 7:30 p.m., at Fohs Hall and a Living History Campfire at 9 p.m., behind Fohs Hall. Saturday's schedule includes all-day attractions from 9 a.m., to 4 p.m., including a sports card show at the Lions Club Building, Touch-A-Truck at the Marion Fire Department, airport and aircraft tours at Marion-Crittenden County Airport, a vendor fair on Carlisle Street and Revolutionary War and Civil War encampments at the Mineral Museum back lot. A truck, semi and tractor show will be held from 10 a.m., to 2 p.m., at the Lions Club Fairgrounds.

Featured events Saturday include a Liberty Tree dedication at 9 a.m., at City-County Park, an apple pie baking contest at 9 a.m., at Fohs Hall, opening ceremony at 10 a.m., on the main stage at Fohs Hall lawn, pedal tractor pull at 11 a.m., behind Fohs Hall, pet show at 12:30 p.m., concert by Small Batch at 2 p.m., reading of the Declaration of Independence at 2:50 p.m., Revolutionary War living history display at 3 p.m., and "Henry Clay: Divided We Stand" at 7 p.m. at Fohs Hall.



Locals marked Memorial Day with services across the weekend. At left are Burna American Legion Post color guard members (from left) Darrell Goodaker, Gene McDonald, Scott Hurley and David Sizemore raising the American Flag at Blackford Veterans Memorial Trail for the annual Blackford Veterans Memorial and Walk of Honor Memorial Day Weekend Celebration of Service on Saturday. Above is U.S. Army veteran and county-at-large elect Chad Nelson giving the Blackford keynote speech. At bottom left is American Legion Post 217 Commander John Driskill, who delivered the keynote address at the Mapleview Cemetery Service in Marion.



Don't shoot the messenger

They came into the courthouse and polling places last week hot under the collar, convinced they'd been cheated. Some barked at election officers. Others muttered about "rigged elections" and "scams" because when they stepped into the voting booth, there was little or nothing on their ballot to vote for.

The frustration is understandable. But the blame was aimed at the wrong people.

Local poll workers did not disenfranchise anyone. Most of those folks sitting behind folding tables from dawn until dark are retirees and neighbors volunteering for a few dollars and a long day of public service. They didn't design Kentucky's election laws. They didn't choose which candidates filed. And they certainly didn't decide which political party dominates this county.

The hard truth is simpler than the conspiracy theories.

Crittenden County is overwhelmingly Republican.

According to local voter registration figures, Republicans account for 4,026 registered voters in the county compared to 1,718 Democrats. Another 347 are registered under other affiliations, while independents make up 238 more. In nearly every district and precinct, Republican registration outpaces Democrats by margins approaching 2-to-1 or more.

That reality has consequences.

Yet, imbalance is not unique to Crittenden County. Across Kentucky this year, Republican candidates overwhelmingly dominated county primary ballots. According to data compiled by the Kentucky Association of Counties, 1,699 Republicans filed for county offices statewide compared to just 244 Democrats. County judge-executive candidates were dominated by the GOP 209 to 27. In magistrate races alone, Republicans fielded 971 candidates versus 136 Democrats. Sheriff races showed 182 Republican candidates compared to only 36 Democrats. The numbers illustrate just how dramatically Kentucky - particularly rural Kentucky - has shifted politically over the last two decades. In many communities, the real contest now takes place inside the GOP primary simply because one party is producing far more candidates.

In a closed primary state like Kentucky, Democratic voters only vote in Democratic primaries and Republicans only vote in Republican primaries. If one party fields few or no candidates locally, then its voters naturally have fewer choices on the ballot. That is not the fault of election officers. It is the direct result of political participation - or lack thereof - within the party itself.

And frankly, many rural western Kentuckians no longer recognize today's national Democratic Party. Livingston, once a bastion of the Democratic Party, is now, too, dominated by the GOP. Fair or unfair, the modern platform has drifted so far left culturally and politically that it struggles to connect with the conservative values rooted in farm communities, churches, hunting camps and small-town life across this region. That disconnect shows up plainly in voter registration numbers.

But there's another uncomfortable truth here too.

Citizens who arrive at the polls without understanding how a primary election works



Chris Evans
Press Editor & Publisher
About Town

Magistrates split on line of credit

STAFF REPORT

During its regular monthly meeting Thursday, Crittenden Fiscal Court conducted a public hearing regarding a proposed \$500,000 line of credit through the Kentucky Association of Counties.

Crittenden County Judge-Executive Perry Newcom said the measure is intended to ensure the county can meet its financial obligations through the end of June amid ongoing cash flow concerns. The county's available cash has been stretched due to an unpaid FEMA claim and ongoing financial burdens at the jail.

Newcom said very soon bills will no longer be able to be deferred. They must be paid before the fiscal year ends on June 30.

The line of credit is backed by anticipated FEMA reimbursements owed to the county's road department for disaster-related work. However, officials said the line of credit agreement only allows the

CRITTENDEN COUNTY Fiscal Court

county to draw funds against invoices from the past 90 days. Much of the FEMA-related road work was completed nearly a year ago.

Newcom said he hopes the county will not have to use any of the borrowed funds, but it's becoming ever so likely.

The line of credit carries a 4.99 percent interest rate.

The judge said funds may be needed to meet road department payroll before the end of next month.

Magistrates were split 3-3 on the issue, but the plan passed narrowly with Newcom casting the deciding vote.

Dissenting were magistrates Matt Grimes, Robert Kirby and Chad Thomas. The majority voting to affirm the measure were magistrates Travis Perryman, Dave Belt and Scott Belt and Judge Newcom.

Newcom probed the magistrates who voted against

the emergency measure for a viable alternative, but got no response.

With regard to the jail, magistrates approved an emergency budget amendment to address a shortfall again this month. Similar transfers have been necessary since early this year.

After deposits and expenses, the jail fund had \$47,153 cash on hand. Projected costs over the next 25 days include about \$99,000 in claims, \$12,000 in recurring utility expenses, payroll of about \$82,000 due June 4 and payments of about \$38,000 due June 20.

The county expects some income from federal inmate housing, Lyon County housing and possibly some smaller receipts before the next round of expenses comes due.

Magistrates approved transferring \$19,000 from

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Clement Mineral Show

The 19th annual Ben E. Clement Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show will be held June 6-7 in Marion next to Fohs Hall. The show will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, June 6, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, June 7. The event will include vendors offering gem and mineral specimens, polished stones, fossils, jewelry and other items. Door prizes, silent auctions, free children's activities and other attractions are also planned.

Former county judge dies

John C. May, one of the longest-serving county judges in Crittenden County history, died Saturday at his home near Tolu. May served as Crittenden County judge-executive from 1986 until 1999, a 13-year tenure in the county's top elected office. A farmer and former school teacher, May was also known for his love of the Ohio River and the Tolu community. See obituary on page 2.



May

KY 654 closing on June 1

A section of KY 654 in northern Crittenden County will close Monday, June 1 for a bridge replacement project. The closure will begin at 7 a.m., where a new bridge will be built over Mattoon Creek southeast of U.S. 60 at Mattoon. The \$485,000 project is expected to be completed by the end of August.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

•Crittenden County Fiscal Court will have a special called meeting at 4 p.m., Thursday, May 28 at the county office complex.



Ideal Market in Marion continues to support local athletics by donating one cent from each gallon of gas drawn from the Rocket Spirit Pump to Crittenden County High School. Last week, Ideal presented school officials, coaches and athletes a check for \$2,854.84 for the year ending June 2025. Another donation will be forthcoming in a few weeks. Pictured are (from left) girls' basketball coach Shannon Hodge, student-athletes Brenna Kemmer, Jordyn Hodge, Adri Berry, Athletic Director Austin Berry, Ideal Manager Patti Hackney, Ideal Engagement Manager Kim Simons, student-athletes Eden Bryant, Hudson Stokes, Drake Young and softball coach Chris Evans. To benefit CCHS athletics, patrons must use the Spirit Pump on the north end of the fueling area.

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