



The Crittenden Press

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TWO DOLLARS

Jailer Hayes resigns

Crittenden County Jailer Athena Hayes announced her resignation during Thursday night's Crittenden County Fiscal Court meeting. Hayes' resignation will be effective Sept. 30, ending her tenure about three months before completion of the four-year term to which she was elected in 2022.

Hayes was elected jailer in November 2022 and took office in January 2023.

She had sought a second term, but was defeated by former jailer Robbie Kirk in the May Republican primary. Hayes and Kirk were the two Republican candidates who filed for the office and there is no Democratic opposition in the Nov. 3 election.

Her resignation will create a vacancy in the county office for the remainder of the current term.

Hayes said she did not want to comment further. Under Kentucky law, the county judge-executive appoints the person who fills a vacancy in the office of jailer. No announcement has been made about an appointment.



Hayes

Just around the corner

Western Kentucky's Highway 60 Yard Sale will be held Oct. 1-4 along a 200-mile route through eight counties. The event stretches through Meade, Breckinridge, Hancock, Daviess, Henderson, Union, Crittenden and Livingston counties. Indoor and outdoor sales will generally be open from dawn to dusk.



Burning restrictions for fall

Kentucky's fall forest fire hazard season begins on Oct. 1 and runs through Dec. 15, during which state law strictly prohibits open burning within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Marion Planning and Zoning Commission will consider a request to rezone the former Rocket Tire building at 503 S. Main St. to accommodate American Shield Blast Mats. The property is currently zoned C-2 General Business District. The applicant is seeking a change to I-2 Light Industrial District. A public hearing will be held at 6 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 24 before the planning commission in the council chambers at Marion City Hall.
- Crittenden County Public Library Board will meet at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, at the library.
- Crittenden-Livingston Water District will meet at 4 p.m. Monday, Sept. 28, in the Deer Lakes meeting room.
- Crittenden County Board of Education will meet at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 29 at Rocket Arena.
- Community Prayer will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, at Marion Commons in front of city hall. Residents are encouraged to attend.
- Livingston County Board of Education will meet at 5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12.
- Marion Code Enforcement Board meets at 5 p.m., Monday, Oct. 13 at city hall.
- Crittenden County Chamber of Commerce will meet at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 13 at Rocket Arena.



Architectural rendering of the completed justice center in Marion.

Deep dive into Marion's new centerpiece

Who is paying for it?

BY CHRIS EVANS
PRESS EDITOR

Crittenden County will own the new justice center being built in downtown Marion, but local tax revenue is not paying its nearly \$20 million construction cost.

The project is being financed through bonds issued locally and repaid with money appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly to the state judicial branch. Because the building will be occupied entirely by the Court of Justice, the Administrative Office of the Courts is expected to pay all approved construction debt and eligible operating expenses.

Circuit Court Judge Brandi Rogers said the distinction between county

TWO-PART SERIES

This is the second of a two-part series examining Crittenden County's new justice center in downtown Marion. Part Two explores the funding, price tag, operational costs and other long- and short-term financial obligations once it is occupied.

government and the judicial branch has caused confusion about who is paying for the facility.

"This is a branch of the government separate and apart from county government," Rogers said.

"County government has its own budget. Judicial services, including circuit and district courts and



Circuit Judge Brandi Rogers

family court are part of the judicial branch of state government and separate from county government."

Kentucky courthouse projects are partnerships between counties and the state Court of Justice. After lawmakers authorize a project and establish its maximum annual use allowance, the county or a local public-properties cor-

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Ice skating rink part of holiday plans



STAFF REPORT

A skating rink will be among the attractions at Marion's Christmas on Carlisle celebration Dec. 5 as plans continue to come together for the downtown holiday event.

Marion Tourism and Recreation Commission last week approved spending just over \$5,000 to rent a 35-by-35-foot skating rink for the celebration.

Christmas on Carlisle will be an addition to the annual Marion Christmas parade

that evening. Additional activities are still being organized and most will be centered around Carlisle Street, which will be closed to traffic.

Mayor D'Anna Browning has encouraged local businesses, organizations and individuals to become involved by sponsoring activities, conducting fundraisers or helping provide attractions during the event.

Among the ideas being

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All property taxes in county now final

STAFF REPORT

Crittenden County's property tax rates are now final for 2026, with the combined bill on a home assessed at \$100,000 totaling over \$800 outside Marion and over \$1,000 inside the city.

Marion City Council gave final approval Monday to a real property tax rate of 22.7 cents per \$100 of assessed value, down from 22.9 cents last year. At the new rate, the city tax on a \$100,000 home will be \$227.

The combined rate for a \$100,000 property outside Marion is \$861. Property within Marion would also be subject to the city's \$227 levy, bringing the combined amount to \$1,088.

Those figures do not account for the state homestead exemption available to qualifying homeowners or other exemptions that may reduce a property's

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Property Tax Distribution

The following shows what each taxing entity will receive from a property assessed at \$100,000 before any exemptions or discounts:

Taxing Entity	Tax Rate (in cents)	Amount from \$100,000 Assessment
State of Kentucky	10.3	\$103
City of Marion	22.7	\$227
Crittenden County	11.4	\$114
Crittenden County School District	51.8	\$518
Cooperative Extension Service	4.6	\$46
Crittenden County Health Department	3	\$30
Crittenden County Public Library	5	\$50

Evolution of Local Property Tax Rates

TAX DISTRICT	Change from '25	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
State of Kentucky	(-0.3)	10.3	10.6	10.9	11.4	11.5
City of Marion	(-0.2)	22.7	22.9	22.9	22.5	22.4
Crittenden County	-0-	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.8	11.6
School District	+0.2	51.8	51.6	51.4	51.6	49.0
Extension	+0.1	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.1
Health Tax	-0-	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Public Library	-0-	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Tradewater	+0.807	37.097	36.29	34.9	33.6	33.7

*Proposed Rates. Values are shown as cents per \$100 of assessed value

Chaos is cheap!

Earlier this month, 13 journalists at the Lexington Herald-Leader learned that their jobs were being eliminated.

The layoffs wiped out a majority of the newspaper's reporting staff, including journalists covering city government, state government, eastern Kentucky, sports and other important beats. One is a good friend who I worked with many years ago. Kentucky lost more than employees that day. It lost trained observers, experienced questioners and watchdogs who knew the institutions and people they covered.

That loss should concern every Kentuckian.

It comes at a time when communities are being flooded with more information – and misinformation – than ever before. Social media allows anyone to become a publisher, but it does not require anyone to become a journalist.

Chaos is cheap.

It requires no reporting, no public records, no firsthand knowledge and no accountability. It takes only a keyboard, a social-media account and a willingness to sow doubt.

An accusation can be posted in seconds. A rumor can travel across the county before anyone pauses to ask whether it is true. A complicated issue involving taxes, schools, courts or local government can be reduced to a few inflammatory sentences stripped of facts and context.

Questions are sometimes posed not because someone wants answers, but because the questions themselves create suspicion.

Could this have happened? What are they hiding? Why isn't anyone talking about this?

Never mind that the premise may be false. Never mind that public records, meeting minutes or firsthand witnesses may provide a clear answer. Once doubt is planted, the author moves to the next accusation while others are left to sort through the wreckage.

That is not journalism. That is not professional. It is chaos, and chaos is cheap.

Real journalism costs something.

It requires trained people to attend meetings, read budgets, examine records, interview sources and verify what they are told. It requires journalists to distinguish between fact, opinion, allegation and evidence.

Most importantly, professional journalism requires accountability.

When a newspaper publishes something, its name is attached to it. So is the reporter's. Readers know where to call, write or walk through the door when they have a question or believe something is wrong. If we make a factual mistake, we are expected to correct it publicly.

Social media rarely operates by those rules.

A person can post an accusation, imply wrongdoing and encourage an audience to draw the worst possible conclusion without offering evidence. If the claim is disproved, the correction seldom travels as far as the original falsehood. Sometimes there is no correction – only another post, another insinuation and another manufactured controversy.

The volume of a claim does not determine its truth. Repetition does not transform rumor into fact. Anger is not evidence, and suspicion is not proof.

Local journalism is not perfect because journalists are human.

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About Town

The Crittenden Press

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