CRITTENDEN COUNTY FISCAL COURT

Mowing, jail discussed

STAFF REPORT

Crittenden County officials will seek prices to lease or purchase a 120-horsepower tractor after equipment failures has left the road department with only one mowing tractor.

Judge-Executive Perry Newcom said the county previously reduced its mowing fleet to two tractors with another serving as a backup. The backup broke down several weeks ago, and one of the primary tractors, a Farmall purchased about six years ago, remains at a Case IH shop with an undiagnosed fuel problem.

Newcom said this summer's favorable growing conditions have made it difficult to control johnsongrass, weeds and other vegetation along county roads. Magistrate Dave Belt said tall grass has been one of the county's most frequent complaints this summer.

"We can do it with two tractors," Newcom said. "We tried it."

So, he asked the court to consider approval of buying or leasing a new tractor.

One tractor under consideration would cost about $99,000 to purchase. A lease-purchase agreement could cost about $21,000 annually, which Newcom said could be covered by the county's equipment budget.

Magistrates approved a motion to obtain lease and purchase prices from multiple dealers. The fiscal court expects to decide at its next meeting. Newcom said the county should place an order soon because delivery could be delayed until spring.

In other business, the county heard a cash-flow report on the jail. The projection shows the detention center account could finish September nearly $5,000 in the red even if more than $113,000 in anticipated state and federal receipts arrive.

Johnsongrass is one of the biggest problems along roadsides. It grows fast in late summer.

The account had an actual cash balance of $89,382.37 after receiving $155,317.09 in deposits since Sept. 1 and a $25,000 transfer from the General Fund. Disbursements during the period totaled $92,255.53.

Upcoming obligations listed on the report include $71,319.27 in claims, $41,970.26 in lease and bond payments, approximately $70,000 for payroll and $24,622.50 in other expenses.

Those expenses would produce a projected deficit of $118,529.66 before anticipated receipts are considered. The revenue was expected to be received within a few days from the court meeting.

The report shows $113,608.14 awaiting deposit from state housing, federal housing and federal transportation billings. If all of those funds are received, the account would still have a projected $4,921.52 deficit at the end of September.

Magistrates, like they have for several months now, agreed that recurring jail bills will not be paid until adequate funding is available.

Members of Virgil Jones VFW Post 12022 and its auxiliary joined local officials Friday at Marion City Hall to observe National POW/MIA Recognition Day. A wreath was presented at City Hall in remembrance of American prisoners of war and those who remain missing in action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed annually on the third Friday in September. Attending the ceremony were (from left) Ron Ledford, Auxiliary trustee; Marion Mayor D'Anna Browning; Sue Ledford, Auxiliary vice president; Tina Jones, Auxiliary guard; Joe Lanham, senior vice commander; Gwen Melton, Auxiliary secretary; Mona Lozen, Auxiliary treasurer; Lynn Goodrich, post commander; Crittenden County Judge-Executive Perry Newcom; and Nancy Lanham, Auxiliary president.

FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Sept. 21, 2026

What does financial fulfillment actually feel like?

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Feeling financially fulfilled means so much more than just the number in your bank account. It's about being able to take your family out to dinner without calculating whether you can afford it. It means sleeping soundly on a Sunday night, knowing that if the water heater gives out tomorrow, you can handle it. And it's saying yes to a vacation because you planned ahead and the money is there.

In short, financial fulfillment is the feeling that your money is supporting the life you want.

Yet true fulfillment is surprisingly rare. Only 16% of Americans are financially fulfilled, according to a 2026 study by Edward Jones and Gallup, "Money and Meaning: Understanding Financial Fulfillment." Those at the other end of the spectrum, the financially stressed (32%), often say that money regularly controls their daily decisions. Most Americans (51%), however, fall in the middle - the financially conflicted. They manage to get by but often carry a persistent undercurrent of worry.

Notably, where you land on this spectrum has less to do with your income than you might expect. More than half of households earning $175,000 or more are still financially conflicted.

Building the foundation

So, the question becomes, "What do financially fulfilled people do differently?" Simply put, they tend to have foundational planning structures in place. Five behaviors show up consistently among the financially fulfilled, and they're simple steps you can take, too.

- Build an emergency fund (98% of fulfilled have this). Aim for saving three to six months of living expenses in a liquid, easily accessible account. When you know you can handle the unexpected, you stop bracing for it, and lower stress gives you a higher quality of life.
- Create a financial plan for retirement (91% of financially fulfilled have one). It's hard to feel in control if you don't know where you're going. A retirement plan puts a real number on what you'll need and lays out a clear path to get there, with built-in protection against life's unexpected curveballs.
- Save intentionally for major milestones (87% of financially fulfilled do). A home renovation, a new vehicle or a child's education don't have to feel disruptive. Setting money aside deliberately for the milestones you anticipate means you can say yes without scrambling.
- Put an estate plan in place (66% of financially fulfilled have). Estate plans are not just for the wealthy. A will and basic estate plan help ensure what you've worked for still reflects your wishes after you're gone.
- Work with a financial advisor (60% of financially fulfilled who sought any guidance have used an advisor in the past year). The internet is great, but real guidance comes from a credentialed person who knows you and your family and what you want your money to do for you.

Knowing that your money is working toward the life you want doesn't happen by accident. Feeling financially fulfilled is worth the effort and may be more achievable than you realize.

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