

# Weather Storm Fern covers, freezes Pendleton

By Burton Cole

Preparation, cooperation and a shifting storm front kept Pendleton County relatively comfortable during Winter Storm Fern. Snow accumulations were about 6 to 8 inches on Sunday, Jan. 25, in most of the county instead of the early projections of up to 12 and maybe even 18 inches of the white stuff. Judge Executive David Fields reported 10 inches of snow in parts of the county, mostly in northern sections. The lights stayed on, and no snow-related fatalities or serious

injuries were reported. "I thought things went really well," Pendleton Emergency Management Director Mike Moore said. "Before it started, we had a meeting of all the jurisdictions, the two cities and the county, at the EOC (emergency operations center) and came up with a plan of what we were going to do. "We established three warming centers. We were prepared to open more," Moore said. "Fortunately, they weren't used. "We had no power outages that I know of," he said

The snow that had been predicted for Saturday morning, Jan. 24, didn't get going until the evening and kept up into Sunday, when there were some pretty heavy snows. Plow crews said they'd just get a road plowed and have to go back and plow it again. "We couldn't get ahead of the snow for a little while," Moore said. But plow and salt crews had most roads cleared on Monday, Jan. 26. "I thought the citizens did a great job of staying off the roads. That helped everybody," he said.

People staying home left roads clear for the snowplows and kept emergency crews safer by not having to make runs on the slick icy roads. County Search and Rescue was deployed to deliver kerosene to one home where the individuals couldn't get out, Moore said. Pendleton County Schools were closed Monday through Thursday last week because of dangerous roads and extreme cold temperatures, and opened on a two-hour delay last Friday. County Fiscal Court met in emergency session Friday to order

more road salt to replenish supplies. But temperatures "warming up" into the 20s had lots of bundled-up youngsters out on sleds and bundled-up adults clearing snow with shovels and tractors. Jennifer Maddox, who lives on Highway 22 West, said, "Our grandson, Jameson Wyckoff, couldn't wait to play and go sledding." Tami Vater of Foster was one of many residents who took photos of their dogs frolicking in the accumulations. "Tig lives for snow!" she said of her canine.

# Champions gives winning report to Fiscal Court

By Jim Thaxton

FALMOUTH — The Pendleton County Champions coalition for a drug-free Kentucky updated county Fiscal Court on the progress of three grant recipients during the court's Jan. 27 meeting. Stephanie Green, executive director of PC Champions, summed up the work the three 2025 grant recipients:

identified high-risk individuals in PC (Pendleton County) by 68%, already surpassing the goal of 30%.

- Gathering Wing experienced a delay from the state on their certification application, but expects to complete the process soon.
- Grassy Creek Christian Church has 15 students enrolled in its Creek Kids Preschool program and was able to purchase extracurricular materials using leftover Champion's funds. "Funding from the grant has been used to offer

four scholarships. Two of the students who were offered a scholarship are children living in the custody of their grandmother after parental removal for drug usage." According to Green, the 2026 requests for proposals for this year's grant went out early in January. Brief content papers were due Feb. 1, with final submissions due March 15. Champions expects to provide the Fiscal Court with recommendations for Opioid Grant funding on May 1.

The folder of information that Green provided to the court also contained the Champions' 2025 Executive Summary, noting 4,506 people served over 4,551 hours, including 743 volunteer hours valued at \$25,615.64. She add that since starting Oct. 1, 2016:

- Youth alcohol consumption has decreased 7%;
- Youth tobacco use has decreased 73%;
- Youth marijuana use has decreased 14%;
- For every Drug-Free Communities dollar that has been invested into the community, the coalition has been able to generate 60 cents in volunteer time and/or other grants or sponsorships;
- 36,536 people have been served;
- 10,502 volunteer hours were generated;
- 2.2 million people have been reached on social media;
- The number of peer

leaders trained in Sources of Strength curriculum have gone up every year in Pendleton County Schools. There are 22 middle school peer leaders and 30 high school peer leaders. The federal grant that pays her salary and the Champions program ends Sept. 30. Competition for federal grant funding and the possibility that those funding sources will be cut will require other sources of funding to keep the program going, she said. She suggested that one source of local funding might be the Opioid Settlement Funds already available to the court, and possibly the court can draw upon its funds designated for mental health. Judge Executive David Fields said that the court and county attorney should determine if that would be a legal use of the Opioid Settlement and mental health funds. Caroline Mullins, director of the NorthKey

Regional Prevention Center, spoke up from the audience, encouraging the court to support Green and the work she and Champions are doing. In other business:

- Jeff Pugh was appointed to a part-time position with the road department.
- Daryl Ammerman was appointed to the Three Rivers District Health Department Board.
- Josh Tackett was appointed to the Recreation Board.
- Fields reported that he was seeking to purchase additional road salt. (Magistrates approve the purchase of additional salt during a special meeting Jan. 29.) After the meeting, Fields told The Outlook that he was working on an update to the open burning ordinance and hoped to have something together by the next meeting. Until a new ordinance is adopted, any open burning in the county must be reported by calling dispatch at 855-428-1212.

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