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\$1.00 (tax included)

Step back in time at Old Fort Harrod State Park

ENJOY MERCER'S STAY-CATION SITES THIS SUMMER



Photo Submitted

Old Fort Harrod offers events throughout the summer along with its living history that includes interpreters showing how the pioneers lived, the Mansion Museum and the Lincoln Marriage Temple.

April Ellis
Herald Staff

Looking for an affordable stay-cation close to home? Why not Old Fort Harrod State Park offers visitors the chance to experience Kentucky history firsthand while spending a relaxing day in one of Harrodsburg's most treasured landmarks.

According to Executive Director Autumn Morrison, the park provides much more than a traditional museum visit.

"The experience is a living history museum," Morrison said. "It is unique to Fort Harrod and is often described as stepping back in time."

Located in the heart of downtown, Old Fort Harrod preserves the site of Kentucky's first permanent settlement and allows visitors to



The Harrodsburg Herald/Robert Moore

Will Harpring Eschbacher enjoyed showing off his new pioneer duds from the gift shop at Old Fort Harrod.

explore the stories of the pioneers who helped shape the Commonwealth.

One of the park's most popular attractions is the reconstructed fort, where interpreters demonstrate what daily life was like on the

Kentucky frontier. The Mansion Museum also draws visitors with exhibits that tell the story of the region's earliest settlers.

"Our interpreters start

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Fiscal court approves \$46.5 million budget for 2027 fiscal year

Robert Moore
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The Mercer County Fiscal Court gave second reading to their \$46.5 million budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which starts July 1. The fiscal court also gave second reading to an ordinance giving the Harrodsburg-Mercer County Tourist Commission authority to run Anderson-Dean Community Park and approved appointments to local boards.

At their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 9, the magistrates approved the budget

for the 2027 Fiscal Year, which includes \$15 million in grants for the Bluegrass Innovation Gateway as well as another \$1 million in grants, including deceased animal removal grants and opioid abatement funds. The budget is \$17 million lower than last year's budget.

Officials say the budget includes \$16 million in reserve. It also includes a 2.7 percent cost-of-living allowance for county employees, which the fiscal court also approved Tuesday. It also allocates funds for a code enforcement board.

The budget also includes

\$400,000 in local funding for road improvements. While assembling the budget, Steele said they learned that state road funding was being cut by \$200,000 this year and by \$200,000 next year. State funding for roads comes from the gas tax.

Unlike the City of Harrodsburg's budget, the county budget is balanced. According to Treasurer Christy Wheeler, the county's biggest liability is \$11.2 million for the Bluegrass Innovation Gateway, formerly known as Wilkinson

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Planning commission will hold another data center meeting in June

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The Harrodsburg-Mercer County Joint Planning and Zoning Commission will hold another public hearing on a proposed data center ordinance in June. By press-time, no date had been set for the meeting, but Chairman Bobby Upchurch said they would like to hold it again at Campbellsville University Gymnasium.

That's where the planning and zoning commission held their last public meeting in April. And the community's input, at least those who spoke at that meeting, was that Mercer County needed a

moratorium on data centers.

Upchurch said the commissioners have modified the ordinance since then. It will be made available to the public before the meeting.

The ordinance would have to be passed by both the Harrodsburg City Commission and the Mercer County Fiscal Court.

"I'd like to get it done so we can move it up the ladder to the fiscal court and the city commission and see what they would like to do," Upchurch said at the planning and zoning commission's regular meeting on Thursday, June 4.

The commission also cre-

See Planning | 2A

Commission gives first reading to 'unconstitutional' 2027 budget

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The Harrodsburg City Commission has given first reading to a budget the city attorney called unconstitutional.

At their regular meeting on Monday, June 8, the commissioners gave first reading to the city's \$19.8 million budget for the 2027 fiscal year. City officials say the budget has a total

shortfall of \$2 million, with a \$1.4 million shortfall on water and sewer and another \$671,000 shortfall on the general fund.

Chief Administrative Officer Stacey Maynard attributed the budget shortfall to maintenance on Harrodsburg's aging infrastructure, an issue that has come under increasing scrutiny recently.

Maynard said the pro-

See Comm | 2A

City struggles to deal with aging infrastructure

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The Harrodsburg City Commission has its hands full dealing with aging infrastructure, from a \$1.4 million shortfall in its \$19.8 million 2027 budget to requests from citizens to repair vital infra-

structure and damaged roads.

Harrodsburg's infrastructure condition became national news on Friday, May 29, when the city asked residents to stop all non-essential water use after discovering a line break in the 12-inch line that pumps raw water from the Kentucky River to the

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