

ANNIVERSARIES



JIM AND MARSHA ROBINSON
50th Wedding Anniversary

Jim and Marsha Robinson of Salvisa will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 6, 2026.

The couple were married on Aug. 6, 1976, in a ceremony at Bruner’s Chapel Baptist Church by Rev. Ernest Carpenter.

The couple have two sons, Ben (Megan) Robinson of Harrodsburg and Adam Robinson of Lexington and two granddaughters, Reed and Maggie Robinson.

Bob

flood rains than we’ve had in years,” Commissioner Marvin “Bubby” Isham said Monday.

On Monday, Commissioner Charlie Mattingly asked when paving would begin. Earlier this year, the city commission approved a list of streets to be paved, including Larchmont Avenue, Linden Avenue, Veterans Park Drive, North Main Street, Commerce Drive, Cedar Street, Magnolia Street north from Broadway to the dead end, Hill Street, Forsythe Street, Daisy Street, Bacon Court and the city-owned portion of Sleepy Hollow Road.

The city received \$224,000 in Local Assistance Road Program funding to pave the first five streets, with \$17,000 for Larchmont, \$85,000 for Linden, \$18,000 for Veterans Park, \$43,000 for Commerce and \$61,000 for North Main.

Public Works Director Frank Lukitsch said they are having a meeting with the contractors, but were unable to provide a timeline for when paving would begin.

In other business, the Harrodsburg City Commission:

- Approved the Harrodsburg-Mercer County Industrial Development Authority applying for funding to pay for state-required repairs to waste water system. The application is due in August to the Kentucky WWATERS Program, which was created by the

Kentucky General Assembly to provide funding for eligible public water and wastewater systems. The program is administered by the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority.

“This is a funding opportunity we’d like to pursue,” said Greyson Evans, executive director of the industrial development authority, at Monday’s meeting. “We want to try to leverage this opportunity and try to fix the issues.”

Evans said the application checks a lot of the boxes. They will not learn whether they will get the funding and whether it’s a loan or a grant until the state legislature meets next year.

On Monday, the city commissioners also approved emergency repairs at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The commission voted to hire EHL Construction of Waynesburg for \$38,000.

Jim Reed, the director of the wastewater plant, said a valve at the bottom of the clarifier tank had malfunctioned. Reed said a roll pin broke, leaving the valve open. The pin is more than 30 feet deep.

“We’re not getting any waste,” Reed said. He said they were in good shape otherwise. Reed said they had received two bids, one from AY Landscaping for \$56,000 and the other from EHL. He said the bids are equal in scope. The winning bidder

will repair the valve. In addition, Reed said he purchased stainless steel bolts so this won’t happen again. He said the repair site was too deep for his employees to reach.

“If there is any way we could do it, we would do it,” Reed said.

Mayor Bob Williams moved to make the emergency repairs.

In addition, the board voted to pay \$20,613 to ServPro for repairs to the water treatment plant after a valve failure that flooded the building. Insurance will reimburse the city for its expenses, officials said.

The commission also approved paying AY Landscaping \$7,500 to complete the cleanup and repair after repairs.

- Approved a budget adjustment to raise the budget line item for the Greater Mercer County Ethics Board to \$5,000 and lower the line item for Legal Fees. The ethics board has retained the legal services of Sturgill, Turner, Barker and Moloney PLLC. The commission also approved paying \$1,667 to the ethics board for the attorneys’ retainer fee. The total retainer is \$5,000, which will be split between the City of Harrodsburg, the Mercer County Fiscal Court and the City of Burgin.

Marian Bauer, chairwoman of the ethics board, said the organization has about \$3,000 in its bank account, but the ethics board, which has been reorganized with new officers, has been unable to access those funds until they provide the bank with documentation of the new officers.

“We can’t get to the money until we make the changes,” said Bauer, who said they had opened their own post office box.

“We’ve got some things we’ve got to deal with,” Bauer said.

- Accepted Harrodsburg Police Officer Brennen Walton’s resignation effective July 31. Mayor Williams said Walton will serve as a school resource officer.

“He’ll be a good one,” said Commissioner Marvin “Bubby” Isham. “Hate to lose him because he’s a good officer.”

- Approved closing South Greenville Street from East Office Street to the right past Servants by Grace (beside the Olde Bus Station) on Monday, Aug. 3, from 3 to 10 p.m. for a back-to-school event.

The next scheduled meeting of the Harrodsburg City Commission will be Monday, Aug. 10, at noon at Harrodsburg City Hall (208 South Main Street). A calendar with meeting dates and other information is available online at harrodsburgky.gov.

from 3A

Hall



The Harrodsburg Herald/April Ellis

Mercer County Fair Board President and Horse Show Manager Brad Noel congratulated Sandy Becker for joining the Mercer County Fair Hall of Fame.

Also, Saturday night, two individuals whose dedication has helped shape the event for decades were recognized as the newest members of the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show Hall of Fame.

The inductions of volunteer Cliff Lister and longtime

horse show secretary Sandy Backer marked the 24th class of the Hall of Fame, which was established in 2003 to recognize individuals whose lasting contributions have strengthened both the fair and the horse show industry.

Lister’s involvement with

the fair began with a simple question in 2005, when Fair President LeMayne Ellis asked whether he had plans for the weekend. When Lister said he didn’t, Ellis recruited him to help with the demolition derby at the Motorsports Arena.

Twenty years later, Lister remains one of the fair’s most dependable volunteers.

Although he works full time at Essity, Lister uses a week of his vacation each year to volunteer at the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show. His duties have included setting up vendor concession spaces, assisting in the Motorsports Arena and helping with countless behind-the-scenes projects before and during fair week.

While he jokingly says his favorite part of the fair is “when it’s over,” Lister said what he enjoys most is meeting exhibitors and families who travel from across the country to compete at the Harrodsburg Horse Show. He also takes pride in working alongside the volunteers who spend months preparing the grounds before the fair begins.

During the induction ceremony, officials noted that volunteers like Lister are the backbone of the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show and have helped preserve its distinction as the longest continuously operating county fair in America.

The second inductee, Sandy Backer, has spent more than two decades serving as secretary for the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show while building one of the most respected careers in the equine industry.

Backer’s connection to horses began before she was born. Her mother directed the equestrian program at William Woods University, and mentor Gayle Lampe later helped guide Backer’s transition from a successful juvenile and amateur rider into a professional

career.

After graduating from William Woods, Backer moved to Kentucky to serve as National Youth director for the American Saddlebred Horse and Breeders Association. It was there that she discovered a passion for horse show management that would define her career.

Throughout the years, she has served in nearly every major horse show office position, including assistant secretary, show secretary, ring secretary, Majority Opinion System tabulator, awards coordinator, special events planner and youth activities coordinator. Her experience has made her a trusted resource for exhibitors seeking guidance on rules, procedures and problem-solving.

Backer’s career has been guided by lessons from respected horsemen who encouraged her to treat every exhibitor with kindness and

view strangers as future friends. Those principles, fair officials said, have earned her a reputation for integrity, compassion and unwavering professionalism.

Her contributions have also been recognized nationally. In 2025, she received the United Professional Horsemen’s Association Sallie B. Wheeler Distinguished Service Award. That same year, she was honored by the American Hackney Horse Society with the Lydia Luhman Pederson National Distinguished Service Award for her leadership and commitment to the Hackney breed, including creating the Hackney Youth Red Carpet event in Louisville.

With the inductions of Lister and Backer, the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show added two more names to a Hall of Fame that celebrates the volunteers, leaders and industry professionals whose dedication has helped the fair thrive for nearly two centuries.

from 1A

Data

Smith also noted there was a cap on the amount of land that could be used for data centers.

“Any land, even in Burgin, counts against the county-wide count,” Smith said.

“Once the acreage cap has been reached, there would be no more data centers allowed,” Smith said.

He also addressed concerns that the county’s comprehensive plan does not specifically mention data centers.

“I don’t find anything in statute that requires a comprehensive plan to mention every single land use,” Smith said, even a hyperscale data center, which he called “an extraordinary and unprecedented use.”

He noted that the current comprehensive plan calls for a balance between development and preservation, and said a data center “threatens that balance.”

He said the criteria for development allowed in agricultural areas in the comprehensive plan would “guide how you decide.”

“If there is a threat to prime farmland, the comprehensive plan allows you to consider that,” Smith said.

“I’m having trouble hearing,” someone in the audience called out.

“I will slow down,” Smith said. “The draft ordinance requires a substantial sum to be deposited for the decommissioning of data centers.”

In addition to the decommissioning bond, developers

would be required to make a deposit funding county engineering, as well as an arbitration process for community complaints.

If the proposed ordinance is approved, developers would have to apply to have land zoned IT. The planning and zoning committee would have 120 days to make a recommendation, to allow them to review the analysis and consult with experts. They could also require developers to make further concessions. In addition, a public hearing would be required.

Once the public hearing actually began, Kylie Donnelly, the director of planning and zoning, noted her office had received seven documents, which were entered as evidence.

“We’re glad you’re all here,” said Chairman Bobby Upchurch. “This is the part that makes it all function.”

The first speaker was Attorney W. Henry Graddy of W.H. Graddy and Associates in Versailles, who represents the coalition “We Are Mercer County,” and called the new draft of the proposed amendment “a very helpful second step.”

“We strongly support the new language,” Graddy said. He said he strongly supports the language concerning decommissioning, including \$100 million deposit that would be required. He also said he supported language that land zoned A1 (agricultural)

al) was not eligible for rezoning. But he said they had reservations about other sections.

“We don’t believe it gets the job done,” Graddy said.

He said they should not allow data centers at all, which he said Fayette County and Woodford Counties were contemplating.

The attorney said the commission had no basis for setting a cap of 1,500 acres. Graddy said that’s what a comprehensive plan is supposed to do. He said it could easily be attacked as arbitrary.

He urged the commission to halt the process until they’d updated the comprehensive plan to address data centers. Graddy said it would help them make decisions in agreement with the plan.

He again asked for a moratorium.

“A moratorium is needed to protect the community,” Graddy said.

He also questioned the removal of language from the draft concerning the tangible property tax.

“Why are you removing the mandate that data centers pay their fair share of property tax?” Graddy asked.

Other speakers followed Graddy, asking for a moratorium or a total ban on data centers.

“This does not need to be a second reading,” said Stacy Sellers of Burgin, “it needs to be a moratorium.”

Diane Floyd of Salvisa commended the commission

for their effort on the second draft but said, “We have a long way to go still.”

Floyd said citizens had not had enough time to carefully review the document, which she said would shape Mercer County for generations.

“We need more time,” Floyd said. “Our goal is to get it right.”

Pete Lynch, a political science lecturer with the University of Kentucky who is also running for Congress in the House of Representatives as a candidate for Kentucky’s 6th Congressional District, which includes Mercer County, said he supports a national moratorium. He conducted an informal poll by asking who supported such a ban. Everyone in the crowd, which was notably smaller than the crowd that turned out for the last hearing, raised their hand.

“I think that’s why they’re here,” Lynch said.

Lynch is holding a forum giving voters the chance to learn their political candidates’ views on AI data centers on Sunday, Aug. 2, starting at 6 p.m. at Old Fort Harrod State Park (400 West Lexington Street.) He said the draft includes no protections for the public and welcomes data centers into Mercer County.

“This ordinance is trash, it must be thrown out,” Lynch said. He asked for a three-year moratorium.

“I don’t really have any business speaking tonight,” said Madeleine Hay who does

not live in Mercer County but lives in Frankfort.

“We don’t need studies, we need more time,” Hay said. She asked for a permanent moratorium against data centers, which, she said, threatened “the dissolution of the fabric that makes us human.”

Bo Baxter, who lives on Beaumont Avenue, said the proposed ordinance does not comply with the comprehensive plan. Baxter noted that the comprehensive plan provides special considerations for the preservation of Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, a national landmark, and the Kentucky Palisades. He also said A2 farmland, which wildlife and plant life depend on, is just as precious as A1 farmland.

“It needs to be preserved for future generations, not turned into a data center,” Baxter said.

Zoé Strecker of Harrodsburg was concerned about water pollution from a hyperscale data center.

“The liquid that they use is not really water,” said Strecker, who called the coolant a “chemical time bomb.”

She said materials leave the data center carrying chemicals—some known carcinogens—at concentrations thousands of times higher than allowed by regulations.

“These hazardous materials are likely to get into our water system,” Strecker said.

Natalie Gray, who lives on Coghill Lane, said A2 farmland should be considered as

important as A1. Gray said surveys showed that 7 out of 10 Americans didn’t want data centers and noted that the governor of New York State had instituted a moratorium.

Gray said the majority of the county does not want to see farmland developed into a data center.

“It would have a negative impact,” Gray said. “Stop this inappropriate use of farmland.”

Bethany Corea of Burgin said requiring developers to apply for a conditional use permit was a significant tool in protecting safety, health and welfare.

“You have put the cart before the horse,” Corea said. “There is no penalty for taking more time,” Corea told the commission, urging them to continue drafting ordinances until they get it right.

“We are watching, we are listening,” Corea said. “We will hold you accountable.”

“People asked you to do what they need you to do,” said Judith Lunsford, who owns a horse farm near Burgin. “Say no to it.”

Lunsford, who admitted she hadn’t read the ordinance, said she fears for her children and grandchildren.

“We the people need you to do what is right,” Lunsford said. “I pray you hear these people’s hearts and not some people’s pockets.”

Karen Hughes of Harrodsburg said the second draft was

from 1A

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