

DEATH NOTICES

Sonja Johnson, 63, of Columbia, SC, died June 26, 2026.
 Denny Coyle Hogue, 78, of Waynesburg, died June 24, 2026.
 H. Merle Montgomery, 82, of Danville, died June 24, 2026.
 Lana Faye Hixson, 74, of Kings Mountain, died June 23, 2026.
 Ruth Anne Barnes, 87, of Danville, died June 24, 2026.
 Virginia Carole Hurt, 93, of Liberty, died June 29, 2026.
 Jannice Kendall Bean, 64, of Liberty, died June 29, 2026.



SUBMITTED ARTWORK

Kentucky retirement systems honored

By Tom Latek
 Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the County Employees Retirement System (CERS) and the Kentucky Retirement Systems (KRS) for their separate Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports (ACFR).

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Both the CERS and KRS ACFRs were compiled by staff at the Kentucky Public Pensions Authority (KPPA). The FY 2025 report awards mark the 26th consecutive year the GFOA has honored KPPA staff for their work presenting the systems' comprehensive financial picture to the public.

"The quality and quantity of work it takes to produce these outstanding documents is vast," said KPPA Deputy Executive Director Erin Surratt. "I am very proud of our teams' accomplishments, which are validated by these awards year after year."

The GFOA advances

excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources, and practical research for more than 21,000 members and the communities they serve.

The CERS and KRS annual reports were judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the annual report. The reports are available on KPPA's website, <https://kyret.ky.gov>, under the Publications & Forms tab.

As of June 30, 2025, KPPA managed \$29.8 billion in pension and insurance assets for hazardous and non-hazardous state and local public employees, and the Kentucky State Police.

The Kentucky Public Pensions Authority is responsible for the investment of funds and administration of pension and health insurance benefits for over 444,000 active and retired state and local government employees, state police officers, and non-teaching staff of local school boards and regional universities.

Based on current assumptions, the systems' actuarial projects that all pension and insurance funds will be fully funded by Fiscal Year 2049.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The University of Kentucky Wildcat Pulling Team poses for a group photo.

UK Wildcat Pulling Team excels in national competition

By Tom Latek
 Kentucky Today

LEXINGTON – The largest-ever University of Kentucky Wildcat Pulling Team has returned from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers International Quarter Scale Tractor Student Design Competition in Bloomington, Illinois.

The University of Kentucky has been participating in the competition for 25 years.

The entire team, made up of 19 undergraduates, two graduate students and four advisors, split into two teams for the competition. The A-Team created this year's new tractor (Wildcat 3526) and the X-Team redesigned parts of the tractor built

for last year's competition (Wildcat 3525).

The A-Team received awards for best appearance, manufacturability and ergonomics. They won the heavyweight pull and placed seventh overall out of 24. Additionally, the A-Team ranked second in durability, fourth in the team presentation, fifth in overall design judging and sixth for their written report.

Meanwhile, the X-Team placed third overall and won both of their pulls, retiring the tractor with an undefeated record. The entire team remains undefeated in heavyweight pulls for the last three years.

Lauren Lanham, a recent UK graduate from Trigg County, has been on

the pulling team since the middle of her freshman year. While she says she's gained invaluable career experience, she's also made long-lasting relationships on the team.

"This pulling team has become my family basically. I had no idea when I joined that I would meet my now-fiancé," Lanham said. "But also having past members that we sometimes contact to ask questions and help us out has been special."

In partnership with Michael Sama, one of The Bill Gatton Foundation Distinguished Professors and director of graduate studies for Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering (BAE), the team is also co-advised by BAE's engineer technician associate Brett

Childers, engineer aide principal Dan Workman and engineer associate Karla Ladino.

"This team's success wouldn't be possible without all the help and support it receives from the BAE department, the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the Pigman College of Engineering," Sama stated. "The Lighthouse Beacon Foundation and the Pigman College of Engineering Student Opportunity Fund generously supported student lodging for the competition."

To learn more about the Wildcat Pulling Team and the UK BAE Department, you can go online to <https://bae.mgcafe.uky.edu/>.

Pastor's Pen: Practice doesn't make perfect

One of the most common sayings we hear is, "Practice makes perfect." Athletes practice, musicians practice, and



PASTOR STEVEN TEMPLE

professionals practice their craft to improve their skills. Although there is value in our discipline and preparation, the truth is that when it comes to our spiritual lives, practice does not make perfect.

The Bible reminds us in Romans 3:23 that perfection is not found in our efforts but in the work of Jesus Christ. That scripture says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" You see, no matter how much we try, we cannot practice our way into righteous-

ness. We cannot attend enough church services, give enough money, or perform enough good deeds to erase our sins. Our greatest problem is not a lack of effort but a fleshly, sinful nature.

Many people spend their lives trying to perfect themselves. They strive to become better, hoping that somehow their good will outweigh their bad. However, scripture clearly teaches us that our righteousness alone is insufficient. This may seem discouraging at first, but the gospel provides us good news. God never intended for us to save ourselves. He provided a perfect Savior because He knew imperfect people could never achieve perfection on their own.

Jesus lived the life we could not live. He fulfilled the law completely and became the sacrifice for our sins. It is not our practice that perfects us, instead it is His sacrifice. Our standing before God is based on Christ's

perfection, not ours. This does not mean we stop growing. We are called to pray, study, worship, and serve. Even though these spiritual disciplines are important they are not a means of earning God's favor they are the result of a relationship with Him.

The Apostle Paul understood this truth as he stated in Philippians 3. Though he was a devoted servant of Christ, he acknowledged that he had not yet arrived spiritually. Paul's goal was not to achieve perfection through his own strength but to continually pursue Christ. We can't do this life on our own. We have to have the perfected work of Christ in our lives.

Maybe today you feel frustrated by your shortcomings. Maybe you've stumbled repeatedly and wonder if you'll ever get it right. The good news is that God's grace is greater than your failures. Your

hope is not in perfect practice but in a perfect Savior. As believers, we should certainly practice faithfulness. We should practice prayer, kindness, forgiveness, and obedience. Our confidence must never rest in our ability to perform. Our confidence must rest in Jesus Christ. Outside of Christ, we are nothing. With Christ, we are perfected.

Don't sell yourself short today. One of the greatest lessons that you will ever learn is the fact that you will not be able to do it all right all of the time. You will fall. You will fail. You will come up short from time to time. Just make sure when you do fall that you get up. Put your hopes in what Christ can do and not that of yourself.

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