

Camp joins 40 Days of Creation music festival

THE JE STAFF

WILLIAMSTOWN, Ky. — The annual 40 Days of Christian Music festival will return to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum next week for its sixth consecutive year, bringing dozens of Christian artists and speakers to northern Kentucky from July 28 through Sept. 5.

According to a release from the attraction, the festival, which attracts tens of thousands of visitors from around the world, will feature more than 100 artists performing daily, except Sundays, at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown and the Creation Museum near Cincinnati.

New to this year's lineup is Christian recording artist Jeremy Camp, a Grammy Award nominee and five-time GMA Dove Award winner.

Festival attendees can tour the life-size Noah's Ark at the Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum while enjoying live performances in state-of-the-art venues.

This year's lineup also includes CAIN, Crowder, Passion, Matthew West, Jamie MacDonald, Jon Reddick, Cochren & Co., David Phelps, Tasha Layton, Jason Crabb, Triumphant Quartet, Karen Peck & New River, Mark Trammell Quartet, The Isaacs, The Inspirations, Gold City and Joseph Habedank,



The Ark Encounter

The 40 Days of Creation music festival will be held at the Ark Encounter, which features a to-scale replica of Noah's Ark. The attraction is in Williamstown, Ky.

among many others.

All concerts are included with admission to the attractions. Annual passes provide unlimited admission to both the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum, along with free parking for one year, allowing passholders to attend as many concerts as they choose.

The event is produced by Abraham Productions under the leadership of CEO Ray Flynn.

"I am honored to bring the world's largest Christian music festival to the top Christian attractions in America," Flynn said. "My vision has always been to bring together multiple genres of music to make an eternal impact on people of all ages and backgrounds. We are also blessed to have outstanding speakers like Ken Ham, the visionary behind the Ark, who provide solid biblical teaching and encouragement daily."

Ken Ham, founder and CEO of Answers in Genesis and visionary behind the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum, said the festival offers something for the entire family.

"Millions of people across America love the various styles of Christian music we offer at the Ark and Creation Museum, the two top family-friendly Christian themed attractions in the world," Ham said. "Festivalgoers can tour the life-size Ark, explore the beautiful grounds, take their children or grandchildren to the playground and carousel, and meet the zoo animals."

A complete day-by-day artist lineup and additional information are available at 40DaysOfChristianMusic.com. Tickets can be purchased through ArkEncounter.com or by calling the Ark Encounter at 800-721-2298.

Local racers shine at Soapbox Derby World Championship

BY CASSANDRA PROFITT
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Racers from the Pennyrile Soapbox Derby Association are returning home after competing in the 88th All American Soapbox Derby World Championships from July 12-18. The annual event, held at Derby Downs in Akron, Ohio, brought together top youth drivers from across the United States and several other countries in a gravity-powered car race.

Eight drivers from the area - Leann Salley, Cash Chappell, Nate Crosby, Katie Wolff, Brayden Chappell, Zach Salley, Eleanore Knight, and Caden Terry - were invited to compete in various divisions. Katie Wolff, Zachary Salley, and Leann Salley brought home several accolades from the week-long event.

Wolff placed 7th in the local stock division, and earned 10th in rally points. Leann Salley ranked 10th in the super stock division. Finally, Zach Salley finished 9th in the rally stock division, and ranked 7th in rally points; he also qualified to compete in the All-Star race based on



Provided by the Pennyrile Soapbox Derby Association

Zach Salley stands surrounded by members of the Pennyrile Soapbox Derby Association while waiting for his chance to race.

his number of first place finishes this season.

"Madisonville racers made their presence known at the World Championships," said Brien Terry, President and Race Director of Pennyrile Soap Box Derby. "Several drivers received national recognition for their driving abilities. Timing is perfect for the opening of our new completion track at the Madisonville City Park. This will increase our ability to develop new drivers."

According to members of the association, there was a Kentucky-based racer in the final rounds for local, rally, and super stock.

"Drivers from Kentucky never advanced to these levels until our track was opened in 2014," said Terry. "We are excited to see how the quality of racing performance improves after the completion of the new competition track."

The event wasn't without its hiccups though, with smoke from the Canadian wildfires interrupting race week with poor air quality. All activities planned for Friday, including the National Super Kids Classic, were cancelled. This left local competitor Caden Terry without the ability to compete. He has been invited to compete again in 2027.

Mercer County cities at odds over data center annexation

BY LIAM NIEMEYER
KENTUCKY LANTERN

An effort by the Mercer County city of Burgin to annex land into its city limits for a potential data center has embroiled the small community in a contentious debate over the impacts of such a project, something that's also raising strong concerns from local leaders of the county seat.

People packed inside the Burgin Independent School building on July 9 for a special-called Burgin city council meeting where city council members voted 3-2 to advance an ordinance to annex from the county more than 1,000 acres of land — roughly doubling the size of the city — for a potential data center development.

The council didn't take public comment from those in the audience during that meeting. Burgin resident Bethany Corea, who attended the meeting, told the Lantern dozens of people were turned away from entering the building.

"A lot of people in Burgin and Mercer County, but primarily Burgin right now, just feel like the process is being rushed, that their voices aren't heard," Corea said. "What it feels like to us is the local officials are going, 'We don't care what you think. More tax money.'"

Corea, 40, a former volunteer firefighter and a volunteer with the community group We Are Mercer County that's

advocating for a data center moratorium, said she's also strongly concerned with the community having enough firefighting capacity for a large data center.

Burgin has now canceled another special-called meeting planned for July 20 because, according to a post on the city's Facebook page, the first special meeting was "not legally accurate as we have not had a first reading of the ordinance."

Voicemails and emails to Burgin city council members Melinda Wofford and Travis Irvin on Friday were not returned. Meanwhile, the Mercer County Fiscal Court and the city commission for the county seat of Harrodsburg are also taking action related to data centers. The city of Harrodsburg sent a letter to Burgin on July 14 objecting to the process it went about scheduling the special meeting for the second reading of the ordinance.

Harrodsburg City Attorney Norrie Currans told the Lantern that the city of Burgin didn't give a 14-day notice, as is required by state law, for the annexation of property on which Harrodsburg's municipal water utility has a water line. Currans said their city, which supplies water to the city of Burgin, has concerns about having enough water supply for a potential hyperscale data center.

"If they annex this property, they have a duty to provide services to those to that area. They

have to provide police fire protection, water, sewer, all the things. They are moving forward with the annexation without ever having discussed with the city of Harrodsburg supplying water to the location in question," Currans said.

The Harrodsburg Herald reported the county fiscal court at a July 14 meeting is also moving forward with considering a temporary moratorium on data center construction in the county, a move that would not affect property within the city limits of Burgin.

In addition, the county's planning and zoning commission is also holding a public hearing on July 23 on a draft ordinance to site and regulate data center construction in the county. Burgin does not have any planning or zoning body.

Corea, who's running for Burgin city council this fall, said herself and other volunteers with We Are Mercer County plan to advocate for a stronger planning and zoning ordinance at the county level.

She said while whether Mercer County should be the location of a large data center is up for debate, she's personally concerned about the potential water usage and environmental impacts from a data center, especially for a place that her family moved to a rural lifestyle.

"You're taking away what makes Burgin, Burgin," Corea said. "So much of the citizens here, so many of them feel that way." way.

Kentuckians warn proposed Medicaid cut threatens disabled

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN

FRANKFORT — Kentuckians with disabilities and their loved ones and advocates came to Frankfort Friday and pleaded with elected officials to find a way to protect the services they receive through Medicaid waivers.

Several spoke during a legislative subcommittee meeting, which was formed to handle issues surrounding waiver waitlists, and many more spoke at a town hall meeting and rally on the Capitol Annex steps. Organizers estimated hundreds attended these events.

Laura Orsland, the mother of a son with disabilities who founded the HIVE in Bowling Green to support "people with developmental disabilities and those who care for them," said the looming 4% cuts to the providers who help her family and others "is not just a number to us. It's a threat."

"It is a warning," she said. "It is the sound of one more piece of stability slipping away."

A June 8 letter from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services informed various providers they would see a 4% reduction in Medicaid reimbursement starting Aug. 1. Reductions are set to target the following waivers, in addition to providers in other sectors:

Home and Community Based Waiver, which provides services to Kentuckians 65 and older or those who are physically disabled and need a nursing facility level of care.

Michelle P. Waiver, which provides services for Kentuckians with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need nursing facility or immediate care facility level of care.

Model II Waiver, which provides services for people needing ventilator support 12 or more hours a day, are on a physician-monitored weaning program and need a nursing facility level of care.

Supports for Community Living, which provides services for Kentuckians with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need immediate care facility level of care.

Meanwhile, families who need waiver services said it's already difficult to find providers able to care for them and their loved ones.

Leslie Hoffmann, the deputy commissioner of the Department for Medi-



SARAH LADD | KENTUCKY LANTERN

Hundreds of Kentuckians with disabilities and their loved ones and advocates came to Frankfort and pleaded with elected officials to find a way to protect the services they receive through Medicaid waivers, Friday.

icaid Services, said there were nearly 19,000 people on waitlists for Medicaid waivers as of July 13, with only around 1,000 spots available.

Year over year, the cost of waiver services and Medicaid claims have increased from around \$492,000 per person in 2020 to around \$607,166 in 2025, Hoffmann said in a presentation to members of the Waiver Waitlist Management Subcommittee on Friday morning. Total annual expenditures for these services hit nearly \$1.9 billion in 2025 even as many spend years on waitlists waiting for care.

Dr. Steven Stack, the secretary for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said solutions to the waitlist and other issues come back to money.

"If you shed tears over the size of the Medicaid budget now, some of the ways we could make all of these problems go away would make you shed buckets of tears about how much larger the cost would be," he said.

'I AM A PERSON'

Grace Anna Rodgers, a singer who has Michelle P. Waiver services and uses a wheelchair, told those gathered for the Friday afternoon town hall: "Don't ever feel sorry for yourself, because we are still human beings."

"A lot of people see people like me as somebody who, 'oh she's in a wheelchair, she can't do anything,' but we thrive and we love to do things," she said. "I play piano, I sing and I love doing it. I am a person."

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Outdoor Recreational Educational Trailer draws eyes to Hopkins club

BY CASSANDRA PROFITT
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

The Hopkins County Sportsmen and Sports-women Club announced its new Outdoor Recreational Educational Trailer. The trailer allows the club to educate families on things like wildlife conservation, hunter education, wildlife

biology, and more.

"We are receiving opportunities to set our trailer up free of charge at large events across the state of Kentucky and beyond," explained Loman Scarbrough.

Over the weekend, he brought the trailer to the East Kentucky Outdoor Show in

Pikeville. The group got a chance to connect with locals and introduce area youth and families to the great outdoors.

"The Modern Woodman Financial organization really appreciated our organization and what we do. They will be becoming our

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