

WCHS pivots after HVAC systems fail

BY DAVID R. DRENNAN
FOR THE JOURNAL-ENTERPRISE

As heat index values cranked into the triple digits again this week, Webster County Schools found itself in an all too familiar place: facing air conditioning issues. This time it was at Webster County High School, where a total of six failed units impacted a number of classrooms. “There are several rooms impacted,” described Amy

Hill, who serves as the district’s Director of Public Relations. Hill also explained that with these older units, there is a struggle to get parts. Hill noted that Trane, an HVAC supplier, is helping the district with the repairs. Ailing HVAC systems have been an ongoing issue for the school district. During the last year, there was an outage at Dixon Elementary School that ended up needing a replace-

ment unit. Almost exactly a year ago, the district had spent \$144,000 on aging HVAC infrastructure repairs and replacements over a span of just two months. Despite the efforts, repair and replacement costs continue to plague the district. Superintendent Michael Gooch reported the current outage to the board at the regular meeting in late August. To mitigate the increasing temperatures while school is

going on, Hill reported that “students have been relocated, and fans and portable half-ton units have been brought in to help. “It is unfortunate that it has happened, and we are doing what we can to fix the issue,” she added. District officials continue to monitor temperatures in the affected classrooms as well. Gooch provided a statement on Tuesday describing the issue and the efforts to make

affected classrooms comfortable. In his statement, he included that progress was being made on the issue. “Four of the six units that remained an issue are now operational,” he said. “Additional temporary cooling has been placed in classrooms served by the remaining units while work continues. If conditions in a classroom reach a point where we do not believe

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Provided

The founding board members for the Webster County Chamber of Commerce pose for a photo at last week’s Chamber meeting.

New Webster chamber moves forward with board members

BY DAVID R. DRENNAN FOR
THE JOURNAL-ENTERPRISE

The Webster County Chamber of Commerce held its August meeting this past week at Webster County Extension Office in Dixon, as the new board of directors took office for the inaugural term.

“We had a good group of local business owners and community leaders there as we continue working through the process of reorganizing the Webster County Chamber of Commerce and getting it moving forward,” reported Bob Palmer and Ryan Hammack, the initial organizers of the new Chamber.

Chris Wooldridge, Director of the Murray State University Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, was the guest speaker. Wooldridge discussed with the attendees “about building a strong and sustainable Chamber and the

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BOE sets tax rate at special called meeting

BY DAVID R. DRENNAN FOR
THE JOURNAL-ENTERPRISE

The Webster County Board of Education met in a special called meeting on Tuesday afternoon. The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m., and adjourned after just four minutes. “To meet statutory requirements, the purpose of this meeting is to take action to set the district’s 2026-2027 property tax rates,” Board Chairman

Tim McCormick stated, according to meeting minutes. The meeting was to approve the first reading of the measure. Also according to meeting minutes, McCormick gave background on the special called meeting, stating, “Formal action on the proposed tax rates was not taken at our previous meeting. Once this was identified, the board was convened at the earliest

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Kentucky Soybean Association names Ellis executive director

BY THE JE STAFF

PRINCETON, Ky. — The Kentucky Soybean Association and Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board have announced Niki Ellis as their next executive director. Ellis will officially begin the role Jan. 1, 2027, following an transition period designed to position her, the staff team and farmer leaders for success. Ellis will succeed Debbie Ellis, who has provided nearly 40 years of service to Kentucky Soy, the organization stated. The soybean checkoff plays a critical role in supporting Kentucky soybean producers through investments in



Niki Ellis

research, promotion, education and market development. Effectively managing those producer-funded dollars requires a strong understanding of finance, budgeting and accountability to ensure every investment provides meaningful value to farmers, officials with the organization said. “We were looking for someone who understands farmer-led organizations, can build strong relationships and has the

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Kentucky PSC panel investigating rising gas, electricity costs

BY LIAM NIEMEYER
KENTUCKY LANTERN

Kentucky’s utility regulator has launched an effort to study the affordability of electric and natural gas utility service for residential ratepayers, arguing that utility access is “fundamental to the health, safety and well-being of

Kentuckians.” A news release issued Wednesday by the Kentucky Public Service Commission says federal data shows the cost of electricity for residential ratepayers in Kentucky has increased by 21.8% from 2020 to 2025. The regulator wrote that

because of rising utility costs, the agency believes a “broader examination” of affordability issues would help it better understand “the factors affecting affordability” and “evaluate existing and potential approaches for addressing those concerns.”

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