



THE LARUE COUNTY HERALD NEWS

Proudly serving the community of LaRue County since May 6, 1885

11TH MARCH, 2026

VOLUME 283, NO. 10 · HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY · \$2

School Board alleges fraud, forgery in tax petition

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

Allegations of fraud, forgery and violations of state law have been raised in the petition effort aiming to recall the LaRue County Board of Education's 2025 property tax levy, with the petition committee accused of misconduct during and after signature collection and LaRue County Clerk Rhonda Metcalf accused of improperly and erroneously verifying signatures.

Filed with the LaRue County Circuit Clerk on Feb. 25, the document is a direct response to the petition committee's initial complaint, which was filed with the court on Nov. 1,

2025; normally required to be on record within 20 days of the complaint, the answer was delayed by the motion to dismiss that LaRue County Circuit Judge Charles C. Simms III denied in February.

The Board included a counterclaim against the petition committee and a cross-claim against Metcalf within its response. It is essential to note that the information contained within the document reflects the entity's perspective on the matter and has not been proven as fact in court.

The first alleges that the committee's recall effort "was permeated by non-uniformity, fraud, forgery, misrepresentation, concealment of required statutory language, unauthorized

circulation, use of photocopied and altered pages, and the inclusion of invalid signatures."

As evidence to the fraud and forgery accusations, the Board contends:

- At least one person whose name appears on the recall petition has come forward stating their signature was placed there by another.
- One individual has stated they thought they were signing a petition concerning "a local 'restaurant tax.'"
- One individual said they thought they were signing routine administrative or delivery-related paperwork while volunteering at a local food pantry, and that the circulator "made no effort to explain the purpose or effect of the petition."

• At least one individual signed after a circulator remained on their property for approximately 45 minutes.

• Certain signatures were executed by individuals on behalf of other adults or by those purporting to act under a power of attorney.

The filing also alleges that petition pages were circulated by individuals who were not members of the petition committee and that petition pages were left in public locations and private businesses and circulated by unauthorized persons, both of which would be in direct violation of state law governing recall petitions, if true.

Other claims argued by the Board against the committee includes:

• That the petition committee and its agents circulated pages that used overlay sheets or substituted headings which covered or concealed the language identifying the taxing authority and the amount of the levy.

• The submission contained photocopied pages rather than original wet-ink signatures, and at least one of the photocopied pages "appears to have been traced over in blue ink ... in an apparent attempt to pass off the photocopied page as authentic."

• Multiple signers did not understand or know the amount of the tax increase that is the subject of the litigation.

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Rooted in Community, Growing for the Future

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

The public is invited to attend The LaRue County Extension Expo, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. this Saturday, March 14, at the LaRue County High School Gym, located at 911 S. Lincoln Blvd., Hodgenville. With giveaways, screenings and more, this free event will have something for everyone.

The Expo will feature over 50 booths representing area businesses and organization, with a theme of "Rooted in Community, Growing for the Future." The event is designed for local businesses and organizations to gather and share, educate, promote and celebrate the services offered in the community.

Various screenings, demonstrations and giveaways will take place, including a free tree giveaway from the LaRue County Conservation District. One lucky person will also win a free trip to 4-H Summer Camp. Concessions will be available from the LaRue County Pork Producers and *The LaRue County Herald News* will also be present with old pictures and subscription offers for attendees.

More information and a list of participating businesses and organizations is available in the B section of this week's edition.

For more information, contact the extension office at 270-358-3401.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Candidate questionnaires begin this week

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

In an effort to educate the public on the upcoming election, The LaRue County Herald News will be publishing a series of candidate questionnaires over the next six weeks.

This week, you'll find the Republican candidates running for LaRue County Judge Executive on pages A4 and A5. All individuals were given the same questions and deadlines and are listed alphabetically by their last name.

The next set of questionnaires will publish in our March 25 edition with the Republican candidates for LaRue County Sheriff and Jailer. The April 1 edition will feature the three Republican candidates for Magistrate District 3 and the two Republican candidates for PVA. April 8 will include the seven Republican candidates and two Democratic candidates

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Closer Purpose

Where faith and style meet to offer something for everyone

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

From the outside, Closer Purpose in downtown Hodgenville may look like any other retail business. Step inside, though, and you'll find the store is steeped with the family's passion for Christ and sharing his word to those who need it.

LaRue Countian Beth Williams began designing apparel many years ago, after her husband, Jeremy, was diagnosed with brain cancer. At the time, she used her shirts, which were primarily Christian based, to help fundraise for the cause. The activity expanded into a business after Jeremy beat the disease, and Closer Purpose officially opened on Etsy in 2023.

Beth said faith is a very



Submitted photo

Closer Purpose, located at 111 N. Lincoln Blvd., Hodgenville, is now open for business selling men's and women's apparel, décor, gifts and more. The owners and designers are, from left, Titus Williams, Beth Williams, Jeremy Williams and Winston Williams.

important foundation to her family, with both her and her husband having a background in adult and youth ministry. This, along with the pair being entrepreneur-minded and seeing the need for sharing the word, led the business

undertaking. "I couldn't imagine life without Christ and getting through both the little everyday issues and life without Him," she said. "He gives me the strength to push through, and we want to help people point

back to him – the world needs it."

In the beginning, it was just Beth designing clothing for women; however, over time, the operation has become a

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Glendale native is seventh soldier to die in Iran war

BY GREG THOMPSON
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

It was around 11 a.m. Sunday, right after walking out of a church service, when Tom Pitt learned of the death of a former student.

Sgt. Benjamin Pennington, 26, of Glendale, and a 2017 graduate of Central Hardin High School, is the latest casualty in Operation Epic Fury having been killed while serving in Saudi Arabia.

"A lot of times, as a teacher, you have students who are smart, students who are charismatic, who are likable, dare I say, enchanting," said Pitt, instructor in the automotive technology pathway at the Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center. "Rarely do you have students who are all of those."

The Department of War said Pennington died Sunday from injuries sustained March 1 during a retaliatory attack by Iran at the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, where he was stationed.

Despite Pennington being



Sgt. Benjamin Pennington, 26, of Glendale, died Sunday from injuries sustained in Operation Epic Fury while in Saudi Arabia.

a quiet, more reserved student initially, Pitt said he could tell there was something unique about the young man.

The U.S. Army sergeant was a track and cross country runner for the Bruins; he had

earned Eagle Scout status, and he represented EC3 in Skills USA competition. Pitt said he also earned an ASE certification through the program.

"He was basically the Swiss

Army knife of students," Pitt said during a news conference Monday.

Pennington only attended EC3 during his senior year, but everyone knew of his desire to join the Army after graduation.

Pitt was able to keep up with him through social media posts.

"Largely, that just revolved around me seeing a lot of pictures of him hanging out of helicopters and stuff like that."

Teachers and other former students who knew him are still reeling from the news and attempting to make sense of it all.

The Pennington family has declined interview requests since first reports surfaced of his service-related injuries last week.

The Hardin County Schools issued an official statement Monday afternoon expressing grief over the loss.

"Our hearts go out to his beloved family. We grieve

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