

Looking back to March 2, 2019

Written by Mary Ann Kearns

The following information was entered into the March 2, 2019, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Spring brings weather challenges

If area residents hear weather warning sirens sound Wednesday, they should be aware that it is a test.

While snow may be in the forecast, spring weather will arrive soon and with it comes the threat of thunderstorms and tornadoes.

Each spring, Kentucky Emergency Management sponsors a statewide tornado and severe weather siren test, according to Mason County Emergency Manager Tim Nolder. This year's test is set for Wednesday, March 6 at 10:07 a.m., weather permitting, Nolder said.

While tornadoes are most likely to occur in June and July, they can form anytime during the year, according to information from the National Weather Service.

When tornado season begins in full force, it's a good idea to have a plan of action, weather experts said.

If you see a tornado, or hear that the National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Warning for your location:

Know where to go

In a home or a building, move to a pre-designated shelter, preferably the basement or the lowest floor of your home. Don't worry about opening your windows first - that would be a mistake, just get to the basement, and get under a sturdy piece of furniture or workbench. Grab blankets to cover yourself with, which will protect you from flying debris.

If an underground shelter (basement) is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, and crouch down close to the floor. Again, grab extra blankets to protect yourself from flying debris. Stay away from windows - as they can shatter due to flying debris and the force of the wind.

If you are in a mobile home immediately move to a substantial shelter.

If you are caught outdoors and cannot get to a safe building. As a last resort, you should:

— Immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter.

— If your vehicle is hit by flying debris while you are driving, pull over and park.

— Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushion if possible.

— If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands. Your choice of whether to stay in your car should be driven by your specific circumstances. Your best choice remains getting to a secure building with a basement or saferoom.

— If you find yourself outside or in a car with a tornado approaching and you are unable to get to a safe shelter, you remain at risk whether you stay in your car or seek shelter in a depression or ditch, both of which are last resort options that provide little protection. The safest place to be is in an underground shelter, basement or safe room.

The National Weather Service's Wilmington, Ohio, office will conduct Spotter Training Classes on March 7, 6-8 p.m., at Maysville Community and Technical College Crockett Auditorium. To sign up for the free class or for more information contact Mason County Emergency Management at 606-564-2570.

Cities Drive Kentucky license plate hits production, supporting disaster relief for cities statewide

Submitted by the Kentucky League of Cities

LEXINGTON, Ky. — The Kentucky League of Cities' Cities Drive Kentucky specialty license plate entered production on February 27 and is now available for purchase online. The license plates are expected to arrive at local county clerk's offices across the state next month. Proceeds from the Cities Drive Kentucky plate directly support the KLC Cities Helping Cities Fund, a disaster-relief initiative that helps Kentucky cities respond quickly when natural disasters strike. The funds will provide immediate assistance to cities impacted by tornadoes, flooding, hail, severe storms, and other disasters.

Kentucky cities play a critical role in citizens' daily lives — serving as hubs for utilities, public safety, emergency response, and essential services. Most Kentuckians work

in a city, attend school in a city, or rely on city-provided services. When disaster hits, restoring city operations is essential to helping entire communities recover.

"Cities are often the first to respond after a disaster," said KLC President and Beaver Dam Mayor Paul Sandefur. "When utilities, public safety, and city facilities are disrupted, it affects everyone — not just city residents. This license plate is a meaningful way for Kentuckians to support the cities that keep their communities running, especially in moments when help is needed most."

"Cities truly drive Kentucky," added KLC Executive Director/CEO J.D. Chaney. "We are proud to be able to provide this and thank the Department of Transportation for working with us to provide this new approach to disaster recovery."

KLC Insurance data shows an ongoing, rising need for disaster

response. Between 2021 and early 2026, storms, tornadoes, hail, and flooding cost cities tens of millions in damages, with multiple years seeing multi-million-dollar impacts. In 2025 alone, damages exceeded \$22 million.

The Cities Helping Cities Fund will support immediate needs and enable KLC to quickly assist cities with urgent costs following a disaster — helping them stabilize operations, support first responders, and begin recovery efforts without delay.

The Kentucky League of Cities is a nonprofit organization that serves cities across the state, providing advocacy, legal services, training, financing, consulting, and more. KLC Insurance is the largest municipal insurance agency in the state. The League is governed by an executive board composed of elected and appointed city officials from across the state.

Kentucky welcomes 83 new National Board Certified Teachers

Submitted by the Kentucky Department of Education

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky celebrated 83 teachers newly certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) during a ceremony at Kentucky State University on Feb. 23.

This year, 104 educators also opted to renew their certification. The National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) designation is the highest certification that pre-K-12 educators may obtain. Now with 4,584 NBCTs, Kentucky is 9th in the nation for total certified teachers, and 12th in the nation for newly certified teachers this year.

Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher said he is proud of this year's class and the high caliber of knowledge they demonstrate.

"I'm always amazed at how skilled our teachers are and how they constantly strive for excellence," Fletcher said. "Together, we are building an environment where our students receive the highest-quality education from the highest-

quality teachers."

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman congratulated the educators, saying that their care and expertise leave an impact on the next generation.

"The personal relationships we have with students that change their lives, you always carry that with you and it never leaves you," Coleman said.

The NBCT certification is designed to develop and retain accomplished teachers, ultimately improving student learning outcomes. To achieve this certification, educators go through a rigorous, performance-based assessment process that evaluates teaching expertise.

Educators submit a detailed portfolio of student work, filled with examples of what teachers have done outside the classroom to improve student achievement. Teachers submit a reflective piece on student learning and then take a challenging exam to demonstrate they have mastered their certification area.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) supports the Kentucky

NBCT Network, which is a community of NBCTs, candidates and supporters across Kentucky. The network helps provide resources and supports candidates through their journey to attain NBCT status.

Allie Green, education program consultant in KDE's Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, said this year's class showed incredible commitment.

"I'm so proud of all the newly certified and maintained National Board teachers honored today," Green said. "The process is rigorous, but the impact is lasting. Each teacher's commitment, perseverance and mastery helps elevate the teaching profession and greatly improves their school."

NBCTs are entitled to an annual \$2,000 salary bonus for the life of their certificate.

Upon successful completion of National Board certification, Kentucky teachers currently holding a Rank II certificate are eligible to apply for Rank I status, and those currently holding a Rank III certificate are eligible to apply for Rank II.

During the ceremony, the Kentucky NBCT network presented two NBCTs with Network Champion Awards, Caitlin McClure and Brian McDowell. Established in 2021, the Network Champion Award honors two Kentuckians who have demonstrated outstanding support in advancing the mission of sharing accomplished teaching to improve student learning across Kentucky.

McClure is an assistant principal at Marion C.

Moore School (Jefferson County) with more than 17 years of experience in education. She spent most of her career as a high school English language arts teacher at schools in Henry and Jefferson counties.

McClure served as an NBCT professional learning facilitator for her school-based cohort for three years, where she supported teachers through their own journeys to NBCT status. McClure is also pursuing her doctorate at the University of Kentucky in curriculum and instruction with a focus on adolescent literacy.

"Becoming an NBCT solidifies in me the power of reflection and of conducting actionable research in my own classroom and school," McClure said in a statement. "At its heart, that's what the core of NBPTS is, acting, analyzing, reflecting and responding accordingly, and above all the power of knowing your students."

McDowell is a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teacher at Highlands Middle School (Fort Thomas Independent). He has received the Kentucky Science Teachers Association's Middle School Teacher of the Year Award, the National Science Teachers Association's Inquiry Based Teaching Award, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching and has helped his schools win more than \$70,000 in grants.

McDowell has been an NBCT since 2012 and recently started mentoring teachers going through the NBCT process at Fort Thomas Independent Schools.

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the VOICE

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THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

JENNIFER DONAHUE, Publisher
jdonahue@cmpapers.com, ext. 1240
LESLIE BAKER, Sales Manager
lbaker@cmpapers.com, ext. 1119
PEYTON DUNAWAY, Editor
pdunaway@cmpapers.com, ext. 1270
DANIEL MILLER, Sports Editor
dmiller@cmpapers.com, ext. 1273
CHAD SHELTON, Production/IT Manager
cs Shelton@cmpapers.com, ext. 1224
MELODY EVANS, Graphics/Pagination Manager, melodyevans@championcarolinass.com

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