

Looking back to June 29, 2018

Written by Christy Hoots

The following information was entered into the June 29, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Mason 4-H kids in horse competition

Several Mason County 4-H students recently participated in the Kentucky 4-H Horse competition for the first time in several years.

Karen Hopkins, coach for the team, said this year was the first time in seven years that Mason County was represented at the competition.

"We're getting it started up again, so hopefully it will grow," she said.

Hopkins said the competition was held June 7-8. There were 100 students who competed from across the state. The Mason County team included Lily Hopkins, 18, Cora Hopkins, 12, Maryfaith Slusher, 15, Julia Dean, 18, and Brittney Gifford, 17.

"It was held in Lexington, with part of it being held in Frankfort — the horse judging part," she said. "There are three elements. One is horse judging, where you're judging horses both for confirmation and for performance, so the kids had to recognize a superior horse over a less superior horse and the other part is more of a written test, which covers everything, physiology, anatomy, reproduction, genetics and industry. The last part is quiz bowl, where they ask you questions. You're sitting there as a team."

According to Hopkins, the event covers everything students learn in the early years of 4-H.

"This was a state competition, so there were kids from all over the state and our kids did really well," she said.

According to Hopkins, the team won fifth place for the quiz bowl, Cora Hopkins won second place in the junior category for speech as well as 10th place for hippology and Lily Hopkins placed fifth overall, qualifying her to compete in the Southern Regionals Competition, which will be held in Georgia on Aug. 1.

"All of the Southern states compete in that competition," Hopkins said. "She'll be on one of the Kentucky teams. There is also the Eastern Nationals, which is held the first week of November in Louisville. They select the national team from how well the students competed during the state competition and the regionals, so we're still gunning for a seat on the national team."

Hopkins said it means a lot to the kids to participate in the competition.

"It's a chance for the kids to learn and to travel," she said.

The kids said they enjoyed competing, though they were also a little apprehensive.

"I was nervous, but it was fun," Lily Hopkins said. "I'm glad I got to do it before I graduated. A lot of the questions they asked about the horses also corresponded with human anatomy, so it's really helpful in some of my classes, as well."

Karen Hopkins said it was a good stepping stone for some of the kids, who may go into science- or horse-related fields.

"A lot of these kids will go into science-related jobs," she said. "It may not necessarily be horse related, but they'll usually go into some kind of science field, such as nursing, animal health technicians and other fields. They are able to network with universities, so it's quite inspiring."

Dean said she enjoyed competing in the bowl and wished she had been able to do it sooner.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "It was educational and we had a great group. We learned a lot of different stuff. It was fun being up there all together, to stay in the hotel together and to be able to give each other pointers and different ways to memorize something."

Cora Hopkins said she is looking forward to more years of being able to compete.

"This was my first year," she said. "I'm really excited to go back next year, because now that I know how the contest plays out and I know everything I'm supposed to do. It was very exciting."

Karen Hopkins said the event is a good experience for any student, regardless of whether or not they own a horse.

"The good thing about this is that you don't necessarily have to own a horse to compete," she said. "It's open to anyone who has an interest."

"It's one thing to ride a horse and know about that, but it's cool to know how your horse's body works, so you can learn how to care for them," Bean said.

More than 100 Morehead students named to the spring 2026 service list

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

MOREHEAD, Ky. (KT) — More than 100 students were named to Morehead State University's Spring 2026 Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list, recognizing their commitment to serving others through community and civic engagement.

Throughout the semester, students participated in service projects that connected classroom learning with real community needs. Working with schools, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers and community partners, students used the knowledge and skills they gained at MSU to make a difference both on campus and beyond.

Projects included teaching CPR and basic lifesaving skills to fellow students, supporting family literacy nights, mentoring elementary students, helping with educational outreach programs and serving as judges for middle school entrepreneurship competitions. Students also participated in study abroad experiences focused on youth engagement, community development, food insecurity and cultural understanding.

Student reflections showed how these experiences helped them grow both personally and professionally. Nursing students gained confidence in teaching lifesaving skills to others. Future teachers learned how to engage students

and build meaningful relationships with children and families. Business students strengthened their communication and leadership skills while encouraging young entrepreneurs. Across all projects, students often identified teamwork, communication, leadership, problem-solving, and adaptability as important skills they developed through service—competencies that align closely with the Council on Postsecondary Education's Kentucky Graduate Profile.

"What I appreciate most about these reflections is that they show students beginning to see themselves as contributors to their communities," said Andrew Sexton, coordinator of

service learning at MSU. "Regardless of the service project they were involved in, students recognized that their knowledge, talents, and experiences can be used to help others. Those moments of connection often leave a lasting impression and help students better understand both their future careers and their responsibilities as citizens."

To be named to the Presidential Community Engaged Eagles list, students must participate in a qualifying service experience and complete a reflection about what they learned. Reflection helps students connect their experiences to their academic studies, future careers, and responsibilities as active citizens.

Four confirmed dead from Saturday storms and flash flooding, officials say

Mark Maynard
Kentucky Today

Four people are confirmed dead after severe flash flooding engulfed areas of Kentucky on Saturday, according to officials.

Three of the deaths came in hard-hit Madison County, according to Coroner Jimmy Cornelison. The fourth death was reportedly in Jackson County involving a vehicle collision during the strong storm.

Two of the deaths in Madison County were suspected of drowning, according to the Richmond Police Department. They responded to a call regarding flooded homes with individuals trapped inside.

Several residents of flooded homes in the area were located or evacuated, the police said.

However, they could not make contact with anyone in one basement residence that was already underwater. Rescue teams later found a man and woman dead from suspected drowning, the coroner said.

Another victim was extracted from a vehicle trapped in floodwaters on Tates Creek Road near Lexington, the coroner's office said.

Carlos Coyle, the deputy Madison County coroner, said search and rescue teams were going door to door searching for victims in hard-hit areas. Some areas still were not accessible, he said.

The identities of the victims have not been released.

Earlier Saturday, Gov. Andy Beshear issued a state of emergency after widespread flooding across Kentucky. He said more fatalities will likely be reported as another round of rainfall is predicted for Saturday evening.

Ten inches of rain were predicted in some areas as storms pound the state.

Bullitt, Madison, Meade, Mercer and Spencer counties and the city of Richmond all declared state of emergency.

"This is a serious flooding event, where teams have already had to conduct multiple water rescues from vehicles and homes across the commonwealth," Beshear said. "As more heavy rain continues through late tonight, we need folks to remain alert and to avoid driv-

ing, especially after dark where there is limited visibility. We've sadly already received reports of fatalities that we are working to confirm, and we need everyone to stay alert and do what's needed to keep each other safe."

In a social media video, Beshear reported one person who was driving was swept away due to flooding.

"We've been warning about the storms of this morning and then later on this afternoon and evening, but they've turned out much more severe than most would have thought," Beshear said in an emergency update briefing Saturday.

Rain was expected to continue until at least 11 p.m.

Five search-and-rescue teams were deployed to Madison County to help stranded residents, Beshear said. Madison House opened Saturday as an emergency shelter to aid flooding victims in the county.

Twelve state highways have been closed along with multiple county road bridges.

In Bullitt County, the Shepherdsville Fire Department, along with Nichols Fire District, have been performing water rescues since 6:30 a.m. due to flooding. Judge-Executive Jerry Summers declared a state of emergency.

Officials said several roads in the area are unsafe after eight inches of rain fell overnight.

The Bullitt County Emergency Management ordered residents on Cedar Springs Drive off Old Boston Road to leave their homes after a moderate dam collapse at the Rod and Gun Club.

Bullitt County EMA later said the dam was holding with no indication of imminent failure. "A portion of the embankment has experienced a landslide," the agency posted on social media.

"If additional protective actions become necessary, affected residents will be notified immediately," the agency said.

More than 8,000 homes and businesses were reported to be without power across the state Saturday morning.

Showers were expected to break up late Saturday afternoon before another round moves through until around 11 p.m. with more rain possible into midday Sunday.

Areas in central Kentucky are already experiencing flash flood warnings.

In Madison County, the Richmond Police Department reported flooding in the area of Catalpa Loop. Drivers are urged to stay away from standing or rushing water.

McKee Baptist Church in McKee has eight inches of water in the basement and may have lost the church van. The area there is under a flash flood warning.

Million Church on Tates Creek Road in Madison County was knocked off its foundation.

The Madison County area appears to have suffered a lot of damage with the recent downpour. Major intersections in the city are flooded.

The severe weather is the latest in a recent history of tragic flooding in Kentucky, including flash floods in early 2025 when a month of rain engulfed much of the commonwealth in less than 24 hours. The 2022 flooding killed dozens of Kentuckians when unprecedented flooding overwhelmed creeks and took out houses, sweeping some of their foundations.

Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief has its volunteers on alert status as they meet with emergency management to access needs across the state.

Response efforts remain focused on rescue operations and assessing road conditions, said Ron Crow, KYDR director.

"Shelters are being established in some communities, though occupancy remains low. As many of you have seen on social media, there are both challenging situations and incredible stories of neighbors helping neighbors," he said. "Numerous roads remain blocked or washed out, making access difficult in several locations."

Officials are in a wait-and-see posture while addressing immediate needs. Once conditions stabilize and life-safety concerns are resolved, formal damage assessments will begin, Crow said.

Meanwhile, KYDR is sending two chainsaw teams and a small flood recovery team (26 volunteers) to Valparaiso, Ind., on Sunday to assist with storm recovery efforts from last week.

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