

2025, Year in Review part 2...

July 1, 2025

Heated discussion precedes city budget approval. Vanceburg City Council approved the 2025–26 fiscal year budget during a brief but heated special meeting where concerns about transparency and compliance with state budget laws sparked spirited debate among members. Fun, music, and fireworks for July Jubilee. Downtown Vanceburg will come alive with patriotic spirit this weekend as the city hosts its annual July Jubilee on Friday and Saturday. New fiscal year, new state laws. A wave of new Kentucky laws is now in effect, following the close of the 2025 legislative session. Most of the new measures went into effect Friday, June 27, while others are taking effect today, July 1. ATVs now permitted on roadways. Lewis County’s new ordinance allowing properly registered and inspected street-legal off-road vehicles on county roads is now underway, with registration having begun June 27 and the ordinance officially going into effect today, July 1.

July 8, 2025

New law regulates communications with students. A new Kentucky law that took effect July 1 is changing the way school employees and volunteers are allowed to communicate electronically with students. Lions Fair set for July 18–26. The 68th Annual Tollesboro Lions Club Fair is set to return July 18 through July 26 with a full week of entertainment, competitions, and community fun. The event takes place at the Tollesboro Lions Club Fairgrounds and promises something for everyone—from demolition derbies and pageants to tractor pulls and baby shows. Vanceburg’s spectacular Independence Day fireworks display provides a patriotic backdrop to the gazebo at Veterans Memorial Park. Great weather played a part in the festivities which featured events from fishing to fireworks for the annual July Jubilee. More measles cases reported. Kentucky public health officials have announced that four new cases of measles have been reported in the state. Three cases involve members of the same household in Woodford County, while the fourth case, involving someone known to have been exposed to measles while traveling internationally, is in Todd County and unrelated to the other three cases. HERALD office moves to Lions Lane. After many years of serving the community from our longtime home at 187 Main Street, THE LEWIS COUNTY HERALD has officially relocated. Our new office is now open at 336 Lions Lane in Vanceburg, directly across from Lewis County Middle School. The move marks a new chapter for THE HERALD, which has proudly



served the people of Lewis County for more than a century. While our location has changed, our mission remains the same: delivering trusted local news and community information with the same dedication and hometown spirit. Brenda O’Cull, with Peoples Bank of Kentucky, presents a contribution for Lewis County EMS to Judge Executive George Sparks. The county ambulance service is celebrating its first year of operation.

July 15, 2025

Inductees to Athletic Hall of Fame named. Six inductees headline the fifth class of the Lewis County Schools High School Athletic Hall of Fame, which will be honored between games of basketball doubleheader during the 2025–26

season. Those named to the Hall of Fame were announced during a special edition of the Saturday Morning Sports Show on WKKS. Inductees include: Savannah Anderson, Chad Dyer, James Matthewson, Kenny Ruckel, Bob Wright and the 1942 Vanceburg High School baseball team. Sparks announces re-election bid. I, George Sparks, am announcing my intention to seek re-election for a second term as your Lewis County Judge Executive. I’m even more excited about the future of our county today than I was during my campaign in 2022. As I say every day, I believe Lewis County has a bright future—and my time in office has only strengthened that belief. Grabill raises budget concerns at meeting. Vanceburg City Councilman John Grabill said during the regular July meeting that at least \$547,000 was spent without council approval during the 2024–25 fiscal year. Council gave first reading to an ordinance amending last year’s budget at Monday’s meeting and could pass it on Aug. 4. Seconds after assistant city attorney Erin Hall read the ordinance, Grabill said there were discrepancies in 33 line items totaling \$547,000. Grabill did not provide the specific line item details and the alleged overspending because he didn’t think council would propose an ordinance. He said he would bring the report and his findings on Aug. 4. Plant Board addresses rates, comp time. The Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg approved two significant measures during its regular monthly meeting last week—an increase in electric rates for all customers and a change in the policy governing compensatory time for employees. Superintendent Bill Tom Stone informed the board that, despite hopes for cost savings after switching electric providers, rising capacity auction prices have forced the utility to adjust rates upward to cover expenses.



In a real-life nod to Winnie the Pooh, a black bear was caught helping itself to some “hunny” at Michael Hershberger’s farm on Trace Road. The bear visited the apiary in search of a sweet snack, leaving behind some broken hives and a sticky situation.

July 22, 2025

Road construction mishap knocks-out utilities. A construction-related inci-

dent on the AA Highway last week knocked out power and communications for a significant portion of Lewis County, while also forcing a highway closure that lasted into the early morning hours the next day. The incident occurred around 4:21 p.m. last Monday near the KY 989 intersection at Salt Lick when a dump truck operated by Rame Contracting, working on an active highway improvement project, traveled with its dump bed raised to spread gravel. The raised bed became entangled in overhead utility lines belonging to Spectrum and Windstream, causing severe damage to infrastructure on both sides of the road. Lions Club Fair runs through Sat-

urday. The 68th Annual Tollesboro Lions Fair enters its final week with a full lineup of contests, livestock shows, pageants, and grandstand entertainment continuing each evening through Saturday, July 26. Fiscal Court moves forward on projects. Lewis County Fiscal Court met in regular session last week with Judge Executive George Sparks presiding. Magistrates Johnny Osborne, Joey McCann, Woody Underwood, and Mark Horsley were present for the meeting, which included discussion and action on several new business items and the presentation of monthly and quarterly reports. Black bear sightings increasing. A string of black bear sightings—and two recent collisions—have drawn attention across Lewis County, highlighting both the return of native wildlife and the importance of public awareness. The first widely reported sign of increased bear visits came July 10, when a black bear was struck and killed by a vehicle on the AA Highway near Lions Lane at Vanceburg. Days later a bear was seen at Michael Hershberger’s farm along Trace Road, where it visited an apiary in search of honey. Then, on July 17, another bear (or possibly the same one) was spotted again—this time making its way through parts of Vanceburg, including the area near the local utility company, Scott Park, and Veterans Memorial Park. Witnesses reported seeing the animal swim across the Ohio River shortly after. But the activity didn’t stop there. On July 18, another bear—or possibly the same one—was struck and killed on the AA Highway, this time just east of the Ronald Reagan Memorial Parkway at Black Oak.

July 29, 2025

Board of Ed reviews staff changes, updates policies. The Lewis County Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting last week at the board office, addressing a wide range of person-

ally to an area with ongoing measles transmissions,” according to Louisville’s health department. Beware of traffic fine text scams. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KY TC) is alerting residents to a continuing text message scam impersonating a state agency and falsely claiming recipients owe traffic fines. The fraudulent texts contain threatening language and a link that mimics official state web addresses—part of a growing trend of mobile-based phishing aimed at stealing personal and financial information.

August 5, 2025

Federal food assistance changes could hit hard. Nearly 600,000 Kentuckians got help buying food through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in June, according to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. But the program, better known as SNAP, faces an uncertain future after Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, a sweeping and contro-

gency Managers (IAEM-USA).

August 12, 2025

Council approves contribution to dispatch center. Vanceburg City Council met in regular session last week with members approving a contribution to the Lewis County E911 Dispatch Center totaling \$22,500 over the next 12 months. Emergency Management Director Dennis Brown had made a request for funding assistance totaling \$48,000 during the July meeting. Looming Medicaid cuts proposed for hospitals. President Trump’s “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” makes drastic changes to how Kentucky’s hospitals are paid and could result in cuts to services or even closure for some, according to health officials. The new law is expected to cut \$911 billion from Medicaid over the next 10 years. In Kentucky, those cuts will amount to \$38 billion in federal cuts to the Medicaid program over 10 years, according to the liberal-leaning Kentucky Center for Economic Policy.

nearby location at milepoint 10.1 will remained closed until 9:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 20.

August 19, 2025

Buses ready to roll for new school year. August brings back that time of the year where everyone from parents and students to all the school personnel are gearing up for a new school year. Lewis County Schools will return to classes on August 26th. School buses will be on the roadways soon transporting children to and from school. Plant Board to apply for grant. The Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg will be applying for funding through the Kentucky Water and Wastewater Assistance for Troubled or Economically Restrained Systems (KY WWATERS) Program, following action taken at the board’s regular meeting last week. Superintendent Bill Tom Stone said the application must be submitted by August 30. Vanceburg City Council has already passed a resolution in support of the



Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Lewis County Schools Superintendent Jeff Aulick is ready to kick-off the new school year. Aulick began his duties July 1 and is retired as superintendent with Bracken County Schools.

versial tax and spending package. Kidney donors sought for family. A mother and her two adult children are in urgent need of kidney donors, a result of Alport Syndrome, a rare genetic condition that causes progressive kidney failure, hearing loss, and eye abnormalities. Amanda Liles, her

‘Other’ dominates new registrations. Secretary of State Michael Adams announced that Kentuckians registering under “Other” political affiliations have led new voter registration for the fifth month in a row, with net new Others outpacing net new Republicans by a nearly 3-to-1 margin, as Democrats continue to hemorrhage voters. “We see more and more Kentuckians bucking the two-party system,” said Adams. “This dynamic could make for an interesting 2026 election.” KY 344 road closure. In a project that got underway Monday, highway crews have temporarily closed KY 344 at milepoint 9.9 between Silver Lick Hollow and Black Lick Branch to replace a culvert underneath the highway. Traffic should detour using KY 57, KY 9, or KY 59. The road will remain closed until Wednesday, August 13 at 8:00 p.m. A closure to replace a second culvert next week will begin at 8:00 a.m. Monday, August 18, on KY 344 between Silver Lick Hollow and Black Lick Branch. The

project. Magistrates give OK to tourism agreement. Lewis County Fiscal Court members, meeting in regular session last week, approved an interlocal agreement with Greenup County Tourism aimed at strengthening the region’s ability to compete for state tourism dollars and grants. Greenup County Judge Executive Bobby Hall and Tourism Director Jaime Bloss outlined the concept at the court’s June meeting, noting that tourism in the area doesn’t always fit the traditional mold but is growing steadily. Clara Kamer Day proclaimed. Lewis County Judge Executive George Sparks proclaimed Monday, August 18, as Clara R. Kamer Day in recognition of her 90th birthday and a lifetime of service to her community.

August 26, 2025

New superintendent ready for new school year. Lewis County’s new School Superintendent Jeff Aulick is excited to get the new year underway. Aulick, who officially began his duties on July 1, said administrators, teachers, and all school

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