

The Lewis County Herald celebrates National Newspaper Week

Herald Staff Report

This week marks the 86th observance of National Newspaper Week, an annual recognition of the role newspapers and their employees play in communities across the United States and Canada.

Observed October 4-10, National Newspaper Week has been sponsored and supported by Newspaper Association Managers since 1940. This year's theme, "Rooted in Community, Committed to Truth," speaks directly to the work community newspapers have performed for generations.

For more than a century, *The Lewis County Herald* has been rooted in Lewis County.

Founded in 1924, *The Herald* has documented the everyday history of the county through wars and floods, elections and emergencies, celebrations and tragedies.

Its pages have recorded meetings of fiscal court, city councils and school boards; elections and public issues; high school sports; births, marriages and deaths; new businesses and industries; the accomplishments of local residents; and countless other events that collectively tell the story of Lewis County.

That role is reflected particularly well in this year's National Newspaper Week theme.

The national campaign notes that the way newspapers deliver news has changed considerably, but the reason they do the work has not. Local newspapers continue to inform their communities, hold government accountable, verify information and tell stories that otherwise might never be recorded.

Those responsibilities have become even more important in an era when information can travel around the world almost instantly through social media.

Speed, however, is not the same thing as accuracy.

A Facebook post can tell thousands of people within minutes that something supposedly happened. A community newspaper has a different responsibility: determine what actually happened, talk with the people involved, check the facts, provide context and put an accurate account into the public record.

That distinction is particularly important at the local level.

No national news organization is routinely sitting through a Lewis County Fiscal Court meeting. It isn't covering Vanceburg City Council, following decisions of the Board of Education, documenting the accomplishments of local students and athletes, reporting on the response to a local emergency, or recording the lives of

Lewis Countians who have died.

Those are local stories, and telling them requires local journalists.

A newspaper tradition stretching back generations

While *The Lewis County Herald* name dates to 1924, the newspaper did not simply begin from scratch that year.

The Herald is the successor to *Vanceburg's Sun*. In 1924, a group of local businesspeople formed a corporation that acquired the assets of *The Sun* and continued publication under the *Lewis County Herald* name.

For many years, the newspaper made that continuity clear on its front page, carrying the words "Successor To The Sun" beneath *The Lewis County Herald* name. The newspaper's roots may extend considerably farther back. Historic *Herald* mastheads traced the publication's lineage to 1872, and surviving newspaper directories confirm that newspapers were being published in Vanceburg during that period. Among them was *The Vanceburg Kentuckian*, which was being published here in the early 1870s.

Exactly how all of those early publications were connected is more difficult to establish today.

Much of the documentary record of Vanceburg's early newspaper history was lost during the catastrophic Ohio River Flood of 1937. Floodwaters reached the second stories of downtown Vanceburg businesses, including the area where generations of community records were stored.

Bound newspaper volumes and other materials damaged by floodwater were discarded. At the time, they were ruined books and business records in the aftermath of a devastating flood. Today, they would be irreplaceable historical documents.

What survives provides tantalizing pieces of that history.

The Lewis County Herald has published under its present name since 1924. Its own masthead for many years identified it as the successor to *The Sun* and traced its newspaper lineage to 1872. The surviving documents the organization created when local businesspeople came together to acquire *The Sun*'s assets and keep a newspaper serving the community.

The precise history behind every link in that chain may have been among the things the 1937 flood carried away.

That loss also illustrates one of the less obvious roles of a community newspaper.

Week after week, newspapers record what is happening while it is still considered simply news: who was elected, what government de-

cided, who graduated, who married, who served in the military, who opened a business, who died, how a community responded to disaster, and what its people considered important.

With the passage of time, those ordinary newspaper pages become something else.

They become history. That is why preserving a community newspaper matters not only to the people reading it today, but also to generations who may someday want to know what life in Lewis County was like before they were here.

A statewide connection

Publisher and Editor Dennis Brown has been associated with *The Herald* since 1987 and continues to represent Lewis County in Kentucky journalism.

Brown served as president of the Kentucky Press Association in 2025 and now serves as the organization's immediate past president. He remains a member of KPA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors. KPA's current leadership roster lists Mike Scogin as president and Brown as past president.

Founded in Frankfort in 1869, KPA is the nation's oldest statewide press association.

Brown is the only Lewis County resident to have served on the KPA Board of Directors or as president of the statewide organization.

His year as president also coincided with a significant transition for KPA. Longtime Executive Director David Thompson retired after more than four decades leading the association, and Brown and the Executive Committee conducted the search that resulted in the selection of new Executive Director Tim Timmons.

KPA's work includes advocating for Kentucky newspapers and for principles essential to their ability to serve their communities, including open government, access to public records and meetings, public notices, and the public's right to know.

Those statewide issues eventually become local issues because government transparency matters just as much in Lewis County as it does in Frankfort.

Rooted here

Perhaps the most important word in this year's National Newspaper Week theme is "community."

A community newspaper isn't simply a smaller version of a metropolitan newspaper.

Its reporters know the roads, schools, neighborhoods, families, institutions and history behind the names appearing in its stories. Readers encounter people they know in its pages. A govern-

ment decision isn't an abstraction when it affects the road they drive, the taxes they pay, the school their children attend or the emergency services they depend upon.

That connection carries a responsibility.

Being "committed to truth" means striving to get the facts right, correcting mistakes when they occur, distinguishing fact from rumor, asking questions of public officials and providing readers with enough information to reach their own conclusions.

It also means showing up.

Someone has to attend the meeting. Someone has to ask the question. Someone has to photograph the event. Someone has to call the official, check the number, read the document and write the story.

Technology can help journalists do those things more efficiently, and the ways readers receive news will undoubtedly continue to change.

But technology cannot replace the fundamental responsibility of having someone paying attention to what is happening in the community.

Still telling Lewis County's story

As *The Lewis County Herald* moves through its 102nd



year, much has changed since its first presses ran in 1924.

How the newspaper is produced has changed. How photographs are made has changed. How stories reach readers has changed. News that once existed only in ink on paper can now reach readers electronically within moments.

What has not changed is the reason *The Herald* exists.

It is here to tell Lewis County's story.

National Newspaper Week is an opportunity to recognize not only the people who produce community newspapers,

but the readers, subscribers, advertisers, news sources and community members who make that work possible.

The official National Newspaper Week message for 2026 puts the challenge succinctly: platforms and technology will continue to change, but communities will continue to need trusted local journalism.

For *The Lewis County Herald*, that means remaining what it has been for more than a century:

Rooted in Lewis County and committed to telling its story accurately, fairly and completely.

PROCESS

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related development in a community.

Local elected officials were among those attending. Vanceburg Mayor Joe Billman, Lewis County Judge Executive George Sparks, magistrates, Vanceburg City Council members and other local officials were observed visiting stations and asking questions of presenters.

Their attendance came as the county and its incorporated cities continue through the state's Nuclear Energy Ready Community certification process.

FAIR

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iting what the action means.

It states that supporting the certification application is not approval or disapproval of any particular nuclear project, facility, developer, technology or site. It also does not represent approval of an incentive or public funding commitment, zoning action, land-use decision, permit or other project-specific action.

Any future nuclear project would remain subject to the separate public review, regulatory and approval processes required by law.

That distinction has been emphasized throughout the Nuclear Energy Ready Community process.

Lewis County currently has no active nuclear energy project.

No nuclear plant has

Organizers have repeatedly emphasized that Lewis County does not have an active nuclear project.

The certification process does not approve construction of a nuclear power plant, select a site, company or reactor technology, or commit local public funding to a nuclear project. Instead, the process is intended to provide education, encourage public engagement and help communities evaluate nuclear-energy-related economic development opportunities should one

arise in the future.

The education fair followed an earlier public seminar at Lewis County High School that provided an overview of nuclear energy and the state's Nuclear Energy Ready Community initiative. Saturday's format provided residents a different opportunity to explore individual subjects and ask questions one-on-one.

For more information, follow the QR code or visit <https://caer.uky.edu/kneda>.



TAXES

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bill breaks down for 2026:

Lewis County Board of Education (School): 51.0¢ → \$316.20

Commonwealth of Kentucky (State): 10.3¢ → \$63.86

Lewis County Real Estate: 13.1¢ → \$81.22

Library District: 8.2¢ → \$50.84

Cooperative Extension: 6.3¢ → \$39.06

Fire District: 10.0¢ → \$62.00

Ambulance Service District: 10.0¢ → \$62.00

Health Department: 6.5¢ → \$40.30

Total: \$715.48

That's an effective tax rate of \$11.54 per \$1,000 of value in 2026, compared to \$11.59 per \$1,000 in 2025, a decrease of five cents per \$1,000.

Vanceburg property owners will be assessed separately for property owned inside the city limits. The 2026 rate is 13.0 cents per \$100 valuation, unchanged from the previous several years.

Property owners having 10 or more acres of timberland will also be assessed 3.0 cents per acre for fire protection, un-

changed from 2025.

In Kentucky, homeowners who are at least 65 years of age or who have been classified as totally disabled and meet other requirements are eligible to receive a homestead exemption, as defined in Kentucky's Constitution.

The value of the homestead exemption for the 2025-26 assessment years is \$49,100. This amount is deducted from the assessed value of the applicant's home and property taxes are computed based upon the remaining assessment. The exemption amount is recalculated every two years to account for inflation.

For example, if the applicant's residence is assessed at a value of \$62,000, property taxes would be computed on \$12,900 (\$62,000 - \$49,100). Based on the 2026 rates, the bill would be about \$148.87.

House Bill 262 transfers the responsibility of advertising and selling delinquent property tax bills from the Lewis County Sheriff to the Lewis County Clerk.

Delinquent tax bills will

be transferred to the Lewis County Clerk at the close of business on April 15, 2027.

In addition to the penalties and fees that are applied by the sheriff's office, payments made in the county clerk's office are also subject to penalties and fees.

The delinquent tax bills are subject to being sold to a third party in the summer of 2027.

Tax bills were mailed to property owners on October 1.

As is usually the case, early birds in paying their tax bills will receive a discount while procrastinators will be penalized.

A discount of two percent will be given if the tax is paid by November 1.

The face value of the bill is due between November 1 and December 31.

Taxes paid in January 2027 will be assessed a five percent penalty and those who pay after January 31, 2027, will be penalized 21 percent.

If you do not receive a tax bill by October 15, contact the Lewis County Sheriff's Office at 606-796-2912.

ROUGH RIDERS

SADDLE CLUB

JIM EVERMAN HORSE PARK

A Fun Day for the Whole Family!

FREE ADMISSION ★ FREE LUNCH ★ FREE JUMPY ★ FREE VENDOR SET UP

COMMUNITY DAY HORSE SHOW

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2026

JIM EVERMAN HORSE PARK

214 GARRISON LANE · GARRISON, KY

GATES OPEN AT 11:00 A.M.

SHOW STARTS AT 2:00 P.M.

LUNCH STARTS AT 12:00 P.M.

- ★ HORSE SHOW CLASSES
- ★ DOOR PRIZES
- ★ JOURNEY'S JUMPY FOR KIDS
- ★ FOOD (HOTDOGS, HAMBURGERS, CHILI & DRINKS)
- ★ VENDORS