

Week in review

THESE SUMMARIES OF FULL STORIES WERE DRAFTED BY AI AND EDITED BY OUR JOURNALISTS

Our best-read local news stories



TASHA POULLARD tpoppard@herald-leader.com

Attorney Anna Whites, sitting next to her client, Rep. Daniel Grossberg, D-Louisville, prior to his scheduled public hearing at the Capitol Annex on Feb. 2, 2026, in Frankfort, Ky.

Kentucky lawmaker settles ethics case

Kentucky Rep. Daniel Grossberg reached a settlement with the Legislative Ethics Commission, accepting a public reprimand and two \$1,000 fines just before a scheduled hearing. Three women who say Grossberg sexually harassed them had gathered to testify but were not called due to the settle-

ment. The women expressed frustration after the hearing, with one stating the settlement provided "no justice." Grossberg, a Louisville Democrat, wrongly claimed he was "fully cleared" of allegations.

Reported by Austin Horn, Alex Acquisto, published Feb. 2

FCPS loses \$223,000 daily on virtual snow days

Fayette County Public Schools loses approximately \$223,000 per day when using non-traditional instruction days due to impacts on the nutrition budget from lost school meal revenue, Superintendent Demetrus Liggins told the school board. As of Feb. 3, the district had canceled in-

person classes for seven consecutive days following Winter Storm Fern. While the district saves \$9,000 daily on diesel when buses aren't running, traditional snow days allow the nutrition budget losses to be recouped when those days are made up later in the school year. Kentucky allows districts 10 NTI days per academic year, though FCPS initially planned to use only four as part of budget adjustments. Liggins will pre-

sent funding considerations at the Feb. 9 planning session.

Reported by Valarie Honeycutt Spears, published Feb. 3

Lawmaker seeks removal of school board chair

Kentucky Rep. Matt Lockett has filed a petition seeking to remove Fayette County school board chair Tyler Murphy from office, alleging Murphy

failed to provide adequate oversight of district finances in violation of state law. Both Republicans and Democrats in the General Assembly have criticized Fayette County School officials for their handling of budget problems. In a Facebook post, Lockett cited concerns about financial mismanagement, failure to provide appropriate oversight in fiscal matters, and failure to follow public notice laws prior to increasing taxes. Murphy said the petition lacks merit "and is sadly the latest of recent politically motivated attacks."

Reported by Valarie Honeycutt Spears, published Jan. 30

Former journalist appointed to Lexington council

Mayor Linda Gorton appointed former Herald-Leader columnist and managing editor Tom Eblen to fill the vacant 3rd District seat on the Lexington-Fayette County Urban County Council. Eblen will serve the downtown and campus-area district through December but will not appear on this year's ballot. The appointment follows the resignation of Hannah LeGris, who stepped down in January to take a job within city government. Eblen served as managing editor from 1998 to 2008 and as metro/state columnist from 2008 to 2019. He resigned from the Fayette Alliance board to avoid conflicts of interest.

Griffin VanMeter and Jon Larson will compete for the seat in November's general election.

Reported by Adrian Paul Bryant, published Feb. 3

Kentucky bourbon distillery sold to Pennsylvania firm

Casey Jones Distillery in Hopkinsville has been sold to B3 Beverage Company, a newly created

Pennsylvania-based firm that has been acquiring breweries and distilleries across the Northeast. Founded in 2014 by Arlon Casey "AJ" Jones and his wife Peg Hays, the distillery produces small-batch bourbon and moonshine. The sale closed on Jan. 30, with the founders retiring after completing a \$2 million expansion in 2022. Jones described the transaction as positive for employees and the community, noting the distillery is a major tourism draw in the county. The acquisition comes amid economic challenges in Kentucky's bourbon industry, with some distilleries entering bankruptcy while others continue expanding.

Reported by Janet Patton, published Feb. 2

Lexington man accused in wife's stabbing death

A Lexington man is facing murder charges after allegedly stabbing his wife 19 times following an argument while their 2-year-old child was in the home, authorities say. Roberto Buffill-Paredes, 43, is accused of killing 29-year-old Aniseley Lantaron on Jan. 15 at their Larkin Road residence. According to police, Buffill-Paredes called authorities and confessed to the killing. A coworker who requested a welfare check reported hearing the child crying inside the home. When officers arrived at 10:45 a.m., they found Lantaron's body wrapped in a taped blanket. Police say Buffill-Paredes told them he wrapped his wife's body so their daughter would not see, then cleaned the scene. He later claimed his wife confronted him with two knives. Buffill-Paredes has been charged with murder, abuse of a corpse, and tampering with physical evidence. A district judge sent the case to a grand jury and set bond at \$1 million.

Reported by Taylor Six, published Feb. 2



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Our best-read U.S. & World stories

Trump announces two-year Kennedy Center closure

President Donald Trump announced plans to close the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for approximately two years beginning July 4 to conduct renovations. The decision follows significant backlash after Trump became board chair and renamed the facility the Trump Kennedy Center without congressional approval. Multiple prominent artists have canceled performances, ticket sales have declined, and the Washington National Opera relocated to George Washington University. Trump stated the closure would produce faster and higher quality results than partial renovations during operations. The center, which opened in 1971 as a memorial to President Kennedy, has served as a key cultural landmark hosting the National Symphony Orchestra and annual Kennedy Center Honors.

Reported by Bloomberg News/TCA, published Feb. 2



The Justice Department completed its final upload of Jeffrey Epstein files on Friday, raising the total made publicly available to 3.5 million pages.

Justice Department releases final Epstein files

The Department of Justice published 3 million additional pages of files from the Jeffrey Epstein case on Jan. 30, bringing the total to 3.5 million pages to comply with the Epstein Files Transparency Act of 2025. The final upload includes 2,000 videos and 180,000 images, according to Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche. More than 500 attorneys reviewed the files to ensure proper redaction

protecting Epstein's victims and blocking child abuse information. Only members of Congress can view unredacted files. The files were collected from Florida and New York cases against Epstein, the case against Ghislaine Maxwell, investigations into Epstein's death, and multiple FBI investigations.

Reported by UPI, published Jan. 30

Israeli strikes kill 17 Palestinians in Gaza

Hospitals in Gaza reported at least 17 people, including six children, were killed by Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire on Feb. 4. Israel said it carried out precision strikes in response to what it called a cease-fire violation after militants opened fire in the north, seriously injuring a soldier. Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City received 13 bodies, including five children, while Nasser hospital in Khan Younis received four bodies following strikes on displaced persons' encampments. The Gaza Health Ministry reports at least 529 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes in the four months since a cease-fire came into force in October.

Reported by UPI, published Feb. 4

US shutdown ends but immigration talks continue

President Donald Trump signed a \$1.2 trillion spending package on Feb. 3, ending a four-day partial government shutdown. The House passed the measure 217-214 with bipartisan support after Republicans struggled to unify over voter ID legislation demands. The package funds most federal agencies through September but excludes Homeland Security, which faces a Feb. 13 deadline amid ongoing immigration policy disputes. Conservative

lawmakers initially threatened to derail the vote, pushing for the SAVE Act requiring citizenship proof and photo ID for voting. Trump met with dissenting Republicans at the White House to secure their support. Lawmakers remain skeptical about reaching a bipartisan immigration deal by the upcoming deadline.

Reported by CQ-Roll Call/TCA, published Feb. 3

Border czar announces Minnesota federal agent drawdown

Border Czar Tom Homan announced that approximately 700 federal agents will leave Minnesota effective immediately, reducing the federal presence by about 25% while leaving roughly 2,000 agents in the state. Homan cited what he described as unprecedented cooperation between local officials and Immigration and Customs Enforcement as the reason for the reduction. County law enforcement officials have been allowing ICE to take custody of undocumented immigrants directly from jails, which Homan said allows fewer agents to operate in controlled environments rather than conducting street operations. ICE and Border Patrol agents have been in Minnesota since December during Operation Metro Surge, which has faced active protests.

Reported by UPI, published Feb. 4

Judge rules out death penalty for Luigi Mangione

A federal judge ruled Jan. 30 that Luigi Mangione will not face the death penalty in connection with the shooting death of United-Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson in December 2024. Judge Margaret Garnett removed two stalking charges, one of which carried a death sentence, after defense attorneys argued that stalking "fails to qualify as a crime of violence." Garnett also ruled that evidence from Mangione's backpack, found when he was arrested at a Pennsylvania McDonald's, would be allowed at trial, despite defense arguments that it was searched without a warrant. The 27-year-old faces both federal and state murder charges, though New York does not have the death penalty. Jury selection is scheduled to begin Sept. 8, with opening statements set for Oct. 13.

Reported by UPI, published Jan. 30

These roundups were produced using AI tools, which summarized stories reported and written by McClatchy and partner journalists. It was edited by journalists in our News division.