

Lake Barkley tourism prepares for first ‘Beast Fest’

Event aims to increased area tourism year-round

BY ALEXA BLACK
FOR THE MESSENGER

With Lake Barkley tourism’s ongoing initiative to keep the entertainment going year-round in the lake area, director Jody Norwood said that the Lake Barkley Beast Fest is expected to do exactly that.

This year’s Beast Fest will take place on Nov. 13-14 at the Lyon County Convention Center in Eddyville, according to the event’s website.

Norwood said many out-of-area visitors visit Lake Barkley during the summer months, mainly to visit the lake or attend a popular event. Most of the local businesses also mainly operate during the summer months as well. With this in mind, hosting a cryptid event was something the Lake Barkley Tourism Commission felt would entice many visitors locally and all across Kentucky, since many cryptozoologists already investigate Land Between the Lakes.

“Land Between the Lakes has been featured in dozens of documentaries and books for both Bigfoot and Dogman activity,” Norwood said. “Just like Lake Barkley

is a destination for boating and fishing enthusiasts, LBL is at the top of the list for cryptid investigators. We’re embracing that interest. With a portion of Lyon County in LBL, we have a tie-in that a lot of similar events don’t have.”

Norwood attended similar events in 2025 to see if hosting a cryptid-related event in Lyon County could be beneficial to the community and potentially become a popular event. Norwood said he was surprised at how engaging many of the speakers were and even watched a presentation by David Wickman, who is a physical therapist in Ohio, at the Park City event in 2025.

Much of Wickman’s research concerns studying the walking gait in footprint castings.

“Our plan is to not only repeat the event next year, but also to keep it growing,” Norwood told the Herald Ledger. “It’s difficult to gauge the success of any event in its first year. We’ve been very fortunate to have several nationally known speakers willing to take part in a startup. Hopefully that



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will translate into a positive event for our vendors and local businesses. I have seen most of our speakers in person and, even if you aren’t a believer, they provide interesting and engaging topics.”

There is much potential for growth simply due to the proximity to LBL and the ideal lake-side access in Lyon County, Norwood said.

Each year, thousands of visitors arrive to hike and explore the national recreation area in search of signs of Bigfoot, Dogman, or other cryptids.

Being a day trip away from other frequented

investigation sites in Ohio and Tennessee, the Beast Fest seemed appropriate to host, Norwood said.

Another plan is to incorporate Lyon County’s own businesses into the event as much as possible.

Allison Choate, a board member of the commission and affiliated with The Joint restaurant, is developing a special menu item to showcase during Beast Fest. A number of other locally owned businesses, including The Shire Bookstore and Bee Ready, intend to host vendor booths.

Norwood and the board aim to bring in a variety of sellers offering goods that residents in the area might not usually encounter.

“Cryptids in Kentucky have a history dating back decades,” Norwood said. “There are writings by Daniel Boone where the explorer describes sighting a 10-foot tall creature covered in hair. Every year there are reported sightings of Bigfoot or the Dogman. And, there is a story of a family being attacked in LBL in the 1980’s that has been heavily featured in a number of documentaries.”

Even before Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

were impounded, Norwood said that western Kentucky had thousands of acres of wilderness, making it a place with a variety of superstitions and lore. Whether a potential guest believes in cryptids or not, Norwood said it is important to have a mix of small and large entertainment for visitors.

Currently, there are thousands of visitors coming in monthly, though it takes months to plan something such as Beast Fest, he said.

Norwood notes that the event will have a “fantastic lineup.”

Charlie Raymond of the Kentucky Bigfoot Research Organization has appeared on Animal Planet, The History Channel and the BBC for his work. He’s a captivating speaker who has given presentations nationwide.

David Wickham offers a different perspective from many investigators. Having organized similar events, he has been very helpful to the board by sharing his insights and recommendations. He’ll also be making castings so children can take home their own Bigfoot impressions.

Amy Bue, from Ohio, co-founded Project Zoo-book, which consolidates information from

Bigfoot researchers, zookeepers, primatologists, law enforcement, forestry personnel and scientists.

Martin Groves, a retired law enforcement officer, shares his eyewitness experiences from working in the region. He is considered a crowd favorite, thanks to his engaging storytelling, professional perspective and warm personality.

Steve Kulls will travel from New York to share insights from nearly 30 years of Bigfoot research. His experience as a private investigator shapes the systematic way he approaches cryptozoology.

Michael Kain, an Ohio-based speaker, manages 750 acres of wilderness where he tracks and records natural trails on his land and neighboring properties.

Local participants include Billy Winsett and Mark Roberts of Night Vision Paranormal in Marshall County; they will lead a guided hike in LBL on Nov. 13. The duo regularly explores the region and organizes tours and events.

Also joining from western Kentucky is Mike Smith, a local teacher and coach who co-founded the Pathfinders group.

Cleaver charged with murder, faces civil action

BY ZOE LEWIS, ETHAN PATTERSON
FOR THE MESSENGER

Russell Cleaver — a Calloway County man who allegedly shot his separated wife — has now been charged with murder and faces civil action from his separated wife’s estate.

MURDER CHARGE

A grand jury ruled that Cleaver should be charged with murder last Friday after he allegedly shot his wife, Brittany Overby, in the chest on Aug. 17. Overby and Cleaver were separated and in the process of divorcing.

According to a uniform citation regarding the Aug. 17 incident, Murray Police Department officers responded to the scene at 1627 Sunset Drive after Overby reported that her husband had shot her.

When MPD arrived, Overby was found sitting on the floor of the house with a gunshot wound to the chest. She told the responding officers that Cleaver had shot her after entering the house to retrieve her belongings. When investigators arrived, she was unconscious.

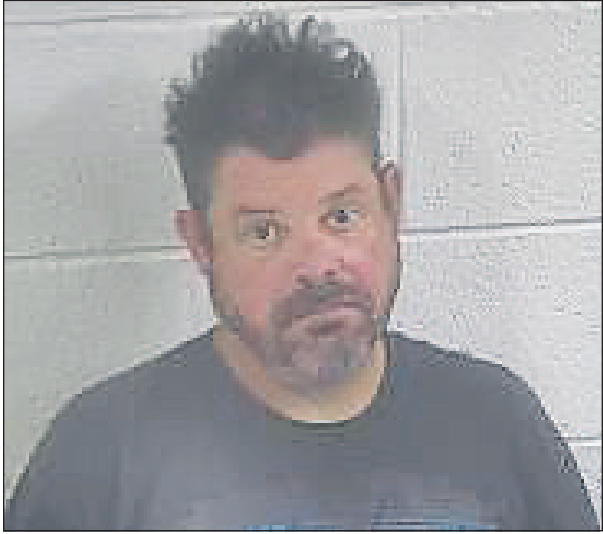
She was transported to a local hospital and was later airlifted to another hospital.

Cleaver was in the residence’s front yard when officers arrived. He surrendered, was detained, and brought to the police department for an interview.

When he was being interviewed, the uniform citation reports Cleaver refused to provide his address or phone information, and he later said that he “did something bad.”

Cleaver was originally charged with attempted murder.

Overby later died at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, on



Murray Police Department

Russell Cleaver of Calloway County was arrested on Aug. 17 and currently resides at the Calloway County Detention Center. His next court appearance will be on Friday, Oct. 2, in Calloway County Circuit Court.

Sept. 4, which led to the murder charge.

Cleaver will be arraigned at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 2, in Calloway County Circuit Court.

OTHER CRIMINAL CASES

Cleaver will also appear in court for two other criminal cases on Oct. 2 at the same time.

One of the criminal cases that Cleaver will appear in court for includes two counts of third-degree assault toward a police officer or probation officer and one count of first-degree criminal mischief.

Documents state these alleged crimes took place the day of the shooting after Cleaver was taken into custody.

The uniform citation reports Cleaver damaged an interview room, including banging on the walls and table and ripping out a security camera from the ceiling. He was later moved to a room with no furniture, where he was informed to sit down.

The report states, “Cleaver then began to scoot on his buttocks towards Officer Thompson, in a manner in which resembled Brazilian Jiu jitsu.” He then

kicked one of the officer’s shins. Later, he was transported to the Calloway County Detention Center where he hit an officer with a car door.

The other criminal case dates back to his arrest in June, stemming from an incident in late May where he was charged with terroristic threatening in the third degree, menacing and retaliating against a participant in legal process, which was also directed toward Overby.

According to a uniform citation, law enforcement responded to a possible ongoing domestic violence situation at the Sunset Drive property. The document states Cleaver had locked himself in the house and would not speak to officers.

Overby told law enforcement that Cleaver made threatening comments towards her after he believed she reported him to the police for a previous DUI arrest, which she had already reported to law enforcement. Overby recorded Cleaver making those threatening comments, which included him saying, “If you called me, I’m killing you,” and that he would shoot her in the

head and drown her in the Arboretum pond.

She reported to law enforcement that she was in fear of death or serious physical injury.

CIVIL CASE

The administrator of Overby’s estate, Tammy Petty, has also filed a civil suit against Russell and Max Cleaver, and asked the circuit court for civil action for a temporary restraining order to prevent the sale or transfer of the Sunset Drive property.

The suit states that Overby, Russell and Max are joint tenants of the property with survivorship interest; however, Kentucky law states if a partner, heir or beneficiary takes someone’s life and is convicted of the offense, that person will no longer receive an interest in the late person’s property, including through a survivorship interest.

Since Russell has not been convicted of taking Overby’s life, they “have the ability to transfer, convey, mortgage or otherwise impede the rights of [Overby] in and to the Identified Property which could deny Plaintiff the ability to recover against Defendant Russell Cleaver for his actions or deny her estate the ability to harness the equity that likely belongs to her.”

The documents state that, due to the close relationship between the defendants, it could cause Russell to transfer the property to Max, which could lead to him liquidating financial assets to pay for Russell’s counsel or expenses while incarcerated.

The suit also notes Petty has heard that the property is being cleaned and readied for sale and asked the court for a temporary restraining order preventing Russell from transferring or selling the property. The temporary restraining order was granted and will expire on Oct. 2, when Russell will appear in court for four cases, including the civil suit.

We reached out to the estate’s attorney, Sarah Jones, and she stated they have no comment at this time and that the documents should speak for themselves.

MAYFIELD ELECTRIC AND WATER SYSTEMS
MAYFIELD, KENTUCKY

**INVITATION TO BID
FOR
CONSTRUCTION OF
2026 SEWER CIPP REHABILITATION**

RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS
Sealed proposals for the construction of the Mayfield Electric and Water Systems 2026 Sewer CIPP Rehabilitation will be received at the office of the Mayfield Electric and Water Systems, 408 East Broadway, Mayfield, Kentucky 42066, on or before 10:00 a.m. local time on Wednesday, October 28th and immediately thereafter all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

The project will include the following described construction:

The furnishing, installing, and testing of approximately 1,525 linear feet of cured-in-place rehabilitation lining of existing 8" sewer lines, rehabilitation and epoxy coating for approximately 11 manholes, cured-in-place lining of existing 4" and/or 6" sewer services and appurtenances; reinstatement of 4" and/or 6" sewer services; 4" and/or 6" epoxied-on-saddles with stainless steel bands, sewer service clean-out assemblies and traffic rated clean-out boxes (if ordered), point repairs, including unclassified excavation, handling wastewater flows, backfill, tie-ins, reconnections, working in State Highway(s) and city streets, working in close proximity with other utilities and structures, testing, materials testing, restoration, asphalt pavement trench repair and maintenance, CCTV Inspection, and all other appurtenances and other work as shown on the Construction Drawings or indicated in the Contract Specifications.

Official (numbered) Bid Documents shall be obtained at the office of Water Management Services, LLC, 2 International Plaza, Suite 401, Nashville, Tennessee 37217 (telephone: (615-366-6088). A fee of \$100.00 must be made for each set obtained.

Mayfield Electric and Water Systems, Mayfield, Kentucky reserves the right to reject any proposal for failure to comply with all requirements of the notice or of any of the Contract Documents; however, it may waive any minor defects or informalities at its discretion. Mayfield Electric and Water Systems, Mayfield, Kentucky further reserves the right to reject all proposals.

Plans and specifications for this project were prepared by Water Management Services, LLC.

Dated at Mayfield, Kentucky this 29th day of September, 2026.

**MAYFIELD ELECTRIC AND WATER SYSTEMS
MAYFIELD, KENTUCKY**