

# MCLEAN COUNTY NEWS

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## Tucker wins Golden Owl Award as agricultural educator

BY MICHELE LOHMAN  
MCLEAN COUNTY NEWS

McLean County's Aaron Tucker, an agriculture teacher at Apollo High School (AHS) in the Daviess County Public School (DCPS) district, has been awarded the Golden Owl Award, presented by Nationwide insurance and the Kentucky FFA Foundation.

"Founded by farmers in 1926, Nationwide proudly embraces its deep agricultural roots and longstanding dedication to supporting the farming community," states the insurance carrier's website. "This commitment includes collaborations with the National FFA Organization and FFA chapters across the country."

The insurance entity describes the Golden Owl award as a way to recognize

agricultural educators who "go above and beyond — dedicating countless hours and often their own resources — to inspire and enrich the lives of their students."

The program began in 2018, growing from two participating states to now, 15. Nationwide has handed out over \$600,000 to help support teachers, students, school agriculture programs and the FFA. Students, current or former, coworkers or supporters from the community are encouraged to nominate their favorite agriculture education teacher for the award. Nominations for the Kentucky awards were taking Sept. through Nov.

Tucker said that he was

nominated for the award by his daughter.

"My daughter was one of the people that nominated me, so she got to read her nomination letter when they presented the award. So, that was really sweet," said Tucker.

Tucker was presented with the award last week during a surprise ceremony, surrounded by his family, friends, alumni and coworkers at AHS.

He said that receiving the Golden Owl award was a "total surprise."

"I didn't even know I was nominated," Tucker said. "So, I was not expecting it whatsoever...But I'm tickled to death. I got a little emotional...and just had a little tear coming out of my eye when my daughter was

(reading her letter)."

Tucker is one of 12 regional winners in the Commonwealth, representing the Green River Region. The 12 regional winners will then compete for the title of Agricultural Educator of the Year, receiving prizes including, \$500 and an engraved plaque, which is provided to each regional winner, along with \$3,000 and the Golden Owl Award trophy. Nationwide will also donate \$5,000 to each participating state's FFA "to further support the personal and professional growth of students, teachers and advisors alike."

Tucker has been teaching for 31 years, most of that tenure at AHS, and he teaches a variety of agriculture mechanic classes, including ag structures, ag power and welding.



Aaron Tucker

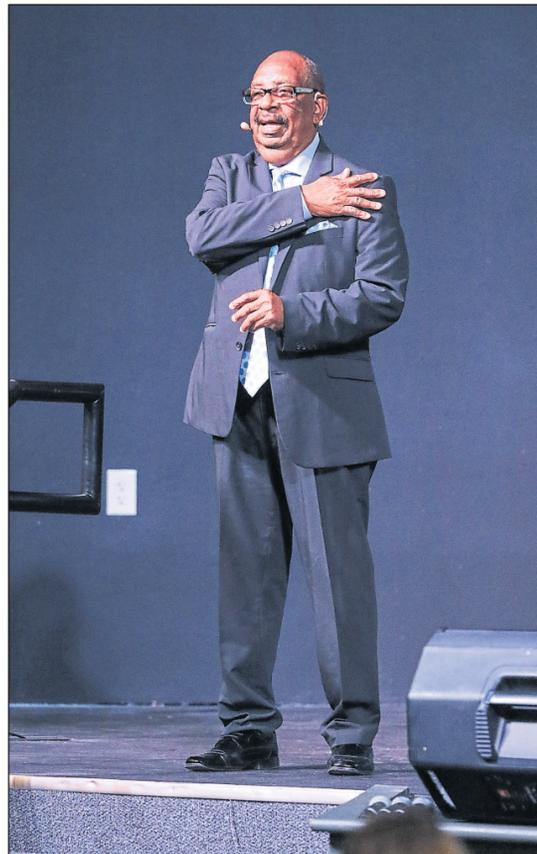


Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | [awarren@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:awarren@messenger-inquirer.com)

**Hezekiah Watkins, civil rights leader and Freedom Rider, describes being arrested and put on death row when he was 13 years old in Jackson, Mississippi as he speaks on Thursday at the Kentucky Wesleyan College's Jack Wells Activity Center at 3300 Frederica St.**

## Civil rights leader Watkins speaks at KWC

BY MICHELE LOHMAN  
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

The parking lot at Kentucky Wesleyan College's (KWC) Jack Wells Activity Center was packed as the college welcomed civil rights leader and member of the Freedom Riders, Hezekiah Watkins.

At only 13-years-old, Watkins was arrested in 1961 when the Freedom Riders ventured into his hometown of Jackson, Mississippi. The arrest placed Watkins on death row at Parchman Penitentiary, a maximum-security prison in the Mississippi Delta region of the state.

Watkins retold the story of how he was arrested as a 13-year-old at the bus station in Jackson.

Watkins said that the path to that arrest, along with more than 100 additional arrests, began with him watching the news.

"I saw individuals being beat. Spit on. Even dragging women by the hair, putting them into the paddy wagon," he said.

Watkins quickly learned that those people on the television were called "Freedom Riders," civil rights leaders who rode interstate buses into segregated southern cities beginning in 1961.

The Freedom Riders sought to raise awareness about the lack of compliance with the 1946 Supreme Court decision *Morgan v. Virginia* and the 1960 case of *Boynton v. Virginia*.

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## White House says it fired NTSB member over misconduct

BY JOSH FUNK THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The White House says it fired an NTSB board member for serious misconduct, and he says the claims are false. President Donald Trump's administration on Monday, March 9, accused Todd Inman of drinking on the job, harassing staff, misusing government resources, and skipping many meetings. Inman says he denies the allegations and plans to defend his reputation in court. Inman is a Republican appointed during former President Joe Biden's administration. The NTSB has declined to comment on Inman's dismissal. The agency now lists only three members, though the U.S. Senate has confirmed an American Airlines executive to join. The NTSB is investigating over 1,000 cases and will issue safety recommendations when it releases its final reports.

The White House said it fired a National Transportation



AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana, file

**National Transportation Safety Board member Todd Inman speaks with reporters at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on Feb. 1, 2025, in Arlington, Va.**

Safety Board member after reports of drinking on the job and harassing staff, but Todd Inman, a former Owensboro insurance salesman, flatly denied the allegations Monday and said he plans to fight back.

Inman revealed Sunday that he had been fired on Friday

without explanation, though his term on the board was supposed to continue through the end of 2027.

President Donald Trump's administration said Monday that it believes the firing is justified.

"The White House lawfully removed Todd Inman from the NTSB after receiving highly concerning reports of inappropriate alcohol use on the job, harassment of staff, misuse of government

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## 31st annual Green River 5K set for April 18

BY THE MCLEAN COUNTY NEWS

The 31st annual Green River 5K Run/Walk takes to the streets of Calhoun on Saturday, April 18.

The races begin at 7 a.m. at Calhoun Elementary School. The course goes down Main Street by the river and down Richland Road before turning around and continuing down Walnut Street.

Pre-registration is \$10. Day of registration is \$12.

Door prizes for adult male, youth male, adult female and youth female will be available. There will also be a \$100 cash

giveaway door prize.

Registration forms are available at the Calhoun Post Office, McLean County Fitness, along with fitness center locations in Owensboro, Thacker Riverside Dental and Laurie's Souper Savor.

Checks can be made out to Green River 5K. The entry fee includes a shirt, fruit and water at the finish line of the race.

Entry forms can be mailed to Nancy Dant at P.O. Box 11, Calhoun, KY. 42327.

For questions or to also register, call Nancy Dant at 270-313-5647.

## McLean Planning & Zoning board agrees to green energy moratorium

BY MICHELE LOHMAN  
MCLEAN COUNTY NEWS

At its March 12 meeting, members of the McLean County Fiscal Court voted to send a rough draft of a moratorium ordinance to the McLean County Planning & Zoning Commission concerning the construction of windmills in the county.

McLean County Attorney Donna Dant said that the purpose of the moratorium is to give Fiscal Court more time to research the issue before coming to a decision on if a final ordinance is necessary.

The moratorium drafted by Fiscal Court provides a period of one year in order to complete the research, which Dant said can be extended or shortened

depending on available research.

Last month, officials in Henderson County passed a moratorium on wind energy products, and McLean County Judge-Executive Curtis Dame said that he would like to watch how Henderson handles the issue before making a final determination on what's best for the county.

The draft of the moratorium traveled to the McLean County Planning & Zoning Commission (MCPC) on Tuesday night.

Members of the MCPC engaged in a direct discussion concerning green energy projects, such as windmills, solar farms and battery storage facilities, deciding to side with the recommendation from Fiscal Court, that a moratorium is currently needed so county officials can research the project more extensively

before drafting any ordinances governing the construction of wind energy products within the county.

Members of the Commission set a date for a public hearing on the matter, the next step in determining the future of wind energy products within the county, which was set for 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, at the McLean County Courthouse in the Fiscal Courtroom.

The public hearing provides members of the community the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns regarding the issue. Comments from the public hearing will be used by the Committee when considering the verbiage in the moratorium before the draft heads to Fiscal Court for the final

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