

Livermore resident establishes McLean County Kids Matter

Initiative meant to advocate for families, children

BY MICHELE LOHMAN
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Livermore resident and McLean County native Alexis Doepp said she wanted to become more involved in her community and help make McLean County a better place to live.

To support that goal, Doepp founded McLean County Kids Matter, an organization she describes as “dedicated to advocating for transparency, equity and resource accessibility for all families in McLean County.”

According to Doepp, the organization gathers data and raises public-interest concerns to promote equitable distribution of resources throughout the county.

Doepp said a line from President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 inaugural address serves as a guiding principle for the group.

“We believe in the power of active, informed citizenship,” she wrote in the organization’s mission statement. “Guided by the principle, ‘Ask not what your city can do for you — ask what you can do for your city,’ we are making a formal commitment to present the concerns of Livermore citizens at every Livermore City Council meeting moving forward. Our goal is to bridge the communication gap between municipal leadership and the families we serve.”

Doepp said she started McLean County Kids Matter after noticing that some residents were reluctant to voice concerns about issues in Livermore.

“Currently, we are working to address a chilling effect in the community where residents express hesitation to voice concerns regarding city operation due to fear of retaliation,” Doepp said. “We are committed to fostering a climate of transparency and fear-free civic discourse.”

As part of that effort, Doepp said she plans to attend all Livermore City Council meetings and serve as a liaison between residents and local officials.

“I’m going to anonymously collect concerns from Livermore citizens, and I’m going to back their concerns with standardized government data to show that it’s not just hearsay or complaining,” she said. “I’m going to back it up with data, and I’m going to present it to our city leadership and demand accountability and transparency.”

Doepp said McLean County Kids Matter will focus on three primary areas: public infrastructure and socioeconomic equity; civic accountability and open discourse; and educational equity and rights.

Using data that she said shows the median income for renting families in the Livermore area is approximately \$15,370 annually, Doepp said she hopes to help expand access to affordable resources for residents.

As an example, she pointed to the McLean County Fiscal Court’s recent approval of a splash pad at Myer Creek Park, which she said would provide affordable recreation for families.

“It’s great to see new recreational investments for our county families in Calhoun,” Doepp wrote in a June 16 Facebook post on the McLean County

Kids Matter page. “But it brings up an important question for us in Livermore: If we can secure funding for a new splash pad at Myer Creek Park, why is our existing 2016 federally funded splash pad at Depot Park still sitting dry and non-operational?”

Doepp raised the same issue during a Livermore City Council meeting earlier this month.

“Resources and community effort went into that enhancement project so our kids would have a place to play, but today it sits idle,” she said. “An idle public resource is a broken promise to families. When our community spaces are built but left neglected, it actively harms civic pride.”

Doepp said her research indicates the city received \$28,800 in grant funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and state Tire-Derived Product funds for construction of the splash pad. She said she has filed an open records request seeking documentation related to the use of those funds.

“I would just really like to show other people in Livermore and McLean County that there is hope, and that their leaders do care about them,” Doepp said. “They have the opportunity to grow and thrive regardless of whether they own a farm or whether they’re from the ‘lower end’ in Livermore.”

Doepp said residents living along the river are sometimes referred to as “lower enders,” a term she said has been used in a derogatory manner.

“I want to highlight that ‘lower enders’ are resilient, fantastic, hard-working people who have overcome years of socioeconomic decay,” she said.

Doepp also said housing and child care remain major concerns for many Livermore residents.

“I just had to resign my most recent job position due to lack of child care,” said Doepp, a legal studies student. “I have a special-needs child and an infant, so there’s not really any resources for people like me who want to improve their lives and want to not be reliant on subsidized housing, but we’re kind of put into a position where we have to.”

While researching local history, Doepp said she became familiar with the work of Landon Willis, owner of the McLean County News from 1946 to 1972.

According to the University of Kentucky College of Communication and Information, Willis “set a national example for editorial leadership in a small, rural county.”

The university notes that Willis “believed the editorial page was open to any topic, and he often opined on state and national issues, which cost him badly needed advertising.”

Willis was also the subject of the 1963 ABC-TV documentary “Vanishing Breed,” which examined the declining number of weekly newspapers.

“His legacy of printing the ‘raw truth’ in McLean County, even when it was difficult, has always been a massive source of inspiration for me,” Doepp said. “I truly admire that kind of courage, and I hope to bring that same level of transparency and integrity to the work we are doing with McLean County Kids Matter.”

More information about McLean County Kids Matter is available on the organization’s Facebook page.

KEN-RAD

FROM PAGE A1

Daviess County, if you’ve driven past the historic brick bones of the Ninth Street Commons recently, under Aline Services Company LLC, we have officially begun stabilizing and restoring this incredible local landmark.”

Skelton added, “For my family, this isn’t just a real estate project. It’s the continuation of an unbroken, 150-year legacy of building and maintaining the infrastructure of Daviess County.”

He said, “We want to shape the future of Ninth Street Commons with the community while preserving the pieces of our past. What do you want to see inside? What local shops, dining options, mixed-use spaces or community areas do you think downtown Owensboro needs



Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | avarren@messenger-inquirer.com

A motorist passes by the former Ken-Rad Lamp Plant on Thursday at 601 E. Ninth St. The Kentucky Historic Preservation Review Board will decide if it will be included on the recommendation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

most?”

In 2015, another East Ninth Street property was added to the National Register.

A former MPD warehouse on the northeast corner of Ninth Street and J.R. Miller Boulevard was turned

into an apartment building after it was approved for tax credits through the National Register.

That building began life in 1901 as the home of the Kentucky Buggy Co.

At today’s meeting in Frankfort, the board will also consider the Caney Fork Rosenwald School in Allen County, Grant’s Lick Elementary School in Campbell County, Epping Bottle Works in Fayette County, Ewing School in Fleming County, Collins Farm in Franklin County, James Taylor-Jacob School Neighborhood Historic District in Jefferson County, Lambs Ferry Road in Kenton County and Dunagan’s Store in Wayne County.

The Owensboro property sits on a .95-acre parcel at the northeastern corner of Bolivar and Ninth streets near Triplett Street.

Keith Lawrence, klawrence@messenger-inquirer.com

TRAINING

FROM PAGE A1

regulations.”

State law generally prohibits public officials from contracting with their own city, although some exceptions apply.

Dennis Winters, Central City’s attorney, said Thursday that no law requires elected city officials to complete training. However, he said officials are encouraged to participate in programs offered through the Kentucky League of Cities.

“Our administration has been through that training,” Winters said.

Elected city officials receive training “if they desire to have it,” Winters said, adding that “we don’t have a mechanism” to require mayors or council members to complete it.

The Kentucky League of Cities offers training programs that award certificates after 30, 60 and

90 hours of coursework in city governance. The organization also offers certified municipal officer and master municipal officer programs, which require 135 and 180 hours of coursework, respectively. All of the programs are voluntary.

Owensboro City Commissioner Sharon NeSmith, one of the city’s newer commissioners, said she attended Kentucky League of Cities training for elected officials, with the city covering expenses such as lodging.

The training included officials from both large and small communities, she said. “They went through all policies and procedures,” NeSmith said. “They are a great resource for new politicians coming in.”

“It was actually very

helpful, rather than saying, ‘Now you’re a commissioner in Owensboro. Go to these meetings,’ and providing no other training,” she said.

Participants also received a legal handbook covering ordinances, the state’s open meetings and open records laws, and ethics, NeSmith said.

Owensboro City Attorney Mark Pfeifer said he studied a municipal law handbook after becoming the city’s attorney.

“I can’t remember if I went through any specific training, but there was a handbook I read” covering laws related to city government, Pfeifer said.

He estimated the handbook was about 500 pages.

If an elected official has a legal question, they can also contact the Kentucky



Sharon NeSmith



Mark Pfeifer

Digest

Daviess Fiscal Court

Daviess County Fiscal Court took the following actions during its meeting Thursday at the Daviess County Courthouse:

- Proclaimed June 27 and June 28, 2026 as Amateur Radio Field Days
- Heard treasurer’s report for May, 2026
- Approved minutes of June 11, 2026, Daviess County Fiscal Court meeting
- Approved all claims for all departments
- Approved budget transfers for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2026
- Approved agreement for permission to assign and sublease with Daviess County Youth Soccer Association, Owensboro Catholic High School and Owensboro Knights Soccer
- Approved security service agreement 10-2026 through Daviess County Sheriff’s Office effective June 12, 2026
- Approved amendment to service agreement with CyberPath Services, LLC for inmate messaging and handheld device
- Approved amendment to service agreement with Combined Public Communications, LLC for inmate communications
- Approved amendment to contract with Green River District Health Department for employee assessments and vaccinations
- Accepted

professional services proposal of special inspection services for inspection and quality control testing for Yellow Creek Park picnic shelter project

- Accepted professional services proposal of special inspection services for inspection and quality control Testing for Panther Creek Park picnic shelter project

- Approved second reading of KOC 921.691 (2026) 04-2026: An ordinance imposing a moratorium on the acceptance and processing of applications related to Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS)

- Approved second reading of KOC 620.57 (2026) 05-2026: An ordinance adopting amended guidelines for accepting roads into the Daviess County road, bridge and street system

- Awarded quote for election equipment to Harp Enterprises, Inc (Clerk)

- Awarded Bid No. 2526-76: Yellow Creek Park restroom project (Parks)

- Hired Jeffrey Dawson as Truck Driver 1 effective June 29, 2026

- Hired Nick Morris as Firefighter 1 effective July 5, 2026

- Hired Chad Daniel as Firefighter 1 effective July 5, 2026

- Hired Matthew Oost as seasonal park attendant effective July 5, 2026

Lottery Numbers

Thursday’s lottery numbers:

Kentucky

Midday Pick 3: 9-6-0

Midday Pick 4: 5-2-6-6

Evening Pick 3: 6-3-0

Evening Pick 4: 5-7-6-0

Cash Ball 225: 2-8-24-32;

The Cash Ball was 9

Millionaire For Life: 3-13-14-34-45

The Millionaire Ball was 1

Indiana

Midday Daily 3: 5-9-3

Super Ball was 7

Midday Daily 4: 0-3-8-8

Super Ball was 7

Evening Daily 3: 6-2-3

Super Ball was 8

Evening Daily 4: 5-6-1-9

Super Ball was 8

Cash 5: 4-6-14-32-43

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OTHER STATES
\$308.67 \$142.46 \$71.23 \$23.74

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OTHER STATES
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