

Swinging Break



Laura Vincent watches as her son, Kase Vincent, 5, left, swings high along with his brother, Towns Vincent, 2, and Hayes Vincent, 1, on Wednesday during a break from homeschooling at Legion Park.

ARCHERY

FROM PAGE A1

many shoots on the core, you just take it out and put a new core in and you still have the same animal you’ve always had,” Leigh said. “Just pull one out, then swap them out.” Leigh said the extra space acquired through the land purchase made it the perfect opportunity to create the course. The county road department is generating signage for the lanes. Leigh said, by all appearances, archery is a growing sport in the area. “It’s hard for me to be able to say exactly, but every time I pick up the newspaper there’s another article about archery,” he said. “The archery clubs have seen great growth and con-

tinued support, and there’s a lot of locals who are very talented and recognized as national winners for various events. While we’re not looking at creating some kind of a competitive opportunity, we just want to make sure that the people in our community have an opportunity to come out, and if they want to target practice for their deer or turkey season, they can, or if they want to because they’re competitive shooters, they can.” Leigh said there are no membership requirements to use the course. “This facility is open to the public just like any of our parks,” he said. “A lot of people are concerned that they need to buy a membership or there is some kind of club that they need to belong to, and they do not. Whether it’s archery or shooting, they do not require a membership.” Leigh said the archery course just

adds to the amenities of the facility, which is about to see its busy season. “Between now and in the middle of the December will be our busiest time of the year, with hunting season coming in soon,” Leigh said. “It’s amazing how much business we’ll do.” Leigh said the shooting range often serves as a practice facility for hunters. “From a dove hunter to quail hunter, pheasant hunter, there’s hardly anything that you could do that would be any better or more realistic,” Leigh said. “That’s another thing that we’ll see a lot of them come out to participate in.” Leigh said the \$10 fee for the 3D archery course is expected to be approved at next week’s Daviess Fiscal Court meeting, and then shortly afterward the course will be ready to open.

OFFICIALS

FROM PAGE A1

and Colossus II supercomputers. “Colossus I and II are built in extremely poor communities,” Kuegel said. “They were kept secret, especially Colossus I. So just the way it came to be seems to be mimicking what we could possibly be seeing here.” Concern about data centers is widespread. According to a poll released Aug. 11 by the Annenberg Public Policy Foundation, “about 3 in 5 U.S. adults (61%) oppose the construction of new data centers in their area, up 12 percentage points from a survey fielded in February and March.” The poll found the opposition fairly evenly spread along political party lines, with 69% of Democrats and 54% of Republicans opposed to data center construction. For the next year, at least, there won’t be any data center announcements in Daviess County, with a one-year moratorium in place for officials to study the issue. In the city, there’s a longer moratorium of sorts, with Mayor Tom Watson saying there won’t be any data center announcements in the city as long as he is in office. Watson holds the seat until the end of 2028. Watson and county Judge-Executive Charlie Castlen said this week they support having regulations and requirements for any data center project that wants to come to the community, although Castlen said the community cannot put an outright ban on such facilities locating here. Data centers are used for “cloud” data storage, but larger “hyperscale” data centers are being constructed to provide infrastructure for artificial intelligence and bitcoin mining. The Hancock County data center proposed for the Century Aluminum site will be an A.I. data center for Anthropic.

Earlier this year, at a city budget hearing, Watson had asked city staff about a “data center that’s being proposed to come here” and what effect it would have on the city. In an interview about a week later, Watson said no data center company was looking at Owensboro, but said “we have to be prepared if the opportunity presents itself.” Those comments lit a fire under residents concerned about a data center possibly locating on the 121-acre Massie Property near West Parrish Avenue, and then at or near the former Elmer Smith power plant site owned by Owensboro Municipal Utilities off Kentucky 144. The Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission recommended against rezoning the Massie site for heavy industrial use earlier this year in response to public concerns about a data center locating on the future industrial park. Watson said the data center issue was “dead,” and that no data center would be allowed to come to the city during the remainder of his time as mayor. But the issue persists. In June, OMU officials announced Green River East GenCo LLC has a five-year option to build a 545-megawatt natural gas power plant on the Elmer Smith site. Residents have raised concerns that property adjacent to the site could be used to build a data center. Both Green River East GenCo and sister company Green River East LoadCo have options on property around the Elmer Smith site. The companies are part of ETX Upstream LLC, a Boston firm that focuses on land acquisition and data-center-scale “mega-load” customers, and related energy-transition infrastructure projects. On the company’s website, ETX says its portfolio includes “energy and data center infrastructure.” “I know there has not been an announcement for a data center,” Kuegel said. “I’ve been told by one

of the commissioners, in a conversation outside of the forum, that there could be other things built” at the OMU site. “I’m aware of that, but I’m also aware the power plant that has been proposed could be a potential community issue.” Kuegel said the succession of events, such as the options Green River East GenCo and LoadCo have taken on part of the Elmer Smith and surrounding properties, suggests the sites are being considered for a data center. “It all kind of ties,” Kuegel said. “... I’m not looking at A.I., whether A.I. is good or bad; that’s somebody else’s fight. I’m looking at the power plant and any potential industry it might feed, and what detriment those two things could cause to our air, our water, noise, to the community.” The Elmer Smith site is near Owensboro Health Regional Hospital, churches and a new nursing home, Kuegel said. The xAI data centers in Memphis seem to have had an effect on neighborhoods near the facilities. A 2025 article by Time magazine, citing data from the University of Tennessee, found concentrations of nitrogen dioxide — which the Environmental Protection Agency says contributes to acid rain, ground-level ozone pollution and the development or worsening of respiratory illnesses like asthma — “increased by 79% from pre-XAI levels immediately surrounding the state center, and by 9% in Boxtown.” OMU is conducting feasibility studies on the Elmer Smith site proposal. OMU officials have said previously that if the power plant is viable, construction on the site would be years in the future.

LOCAL OFFICIALS CONSIDER REGULATIONS

In late May, Daviess Fiscal Court approved a one-year moratorium on accepting and processing applications related to data centers. Earlier this week, city attorney Mark Pfeifer said the moratorium applies to Owensboro as

well as the county. City commissioners would have to take action, such as passing an ordinance, to exempt the city from the county’s moratorium, Pfeifer said. The moratorium was put in place for planning officials to study data centers. Any regulations or requirements for a data center would have to be put in place through changes to the community’s zoning regulations, which cover Owensboro, Whitesville and Daviess County. “Our staff have certainly been doing research,” Brian Howard, executive director of the Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission, said earlier this week. For example, planning staff have been examining regulations other Kentucky communities are putting in place, Howard said. The planning commission staff will come up with recommendations to present to officials in the two cities and to Fiscal Court, with all three governments having to approve. “We will be prepared to have those discussions with the city and county, whenever they want to have those discussions,” Howard said, and that, “it’s what they requested, (to) provide some guidance on where they want to go with it.” Any regulations would be in the form of text amendments to existing zoning ordinances, Howard said. The public would have input before planning commission members voted on the recommended changes.

SEE OFFICIALS/PAGE A4

Lottery Numbers

Wednesday’s lottery numbers:
Kentucky
Midday Pick 3: 7-0-5
Midday Pick 4: 9-7-2-7
Indiana
Midday Daily 3: 2-7-6
Super Ball was 3
Midday Daily 4: 4-8-6-4
Super Ball was 3

Late lottery numbers were not available by press time and will run in Friday’s edition.

Owensboro Public Schools receives national recognition

District repeats as an Imagine Learning District of Distinction

BY SCOTT HAGERMAN
MESSENGER-INQUIRER
Owensboro Public Schools has been recognized as a 2025-26 Imagine Learning District of Distinction award winner. It’s the second straight year the school district has received the recognition from Imagine Learning, the nation’s leading provider of pre-K-12 curriculum. “I think it’s extremely exciting, because everybody has been working so hard at implementing this new curriculum,” said Dr. Sarah Brown, Estes Elementary School principal who was the district’s math and science instructional coordinator last year. “To get recognition for it really shows you that your hard work is paying off.” More than 42,000 schools and districts were eligible for this year’s Imagine Nation Awards. Of those, 293 schools and districts were honored as Imagine Nation Schools of Excellence or Districts of Distinction, representing best-in-class implementation and meaningful engagement with Imagine Learning solutions. Brown said Imagine Learning is a problem-based learning curriculum used throughout the district, with the exception of Owensboro Middle School, which had previously implemented a different curriculum. “It’s a lot more about student inquiry and trying to solve problems, and then following up with instruction after the students have tried it,” Brown said. “That’s just a different way of teaching, and it takes a lot of professional learning to understand that process and understand how students really learn. So that has been a lot of work behind the scenes, trying to make sure that we feel prepared to teach the curriculum. ...It’s just a different style of instruction, which makes it a little bit hard. But being recognized for that shows that everyone has been



Sarah Brown

putting forth their best effort in making sure that everyone’s successful.” The curriculum, to an extent, offers students the ability to learn at their own pace, but is more about giving students the opportunity to take ownership of their learning. “Traditionally — and we’ve all been there — you’re learning from following along with the teacher,” Brown said. “Well, sometimes that doesn’t actually help you understand what you’re learning. You’re kind of just copying it down. So in this aspect, it’s letting the teacher see what students already know. They try to solve a problem first, and they get to see what they know. Some of them are ready, and then we get to move faster. Others, they’re starting to put the pieces together. They’re on their own, which makes them understand it in a deeper way. “So problem-based learning is all about getting a deeper understanding of the content.” Brown said teachers have seen a difference in the students since implementing the curriculum. “I think the biggest thing is that I don’t know how many times the teachers have said, ‘Wow, I’ve heard the students talk a lot more than they used to, and in a good way,’ ” Brown said. “They’re talking, and they’re explaining what they know. And the teachers are saying, ‘Sometimes I didn’t actually even know that they knew that until we switched to this style of learning.’ So we feel like we’re understanding what the students know a little bit better. “Also, I’m proud of the students, because that’s a shift for them too. They’re used to being able to come in and just kind of being told, and now, it’s help solve the problem. How can we do this? The students have really been stepping up and taking ownership of their learning too.”

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