

FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

OHS wins opener 42-6 over Greenwood • C1

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

Bruce Williams, president and CEO, right, gives Kentucky State Senator Stephen Meredith a tour of the X-ray lab during the Advancing Healthcare Workforce Development event on Thursday at the Healthforce Kentucky Innovation Center.

HealthForce Kentucky highlights need for rural health care workers

BY JAMES MAYSE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER



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

Students from Brescia University's physician assistant program work with medical training manikins in the anatomy lab on Thursday during the Advancing Healthcare Workforce Development event at the Healthforce Kentucky Innovation Center.

Local and state health care and education officials, along with members of the Federal Reserve, met Thursday at HealthForce Kentucky in Owensboro to discuss how to train and retain rural health care workers and the importance of the health care industry to rural economies.

The session brought together people in the health care and education professions, along with government officials, to discuss ways to grow the health care workforce in rural communities through training opportunities and educational initiatives such as HealthForce Kentucky.

According to 2025 data from the Kentucky Hospital Association, the state had a shortage of 2,821 registered nurses last year, and the deficit was expected to worsen over time. By 2030, 18% of operating room nurses and 25% of psychiatric nurses are expected to have retired from the profession.

Bruce Williams, president and CEO of HealthForce Kentucky, said the health care worker shortage was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, when workers in various health professions retired or quit because of burnout. The idea behind HealthForce Kentucky, which has a classroom facility on Frederica Street and two mobile classrooms, is to interest students in health care careers while also supporting schools through science education.

The mobile units, Williams said, expose students "to careers they may not know existed" in health care.

John J.P. Hamm, assistant vice president for workforce development for the Kentucky

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Utility Commission approves rate increase

Base rate increase would be offset by decrease in other fee on OMU bills, officials say

BY JAMES MAYSE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

City Utility Commission members approved an increase in the base energy rate on electric bills Thursday, an anticipated move that officials say will be offset by lowering another rate.



Tim Lyons

The rate increase must now be approved by Owensboro city commissioners. If approved, the increase will take effect in February.

The base rate increase is part of a plan that has been discussed throughout much of the year. When the base rate is increased, Owensboro Municipal Utilities will offset it with a decrease in the energy cost adjustment fee on OMU bills, with the net result being minimal impact on residential customer bills.

"We are projecting an estimated impact in Fiscal Year 2027 of near zero" for residential power customers, General Manager Tim Lyons said at a public hearing on the increase Thursday morning.

Officials said the rate increase will allow the utility to meet its financial obligations for the next several years. OMU, which buys power, is anticipating increasing power costs that will squeeze revenues and hamper its ability to cover expenses if the base rate is not raised.

The base rate increase will allow OMU to cover its power and other costs without having to drain its "cash days on hand."

In September, also in a long-discussed move, Utility Commission members raised the energy cost adjustment rate from 2.47 cents per kilowatt-hour to 3.50 cents per kilowatt-hour.

If city commissioners approve the base rate increase, the base energy rate will increase from 4 cents to 7 cents per kilowatt-hour. At the same time, the energy cost adjustment will be reduced to 1.315 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Percentage-wise, the base rate

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OHRC hosting event to raise awareness about homelessness

'Night Without a Home' will be Saturday, Nov. 14

BY SCOTT HAGERMAN
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

With homelessness having become a hot-button topic in Daviess County in recent years, the Owensboro Human Relations Commission (OHRC) wants to shed light on all aspects of the issue.

In conjunction with National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the OHRC will host "Night Without a Home: One Night. A Greater Understanding. A Stronger Tomorrow." from 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, to 7 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 15, on the Daviess County Courthouse lawn.



The Rev. Rhondalyn Randolph

Rhondalyn Randolph, OHRC executive director, said discussions about holding an informational sleepout began last year.

"It's an idea that I came up with last year when I first started here at OHRC, but the Homeless Coalition didn't think that we had enough time to really put it into action," she said. "But then Harry Pedigo reached back out to me (this summer) and said, 'What do you think about it; let's try to do this?' That's really how it all came about for this year.

"In light of the issues that have been taking place with the homeless population in our community, I think we need to shed more light on some possible solutions and not so much criminalizing people for being homeless."

From 8 to 11 p.m., there will be speakers and discussion groups focusing on what life is like when homeless, as well as possible remedies to homelessness.

"We're going to have a panel of people that have experienced homelessness or are currently homeless tell about their stories, how they ended up homeless, so that we can put like a face to people that are going through this," said Randolph, who believes it's critical that everyone experiencing homelessness isn't viewed as a faceless group. "Putting the face on it is critical, because those people who are homeless have been shunned.

"The people that are going through homelessness have been pushed to the fringes, and nobody wants to admit that they

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