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Middlesboro News

Issue 30, Vol. 116 Serving the tri-state community • Breaking news at middlesboronews.com Wednesday, July 29, 2026 • \$1.00

5 sentenced to federal prison in meth trafficking case

Charges came after lengthy ANI investigation in Bell and Harlan counties

By Jay Compton
Middlesboro News

Five individuals have been sentenced to federal prison following a lengthy drug trafficking investigation conducted by Appalachia Narcotics Investigations (ANI) targeting the distribution of methamphetamine in Bell and Harlan

counties. The investigation began in late 2023 and continued through late 2024, focusing on drug trafficking activity in the Middlesboro area of Bell County. As the investigation progressed, detectives identified a Drug Trafficking Organization that investigators determined was a primary supplier of methamphetamine to the City of Middlesboro, other areas of Bell County, eastern Tennessee, and portions of Harlan County. During the course of the investigation, detectives seized

more than twelve pounds of methamphetamine. Between May and July 2026, the following individuals were sentenced in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, Southern Division at London:

- David Mosely — 188 months in federal prison
- Josh Berry — 137 months in federal prison
- Charles H. Garren — 120 months in federal prison
- James Hamlin — 113 months in federal prison
- Jacqueline P. Hamlin — 40

months in federal prison Each was sentenced for Conspiracy to Distribute 500 Grams or More of a Mixture or Substance Containing a Detectable Amount of Methamphetamine, a Schedule II Controlled Substance. The investigation was conducted by Appalachia Narcotics Investigations with assistance from the Kentucky State Police Post 10, Drug Enforcement Administration - London Resident Office, Bell County Sheriff's Office, Harlan County Sheriff's Office, and Kentucky National

Guard JSO Recon. Appalachia Narcotics Investigations remains committed to identifying and dismantling drug trafficking organizations responsible for supplying dangerous controlled substances throughout southeastern Kentucky. This investigation demonstrates the importance of cooperation between local, state, federal, and military partners in disrupting drug trafficking networks and holding those responsible accountable.

Middlesboro Music Series kicks off



PHOTO COURTESY MIDDLESBORO MUSIC SERIES

The 2026 Levitt AMP Middlesboro Music Series kicked off Thursday evening with headliner Nik Parr & The Selfless Lovers and Blake Branscom opening the show. Parr is pictured heading into the crowd during a saxophone sole. This Thursday's free concert features The Droptines with Jack Browning opening at 6:30 p.m..

Frakes School Center draws national attention

By Jonathan Neely
Bell County Schools

Since November, excitement has filled the air at Frakes School Center as the school has achieved the type of excellence all schools hope for: being ranked as the state's best and second-best school in different categories. These achievements have gained statewide and even national attention for the staff, students, and administration at Frakes. That attention recently led to a case study and publication by The Thoughtful Classroom, a nation-wide educational organization that teaches the instructional strategies that have been key to student success at Frakes. The case study highlights Principal Christie Willis' leadership and dedication to improving student engagement from day one, stating, "When Principal Willis joined Frakes in February 2022, one of her first initiatives was to conduct Learning Walks and data reviews." However, as a new leader, Principal Willis recognized that "this work of learning where we were had to be done with teachers, rather than to them." The article also highlights that the journey "from code orange to number two in Kentucky" was made possible through a team effort across Willis' staff. The study explains that, as a team, the staff recognized that while classrooms were orderly and relationships were positive, the challenge was ensuring students were highly engaged in the kind of thinking and discussion required for deeper learning. The study shares that the team at Frakes found tremendous success when, rather than launching multiple initiatives, they committed to a single, high-leverage priority: student engagement. The results are evident throughout

FolkFest returns to Cumberland Gap August 8

By Jay Compton
Middlesboro News

Appalachian traditions will take center stage once again when Cumberland Gap FolkFest returns on Saturday, August 8, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in historic downtown Cumberland Gap. The free, family-friendly festival invites visitors from across the region to experience a full day of Appalachian music, traditional arts, handcrafted goods, storytelling, local food, and the mountain heritage that continues to shape the region. Originally founded in 1974 by the Cumberland Gap Townlift Committee, FolkFest became a beloved summer tradition before taking a hiatus. Since its revival in 2022, the festival has grown through the leadership of Guardians of the Gap, Cumberland Gap, local businesses,



JAY COMPTON/MIDDLESBORO NEWS

Joseph and Samantha Hensley perform Bluegrass music in the Olde Church Events Center during last year's FolkFest. They also demonstrated instrument making during their performance. volunteers, artists, and community partners committed to preserving and celebrating Appalachian culture. This year's FolkFest will feature more than 60 artists, craftspeople, demonstrators, musicians, and vendors representing communities throughout the Appalachian region. Throughout downtown, visitors will find live performances, traditional craft demonstrations, educational

exhibits, hands-on activities, and opportunities to meet the artists and culture bearers keeping Appalachian traditions alive. Festival Highlights

- Live Appalachian music throughout the day under the main tent and at locations across downtown.
- Traditional craft demonstrations featuring broom makers, potters, painters, woodworkers, herbalists, fiber artists, and other regional artisans.
- Heritage talks and storytelling celebrating the people, places, and traditions of Appalachia.
- A children's area with hands-on activities and traditional Appalachian games.
- Regional artisans, makers, and food vendors showcasing Appalachian craftsmanship,

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84° | 61°
Cloudy

OBITS

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Middlesboro, Kentucky

\$1 Newsstand

