

UPGRADES

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had an architect and mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineer to do an assessment of all the needs at the facility.

“When we did the assessment, we also identified finishes that needed to be repaired, spaces that weren’t being utilized for the purposes they were intended for and insulation issues,” he said. “At that point we worked with the architect and engineers to develop an opinion of costs of what it would take to renovate the building the way it needed to be renovated.”

Rhodes said Chief Justice Debra Lambert, a Bell County native, was very diligent in including the project into the

judicial branch budget based on that opinion of costs.

As part of the MOU approved on Thursday, a project developmental board will be created consisting of the Judge Executive, Circuit Judge, District Judge and Circuit Court Clerk.

Judge Executive Elect Rick Nelson was in attendance at Thursday’s meeting and Brock said he would be invited to any future meetings of that board since he would be taking Brock’s place on it in January “just to flatten the learning curve because the lion’s share of this — the construction, the bond payments, all of those things are going to fall on you and your staff to execute. Most of what we’re going to do is just get the paperwork straight.”

Saylor asked if there was a projected date for the project to be completed.

Rhodes there wasn’t yet.

“Once we get in and develop the full scope of the project and the logistics of that, because there are a lot of moving pieces with it being an occupied building. How will we handle finding space for those functions that are currently being handled within that building? That will be a discussion the project development board will have with the architects and construction provider,” he said. “It’s an extensive project the way we’ve looked at so there will probably be months to multiple years that we’ll have to find an alternate location for.”

Brock said the county

is hoping to be able to charge the AOC a reasonable amount of rent to use the old courthouse during the construction.

“We’ve got some vacant office space in the basement and they could use this room for Circuit and potentially District Court,” he said. “It might be an opportunity for us to help them out and also bring a little extra revenue to the county. Obviously, it’s going to be an inconvenience for everybody but progress is often messy.”

Magistrate Joe Hammontree asked if the project would include any improvements in parking at the judicial center.

Slusher said that had been discussed and also took a minute to defend the project.

“Any Bell County tax-paying citizen that doesn’t see this as an exciting day

for our judicial center, you’ve got to be a moron,” he said. “My colleagues across the state, all 120 circuit court clerks would love to be getting this news. A lot of judicial facilities are in old courthouses that have issues over time and ours has major issues. We’ve been trying to do this for a long time so it is a win for Bell County today.

“I’m appalled by somebody that would say they were against improving things for Bell County. Do you want that money to go to Paducah? Do you want it to go to northern Kentucky? It’s coming to Bell County and everybody should have a smile on their face about us receiving this money instead of somebody else.”

Slusher added the county owed a special

thanks to Justice Lambert as well as State Rep. Adam Bowling and Sen. Scott Madon for helping to get the project including in the final budget and pushing it over the finish line.

“When you drive by that building, it’s a good looking building but on the inside it’s falling apart,” Slusher said.

Brock agreed and shared that he had a picture of a garbage can sitting on the Circuit Judge’s desk with water running into it from a light fixture.

With the MOU in place, Rhodes said the next step would be a notice issued by the Chief Justice to officially form the development board and that would basically kick off the project.

GREGORY

Continued from 1A

deadlines.

“When those hit, they’ve got to be done and Irma has always made sure that we were on time and not late and every penny was accounted for in our audits,” Brock said. “I’ve been through 20 audits with Irma and everything has been where it’s supposed to with nothing missing and nothing nefarious. That’s a big testament to Irma, more so than to me.”

Brock also thanked Irma for being a good friend to him and everyone in the courthouse during her tenure.

“If somebody gets sick, Irma prays for them and prays hard until whatever issue gets resolved. She’s very steadfast in her faith,” he said. “The county has been very blessed and lucky to have her. My works are going to fall woefully short of being able to express that and the gratitude for it, but it’s very sincere from me.

“I didn’t know Irma that well when I first got elected, but over the years we’ve become very, very good friends. Our families have become friends.”

He told Brooks he was going to personally miss her being around the courthouse over the next five months while Brock closes out his final term

in office.

Brooks said it has been an honor to serve the people of Bell County as treasurer.

“I do love everybody in the courthouse and I am going to miss the people,” she said. “I do love my job, I’ve always really put it above everything — but not above the Lord. If I worked on Sunday it would always be after church. But I’m so thankful to have had this job and I’m thankful to every one of you all.”

The court officially appointed Angel Gregory as Bell County Treasurer effective August 1 with a salary of \$45,000 through June 30, 2027.

“Historically, it has

been the assistant treasurer to get promoted and Angel has been in that role for a while,” Brock said. “I can go back as far as Curt Hoskins’ time (as judge) historically, Brenda Walters was the treasurer and Sharon Taylor was her assistant. Sharon ascended to the treasurer role and then Irma became Sharon’s assistant. When Sharon resigned we nominated Irma and Angel has ascended to the assistant’s role. Now Irma is leaving and that puts a great weight on Angel, but we’re confident that she’s going to be able to handle it.”

He said treasurer was a very important job for the county

“It’s a big, big job. It’s not something that you can just pluck somebody off the street and bring them in and say OK now you’re the treasurer because you worked at a bank,” Brock said. “Nothing against the girls that work at the bank, but this particular fiscal operation is uniquely different. It’s kind of like you’re operating five or six companies under one flag but they’re all independent. You can’t commingle money or use certain funds for certain things.”

Brock also pointed out that the treasurer was the only employee in the county that works directly for the magistrates.

The court also approved the treasurer’s monthly financial statement, fourth quarter financial statement and annual reconciliation settlement for 2026 (subject to audit) as well as accepting the transfer of funds confirmation where the county has changed banks.

Brock said the primary reason for holding the special called meeting was due to the bank not being able to prepare the financial statements for Brooks in time for the regular July meeting.

The magistrates also approved removing Irma Brooks’ name from and adding Angel Gregory’s to all Bell County Fiscal bank accounts.

MAN

Continued from 1A

roadway taking a combative stance. He was told to stop and said he “had a gun too...and I will kill you both.” Gambrel refused to obey the officers order to stop continuing to threaten them and said his dog “would get them.”

For compliance, a

taser was deployed on Gambrel who was still resisting the officers while calling for the dog to attack them. While Det. Luttrell and Ofc. Churchwell tried to place Gambrel in cuffs, his dog came over and attacked the detective. The dog punctured both of Det. Luttrell’s ankles and would not let go. To stop the attack, the dog was fired upon and

struck twice. It was shot two additional times after it appeared it would attack again and succumbed to its injuries shortly afterward.

After a continued struggle with Gambrel, he was placed in handcuffs but continued to resist the officers and they had to deploy OC spray to get him in a cruiser.

He was lodged in the

Bell County Detention Center, charged with terroristic threatening - 3rd degree, menacing, public intoxication - controlled substance (excluding alcohol), fleeing or evading police - 1st degree (on foot), resisting arrest, disorderly conduct - 1st degree, criminal trespass - 1st degree, and assault - 3rd degree - police officer.

Detective Luttrell was taken to the Pineville Community Health Center for treatment of his injuries and has since been released.

In recent encounters Gambrel has been armed with a machete and a hammer. Detective Luttrell has also

fielded concerns from citizens in the Arjay community after Gambrel has said he had a gun.

Additionally, this is the third such incident involving Gambrel’s dog. On a recent call, a Bell County EMS member was bitten by the animal.

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STEM project funding available for educations in TVA region

By Tom Latek

Kentucky Today

Educators in the Tennessee Valley Authority’s (TVA) seven-state region, which includes a good part of Kentucky, may apply for up to \$5,000 in funding for STEM learning projects in classrooms and schools, now through Sept. 15.

TVA will provide \$1.5 million in partnership with Bicentennial Volunteers, Inc. (BVI), a TVA retiree organization.

““Every student should get the chance to explore big ideas with real world tools,” said interim TVA President and CEO Mike Skaggs. “When we invest in the curiosity of young people today, we’re helping build the strong communities and bright futures our region depends on.”

The competitive STEM classroom award program is operated in partnership with the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network that is managed by the Battelle organization. The program received 528 grant applications last year with

339 selected for funding. Since 2018, TVA/BVI has provided \$9.5 million in STEM awards supporting over 845,000 students.

“It’s funded 3D printers, hydroponic towers, and it’s helped us refresh our garden. One year we purchased microscopic digital viewers for students,” said Jennifer Kennedy, a STEM specialist at Cowart Elementary School in Athens, Alabama. The school has received multiple awards during the program’s history.

“They are so excited, especially with the 3D printers,” Kennedy added. “They see all the videos on YouTube, and they want to be producers as well.”

Teachers can apply at tva.com/learn/stem-awards for up to \$5,000 to fund STEM projects with preference given to applications that explore TVA’s primary areas of focus: energy, environment stewardship, economic and career development, and community problem-solving.

“These awards fund hands-on projects in sci-

ence, technology, engineering and math, building the teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills students will carry into any career,” said Adam Wolcott, BVI Director of Operations. “When we invest in a teacher’s vision today, we’re helping build the workforce our region will depend on tomorrow.”

Eligible applicants are teachers or school administrators in public or private schools, grades K-12. Schools must be in the TVA service area and receive electricity from a local power distributor served by TVA.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is the nation’s largest public power supplier, delivering energy to 10 million people in seven states. That includes 39 Kentucky counties as well as all or parts of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Hearing Notice

To all interested citizens of City of Pineville, Kentucky:

The Kentucky Department for Local Government is accepting application material under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Design Only Program. The City of Pineville intends to apply for CDBG design funds assistance for the development of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), research, and design of construction plans for the separation of the existing combined sanitary/storm sewer system along Tennessee Ave and Park Ave in the southeast portion of downtown Pineville.

The City of Pineville will hold a public hearing prior to the submission of the pre-submission form. The public hearing will be held on Monday, August 17, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Pineville Bell Theater (114 Kentucky Avenue, Pineville, KY 40977). The purpose of this hearing is to obtain views on community development needs, review proposed activities, review the proposed application, and solicit public comments. Technical assistance is available to help groups representing low and moderate income persons in developing proposals.

The following information concerning the CDBG program is available for public inspection at Pineville City Hall during regular business hours:

A. Amount of funds available and range of activities that may be undertaken.

B. Estimated amounts of funds proposed to be used for activities benefiting persons of low and moderate income.

C. Plans for minimizing displacement of persons as a result of activities associated with CDBG funds and plans for providing assistance to those persons to be actually displaced as a result of CDBG-funded activities.

D. Records regarding the past use of CDBG funds.

E. A summary of other important program requirements.

Comments on Application

A copy of the CDBG application material will be on file at Pineville City Hall for citizens’ review and comment during regular business hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday, August 10, 2026, through 4:00 p.m. August 17, 2026. Comments on the proposed application may be submitted to the attention of the mayor until the close of business on August 17, 2026.

Discrimination Clause

The City of Pineville does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion or disability, and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation, including auxiliary aids and services, to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs and activities. Any persons requiring special needs assistance should contact City Hall at 606-337-2207 at least five days prior to the meeting. The TDD number for the hearing impaired is 1/800-648-6057 (or local number if available).

NOTE: ADA Contacts

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