

# COURTHOUSE

## CIVIL SUITS ■ DOCKET ■ COUNTY

INEZ — Martin Circuit Clerk Denise Gauze reported the following civil suits filed in her office from June 5 to June 11:

- Credit Acceptance Corporation vs. Ann Ball.
- Danna Hinkle vs. Rhonda G. Sartaine.
- LVNV Funding LLC vs. Christy Messer.
- LVNV Funding LLC vs. Tiffany Hinkle.
- Quail Hollow 2 vs. Greg Lilly.
- LVNV Funding LLC vs. Herbert Cantrell.

### DEEDS

INEZ — Martin County Clerk Susie Skyles reported the following deeds recorded in her office through June 10:

- William Russell Callaham and Patricia Lynn Callaham to Troy Blackburn and Maggie Blackburn.
- John Moore and Chong S. Moore to the Moore Family Revocable Living Trust Agreement.

### MARRIAGES

INEZ — Martin County Clerk Susie Skyles reported the following marriages recorded in her office through June 10:

- Brooke Alexis Dials, 28, of Inez, and Kamron Jose Snell, 26, of Mount Sterling.
- Hallie Brooke Mills, 20, of Tomahawk, and Braxton Lee Smith, 21, of Tomahawk.

The Mountain Citizen

INEZ — Judge Brett Butcher heard the following cases June 9 in Martin District Court:

- Floyd Howell Jr. (arraignment) — Public intoxication of controlled substance (excludes alcohol): Pleaded not guilty, pretrial conference 8/4/26 at 10 a.m.
- Miranda Martin (arraignment) — Assault, fourth degree, no visible injury; assault, fourth degree, minor injury; harassing communications; criminal abuse, third degree: Pleaded not guilty, pretrial conference 8/3/26 at 10 a.m.
- Brandi Moore (arraignment) — Possession of controlled substance, first degree, first offense (methamphetamine); failure of owner to maintain required insurance/security, first; improper display of registration plates: Preliminary hearing 6/23/26 at 11 a.m.
- Dustie Clay (pretrial conference) — Cruelty to animals, second degree: One-year diversion on the condition that the defendant completes 60 days of community service through the CARES program, waived court cost.

Timmy Austin Mullett (pretrial conference) — 1. Inadequate silencer (muffler); 2. Operating on a suspended/revoked operator's license; 3. No/expired registration plates; 4. Failure of owner to maintain required insurance/security, first: 1-2. Pleaded not guilty, pretrial conference 8/18/26 at 10 a.m.; 3-4. Dismissed, proof shown.

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Congressman Harold Rogers originated after the Martin County Fiscal Court in June 2024 purchased several downtown properties extending from the vacant lot beside Leonard Stayton's law office to the boundary of People's Bank on Main Street.

On June 4, 2026, Rogers announced that the \$7.3 million Community Project Funding earmark for the Martin County Fiscal Court was among nearly \$85 million in Eastern Kentucky projects approved by the House Appropriations Committee and advancing to a vote before the full House.

In announcing the funding request, Rogers said the Revival on Main: Downtown Inez Infrastructure and Revitalization Project includes "repairing water and utility needs and preparing the downtown area for new economic opportunities."

"This big dream of building Inez has lain here forever in dilapidated form," Mills told EDA board members.

"It's not a done deal, but it's very promising," she said of the earmark.

Mills said county officials expect to know by September whether the funding will be approved. If so, the EDA could begin accessing the money early next year.

EDA board member Eddie Howell asked whether the board would have input into the project's design.

Mills said county officials have discussed constructing a park, a parking lot, a road and a new mixed-use building.

"Residential on the top — apartments — because we want people to live downtown; there's no place to live," Mills said. "And retail space on the bottom."

She said architects would develop preliminary concepts and present them to local officials and the EDA for review.

"They'll put a design together, and then we get to go in and say, 'I don't like that,' or 'Add that,'" Mills said. "He will work with us to get it to where we need it to be."

Board member Brad Pack questioned the concept of retail space in the development.

"Do you have anything?" Pack asked Mills.

She replied that she did not have identified retail tenants.

In related business, Mills asked the EDA board to approve hiring two architecture firms to begin designing a parking lot and park area using a \$10,000 Flex-E grant awarded last month to the Martin County Fiscal Court.

The Center for Rural Development awarded the grant, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, noting that the county will use the funding "to begin planning for a new park and outdoor amphitheatre in downtown Inez." The organization said grant funds will support architectural and engineering services for the proposed "Heart of Inez Park and Outdoor Amphitheatre Project."

"The initiative will transform a blighted downtown site into a construction-ready tourism and community destination through development of renderings, site plans and bid-ready documents," the organization stated.

Mills explained that the grant would fund a landscape architect and a building architect.

The board approved moving forward with the planning work.

Martin County Judge/Executive Lon Lafferty commented on the federal earmark after the meeting, saying water and wastewater upgrades will be his top priority.

"Downtown Inez serves as the heart of Martin County," Lafferty said. "This project represents an investment not only in our infrastructure but in our future. Modern utilities, improved drainage and development-ready sites will allow us to build upon the momentum we are seeing throughout our county. Our goal is to create a downtown that residents are proud of, businesses want to invest in, and visitors want to experience. This is about preparing Martin County for the next generation of growth and opportunity."

In his request for the federal earmark, Lafferty said the funding would go toward modernizing asbestos water lines, updating wastewater systems, correcting graywater and stormwater drainage failures, and placing electrical utilities underground.

"In the spirit of 'dig once' project foresight and planning, we will rehabilitate this utility construction to add a walkable public park, develop a downtown parking facility to support commerce and install the necessary infrastructure and construct a mixed-use building that will provide small business space and affordable housing," he said.

Lafferty noted in the funding request that the county had already invested substantial local resources in planning and preliminary development and is committed to another \$1 million in coal severance tax dollars to support this effort.

"The project is in advanced planning and the county can obligate funds within 12 months of enactment," he said.

On Tuesday, Lafferty said the county is pursuing

additional funding opportunities for the project.

### Industrial building

In other business, EDA Chairman James Ayers provided an update on the authority's industrial building at the East Kentucky Business Park in Debord.

Ayers said Frontier Housing will continue paying rent through July, at which point its lease agreement will terminate.

"We've already been discussing the building with those interested," Ayers said. "There is another group coming Monday to look at it. So I think everyone is confident that we will be able to get somebody in there fairly quickly that hopefully leads to job creation."

Frontier Housing signed a three-year lease for the 55,000-square-foot building in June 2025. At the time, officials announced that the Morehead-based homebuilding company would create 20 to 25 high-paying jobs initially and increase employment to nearly 40 positions within two years.

In April 2026, Ayers reported that Frontier had never moved into the facility and had indicated it wanted to discontinue its DreamBuild expansion plans and abandon the lease.

### Donation, meeting change

The EDA agreed to contribute \$650 to Martin County Tourism to fund inflatables for a Fourth of July celebration in downtown Inez.

Board members also voted to change the frequency of EDA meetings to every other month rather than monthly unless specific business requires additional meetings. Tentatively, the next EDA meeting will take place Aug. 12 at 5:30 p.m. on the second floor of the Martin County Government Center.

incorporated area of Martin County and includes both a primary route and an alternate route.

The transmission line would serve the Lynn Bark Energy Center, a solar facility planned on approximately 1,514 acres of reclaimed mountaintop coal mine land about 6 miles south of Inez. The project is designed to generate up to 200 megawatts of electricity and will include approximately 357,588 photovoltaic solar panels, 51 inverters and an on-site substation transformer.

Savion filed its merchant plant application for the solar project with the Kentucky Siting Board in June 2024 under Case No. 2024-00104. The board granted a conditional construction certificate in November 2024 following a review process that included public hearings and testimony from local officials.

The transmission line represents a key component of the project, providing the connection necessary to move electricity generated by the solar facility onto the existing transmission system.

According to filings with the Siting Board, the solar farm is expected to begin commercial operation in March 2029.

The Siting Board has not yet announced a timetable for reviewing the transmission line application.

## SOLAR

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ing before the Siting Board in Case No. 2026-00096.

A public notice scheduled for publication June 17 states the proposed line would be located in an un-

### SHARE YOUR VOICE: Pool Party & Plan Launch

Over the last six months county residents have helped create a new strategic plan - a roadmap for the years ahead, based on resident priorities. Join us at a FREE pool party to celebrate the completion of the plan and what we all love about Martin County.

FREE Admission - FREE Food - LIVE Music from the Pick N Bow program - EVERYONE Welcome

Friday, June 26  
Martin County Pool  
57 Cardinal Lane, Inez  
6pm-8pm

For questions contact Tyler McDaniel at tyler.mcdaniel@uky.edu or (859) 257-7272

The Martin County-Tug Valley

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