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Transit director proposes nearly 173% rate increase

Ride to Frankfort would skyrocket from \$22 to \$60 if approved by fiscal court

BY ANN CARTER
CORRESPONDENT

The cost to use the county's transit system could soon be more expensive.

A lot more expensive.

Dan Brenyo, the transit system's director, on Tuesday told the Owen County Fiscal Court he is considering a significant rate increase for the system and set a public hearing on the proposal for 10 a.m. March 19 in the upstairs meeting room of the Owen County

Courthouse.

Brenyo said the last rate increase occurred in 2016. The current fare, \$3 for the first 10 miles and 40 cents for each additional mile, would shift to a flat \$1 per mile under the proposed hike. He stated that the adjustment would bring Owen County's rates more in line with other public transportation providers.

That meeting is open to the public. The change would have noticeable effects on longer routes. For example, a round-trip to Frankfort currently costs roughly \$11, but the same trip would rise to over \$60 under the new rate – a 173% increase from the current rate.

Brenyo said the Owen County Transit is the only county-supported public transportation service available in northern Kentucky.

If adopted, the new rate would take effect July 1.

Judge-Executive Todd Woodyard said after the meeting that any change to the rate would have to be approved by the fiscal court, and that no date had been set for a vote.

The court also heard from Jenni Duncan from the Wide Open No Fear Rodeo committee. Duncan requested a letter of support from the fiscal court to accompany a grant application the group plans to submit.

The rodeo committee is seeking \$50,000 in grant funding to upgrade the RV sites at the Owen County Park and Fairgrounds. The proposed improvements include installing electric service at each site, adding concrete pads, and enhancing security with new cameras. Duncan told the court that the grant application is due by the end of March.

In other business, the court

approved the purchase of 5 Harp Auto Ballot kits at a cost of \$2,570. The new ballot printing systems will be used at the Extension Office polling location during the upcoming primary election.

County Clerk Laura Gambrell said the ballot kits will help reduce mistakes by printing ballots on demand rather than relying on pre printed ballots. "The ballot kits will cut out human error," Gambrell told the court.

The court also approved the placement of a commemorative bench on the courthouse lawn in recognition of the Rotary Club's 100 years of service. The bench will be provided by the Rotary Club.

Additionally, magistrates voted to allocate \$6,801.75 for a new floor coating at the Friends of Animals shelter on Old Monterey Road. The coating will be applied to all kennels, the front entryway, and

two additional rooms. Shelter Director Hilari Gentry said the improvement will improve animal health and facility sanitation.

"The coating will help keep the animals clean, prevent sickness, and will be easier to sanitize." Gentry also stated that the coating comes with a lifetime warranty.

Coroner Mark Garnett also addressed the court, requesting salary increases for both the coroner and deputy coroner positions. Garnett stated that Owen County's salary rate levels are currently the lowest among nearby counties. He also asked the court to designate an official office space for the coroner's department to help with equipment and file storage.

The court said they will review with the treasurer, discuss possible office sites, and revisit the matter at the March meeting.

Smith, Steffen receive named to All-8 Region teams

BY STAFF REPORTS

Two Owen County basketball standouts were named last week to the All-8th Region teams.

Junior guard Michael Smith was named to the boys team and senior guard Kylee Steffen was named to the girls team.

Smith, who has received several honors during his high school basketball career, paced Owen County throughout the regular season. The productive Smith leads Owen County in both scoring and rebounding.

Smith averaged a double-double for Owen County throughout most of the regular season, a stint which featured numerous highlights for the talented guard. Smith entered the postseason averaging a team-high 19.5 points and 9.8 rebounds per game for the Rebels. Smith scored 508 points and claimed 256 rebounds for Owen County during the regular season.

Smith and his Owen County teammates were poised to meet either Gallatin County or Trimble County in the semifinals of the 31st District Boys' Basketball Tournament in Warsaw at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26. Results from a Gallatin County-Trimble County game were unavailable at press time.

Steffen is a longtime leader for the Lady Rebels. The senior guard led Owen County in both scoring and rebounding for most of the 2025-26 girls' high school basketball regular season. Heading into Owen County's regular season finale at St. Henry on Friday, Feb. 20, Steffen was averaging a team-high 12.1 points and 4.7 rebounds per game for the Lady Rebels.

Steffen has earned many honors during her high school basketball career. In addition, she has scored nearly 300 points in her senior campaign.

Steffen and her Owen County teammates were set to meet Trimble County in the semifinals of the 31st District Girls' Basketball Tournament at Gallatin County on Wednesday, Feb. 25.



Senior guard Kylee Steffen led the Lady Rebels with 12.1 points and 4.7 rebounds per game this season. Photo by Abby Hooven

CRIME ROUNDUP

Sex abuse, sodomy suspect to enter plea

STAFF REPORTS

A Burlington man is scheduled to enter a plea on 10 counts of first-degree sexual abuse and third-degree sodomy March 10 in Owen County Circuit Court.

Michael Joel Howard, 36, of Howe Road was charged indicted by a grand jury following his arrest last April on Conrad Lane.

The charges stem from incidents that started in 2021 involving a victim under the age of 16 and another under the age of 18 to engage in sexual contact in Howard's presence. Another count alleges he engaged in sexual intercourse with a victim under the age of 16 and another minor less than 18, according to the indictment.

He also faces counts of sodomy and first-degree sexual assault in 2022 and 2023, according to the indictment.

MAN TO ENTER PLEA ON SEX ABUSE OF MINOR

A Worthville man is scheduled to enter a plea on a count of using a minor in a sexual performance, according to a warrant complaint on file in Owen County Circuit Court.

Steven M. Broughton, 41, of Eagle Circle Drive, was charged with having a 7-year-old victim come into a bedroom and asked to look at her private parts and remove her underwear, court documents say.

Broughton then allegedly

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Photographs connect one generation to the next

In 1921 Fred Barnard wrote this phrase in his trade journal, Printers Ink: "One picture is worth a thousand words."

This saying became popular and was promoted as a better way of advertisement. It was taken from a Chinese proverb attributed to Confucius who said, "Hearing something one hundred times isn't better than seeing it once."

After the Civil War, photographs became a

way of preserving the images of family, friends and important events. It is indisputable that it changed the face of America.

The photos in the Owen County Historical Society Museum cover every available wall space. They occupy the tops of file cabinets, tables and display cases; and they represent decades of Owen County folks, their farms, their animals,

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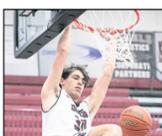


BONNIE STRASSELL

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