



**HAPPY FOURTH
OF JULY**

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Floods followed by heat in Bullitt County

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

LEBANON JUNCTION – The rain came quickly on Saturday in much of Bullitt County.

While first responders were on the scene quickly, it was a flooding situation that pulled them from every end of the county.

With around six inches of rain falling in a very short span of time Saturday morning, Bullitt County Emergency Management Agency director Jon Waters said good coordination during past disasters made the situation much better.

Waters, who has had interview requests from all over the world, said that work is currently underway to assess the damage

done by the flash floods.

Much of the publicity resulted from some information that was on social media. While the reports made it appear that a dam was failing in a subdivision in Lebanon Junction, Waters said that was not truly the case.

Voluntary evacuation was recommended for the 35 homes near Old Boston Road in Lebanon Junction. Waters said the earthen dam had some erosion but it was not in a situation that it would collapse.

About half of the residents did evacuate but Waters said they could have returned home on Sunday as the dam remained stable.

While that may have gained the

county national media attention, Waters said the flash flooding was serious.

One home in Mount Washington reported 55 inches of water inside.

Pryor Valley in Brooks was especially hard hit by the rising waters.

Pendleton Hill in Nichols and Beech Grove Road were also hard hit.

Northbound Interstate 65 along the Hardin-Bullitt County line had lanes covered with water.

At this point, Waters said the water rescue teams at the fire departments were busy all day on Saturday. If they weren't making a rescue, they were making welfare checks.

With the agencies still working on getting numbers, Waters said he did not have a figure on the number of rescues.

Most of the water has receded but Greenwell Ford Road and Cedar Grove Road remain a problem, as of Tuesday afternoon.

The heavy rains and rising Salt River led to the postponement of the Bullitt Blast/City Fair on Saturday. Those events will be rescheduled over the next two weeks.

Jailer Bryan Whittaker had a plan to relocate prisoners as waters surrounding the Bullitt County Detention Center, if needed. But the water receded and no one was relocated.

In order to receive federal

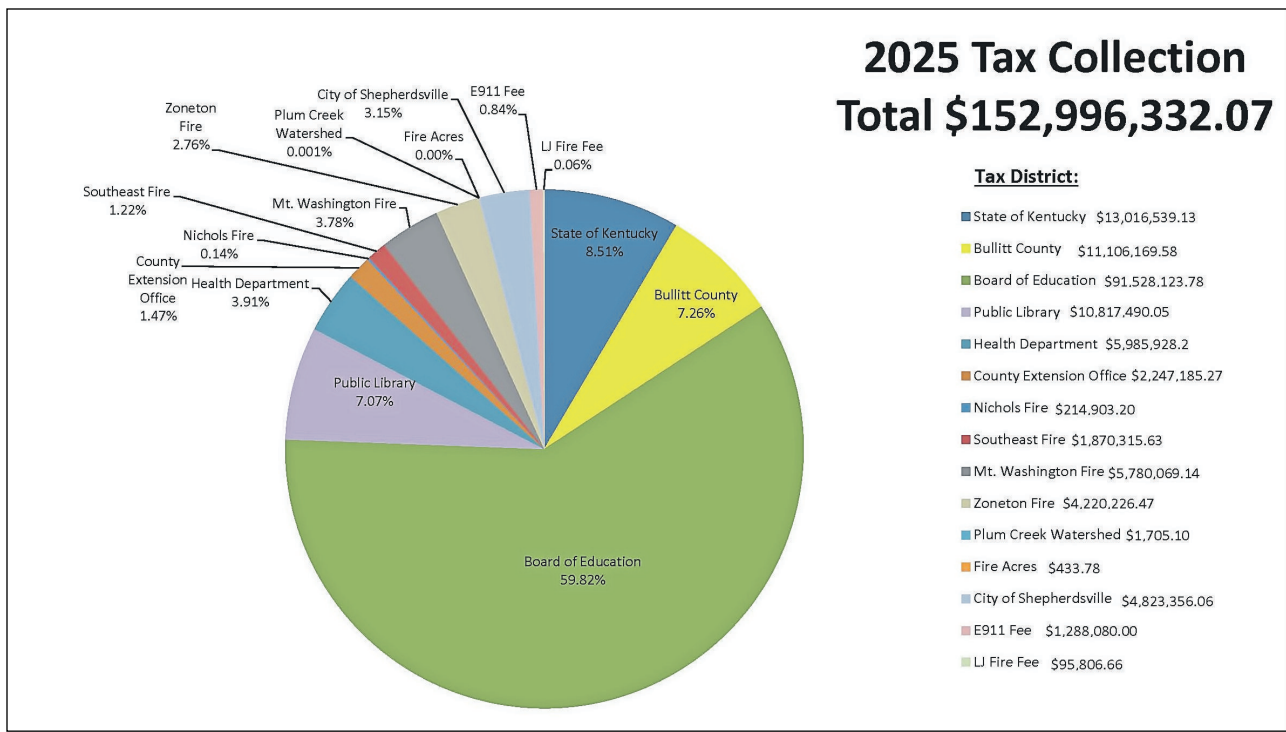
reimbursement on damages from FEMA, Waters said the county must reach a threshold of around \$400,000.

Between the road damage, the overtime incurred by many agencies and the individual damage, Waters was not concerned about meeting the threshold.

Waters said that the deadline for local assessments would be this Friday. He asked anyone with photos of the damage and high water to send them to bullittteoc@bullittky.com.

He asked that homeowners place as much information as possible on the email. There will be EMA crews out the rest of the

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Tax receipts in county grow nearly \$20 million

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE – Just look around. You will see how much the county has grown in just the past year.

The annual tax settlement from the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office was recently submitted to fiscal court.

In the report presented by Sheriff Walt Sholar, it showed that his office collected \$152,996,332.07 from the 2025 tax bills.

This is higher than the \$133,461,785 from the 2024 tax collection cycle.

Just seven years ago, that collection stood at \$80 million.

Contrary to the belief of many, all of those dollars do not go into a big pot controlled by county government.

Instead, there are 15 agencies which receive a piece of that tax collection pie.

Once again, the Bullitt County Public Schools receives the biggest piece of that pie.

For the 2025 tax year, the district received 59.8 percent of the total – \$91.5 million. This compared to the \$479.4 million from the previous year.

The second largest benefactor from the tax collection was the state of Kentucky. The Commonwealth received a check for just over \$13 million. That compared to \$12.1 million the prior year.

Bullitt County govern-

ment remains in third place with \$11.1 million, up from the \$9.7 million. This represents 7.26 percent of the pie.

The fifth largest recipient of your tax dollars is the Bullitt County Public Library System. The library system is just behind county government as it collected \$10.8 million this past year. That is 7 percent of the total and was more than the \$9.1 million in 2024.

The Bullitt County Health Department has one of the lowest tax rates in the state. However, due to the growth, the revenue continues to grow.

From the 2025 tax bills, \$5.9 million was collected for the health department. This is an increase from the \$4.7 million the prior year.

The Mount Washington Fire Protection District received \$5.78 million, or 3.78 percent. This is an increase from \$5.6 million a year ago. This includes both the fire and the EMS tax for property owners in the fire protection district.

The sheriff's department collects taxes for the city of Shepherdsville through an arrangement set up years ago when the municipality was undergoing some financial issues.

This past year, the sheriff's office collected \$4.8 million in taxes which was sent to the city. This compares to the \$3.7 million the prior year.

Zoneton Fire Protection District received \$4.2 million from the 2025 taxes.

This is an increase from the \$3.9 million during the 2024 taxing cycle.

The Bullitt County Extension Service received \$2.2 million, which was an increase from the \$1.79 million the prior year.

Southeast Bullitt Fire District realized a tax payment of \$1.87 million. This was compared to the \$1.5 million in 2024.

Years ago, the county placed a fee on each phone line to help pay for the 911 Central Dispatch. Now, each tract of property is assessed a \$36 annual fee.

In 2025, this generated \$1.28 million, up from the \$1.2 million collected in the past year.

Nichols Fire Protection District received \$214,903 in the past year. This is up slightly from the \$211,284 the previous year.

The Lebanon Junction Fire Department receives some money as part of an assessment for property which is outside the city limits but still in the district's coverage area.

The department received \$95,806.66 in 2025, compared to \$73,403.79 in 2024.

The Plum Creek Watershed district received \$1,705.10, compared to \$1,675.57.

And a tax going to Fire Acres was \$433.78, a decrease from \$434.02.

Recently, a number of property owners were notified that their holdings were reassessed. Some were reportedly large increases.

However, those

reassessments from the Bullitt County PVA office do not necessarily mean that taxing districts will benefit.

Fire districts are limited to a 10-cent cap on assessments. That means that those agencies would not be required to lower tax rates and will amount to higher tax revenue.

For other governmental agencies, the General Assembly adopted House Bill 44 in the 1970s.

That places a cap on tax revenue increases. Government agencies are limited to receiving no more than 4 percent additional revenue (new property excluded) on real estate.

If that cap amount is exceeded, governmental leaders have an option of lowering the tax rate to reach the 4 percent threshold or it could exceed that amount and risk recall at the ballot.

Most governmental agencies will opt for no more than the rate which would generate the 4 percent hike in revenue rather than taking a chance of the matter being placed on the ballot.

Agencies will be setting tax rates for 2026 in mid- to late-August once the state certifies the assessments provided by PVA Clint Mattingly.

So, your tax bills paid each year will actually be different among various taxing agencies, depending on where you might live.

Bullitt Blast canceled, merged with other city events

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

SHEPHERDSVILLE — The only blast that took place at the Shepherdsville City Park on June 27 was thunder.

Torrential rain led to the cancellation of the annual Bullitt Blast presented by the City of Shepherdsville in association with the Shepherdsville/Bullitt County Tourist and Convention Commission and

the Bullitt County History Museum.

Event officials have decided to provide some version of the Blast fun by mixing things into two other events scheduled later in the month.

According to city community planner Amber Odle, Casabella Pyrotechnics will be available to display fireworks as part of the city's Friday After Five

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Lawson withdraws request; Gooden wins magistrate seat

THOMAS J. BARR
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SHEPHERDSVILLE – You can close the books on the 2026 May primary in Bullitt County.

On Thursday, Gary Lawson's bid to see if he would find nine votes to overturn the outcome in the Second Magisterial District came to a close.

Attorney Mike Ferguson submitted a motion to dismiss Lawson's bid to have a recount in the race in which Bruce Gooden was declared the winner by nine votes.

The hearing on Thursday in Bullitt Circuit Court was for Judge Rodney Burress to determine the cost of the

recount and the date it would be held.

While an estimate on the cost, which would be paid by Lawson, was never revealed in court, Ferguson said he worked with assistant county attorney Jeffrey England to determine the possible range.

After consulting with his client, Ferguson said the decision was made to ask to dismiss the request for a recount.

Lawson had posted a \$5,000 bond originally. That would be released with the granting of the dismissal.

Following the hearing, Lawson said the cost was too high with no guarantee anything would change.

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County approves \$43 million 2026-27 budget

THOMAS J. BARR
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SHEPHERDSVILLE – The days of federal funding for the affects of COVID are over.

Governmental agencies, like Bullitt County, are now returning to the days of old – living within your means.

Bullitt County Fiscal Court recently approved its \$43 million budget for the fiscal year, which began on July 1.

This version of the budget will cut \$2.1 million from the previous year.

"We are in solid financial shape," said county judge Jerry Summers.

He said the only major expense would be Styker equipment for EMS. The rest of the major capital purchases were accomplished as one-time costs when ARPA funds were available.

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