

MY VIEWS: Kieffer pears ripen off the tree

Kieffer Pears ripen off the tree

We have a few newer Kieffer pears planted at the farm but most of the really good Kieffer pears are found on old farm sites that have long been vacant. The Kieffer pear is a remnant of a once thriving agricultural model that fed the whole family. Among the farm smorgasbord was the small home orchard; and among the orchard the Kieffer pear still stands if nothing else does.

The Kieffer pear has been around for a long time, and it seems we have forgotten how to treat it as an eating pear. If you have ever happened upon an old tree, you may have been put off by the hard fruit. You see, there is a virtue in this hard fruit if you can't go to the grocery store every few days: the Kieffer pear

stores and ripens after an initial chilling period so this is perfect if you want pears in the root cellar to last until the winter!

In fact, there is a category of pears called "Winter" pears because this chilling period initiates the ripening process and is one of the reasons pears are typically harvested prior to true ripe on the tree. Usually if pears are left on the tree to ripen their skin gets tough and the flesh gets mealy. The one exception to "pears ripen best off the tree" are Asian pear varieties like Hosui, Chojuro and Shinseiki.

So, back to the Kieffer pear, in our Fruit, Nut and Berry Inventory book the Kieffer pear is described as "large, long, golden yellow fruit with a crimson blush. Crisp, juicy, coarse textured, white flesh with musky aroma.

Excellent for canning and baking. Good variety for pear honey and preserves. Pick fruit while still hard and store in a cool place; reaches peak flavor when fruit gives slightly to the touch. Hardy, vigorous trees bear young, dependable crops. Self-fruitful. Practically immune to blight. Tolerates hot climates; grows well in all parts of the country. Extra hardy. Ripens from mid-September to mid-October. Requires 350 hours of chilling..." So, in the heat of the summer, no problem; but keep your fingers crossed that there is enough chilling time throughout the winter! This year is certainly a bumper crop for Kieffer pears!

If that description does not sell someone on the virtues of this old tree what will? I am afraid the tree fell out of favor because of the changing ways we sourced our food. No longer was the

home orchard providing fruit for our families directly or through the corner market; the Super Market became our source for fruit which meant a bulk proposition sourced from a monoculture orchard growing fruit ready to eat, not ready to store.

For fear of losing the food knowledge that allows us to enjoy the Kieffer pear: instead of thinking it tastes terrible remember the chill; and if you come across a Kieffer pear out standing in the middle of a field somewhere, you will know to harvest the fruit that releases with a gentle tug. You will know to store it in the produce drawer of your refrigerator and forget about it for a couple of weeks. And you will be delighted with the pear after it has a chance to fully ripen and there will be no need to gobble them up because you will also know that they have long storage life.

Pioneer Village gives big tax rate reduction

THOMAS J. BARR
THE PIONEER NEWS

PIONEER VILLAGE – It's that time of year where governmental officials gather to determine tax rates to be paid by property owners.

With a growing area, most Bullitt County governmental agencies have been required to lower rates in the past few years.

However, in Pioneer Village, city rates will take a huge drop when bills are distributed later this month.

At a special meeting Tuesday, the council voted to drop the real estate property tax rate from 11.39 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 7.915 cents.

That means that for a \$100,000 home, the tax would go from \$113.90 to \$79.15.

And there is a 2 percent discount if bills are paid prior to Nov. 1, 2026. Of course, there is a penalty if the bill is not paid by Dec. 31, 2026.

City attorney Mark Edison led the council through a path of learning on how the tax rates are established.

The total assessments for Pioneer Village rose from \$230.6 million to \$317 million, growth of \$87 million.

With a small amount of new growth and homestead exemptions, the increase meant that properties in the corporate limits had been reassessed by the Bullitt

County PVA.

To avoid voter recall for exceeding the 4 percent revenue increase allowed by House Bill 44, the council had to remain less than 11.203 cents. The compensating rate of 7.915 cents was also the highest amount the council could charge without hosting a public hearing.

The tax rates for personal property/motor vehicles and public service companies remained the same at 21 cents per \$100 of assessed property.

HUNTERS HOLLOW

Also setting its rates at a special meeting, the Hunters Hollow City Council also had the opportunity to decrease its real property rate.

The assessments for the city increased slightly to \$21.8 million.

The current tax rate is 7.77 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

After discussing its options to avoid a public hearing or a voter recall, the council opted to accept the rate of 7.31 cents.

This could make the tax bill on a \$100,000 home go from \$77.70 to \$73.10.

Property owners would be allowed a 2 percent discount if bills are paid by Oct. 31, 2026. A penalty and interest would be added to bills after Dec. 31, 2026.

The council agreed to keep the tax rate the same at 16 cents per \$100 of assessed value of personal property/motor vehicles and public service companies.

PV Council approves new roof for City Hall, police

STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS

PIONEER VILLAGE — During a quiet August business meeting, the Pioneer Village City Council decided to raise the roof.

The council approved a bid by JW Home Improvements to install a new roof on both Becknell Hall and the neighboring police department headquarters.

Mayor Gary Hatcher said the roof was last replaced in 1998 and reported a leak in the City Hall front office.

According to Hatcher, companies were asked for bids that included use of the same metal roofing materials for both buildings, as well as gutters.

The bid received by JW Home Improvements totaled \$29,150. Council members selected the bid over two others received from JLH Construction (\$34,980) and Roof Runners (\$71,900).

Hatcher mentioned that Roof Runners provided a much higher bid because it intended to implement seamless metal.

The council voted 4-0 to select JW Home Improvements, with members Jim Burke and John Mast absent. Afterward, resident Melanie Holbrook asked if the council researched the companies, or checked to see if they were Better Business Bureau members, or provided warranties.

Hatcher said all three companies included product guarantees with their bids. He said he was famil-

iar with all three and would have alerted the council if there were any concerns.

Council member Don Howell added that many companies contracted for city work have worked with the city in the past.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The council approved an updated version of the city's yard sale ordinance.

City residents are required to apply for a yard sale permit at the City Hall office in Becknell Hall or by calling (502) 957-3800. Only two yard sale events are allowed per residence within a 12-month period.

Visitors must park on the same side of the street as the yard sale to avoid blocking traffic flow. The yard sale host is responsible to maintain the parking.

- City attorney Mark Edison alerted the council of a request received by the Bullitt County Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the process of business zoning requests.

The commission, in the process of updating its countywide comprehension plan, is alerting all municipalities of another available option for a zoning change process.

Edison said the proposed provision would allow a city 21 days to make a decision following a recommendation from the commission. He said with the commission meetings scheduled on the second Thursday of each month, it would be difficult for cities not meeting until

the next month.

"I'm not sure it's practical for all of the county to consider it," he said.

Council member Peggy Druin asked if a city would need to host a special meeting to meet the 21-day period. Edison said it would in some cases.

The attorney said many cases were not controversial and they would not be a problem. However, he noted that the commission only hears a certain amount of cases each meeting, which sometimes backs up a case for a few months.

The council took no action on the proposed changes.

- Resident Julie Peyton made a request to place a Free Puzzle Library box near City Hall.

According to Peyton, the boxes worked similar to library boxes and food boxes, with everyone encouraged to give, take, or swap items as they pleased.

Peyton has been approved to place a similar puzzle box in Hillview near the police department headquarters and the Eadens Resource Center. She felt placing one next to the Pioneer Village food pantry box would make for a good location.

She said the box would be placed on a metal pole, on a platform, adding that she would have it installed. The council approved the placement of the box by a 4-0 vote.

- Dates were determined for the city's annual Fall Clean-up.

City residents will be allowed to bring items to Becknell Hall Saturday, Sept. 19, with a rain date of Saturday, Oct. 3.

The event will take place from 8 am to noon, or until all the dumpsters are filled. Three dumpsters will be provided by Waste Management, the city's contracted trash collection provider.

- Police chief Mark Riley reported 177 calls for service during the month of July.

Riley noted an influx of 20 building checks during the month. He said officers are now checking city business locations at night as an added security feature.

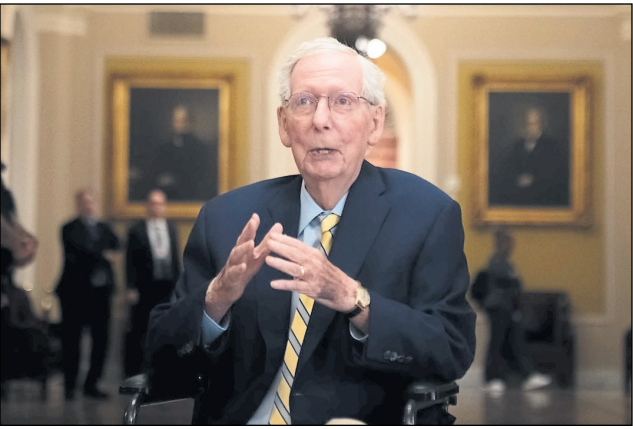
- Resident Tim Holbrook addressed his concerns about overgrowth along road easements near Maryville Elementary.

Hatcher and Edison said Bullitt County Public Schools and property owner Jim Walser were responsible for the issue. Edison added that if the overgrowth were at the point of impeding traffic, the city could take action.

Holbrook felt the issue was problematic and that the size of the available road was decreasing.

Hatcher said he would look into the issue. He said bus drivers often contacted the city to alert of such issues.

- The next Pioneer Village City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 22, 7 pm, at Becknell Hall on Summitt Drive. The public is invited to attend.



Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., speaks to reporters at the U.S. Capitol on Monday, Sept. 14 in Washington.

McConnell returns to the Senate for the first time since his June hospitalization

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky returned to the Senate to vote on Monday for the first time in three months, looking noticeably more frail after he was hospitalized for a June fall in his home.

McConnell's lengthy absence from the Senate generated a flood of criticism and online speculation, as he initially remained quiet for weeks about his condition. The 84-year-old senator eventually disclosed a month later that he had been "briefly unconscious" due to the fall and had also been treated for mild pneumonia in the hospital.

He briefly addressed reporters Monday from a wheelchair outside the Senate chamber, smiling but speaking slowly and with some difficulty. McConnell joked that he wasn't sure how many reporters would be there after dodging so many questions during his almost two decades as leader.

He said he was back in the Senate to work on a pending farm bill and because he has an ongoing interest in NATO and "backing up our good friends who are totally in the fight against the Russians." Reporters and photographers were told by Senate staff not to take video of his remarks in the second-floor hallway, even though video is often permitted in that area. Still images were

allowed.

McConnell, who holds the distinction of being the longest-serving Senate leader, is in his final months of his four decades in office. He is retiring at the end of January after one of the most consequential careers in modern politics.

Republicans have nominated U.S. Rep. Andy Barr to replace him, while Democrats have nominated former state lawmaker Charles Booker. McConnell has said he is determined to finish out his term.

MCCONNELL SUGGESTS HE'S STILL RECOVERING

In a statement issued before his remarks, McConnell made clear that he may still miss some votes due to his health issues.

He said that he is "still not quite back to 100%, but I've assured Leader (John) Thune that, as I continue with physical therapy on the advice of my doctors, I will do my best to be present for tough votes when our Conference needs me."

"My recovery has been a long and often frustrating process, and the lingering effects of childhood polio haven't made it any easier," McConnell said in the statement.

The senator's extended leave highlighted increasing public concern about the age of lawmakers and their capacity to carry out their duties. Speculation about his condition grew so intense at one point that Kentucky's

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MEMORIAL

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honors all branches of the military.

The Bullitt Central

JROTC honor guard presented the colors and Carolyn Dawson sang the National Anthem. The retired military in the audience were part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

HEBRON

FROM **PAGE A1**

Magistrates approved the plan for this year's rural secondary road program.

But they also asked transportation officials to look at the condition on Bells Mill Road, Greenbriar Road and Brooks Hill Road.

And Brian Bleemel wanted to make sure the state looks at a dip in the road and drainage issues before completing the next phase on Clarks Lane.

In road-related actions by the court:

*Approved speed limits to be posted in streets in English Mills and Millers Crossing subdivisions.

The speeds will range

from 15-25 miles per hour in the residential areas off Bells Mill Road.

*The court approved an agreement with the state to provide

\$140,207 for the reimbursement of work done by the county road department on state roads.

The small projects included work on Grindstone Drive, Lazy River Drive, Little Bend Trace, Mill Run Road, Old Hickory Hill Lane, Old Mill Stream Lane, Owl Creek Court, Owl Creek Lane, Rolling Ridge Lane, Settlers Court, Settlers Trace and Somber Way.

The next meeting of Bullitt Fiscal Court will be on Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 9:30 a.m. in the courthouse. The public is invited to attend.

CANDIDATE

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from the audience will not be taken. Each candidate will have a time limit to address the questions.

Editor's Note: Candidates should contact the

Chamber at 543-6727 to confirm your attendance. And candidates should also return their questionnaires to The Pioneer News (editor@pioneernews.net) no later than Sept. 22. Stories will begin on Oct. 1 for those who return the surveys.