

Fiscal Court receives update on operations at Bluegrass Army Depot

Blake Vickers

Richmond Register

While their mission to dismantle dangerous chemical weapons has long since been over, work still continues at the Bluegrass Chemical Agent Pilot Plant (BGCAPP). Craig Williams, chair of the Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission (CAC), gave an update to the Madison County Fiscal Court on everything happening with BCAP, new projects on the way, and more at the Bluegrass Army Depot during their July 14 meeting.

Demolition is still happening with some facilities at the depot. The demolished remains will be taken off site and recycled. Work on that demolition project is slightly ahead of schedule. While Williams noted scheduling on long projects like this are fluid, they are set to have completed demolition by December of 2027.

Despite that, Williams said that several important buildings



BLAKE VICKERS — RR

Craig Williams, chair of the Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission (CAC), gives an update to the Madison County Fiscal Court on everything happening at the Bluegrass Army Depot.

and other pieces of infrastructure will remain in place at the Depot for upcoming projects.

"Things are looking very good for the future as far as new projects that are coming in," Williams

said. "Funding requests for additional funding — that means funding has already been appropriated for this project incrementally. They don't have the whole budget for it, but they have enough to know that it's under contract and they can move forward."

Those projects include an energetics (explosives) plant, a metal shipping facility, and a centralized security monitoring facility. The U.S. Army is targeting training year 2029/2030 for energetics plant to be up and running. With the metal shipping facility coming along in a similar time frame.

"So many people thought that when the chemical weapons were gone, the depot is going to go away. This demonstrates the fact that that's not going to happen. That's good news for the county and for the city of Richmond and the community," Williams said.

The BGCAPP project destroyed more than 500 tons of GB, VX, and mustard agents

— extremely lethal munitions once kept earth-covered bunkers across 250 acres of the depot.

BGCAPP is currently employing 155 workers. Of that number, nearly 50% are local hires. The depot has spent nearly \$209 million with Kentucky companies, \$122.9 million of that has been spent in Madison and other surrounding counties. Williams praised those employees and others involved with the chemical weapons mission during his presentation. Noting that their miraculous record for safety during the 5 year lifespan of the project.

"The safety record associated with that project has been a phenomenal accomplishment. If we think about 100,000 chemical weapons that were destroyed and nobody got seriously injured over a period of five years, that's a remarkable accomplishment," Williams said.

That injury rate is 79% lower than the industry's average.

Berea's Old Jail transforms into Golden Hour Salon

Ariel Fugate

Special to the Register

In Old Town Berea, one of the town's oldest structures has been home to just about everything. Built in 1912 as a jail, it later became the city hall, then a church, a wood shop, a jewelry store, and a candle shop.

Shuttered after that for 5-6 years, following months of renovation, the doors are now open again. This time as Golden Hour Salon.

"This building has been part of so many people's journeys in life," owner Amber Spurlock said. "I'm really glad she's part of mine too."

A stylist of 20 years, Spurlock took a leap to purchase the building in 2025. Most of her time as a hairdresser was spent at a salon owned by Nancy Coffey, a longtime family friend and mentor.

"I always thought about what it might look like to have something of my own," she said.

As Nancy looked to retire from owning a shop, the timing felt right. After connecting with Mountain Association for financing to purchase and overhaul the building, it began to fall into place.

Turning the old building into the salon of her dreams wasn't simple. Because it's on the Historic Registry, everything had to be done carefully. That meant reworking plumbing, updating electrical systems, and installing proper ventilation, all without losing the building's character.

"Everything right down to the screws and the toilet handle is period accurate, thanks to Matt."

Matt Cox, Spurlock's boyfriend, spent months helping bring the space back to life. He said it took a lot of late nights and essential support from their friends and family to help hand paint signs and other tasks. All the small details like an old wooden phone, custom-made brass door plates and vintage porcelain lights from a Knoxville warehouse make the space what it is now.

"We wanted the building to honor its history and the history of the community," Spurlock said. "Because so much of what I do is about community, meeting people and building relationships."

Being in the heart of Old Town Berea also means being part of the town's tourism efforts. Outside the salon, Spurlock does a themed bench to give visitors a photo opportunity. This spring, they hosted a car show featuring Matt's Mayberry Sheriff vehicle. People often poke their heads in to see the space and talk with the stylists. Four stylists work in the building, including Nancy who now is able to work under Spurlock's business, a "full-circle" moment for both.

When asked her advice for fellow entrepreneurs on a recent podcast, after laughing and saying, "get you a praying friend," Spurlock said, "Find someone who supports you. If it wasn't for Mountain Association, I couldn't have done any of this. They 100% gave me my journey."

The Mountain Association is a community economic development nonprofit that serves the 54 Appalachian Kentucky counties with flexible business financing, supports and other services.

Regina Becknell, Senior Lender at Mountain Association, said, "Bringing new life to these historic buildings is vital to a small town like Berea. Entrepreneurs like Amber, with a vision and a solid plan, make this kind of meaningful investment in the community possible. We're honored to have supported her with Golden Hour."

To learn more about Golden Hour Salon, please visit their Facebook page.



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Golden Hour Salon has opened up in the old Berea Jail building.

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City of Richmond Request for Proposals

The City of Richmond is accepting bids for a new Class V 5,000 lb. Nominal Capacity Lift Truck.

For questions about specifications please contact Aaron Vaughn at avaughn@richmondky.gov.

All proposals should be sent to:
City of Richmond
Attn: Lisa Cassity
239 W. Main Street
Richmond, KY. 40475
or LCassity@richmondky.gov or submit by secure portal at richmondky.gov and should be received no later than Monday July 27th, at 1:00 pm est.

Silicon Ranch Solar Community Meeting
Silicon Ranch is proposing to develop, own, and operate the SR Madison solar project.
A 53 megawatt project on 827 acres near Crooksville Road.

The public is invited to learn more about Silicon Ranch by visiting our website at siliconranch.com or by attending a public information meeting. Questions may also be submitted by email to blake.spurgeon@siliconranch.com.

Silicon Ranch will host a public meeting to provide the community with information about the proposed project. Company representatives will be available to answer questions.

Public Information Meeting
Tuesday, August 4, 2026
6-7:30 PM
Dreaming Creek Brewery,
109 E Irvine Street, Richmond, KY 40475