

Laurel school board honors student for winning ‘I Voted’ sticker contest



Ryker Asher, a student at Bush Elementary, was the winner of the “I Voted” sticker contest announced by Secretary of State Michael Adams. | PHOTO BY MACEE SWAFFORD

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

LONDON — The Laurel County Board of Education recognized a Bush Elementary fourth grader during its regular meeting on Monday whose artwork will be featured on Kentucky “I Voted” stickers.

Ryker Asher, a fourth-grade student at Bush Elementary School, was recognized by board members for winning the Kentucky 2026 “I

Voted” Sticker Contest hosted by Secretary of State Michael Adams’ office.

Asher’s artwork was selected after more than 3,500 ballots were cast at the Kentucky State Fair. His artwork features a sun with a smiley face, and the outline of the state of Kentucky with a star placed near Eastern Kentucky with words below reading “Kentucky Proud!”

“We’re anxious to wear those, Ryker, so thank you very much,” Superintendent Denise Griebel said during the recognition.

Asher’s winning design will be featured on “I Voted” stickers that Laurel County will receive for the November election, while county clerk offices across Kentucky can also request stickers featuring his artwork.

The board also recognized the Laurel County Youth Leadership Council after the organization was named the 2026 Nonprofit of the Year during the Laurel County Homecoming.

The council is made up of more than 100 students from North Laurel and South Laurel middle and high schools. Students apply annually to participate in the council, which provides opportunities for community service, collaboration and leadership development.

Kenna Williams, Director of Teaching and Learning for Laurel County Schools, serves as the district’s lead sponsor. School-level

SEE **CONTEST**, PAGE 15A

Fiscal Court approves budget amendment, honors longtime employee

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

LONDON — Laurel County Fiscal Court approved the first reading and adoption of Budget Amendment No. 3, Ordinance No. 223.00, and recognized a longtime county employee during its regular meeting Monday morning.

The court approved the ordinance relating to the county’s annual budget and unbudgeted receipts.

The amendment increased the General Fund’s estimated receipts by \$3,230,785.54 and increased General Fund expenditures by the same amount.

At the end of the meeting, the court recognized Chad Robinson upon his retirement after 27 years of service with the Laurel County Road Department.

During his tenure, Robinson operated nearly every piece of heavy machinery in the county’s road department yard, from loaders to semis.

Judge Executive David Westerfield presented Robinson with a plaque recognizing his dedication and service to the people of Laurel County.

“For 27 years of service to Laurel County, Chad Robinson is recognized for his dedication, commitment and hard work for the people of Laurel County,” read Westerfield from the plaque.

Fiscal Court also approved rescheduling its Sept. 22 meeting to Sept. 30 at 9:30 a.m. due to the upcoming World Chicken Festival.

NO TRESPASSING

on the property belonging to Henry Estep located at 2063 Lamero Cruise Road, E. Bernstadt, KY 40729.

All violators will be persecuted.

Signs are Posted

East Bernstadt students recognized for AI projects

BY NITA JOHNSON
CORRESPONDENT

EAST BERNSTADT — The rise in AI usage is being put to good use by East Bernstadt 8th grade students — all of whom were recognized during last week’s regular monthly board meeting.

“The students used AI to develop ways to prevent or assist in a natural disaster,” said Finance Director Adam Hooker. “One project was how to help evacuate people during a tornado — which was inspired by the tornado that hit London last year. Another one was an alert system that would go to your phone, since during the tornado many people didn’t hear the alarm or the alarm didn’t reach their area.”

Another project was a detection system that would track the travel of a storm. Another one was based more on a hurricane than a tornado, Hooker added.

Board members also heard from Superintendent Vicki Jones regarding continuing the GEAR UP grant — a grant that the school has received for the past several years. Hooker explained that the federal grant year begins in October, rather than the state fiscal year which begins in July.

“We had to apply for this before the new fiscal year begins,” Hooker said.

The school district is also applying for a Kentucky

Arts Council grant, which Hooker said will accentuate the resources already being used by the Music/Art teacher for enhancing that program. He added that the grant has no specified amount but that board members approved the school applying for that additional funding.

Principal Susan Elza reported that the school year is getting off to a good start, with the middle school girls’ basketball team winding down their season. The middle school boys’ team is preparing to start their season,

as is the elementary school team.

Students and staff recently participated in theme days, which were to encourage attendance, with a High Attendance Day highlighting that week.

Board member Pate Williams was selected to be the board representative for the school district’s planning committee.

“We have to have a planning committee to look at school improvement projects,” Hooker said.

SEE **STUDENTS**, PAGE 13A

Sheriff’s 2024 Tax Audit

- A copy of the complete audit report, including financial statements and supplemental information, is on file at the Sheriff’s Office and is available for public inspection during normal business hours.
- Any citizen may obtain from the Sheriff a copy of the complete audit report, including financial statements and supplemental information, for his personal use.
- Citizens requesting a personal copy of the Sheriff’s audit report will be charged for duplication costs at a rate that shall not exceed twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per page.
- Copies the financial statement prepared in accordance with KRS 424.220 are available to the public at no cost at the business address of the officer responsible for preparation of the statement.

PUBLIC NOTICES

9.16.2026

The City of London announces an online auction of surplus items

The City of London, Kentucky, announces an online auction of surplus items. The online auction will start on or about September 25th, 2026. For a complete listing of the items and

bidding information, please visit www.govdeals.com. For more information, please contact the City of London at (606)864-4169.

Wood Creek Water District will be accepting sealed bids for approximately 46 acres of property located in Rocky Branch Hollow off of North US 25

Wood Creek Water District will be accepting sealed bids for approximately 46 acres of property located in Rocky Branch Hollow off of North US 25. Bids are to be sealed and will be opened at the October 19, 2026 Board meeting of Wood

Creek Water District Commissioners at 3:00 pm. The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids. A description of the property is available in Deed Book 643 page 116. Payment must be paid in full within 15 days.

**IN THE CHANCERY COURT FOR SULLIVAN COUNTY
AT KINGSFORT, TENNESSEE**

VICTORIA RIGNEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

THOMAS RIGNEY,

Defendant.

Civil Action File No. 2025-CK-44817

FILED 8-27-26 @ 8:51 a.m.
Katharine Jennelle, Clerk and Master

PUBLICATION ORDER

UPON sworn request of Plaintiff who has filed a Complaint for Divorce against Defendant, Thomas Rigney and for good cause shown, it is HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that:

1.

The residence of Defendant, Thomas Rigney, is unknown, and after diligent inquiry, cannot be ascertained.

2.

Plaintiff has conducted a diligent inquiry for Defendant as presented to this Court with particularity by Plaintiff’s sworn Motion for Service by Publication.

3.

The best possible notice under the circumstances and notice reasonably calculated to give Defendant actual notice is publication in the Echo Sentinel, a newspaper located in London Kentucky, or another paper of general circulation, as provided by law.

ENTERED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Katharine Jennelle
CHANCELLOR/JUDGE

Approved for entry:
J. Matt King, #025504
Spivey, King & Spivey, LLP
142 Cherokee Street
Kingsport, TN 37660
423-245-4185 (tel)
423-245-3362 (fax)

I HEREBY CERTIFY THIS IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE ORIGINAL FILED IN THIS CAUSE
8-27-26 9:28 am
Katharine Jennelle
CLERK AND MASTER