

We are trying to make KY's driver licensing easier and better

BY SEN. AARON REED AND
SEN. JIMMY HIGDON

Kentuckians, especially in rural areas, know what it feels like to take a day off work, spend money on gas and drive long distances just to renew a driver's license. That frustration is real. It affects people across the state. We hear it every day when we talk with folks in our communities. That's why Senate Bill 7 was filed this session. As we said on the Senate floor, this bill is not a permanent fix. It's a practical first step the Senate has taken to give Kentuckians relief now while we work toward long-term improvements in how the state delivers driver licensing services.

SB 7 gives local communities the option to help their residents with basic renewal services. It allows

one of four local offices — circuit court clerks, county clerks, sheriffs or judges/executives — to take on renewals and duplicate licenses if they choose. If none of those local officials opt in, the county can enter into an agreement with a neighboring county to better serve its constituents. SB 7 gives people more access without taking anything away. Under SB 7, if your county doesn't offer local services, you can still renew online or by mail if eligible. Pop-up services may continue in many communities. The Senate proposal gives counties another tool to bring basic services closer to home. The Senate quickly passed the bill, reflecting the concerns we hear daily from Kentuckians. It had 29 co-sponsors in a

chamber of just 38 members. That kind of early support does not happen often. It shows how serious this issue is and how ready Senators are to act. The Senate quickly passed the bill, to the overwhelming approval of Kentuckians. Some have argued that the bill doesn't do enough, and we understand those frustrations. But we deal with the art of the possible, and Senate Bill 7 is more than possible. This year, the Senate put one forward in Senate Bill 7, a bill that carries significant momentum.

Some have called for all driver licensing services to return fully to Circuit Court Clerks. We understand that desire. However, that approach would require a heavy-handed mandate from Frankfort

with no flexibility on implementation. Facts matter, as do the realities of truly governing. The issue came into focus in 2017, when Kentucky reluctantly moved to comply with the federal REAL ID Act. As implementation progressed, Circuit Court Clerks made clear they could not meet the new federal security and technology requirements, and that equipping all 120 clerk offices would place an overwhelming cost on local governments and ultimately our taxpayers. In response, clerks requested that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet become the sole provider of driver licensing services. That request led to House Bill 453, which Governor Andy Beshear signed into law in 2020 after it passed the

House 81-19 and narrowly cleared the Senate 21-17. SB 7 respects constitutional boundaries and confronts political reality with a reasonable proposal. It offers a voluntary step toward something better than we have now. We also want to be clear. We share the public's frustration with how long it has taken to fix Kentucky's driver licensing system.

Since 2020, the General Assembly has approved funding, opened more regional offices and passed numerous reforms. We passed laws that allow mail-in and online renewals. We approved third-party renewals through organizations like AAA. To date, that change still has not been implemented. SB 7 is only halfway through the process. The Senate

moved quickly and passed the bill to respond to years of concern from our constituents. That action created momentum. We strongly encourage our colleagues in the House to pick up the conversation the Senate started and move it forward. Kentuckians have long asked for change. Let's aim for better, as perfection is not possible. We respect the legislative process and the House's role in it. We also believe now is the time to act. Let's give SB 7 a fair hearing. Let's give Kentuckians the relief they need. Let's keep working together to find solutions that reflect what good public service looks like: listening, taking action and delivering results for the people we represent.

Maple syrup puts sweet stamp on February

Ag Commissioner proclaims February as Maple Syrup Month

BY KENTUCKY AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Kentucky maple syrup enthusiasts joined Kentucky Agriculture Department officials at Blue Ends Farm in Shelbyville today to tap some maple trees and proclaim February as Maple Syrup Month in Kentucky.

"Maple syrup production has a storied history in Kentucky," Commissioner Shell said. "Through the years, production may have lessened but it's making a resurgence and Kentucky is certainly blessed to see that. It adds that sweetness to Kentucky agriculture."

In Kentucky, maple syrup production can be traced back to Native Americans long before Europeans arrived, according to the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association (KMSA). However, Native Americans used the tree sap to create sugar, not syrup. Settlers adopted the practice but modernized it and made sugar and syrup from the sap.

The practice trickled off until the 1940s when sugar was rationed and many rural Kentuckians went back to the practice of tapping trees for sap and making their own sweeteners to cope with the shortage. But when times got a little easier, many stepped away from the tree tapping practice. Today, however, Kentucky is seeing yet another resurgence in maple syrup production. Farmers are harnessing modern technology, a changing economic landscape, and that same entrepreneurial spirit that



Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Kentucky Deputy Agriculture Commissioner Warren Beeler, right, uses a drill to tap one of the maple trees on Blues End Farm as farm owner Doug Welch looks on. The Shelby County farm tapped 200 of its maple trees this year, and the sap will be boiled down into syrup.

brought Europeans to Kentucky, to tap into the abundance of maple trees in the state to bring Kentucky maple syrup back to the table.

"While Kentucky sits just south of traditional maple regions, our forests are full of maple trees representing a largely untapped resource with the potential to grow the state's agricultural economy through syrup production," said John Duvall, KMSA president.

KMSA boasts a growing membership of about 50 producers from Pike County in Eastern Kentucky to Graves County in Western Kentucky and all points in between. Through educational events and invitations from members to tour their properties, the Association works to spread the word and grow maple syrup production in Kentucky.

Those efforts have been

aided along the way by the University of Kentucky Forestry Extension, UK's Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

There are more than 30 species of trees that can be used for syrup, Duvall said. And unlike other forest industries, syrup production doesn't require the harvesting of the tree itself, helping sustain forest land and agricultural landscape.

Although there are more than 100 maple syrup producers operating across the Commonwealth, many of them small family farms, Kentucky's large forested areas poised the state for growth in the industry aligning with Kentucky's goals of sustainable agriculture, ag-tourism, and value-added farm products.

Those interested in learning

more can visit KMSA's website can attend a host of education opportunities the Association puts on throughout the year. In February, KMSA hosts Kentucky Maple Days, Feb. 7 and Feb. 21, where Kentucky producers open their farms for tours and demonstrations and visitors can buy products straight from producers. A list of participating producers can be found on KMSA's website.

"It's amazing what can be made out of the maple syrup," Duvall said. "From candies to maple covered nuts and even maple cotton candy, if you use refined sugar in your recipes, you can replace it with maple syrup."

Those interested can find out more on the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association website, at kymaplesyrup.com or its Facebook page.

Nourishing your heart is as important as listening to it

BY BETH MAXEDON

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES AGENT
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY SPENCER COUNTY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

With February being American Heart Month, now is a perfect time to learn about ways to lower your risk of developing heart disease. One of the best ways to do this is by following a heart-healthy diet.

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet and the Mediterranean diet are widely accepted by scientists as being good for your heart. Both emphasize whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, seafood and lean meats, and fewer fatty foods and sweets. Both the DASH and Mediterranean diets also encourage followers to incorporate physical activity and movement into their day. In addition to being heart-healthy, both diets may help you lower your risk for developing type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

The Mediterranean diet has been named one of the best diets in the world on numerous occasions. It gets its name from its origins in countries like Greece and Italy that border the

food to build the foundation for a healthy lifestyle, rather than focusing on restriction or following a strict diet.

Another important component of the Mediterranean way of eating is to enjoy as many meals as possible with others in social settings. In addition to being a heart-healthy diet, studies strongly suggest that individuals who follow the Mediterranean diet have lower levels of LDL "bad" cholesterol, lower blood pressure, weight loss or weight maintenance, improved eyesight and brain function, increased joint relief from rheumatoid arthritis, and may live longer.

The DASH diet is designed to help people lower their blood pressure. In addition to consuming nutrient-dense foods, it focuses on lowering sodium intake and adding in potassium-rich foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables.

By following the DASH diet, you

may be able to lower your blood pressure by a few points within a couple of weeks. Long-term followers have been able to lower the top number of their blood pressure, also called systolic blood

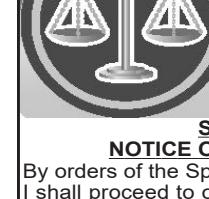
pressure, between eight and 14 points, which reduces their risk for heart disease. The diet is also consistent with recommendations for lowering your risks for osteoporosis and stroke. For more information on ways to eat healthy, contact the Spencer County office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Source: Heather Norman-Burgdorf, Extension Specialist for Food and Nutrition.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

The University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment news and communications team provides monthly Extension Exclusives in the categories of Horticulture, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H and Family & Consumer Sciences. View more UK Extension exclusives.

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LEGAL NOTICE

SPENCER CIRCUIT COURT NOTICE OF MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE

By orders of the Spencer Circuit Court in the below listed actions, I shall proceed to offer for sale, at public auction, the real estate described herein to the highest and best bidder at the Spencer County Courthouse, Taylorsville, Kentucky, on **FRIDAY, February 27, 2026, at 10:00 A.M., EDT**, which real estate is located in Spencer County, Kentucky, to-wit:

SALE NO. 1 NATIONS DIRECT MORTGAGE, LLC V. DYLAN KEITH JENKINS AND PIN OAK HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC., ET. AL., Civil Action No. 24-CI-00156, 420 Oak Tree Way, Taylorsville, Kentucky, Spencer County (for more specific and detailed description, refer to Deed Book 310, Page 413, in the Spencer County Clerk's Office. Parcel No.: 20-90-56). Plaintiff's Attorney: Travis W. Thompson

SALE NO. 2 NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE, LLC V. ANGELA J. HELTON, ET. AL., Civil Action No. 25-CI-00186, 99 Phillips Lane, Taylorsville, Kentucky, Spencer County (for more specific and detailed description, refer to Deed Book D294, Page 383, in the Spencer County Clerk's Office. Parcel No.: T3-31-0C1). Plaintiff's Attorney: Phillip S. George, III

SALE NO. 3 STOCK YARDS BANK & TRUST COMPANY S/B/M TO COMMONWEALTH BANK & TRUST COMPANY V. TAMMY J. PATTERSON, ET. AL., Civil Action No. 25-CI-00188, 179 Swan Way, Taylorsville, Kentucky, Spencer County (for more specific and detailed description, refer to Deed Book D262, Page 260, in the Spencer County Clerk's Office. Parcel No.: 32-40-146). Plaintiff's Attorney: Phillip S. George, III

Each of the foregoing parcels of real estate shall be sold on terms of cash deposit, cashier's check, or certified check in the amount of the purchase price, or 10% down at the time of sale and the balance thereof due and payable in 30 days after date of sale. The purchaser of said real estate shall have the right to pay all or any part of the purchase price on the day of sale by cash, cashier's check, or certified check. If the purchaser does not elect to pay the entire purchase price the Master Commissioner shall take from the purchaser, the sum of 10% down and a good and sufficient bond with surety acceptable to the Master Commissioner for the balance of said purchase price and bearing interest from date of sale as stated in the court order until paid in full.

Each tract or parcel of real estate shall be sold subject to the following: (a) all city, state, county and school real estate taxes due and payable in the current year and all subsequent taxes for which the purchaser shall not take credit, unless otherwise stated, in addition any delinquent taxes not named in the pending action shall be the responsibility of the purchaser to pay; (b) any easements, restrictions, stipulations and agreements of record; (c) any assessments for public improvements levied against the property; (d) applicable zoning ordinances; or (e) any matters disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property.

SALE NO. 1 The Plaintiff shall recover the present principal balance of \$229,839.88, together with accrued interest thereon at the current Note rate of 3.125% per annum starting from February 1, 2024, until fully paid, plus any other charges which have accrued, plus Plaintiff's costs expended for a grand total (as of July 30, 2024) of \$233,382.68. Plaintiff is also awarded an In Rem Default Judgment against the interests of Pin Oak Homeowners' Association, Inc. in the real property that is the subject of this matter as these defendants were duly served with summons and are in default of an answer.

SALE NO. 2 The Plaintiff is granted an in personam Judgment for the sums due under the Note and Mortgage in the amount of \$88,690.36; plus, interest in accordance with the terms of the Note, on said judgment at the current rate of 5.99000% from November 10, 2025, until paid. Plus, judgment for court costs incurred to date, in the amount of \$846.87, plus additional costs which may be expended for execution upon this Judgment. Plus, additional fees, costs and expenses in accordance with the terms of the Note and Mortgage, including advances in payment of ad valorem taxes, insurance premiums, assessments, weatherization, and preservation of the Real Property. In addition, Judgment for attorney's fees, in the amount of \$3,900.00, paid, or agreed to be paid, to its counsel for the prosecution of this matter. Total Judgment for all of above is \$93,437.23.

SALE NO. 3 The Plaintiff is granted an in-personam Judgment in the amount of \$107,254.32, plus judgment for court costs incurred to date, in the amount of \$1,246.34, plus additional costs which may be expended for execution of this Judgment. Plus, interest in accordance with the terms of the Note, on said judgment at the current rate of 3.87500% from November 9, 2025, until paid. Plus, additional fees, costs and expenses in accordance with the terms of the Note and Mortgage, including advances payment of ad valorem taxes, insurance premiums, assessments, weatherization, and preservation of the Real Property. Plus, Judgment for attorney's fees, in the amount of \$3,000.00, paid, or agreed to be paid, to its counsel for the prosecution of this matter.

MASTER COMMISSIONER'S NOTES

All prospective purchasers are advised to fully understand and consider the following:

1. All properties are sold strictly "as is with no warranties expressed or implied". Properties shall be sold on the courthouse steps, weather and traffic permitting. No prior inspections are arranged by the Court or the Commissioner in that properties are often occupied as of the day of sale.
2. Risk of loss to improvements to real estate shifts to purchaser as of the date of sale. Insurance should be placed immediately by successful bidder.
3. All properties sold for less than two-thirds the appraised value are subject to current owner's statutory right of redemption pursuant to Kentucky Revised Statutes.
4. Rights of possession given to purchaser with deed, but hold-over occupants of real estate may require additional Court action by purchaser to obtain actual possession.
5. Master Commissioner's deed warrants title only so far as authorized by the judgment, order and proceedings of the Court, but no further. Independent title examination by successful purchaser is recommended prior to confirmation of sale.

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