

THE STURGIS NEWS

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CAROL MARTIN AND Rhonda Hawkins have put in countless hours digitizing records at the Union County Clerk's office.

Union County Clerk's Office Expands Online Access To Historic Records

The Union County Clerk's Office has announced a major milestone in its ongoing efforts to preserve county records while making them more accessible and convenient for the public.

Through two separate phases of the House Bill 1 funding program, the Union County Clerk's Office successfully applied for and was awarded more than \$127,000 to undertake a significant imaging and indexing project. The funding will enable the office to digitally preserve and make available online many of the county's most frequently searched and referenced public records.

Records that will be imaged and indexed include:

- * Wills
- * Deeds
- * Mortgages
- * Powers of Attorney
- * Judgment Liens
- * Leases
- * Marriage Records
- * And many other commonly referenced public records

At the conclusion of this project, these records will be searchable online dating back to 1966, with many record series extending even further into the county's history. Attorneys, title companies, surveyors, genealogists, and members of the general public will be able to access important documents without having to visit the Clerk's Office in person.

"This project represents a tremendous investment in preserving Union County's history while improving customer service," said Union County Clerk Garrick Thompson. "Whether you're researching your family's history, conducting a title search, or

simply looking for an old record, having these documents available online saves time and makes our office more accessible than ever before."

Building on that success, the Union County Clerk's Office also applied for and was awarded a salary grant from the Kentucky Department of Libraries & Archives for more than \$12,000 in June. That funding supports a contracted employee who is dedicated to imaging and indexing historic deed records dating back to the transition from handwritten deed books to typed records in the early 1900s.

Once this project is complete, Union County will have searchable digital deed records, along with corresponding indexes, dating back to 1900. The project will preserve more than a century of property records while ensuring that these important documents remain accessible to future generations. Thompson also recognized the employees whose dedication has helped make the deed project possible.

"I want to extend a special thank you to Carol Martin and Rhonda Hawkins for the countless hours they have devoted to this deed preservation project," Thompson said. "Their diligence, attention to detail, and perseverance have been instrumental in bringing these historic records into the digital age."

The Union County Clerk's Office remains committed to modernizing its services, preserving public records, and providing efficient and convenient access to information for the citizens of Union County and all who rely on its records.

Common Financial Scams That Target Seniors

Financial scams are as old as the concept of currency. But consumers' vulnerability to scams has seemingly increased in the twenty-first century, when the Internet and devices like smartphones have enabled scammers to gain access to potential victims' financial information and even gain virtual entry into their homes.

Seniors are targeted by financial scammers with such frequency that the term "elder fraud" has entered the English lexicon and is now widely recognized as a notable threat to individuals age 60 and older. In recognition of that threat, the Elder Justice Initiative aims to support and coordinate U.S. Department of Justice efforts to combat financial fraud that targets older adults. Those efforts are ongoing and include a number of initiatives to educate older adults about elder fraud, including warning seniors about some notable scams that criminals use to target older adults.

• Social Security Administration Impostor Scam: When perpetrating

this scam, criminals typically contact prospective victims via telephone and falsely claim that suspicious activity has prompted the suspension of their Social Security number. Scammers may also indicate money must be withdrawn from a potential victim's bank and stored on gift cards for security's sake. It's important to note caller ID spoofing is often utilized when perpetrating this scam so an incoming call appears to be coming from the Social Security Administration.

• Tech Support Scam: This scam involves criminals claiming to be representatives from widely recognized companies who are calling to inform seniors that viruses or malware have been detected on their devices. Some also may claim a target's computer has been hacked. The Federal Trade Commission notes perpetrators of this scam pretend to be tech support and request victims enable them to remotely access their devices or computer. Granting such access provides

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UC Fiscal Court Approves Resolutions, Amends Lease

Union County Fiscal Court met on August 11, with seven resolutions on the agenda for approval as well as hearing the first amendment of a fire tower lease agreement. The court also approved the Green River District Health Department (GRDHD) Tax Rates for 2026.

GRDHD submitted their proposed tax rate of .05255 for both real and tangible property for approval. The court unanimously approved the rate.

Judge/Executive Adam O'Nan presented a first amendment reading to the county's fire tower lease agreement. EMA director Lee Baird told the court that the agreement amends the pre-existing agreement for tower use for by EMS and the sheriff's department to the site. The 30-year agreement with the state will allow work to begin on the project. Communications International will work on this radio project one the agreement is signed.

Magistrates also approved first reading of an ordinance for the reduction of the speed limit on One-Eye Ridge Road to 35 mph on a roll call vote. Magistrate Jim Ricketts had requested the speed limit change due to the road being narrow and curvy. Second reading will be held at the court's next meeting.

In other matters, magistrates

approved seven resolutions that will provide funding for a number of county project. Those HB 500 resolutions include

- *up to \$210,000 for Union County First support
- *up to \$145,000 for Breckinridge Museum operational costs
- *up to \$377,000 for the city of Sturgis' ongoing sewer project
- *up to \$425,000 for operational costs for Moffit Lake
- *up to \$250,000 for Phase 4 of the pickle ball courts
- *up to \$100,000 for restrooms and batting cages at Morganfield City Park
- *up to \$40,000 for Phase 4 of Coal Corner.

In approving the resolutions, O'Nan told the court that single county coal severance dollars are being spent to finish all of the projects listed.

Before the meeting concluded, the court approved claims and transfers.

At 9:23 the court went into a closed session per KRS 61.810(1)(c) to discuss potential and/or pending litigation. When they returned to open session, they had nothing to report.

The next meeting of the Union County Fiscal Court is Tuesday, August 25, at 9:00 a.m.

Sturgis City Council Hears Updates; Discusses Agreed Order

The Sturgis City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, August 12 with Mayor Billy Adams presiding and all council members in attendance. Also present for the meeting were City Clerk Sandra Germane, City Attorney Vickie Davis, Code Enforcement Officer Greg Warmack, and Fire Chief Brent Thompson.

The council took action on several items, reviewed reports, discussed a problem at the fire department, heard updates on the waterline renovation project and the blacktopping scheduled for areas of the city, and set the date for the annual Christmas parade.

Following approval of the minutes from the regular meeting in July and a called meeting on July 22, council members reviewed the financial report. Mayor Adams told the group that city office staff have spent many hours working on a new format for the monthly report. On Wednesday, council members saw a more extensive view of the city's financial picture as a result of that work. City accounts continue to operate with positive balances, and officials continue their efforts to improve services for city residents.

Mayor Adams also reported that the city had received checks from Carlene Thomas for services provided during the annual Sturgis Rally. The city received a check in the amount of \$21,700, and a check for \$3,000 was presented to the local fire department.

The council also approved the mayor's mileage reimbursement report in the amount of \$159.50.

Council members were also presented a detailed water report for the past month. That report showed the water loss at 20% without flushing lines; however, public works employees were forced to do extensive flushing in July because of the extremely hot weather, and when flushing is factored into the report, the water loss jumps to 41%. Mayor Adams emphasized that is why it is imperative for the City of Sturgis to return to producing its own water and why efforts continue to secure funding for the construction of a local water treatment plant.

The monthly report from the Union County Sheriff's Department showed officers responded to 59 incidents in Sturgis during July. Ac-

cording to Mayor Adams, there was one arrest for driving under the influence in July and one arrest for alcohol intoxication during the month.

In his monthly report to the council, Warmack noted not much had changed from July. The city is still awaiting help from county crews to demolish five structures in the city. Those properties are located on Talbot, Kelsey, Pike, and King streets. According to the mayor, that help is expected in the next few days.

Chief Thompson reported to the council that the local fire department currently has 21 members. In July, those members responded to 47 medical calls, four fire runs, and set up three training dates.

Thompson had a more pressing issue, telling council members the fire department has been "using foam that is illegal." He emphasized that the foam, which he found stored in a room at the fire department, cannot be used. "This has to be removed by a cleaning company," he added. The cost of that removal is \$4,195.00. Council members approved that expenditure, and the foam will be removed as quickly as possible. Thompson told members a new foam will be purchased at a cost of about \$150.00 per container.

Mayor Adams informed the council the city water department is currently under an agreed order with the Kentucky Division of Water. He said the order is a result of the "large number of notices of violation", which date back to 2021. Adams said he was in negotiations with DOW and some of the verbiage in the agreed order has been changed. He told members the city is better off being in negotiations with DOW rather than the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Mayor Adams added that in order to have the agreed order lifted, water testing has to pass four consecutive quarters. He also said, "A new water plant is the city's action plan." A test failure will result in a \$500.00 fine, according to Mayor Adams; however, he noted DOW will consider the city's efforts to comply before implementing the fine.

In providing updates on infrastructure projects in the city, Mayor Adams said bids for the wastewater treatment plant upgrades will be advertised later this month. Work on

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