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Blood drive to honor infant battling leukemia set for June 20 in Corbin

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
Staff Writer

CORBIN — Community members will have an opportunity to help save lives while supporting a local family during a special blood drive scheduled for Saturday, June 20, at Central Baptist Church in Corbin.

The Kentucky Blood Center will host the blood drive from

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the church gymnasium, located at 201 W. Fourth St. The event is being held in honor of six-month-old Cooper Jewel, who is currently battling Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML).

According to organizers, approximately one-quarter of the nation's blood supply is used by cancer patients, making blood donations especial-

ly important for individuals undergoing treatment. The drive aims to raise awareness about the ongoing need for blood products while showing support for Cooper and his family during his fight against cancer.

Donors who participate will receive a Kentucky Blood Center "United We Give" T-shirt and a voucher for a free

pint of Blue Bell ice cream while supplies last.

Organizers encourage eligible donors to attend and help ensure blood products remain available for patients across Kentucky who rely on transfusions and other lifesaving treatments.

The blood drive will be located inside the church's gymnasium at 201 W 4th St.

Towing concerns raised during Whitley Fiscal Court meeting

BY MACEE SWAFFORD
Staff Writer

WILLIAMSBURG — Concerns over two local towing companies being removed from the Whitley County Sheriff's Department towing list were brought before the Whitley County Fiscal Court during its regular meeting Tuesday.

Jim Foley, with Quality Care Towing, and Marty Gilley with Bo's Tows, addressed the court during guest comments, saying they had been removed from the sheriff's towing list without being given a direct reason.

"My reason for being here, you guys may have heard, we've been removed from the sheriff's calling list post-election," Foley said. "My purpose was to address the sheriff and ask him for a reason. We've never been given a reason."

Gilley also told the court he had been on the towing list for several years and said he believed the decision would affect local businesses.

"Sheriff wins an election, takes me and Jim Foley off the list with no reason," Gilley said. "My question to you all is, can you all help us with it?"

County Attorney Robert Hammons explained that while the fiscal court can review county policies, the sheriff is a constitutional officer whose office operates independently of the

fiscal court.

"The complaint's the wrong venue," Hammons told the towing operators. "We don't have control of other constitutional office-holders."

Whitley County Sheriff Bill Elliott was unable to attend Tuesday's meeting, but later provided comment, saying the towing list is reviewed annually and that towing companies are required to submit updated paperwork each year.

"Commercial vehicle tags, like on wreckers, they expire March 31 of every year," Elliott said. "By policy, they're supposed to have that stuff turned in by April 1 of each year."

Elliott said neither Quality Care Towing nor Bo's Tows had contacted him directly to request being placed on the list for the current year.

Gilley with Bo's Tows stated at the meeting that neither of them were provided with a written or verbal statement saying why they got dismissed from the towing list.

"I'm trying to get it fixed like this. If you all can help two local businesses in town — that's what we're crying out for you to do," said Giley. "We've done nothing wrong, absolutely nothing wrong."

Judge-Executive Pat White Jr. recommended to the two towing companies to talk to Sheriff Elliott directly.

The sheriff's policy states that each wrecker service must provide updated KSP-25 forms and registration receipts by April 1 annually. The policy further states that failure to provide the required information by that date "will result in the wrecker service being removed from the wrecker log for the year."

"Neither one of them has called me," Elliott said. "They've expressed no concern. I have had no calls from either one of those wrecker services requesting to be on the list this year."

Elliott also said he would be willing to allow the possibility for the companies to reapply.

The court also approved the second reading of the county's Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget. The budget includes approximately \$13.8 million in the General Fund, \$5.3 million in the Road Fund, and \$4.5 million in the Jail Fund, along with funding for ongoing county projects. White said the budget also includes a 2% pay raise for county employees.

The court also approved the renewal of the county's contract with the Whitley County Board of Education for School Resource Officers for the 2026-2027 school year. Officials said the program has been suc-

cessful and that the county hopes to expand school safety efforts through a federal COPS hiring grant.

Whitley/Laurel County Emergency Management Director Jerry Rains also gave his monthly report, noting that a life jacket station had been installed at Ballard Ford boat ramp and that the jackets are being used and returned. Rains reported four search and rescue calls for the month, as well as 39 missing persons cases for Whitley and Laurel counties combined during May.

Rains said as of June 1, there were nine people still missing, with a year-to-date total of 103 missing persons cases. As of Tuesday morning, that number had increased to 119.

Anne Bays with the Whitley County Conservation District also presented the district's annual report, noting that state cost-share funds had assisted nine participants for a total of \$94,970 during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The district also certified 17 new agriculture water quality plans, maintained six agricultural districts in the Corbin area, awarded eight \$1,000 scholarships to local high school students and provided funding to local farmers for hay and pasture seeding.

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DROWNS

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Fire Department.

Later that same afternoon, emergency responders from Laurel and Whitley counties were called to a separate possible drowning at the spillway on Laurel Lake.

According to the London-Laurel Rescue Squad, Laurel/Whitley Emergency Management requested mutual aid at approximately 4:25 p.m. Rescue crews — including London-Laurel Rescue

Squad, Woodbine Fire and Rescue, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Whitley County Sheriff's Department, Kentucky State Police and Whitley County EMS — responded to the area with boats and rescue equipment.

However, shortly after crews arrived on scene, Kentucky State Police located the individual — who wasn't identified — safely, and no injuries were reported.

Services were held Tuesday for Vickers at Bowling Funeral Home.