



JACKSON COUNTY BANK
Serving Jackson County Over 120 Years

Visit us online at: jacksoncobank.com

LOCATIONS:
MCKEE
ANNVILLE
SAND GAP



USPS 271940 COPYRIGHT ©JACKSON COUNTY NEWSGROUP ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. THIS MATERIAL MAY NOT BE PUBLISHED, BROADCAST, REWRITTEN OR REDISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT.

Vol. 100 • Number 31

Jackson County Sun

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026

www.jacksonsunky.com

75¢

2026 Boone Forest Rally Showcases the Power of Rural America



Utilizing the backroads of Jackson County provides some of the most beautiful scenery for the most exciting races



Visitors to the 2026 Boone Forest Rally wander Water Street in downtown McKee, KY marveling at the cars

The 2026 Boone Forest Rally once again proved that world-class motorsports can thrive in the heart of Appalachia. Sanctioned by the American Rally Association (ARA), competitors from across the United States traveled to Eastern Kentucky to take on some of the most technical and scenic roads in the country while bringing visitors, tourism, and economic opportunity to our rural communities. This year's event began with activities in Laurel County before competitors raced through the winding roads of Jackson and Lee Coun-

ties, eventually finishing under the lights at the Appalachian Overland Triangle (AOT) in Owsley County. The spectator super stage and awards ceremony at the AOT brought together race teams, volunteers, families, and fans to celebrate another successful year of rally in Kentucky. The Boone Forest Rally is about much more than competition. Every hotel room booked, every restaurant visited, every tank of fuel purchased, and every stop at local businesses creates an economic impact that benefits com-

munities often overlooked by traditional tourism. Rally brings thousands of visitors directly into rural Appalachia, demonstrating that our mountains, public lands, and backroads are valuable assets capable of supporting sustainable economic development through outdoor recreation and motorsports tourism. Backroads of Appalachia remains committed to its mission of community first, racing second, using events like the Boone Forest Rally to showcase the beauty, hospitality, and potential of Eastern Kentucky.

See RALLY - Page 7

Local Business, McKee Auto Supply, Adopts Local Artist Laura McCowan



Laura McCowan, our local artist and Donnie Smith, the owner of McKee Auto Supply

McKee Auto Supply has “adopted” local artist, Laura McCowan. Ms. McCowan has been a Jackson County resident since she was 16, and worked in the community for decades utilizing her creative skills, from drawing pictures of mice while working at Gray Hawk Headstart to creative problem solving as a supervisor for MidSouth in Annville. Now that she has retired Laura enjoys quilting and acrylic painting using bright colors. At age 84 she sometimes feels self-conscious of her abilities - in fact when she found out McKee Auto Supply wanted her to be their artist, her response was “really?!?” She was shocked and honored to have the opportunity. Laura was nervous because brush strokes can be difficult due to her hands shaking, but she got to work. She worked for 2 weeks wanting an artpiece that not only shows what McKee Auto Supply has to offer but she also wanted to paint something as tribute to all our county's “shade tree mechanics”. As a single mother working everyday she knew the struggle and necessity of having a reliable vehicle. The frustration you feel when a car breaks down, the hope that you can find the part you need some place local, and the gratitude of having a friend, family member, or neighbor that knows how to fix it. So the next time you stop in McKee Auto Supply (Part City) be sure to take the time to notice the round painting by the register and realize that you are seen, your frustration has been felt, and your hard work appreciated by your local artist, Laura McCowan. With no art gallery in the county, the Jackson County Creatives have begun asking local businesses if they would like to “adopt” a local artist. The businesses are displaying at least one art piece from one of our county's artists, not trying to sell said artpiece and not responsible if something happens to the artwork, only displaying. This allows Jackson County artists to have a place with foot traffic to showcase their work and shows the community that this business cares about our local talent. If you are a local artist or a local business that would like to partici-

See ARTIST - Page 7

McKee City Council Hears Updates on Several Ongoing Infrastructure Projects



City of McKee - City Hall

The McKee City Council met in regular session on Monday, July 20, 2026, with Mayor Michael Stidham calling the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Council members Vicky Gabbard, Dylan Harrison, Brandon Vickers, Jewell Gabbard, and Rich Waite were present. The council unanimously approved the minutes from both the June 15 regular meeting and the June 22 special meeting. City officials provided updates on several ongoing infrastructure projects. The Wastewater Treatment Plant project remains in the planning and funding stages, while construction has officially begun on the city's sewer line replace-

See CITY - PAGE 7

INSIDE

Gov Seeks Major Disaster Declaration (SEE PAGE 9)

Interim Judge Paul Hays Report (SEE PAGE 2)

COLUMNS

Briar Philosopher
See - Page 4

Shooting it Straight
See - Page 4

Notes to Consider
See - Page 4

Road to Mental Wellness
See - Page 2

Speak Up, Jackson County
See - Page 2

