

Horbovetz plans Murray State path toward aquatic biology

BY BEN OVERBY
FOR THE TIMES LEADER AND HERALD LEDGER

Alex Horbovetz — a senior at St. Mary High School — hopes to pursue an education in aquatic biology at Murray State University.

Horbovetz is this week's Murray State University Teen of the Week.

Horbovetz said he first got acquainted with Murray State's campus through participating in the Commonwealth Honors Academy this past summer.

"It was really great," he said. "I still talk to a few guys from there. I took an art class and a music class, and both of them were great. The teachers were amazing, it was a very good open environment and I feel very glad to have taken part in it. It's the main reason I'm going to Murray State, because I kind of fell in love with the campus and the whole atmosphere there. It was a really great experience for me. I really like the campus there. It's close enough to my house. It's only about 45 minutes away, so I don't feel terribly removed from my family and my friends back here."

He said he will receive a four-year full tuition scholarship to the college for completing the program, and is interested in studying biology.

"They have a really great biology program, that's a huge reason," Horbovetz said. "I'm wanting to go into aquatic biology, and they have a really great big biology building. It's just a good mix of close enough to home and still having this great program and teachers that I really like. So I think it just ended up being a really great fit for me."

He said his interest in aquatic biology developed from life living



Teen
of the
Week



Contributed

Alex Horbovetz, is a senior at St. Mary High School

out in the country, which included childhood fishing trips.

"My grandpa would take me and my cousins out to Lake Metropolis and fish, and that was an early interest in that sort of thing," he said. "But as I got a little older, I really have fallen in love with nature and the outdoors, and especially water and fish and amphibians, things like that. I think that's just sort of a natural passion of mine. I'm really glad I'm able to pursue a career in that. The dream is to be a field researcher where I go out into these ponds and things and search and research these animals, but any sort of natural preservation job would be really really great."

Horbovetz holds a GPA of 3.98/4.0 and is a Governor's Cup District Winner in science from 2019-2023. He is also a 4-H speech area winner for 2019-2022, 2024 and 2025, and a state winner for 2026. Outside of school he coaches kids at Tenacity Training and volunteers at Hope Unlimited.

"During my freshman year of high school, my religion teacher had us crochet baby afghans for an organization called Hope Unlimited," he said. "At the time, I thought it was a little silly, but

I kept my head down and completed it. After my class completed our afghans, we took a field trip there to deliver them, and what I saw and felt there really touched my heart in a way few things do. They told us about their mission and how they need volunteers and I thought, 'How great would it be if I could volunteer here?' Then I thought, 'Why not me?' So, I started volunteering there every Wednesday, and have done so for three years now. Hope Unlimited and its mission has become a huge part of my life now, and none of that would have been possible if I hadn't decided to take the first step and reach out to them about volunteering. Before then, I do not remember a specific time I took the initiative to make a difference like that. It has taught me to not be afraid to take the first step in things I am passionate about, and I am unbelievably grateful for it."

BALLOT

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an honest mistake, and she moved to correct it as quickly as possible. However, the slight delay in resolving the issue, as well as seeing multiple candidates' election materials on display within the clerk's office, left some locals still concerned.

Caldwell County resident Pamela Ortt said her main concern is the incorrect ballot, and she is worried about how many absentee ballots have already been sent out with the mistake.

Ortt feels that this is not only a matter of fairness but of personal importance to all candidates.

Candidates listed first typically maintain a slight advantage, since some voters simply select the first candidate they see on the ballot, according to Crittenden County Clerk Daryl Tabor.

"My main concern has been the sample ballot that was printed with a candidate not in the right spot, and absentee ballots having been sent out," Ortt said. "I don't know if there was one ballot, or 100 ballots. Nobody knows how many absentee ballots were sent into that school district. They draw for their position on the ballot, and the number one spot; everybody wants it."

As a resident who recognizes the importance of voting in local elections, Ortt said she wants each election to remain fair for all running. Ortt also shared further concerns over the appearance of favoritism as well, saying she has seen candidates' campaign materials on display at the clerk's office, which she feels could set a bad precedent.

Hale clarified that only five absentee ballots were sent out before the mistake was corrected by Harp Enterprises, the election provider. She shared that she takes full accountability for the mistake, and



ALEXA BLACK | Times Leader

"I just want the election to be fair for everybody, for every candidate, because they all spend their time and their money running for office," resident Pamela Ortt said. "You can't do this and it not cost you anything, because it does."

that the new ballots and sample ballots were sent out the next day.

However, by law, Hale said the correction was not required.

"One gentleman's name did not appear first, and he had drawn first," Hale said. "It was a mere oversight on my part, because I went through and checked everything that was being sent in beforehand. So, I'm going to take that on me. We could have went on with it, just because people are going to vote for who they are going to vote for, no matter what order they are on the ballot. However, he insisted we have new ballots printed for the election, so that is what we did."

Hale also said one candidate told voters to "throw out their own ballots," and that doing so is not the right way to resolve the situation. If a resident has discarded one of the five incorrect absentee ballots, the only way to get a correct one is to call the Caldwell County Clerk's office at (270) 365-6754 and request a replacement.

According to Hale, a former candidate now running for re-election as Caldwell County Clerk, being first on the ballot will not always make a vast difference in overall election outcomes. She said that during her own candidacy, she was listed second on the ballot and had the "highest number of votes in the county."

"It has been handled,"

Hale said. "All ballots are being sent with Mr. Lane's name first as the candidate for the Board of Elections in the district that he is running in. There are no problems, and there won't be any problems on this at all. It was handled the day after, and it has all been taken care of,"

In response to the incorrect ballot, District 3 School Board candidate Kevin Lane did issue a brief statement, saying, "Jennifer made it right, and I appreciate that."

Regarding concerns about election material on display in the clerk's office, Hale notes that as long as none is present at an actual voting center or polling location, it is not illegal. Although there is no restriction, Hale said that soon after concerns surfaced, she removed the material.

"I have always allowed any candidate that wants to come put cards, ink pens, whatever they want on the counter in our office until it is time for it to become a polling place, or to be within a distance of a polling place that is allowed," Hale said. "So, I allowed the other people that are running to keep their stuff there. I kept my cards out. I moved the signs home, but there was no way that it was going against any kind of law for those to be there at any point."

Crittenden County Clerk Daryl Tabor shared the extent of a clerk's responsibilities during elections, including how ballot posi-

tions are selected, the laws in place, measures to mitigate potential errors, and the depth of the overall election process, which can create opportunities for slight errors.

"What we do as county clerks, being the election official in each county, it's almost like an iceberg," Tabor said. "What the voters see is just a very small percentage of the work that goes into elections, and there are so many steps. It's very easy to make missteps along the way. But I think when those missteps are made, recognizing that, acknowledging it, and correcting it is the right way to go."

Tabor also detailed the statutory requirement for candidates to be invited to draw their name for order on the ballot after the filing period ends. Tabor noted that the order of candidate positions on the ballot may affect vote outcomes in larger races with several candidates. However, even in individual races, some voters mark the first name they see, giving the first candidate a slight advantage.



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"We are so excited we found the opportunity to be able to reconnect this important area in the community with future development opportunities," said Caldwell County Judge-Executive Kota Young.

Rotary Club receives update on future housing development

BY ALEXA BLACK
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PRINCETON — The Princeton Rotary Club heard from Caldwell County Judge-Executive Kota Young, who gave an overview of the ongoing industrial and housing developments in the city and county.

Young began the presentation by discussing the housing crisis, saying that the Kentucky Housing Corporation put together a study at the state and county level in an attempt to quantify the housing supply gap.

"From the results of that study in 2024, they determined that we are looking at little over 206,000 houses in a shortage across the Commonwealth," Young said. "They also did it through 2029 and showed that number rises to over 280,000 in five short years. So, the scale of that issue is obviously quite large."

Young told Rotarians the specific numbers projected for Caldwell County, saying that available and affordable housing is of the utmost importance for the county. According to the 2024 study, Caldwell County needed 471 housing units, with 748 units projected to be needed by 2029.

He described the Madison Mills housing project. It will be a 60-unit complex called Madison Mills Apartments and is currently planned for construction.

The three-story building will be located on the former Hosiery Mill lot on West Washington Street and is intended to provide much-needed housing for residents aged 55 and older.

"It is a great redevelopment opportunity to inject vitality into an area of the community that was so important to our day-in day-out lives for many years," Young said. "But, after that closure, the demolition has seen better days. We are so excited we found the opportunity to be able to reconnect this important area in the community with future development opportunities."

Young called it the largest residential development Caldwell County has seen in many years and said the project will include substantial investment in stormwater infrastructure to help resolve the neighborhood's ongoing flooding issues.

Young also said that this planning is advantageous, considering its close location to Princeton's downtown businesses. Residents will have access to the district and its many shops, businesses, civic buildings and potential future restaurants both by driving and walking.

Madison Mills is set to begin at an unspecified date in 2027.

A project the IDA applied for more recently would house the 2.5-million-gallon stormwater retention basin that will mitigate flooding in the general area. Young said it would be a massive improvement to the infrastructure to be able to direct water away from the community.

Madison Mills will be comprised of 48 one-bedroom housing units for those aged 55 and up, and the remaining 12 units are two-bedroom units for any ages, Young said.

It will also be an elevator-served development and a street-facing facility with parking designated behind the building.

Young also detailed Washington Mills, which would be designated for workforce housing, specifically.

"Washington Mills is going to be what they consider a family-designated development," Young said. "What this really is going to constitute is workforce housing. We are looking at building a series of 12 plexus with walk-up units, and between one and two-bedroom developments."

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