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## SPOTLIGHT

**Wesson  
Founder's Day**  
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Volume 14, Number 5

"Your Community. Your News. Your Paper."

May, 2026

# Chamber honors Wesson movers & shakers

Special to Wesson News

Wesson Chamber of Commerce celebrated the movers and shakers of the town last month at its 2026 awards banquet.

The Chamber brought local leaders to the podium at the Co-Lin Thames Center and presented awards to businesses that helped drive the economy last year, a service organization for its charitable activities, and individuals who contributed to the life and culture of Wesson.

**Sharon Langley** was honored as Citizen of the Year and **Larry Williams**, President of Wesson Lions Club, accepted the Community Service Award on behalf of his organization. Also receiving awards were:

- **Brad Turner** for BW Turner Construction, named New Business of the Year;



Special to Wesson News

Lions Club members (left to right) Daryl and Stephanie Alsbury, Suzanne and Randy Davis, Larry Williams, Bob Arnold and Bobby Thornton celebrated receiving Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award.

- **Nekitha Jackson** for Destiny Delights, the Business of the Year recipient;
- **Landon Beasley**, Fireman of the Year;
- **Penny Martin** from Wesson Attendance Center, who received the Educator of the Year award;
- **Sergeant Rick Bynam** and Officer Brandon O'Quinn, who shared the Policeman of the Year award.

An array of speakers shared their perspectives on the Wesson community and making life better for Mississippians.

Mississippi Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson, told the awards banquet audience as the keynote speaker that strategic planning around new technologies can make the state the national leader in agriculture and forestry

Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw, who has needed to care for his mother since she suffered a stroke, said he has increasingly come to appreciate how citizens of the town step up to the plate and provide leadership when he is distracted by family responsibilities. "I particularly thank the people in this room for that," he said.

District 92 State Representative Becky Curry pointed to achievements

Cont. on page 4

# Town Aldermen discuss event vendor fees

Special to Wesson News

Do vendors in tents at town events, who pay almost nothing to sell food and products, compete unfairly with brick and mortar businesses?

A question about the fee vendors at the Chamber of Commerce Taco Tuesdays are paying – or not paying -- sparked an intense, but polite discussion about the issue among Wesson Aldermen, Teri Bath, the Chamber president, and other townspeople at the May Aldermen meeting.

Although the Aldermen had approved Taco Tuesdays, with vendors paying the town \$25 each, it was discovered the fee was not being collected. For Alderman Ashley, a local businessman, it seemed he was paying thousands of dollars for business licenses, permits and other fees while the vendors were competing unfairly. Others argued that Taco Tuesday vendors brought people to town who patronized established local businesses, and the vendors were, in fact, fledgling businesses that could grow into brick and mortar commercial enterprises and boost the local economy.

The discussion ended with an agreement on the need to enforce the \$25 vendor fee, and Mayor Shaw promising to come back to a future meeting with a comprehensive recommendation considering other licensing and permit requirements for the Taco Tuesday vendors.



Special to Wesson News

Tent vendor fees spark discussion at Aldermen meeting.

"It was a productive discussion in which folk agreed to disagree with a conclusion that did not involve people with different opinions becoming enemies – something that is all too common today," Mayor Shaw affirmed.

At the meeting, Aldermen also:

- Received the resignation of Officer Rashaun Tillman through Police Chief Chad O'Quinn. Previously, the Aldermen at their April meeting had hired two new part-time officers – Aaron Love and Clint Earl – to replace the full-time Tillman.
- Approved travel of Alderman and town officials to the annual Mississippi Municipal League conference June 21-July 1 in Biloxi and Town Clerk Angela Hester to the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) at Reno, Nevada, May 14-22.

Hester's travel to Nevada prompted a question about how it would be funded, and she explained that an IIMC scholarship covered her conference registration and hotel expenses and she will pay for her air fare. In the process, she pointed out she will bring back important learnings to her job.

A question about replacing old water meters at a trailer park prompted Mayor Shaw to observe the town is maintaining budget discipline in the face of "rising costs in many areas." In the case of the trailer park meters, two master meters will be installed instead of replacements, which require very expensive related software to function. He also pointed to the Police Department's decision not to replace Tillman with another full-time officer.

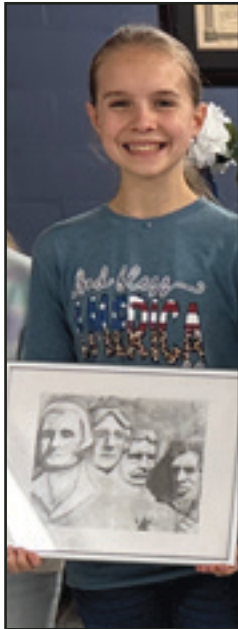
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# Wesson kids display their talents



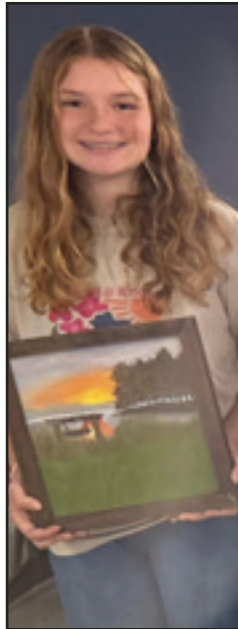
Special to Wesson News

Competitors in the Wesson Kids Got Talent show danced, sang, played instruments and displayed works of art.



Special to Wesson News

Hannah Carroll won first place for her Mount Rushmore drawing in the visual arts category.



Special to Wesson News

Molly Waltman won a second place for her oil painting.



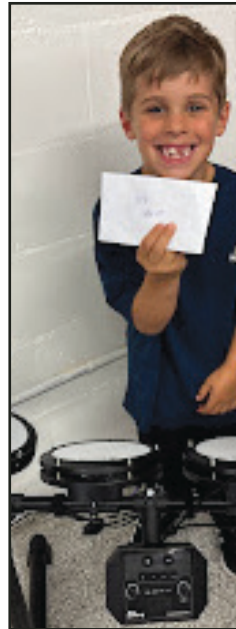
Special to Wesson News

Sami Cruole sang Proud to be an American.



Special to Wesson News

Dancers Kati and Kiki Garcia.



Special to Wesson News

Colby Greer played drums.

Special to Wesson News

Seventeen local children and youth between the ages of four and 18 years old demonstrated that they don't take a backseat to their peers elsewhere when it comes to dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, the visual arts and more in the first Wesson Kids Got Talent competition sponsored by the Wesson Chamber of Commerce on the evening of May 1 in preparing for the town for events of Founder's Day that followed on May 2.

Heavy rains moved the talent show scheduled to take place at the Community Fountain Garden beside the Milltown Salon and Spa to the American Legion Post 79 lodge where a capacity audience came to see and admire what local kids can do.

Judges awarded Katie and Kiki Garcia first place honors for their dance duo. They each received a \$100 prize.

Sami Cruole and Colby Greer tied

for second in the competition. The petite Cruole wowed the judges and audience singing "Proud to be an American," and Greer showed he could out-perform even veteran adult drummers at his tender age.

In the visual arts charcoal category, Hannah Carroll won first place for her Mount Rushmore drawing. Molly Waltman also won second place for an oil.

Other kids in the competition were Mathew Waltman (pencil drawing), Killian Jackson (pencil drawing), Finn Jackson (pencil drawing), Oliver Jackson (pencil drawing), Clara Carroll (oil painting), Tyrece Terrel (dance) and Josie Kennedy (piano).

Teri Bath, the Wesson Chamber President, says "Wesson is an amazing community with many hidden talents, and I wanted an opportunity to recognize this talent in a very public venue." Thus "Wesson Kids Got Talent" was born, stirring much

excitement in the area.

Alderman Stanley Martin, owner of Super Sounds DJ & Karaoke and the event DJ, adds, "it's not just a show," explaining that big talent often comes from small towns. "This is a chance for our community to come together, support our youth and celebrate the bright future growing right here at home."

From the many Mississippians that have recently been selected for hit TV shows such as *American Idol* and *The Voice*, "it's exciting to think about the talent we have here in Wesson, and who could be discovered next," says Jessica Breazeale, Chamber member and a local business owner. Jamal Roberts from Meridian was an *American Idol* winner last year.

The talent show winners received cash prizes funded by \$5 per person application fees to participate and other support for the event.



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# Adding color to porches & decks

By Guest Columnist Eddie Smith

There's something about a colorful hanging basket that makes a front porch feel welcoming.

Whether it's part of a quiet morning with a cup of coffee or an evening visit from friends, those baskets overflowing with blooms add life and charm to your outdoor space. A few well-chosen plant combinations can turn ordinary baskets into real showstoppers.

One of my go-to plants for hanging baskets is Supertunia petunias.

These vigorous plants have a naturally mounding and trailing growth habit, which means they work beautifully as both fillers and spillers in containers. Instead of needing constant grooming, they simply grow and spill over the sides of the basket, creating that full, lush look everyone loves.

Another thing gardeners appreciate about Supertunias is that they are low maintenance.

That means no deadheading is required, so you can spend more time enjoying your porch and less time fussing with the plants. They perform best when fertilized regularly, and because they grow in containers, it's easier to keep their soil moisture

just right.

Another excellent companion for hanging baskets is Superbells calibrachoa.

Much like Supertunias, these plants have a mounding, trailing habit that allows them to cascade beautifully from containers. They also share the same low maintenance nature with no deadheading needed. A steady diet of water and fertilizer keeps them blooming.

One important thing to remember about both Supertunias and Superbells is that they don't like constantly wet soil. Growing them in containers works in their favor because it allows you to better control moisture levels.

One of my favorite hanging basket combinations features Superbells Grape Punch, Superbells Yellow and Supertunia Persimmon. Grown together, these three colors create a warm, sunset-like display. As the plants begin trailing over the sides of the basket, the mix becomes even more dramatic.

Another beautiful combination includes Supertunia Vista Fuchsia, Snow Princess and Laguna Compact Blue with Eye.

Supertunia Vista Fuchsia deliv-



Special to Wesson News

The addition of colorful hanging baskets can make a front porch or patio feel welcoming.

ers bold pink blooms, and Laguna Compact Blue with Eye adds stunning blue flowers accented by crisp white centers. Snow Princess spills over the basket with cascading white blooms that soften the whole arrangement. Together, the basket feels bright and cheerful.

No matter which plants you choose, the secret to keeping hanging baskets looking full is consistent care. Regular watering and a steady fertilizer routine keeps the plants ac-

tively growing and blooming.

Your hanging baskets can overflow with color all summer long, turning your front porch into a welcoming garden space that everyone will notice.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Eddie Smith is a gardening specialist and Pearl River County coordinator with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. He is also host of the popular Southern Gardening television program.*



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Cont. from front page

## Chamber honors Wesson movers & shakers

of the recent state legislative session, which, she said, was “perhaps one of the most contentious”:



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Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw at Wesson Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet.

- Protecting local public schools from legislation that would have consolidated school districts and “choice” that would have reduced their funding, while making the state school system less accountable.

- Creating a foundation for more legislative work in support of independent pharmacies.

Jackie Martin, Vice President of the Co-Lin Wesson campus, declared the local community college “number one for student success in the

state,” reflected in graduation rates. She pointed to the \$18 million grant the college received from FEMA for a safe house, student housing renovations, success of athletic teams and growth of funds managed by the Co-Lin Foundation.

Wesson Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Chief Ken Carraway and Police Department Chief Char O’Quinn reflected on the service of their departments. Carraway said WVFD answers four to five calls per week for some kind of emergency assistance with volunteers who love serving. O’Quinn said his police officers are just human beings “who step into people’s worst moments” and make sacrifices.

Chamber President Teri Bath thanked the organization’s board members for their service: Gerri Lynne Porter, Nekitha Jackson, Janet Currie, Pam Stamps, Kristy Carney, Misty Sandiffr, Michelle Chambers and Stanley Martin. She also cited Copiah Bank, Copiah Medical Center, Trustmark Bank and Taylor Legacy HVAC for sponsoring the awards banquet and noted table sponsors Bobby Thornton, Brad Turner Construction, Copiah Bank, Copiah County Medical Center, Co-Lin Foundation, Destiny’s Delights, Janet Currie, Johnny Smith, Pam Stamps, Salmon Point Development, Taylors Legacy HVAC, Town of Wesson, Trustmark Bank, Wesson Attendance Center, Wesson Police Department and Wesson Fire Department.



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Chamber member Dixie Thornton presents Citizen of the Year award plaque to Sharon Langley.



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# Co-Lin choir to debut work in New York

Special to Wesson News

Dr. Bobby G. Helms, Co-Lin Director of Choral Activities and Theater, is taking his college choir to Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Along with the Jackson-based Mississippi Boys Choir, also directed by Helms, the Presbyterian Christian School choir from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the Tyler, Texas, First Baptist Church choir and a New York City choir, the Co-Lin choir will perform the world premiere of "To Truly Love" on May 25 at the famed Gotham venue.

"It all started back in 2024, when I took a phone call from MidAmerica Productions (MAP) asking me if I would be interested in directing a choral ensemble at Carnegie Hall," Helms recalls.

MAP is a renowned music production company that specializes in organizing and producing concerts in New York City and worldwide. Since its founding in 1984, MAP has grown into a leading independent producer of choral concerts, presenting international conductors, soloists, and ensembles at New York's premier venues and around the world.

MAP invited Helms to bring along choral groups that he directed or with which he had an association to perform a work it could provide or a new one he could find.

"I knew Sherry Blevins from when I was student and Raphael Fusco from



Special to Wesson News

Vienna, Austria, as a team that could create a luminous work for choir, soloists and orchestra," Helms says. "They agreed to develop a work for the Carnegie Hall stage."

Blevins wrote the lyrics, and Fusco did the orchestration for "To Truly Love," a powerful 25-minute work that explores the intricate relationship between parents and their children, tracing the human journey from innocence and self-discovery through despair and redemption, culminating in a radiant affirmation of love's enduring power. Its five movements – The Wonder of Your Life, Your Masterpiece, When

Darkness Came, Stay Here with Me and To Truly Love – offer singers of all ages a shared musical and emotional experience. The work's sweeping orchestral colors, heartfelt melodies and expressive language illuminate themes of hope, belonging and acceptance.

Two weeks before departing for New York City, the choir will be rehearsing the new work. Since August, the choir has been laser-focused on fundraising for the travel to the scheduled performance and spending five days and four nights in New York City at the Midtown Hilton Hotel with visits to Central Park and Times Square, dining at famous

restaurants, a dinner cruise and attending *Death Becomes Her* on Broadway.

Each choir member on the trip is paying \$3000, and supporting donations have been made by the Mississippi Boys Choir, Co-Lin and members of the general public. The choir's fundraisers have included popcorn sales and a dinner theater production of a Mardi Gras-themed murder mystery with a silent auction before the event. The choir staged a second dinner theater production of a Mafia-themed murder mystery coupled with a silent auction. Co-Lin students scripted the murder mysteries.

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# Co-Lin chef shares his secrets



Wesson News



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Special to Wesson News

Chris McSweyn, the long-time chef at Wesson's once world-renown Porches Restaurant before taking over as Executive Chef for Co-Lin's Aladdin Campus Dining, shared his cooking secrets with more than 20 Institute for Learning in Retirement members seeking to improve their culinary skills in a special workshop at the college's Thames Center last month.

At the workshop, McSweyn shared start-from-scratch recipes for water melon and chicken salads, turkey cranberry sliders, red wine vinaigrette and chocolate chess pie, showed class participants how to prepare them from fresh ingredients, cooked and served the food to them in the tradition of his grandmother and shared thoughts on how to make the dishes extra special.

McSweyn, who grew up in a cooking family and still recalls his grandmother's tutoring, engaged in conversation with his ILR students throughout the workshop, revealing his own secrets as they tested their knowledge and understanding with him. Among his secrets:

- **An increasingly popular all-purpose seasoning mix.** Originated in San Francisco, Everything Bagel includes a mixture of seasonings that enhance food flavor – garlic, onion, poppy seed, sesame seed and more. You can't go wrong!
- **Rag it instead of brushing it.** When the recipe calls for brushing something, McSweyn dips a rag in the butter or sauce and heavily mops the food he is cooking. More is better!
- **Copiah tomatoes.** Copiah County, Mississippi, soil produces the best tomatoes in the world. Alone sliced, part of a salad or stuffed with chicken or tuna salad, they make a big difference.
- **How to salt & pepper to taste.** Salt is salt is salt when it comes to taste. When seasoning, pay attention to the size of the salt you are using. Size determines saltiness. When it comes to peppers, kind makes the difference. Red pepper is hot. Green pepper is mild. Black pepper is somewhere in between.
- **Brining fish, poultry and other meats and blanching fruits and vegetables.** Brining before starting to cook meats moisturizes and tenderizes them, enhances their flavor and reduces their cooking times. A simple brine is a mixture water and salt, but brines may include sugar, spices and other seasoning mixed with broths, buttermilk and juices as well as water. Usually, meats are refrigerated in a brine overnight. Blanching – immersing a vegetable or fruit in boiling water for two minutes to cook rapidly and then abruptly stopping the cooking with an ice bath -- preserves the flavor, color, texture and nutritional value of vegetables and fruits like cauliflower, green beans and tomatoes.
- **Hand-mixing.** While mixers are better for speed, large batches, and high-fat doughs, hand-mixing is preferred for developing a deeper understanding of your mix, particularly for breads, pastas, and pastries. You can feel the exact moment the mixture changes, ensuring it is properly hydrated, smooth, and not over-worked. You prevent crushing or over-compressing items that a machine might damage. You have better control and greater precision for small batches or specific recipes. Allows for immediate cleaning and avoids dirtying extra appliances.



## TURKEY SLIDERS

**Yield:** 12 sliders. **Prep Time:** 5 minutes.  
**Cook Time:** 18 minutes. **Total Time:** 23 minutes

Hawaiian roll turkey sliders use holiday leftovers. With turkey, cranberry sauce and Swiss cheese in a roll baked to perfection with a butter drizzle, they are tasty follow-up to holiday feasts.

### Ingredients

1 package of Hawaiian Sweet Rolls, 12 count  
3 cups of cooked turkey, diced, sliced or pulled  
1 cup of cranberry sauce  
(you can use a simple cranberry BBQ sauce as an alternative)  
6 slices of Swiss cheese

### For the butter drizzle:

4 tablespoons of melted butter  
1 teaspoon of yellow or Dijon mustard  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon poppy seeds (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Line a 9x13 inch baking dish with non-stick foil or use cooking spray on surface.
2. Separate top and bottom portions of Hawaiian Rolls and place bottom half of the rolls into the baking dish.
3. Layer with turkey, cranberry sauce and cheese and place top of the rolls on top of the layers of ingredients.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together melted butter, mustard, garlic powder, salt and poppy seeds.
5. Pour butter mixture over the top of rolls and use a brush or spoon to spread the butter and spices evenly over the top.
6. Cover with foil and bake 15 minutes.
7. Remove foil and bake three more minutes uncovered.
8. Serve immediately.

### Ingredients for cranberry BBQ sauce

2/3 cup of cranberry sauce  
1/3 cup of ketchup  
¼ cup of brown sugar  
2 teaspoons of Worcestershire sauce

### Directions:

Add ingredients to a small saucepan. Place over medium heat until it begins to bubble, stirring constantly. Spoon over top of turkey layers before baking.

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## Wesson Butterbeans celebrate Earth Day

Special to Wesson News

The Butterbeans, the youth gardeners of the Wesson Garden Club, celebrated Earth Day at Wesson Public Library last month in conjunction with National Library Week.

Librarian Marilyn Britt lectured the group, discussing the historical context and significance of Earth Day.

This annual event, observed globally on April 22, supports environmental protection efforts, she said. Having first taken place in 1970, Earth Day has developed into a worldwide movement, with earthday.org coordinating events in over 193 countries and involving 1 billion people.



Wesson News

As part of the local celebration, each Butterbean member were given a seedling tree from Neighborhood Forest to take home, plant and nurture.

The Butterbeans concluded their Earth Day Celebration, enjoying snow cones from Park Place Concessions at the Wesson Park.

Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Natchez Trace District of GCM.

## Garden Club focuses on birds

Special to Wesson News

An avid birdwatcher from Brookhaven highlighted the Wesson Garden Club (WGC) meeting last month.

Chris King, who promotes bird conservation and protecting habitats, presented an informative program – “We Are All About Birds” – that encouraged his audience to place native plants in their yards to support birds and insects.

Attendees at the WGC meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at the American Legion Post 79 included Terri Bath, Marilyn Britt, Sherri Carty, Sonya Cowen, Robin Furr, Rebecca Harrison, Cherry Head, Rhonda Ishee, Camille Johnston, Vickie Martin, Jennifer Meilstrup, June Owens, Pam Owens, Jennifer Peets, Joy Phillips, Jean Ricks, Lisa Smith, Pollyanna Smith, Sheila Stewart, Stanley Stewart and Dixie Thornton.

WGC President Sherri Carty called the meeting to order and welcomed members with an inspirational quote. The group recited the Garden Club Collect and the Pledge to the flag. Following the program, Pam Owens offered the “Gardening Tip of the Month” on recycling.

After completing the club’s business and a closing prayer by Robin Furr, the meeting adjourned. Refreshments were enjoyed courtesy of hostesses Jennifer Meilstrup, Cherry Head, Dixie Thornton and Sheila and Stanley Stewart.

The WGC is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Natchez Trace District of GCM.



Photos by Wesson News

Chris King tells Wesson Garden Club members to place native plants in their yards to support birds and insects.

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## 72 seniors graduating from Wesson High School

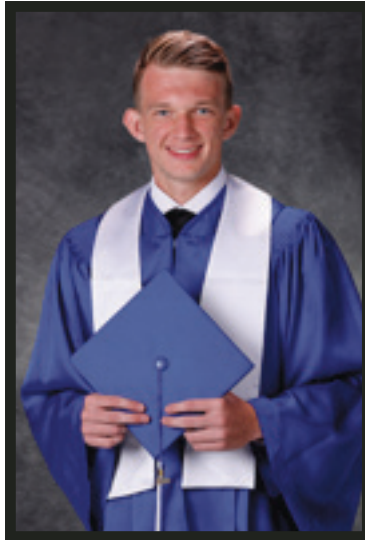
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Wesson High School will graduate 72 seniors this month with the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Among the graduates are four Wesson Attendance Hall of Fame inductees: Tate Brister, Macy Loy, Ty Turner and Mary Margaret Woods. The 2026 STAR Student from the Class of 2026 is Brendon Duguid. The 2026 STAR Teacher is Heather McKenzie.

The 72 graduating seniors are:

Brayden David Allen, Jackson Stephen Barlow, Jaxon Valor Barlow, Allie Elizabeth Beeson, Jamera Tyonna Jenise Black, Blair Mitchell Boyd, Trinity Rain Breland, Celeen Aleese Brice, Charles Tate Brister, Micah Van Britt, William Gavin Greene Brock, Brandon Parker Brooks, Ke'mari Jaquan Brown, Kievon Ashad Brown, DaKiyah Kristian Butler, Abigail Marina Cameron, Walyann Richard Cline, Brooke LouAnne Coleman, Kayleigh Rayne Cook, Rowan Spencer Crapps, Conner Miles Davis, Natalya Maia Dickerson, Brianna Keshundra Dixon, Brendon Robert Duguid, Wallace Douglas Dunn, Jer'Keivsha Lasha Edwards, Jenny Joana Flores Delacruz, Michael Lee Guess, Maria McKenzie Hall, Tyrell, Montre'z Harris, Jamirah Dameal Harvey, Melvin Hernandez, Noah Nelson Marion Howell, Stephen Garett Hundhausen, Alan Caroline Hux, John-Brayden James, Jakyiah Teliia Johns, Gracey Victoria Lopez, Willow Margaret Love, Macy Rebecca Loy, Mar'Shunti Quintayvea Martin, Tripp Radford Martin, Katherine Blair Mathis, Karter Brent Lee McLemore, Madison Victoria Morris, Ruston Dayne Newman, Ashtyn Lee Nieburg, Katherine Rae Norwood, Rylan Kesley Oswald, John Patrick Parsons, Lexi Grace Prestridge, William Nick Raiford, Sullivan McKenzie Roberts, Kylie Morgan Rorie, Gustavo Ruiz-Garcia, Dakota Rose Rushing, Samuel Cade Scopel, Karley Grace Shannon, Warren Channell Shelton, Joseph Thomas Shumaker, Baylor Lane Smith, Connor Wyatt Smith, Isaac Conner Stovall, Ty Rustyn Turner, Aider Keith Wallace, Akierah Denari Wallace, Sydnee Layne Westrope, Whitney Paige Westrope, Caeden Blake Williams, Jack Henry Wilson and Mary Margaret Woods.



Brendon Duguid  
STAR Student



Tate Brister  
Hall of Fame



Macy Loy  
Hall of Fame



Mary Margaret Woods  
Hall of Fame



Ty Turner  
Hall of Fame

Photos special to Wesson News

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# Disaster, AI, roads, immigration & redistricting

Special to Wesson News

**Small business disaster aid.** The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the availability of low-interest federal disaster loans to small businesses and private nonprofit organizations in dozens of parishes and counties across Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan program aims to offset economic losses caused by drought that began on Dec. 30, 2025. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan program is available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, nurseries and private nonprofits, including faith-based organizations, to address financial losses directly related to the disaster. They are designed to cover working capital needs and can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that could not be paid due to the drought, even if no physical damage occurred. Eligible organizations can receive up to \$2 million. The interest rate is 4% for small businesses and 3.625% for private nonprofit organizations. Adams, Claiborne, Jefferson, Warren and Wilkinson Counties are covered in Mississippi.

**Law school requires AI study.** Mississippi College School of Law is one of the first schools in the nation to tackle the growing influence of artificial intelligence in jurisprudence by making AI education mandatory for all students. The goal is to train law students “to use the technology effectively, efficiently, and ethically and avoid a lot of the headlines about lawyers taking shortcuts with these technologies.” While the school has other AI classes, a general course is now mandatory for all first-year students. Artificial intelligence refers to any technology or machine that simulates human intelligence, such as performing problem solving, decision making and reasoning. Researchers have been working on AI since the 1940s but it only began to reshape the world in the past few years.

**\$2 billion for roads.** The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) will operate on a nearly \$2 billion budget next year, but the agency did not receive its full funding request from lawmakers for capacity projects. The agency received \$150 million for capacity projects, about half of what is needed. Lawmakers removed the sunset clause on state lottery revenue for MDOT, guaranteeing the agency will continue receiving the first \$80 million in lottery funds each

year. MDOT has used lottery funds for paving two-lane roads across the state since 2018.

**State immigration law.** A new law creates a state crime tied to illegal entry into Mississippi, marking a major expansion of state involvement in immigration enforcement. The law establishes new enforcement powers for state agencies and requires closer coordination with federal immigration authorities. It includes criminal penalties and formal procedures tied directly to immigration status and makes it a state crime to enter Mississippi directly from another country without going through a lawful port of entry by plane, boat, or other direct travel routes into the state. The measure does not replace federal immigration law but adds a separate state charge. It allows state authorities to act in cases that previously fell only under federal jurisdiction. The Department of Public Safety must identify and track undocumented individuals living in the state and make a reasonable attempt to execute a memorandum of agreement with ICE under Section 287(g) within 120 days after the law takes effect. Each county law enforcement agency operating a county detention facility must make a reasonable attempt to enter a written agreement with ICE and until that happens provide quarterly status updates and explain any noncompliance.

**Redistricting fight looms.** Governor Tate Reeves has called the Mississippi Legislature back to the Capitol for a special session on redistricting after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the landmark Louisiana v. Callais case that Louisiana's redistricting map is constitutional. Mississippi lawmakers attempted to redraw voting districts in 2022, well before President Donald Trump pushed Republican-majority states to redistrict in 2025. They worked on congressional and state legislative maps. The state legislative maps were challenged in court by the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP and a group of voters, citing the second section of the Voting Rights Act. A three-judge panel sided with the NAACP in July 2024, ordering the legislature to redraw the maps with more majority-Black districts. In another blow to the state's redistricting efforts, a federal judge also ruled in 2025 that the state's Supreme Court electoral map diluted the voting power of Black Mississippians and had to be redrawn.



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# Renasant Bank

*Special to Wesson News*

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“With Renasant Bank, customer service is top tier. Also, when you walk in the door, you’re family,” said Misty Prine, Branch Manager of Copiah County.

The bank has two locations in the county, Crystal Springs and Hazlehurst. Prine has been with the bank for 23 years. She also writes a weekly devotional that is featured on wessonnews.com.

From personal checking and savings accounts to home loans and business banking solutions, Renasant Bank offers modern financial tools with the personal touch customers appreciate. Local residents say the bank’s knowledgeable staff and strong community involvement make it a reliable partner for every stage of life.

Community leaders also praise the bank for supporting local events, schools, and charitable organizations throughout the region. As more customers look for dependable financial services close to home, Renasant Bank continues to stand out as a trusted name in community banking.



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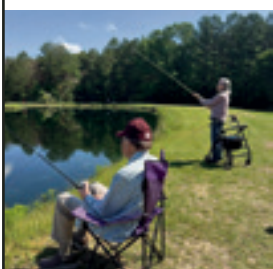


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## Local Banker speaks



*Special to Wesson News*

Copiah Bank (CB) Assistant Vice President Bryce Chapman talked to students at Co-Lin's Wesson campus. Bringing donuts along, he discussed CB services and the importance of having a relationship with a local bank. Chapman has been with the Copiah Bank for five years and in his current role for 17 months. He started as an intern and worked his way up. Jayla Ward, a student from Franklin County, enjoyed her "breakfast of champions," courtesy of Chapman and Copiah Bank, as she listened to the bank executive, and Owen Siegfried, a member of the Co-Lin's golf team, was among the students. Copiah Bank is located at 2048 US-51 in Wesson, Miss. Call 601-643-5121 for more information or visit [copiahbank.com](http://copiahbank.com).



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# WHS band members move on

Special to Wesson News

Seven members of the Wesson Cobra All-Superior band have signed scholarships to further their band careers at the next level. Five are going to Co-Lin, one to Mississippi College and one to the University of Southern Mississippi.



Photos Special to Wesson News



Tate Brister signed a scholarship with Co-Lin's Blue Wave Show Band to play the trombone. Pictured (front left to right) are Vanda Brister (Mom), the signee and Tyler Brister (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman, and Co-Lin Blue Wave Show Band Director Chad Austin.



Brooke Coleman signed a scholarship with Co-Lin's Blue Wave Show Band to play the trumpet. Pictured with Brooke (front left to right): Shae Coleman (Mom), the signee and Travis Coleman (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner and Co-Lin Blue Wave Show Band Director Chad Austin.



Willow Love signed a scholarship with Co-Lin's Blue Wave Show Band to play the saxophone. Pictured with Willow (front left to right): Jennifer Love (Mom), the signee and David Love (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman and Co-Lin Blue Wave Show Band Director Chad Austin.



Madison Morris signed a scholarship with Co-Lin's Blue Wave Show Band to participate in its color guard. Pictured with Madison (front left to right): Melissa Morris (Mom), the signee and Jeremy Morris (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman and Co-Lin Blue Wave Show Band Director Chad Austin.



Caeden Williams signed a scholarship with Co-Lin's Blue Wave Show Band to play percussion. Pictured with Caeden are (front left to right): Anna Williams (Mom), the signee and Blake Williams (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman and Co-Lin Blue Wave Show Band Director Chad Austin.



Alana Hux signed a scholarship with Mississippi College to play the flute. Pictured with Alana are (front left to right): Stephanie Hux (Mom), the signee and Daniel Hux (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman and Mississippi College Band Director Duvy Salvant.



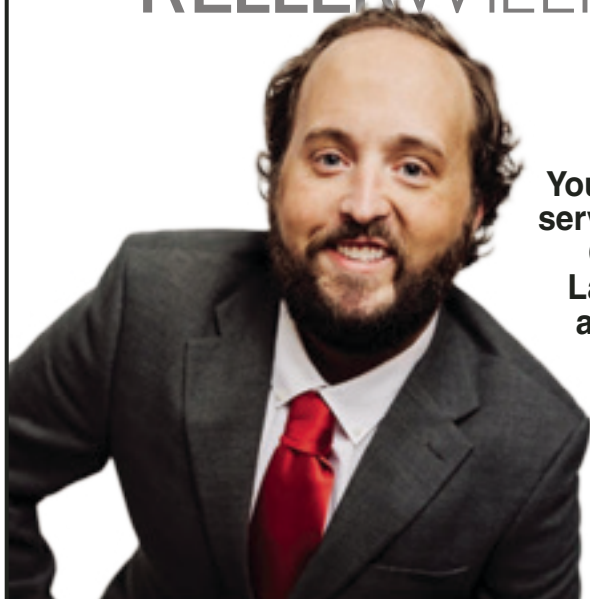
Sullivan Roberts signed a scholarship with The University of Southern Mississippi to play the baritone. Pictured with Sullivan are (front left to right): Angela Shannon (Mom), the signee and Michael Roberts (Dad). Back (left to right) are Wesson Band Director Andrew Bonner, Color Guard Director Shae Coleman and USM Alumni Hank Jordan.

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# Local kids camp is recognized

*Special to Wesson News*

G.O.A.T Camps was recognized as a 2026 REACH Award winner during the Children's Foundation of Mississippi's 2026 Summit, Sowing Seeds of Success: Cultivating a Bright Future for Mississippi's Children last month at Pearl, Mississippi.

The two-day Summit brought together leaders, professionals, advocates, educators, community partners, and stakeholders from across the state for learning, connection, and conversation centered on the well-being of Mississippi's children and families. Sessions focused on key issues affecting children across the state, including health, education, economic well-being, and family and community life.

A major highlight of the Summit was the release of the 2026 Mississippi KIDS COUNT Risk & Reach Report. The report pairs data on child well-being with real examples of people, programs and organizations working to support children and families across Mississippi.

As part of the Risk & Reach Report, REACH Award winners were selected through community nominations to highlight meaningful, community-rooted work taking place in counties throughout the state. The recognition honors organizations, programs, and initiatives that are helping meet the needs of children and families in practical and impactful ways.

G.O.A.T Camps was selected as a 2026 REACH Award winner for its work in Copiah and Lincoln Counties. The organization supports children and families by offering a free outdoor camp experience twice a year in Copiah and Lincoln counties, which combines sports, arts, guest speakers, and mentorship, with teens and young adults helping to serve as leaders and role models.

"This camp being recognized for its impact is an honor we don't take lightly," said Jessica Breazeale of Wesson, one of the camp's founders. "It's a meaningful recognition that means we are doing something right. We didn't start it because it would be fun or easy. We felt compelled because we saw a need and tried to meet that need."

Through the Summit, the Risk & Reach Report, and the recognition of REACH Award winners, the Children's Foundation of Mississippi highlighted both the challenges facing children and the people and programs helping create stronger futures across the state.

To learn more about the Children's Foundation of Mississippi and the 2026 Mississippi KIDS COUNT Risk & Reach Report, visit [childrensfoundationms.org](http://childrensfoundationms.org).

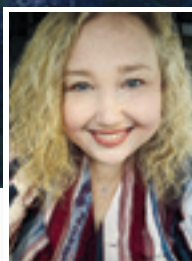


*Wesson News*

*Jessica Breazeale accepts award on behalf of G.O.A.T Camps at the Children's Foundation of Mississippi's 2026 Summit.*

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BY *Misty Prine*



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# Co-Lin's Huckaby in state HOF

Special to Wesson News

The late Bob Huckaby of Bogue Chitto has been inducted into the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame.

Huckaby graduated with an associate's degree from Co-Lin in 1954, where he played basketball. He continued his education at Mississippi College, earning bachelor's and master's degrees.

A member of the Bogue Chitto High School Class of 1952, he was named an All-American after leading his team to a state championship. He had a successful two-season stint at Co-Lin under Coach Ray Busby, where he was the leading scorer and rebounder. He was inducted into Co-Lin's Sports Hall of Fame in 1984. At Mississippi College, he earned Little All-American honors and continued his streak as the team's leading scorer and rebounder. He was inducted into MC's Sports Hall of Fame in 1983, and he is a member of the 500-point club.



Special to Wesson News



After graduating from college, he was drafted into the United States Army and spent two years at Fort Chaffe in Fort Smith, Arkansas. In the Army, he continued to excel in basketball, softball, and track, including a fourth-place finish in the Army High Jump. He coached at State Line, Mississippi, for seven years before returning to Co-Lin to be the head basketball coach from 1966 to 1968. He left coaching to become a vocational counselor until his retirement in 1995. He died on October 13, 2021.

"I saw him play at Mississippi College against Southern Miss, and he was scoring every time he got the ball," said Alton Ricks, former Co-Lin basketball coach and Huckaby's colleague. "He was a left-hander; he was considered the best with his left-handed hook shot."

Huckaby and his wife, Katherine, had three children: Cheryl Shelby (Gus), Julia Everett (Jack), and Robert Huckaby (Leanne).




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# On the Shelf: Big fantasy releases on the horizon

By Courtney Warren

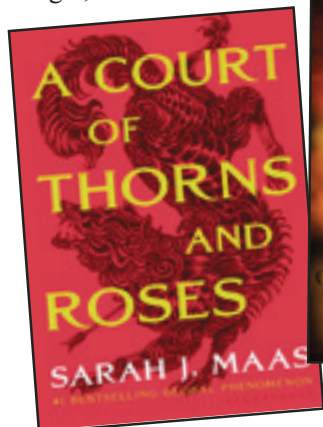
Fantasy readers, this is our moment. When I saw that all of these are coming in the fall, I honestly had a small moment of panic, because what do you mean I need to reread every one of these to prep?! I'm going to.

If your bookshelf has been feeling a little quiet lately, that's about to change in a big way. Some of the most talked-about names in modern fantasy are preparing to release new stories, making this the perfect time to dive in, or dive back in, to some unforgettable series. Now, this is by no means a complete list of the new releases, but it's like a line up of our heavy hitters. These are the books that have taken over social media, and some of these books have even gotten people back into reading. I will make a note here - none of these are YA or for younger audiences.

Fans of "A Court of Thorns and Roses" have a lot to anticipate. Sarah J. Maas is continuing her bestselling saga with *ACOTAR 6* and *ACOTAR 7*. She announced this on a podcast recently, and people (me, I am people) were absolutely losing their minds at the hints she made towards this series. I have already started rereading it.

About the series: This series follows Feyre, a young woman pulled into a

dangerous Fae world after a single mistake changes her life. What begins as a loose retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" quickly expands into a sweeping story filled with political alliances, powerful magic,



romance and war across richly imagined courts.

This series is so much more than just magical Fae. It tackles ideas about doing the right thing even when it's hard, standing up for yourself, and finding your purpose after losing everything you thought you were.

Another exciting release is *Burn of the Everflame*, by Penn Cole.

About the series: The Everflame series centers on a world divided by power, rebellion and destiny. With a



strong female lead at its core, the story blends romance and action as characters navigate dangerous secrets, shifting loyalties and the fight for freedom in a land shaped by magic and conflict.

This



was a new series

for me this year! I read the first three books in a matter of days and regret nothing. The world created by Cole is something fun and new, but the need for justice and taking down the bad guy still remains at the core of this one. It's plot twist after plot twist, and I already have the preorder ready.

And, in a surprise announcement, Rebecca Yarros is releasing a new, untitled novella set in the Empyrean series universe—the same world as

*Fourth Wing*. The 176-page story is set to release on September 29, 2026.

About the series: The Empyrean series follows Violet Sorrengail, a student forced into a brutal dragon rider training program where survival is never guaranteed. Packed with high-stakes trials, fierce competition and slow-burn romance, the series combines military fantasy with emotional depth and nonstop tension.

I have many thoughts about our girl Rebecca. First of all, she didn't announce this book until Maas announced hers and took over the internet. Part of me wonders if it's an attention grab. There were many reviews that said she wrote book two of this series way too fast because the fame went to her head. It was a very rushed story and left many readers dissatisfied (including myself). That being said, I will still read the novella, but I wish someone would tell her to relax and take her time. Good stories are worth waiting for. Look at how long we waited for Maas to give us her next *ACOTAR* book!

All signs point to one thing: fantasy is having a major moment. Whether you're revisiting a favorite series or starting one for the first time, now is the perfect opportunity to catch up before these highly-anticipated releases hit shelves.

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# Banker teaches good money habits



Special to Wesson News

Brister speaking to classes on the Co-Lin Wesson campus.

Special to Wesson News

Building good money habits early can help students succeed later, says Brittany Brister, branch manager at Trustmark in Wesson.

Brister, who has worked at the Wesson branch for about two and one half years, spoke about credit, savings and fraud during recent visits to local schools. She is making a similar presentation at Wesson Attendance Center, focusing on how credit works. She spoke to 71 seniors at Wesson High School. They played credit Jenga and munched on snacks and reviewed promotional items.

"I enjoy helping customers achieve their goals," Brister said. "I also like being part of the community."

During her school talks, Brister explains how young people can start building credit. She recommends secured loans or a line of credit as safe first steps. She also says teens can become authorized users on a parent's credit card, as long as the parent uses the card responsibly.

Brister says students should also learn how to protect their money. She warns that scams and fraud are common and can affect anyone. "Be careful," she says. "Fraud is everywhere right now."

With the school year ending, Brister encouraged graduating seniors to open student checking and savings accounts. She says starting early can help students manage money better as they enter college or the workforce.

Brister's goal is to give students simple tools they can use right away. "Understanding money now can make a big difference later," she says.

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## Davis Leading Edge Society awardee



Wesson News

Special to Wesson News

Local Realtor Sherry R. Davis has been named a Leading Edge Society Award winner. Davis, of Wesson, is a Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices (BHHS) team member. She is also a retired school teacher working on her second career, now in real estate.

This Leading Edge Society award recognizes top-performing agents for their sales achievements within the BHHS network. Davis ranked among the top agents based on her 2025 sales numbers. She has been a realtor for over 20 years and is based in Wesson. She serves clients in Copiah and Lincoln counties.

"I'm so grateful for my clients and this amazing community," Davis said. "My favorite thing about my job is networking with my work family and making people happy."

Davis also won this award last year. "This tells me I've fulfilled a lot of dreams for my beautiful clients and for myself," she said.

For more information, visit Sherry R. Davis, Realtor's Facebook page, for buying or selling questions.

## Little Miss Poppy



Wesson News

Harper King was named "Little Miss Poppy" by the American Legion unit 79 in honor of the 250th year of America. King is a third grader at Wesson Attendance Center and the daughter of Collin and Lyndsay King. Little Miss Poppy is a youth outreach program by the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) in which Junior members aged 6-12 promote the memorial poppy, a symbol of remembrance for veterans. Participants distribute poppies, raise funds for veteran services, and educate the public on the flower's significance during Memorial and Veterans Days. King was crowned at this year's Founder's Day.

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November 3, 2026

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## Janet Currie Auxiliary tablescape winner

Special to Wesson News

Janet Currie won the People's Choice award in the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 79 tablescape fundraising event on Founders Day at the Wesson Old School in conjunction with America's 250th birthday celebration.

This was the Auxiliary's first Heart of the Table: Tablescape and Silent Auction.

In tablescaping competition, community members and organizations decorate tables in varied styles within the framework of three thematic divisions – formal, holiday and patriotic. For the silent auction, local merchants and members of the American Legion, Sons of the Legion and Auxiliary donated items that bidders sought, with the money going to support the Auxiliary.

A panel of four judges selected first, second and third prize-winning tables in each division and event visitors from the public voted with their money – one dollar per vote – for the People's Choice Award, with proceeds going to the Auxiliary's annual missions and projects in the fun fundraiser.

"It was a wonderful day of showcasing the amazing creative talent within our community, as well as raising awareness of what the American Legion Family is all about," said event chair Laurie Chassion. "We are very grateful to the Town of Wesson for opening up the historic Old School for the event, which brought many sightseeing guests. We appreciate the Wesson Chamber of Commerce for allowing us to take part in Founder's Day. It was great fun, and we surpassed our expectations for fundraising due to the kindness of many donors."

The plans are to build an annual event and a bigger, better Heart of the Table next year.

Auxiliary President Kim Whittington is always looking for ways to serve veterans and military families. In the next few weeks, the auxiliary will be getting its delegates ready to attend Girls' State. The Auxiliary thanks all the groups and community members who took part and made the tablescaping fundraising event a success.

To join the local Auxiliary, contact auxiliary president Kim Whittington at 601-942-3319.

## Vacation Bible Schools

### Mt. Zion Baptist Church

- June 8-12
- PK3-6th grade
- Register: <https://kideventpro.lifeway.com/myEvent/?id=73521>
- T-shirts \$10 each

### Beauregard Community Church

- June 22-26, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM
- Ages 3K (potty trained) - completed 6th grade
- Register: [form.jotform.com/261104119747151](http://form.jotform.com/261104119747151)

### Wesson Baptist Church

- June 8-12, 5:30 PM-8:30 PM
- Register: <https://wessonbaptistvbs.myanswers.com/emerald-crossing/register/>

### Clear Branch Baptist Church

- June 15-19, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM
- Register: <https://vbspro.events/p/events/79de84/sessions/103158/participants/new>

### Strong Hope Baptist church

June 1-5  
8:30-11:30

### Sylvarena Baptist Church

June 22-26  
5:30-8 pm

## Britt crowned Founder's Day queen

*Special to Wesson News*

Caylie Britt, a junior at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC), is the 2026-2027 Wesson Founder's Day Queen.

The daughter of Hilry and Misty Britt of Wesson, the new Queen says she aspired to the role because "I am proud to be a part of the community." She says grew up in Wesson and always enjoyed the events that brought the town together and believes "I would be a positive representative for the town."

At WAC, Britt has been a member of the Beta Club, yearbook staff and Educators Rising. She is an honor student, achieved the highest average in Education Preparation I, and was recognized for outstanding achievement in child development, contemporary health and education preparation.

Britt has played Lady Cobra volleyball for four years.

Her favorite class is entrepreneurship because she is very interested in business and has launched her own boutique this year.

She has enjoyed helping with Vacation Bible School, GA activities and participating in D-Now with her church youth group at Sylvarena Baptist Church, where she is a member.

Britt plans to attend Co-Lin and pursue a degree in business administration focusing on entrepreneurship.



*Wesson News*

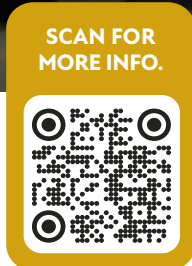
Rising 2<sup>nd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Rising 7<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> grade

## Summer starts with *creativity.*

From young artists to high school creatives, MC's Department of Art is offering Summer Camps featuring fun, skill-building experiences in a variety of art forms.

**Learn more and register online: [art.mc.edu/events/summer-camps](http://art.mc.edu/events/summer-camps)**



# Wesson Founder's Day



Photos by Wesson News  
Heavy rains left blue skies, sunshine and cool temperatures – nearly perfect weather – for the Wesson Founder's Day celebration of the town and its life. Crowds lined Church Street into the municipal park downtown to shop, grab a snack or meal or relax on a bench and enjoy music or watch entertainment while kids frolicked on inflatables as their parents went about their business.





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