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Volume 11, Number 10

“Good News You Can Use”

October, 2023

Taxes stable with budget hikes

By Bob Arnold

With revenues up 22.2 percent and expenditures up 17.45 percent, Wesson aldermen have adopted a 2023-24 budget that requires no tax increase.

For the fiscal year, the Town is projecting total expenses of \$1,345,211 with revenues of \$1,431,757, compared to FY 2023's revenues of \$1,170,757 and expenses of \$1,145,261.

A whopping 37.5 percent increase in revenues from sales taxes to \$220,000, and \$100,000 budgeted for general government and water-sewer revenues from the Mississippi Use Tax helped the Aldermen maintain the Town's millage rate tax levy at 35.53.

The Town's budget encompasses revenues that pay for general govern-

ment expenses, the police and street departments, Old School Community Center and public library; and revenues and expenses for the fire and water/sewer departments, and water meters.

Revenues anticipated for the General Fund will climb by almost 19 percent to \$730,600 during the fiscal year to support:

- General government expenditures budgeted at \$242,650, primarily reflecting increases in personnel costs – salary expenses (\$75,000 to \$80,000), retirement expenses (\$12,000 to \$18,400) and health insurance expenses (\$7,000 to \$15,000) – and an 11-fold increase in building insurance costs to \$14,000.

- Wesson Police Department

(WPD) salaries up to \$235,000 from \$200,000 and retirement expenses up to \$44,650 from \$28,000 that help account for a projected 19.7 increase in forecasted WPD expenditures to \$361,750.

- A 9.2 percent increase in projected street department expenses to \$91,050, including double the expenditures on gas and oil to \$4,000.

Old School Community Center and library expenditures are expected to maintain FY 2023 levels at \$20,200 and \$12,460, respectively. Again in FY 2024, the Town is not budgeting for Old School rental income.

With an anticipated 14.25 percent increase in Wesson Volunteer Fire De-

partment (WVFD) expenses to \$28,450 and only a 3.17 percent increase in its revenues to \$32,532, WVFD's budgeted balance is expected to decline from \$6,632 to \$4,082. The Department is expected to see expenses increase for uniforms (\$3,000 to \$5,000) and utilities (\$3,250 to \$4,000).

A projected 15 percent increase in water-sewer expenses to \$583,651 should be more than covered by a 28 percent revenue increase to \$661,600 paced by hikes in metered sales to customers, garbage pickup fees and sewer charges to customers, and the Mississippi Use Tax.

Water meter revenues and expenses are again budgeted at \$7,025 and \$5,000 respectively.

WAC gets A accountability grade

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) awarded Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) an A accountability grade for the 2022-23 school year, joining West Lincoln, which was graded similarly, as the highest graded school in Lincoln and Copiah Counties.

Statewide student assessment data make up a large part of accountability grades. In 2022-23, the overall percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced reached an all-time high in mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), science and U.S. History.

“This year's school and district grades provide further evidence that Mississippi teachers, school leaders and staff have done an outstanding job helping students accelerate learning after the disruptions of the pandemic,” said Dr. Raymond Morgigno, interim state superintendent of education. “I am confident our schools will build upon these achievements so that all students are proficient and prepared for success after high school.”

Throughout the state, 87 percent of

schools and 91 percent of districts earned a grade of C or higher.

The components of the state's accountability system are based on state and federal law and State Board policy. They include:

- Growth of the lowest performing 25% of students in ELA and Mathematics.
- Science proficiency in grades 5 and 8.
- English Learner progress toward becoming proficient in the English language.
- Performance on the ACT and high school Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History assessments.
- Student participation and performance in advanced coursework such as Advanced Placement and dual credit/dual enrollment courses. Four-year graduation rate.

For their performances in these categories, MDE awards up to 700 points to elementary and middle Schools and up to 1,000 points to high schools and districts, with up to 380 points awarded for

growth.

In the Copiah-Lincoln County area, Brookhaven School District (619 points), Copiah County School District (623 points) and Hazlehurst School District (605 points) received B accountability grades. Lincoln County School District earned an A with 684 points – the only district in Southwest Mississippi graded as highly.

B-graded schools in the area were Bogue Chitto, Brookhaven Elementary, Brookhaven High School, Crystal Springs High School, Enterprise, Hazlehurst Elementary, Hazlehurst Middle, Lipsey Middle, Loyd Star and Mamie Martin Elementary. Alexander Junior High School earned a C.

For its A grade, Wesson Attendance Center earned 776 points, showing student proficiency rates of 50.5 in reading, 69 in math, 77 in history and 70 in science; and an 89.7 graduation rate.

The grades statewide are an improvement over 2021-22, when approximately 81% of schools and 87% of districts were rated C or higher. In 2016, when the Mississippi State Board of Education

set a goal that all schools and districts be rated C or higher, the percentage of schools and districts meeting this goal were both 62%.

Since 2020, school districts and the state have invested federal pandemic-relief funds in programs and services to overcome pandemic disruptions and accelerate student learning. The additional funds enabled districts to pay for extended learning days, tutorial services and intensive interventions, among other supports. State investments include the Mississippi Connects digital learning initiative, which provided all students with a computer device, and services including on-demand tutoring, high-quality digital curriculum subscriptions and digital learning coaches for teachers. Pandemic-relief funds for these services will end in September 2024, and school districts will be responsible for paying for any services they wish to continue.

Mississippi's accountability grades help teachers, school leaders, parents and communities know how well their local schools and districts are serving their students.

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WHY GO ANYWHERE ELSE?

Escaping crystal meth in Wesson

By Bob Arnold

Crystal meth – the common name for crystal methamphetamine – is a strong, highly addictive drug with no legal use that affects the central nervous system. Also called “ice” or “glass” because it comes in clear chunks or shiny blue-white rocks, it is a popular party drug, usually smoked with a small glass pipe, and sometimes swallowed, snorted or injected into a vein.

First-time users may get hooked right from the start after experiencing a quick rush of euphoria, feelings of pleasure, confidence and energy; and becoming hyper-aware and sensitive to noises, smells and visual stimulants. As they continue to use the drug, they build up tolerance and need higher doses for the same effects. As their addiction grows, they forget hunger and thirst, with the drug at the center of their lives.

As the drug works its seeming magic for those who crave the feelings it produces, it also damages the body and causes severe psychological problems. Lives of addicts crumble with economic losses and homelessness because they cannot – and do not want to – function on jobs; and their health deteriorates due to lack of self-care, including medical care, and to the drug itself, which can cause heart and lung damage, dental, skin and eye problems, cramps, insomnia, twitching and restlessness, among physical effects; and paranoia and psychosis characterized by auditory, visual and physical hallucinations.

Eleven years ago, Chasity Hart – now a busy married mother of a 17-year old son and 15-year-old daughter who works full-time in Co-Lin’s maintenance department and part-time in several other jobs while starting an artisan business as a soap maker – was in the grips of crystal meth and its downward spiral.

In 2012, she came to a residential ministry for women that the New Beginnings Worship Center at Martinsville, Mississippi, ran at Wesson, where she says “I found Jesus, and learned how to be saved and loved rather than depending on a substance.”

“Coming to Wesson saved my life,” Hart affirms.

Until 11 years ago, Hart lived all around Wesson in south central Mississippi, with a brief interlude in Alabama.

Suffice it to say, she recalls an “unpleasant childhood” in “a dysfunctional family.” Hart, her mother and two sisters experienced life without a strong male presence. With her two

older sisters, she moved from community to community with her parents, and sometimes lived with relatives. Whether it was the different changes in schools or the nature of the institution, she did not like school and quit after completing the ninth grade.

Ironically, dropping out of school led to some of Hart’s happiest days as a youth as a resident of the federal Job Corps facility at Crystal Springs. Encouraged by her mother and sister, she applied for the program for youth and young adults from low-income families. Within an environment that provided housing, meals and care for personal needs, she spent two years there starting at age 16 in career studies, including a Business Office Technology course and Certified Nursing Assistant classes, and earned a high school graduation equivalency diploma. She also met her first husband there.

With her then husband, she moved to Alabama, worked at the Washington County Hospital Infirmity and started her family, but returned to south central Mississippi after a divorce where she fell into a drug-centered life.

“I wanted to be around family, but found friends that turned out to be the wrong crowd,” Hart relates. She also found crystal meth, and started a two-year spiral downward, interspersed with some failed attempts at rehabilitation.

“My situation was pretty ugly,” she recalls. “A communal living situation with friends not much better off than I. No work. Food stamps. I blamed others for my problems, didn’t keep sober company and made the wrong choices trying to manage my life alone.”

Finally, Hart’s older sister Brenda stepped in. “She came to where I was living in Lawrence County, packed me up and ex-

tracted me,” she recounts. She took her to New Beginnings Worship Center’s Elizabeth House in Wesson.

Unlike the hospitals and other voluntary organizations where she tried to find help for her addiction, Elizabeth House offered no medications to make rehab less painful. “They gave me a Bible and told me ‘it’s all here,’” she says. “There were also worship services twice a week, Bible studies, Godly people with whom I could talk and a wonderful counselor – Teresa Veramontez – who helped me spiritually and practically. But for two weeks before I finally opened the Bible and started reading, it was a living hell.”

Over the course of a year, Hart says she did a lot of soul-searching. “I took the first step to get help in recognizing I needed a savior, that I couldn’t do it myself and finding the love of Jesus to change my life,” she says.

When Hart moved out of Elizabeth House to a small house of her own just down the street, she faced a multitude of practical problems around supporting herself and two children and figuring out how to live, but one important thing had changed: she no longer depended on crystal meth. Jesus’ love helped her make the right choices. She took her first real job at Shop ‘n Wash, where she helped prepare food, interacted with its grocery-shopping customers, checked out shoppers at cash registers and, in the process, learned about the working world’s values – being on time, business ethics and sacrifice. She also fell in love with Freddie Hart, a local carpenter, whom she married in 2017. Hart’s new life has continued to evolve.

Today, Hart is part of the cleaning crew at Co-Lin, helps run Uncle Rays eatery, bait shop and convenience store across from the entrance to Lake Lincoln State Park on weekends and is trying to turn an interest in soaps and soap making into a local artisan business.

Hart’s Essential Soaps, which she started in July, grew out of her reading interest in soap making and experimenting with melting-and-pour soaps – existing soaps with added ingredients. In her new business, Hart is making cold-processed soaps for sensitive skin and fragranced soaps from scratch with oils, lye and goat’s milk – her major additive. She produces about 50 bars of soap per week, which she sells to a customer base including 130 Facebook followers and patrons of various area flea markets.

With Jesus, Hart, at 36 years old, has moved beyond a rough childhood and youth and crystal meth to a new positive life in Wesson.



Wesson News

Chasity Hart makes soaps.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

What are your hobbies?

I try to share the story of my recovery to help give other people hope and find the way out of their situations, whatever they are. I go to church, but am not an active member of Little Bahala Baptist Church. I maintain the New Found Hope Recovery Today website to encourage those who need motivation and strength in dealing with their issues. It’s a public page with 314 followers, which used to sponsor meetings at Elizabeth House in Wesson. Other than that, it’s all work for me.

Are you a reader?

I mainly read the Bible, although I may pick up something like *Duck Dynasty*, as I did recently, and get into it.

How about music?

I don’t sing or play an instrument, but I listen to worship music on Pandora and 106.7 rock on my car radio.

What would you do with the winnings if you won the lottery?

I would donate to the Boren Children’s Home, establish a new Elizabeth House in Wesson, and help set up my children for their lives.

How would you change the world?

People need to be introduced to Jesus to know there is a better life – to know there is hope outside of drugs, abuse and dysfunctional families.



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ILR class hones painting skills

By Bob Arnold

With a little help from Co-Lin Art Instructor Carisa Mitchell, eight Institute for Learning in Retirement members – some skilled, but most with very little background – found creative expression in painting in a special workshop earlier this month.

Bob and Julia Arnold, Shirley Calcote, Sharyn Davis, Sarah Lloyd, Patti Perkins, Mary Ann Smith and Joy Wesbrooks sat in front of easels with empty white canvasses, a palette with red, blue, green, yellow, black and white acrylic paints and an assortment of brushes coaxed and coached by Mitchell in what she calls a “paint-along” class.

“It’s about having fun, whether or not you have any painting experience,” says Mitchell.

And painting, not drawing, is what it’s all about, she stresses. Applying



Wesson News

colors to a canvas. Mixing paints for just the right color. Brush strokes and the right brushes to use. That’s what class participants learn as they turn their blank canvasses into colorful art that they can be proud to take home and hang on their walls.

Mitchell provides subject matter – other paintings that require limited, if any, drawing -- as models to guide the creative efforts of her classes.

The ILR class participants voted on four models presented by Mitchell, choosing a painting of a poppy

field – green stems with red flowers -- to get them started on their creative journey. Two hours later, the eight class members had produced eight different paintings ranging from expressionist to realist in varying colors – all based on the same painting model, but distinctly different from it.

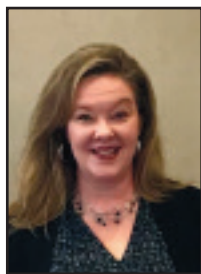
Mitchell came to Co-Lin in 2022 and teaches art appreciation, drawing, design and introduction to visual art at the college. Her students’ work will be exhibited at Co-Lin in a show that runs from November 2 to 17. She is also involved in producing a first-time Art Market November 3 from 8 a.m. to noon on the college campus that will feature Co-Lin and community contributors who want to sell their creations.

Mitchell’s “paint-along” classes are \$45, including art supplies, paint and canvas.

Preventing cancer with diet

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

October is a month of double significance: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, reminding us of the importance of early detection and treatment, and Eat Together, Eat Better Month, emphasizing the value of shared meals. However, not widely known is the potent connection between nutrition and cancer prevention.



It is an opportune moment to explore nutritional choices that can reduce the risk of cancer. Here are ten actionable steps to make better dietary choices:

1. Embrace Antioxidant-Rich Foods. What to eat: Fruits and vegetables, especially berries, citrus fruits, nuts, green leafy veggies and tomatoes.

Why it helps: Antioxidants neutralize free radicals, which can damage cells and lead to cancer.

2. Choose Whole Grains Over Processed Grains. What to eat: Oats, quinoa, brown rice, barley, and whole grain bread.

Why it helps: Whole grains are rich in fiber, which aids digestion and can help prevent colorectal cancers. They also regulate blood sugar levels, curbing diabetes risk, which is linked to certain cancers.

3. Limit Processed and Red Meats. What to avoid: Bacon, sausages, ham,

and excessive amounts of red meats like beef and lamb.

Why it is important: Regular consumption of processed meats has been linked to colorectal cancer, while high intake of red meat is also associated with increased cancer risk.

4. Incorporate Omega-3 Fatty Acids. What to eat: Fatty fish (like salmon, mackerel, and sardines), flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts.

Why it helps: Omega-3s have anti-inflammatory properties that may help prevent cancer.

5. Limit Alcohol Intake. What to avoid: Excessive drinking. Moderation is key.

Why it is important: Alcohol can increase the risk of several cancers, including breast, mouth, throat, liver, and colorectal cancer.

6. Boost Cruciferous Vegetable Intake. What to eat: Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, and Brussels sprouts.

Why it helps: These veggies contain compounds that have shown potential in slowing the growth of cancer cells.

7. Prioritize Plant-Based Protein Sources. What to eat: Beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, tempeh, and edamame.



Why it helps: These foods provide essential nutrients without the saturated fats often found in animal products.

8. Limit Sugar and Refined Carbohydrates. What to avoid: Sugary drinks, sweets, and white bread.

Why it is important: High sugar intake can lead to obesity, a known risk factor for various cancers.

9. Spice It Up. What to eat: Turmeric, garlic, and ginger.

Why it helps: These spices have properties that can inhibit cancer cell growth.

10. Stay Hydrated with Clean Water. What to drink: Filtered water; limit sugary beverages.

Why it is important: Water helps detoxify the body, while sugary drinks can contribute to obesity.

As you think about diet during Eat Together, Eat Better Month, remember the benefits of communal dining. Sharing meals fosters emotional well-being, reduces stress, and allows for the exchange of healthy recipes and habits. Together, as a community, we can adopt nutritional choices that not only reduce cancer risks but also promote holistic health.

Let’s pledge to make mindful, healthful choices, intertwining the essence of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month with the spirit of Eat Together, Eat Better. Your plate, your choice; make it count for cancer prevention.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is owner of Do Good ProHealth (CPR Classes) and Do Good Leadership (motivational speaking, and leadership and success coaching).

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Flea Market expecting big crowds

Special to Wesson News

More than 150 vendors -- individuals, church groups, clubs and civic organization and businesses -- will line the streets of downtown Wesson in their special tents to offer arts and crafts items, fleas, clothing, food, snacks and refreshments, among other things, to thousands of browsers and shoppers expected to flood into town on Saturday, October 21, for the 52nd annual Flea Market and Outdoor Arts and Crafts Show.

Wesson Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Chief Ken Carraway, who is coordinating the Flea Market for WVFD, the managing organization, predicts a big crowd will be browsing, shopping and munching on the concessions. The Flea Market will start at 8 a.m. on Highway 51, Factory, Spring and Beech Streets and run until 4 p.m.

While their parents shop, kids can play and run off their energy at a special fun zone.

"With help of some good weather, it will be a time for great food, shopping and fellowship," says Carraway.

At a food court on Spring street near highway 51, shoppers can consume or take home varied edibles offered by civic clubs and church groups -- pulled pork parfaits and sandwiches, pork skins, egg rolls, jambalaya, burgers, chicken strips, chicken on stick, turkey legs, kettle corn fish plates, funnel cakes, jel-



Special to Wesson News

lies, jams and baked goods, along with Mississippi's favorite beverage -- sweet tea, of course.

Vendors from throughout Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee will be on hand to

help visitors with their gift lists for Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years, offer seasonal decorations and meet varied home and personal needs.

Shoppers will find drawings,

paintings and ceramic and glassware of local artists and artisans. There will be yard art, wreaths, door hangers, candles and much, much more for those who want to add charm in and around their homes. Pets, flowers and plants, an array of fleas and crafts -- dolls and doll clothing, wood and iron work, men's and women's clothes, leather products, bath products, collectible knives, hair bows, jewelry and antiques -- will all be part of the mix.

Friends of the Library will hold its annual book sale in the building next to the Wesson public library pavilion. Town Hall staff will be in a special tent, where residents can get to know government officials.

Started by a local merchants association, WVFD turned the event, better known today as the "Wesson Flea Market," into a major fundraiser held annually on the third Saturday in October. The volunteer fire fighters generate some \$5000 each year on sales of the 10-foot-by-10-foot display areas at \$45 each to purchase equipment for the fire department, Carraway says.

Vendors and exhibitors can still reserve display areas. They must furnish their own tables, chairs, and other display equipment and may sell from tents, booths or their cars and trucks. Set-up for the Flea Market is after 5 p.m. on Friday, October 20, and before 8 a.m. on Saturday. Get information at 601-265-1694 or wessonfd@gmail.com.

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Dry weather increases fire threat



Special to Wesson News

With dry conditions, low humidity and winds, fire risk – especially wildfires – is an ongoing threat in the area.

Burn bans remain in effect, and people should not attempt open burning of any kind. Because one spark can cause a fire, people should also exercise caution in using lawn mowers, bush hogs and chain saws; disposing cigarettes and allowing trailer chains to drag on roadways.

Already, trash-burning, bush hogging, grass heating up due to the muffler of a lawn mower and a squirrel chewing on a transformer have ignited fires in Lincoln County, where Emergency Management Agency Director Chris Reid is warning that he will issue citations for violations of the burn ban.

Firefighters and the Mississippi Forestry Commission fought a forest fire in Copiah County that consumed 49 acres at the intersection of Harvey and St. John Road in the Pleasant Hill Community on Weyerhaeuser Company property near the Homochitto National Forest.

Local volunteer fire departments say they can use more help with the threat of blazes looming.

Sweet potatoes return to town

By Bob Arnold

For area sweet potato lovers, it's the most wonderful time of the year.

For the ninth consecutive year, locals have gobbled up the world's best sweet potatoes grown at Landreth Farms in the Vardaman area in north central Mississippi -- the "Sweet Potato Capital of the World" -- at a bargain basement rate generate funds for the international and local charities supported by Wesson Lions Club.

Members of the Club started selling them during the first week of the month and had run out of them within two weeks -- more than 400 forty-pound boxes of sweet potatoes sold for \$20 per box, or 50 cents per pound. Individuals and area restaurants stocking up on the quality sweet potatoes supported the Lions Club's annual fundraising effort.

Landreth Farms officials say it's the loamy soil -- along with timely early rains -- in the Vardaman area that make their potato crops sweet and special. Landreth plants sweet potatoes on 600 acres, among Mississippi farmers, who raise sweet potatoes on more than 18,400 acres across the state. The farm sells commercially to national food stores, such as Kroger and Wal-Mart; and canners, like Gerber; and produces a line of pre-wrapped sweet potatoes for microwave cooking.

The annual sweet potato sale is among three major fundraising activities of the Wesson Lions Club. The Club also has an annual spring pancake breakfast and sells boiled peanuts at Co-Lin athletic events. It disburses some \$10,000 every year to assist deaf and blind persons through the International Lions Club and to support local organizations and causes related to community improvement, children and youth, veterans, hospice care and address other issues and concerns.



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Artist painted WWII planes

Special to Wesson News

Ward Gallman, Jr., born in 1917, started exhibiting creative talent at a young age when he was going to school in Crystal Springs. Along with a unique ability to sketch and use shading in drawings, he was drawn to wood crafting, and, on one occasion, designed a blue jay house made from cedar, red with a green roof, and provided specifics about why the roof should be slanted.

At Memphis Academy of Arts and Chicago Institute, he honed his skills, and focused on varied mediums – oils and pastels – and subjects – portraits, landscapes and florals.

In New Guinea during World War II for 47 months, he was a camouflage painter and insignia designer for the 41st Fighter Squadron, also known as the “Flying Buzzsaws.” Dubbed the “Squadron Michelangelo” by his comrades, he repeatedly repainted planes, adding new colors and designs, to make the enemy think the U.S. had more planes than they did. A 1943 *Life Magazine* Oldsmobile ad featured a photo of one of his planes with colorful insignia – a round metal buzzsaw blade with bright red wings flying on a cloud. One year, he designed a Christmas card for his comrades to use. It featured a Christmas wreath with huts and palm trees, hinting at their location, and read “The Japs have not kept us from thinking of and wishing you a very Merry Christmas – Somewhere in the Southwest Pacific.”

At the time, when he wasn’t painting for the military, he also expressed his humor in portraits of pilot’s wives, characters such as Bugs Bunny riding a door, coiled drag-



Ward Gallman, Jr. painted planes.

Special to Wesson News

ons, and a crow holding a machine gun, smoking a cigar and riding on a cloud. From his Pacific base, Gallman sent mail to his parents in Crystal Springs adorned with sketches of what he was painting, and his daughters still have some of the correspondence.

When he returned to Crystal Springs after the War, he married Sara Lee Hubbard, with whom he had two daughters, Gale and Sheila.

A devoted Methodist, Gallman also found inspiration for his works in religion. Applying his wood working skills, he designed and built a life-size nativity scene for the front lawn of his church every Christmas. He also painted the scene

of a flowing river for Pilgrims Rest Baptist Church.

Gallman continued to paint until his death in a 1972 automobile accident at age 54. In the late 1970s, the Junior Auxiliary honored his memory with a month-long exhibit of his artwork, including a stunning portrait of his wife that he was painting just before his death.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Throughout the 2023 Copiah County Bicentennial year, Wesson News will feature sketches of past and present visual artists, musicians, authors and photographers who are natives of the county. They will be excerpted from Tricia Nelson’s reporting in A Shared History: Copiah County, Mississippi 1823-2023 edited and compiled by Paul C. Cartwright and available through Cartwright for \$25 plus \$5 for shipping at 3 Waverly Circle, Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Nelson is a Crystal Springs writer who contributes to the Copiah County Monitor.





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Six join Sports Hall of Fame

Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin Athletic Alumni Association will induct six members into the Sports Hall of Fame during Homecoming festivities on Thursday, Oct. 26. This year's class includes Kyle Beall, of Louisville, Kentucky; Chassity Cubie of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Daniele Knight of Destrehan, Louisiana; Thomas Matthews of Clinton; Dequan Menzie of Richland; and Amy Russell Riley of New Hebron.



The six will be inducted during the Alumni Association Awards Reception at 3:15 p.m. in the Thames Center on the Wesson Campus, October 26.

Beall is a 2002 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the Wolf Pack baseball team. While at Co-Lin knight he was named First Team All-American, First Team

All-Region and First Team All-State in 2002. After Co-Lin, Beall played baseball at Coastal Carolina University and Carson-Newman University. He was named to the 2005 South Atlantic Conference All Tournament Team. He graduated from Carson-Newman with a degree in exercise science.

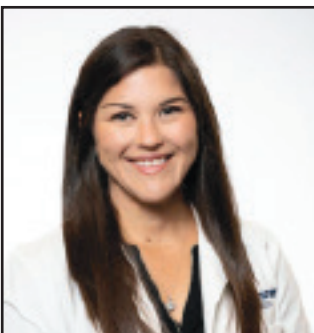
He currently works as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist at Norton Healthcare in downtown Louisville, Kentucky. He is a member of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Kentucky Association of Nurse Anesthetists and NULU Small Business Association.

"It is truly humbling and an honor and privilege to be a part of such a prestigious group of former student athletes," he said. Beall is married to Peyton Beall ('02), formerly of Brookhaven.



Cubie is a 1998 graduate of Co-Lin, where she was a member of the Wolf Pack basketball team. During her freshman year at Co-Lin, she averaged 11.2 points, 3.8 rebounds, 1.6 steals and 1.9 assists, and she was named to the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) First Team All State. In her sophomore year, she averaged 13.2 points, 3.7 rebounds, 2.2 steals and 2.3 assists, and was named to the MAC-

JC First Team All State, NJCAA ALL Region XXIII, NJCAA All Region XXIII All Tournament and NJCAA Third Team All American. During the 1996-1997 season, her team won the MACJC State Championship, NJCAA Region XXIII Championship, MACJC South Division Championship, and they participated in the NJCAA National Tournament. During the 1997 - 1998 season, her team won the MACJC South Division Championship and was runner-up in the MACJC State Championship and NJCAA Region XXIII Championship. After Co-Lin, Cubie played basketball at Southeastern Louisiana University.



Knight is a 2010 graduate of Co-Lin, where she was a member of the Wolf Pack softball team. While at Co-Lin, she was named First Team All-Region and First Team All-State in 2009 and 2010. She was also selected for the All-Star game and her team won the state championship title both years. She set records for RBIs (49), doubles (16) and walks (27). She also struck out only six times

during her freshman season at Co-Lin.

After Co-Lin, Knight attended Louisiana College, where she received a Bachelor of Science in nursing. She also earned her Master of Science in nursing at Northwestern State University. She currently works as a nurse practitioner in the field of family practice.

"This honor is a reflection of all of the hard work and dedication myself, my family, my teammates and our coaches put forth day in and day out," she said. "I am proud to represent my team in the Hall of Fame."

Knight and her husband, James, have one son, Brooks, one daughter, June, and are expecting twins in January.

Matthews is a 1988 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the Wolf

Pack basketball team. While at Co-Lin, he was named to the First Team All-State and was named Most Valuable Player at the Mississippi Junior College All Star Game. After Co-Lin, Matthews continued his basketball career at Mississippi College, where he was named Gulf State Conference

Newcomer of the Year and First Team Gulf South Conference. He then went on to play nine years in Portugal and Greece.

He currently owns his own business, Corporate Security, in Clinton. He gives back by running a sports camp at the YMCA in downtown Jackson.

"It is a great honor to be inducted into the Co-Lin Hall of Fame," he said. "It has been my dream for a long time. The school has meant the world to me, and what I am today — a

successful businessman and family man — all started with the values of hard work instilled in me the day I walked on campus." He and his wife, Annie, have one son, Khristian.

Menzie is a 2010 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the Wolf Pack football team. He was named a Second team All-American by the NJCAA following his sophomore season at Co-Lin. He garnered NJCAA All-Region 23 honors and was named the Most Valuable Defensive Back in the MACJC. He was also named to the First team All-State.

After Co-Lin, Menzie attended the University of Alabama, where his team won a national championship. He received a bachelor's degree in human environmental science. He was drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs in the 2012 NFL draft, before continuing his career with the Detroit Lions and Carolina Panthers. He currently serves on the executive protection team at the Mississippi Highway Patrol.

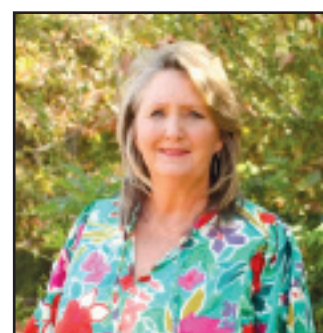
"It is a great honor and privilege to be inducted into the Co-Lin Sports Hall of Fame," he said. He is married to Wolf Pack women's basketball alumna TeAirra Wilbert Menzie, and they have five children: Alanna, DeAunni, Annelise, DeQuan, Jr., and Avianna.

Riley is a 1987 graduate of Co-Lin, where she was a member of the Wolf Pack tennis team. While at Co-Lin, she earned the state and regional title in No. 2 singles and No. 1 doubles, and was ranked in the nation's top 20 in 1986. Her team that year won the state and regional championship and was ranked in the nation's top 10. She also won the state and regional title in No. 3 singles and was ranked in the nation's top 20 in 1987. That team was the first Co-Lin tennis team to play in the NJCAA National Tournament in Midland, Texas.

After Co-Lin, Riley attended the University of Southern Mississippi, where she received a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She taught at Prentiss Christian Academy for three years before joining the staff at New Hebron Attendance Center. During her 27.5 years at New Hebron, she served on numerous committees and coached basketball, track and cheer. She remains active in the USTA adult tennis league.

"I am in awe of the fact that I am among some of the best athletes that have come through the Co-Lin athletic program throughout the years," she said. "I am forever grateful for this opportunity." Riley is a member of New Hebron Baptist Church, where she currently serves as church hostess, greeting coordinator and member of the children's ministry committee. She was married to the late Jason Riley for 29 years, and they are parents of three daughters: Abby Crider (husband Jeret), Carly Reeves (husband Blake), and the late Jacy Lee Riley. They also have four grandchildren, AnaMolly Crider, Adeline Crider, Collins Reeves and Hutch Reeves, and a fifth grandchild is expected in April.

Admission to the Alumni Awards Reception is free. For more information on Homecoming events, visit www.colin.edu.



Chicken soup for cooler weather



By Guest Columnist Charles Fortson, Jr.

With cooler temperatures, soups become a staple at Southern meals. Chicken soup makes both a hearty meal and appetizer, great any time of the year.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Charles Fortson, Jr., is proprietor-chef at Uncle Ray's across from Lake Lincoln State Park. He makes lunches and dinners to take out or for table service, while also operating a convenience store and bait shop at his Sunset Road location. Follow his cooking tips on Uncle Ray's Facebook page or call 601-643-0174 to check on his daily specials.



Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken
- 2 bunches of broccoli
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup of finely chopped onions
- 2 tbsp. chopped garlic
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 large cans condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 tsp red pepper

Directions:

1. In large stock pot, boil chicken over medium to high heat until tender for 45 minutes in water with red pepper added.
 2. Remove chicken, cool, debone and chop.
 3. While chicken is cooling, drain broth into separate bowl. Return 1 quart to stock pot.
 4. Add onions, garlic and carrots.
 5. Cut tops off broccoli and add to mix in stock pot with tsp. of salt.
 6. Bring mixture to boil, reduce heat and cook for 20 minutes.
 7. Add 2 cans of condensed cream of chicken soup and stir well on low heat to totally dissolve it in stock pot mix.
 8. Depending on desired consistency of soup, add more chicken broth to dilute.
 9. Add chicken to mix.
 10. Cook 10 minutes on low heat, stirring regularly.
 11. Check consistency of soup, stirring regularly, and adding broth as desired.
- Serve with a happy face, and two to four crackers. Serves four to six for a meal.

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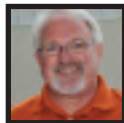
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- 1996 Harley Davidson Heritage Softail, only 1800 miles, many many custom parts, garage kept, like new
- 2006 Mazda mx5 miata convertible, 5 speed, air, power windows, Fun Fun at a bargain price!
- 2007 BMW 650i Convertible, Only 52,000 actual miles, new tires, Like new!
- 2012 Buick Lacrosse Touring, Leather, Pano Sunroof, Rear Camera, Super Sharp
- 2013 Chrysler 300s, Pearl White, Leather, Pano Sunroof, Chrome wheels, Beats sound system, Beautiful
- 2015 Ford F150 SuperCrew 4wd Platinum pkge, new tires, Buckets, Pano Sunroof, Dont miss this one
- 2018 Ford F150 SuperCrew XLT Sport 4x4, Ruby Red w/black, Sharpest truck around
- 2015 Honda Accord EXL Coupe, Leather, Sunroof, Spoiler, Bluetooth.
- 2006 Honda Odessey EX-L, One owner, only 86,000 miles, Leather, Sunroof, One of a kind!
- 2012 Ford Fusion (2 to choose) both have low mileage, and are super clean w/great gas mileage
- 2014 GMC sierra SLT crew cab 4wd, leather, nav, new tires, rear camera, super nice
- 2014 Honda Accord (2) one EX-L V6 and one Sport Package, Both are really nice
- 2013 Hyuandai Santa fe sport suv, leather, sunroof, AWD, new tires, like new
- 2011-2013 JEEP wranglers, 2 two door, one 4 door come take a look
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Co-Lin announces Homecoming activities

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin's Homecoming during the week of October 23-28 will feature an array of activities for alumni, friends and students on the Wesson campus and provide opportunities for folk to reconnect and experience the exciting changes happening at the college.

At an awards ceremony on Thursday, October 26, Charles Fortenberry, class of 1961, will be honored as Alumnus of the Year. He is originally from Bogue Chitto and currently resides in Fayetteville, NC. After Co-Lin, he graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science and Troy State University with a Master of Arts. He is a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force and received 11 Air Medals and two Distinguished Flying Cross medals.

Homecoming week will kick off on Monday, October 23, with a karaoke night outside of the cafeteria to which all students, alumni and members of the community are invited.

On Tuesday, October 24, the Alumni Association and Office of Enrollment Services are sponsoring a 5K Glow Run on campus. The event is free and open to runners and walkers of all ages. Prizes will be awarded to the top male and female winners in a variety of age groups. The first 50 participants to register will receive a t-shirt. Registration is online on the Co-Lin website.

The bulk of Homecoming events will be Thursday:

- A retiree brunch at the president's home at 10:30 a.m.. All retirees from the college's three campuses are invited to attend.
- Alumni Association chapter meetings for the Athletic Alumni Association in the Henley Building and for the Band/Colette Alumni Chapter in the Natchez Room at the Thames Center at 2:00 p.m.
- The annual alumni awards reception from 3:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Thames Center. Alumnus of the Year, Sports Hall of Fame, Band & Colette honorees and the 50-year reunion class will be recognized during this time. Check-in and social time will begin at 3:15 p.m., with the award program beginning at 3:45 p.m.
- The annual business meeting beginning of the Alumni Association at 4:30 p.m. Admission to the event is free, but guests are asked to RSVP with the Alumni Office.
- A tailgate party outside Stone Stadium from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., with free food sponsored by Alfa Insurance, games and activities for kids sponsored by the Mississippi Army National Guard, and a pre Homecoming football game pep rally featuring the Blue Wave Show band and cheerleaders at 6 p.m. The event is open to the public.
- The Homecoming football game at 6:30 p.m. against East Central. The 2023 Sports Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized on the field prior to the coin toss. The Homecoming Queen and her court will be recognized on the field at halftime.

On Friday, October 27, a four-man scramble golf tournament will be hosted by the Co-Lin baseball team at the Wolf Hollow course. Registration will be \$100 per player, and hole sponsorships are available for \$100. Registration is online on the Co-Lin website. A mixed doubles tennis tournament will also be hosted by the Co-Lin tennis team at the Co-Lin Tennis Complex. Registration will be \$50 per player, and t-shirt sponsorships are available for \$150. Registration is online on the Co-Lin website.

For more information on Homecoming events and activities, visit www.colin.edu or contact the Alumni Office at 601-643-8498.



Charles Fortenberry

Wesson News

Local Wesson Drone pilot demonstrates craft capabilities



Special to Wesson News

Local sky-gazers near the Co-Lin Wesson campus who see an unidentified flying object could well be viewing a drone piloted by Corey Hart, the graphics design technician at the college.

Since Hart shoots and designs video graphics for Co-Lin, the college chose him to make use of its drones when it decided to purchase two commercial models.

“I learned all I could about them through reading and the internet, and got my Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) license to pilot the kind of regulated small unmanned aerial vehicles (SUAVs) the college bought,” Hart told an Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) workshop.

Recreational SUAVs less than one-half -pound with limited altitude and distance capacities, which can be acquired in retail stores, do not need to be registered with the FAA and can be operated without a license, he explained.

At the workshop, Hart demonstrated the college’s workhorse commercial multi-rotor craft that measures a little more than a foot in length along a one-inch deep fuselage and from propeller to propeller in the front and rear. It can climb to 400 feet and travel about one mile in sight range when weather conditions are favorable.

Hart piloted the craft with a simple remote device with starter buttons to activate the rotors and two control sticks to direct take-off, landing and flight, including altitude and distance. With a cellular phone app, he monitored and controlled an on-board camera.

Since deploying drones, Co-Lin’s photography and videography has changed dramatically, with ready use of aerial still photos and video clips.

“Drones have made aerial coverage with the variety of photographic and video techniques and perspectives they make possible a standard relatively low-cost graphics tool,” said Hart. “Fifteen years ago, you had to contract a manned aircraft and an aerial photographer. Now you activate your camera-equipped drone and take your picture or make your video from the ground with your cell phone.”

While graphics is the lion’s share of the work Co-Lin’s drones do, they can quickly and efficiently collect data flying over structures and land. “Not long ago, a storm damaged a portion of the scoreboard at Co-Lin’s Stone Stadium, and we flew our drone around and into it to assess the problem without erecting scaffolding or having workers climb ladders,” Hart said. “SUAVs have wide applications for power companies in monitoring their lines, real estate organizations in evaluating properties and agricultural firms in analyzing crop and grazing lands.”

DJI produced Co-Lin’s drones, and other major manufacturers include Yuneec, 3D Robotics, AeroVironment and Hubson, among an array of other companies.

In addition to the small multi-rotor drones, UAV fixed wing, fixed wing hybrid and single rotor craft may be close to the size of manned aircraft, and take on larger tasks, including, but not limited to military, law enforcement, firefighting and farming tasks, Hart added.

With Hart’s growing expertise in drones, Co-Lin has moved him into an instructional role in periodic drone training classes it offers. While he focused on drone technology and operational skills in early classes, student interests lie largely in becoming licensed for commercial work. “FAA knowledge related air traffic safety and the rules of flying, reading air maps and understanding weather maps are among the most important licensing requirements,” he explained. “The operational side of piloting drones is comparatively easy.”

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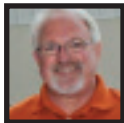
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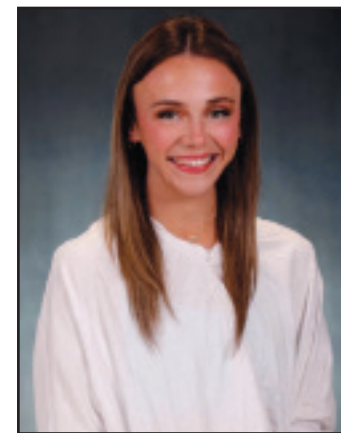
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Band & Colettes honor Elliott, Moore



Elliott

Wesson News



Moore

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Special to Wesson News

The Band and Colette chapter of the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Alumni Association will induct Joe Elliott of Bogie Chitto, into its Hall of Fame and will honor Kennedy Moore of Brookhaven as the Stanley Stewart Outstanding Young Alumni recipient during Homecoming festivities on Thursday, October 26.

Elliott is a 1987 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the Blue Wave Show Band, the Sojourners and the choir. After Co-Lin, he received both bachelor's and master's degrees from Mississippi College. He has been a member of the music faculty at Southwest Mississippi Community College for 27 years, and is the chair of the humanities and fine arts division there. He has also been a bivocational music minister for 37 years, now serving at New Heights Baptist Church. He has enjoyed a regional career as a vocalist, conductor and director in musicals and orchestral events, and is actively involved in community choir and theatre events to engage musical involvement in the community. He and his wife, Jennifer Joiner Elliott, have four children: Joey, 26, Beth, 23, Emily, 23, and Abby, 21.

"As a lifetime believer in the community college system, I am a Wolf at heart and a Bear in life," Elliott said. "It is a great honor to be acknowledged by the institution of my past."

Moore is a 2017 graduate of Co-Lin, where she was a captain of the Colettes. While attending Co-Lin, she was also named to Who's Who Among Students in American Community Colleges. After Co-Lin, Moore received a bachelor's degree in child development from the University of Southern Mississippi, with a minor in dance education. She currently serves as the Colette director, teaches dance at Show Stoppers Studio of Dance in Brookhaven and is a fifth and sixth grade English Language Arts teacher at By Faith Christian Academy.

"I absolutely loved my time at Co Lin, and now getting to be a coach here is such a meaningful job to me," Moore said. "I love getting to share my passion of dance with each team that I get, and I love being able to work at a college that supports me and what I do. I feel extremely lucky and blessed to work at a college like Co Lin. Being a recipient of this award is something I will forever cherish."

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Programming award



Wesson News


American Legion Post 79 Commander Bobby Thornton (left) accepts the 2023 American Legion Riders Family Award on behalf of the Wesson American Legion family for its programming. Two separate presentations were made at the 104th annual Department of Mississippi American Legion Convention in Natchez -- one to Thornton and another to the Auxiliary Unit. The award is based on the past year's activities of the Legion post, including the variety of events and the spirit of cooperation between the Legion, Sons of the American Legion (SAL), and Auxiliary Unit in serving the Veterans population. The American Legion program focuses on "the Four Pillars" -- Veterans affairs and rehabilitation, national security, Americanism and children and youth. American Legion Post 79 meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 1014 Main Street in Wesson. To learn more about the American Legion, visit its website at www.legion.org or follow American Legion Post 79 on Facebook.



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Grants, tiff, scandal, deer & shipping

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin grants. Eighty-four low-income older Mississippians and nursing students will benefit from two grants awarded to Co-Lin. With \$466,977 in federal funds from the Center for Workforce Inclusion, the college will provide in-demand skills training through the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to low-income adults age 55 and older in Copiah, Lincoln, Lawrence, Franklin, Jefferson, Walthall, Pike, Amite, Adams, Claiborne, Simpson, Smith and Wilkinson Counties who are seeking jobs. Another \$73,000 from the Mississippi Allied Health College and Career Navigator Grant Program funded by American Rescue Plan Act will allow the college to provide assistance through navigators who will assist nursing students on financial aid and services related to mental health, transportation, childcare, healthcare and housing.

Mobile-Biloxi tiff. Mobile, Alabama's largest city, claims police from nearby Biloxi are dropping off homeless people, sometimes after coercing them to go – a charge Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich denies. To the contrary, Gilich says Biloxi is working with homeless shelters in Mobile, no one has been taken against their will and fewer than 20 people have been transported to Mobile. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson counters that Biloxi police are violating the civil rights of homeless people by saying they are breaking the Mississippi city's laws and then taking them to Mobile. The Mobile Mayor asks Biloxi to stop the transports, and threatens to call in federal officials to investigate civil rights violations in Biloxi. Mobile, a city of 200,000 people, is about an hour's drive east along the Gulf Coast from Biloxi. Gilich says Mobile officials are "misinformed," and that Biloxi has been working with two Mobile shelters since August 2022 "that offer homeless persons numerous resources not available in our community."

Welfare scandal. U.S. Representatives Jason Smith, of Missouri, and Darin LaHood, of Illinois, want the federal Government Accountability Office to review non-assistance spending in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides about \$16.5 billion in funds to states to help families who cannot pay for their basic needs. The former Republican-appointed head of Mississippi's Department of Human Services and former leaders of nonprofits have pleaded guilty to state and federal charges alleging that they misspent money through the TANF program. The scandal has also ensnared high-profile figures, including retired NFL quarterback Brett Favre, who is among more than three dozen defendants in a lawsuit the current Human Services director filed to recover some of the welfare money. Instead of going to needy families, the money helped fund pet projects of the wealthy, including \$5 million for a volleyball arena that Favre supported at his alma mater, the University of Southern Mississippi, says Mississippi Auditor Shad White. White has recommended

that the program mitigate fraud by requiring state agency heads to sign statements under penalty of perjury about the number of people served by assistance programs.

Too many deer. Mississippi's deer population is bigger than ever before, prompting state officials to encourage hunters to catch an extra target total this year. Mississippi is home to more than 1.5 million deer, a state record, according to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. In an effort to keep the deer population under control, the department gave hunters the green light to grow their harvests during the current and upcoming hunting seasons. Deer hunting is a \$1 billion industry in Mississippi. The dates for hunting seasons around the state vary based on location, weaponry and the types of deer.

Shipping costs up in drought. The long stretch of hot, dry weather has left the Mississippi River so low that barge companies are reducing their loads just as Midwest farmers are preparing to harvest crops and send tons of corn and soybeans downriver to the Gulf of Mexico. The transport restrictions are a headache for barge companies, but even more worrisome for thousands of farmers who have watched drought scorch their fields for much of the summer. Now they will face higher prices to transport what remains of their crops. About 60% of U.S. grain exports are taken by barge down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where the corn, soybeans and wheat is stored and ultimately transferred to other ships. It's usually an inexpensive, efficient way to transport crops, as a typical group of 15 barges lashed together carries as much cargo as about 1,000 trucks. But as river levels drop, that cost has soared. Prices have risen because the river south of St. Louis does not remain consistently deep enough now to accommodate typical barges, forcing companies to load less into each vessel and string fewer barges together.

Child care assistance spikes. Mississippi has seen a consistent rise in the number of families accepting public assistance for child care since lawmakers banned abortion in almost all circumstances, with the sharpest increase coming after a child support policy change in May, the state human services director reports. The department counted 31,532 families receiving those vouchers as of this month, up from 24,500 last October. After the U.S. Supreme Court's abortion ruling, a Mississippi law went into effect banning abortion except if the woman's life is in danger or if a pregnancy is caused by a rape that has been reported to law enforcement. Voucher enrollment further accelerated in May after Governor Tate Reeves approved a recommendation from a council of early childhood administrators to do away with a 19-year-old policy that had forced single parents and guardians to seek child support from the other parent to be eligible for assistance through the Child Care Payment Program, which offers help to low-income parents.

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