

Weakley County Press

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REMEMBERING DR. KING — Students, adults and children, black and white, marched Wednesday night through Historic Downtown Martin to the UTM campus to honor the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. King was in Memphis leading a strike of sanitation workers. After delivering a stirring speech at Ebenezer Baptist Church, King was assassinated the next day. He had led the fight for black civil rights for years throughout the South, and his “I Have a Dream” speech is credited by many for leading to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Wednesday’s march was sponsored by the University of Tennessee at Martin Civil Rights Conference Planning Committee.

Photo by Linda Thurston

State bill to arm school employees fails

By KAREN CAMPBELL
Press Reporter

If guns are allowed in Tennessee schools, they won’t be in the hands of teachers. So says the Tennessee Legislature after HB 2208 failed to receive the needed votes to advance out of committee for a vote on the House floor.

But another attempt to secure campuses is still a possibility. Deemed the School Safety Act of 2018, the bipartisan legislation would allow armed, off-duty law enforcement officers to provide security. Thus far, the effort, in the form of an amendment to HB 2129/SB 2059, is with the finance, ways and means committees of both the House and Senate.

If the Act passes, sheriff’s deputies, police officers, and other law enforcement personnel with Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission certification would be allowed to fill the security roles.

HB2208 was Rep. Byrd’s third attempt to address the need for an on-campus security presence in “distressed” counties that are currently unable to financially secure and train Security

Resource Officers (SROs). The bill would have allowed for private certified firearms instructors to train teachers carrying concealed firearms on school property. Weakley County Representative Andy Holt was listed as a co-prime sponsor of the failed bill.

Randy Frazier, director of Weakley County Schools, previously stated his and the school board’s opposition to the proposal of school personnel taking on the additional responsibility of armed security. SROs remain as the preferred choice. But financing additional SROs for the 10 properties (11 schools) in the county is still a matter of discussion.

Regarding the Security Act of 2018, Frazier notes, “It’s a start. It allows for systems in distressed districts to look at employing the off-duty officers and others with previous training. But we still believe the best answer is trained full-time officers. That’s still

our goal.”

In a recent meeting of the county commission’s public safety committee, Sheriff Mike Wilson, new Emergency Management Director Dustin Kemp, Frazier, School Board Chair Steve Vantrease and Safe Schools Coordinator Lorna Benson discussed the SROs.

“My personal opinion is that the best solution is school resource officers,” Wilson said, noting that the cost of each SRO would be approximately \$50,000 a year in salary and benefits in addition to initial training and equipment costs.

Current estimates are that the county would need five or six officers, depending on whether the City of Martin, which funds its own SROs, wanted to stop splitting one officer’s duties between the primary and elementary schools.

Frazier reported that Wilson is working on a projected budget for financing SROs to be presented in May. However, he injected, “Even in the best-case scenario — due to training etc. — the initial date [for seeing a physical presence on campuses] would be Jan. 1.”

My personal opinion is that the best solution is school resource officers.

Mike Wilson
Weakley County Sheriff



GARY EDDINGS

Gary Eddings announces run for commission

Gary Eddings Jr. of Sharon is announcing his bid for election to the County Commission District 4 post.

Eddings has served as a District 4 County Commissioner for Weakley County after being appointed last year. He has been involved in public service to the county since 1987, when he began his career with the Weakley County Municipal Electric System. He is currently an engineer/lineman for WCMES.

He has served as chief of the Sharon Fire Department since 2009. He began work-

ing for the fire department in 2002.

Eddings is also a deputy for the Weakley County Sheriff’s Department and has been with the department for the past 14 years. He is also an advanced Emergency Medical Technician and works with the Weakley County Emergency Services.

He attended Walters State Community College, Dyersburg State Community College and Nashville State Technical College.

“Serving the public is a
SEE EDDINGS, PAGE 7



STORMY, STORMY NIGHT — Tuesday night, after a daytime high near 80 degrees, brought thunderstorms and high rain to Weakley County, while nearby areas in Missouri and Kentucky suffered tornadoes. A total of about 10,000 customers were without electricity after lightning struck the Westview substation. There were other smaller outages, but the substation power was restored in about an hour, officials with Weakley County Electric said.

Photo by Christel Laney

City discusses bridge, new logo

By LINDA THURSTON
Press Editor

Bridge repairs planned for Hyndsver Road will require major re-routing of residents who travel that area. It has also run into a possible construction hitch.

Marty Ables told the Martin Board of Mayor and Aldermen on Tuesday night that construction engineers said a pole which holds an emergency siren may have to be moved in order to

construct new guardrails adjacent to the bridge.

The bridge allows traffic on Hyndsver to cross the Highway 45 bypass.

A meeting with engineers is planned to address the problem.

Brad Thompson, director of economic and community development, said all the city’s plans for a new police station, fire station and library, along with other developments, led to the creation of a new logo

for the city. The theme to be represented, Thompson said, was “connections” — the city’s connection with the University of Tennessee at Martin, the new connectivity to be achieved with the construction of a fiber optic network, along with all the buildings planned.

“This is a fresh new look for our city because we’re doing a lot of fresh, new things,” Thompson said.

(See Page 7 for more on the logo.)

At the city’s formal meeting on Monday, Mayor Randy Brundige said, the board will be asked to consider resolutions concerning the installation of new gas and water meters throughout the city’s service area, and extending the loan for the new west fire station another \$200,000 because bids came in higher than expected.

The board will hold its formal meeting at 5:15 p.m. on Monday.

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PET PAGE SPECIAL — Submit a photo of your pet on our Facebook page with a note on what makes him/her special. Each week in April we will feature the post with the most likes on our Pet Page. Today's focus is on Jordy. Haylee Brown explains why: "This is my 89# mutt, Jordy. He was born blind and reminds me every day that everyone has difficulties in life, ut it's how you handle them that counts!"

USDA seeks input on opioid recovery

Tennessee Rural Development State Director Jim Tracy this week unveiled a new interactive feature on the United States Department of Agriculture's rural opioid misuse webpage. Now, webpage visitors can tell USDA what prevention, treatment and recovery actions have been effective in addressing the opioid epidemic in their rural communities. USDA is collecting this information as part of an ongoing effort to identify best practices and effective strategies for addressing rural opioid misuse.

The webpage can be found at www.usda.gov/topics/.

"Opioid misuse has affected rural areas across the country and rural Tennessee has not been immune," Tracy said. "Rural Development is working hard to assist communities in developing solutions to this issue and having a data base of best practices will aid in our efforts."

The National Center for Health Statistics estimates that more than 63,000 Americans died from drug

overdoses in 2016. More than half of those deaths involved opioids, including prescription drugs and heroin.

USDA is an important partner to rural communities addressing this national problem. The Department is investing in treatment facilities and services, e-Connectivity and telemedicine, and public education efforts. In addition to program investment, USDA is helping communities share information about best practices to address the crisis.

Information collected from this new webpage feature will be used to create an interactive resource for communities looking to address the opioid crisis on the local level.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented

the Task Force's findings to President Trump, which included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America.

In the area of quality of life, the Task Force included a recommendation to modernize health care access. The report highlighted the importance of telemedicine in enhancing access to primary care and specialty providers. The Task Force also found that improved access to mental and behavioral health care, particularly prevention, treatment and recovery resources, is vital to addressing the opioid crisis and other substance misuse in rural communities.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity (PDF, 5.4 MB).

WC inmate who died is identified

The identity of a man who died in jail this week was confirmed by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Tuesday morning.

On Monday morning at about 4:45 a.m. corrections officers at the Weakley County Jail were advised that a 35-year-old male inmate in the jail was having a seizure. The Weakley County emergency medical service was advised and an ambulance responded to the scene. As the ambulance arrived, Weakley County Sheriff's Department Capt. Randall McGowan said, the inmate, Danny Joe Boane, 35, of Martin went into cardiac arrest and EMS personnel and correctional officers administered CPR. The effort was unsuccessful and the inmate was pronounced dead about 5:26 a.m., officials said. The Weakley County Medical Examiner's investigator



BOANE

was at the scene and he sent the body to the Nashville Medical Examiners Office for an autopsy.

After Sheriff Mike Wilson talked with District Attorney Tommy Thomas the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has been called in to investigate the death.

Wilson said after Boane's death, four other inmates showed possible signs of

being under the influence and were taken to area hospitals as a precautionary measure. All were returned to the jail, Wilson said.

Authorities were withholding Boane's identity on Monday until family members were notified.

Boane was arrested in October of last year on drug charges as well as charges of failure to appear and violation of probation. He was serving four years for aggravated robbery.

Boane is survived by three children, Oaklee Michelle Boane of Martin; and Alexander and Andrew Boane, both of Kentucky; his mother Joann Boane Parker, his sister Lisa Faye Boane and his stepfather Ronald Wright, all of Martin; and his stepbrother Ronnie Waggoner of Kentucky.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete at press time.

Andy Holt qualifies for Dist. 76

Andy Holt, a Republican and the incumbent representative for District 76, has filed his petition to run for re-election.

He faces Scott Fortner, a current county commissioner, in the Republican primary May 1.

One Democrat, Deane Arganbright, has qualified for the Democratic primary, although John A. Hayes has also picked up a petition to run but has not returned it. The deadline for filing petitions is today (Thursday) at noon.

April 2 was the last day to register to vote in the May primary, and early voting starts next Wednesday.

Kidnapping reported in Martin

Martin Police Department officers responded to The Station Apartments on West Peach Street) at 12:23 a.m. on Friday pertaining to a possible robbery that had occurred the night before. Two male victims reported that they had been robbed at gunpoint by two masked individuals in the parking lot as they were getting into their vehicle. The victims told officers that the two assailants drove them around Martin and stole several personal items from them before returning them to the Station parking lot.

Both victims reported that one of the subjects hit them multiple times in the face with the pistol. The victims stated that after arriving back at the parking lot, the two subjects threw the car keys on the ground and ran away on foot.

The incident was still under investigation by the Martin Police Department at press time.



City unveils new 'connectivity' logo

The proposed new logo for the City of Martin has special meaning for city officials.

"In our logo design, our goal was to succinctly communicate Martin's new image — from historic downtown redevelopment and new development throughout the city all the way to our fiber project," said Brad Thompson, the city's director of economic and community development. "Ultimately, it was a desire to reflect connectivity in what the city is doing to attract more entrepreneurship and tech-demanding businesses, which is a forward-thinking way to keep our city growing."

Mayor Randy Brundige took the "connections" connection even further.

"Building Connections" communicates effectively the overarching theme of our city projects — sidewalk projects, the Brian Brown Memorial Greenway, fiber

to the home, a 21st Century city library, additional fire station, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, new police station, industrial and retail recruitment, improving town and gown relations, quarterly electronic city newsletter, a vibrant city center in our Martin Historic Business District, and a world class Tennessee Soybean Festival," he said.

"During my tenure as mayor, it has been important to me that we not remain content. We have aggressively pursued many new projects (not to mention with no tax increases) to keep Martin competitive and our citizens safe when it comes to choosing a place to live, start a business, or attend school," he continued. "Connecting people to our city resources, and ultimately to the world, is important to me."

Draw a Bird Day

Sunday, April 8, 2018

3 - 4:30 PM

AT THE

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

145 HANNINGS LANE, MARTIN, TN 38237

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SAMANTHA GOYRET
NWTNFOODGUIDE@GMAIL.COM
 OR CALL 731.281.4770

Open to all Children ages 0 - 12 & their Parents

Be prepared to get dirty!

HELP US BUILD A HUGE BIRD'S NEST

Learn how to worm compost. SNACKS INCLUDED

FREE TO ATTEND.

Children are invited to celebrate 'Draw a Bird Day'

The Trinity Patch Community Garden, on 145 Hannings Lane in Martin, will host its first Children's Garden event for children up to 12 years old on Sunday from 3 to 4:30 pm in celebration of the Year of the Bird on National "Draw a Bird Day."

On Sunday, children, parents and volunteers will be making a huge bird's nest, digging in the dirt for worms, learning about worm composting, planting bird seed, drawing, reading and learning all about birds. Healthy snacks will be included in this free event. The Trinity Patch Community Gardens plans to dedicate a portion of the garden to plant flowers for pollinators and birds, along with encouraging children to grow their own food.

This year marks the

centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, what many consider the most important bird-protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network, Trinity Presbyterian Church's Community Garden, National Geographic, the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife International will join forces with more than 100 other organizations and millions of people around the world to celebrate 2018 as the "Year of the Bird."

This effort aims to heighten public awareness of birds because of their wonder and beauty—and because they symbolize nature's interconnectedness and the importance of caring for our shared plan-

et. If you are unable to attend the event in the Children's Garden, then join from home by drawing your own picture of a bird and posting it on the Local Food Network's facebook page #NWTNLFN.

"If you take care of birds, you take care of most of the environmental problems in the world," said Thomas E. Lovejoy, tropical conservation biologist and National Geographic Fellow.

The NWTN Local Food Network is working toward building an equitable and sustainable food system, one that is improving access to locally grown, fresh, healthy food, and promoting increased usage of local places for the health and economic welfare of the communities in Northwest Tennessee.

EDDINGS, FROM PAGE 1

privilege and an honor," Eddings said. "I'm able to be connected to the public on a daily basis and see the needs of our citizens firsthand. We have an excellent, close-knit community here in Weakley County and my job is to make sure our people are heard and well represented."

As a public servant to Weakley County, Eddings also works hand-in-hand with several boards and organizations — including co-chairing the Weakley County Fire Chiefs Association and co-chairing the Weakley County Drug Coalition. He is a board member of the Weakley County Government Employees Credit Union.

"One of my most important goals for Weakley County is to emphasize more trade skills training to be available in our schools," said Eddings. "We need to ensure our children are prepared for future careers that don't necessarily include a college path. Our community will need to have

these trade-based professions filled in the upcoming years and we need to have more of that training as an option in our secondary schools."

Eddings' skillset and training through the years with various agencies have earned him an "Officer of the Year" in West Tennessee award in 2013 and "First Responder of the Year" in 2008 by Gov. Phil Bredesen.

The District 4 commission incumbent is an active member of Sharon First Baptist Church in Sharon, where he is a member of several committees.

He resides in Sharon with his teenage son, who is involved in a variety of athletics at Dresden Middle School.

"I am grateful to serve Weakley County as your commissioner," said Eddings. "I would appreciate your vote and the opportunity to continue serving you. Early voting begins April 11 through the 26 with Election Day on May 1 — please come out and vote."



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