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Good News You Can Use

# SWRANKIN NEWS

Vol. 8, No. 02 | February 2023

The Pearl News

THE NEWS RICHLAND

THE FLORENCE NEWS

## Maddy Pitman's legacy continues with 3rd Annual 5k

By Alexa Haik

Maddy Pitman passed away September 6, 2022, after battling an aggressive form of leukemia for most of her life. She was two years and four months old. Maddy had been diagnosed at two months old and spent much of her time at St. Jude in Memphis, Tennessee, for extensive treatments, which included intense chemotherapy, immunotherapies, numerous procedures and ICU stays and bone marrow transplants. She was the youngest daughter of Nick (a Pearl native and Pearl High School alum) and Amanda Pitman.

Shortly after her passing, the Pitman family made the decision to use her legacy to carry on, because for such a young soul, Maddy “made a huge mark on the world while she was here,” says Amanda. “She was always spreading joy everywhere she went. So, as her mom, I just wanted to be able to continue that for her.”



Thus, Maddy’s Memories Foundation was established. It made sense that the premier fundraising event for the fledgling organization would be a 5k – similar to those held the past two years on Maddie’s behalf. The proceeds will assist the foundation in moving forward with its mission – providing opportunities for families of pediatric cancer patients to take a much-needed break from the stresses of navigating the “cancer world,” and to provide resources for families to share quality time together and



Maddy Pittman

Special to The Pearl News

create cherished memories. The 3rd Annual Miracle Maddy 5k will be held Saturday, March 4. There will be a walk, a run, and a “Kids Fun Run.” Organizers say it is an opportunity for great

exercise, time spent with family, and fellowship with friends and the community. The 5k also offers opportunities for sponsorship. To participate as a sponsor, visit Maddy’s Memories Foundation online, click on the “Ways to Give” tab, and make contact through the “Sponsor” link. The foundation will send a sponsorship form and add the business name to their list of sponsors. Participating businesses will also receive a shoutout on Facebook and social media and will have their name and logo displayed on event signage and t-shirts. For those who wish to contribute in some way, but who are unable to attend in person, monetary donations, as well as donations of services, are also welcome. Register for the 5K by visiting [www.maddysmemoriesfoundation.org](http://www.maddysmemoriesfoundation.org) or [RaceRoster.com](http://RaceRoster.com). Coming soon: Part two of this article – Maddy’s Memories Foundation focuses on altruistic care - to be featured in the March issue of *The Pearl News*.

## Master watercolorist Wyatt Waters to visit PSC in February

Special to The Pearl News

Master watercolorist Wyatt Waters will showcase his new book, *The Watercolor Road | Painting and Writing through the American South*, at the Pearl Senior Center on Tuesday, February 21, at 11:30 a.m. The book caters to Southern culture aficionados, as well as those who enjoy the act of painting and desire a deeper understanding of the “whys” of painting more than the “how-tos.”

A prolific painter, renowned watercolorist Waters has painted about as long as he has been alive — starting with lessons before he was school-aged until earning a master’s degree in art at Mississippi College, where he received the Belleman Award for art and creative writing. In his unrelenting quest of becoming a better painter, Waters draws on the influences of masters such as John Singer-Sargent, Edward Hopper and William Hollingsworth.

Waters works solely on location – pre-

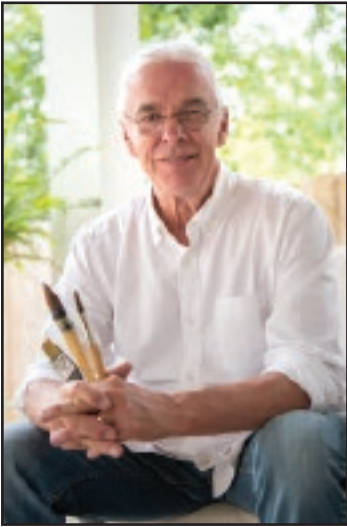
ferring the challenges that both plein air and watercolor present. His philosophy is “if it is interesting to see, it can be a painting.” This approach led to the release of *The Watercolor Road*, as well as the publication of seven very successful books, including *Another Coat of Paint*, *Painting Home*, *An Oxford Sketchbook*, and, in collaboration with Mississippi restaurateur Robert St. John, *A Southern Palate*, *Southern Seasons*, *An Italian Palate*, and *A Mississippi Palate*.

Additionally, Waters may be found on Mississippi Public Broadcasting’s television series, *Palate to Palette*, with St. John — a traveling culinary and art series set in Italy and Mississippi. He

has also illustrated covers and interiors for seventeen other books through various publishers.

A recipient of the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts, the Mississippi Institute for Arts and Letters (*An Oxford Sketchbook*), and the Mississippi Library Association’s Special Award (*A Southern Palate*), Waters and his work have been featured in numerous magazines such as *Plein Air*, *American Artist*, *American Watercolor*, and *Arts & Antiques*.

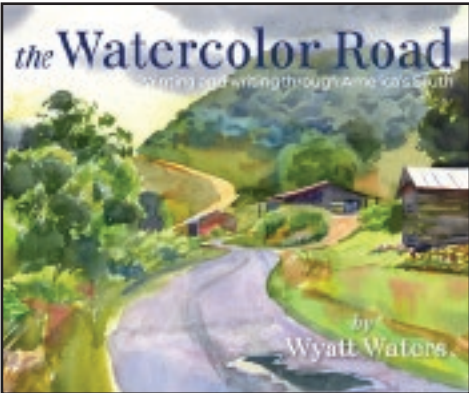
Waters is a past president and founding member of the Mississippi Watercolor Society and has had paintings in the national exhibitions of the National Watercolor So-



Wyatt Waters

Special to The Pearl News

ciety and the National Society of Painters in Casein and Acrylic. Tickets are currently available at a cost of \$6 per person. Space is limited, and there will be no holds for this event. For more information, contact Pearl Senior Services at 601-863-3229 or visit them at 110 Valentour Road in Pearl. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.



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## Hands UP Outreach's Grace Center offers training for employment, life

*Special to The Richland News*

Reverend Roy and Mary Callahan are co-directors of Hands UP Outreach Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) and Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC) of Rankin County. The Grace Center Campus, located at 155 Brandon Avenue in Richland, is the central location of this non-profit, faith-based ministry. Its purpose is to ensure that women and men in need are well-equipped for life and employment by offering instruction in Jobs for Life, computer, GED preparation, Bible study and mentoring. They also offer English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship classes, and tutoring for children.

Originally named the Rankin County Christian Women's/Men's Job Corp, the organization was certified and registered under the Rankin County Baptists Association in May 2007.

Inspired by their theme of "Reach-

ing UP with the Word of God and Reaching OUT into Our Communities," the name of the ministry evolved to Hands UP Outreach Christian Women and Men Job Corps. The location of the Grace Center was selected after completing a needs assessment that identified the City of Richland as an ideal candidate for their services.

The ministry has since grown from one building to two buildings and an office at the Rankin County Baptists Association in Pearl.

The requirements for participation in the services provided are simple – applicants must be seventeen years old or above and be able to provide photo identification.

Currently, the organization utilizes thirteen volunteers and provides services to twenty-five students on a weekly basis.



*Special to The Richland News*

Participants in Hands UP Outreach's Grace Center ministries.

They welcome anyone who is interested in donating their time and service to be volunteers. Many of their volunteers mentor and instruct at the Flowood Correctional Work Center.

One student and success story of the Grace Center, Kayla, says that Hands UP Outreach changed her life in more ways

than one, "Not only did I receive my GED, I also met amazing people that I will have a lifelong relationship with," says Kayla. "I gained the confidence to pursue my education further in college and will soon complete. I am forever grateful."

Classes meet each week on Mondays, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.; and Wednesday mornings, from 10 a.m. until noon.

Reverend Callahan earned his master's degree in Christian education from Mid-America Theological Seminary and is an ordained minister. He also spent twenty-four years in the U.S. Navy. Together, he and his wife, Mary, ministered to military families during the Iraq War.

Mary Callahan received her certification in women's ministry from The Southern Theological Seminary of Louisville, Kentucky.

For more information, call 601-826-0442 or 601-826-0449, or visit [www.RankinCWJC.org](http://www.RankinCWJC.org).

## City of Richland hosts *The Freedom Rides: Journey for Change* exhibit

*Special to The Richland News*

*The Freedom Rides: Journey for Change* will be on display at the Richland Library through March 21, 2023. This exhibit explores one of the most important events in civil rights history through the eyes of the activists fighting for change. The exhibit is part of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Traveling Exhibits Program.

On May 4, 1961, the first Freedom Riders left Washington, D.C., on two buses headed for New Orleans, determined to challenge segregation on buses and in bus stations throughout the Deep South. The journey was organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

On May 24, 1961, the buses rolled into Jackson, and the Freedom Riders

were immediately arrested as they attempted to use the segregated facilities. They were charged with breach of peace, and many riders made the decision of "Jail, No Bail." By the end of the summer, hundreds of Freedom Riders had been arrested, jailed, and sent to Parchman—Mississippi's notorious state penitentiary.

Library patrons and local residents are encouraged to visit *The Freedom Rides: Journey for Change* to bear witness to their experiences as they struggled and sacrificed in the name of equality and civil rights.

*The Freedom Rides: Journey for Change* is sponsored by the



*Special to The Richland News*

*The Freedom Rides: Journey for Change—an exhibit featuring photographs of the 1961 Freedom Riders journeying from Anniston to Jackson and their attempts to integrate interstate transportation—will show at the Richland Library from now until March 21.*

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Foundation for Mississippi

pi History, the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Mississippi Historical Records Advisory Board, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

For more information about this exhibit or the traveling exhibits program, contact the Mississippi Department of Archives and History at [exhibits@mdah.ms.gov](mailto:exhibits@mdah.ms.gov), or visit [www.mdah.ms.gov/explore-mississippi/travelingexhibits](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/explore-mississippi/travelingexhibits).

Entry to this exhibit is free of charge. Exhibit hours are from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m., Monday and Thursday; 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday; and 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

The Richland Library is located at 370 Scarbrough Street in Richland.

For additional information, contact Stephanie at 601-487-1186 or [sward@richlandms.com](mailto:sward@richlandms.com).

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# State crime lab to be named for Rep. Weathersby of Florence

Special to The Florence News

Representative Tom Weathersby (R – Florence) got quite the surprise on the floor of the Mississippi House of Representatives recently. While discussing House Bill 266, an amendment was introduced naming the Mississippi Forensics Laboratory after Weathersby. The Rankin County Representative played an instrumental role in getting the state-of-the-art facility to Pearl.

In the main part of the bill, HB 266 names the Department of Public Safety Headquarters after the late Commissioner David R. Huggins. The bill passed as amended by a unanimous vote of 116-0, and Rep. Weathersby received a standing ovation from the House.

Tom Weathersby (Republican Party) is a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives, representing District 62. He assumed office in 1992. His current term ends on January 2, 2024.

Weathersby (Republican Party) ran



Special to The Florence News

Pictured (l for r) are Speaker of the House Philip Gunn, Rep. Gene Newman, Rep. Tom Weathersby, Rep. Price Wallace, Rep. Fred Shanks, Rep. Lee Yancey, Rep. Tom Miles and Rep. Brent Powell.

for re-election to the Mississippi House of Representatives to represent District 62. He won in the general election on November 5, 2019.

A graduate of Florence High School, Weathersby received a basketball schol-

arship to Hinds Community College. While there, he earned All-State recognition as a basketball player. He was inducted into the Hinds Sports Hall of Fame and was named 2009 Alumnus of the Year.

Weathersby went on to earn a B.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi, and M.Ed. from Mississippi College.

During the many years Weathersby has participated in the Mississippi legislative sessions, he has served on the following committees: Municipalities (Vice Chair), Appropriations, Education, Insurance, and Public Property (Chair), Ways and Means, Corrections, Banking and Financial Services, House Energy, House Public Property (Chairman), House Insurance, Judiciary A, Management, House Insurance, and Transportation.

Representative Weathersby is a deacon and a Mason and is affiliated with Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Rankin and Copiah Counties Chambers of Commerce, Mississippi Cattlemens' Association, Kiwanis, ALEC and the NRA.

Representative Weathersby was born July 24, 1944 in Jackson and is married to the former Beverly Cook. He is of the Baptist faith.

# Florence natives selected for Mississippi Arts Commission FY2023 Mini Grant

Special to The Florence News

The Mississippi Arts Commission has awarded a total of \$1.65 million in funding to artists and art programs across the state for Fiscal Year 2023, which runs from July 2022 to June 30, 2023. Among this year's winners were Florence natives Jason and Amanda Ray, a fine art photography duo known as "Double Negative." They received an Individual Artist Mini-Grant for their study of color-changing Lomography film.

The Individual Artist Mini-Grant is a reimbursement grant that supports established and emerging professional artists based in Mississippi by providing funds to assist them with professional development, such as attending a training, conference or workshop. Individual Mini-Grants can also be used for promotional efforts and marketing



materials, such as business cards or website design, or may be used to purchase expendable art supplies. These grants were awarded in amounts up to \$500.

The Rays were also selected as Bronze winners of OneEyeland's World's Top Ten Fine Art Photographers competition, a contest honoring fine art photographers from around the world. Entries are judged by "the best in the business." All Bronze



Image courtesy of Double Negative

winners receive a certificate and have their winning images showcased online.

In addition, Double Negative has had works selected with honors at both Praxis Gallery and the Alex Ferrone Gallery in New York. Other recent wins include the Tokyo, Moscow, and International Foto Awards.

With over seventy high-level publications in *Vogue Italia* and a strong international gallery presence, Double Negative's goal is to fundamentally change the way small-town art is viewed.

To see the complete list of this year's Mississippi Arts Commission grant recipients, and/or sample the winning images, visit [www.arts.ms.gov/grant-recipients](http://www.arts.ms.gov/grant-recipients), [www.oneeyeland.com](http://www.oneeyeland.com), [www.praxisphotocenter.org](http://www.praxisphotocenter.org), [www.tokyofotoawards.jp/winners](http://www.tokyofotoawards.jp/winners), and [www.photoawards.com/winner](http://www.photoawards.com/winner).

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# Celebrate Mardi Gras at the 2023 Krewe de Roux Festival

*Special to the SW Rankin News*

Locals are invited to join the Rankin County Chamber and City of Brandon for what is billed as the largest Mardi Gras celebration in Central Mississippi on February 17 and 18. Festivities include free live entertainment, courtesy of the Molly Ringwalds. There will also be a parade of floats, antique car show, gumbo cook-off, and more.

Kicking things off on Friday, February 17, is the Krewe de Roux Festival Parade and Block Party. The staging for the parade line-up will be located in the Brandon Middle School Parking lot at 408 College Street in Brandon.

Parade floats, cars, and bands will begin to line up for the parade procession at 4 p.m. The parade, which will take place in historic downtown Brandon, as well as the Block Party, are scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Entry fees for the parade are \$100 per parade float, \$50 per car, \$50 per political candidate or pageant title holder (in vehicles only), and schools are invited to

participate free of charge. The Molly Ringwalds will perform immediately following the parade on Friday.



To register for the parade, visit [www.RankinChamber.com](http://www.RankinChamber.com) to access an application. Parade entry registration forms should be emailed to [sadams@RankinChamber.com](mailto:sadams@RankinChamber.com).

Following on Saturday, February 18, the Rankin County Chamber and City of Brandon will present the 4th Annual Krewe de Roux Festival, which will take place from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Attendees can enjoy a Gumbo Cook-Off, with teams cooking fresh gumbo, and live entertainment throughout the day. Each year the event benefits the Rankin Chamber Youth

Leadership Program.

The Gumbo Cook-Off will kick off at Brandon Amphitheater located on 8190 Rock Way in Brandon (off Boyce Thompson Drive). The cost for general admission (for five-years-old and up) is \$10, and \$5 for children ages two- to four-years-old.

Also on Saturday is the Krewe de Roux Car Show for classic automobiles. Entry is \$30 in advance or \$35 at the gate. Proceeds from the car show will benefit the City of Brandon's Mayor's Youth Council. Entry to the car show comes with two Festival wristbands. Categories for prizes include: RAT Rod, Best Truck, Car Classic 1955-1979, Car Classic 1979-Current, and Miscellaneous. The location of the car show is the Brandon Amphitheater.

Rules and regulations questions may be directed to Carley Keyes at [ckeyes@brandonms.org](mailto:ckeyes@brandonms.org) or to Edward Means at 601-941-5312. Winners will be announced at 1 p.m. on the main stage.

Registration, entry forms and rules may all be found on [www.RankinChamber.com](http://www.RankinChamber.com). For more information, contact The Rankin County Chamber at 601-825-2268.

*Special to The Florence News*

*The 2023 Krewe de Roux Festival includes free live entertainment courtesy of the Molly Ringwalds.*

*One of the Krewe de Roux Gumbo Cook Teams, "Unrouxly Krewe," is pictured (left) getting some practice in. Nick Clark and Karen Thomas will be the lead cooks for the BHS Culinary Arts program at this year's event.*

**SWRANKIN NEWS**  
P.O. Box 5963, Pearl, MS 39208  
601-706-9237  
Volume 8 Issue 02  
Circulation - 15,000  
**Publisher**  
Clay Mansell  
[claymansell@SWRankinNews.com](mailto:claymansell@SWRankinNews.com)  
**Editor in Chief**  
Stephanie Tracy  
**Managing Editor**  
Alexa Haik  
[news@swrankinnews.com](mailto:news@swrankinnews.com)  
**Sales Representatives**  
Clay Mansell  
[claymansell@SWRankinNews.com](mailto:claymansell@SWRankinNews.com)  
Judy Duke  
[Judy@SWRankinNews.com](mailto:Judy@SWRankinNews.com)  
**Graphic Designer**  
Holly Embry  
[designer@SWRankinNews.com](mailto:designer@SWRankinNews.com)  
**Office Manager**  
Doris Bynum  
**Distribution**  
Ben Barnett

For submission information, email [news@SWRankinNews.com](mailto:news@SWRankinNews.com).

Southwest Rankin News is published on the second Tuesday of every month.

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# Billiot recognized as the Employee of the Month



Special to SW Rankin News

Harmony Billiot, a student from Florence High School in the Rankin County School District (RCSD) Aspire Program, was recently awarded The Spot Downtown's Employee of the Month for December 2022 and received an official certificate, as well as money from the tip jar. Pictured (l to r) are Program Director for the RCSD Transition Program Annette Varner and Billiot.

# Pearl appoints Reid as the official City Historian

Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Mayor Jake Windham and the Pearl Board of Aldermen have appointed Chris Reid, a sixteen-year resident of Pearl, as the official City Historian. This year, Pearl will celebrate its fiftieth birthday as a city, and Reid will play an integral part of helping tell the story.

"This is something that the City has needed for a while, and Chris has a level of enthusiasm that is exactly what is needed for this position. I think he's going to do a great job," says Mayor Windham.

The City Historian is a volunteer position appointed by the Board of Alderman to be a resource for the City government and community.



Special to SW Rankin News

Chris Reid

Following the creation of the position in December 2022, Reid has set out gathering information on Pearl in various archives and libraries in the hopes of increasing public awareness of the history of the city.

"Many citizens are familiar with various aspects of the City's history since its incorporation in 1973, but there is a much larger story of the area going back to the 1800s that begs to be told," said Reid.

Reid is encouraging the public to share knowledge, stories, photos and videos they may have of Pearl, both as a city and pre-incorporation in 1973. For local residents who have information to share, contact Reid at [creid@CityOfPearl.com](mailto:creid@CityOfPearl.com).

# Florence HS celebrates a "Winter Homecoming"

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) celebrated its first annual Winter Homecoming on Friday, January 20, as the Florence Eagle basketball teams took on the Brookhaven Panthers. The Eagles began Homecoming Week with Spirit Dress Up days. Pep rallies were held at Steen's Creek, Florence Elementary and FHS. The presentation of the court took place in the FHS gym and ended with the Crowning of the Winter Queen and Basketball Maid. The Lady Eagles Varsity game tipped off at 6 p.m., followed by the Varsity Eagles game. A Winter Formal sponsored by the senior class closed out the week in the FHS Multipurpose Room on Saturday, January 21.



Special to SW Rankin News

Chosen by the Class of 2026 as Winter Homecoming Maids are Hayden Carden, Laina Dunkley, Ahmya Norwood, Sydney O'Hair and Daylee Wilder. Representing the Class of 2025 are Ariana Barnes, Sydney Higdon, Katie Beth Kennedy and Nyla Myers. The Class of 2024 selected Lacy Burns, Alana Guillot, Reagan King, and Avery Meredith. Representing the Senior Class of 2023 are Payton Arrington and Laila McCoy.

# Pearl Junior High Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Winners named



Special to SW Rankin News

Students in Kimberly Waites' creative writing classes at Pearl Junior High School received honorable mention awards for their entries into the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards-Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, the nation's longest running and most prestigious program for creative teens in grades seven through twelve. Pictured (l to r) are Kelly Stingley, Kimberly Waites, Robin Russell and Britley Langford.



# Third annual Side-by-Side ATV toy drive a success



Special to SW Rankin News

The third annual Side-by-Side ATV toy drive was another great success, due in part to the efforts and contributions of Florence High School. During the 2022 holiday season, Mud Mafia, a Florence-based four-wheeler/side-by-side group, and their troop of ATV vehicles, bikes, and trucks made their way to Children’s of Mississippi to drop off toys they collected for patients. They also included a visit with Santa himself to assist in the delivery the toys. Mud Mafia donated \$2,000 toward the purchase of gaming systems and games for the hospital. The Florence High School football team, Florence High School Medical Science Academy, Florence Middle School Student Council, and the Florence Middle School Medical Science Academy also made monetary contributions.





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## Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



### What Choices Do I Have?

Someone voices, “I have a right to my opinion!” That is correct but your opinion does not bind God’s acceptance and approval. You have your right to choose your religious affiliation or to choose not to be affiliated with any religious body. However, “joining the church of my choice” does not obligate God to assume the responsibility of your salvation!

Carefully consider this: Jesus promised to build His church (Matt.16:18); the Lord added the saved to that church (Acts 2:47); He gave Himself for that church (Eph.5:25); He purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28); God gave Him to be the head over all things to that church, His body (Eph.1:22-23); and He is the Savior of that body (Eph.5:23). You have the right to choose that church or reject it for a man made church that is mentioned nowhere in God’s word. But after your choice, don’t try to make od save you in a counterfeit church made by man to compete with the church Christ died for and purchased with His own blood. Man is the only one that bears responsibility when he makes the wrong choice especially after God has plainly revealed His Church! Notice, “*Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*” (Matt.15:13). What choice have you made?

When driving around any community you will find a multiplicity of names relating to religious churches. Members of those bodies have the right to choose the name they will wear. Remember, you will be responsible for the choice of the name you will wear. The name of Christ’s followers is first found in these words: “*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*” (Acts 11:26). This is a fulfillment of prophesy found in Isa.56:5; 62:2; and 65:15. When Agrippa said to Paul, “*Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian*” (Acts 26:28). Paul did not stop to ask him “What kind of Christian are you speaking of?” Peter states later, “*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*” (1 Pet.4:16). (See also Jam.2:7). Even in the days of these men people were not choosing that name! One day they will have to answer for that choice. (to be continued)

Florence church of Christ- P.O. Box 277 –Florence, Ms 39073  
220 White Street



# FMS announces RCSD Bullying Awareness Contest Winners

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence Middle School students Zoey Perez and Madilyn Ellis were recently recognized as winners in their categories in the Rankin County School District’s Bullying Awareness Contest.



Special to SW Rankin News

The first-place winner for the sixth-eighth grade poetry contest is Zoey Perez.



Special to SW Rankin News

The first-place winner for the sixth-eighth grade poster contest is Madilyn Ellis.

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# Durr of Pearl to serve as page in Mississippi House



Special to SW Rankin News

Jack Durr of Pearl and Pepper Newman of Brandon recently served as pages for the Mississippi House of Representatives. Pages generally run errands for officials and House staff. Durr, fifteen, is the son of Tiffany and Ray Durr, and he is a freshman at Pearl High School. He was sponsored for the week by Rep. Gene Newman. Pictured (l to r) are Rep. Newman, Pepper Newman, Jack Durr and Speaker of the House Philip Gunn.

# Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Mr. Gerl Johnson	79y	Hattiesburg, MS	12/28/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. John Rowell	81y	Florence, MS	12/30/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. H. D. Hood, Jr.	55y	Florence, MS	01/01/2023	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Terri Lindsey	59y	Florence, MS	01/01/2023	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Evelyn Spellings	99y	Florence, MS	01/15/2023	Chancellor FH
Mr. Steve Collins	68y	Florence, MS	01/11/2023	Chancellor FH
Baby Fletcher Sullivan	1d	Florence, MS	01/14/2023	Chancellor FH
Danny Moore	83y	Florence, MS	01/24/2023	Chancellor FH
Joseph "Clay" Groom	63y	Florence, MS	01/26/2023	Chancellor FH
Barbara Forrester	84y	Richland, MS	01/21/2023	Chancellor FH
Kevin Maddox	62y	Pearl, MS	01/24/2023	Chancellor FH

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# Pearl Public Safety team seeking new recruits

Special to SW Rankin News

The Pearl Police Department (Pearl PD) is currently taking applications for police officer and 911 dispatcher positions. This employment opportunity provides a chance to make a difference, save lives and serve the community.

To apply for the position of police officer/police recruit applicants must be at least twenty-one years of age and have a high school diploma or G.E.D., have no previous convictions for felony crimes or crimes of domestic violence, possess a valid Mississippi Driver's License, and agree to participate in an extensive selection process that includes a physical fitness test, extensive background investigation, drug screen and psychological examination.

Duties for this position include, but are not limited to: performing law enforcement and crime prevention work; controlling traffic and enforcing state and local traffic regulations;



performing investigative work; participating in and providing support and assistance to special crime prevention and enforcement programs as assigned; providing courteous, efficient and responsive service to city residents and the general public; and performing other duties as assigned. Applicants are also required to complete the State Minimum Stan-

dards of Training Academy.

Pearl PD is also seeking individuals to fill 911 dispatcher positions.

To qualify, applicants must be eighteen years-of-age or older, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, have no felony convictions, be able to excel under stress, and must submit to an extensive interview process. Applications may be submitted online at [www.cityofpearl.com/government/city-departments/police-departments/](http://www.cityofpearl.com/government/city-departments/police-departments/), in person at 2561 Old Brandon Road in Pearl, or call 601-939-7000 for more information.

Established in June 1973, The Pearl Police Department is the tenth-largest city police department in the state. All officers are equipped with today's most modern equipment.

The Department is led by Police Chief Dean Scott, appointed in 2018. He has served the citizens of Pearl since 2017, where he served as an Assistant Chief. Currently, Scott supervises over sixty sworn officers and over twenty civilian employees.

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Title IX: DeAndre House, Associate Vice President Student Services, Title IX Coordinator , Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3353 or Email: [TitleIX@hindscc.edu](mailto:TitleIX@hindscc.edu).






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## Florence Middle announces January Eagles of the Month



Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence Middle School (FMS) Sixth Grade Student of the Month is Landry Varner. Pictured (l to r) are: Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Head Principal Keith Reed, Varner, Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams and Tanner Wilson.



Special to SW Rankin News

The FMS Seventh Grade Student of the Month is Taylor Gunn. Pictured (l to r) are: Head Principal Keith Reed, Gunn and Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams.



Special to SW Rankin News

The FMS Eighth Grade Student of the Month is Madelyn Thompson. Pictured (l to r) are: Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Head Principal Keith Reed, Thompson, Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams and Tanner Wilson.



Special to SW Rankin News

The FMS Teacher of the Month for January 2023 is Arias Melvin. Pictured (l to r) are: Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Head Principal Keith Reed, Melvin, Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams and Tanner Wilson.



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# Exchange Club of Richland gives Community Service Awards

Special to SW Rankin News

The quarterly Community Service Awards were presented at the January Exchange Club of Richland meeting on Tuesday, January 17. The individuals were selected by their peers/departments for exhibiting a hard work ethic and for going far beyond what is required of them for the City of Richland, Richland Police Department (RPD), and Richland

Fire Department (RFD).

The Exchange Club of Richland is quoted as saying, "...thank you for all the work you and your departments do each and every day to keep our city safe and clean. Thank you RPD Chief Nick McLendon, RFD Chief Todd Sanford and Todd Whatley for leading these great departments and all you do and the support you give to the Exchange Club of Richland."



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (center) is January 2023 Exchange Club of Richland Community Service Award recipient Kevin Grantham of the Richland Fire Department.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (center) is January 2023 Exchange Club of Richland Community Service Award recipient Juan Chapa of the Richland Police Department.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (center) is January 2023 Exchange Club of Richland Community Service Award recipient Shane Dilmore of the City of Richland.

# McHenry of Pearl to serve as page in Mississippi House



Special to SW Rankin News

Raelyn McHenry of Pearl recently served as a page for the Mississippi House of Representatives. Pages generally run errands for officials and House staff. McHenry, eighteen, is the daughter of Shelley and John McHenry, and she is a senior at Pearl High School. She was sponsored for the week by Representative Gene Newman (R – Pearl). When asked about the week, McHenry said, "I am so thankful to have been able to page for the last two years. Both years have been such an amazing experience. Thank you, Representative Newman, for this great opportunity!"



WORD SEED

Word Seed

Acts 14:19-22

**19.** And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. **20.** Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. **21.** And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, **22.** Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Paul was literally dragged out of the city, beaten and left for dead. What happened to Paul physically, happens to us spiritually. We know it as spiritual warfare. We have an enemy. It's not spiritual paranoia. Peter, said it well: **"...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."** Satan is that hellish opponent that seeks any and every opportunity to discourage, distract, deceive, and defeat the people of God. Certainly, the devil works against *all* those that possess and profess Christ as Savior. But, he maliciously and methodically attacks those who are preachers and teachers of God's Word, those who are intercessors, those who lead in worship, those who work with and surround their pastor with support and those who are obedient givers of their finances. Satan wants you and I where Paul was... down, beaten and immobilized.

Notice with me verse 20: **"Howbeit as the disciples stood round about him..."**. Although it is not stated, I would imagine that the disciples did more than just stand over Paul. No doubt, Peter was with them and we must remember that on one occasion, just his shadow passing over the sick brought healing. I would think that those Spirit-filled disciples began praying over this man of God. Paul's attackers may have left him for dead, but, something happens when faith-filled, spirit-filled people begin to pray! Verse 20 states that **"he rose up"**.... he was down but, he wasn't out! When we find ourselves under attack, when we find ourselves worn and weary and worried we need to call on our faith-filled, spirit-filled brethren and ask them to pray! James said in James 5:16 that we are to **"pray one for another"**.

Evidently, Paul not only rose up but, he went with the other disciples to Derbe and there he preached the gospel to that city. Paul neither gave up or went back! What Paul did was press on in his service to the Lord. If you are down and feel defeated, today is your day to **"rise up"** in the Name of *Jesus*! The devil is a liar and a loser. I Corinthians 15:57 says, **"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** May God grant us grace and grit to press in and press on!

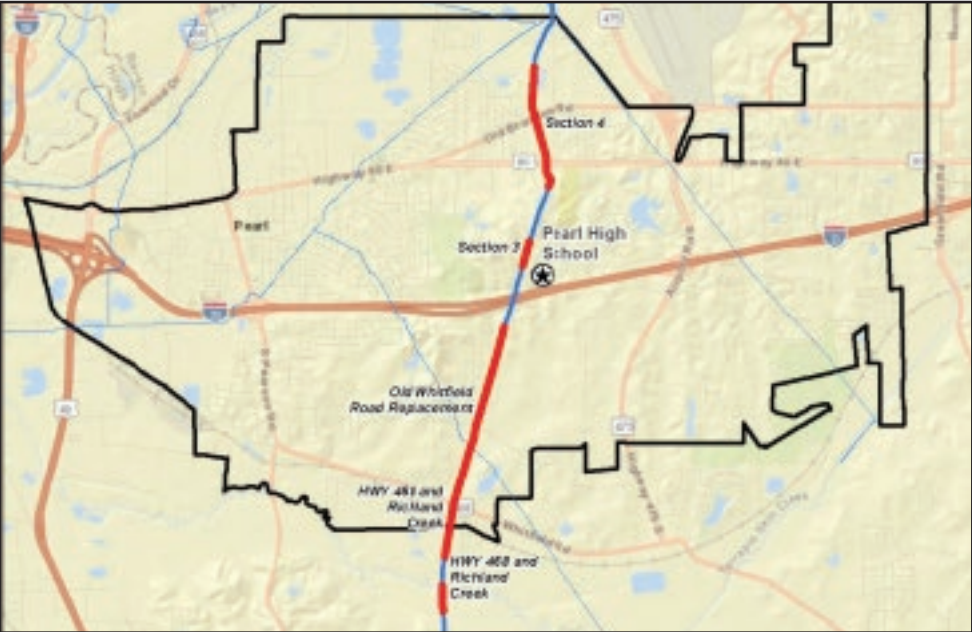
**For The Harvest, Bob Wilburn**



# Pipeline project nears completion

Special to SW Rankin News

Local residents may have become aware recently that a pipeline project has been taking place at Highway 80 near Pirate Cove in Pearl. It's a private project being completed by Gulf South Pipeline to replace several sections of natural gas pipe with a new thicker pipe for safety. Gulf South expects to have the project completed in February.



Special to SW Rankin News

Gulf South Pipeline Company, LLC (Gulf South), a subsidiary of Boardwalk Pipelines, LP, is replacing multiple sections of its natural gas pipeline in Pearl and Florence, to satisfy the requirements of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, a division of the United States Department of Transportation that regulates pipeline safety. The project entails replacing segments of Gulf South's Index 130 pipeline with heavier wall thickness pipe in areas where population increases have been identified. This project enables Gulf South to continue to meet today's energy needs and ensures the structural integrity of our transportation system for those who reside near our facilities."

# Pearl Public School District Employees of the Month honored

Special to SW Rankin News

The Pearl Public School District recently announced their November and December 2022 Employees of the Month. The employees of the month are selected from the nominations submitted each month by employees, parents and community members.



All photos special to SW Rankin News  
November 2022 Administrator of the Month: Paige Broman, PPSD Chief Financial Officer.



November 2022 Certified Staff of the Month: Susan Boyd, PPSD Math Specialist.



November 2022 Classified Staff of the Month: Melissa Bush, Pearl High School Administrative Assistant.



December 2022 Administrator of the Month: Joel McCarty, Pearl High School.



December 2022 Certified Staff of the Month: Terri Park, Pearl Junior High School.



December 2022 Classified Staff of the Month: Ronda Dewolf, Transportation.



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# MS House Weekly Summaries: January 2023

Submitted by Representative Tom Weathersby

On January 3, 2023, the Mississippi State Legislature began the fourth and final session in its four-year term. Though it is early in the session, the first week included resolutions honoring Mississippians who have made a positive impact on their communities.

During the second week, the House debated several bills, including **House Bill 370**, which would authorize the removal of municipal elected officials using the same process of removal of county elected officers. Currently, elected officials of municipalities are the only elected officials in the state not subject to a removal process under state law. To remove a municipal official under **HB 370**, 30 percent of eligible voters would sign a petition that would then be sent to the governor. The governor would then appoint a panel of three judges to determine the validity of the petition. If granted, an election would be held for voters to decide on removal. Proponents of **HB 370** stated that it is another form of checks and balances on municipal officials that all other elected officials in the state are subject to. Opponents argued that thirty-percent of voters is not a majority, and elections every four years are the way to hold officials accountable. The bill was laid on the table subject to call.

**House Bill 266** would name the Department of Public Safety Headquarters office in honor of the late Commissioner David R. Huggins,

who also served as chief of the Mississippi Highway Patrol. During the floor action on the bill, Amendment 1 was introduced naming the Mississippi Forensics Laboratory in Pearl after Representative Tom Weathersby (R – Florence). The bill passed as amended by a unanimous vote of 116-0, and Representative Weathersby received a standing ovation from his fellow House members.

The third week brought the deadline for introducing general bills and constitutional amendments, and committees began discussing these bills in meetings. In addition, several pieces of legislation reached the House floor that week.

**House Bill 1125**, or the Regulate Experimental Adolescent Procedures (REAP) Act, would regulate transgender procedures and surgeries on children under 18. The bill does not apply to individuals born intersex. Proponents of the bill said that this would prevent children from making permanent decisions they could regret later, while opponents argued that this was a step back for transgender rights. After lengthy debate, the bill passed by a vote of 78-28 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

Committees met frequently during

the fourth week of the legislative session, as after Tuesday, January 31, no additional general bills could be added to the House calendar for consideration.

Several education bills were passed during the fifth week. **House Bill 1365** would ensure that assistant teachers receive their pay raises from last year, as well as a new salary minimum of \$20,000. **House Bill 1369** would adjust the funding formula of MAEP from being based on average student school attendance to average student enrollment.

**House Bill 1373** or the “Released-Time Moral Instruction Act of 2023,” would allow school boards to permit students who wish to participate in religious activities during the school day to be excused with parental consent. These activities would not take place on school premises, but it would allow parents to take a child to a religious activity one hour a week without repercussions.

**House Bill 989** would remove Child Protection Services from the Department of Human Services and make it a separate agency. CPS was established by the legislature in 2016 and was made a subagency of MDHS. The bill passed by a vote of 102-9 and

has been sent to the Senate.

**House Bill 384** would allow local authorities to permit package retail sales on Sundays from 1-6 p.m. This would only apply to wet counties and municipalities under the Local Option Beverage Control Law. **HB 384** passed with a vote of 72-39 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

**House Bill 1318** would revise provisions related to baby drop-off and safe haven laws. The maximum age of the infant would be changed to 90 days, and municipalities and counties would be able to sponsor a baby safety device, or “baby box,” for anonymous drop-off. The bill passed unanimously by a vote of 111-0 before being held on a motion to reconsider.

**House Bill 1315** would regulate pornographic media exposure to minors by requiring commercial entities to conduct age verification of the consumer. The bill is similar to one passed in the Louisiana Legislature earlier this year. **HB 1315** passed with a vote of 111-2.

**House Bill 1371** would make it a felony for therapists to have sexual contact with current patients or former patients after up to twelve months of receiving services. The bill caused some debate with opponents arguing that some of the relationships could be consensual. Proponents of the bill countered that this bill was trying to prevent abuse of power by a person rendering services. The bill passed by a vote of 62-47 before being held on a motion to reconsider.



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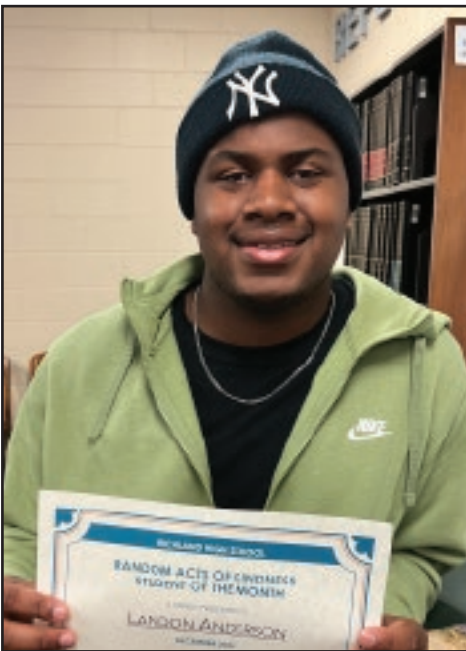
## Pearl High School offers part-time employees to local businesses



Special to SW Rankin News

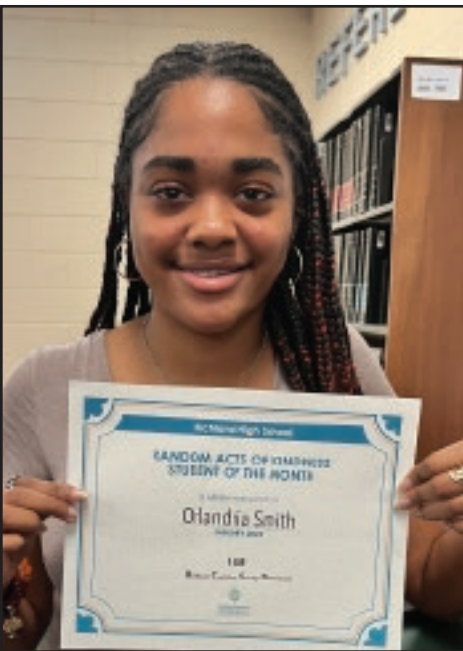
Pearl High School (PHS) is currently implementing a new program that offers eligible twelfth-graders the opportunity to work part-time at a local business. The students will be paid \$12 an hour through funds provided by a grant – leaving the employer exempt from payroll, taxes or insurance expenses. Those interested in learning more about the program or those interested in submitting a completed application are encouraged to contact Pearl Public School District (PPSA) Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services Kim LaFontaine at [klafontaine@pearlk12.com](mailto:klafontaine@pearlk12.com) or PPSD Superintendent of Schools Chris Chism at [cchism@pearlk12.com](mailto:cchism@pearlk12.com).

## RHS students selected as Character Trait Students of the Month



Special to SW Rankin News

Landon Anderson is Richland High School's December 2022 Character Trait Student of the Month. The character trait for the month was joy. Anderson joyfully helped another student without being asked.



Special to SW Rankin News

Orlandria Smith is Richland High School's Character Trait Student for the Month of January 2023. The character trait for the month was knowledge. Smith is a junior that is always learning something new to better herself.

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## Lingle, Thomas honored with new Hinds award

Special to SW Rankin News

Hinds Community College has selected its first group of honorees in its new employee recognition program called IDEAList. IDEALists may be nominated by anyone at the college or the community. They model the IDEALS as identified in the college values of Integrity, Diversity, Excellence, Accountability, Leadership and Stewardship. Included in the honor were Wendy Lingle of Pearl and Emily Thomas of Richland.

Lingle, who serves as Dean of Nursing for Hinds' Nursing/Allied Health Center, is a Hinds graduate who has been employed at the college for ten years. She oversees nursing programs at NAHC, Rankin and Vicksburg. Thomas, a business services system analyst for Hinds' Raymond Campus, is also a Hinds graduate and has worked at Hinds for eight and a half years. She troubleshoots and finds solutions to issues or problems within Navigator and researches and tests improvements to the system.

Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (left to right) are Hinds IDEAList honorees, front row: Julie Clark of Brandon, Wendy Lingle of Pearl, Jackie Jackson of Raymond, Tershuna Bass of Terry and Dana Harpole of Vicksburg; and back row: Brad Smith of Brandon, Karen Mays of Jackson, Jeffery Johnson of Bolton, Renita Ragsdale of Clinton, and Emily Thomas of Richland.



# Wills for First Responders MS offering free legal clinic in February

Special to SW Rankin News

All Mississippi first responders, including sworn law enforcement officers, fire fighters, volunteer fire fighters, EMTs, paramedics, dispatch, and active military, are invited to attend the next Wills for First Responders Mississippi (WFFRMS) event, scheduled for February 25, at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy in Pearl.

The service is provided to all Mississippi first responders and their spouses completely free of charge.

First responders and spouses will check in at their allotted time, where they will meet with a paralegal to go over their initial questionnaire. Documents will then be drafted on-site by a paralegal and reviewed by an attorney. The attorney will then meet with each first responder and spouse privately to go over their documents. All documents will be

signed, witnessed, and notarized on-site. Each first responder and spouse will receive their original documents – no copies are retained by WFFRMS.

The documents will include a ba-

guardian(s) for their minor children (if applicable). These basic wills do not provide a trust for minor children or other heirs. Documents will also include an advanced healthcare directive, which allows an individ-

ic way, such as their choice if life sustaining treatments be withheld/withdrawn.

Interested first responders and spouses must sign up for a time slot in order to participate. Visit [www.wffrmsFebruary2023.eventbrite.com](http://www.wffrmsFebruary2023.eventbrite.com) to sign up and fill out an initial questionnaire prior to the event. The deadline to sign up is February 11, and slots are limited.

The Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer Training Academy (MLEOTA) is located at 3791 Mississippi 468 in Pearl.

For additional information, contact Wills for Magnolia State First Responders President Kristy Hogan, at [info@wffrms.com](mailto:info@wffrms.com) or 601-519-0334.

WFFRMS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that brings together volunteer attorneys and paralegals to prepare wills and advanced healthcare directives for Mississippi's first responders and their spouses free of charge.



sic will that allows individuals to designate how they want their assets distributed, to name an executor who will be responsible for carrying out their wishes, and to designate a

ual to designate someone to make medical decisions on their behalf in the event they are unable. It may also document their wish to direct medical treatment in a more specif-

# RHS cheerleaders perform at the 2023 Citrus Bowl



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School's(RHS's) All-American cheerleaders, Cierra Sheppard, Isa Alvarado, Anecia Robinson and Mackenzie Ferguson, performed at the 2023 Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida, on Monday, January 2.

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# Employment opportunities available at Big Fix Clinic and Big Thrift

Special to SW Rankin News

For locals seeking employment, Mississippi Spay and Neuter says look no further, as they are currently seeking employees for both The Big Fix Clinic and The Big Thrift store.

The Big Fix Clinic is seeking a Veterinary Office Assistant. This position is responsible for preparing client paperwork, accurate data entry, answering phones, cleaning, and other duties as assigned. Representatives say that it is important to note that the clinic is a very busy and fast-paced environment.

To qualify for this position, the applicant must be customer-service oriented and aware of personal biases, be skilled in customer conflict resolution, be knowledgeable and skilled in Google Docs, be a team player and easy to get along with, be a quick learner, type at least thirty-five words per minute, and be able to work any days and any times that are needed.

The position is a full-time position, forty hours a week. Typical

work weeks are Tuesday through Friday, 7:25 a.m. until 5:55 p.m. Occasionally, work weeks run from Wednesdays to Saturday or Monday through Thursday to accommodate for holidays.



The Big Flix Clinic, located at 657 Highway 49 South in Richland, performs more than 5,000 spay/neuter surgeries per year for cats and dogs.

A Retail Associate position is also available at The Big Thrift. An asso-

ciate is needed to work three to four days per week (twenty-four to thirty-six hours) at the Richland shop. Applicants must have a background in customer service, and retail experience is preferred. Other respon-



sibilities include the ability to lift fifty-plus pounds; provide excellent customer service; operate and balance a cash register (Square POS); carry, sort and clean items; keep sales floor and sorting rooms organized

and clean; educate customers about the organizations that The Big Thrift supports, spay/neuter and adoption; and other duties as assigned.

The shop hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Employees must have some evening flexibility, as the shop does not close right at 5:30 p.m. if customers are still shopping.

The Big Thrift, a nonprofit resale shop, is located at 657 Highway 49 South in Richland. It supports and is operated by Mississippi Spay and Neuter and the Mississippi Animal Rescue League. The store carries clothing, housewares, toys, pet items, jewelry, electronics and just about anything else.

Interested applicants may send resumes to [sharon@msspan.org](mailto:sharon@msspan.org) and are asked to include the title of the job being applied for in the subject line of the email.

Mississippi Spay and Neuter is a non-profit organization dedicated to ending animal suffering, homelessness and euthanasia by providing affordable spay and neuter services.

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# Florence MS announces 2022 RCSD award winners



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence Middle School (FMS) Principal Keith Reed was recently selected as Rankin County School District's (RCSD's) Secondary Administrator of the Year for 2022.



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence Middle School Parent Adrienne Rainer was recently selected as RCSD's Secondary Parent of the Year for 2022.

# MS Dept. of WFP's turkey draw currently open to applicants



Special to SW Rankin News

The 2023 Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) Spring Turkey Season is coming up soon. Applications for the 2023 turkey draw hunts at participating Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) will be open until Wednesday, February 15.

All hunters (including under the age of sixteen, over the age of sixty-five, and handicapped) applying for a WMA draw hunt must possess a current valid WMA permit, lifetime hunting license, senior exempt or a youth exempt license to apply for a WMA Draw Hunt.

Hunting partners will not appear on the check history page. Each hunter will have to login separately to view



his/her winning permit and/or make a Canemount purchase. For Canemount winners, both applicant and partner will need to make a payment separately.

To purchase or renew a hunting license, visit [www.ms.gov/mdwfp/licensing/login](http://www.ms.gov/mdwfp/licensing/login).

Nonresidents wishing to apply for the 2022 open public lands license endorsement may visit [www.ms.gov/mdwfp/turkey](http://www.ms.gov/mdwfp/turkey).

After purchasing or renewing a hunting license, there is a twenty-four-hour waiting period before participants may apply for WMA Draw Hunts. This is to assure that the license information is updated in the WMA Draw Hunt database.

For more information, contact MDWFP at 601-432-2400.

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# RHS names Nov. and Dec. 2022 Students of The Month

Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School recently named their November and December 2022 Students of the Month. These students are nominated and selected by their teachers for such qualities as dependability, attitude, leadership, attendance and class work. Students are awarded a certificate from the Exchange Club, a book donated to the library in honor of the senior from the Exchange Club, and gift cards from local businesses.



Special to SW Rankin News

The RHS November Students of the Month are pictured (l to r) are, front row: Palak Kaur, Makayla Sanford and Anna Lynn Bishop; and back row: Kylie Sutphin, Haley Heggins and Jose Arellano. They are pictured with Cadence Bank Assistant Vice President Hill Pollard.



Special to SW Rankin News

The RHS December 2022 Students of the Month are (l to r), front row: Payton Greenwell Anna Keith and Gage Boyer; and back row: Madison Archuleta, Isaiah Harris and Roy Goodrich. They are pictured with Cadence Bank Assistant Vice President Hill Pollard.

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