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SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 7, No. 10 | October 2022

The Pearl News

THE NEWS
RICHLAND

THE FLORENCE
NEWS

Pearl Public School District earns 'A' Rating

Special to The Pearl News

On Thursday, September 29, the Mississippi State Board of Education approved new accountability grades for Mississippi schools and districts for the first time since 2019. Pearl Public School District earned an A rating for the 2021-2022 school year.

"We are very proud of the effort of all of our teachers and staff in Pearl," said Pearl Superintendent of School Chris Chism. "I am so proud to see the hard work and dedication of everyone here recognized with other schools across the state. This rating is important for our schools and our city."

Chism also pointed out that there were several noteworthy details in the assessment data.

Overall, the district grew five points, from 686 (A) to 691 (A). As part of that growth, the district saw reading growth of the lowest performing students move from 56.7 to 56.9 percent, while math



growth of lowest performing students grew from 61.3 to 69.5 percent. Math improvement for all students grew from 69 to 71 percent, and history proficiency improved from 63.9 to 69.2 percent. Ac-

celeration grew from 63.9 to 72.4 percent, and college and career readiness grew from 47.3 to 50.2 percent. The district's graduation rate is the tenth highest in the state, at 93.9 percent.

In addition to receiving an A rating as a district, Pearl Lower Elementary, Northside Elementary and Pearl Upper Elementary earned A ratings. This is the first time Pearl Upper Elementary has earned an A rating in this accountability model. Pearl Junior High School and Pearl High School earned B ratings.

School Board President Sondra Odom expressed the Board's pleasure with the performance of the district.

"Receiving an A rating affirms the countless hours of excellent instruction provided by teachers and the support provided to them by our administration and staff," said Odom. "We thank the entire staff, our parents, and the community for their support and commitment. It is an exciting time to be a Pirate."

"We are all going to take the time to celebrate this accomplishment as a district," said Chism. "However, our goal is to continue to improve our opportunities and outcomes for all students now and in the years to come."

Stretch of U.S. Highway 80 dedicated to Ray Rogers

Special to The Pearl News

Ray Rogers Memorial Highway was recently unveiled after the Mississippi Legislature approved a bill to designate Highway 80 between Bierdeman Road and Pirate Cove the "Ray Rogers Memorial Highway." Pearl Mayor Jake Windham and the Board of Alderman selected that stretch of highway because it connects the site of the old high school and Shepherd Field to the current high school and Ray Rogers Stadium.

Central Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons joined Sen. Dean Kirby, Rep. Tom Weathersby and Mayor Windham to dedicate the portion of U.S. 80 in Ray Rogers' name. The event was held at the Pearl Community Center.

Rogers, born Nolan Ray Rogers, is a former Mississippi State Representative who passed away on December 18, 2020.

In 1983, he was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives, where he served as an active member for thirty-six years. As a member of the House of Representatives, he worked to bring economic growth and job opportunities to Pearl and Rankin County. He was the first quarterback and captain of the Pearl High School football team and was drafted into professional baseball out of high school, signing a contract with the Washington Senators, now the Minnesota Twins.

Rogers was a member of the team of elected of-



Special to The Pearl News.

The Dedication Ceremony for The Ray Rogers Memorial Highway was held Friday, September 9, at the Pearl Community Room.

officials responsible for bringing Trustmark Park and the Mississippi Braves to Pearl. He also played a role in attracting Bass Pro Shops and the Outlets of Mississippi, which employ over 1,000 people in Pearl. As Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives, he played a significant role in acquiring \$300 million from the federal government and \$100 million from the State of Mississippi to build three Veterans Nursing Homes located in Oxford, Collins and Kosciusko.

"Ray exemplified the importance of leadership and public service," said Simmons. "He believed that we are obligated to service, that service is a part of success and that the fulfillment of a good life is in serving others. Naming this section of U.S. 80 in his name will remind those that travel this roadway that he truly left this community in a better place than he found it."

For more information on memorial highway dedications, visit GoMDOT.com.

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Registration opens for annual "Kick or Treat" tournament

Special to The Richland News

Richland Futbol Club (RFC) will host its 6th annual soccer Kick or Treat tournament on Saturday, October 15. Located at the Richland Community Center fields, the recreational soccer tournament is an all-day event that hosts competitions U6 through U19 age groups. RFC invites all U.S. and/or Mississippi Soccer Association members to register online at www.RichlandFutbolclub.com. First and second place teams will be awarded medals.

Registrants must provide the name of the team, the name and contact information of the head coach, and the name and contact information of the assistant coach. Co-ed registrants must provide the number of male and female players on the team.

Parents, players and referees are also encouraged to participate in the costume contest, as well as the trunk or treat that takes place Saturday evening.



Participants at RFC's 2021 "Kick or Treat" tournament.



2021 "Trunk or Treat" competition entry.

The best dressed team and best decorated "trunk" or "truck bed" will be recognized.

The cost for registration is \$100 for girls, boys and coed 3v3 in U6, U14, U16 and U19 divisions; \$175 for girls, boys and coed 4v4 in the U8 division; \$250 for girls, boys and coed 7v7 in U10, U14 and U16 di-

visions; \$275 for girls, boys and coed 9v9 in the U12 division; and \$300 for girls, boys and coed 11v11 in the U14 and U16 divisions.

Richland Futbol Club was originally established in 2017 by local athlete and sports enthusiast Virginia Miller. The purpose of the club is to encourage a love of recreational soccer, hoping all athletes have fun and develop

as players, and to offer specific opportunities for further training and healthy competition at a more advanced level.

For more information, contact RFC president and tournament director Virginia Miller at rfc-president@yahoo.com.

Richland library celebrates Halloween with music, stories and a "ghost in a jar"

Special to The Richland News

October is a special month for Richland Public Library (RPL) where all activities celebrate the commencement of the holiday season. For starters, Halloween music, sounds and stories are available for a listen at Freegal® Music, a free music service. It offers access to approximately 15 million songs and over 40,000 music videos. RPL encourages patrons to "Log in with your CMRLS Library card, and get spooky!"

Preschool Story Time is back with seasonal themes, such as mummies on October 17, bats on October 24, and spiders on October 31. Parents and children ages birth to twelve years old are invited to visit RPL any Monday at 11 a.m. to read theme-based books, sing songs and create a craft.



Family Craft Night is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, at 6 p.m., where participants will be creating a "ghost in a jar." Registration is required. Visit CMRLS's Calendar of events to register in advance at www.cmrls.evanced.info/signup.

Local teens are encouraged to contact RPL to inquire about "Teentober" activities and events. They may also visit the online events calendar for further information.

For adults and adult seniors, there is the monthly Richland Book Club meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, at 11 a.m. This month's book selection is *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt.

For more information, visit the Richland Public Library at 370 Scarbrough Street in Richland, or call 601-932-1846.

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Florence Elementary named Blue Ribbon School

Special to The Florence News

On Friday, September 16, four Mississippi schools were among only 297 schools across the nation named as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2022. U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona made the official announcement during his Road to Success Back to School bus tour. Florence Elementary School (FES) was among the honorees and was formally recognized as an “Exemplary Achievement Gap-Closing School.”

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, “Achievement gaps occur when one group of students (e.g., students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group, and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (i.e., larger than the margin of error).”

In the case of FES, recognition was

based on their overall academic performance and progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

Florence Elementary’s Head Principal Amanda Clark expressed gratitude for receiving the honor.

“On behalf of everyone at Florence Elementary School, we are excited and honored to be awarded the distinguished title of 2022 National Blue Ribbon School. The achievement of this award is based on teamwork from every student, teacher, staff member, parent and community member, working together to find the best in EVERY student! It is our goal to form strong relationships, set high expectations, and work together to create high levels of student



Photos special to The Florence News.

Florence Elementary School celebrates National Blue Ribbon Status on September 16.



achievement for ALL,” said Clark.

For more information, see page 11 for accompanying article, “Florence Elementary receives national recognition for ‘Closing the Gap.’”

Vendor applications now being accepted for Florence Day 2022

Special to The Florence News

The City of Florence will host its annual Florence Day on Saturday, November 11, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Hemphill Park, located at 437 South Church Street in Florence. As in years past, the event will host a variety of arts/crafts and business booths, as well as food vendors. Registration is now open for all types of vendors.

Arts and crafts/business booths are \$50 until October 21. Any booths still available after that date can be reserved for \$75. A limited number of electrical hookups are available for an additional \$10. Vendors will need to supply their own tables, chairs, tents, extension cords, and the like. Tents must be anchored down. Generators will be allowed, but must be muffled to eliminate noise. Booth space for both types of booths is 10’ wide by 12’ deep.

This is a “Family-Friendly” event, therefore, any type of weapon, knives or



Florence Day 2021

Photos special to The Florence News.

any item that promotes violence and/or is harmful to others is prohibited.

Vendor setup will be Friday from 5 until 7 p.m. and Saturday morning from 7:30 until 9:30 a.m. The market opens at 10 a.m. A parking area will be designated for vendors, as no vehicles will be allowed to remain in the booth area.

Business booths may hand out pens, pencils, key chains, notepads, magnets and other business-related items, but no food may be given away or sold, including bottled water. Food and drinks may only be sold by approved vendors.

Food registration is \$150 per booth/truck. Food vendor spaces are

24’ wide by 12’ deep.

Applications submitted after the October 21 deadline are subject to a \$25 late fee.

Florence-based non-profit organizations may apply for a free booth. Free booths must be approved by the mayor.

Booth spaces must be utilized by the

person or company that has registered for that booth. If a second person or company will be selling or displaying items from a booth, their name and items to be sold must be included on the application.

All booth applications will be accepted and spaces assigned on a “first come, first served” basis. Vendor applications are available online at www.CityOfFlorenceMS.com

There will be a processing fee to pay by card; to avoid the fee, pay by cash or check at Florence City Hall, located at 203 College Street. Vendors may pay registration fees online at www.CityOfFlorenceMS.com. All vendors will be required to collect 7% sales tax for their sales, and the reporting form and sales tax will be collected at the end of the day by City of Florence personnel to turn in to Mississippi State Tax Commission.

For additional information, contact the City of Florence Parks and Recreation Department at 601-845-5858.

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October Book Report: *The Invisible Man*

A book report by Beth Woodmansee for
The Friends of the Richland Library

H. G. (Herbert George) Wells, (1866 – 1946), is considered one of the greatest writers of science fiction. He published *The Invisible Man* in 1897. It is the story of a scientist named Griffin who experiments with light on himself in order to achieve invisibility. While offering some benefits, invisibility becomes a curse for the invisible man.

The story begins in February, 1897, as we follow a heavily-wrapped man slogging through snow to find a room in a country inn in the small village of Iping, England. We are not told his name. Mrs. Hall, the landlady, does not know; she only knows that he throws down money, calling out, “for a room and a fire.”

The stranger’s head is heavily wrapped in bandages, and he wears large bluish goggles on his eyes with side covers. A large hat with a wide, floppy brim hides most of his head. Only his bright pink nose is visible. His hands are covered in several layers of gloves.

For the next weeks, he resists normal human interaction, preferring to be alone, working with the many glass bottles and vials, three large notebooks and other equipment delivered to him the day after his first arrival as he attempts to reverse his invisibility. He informs Mrs. Hall that he is an “experimental investigator.”

As the days pass, his irritation grows until the day Mrs. Hall asks him to pay what is owed. Tossing furniture about, he shouts he will have the money the next day. That evening, the house of the Vicar and his wife is burgled, and they hear strange noises, yet see no one. Soon, the villagers decide to seek out the truth about this stranger; many suspect he is totally covered to elude the police.

One day, the invisible man captures a raggedy little man named Mr. Marvel, forcing him to help him steal money. Soon, Mr. Marvel gets free and tells his story to the police, who finally accept they are looking for an invisible man.

In the neighboring town of Burdock, a desperate Griffin makes his way into the home of the retired Dr. Kemp, whose scientific interests are similar to the Invisible Man’s. Kemp was at the same college as the Invisible Man and recognizes Griffin’s voice; he decides to help him.

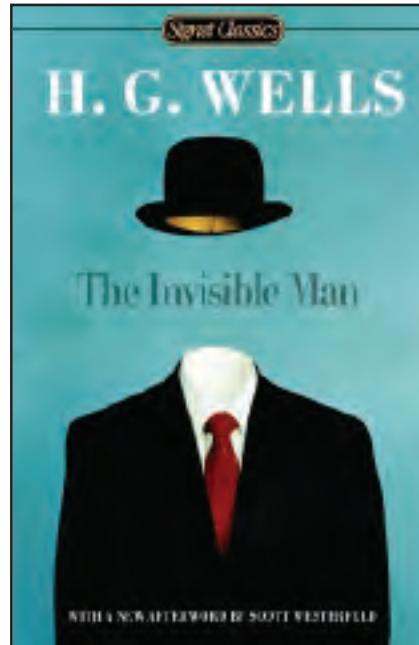
After a full meal and drink, followed by a restful sleep, Griffin becomes angrier - paranoid to the point of insanity - making grandiloquent plans to join forces with Kemp and terrorize the world - the

Invisible Terror! He tells Kemp that all his secrets, in cyphers, are in the three notebooks, and he has to have them to continue his work. Following a night of strange thoughts and fears, Kemp manages to get loose and alert the police to give chase.

A large mob senses that Griffin is near and attack him with fists, sticks and kicks. Kemp hears that Griffin is hurt and tells the crowd to stop. As Griffin lies dying in the street, the mob begins to see the evidence of his injuries and carries Griffin into the house, where he can be tended to. As his body dies, Griffin becomes, once again, a Visible Man.

Weeks following these events, Mr. Marvel finds the notebooks of mysterious writing and, every evening, after securing his room, he looks through them trying to decipher the code in which they were written. Only after his death will others know of the existence of these books. Will someone solve the codes and become a second Invisible Man?

Your favorite library has multiple copies of this fascinating book.



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Pearl High School crowns 2022 Homecoming Queen



All photos special to SW Rankin News.

Pearl High School (PHS) senior Anneliese Renfro was crowned the 2022 Homecoming Queen during the halftime ceremonies held at PHS on Friday, September 9. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Flower Girl Emily Rowan, Crown Bearer Will Durr and Flower Girl Price Brewer; and back row: Pearl High School Principal Dr. Michael Brewer, Kenny Renfro (father), 2022 Homecoming Queen Anneliese Renfro and 2021 Homecoming Queen Zamiya Warner.



The PHS 2022 Senior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Kimberly Arevalo, Tya Jones, Anneliese Renfro, Saylor Foster, Kedra Dixon and Kate Roa; and back row: Football Maid Aria Jones.



The PHS 2022 Sophomore Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are Patria Bailey, Jordyn McCornell, Raegan Van Buren and Jade Johnson.



The PHS 2022 Junior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are Melissa Gonzalez, Layton Ward, Kaitlyn Richardson, Jayden Neal and Evelyn Barajas.



The PHS 2022 Freshmen Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are Baylee Hughes, Anna Winston and Lexie Sessums.

RFC has 9th annual Kickin' Cancer Kickball Tournament in Memory of Paige McLendon

On Saturday, September 17, Richland Futbol Club hosted its 9th annual Kickin' Cancer Kickball Tournament in Memory of Paige McLendon. All proceeds went to a family fighting cancer. A thanks went out to all who participated, contributed and volunteered at the event, especially the City of Richland, Mazzio's, Mrs. Lynn Pearson and Melissa Skeen, David McGowan, Tyler Weaver and Rusty Bain, as well as Group Services of MS, LLC. The next tournament will be held in Spring 2023. For further information, contact m1llerfundraising@yahoo.com or Virginia Miller at 601-594-0485.



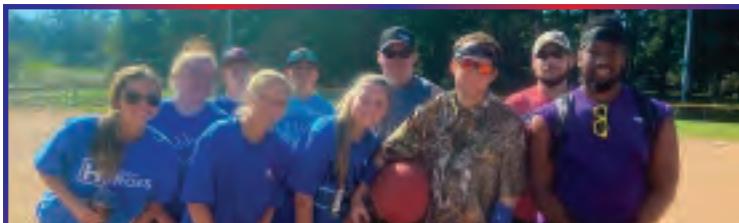
9th Annual Kickin' Cancer Kickball Tournament Champions, the "Rubber Busters."

Third place winners, the "Cereal Kickers," and first place winners for Costumes for a Cause.



9th Annual Kickin' Cancer Kickball Tournament finalists, "Nuff Said."

Fourth place winners, the "G.I. Joes." All photos special to SW Rankin News.



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Main Street Pearl to host October festivities

Special to The SW Rankin News

In keeping with its mission “to create, organize and promote fun and businesses in the Midtown District of Pearl, Mississippi,” Main Street Pearl will usher in the 2022 holiday season with a host of community festivities.

First on the agenda is “Oktoberfest,” scheduled for Saturday, October 22, at 2 p.m. A time-honored and treasured German tradition, Oktoberfest has been celebrated since 1810. While it may not resemble present-day Oktoberfest celebrations in every detail, it's still a folk festival that is celebrated in Munich and has managed to make its way around the world to Pearl, Mississippi.



The main theme behind Oktoberfest is the celebration of Bavarian history. With that in mind, Pearl will offer brats, burgers, and brews, as well as a live polka band, The Delta Krauts. In addition, there will be a giant screen for viewing of college football, a kids zone and games and

an eating contest. The location will be the field located behind the Pearl Public Library next to the Pearl Senior Services building.

Next up, on Saturday, October 29, the City of Pearl will host “Trick or Treat Street.” In partnership with Main Street Pearl, the event will



take place on Old Brandon Road in front of City Hall. This portion of the newly-designated Main Street Pearl, Midtown Pearl area - the area around the City Hall complex between Bierdeman and Valentour Roads and Parkway and Old Brandon Road - will be lined with tents, booths, games and inflatables beginning at 6 p.m.

Neighborhood trick or treating in the City of Pearl will follow on Halloween, Monday, October 31.

Trick or Treat Street vendor applications are currently being accepted. To register, contact Stacy Smith at SSmith@CityOfPearl.com or visit www.CityOfPearl.com to submit an application online.

Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



The Birthday Of The Church/Kingdom

One question relative to the beginning of the church or kingdom of Christ continues to be an important issue among religious people today. Some teach the church began soon after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Others teach it was founded by John the Baptist. Some have the idea that the church began during the personal ministry of Christ. The mainstream religious groups teach the church was an afterthought or substitute since Jesus did not set up an earthly kingdom. Some denominations will admitting that the church has already been established will deny that the kingdom has already been established.

As we have already noted in a previous lesson the terms “My church”, “the kingdom of heaven” (Matt.16:18-19), and “My kingdom” (Jno.18:36) all refer to the same institution. The Lord’s Supper was to be eaten by those in Christ’s kingdom (Matt.26:28-30; Lk22:28-30).

Before the cross John preached that the kingdom was “at hand” (Matt.3:1-2). Jesus preached the same message that it was “at hand” (Matt.4:17). Christ sent out the twelve (Matt.10:4-7) and the seventy (Lk.10:9-12) to preach that the kingdom “is come nigh”, “is at hand”. The term “at hand” means nearby, in the immediate future (2 Tim.4:6). The church or kingdom was only “at hand” before the cross (Mk.9:1; Lk.12:32; 23:14; Mk.15:43). The church could not have been built by John the baptizer because in Matt.14 we read of the death of John. Several months after the death of John, Jesus spoke of the church being in the future saying, “Upon this rock I will build My church” (Matt.16:18).

Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and bring to them remembrance of all things He had taught them. (Jno.14:16-26; 16:13). They would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them (Acts 1:8). The kingdom would also begin when the power came (Mk.9:1; Acts 1:5). Jesus instructed them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they be “endued with power from on high” (Lk.24:46-49). Following the Lord’s ascension the apostles went to Jerusalem and on the day of Pentecost received the Holy Spirit and “power from on high” as the Lord promised. Now since the kingdom was to come “WITH” power we must conclude that the church or kingdom was established at that time in A.D.33.

During this event on Pentecost, three thousand became members of the church and the “Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:41-47). This is the first time the “church” is spoken of as being present, not future. You cannot add to something that does not exist. In the book of Revelation, John stated that he was “in the kingdom” (Rev.1:9). When Paul wrote the letter to the “saints and faithful brethren who are in Colosse” (Col.1:2) stated they had been “translated” or “conveyed” into “the kingdom of His dear son” (Col. 1:13). If the kingdom has not been established then there are some who heard the words of Jesus still living today (Mk.9:1).

The Bible is true and Jesus is the Christ and the day of Pentecost (A.D.33) marks the birthday of the church. Before that date the Bible speaks of the church or kingdom being in the future, but thereafter inspiration refers to it as being in existence.

Florence church of Christ- P.O. Box 277 –Florence, Ms 39073
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Sunday Morning: Bible Study 10:00 Worship 11:00

Richland High presents 2022 Homecoming Maids



Special to SW Rankin News.

Richland High School (RHS) held their Homecoming Parade on Thursday, September 22, and Homecoming on Friday, September 23. Members of the court pictured (l to r) are, front row: Senior Maids Chloe Owens, Emily Bridges, Alainah Alexander, Leighannah Hodum, Kori Edwards and Samaria Thompson; middle row: Vanessa Vaca, Belen Valadez, Bree Mitchell, Kallie Shirley, Chrislee Mobley, Brooklyn Armstrong, Sarah Beth Bates and Macie Tagert; and back row: Kaylee Anders, Cierra Sheppard, Anecia Robinson, Isa Alvarado, Madison Archuleta, Jaylen Bridges, Hallie Hancock and Chelsey Courtney.



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Florence Eagles to recognize veterans and first responders



Special to SW Rankin News.

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The Florence High School (FHS) Junior ROTC will host a veteran's recognition program on Thursday, November 3. The special program will take place during half time of the Florence/Natchez football game. Entry to the game is free to all veterans and first responders. All honorees are invited to attend the pregame tailgate at 6 p.m. on the FHS track field, followed by kick-off at 7 p.m.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Mr. Samuel "Sam" Kursar	69y	Richland, MS	08/30/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. John M. Prystupa Sr.	74y	Brandon, MS	09/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Joel Roscoe Thornton	73y	Magee, MS	09/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Olga Little Williams	82y	Florence, MS	09/06/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Michael "Mike" Owen	63y	Harrisville, MS	09/07/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Daniel "Dan" Lacey	84y	Pearl, MS	09/07/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Mary "Dolly" Martin	84y	Richland, MS	09/10/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Seth Patrick Reeves	28y	Braxton, MS	09/11/2022	Chancellor FH
Ms. Rebecca "Ann" Robertson	73y	Brandon, MS	09/15/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Carole Sitzmann Brewer	79y	Florence, MS	09/15/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Mildred Hodge Parker	90y	Florence, MS	09/16/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Nils Larsen	85y	Florence, MS	09/19/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Jimmy L. Harrison	73y	Pearl, MS	09/23/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Jaqueline "Jackie" McLendon	83y	Richland, MS	09/25/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Honor Mae Hobby Tingle	97y	Jackson, MS	09/27/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Robert E. East	73y	Brandon, MS	09/27/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Laverne Young Barnes	95y	Richland, MS	09/30/2022	Chancellor FH

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Jingle Bell Market accepting vendor applications

Special to The Pearl News

The Pearl Chamber of Commerce is currently accepting vendor applications for the 2022 Jingle Bell Market, slated for Saturday, December 3, at The Clyde Muse Center in Pearl.

Vendor applicants must provide a list of all items that will be sold at the event, as placement of vendor booths is based on the type of merchandise on display. In addition to the list, a print photo or link to an electronic image of all items is also required for registration. No home party merchandise will be accepted, such as Avon, Mary Key, LuLaRoe, Color Street Nails, Tupperware, etc.

Potential vendors are encouraged to submit applications for merchandise that is unique and special. Items that have proved to be popular in the past include hand-made Christmas ornaments, decorations and yard art, as well as a variety of locally-made edibles. Anything that showcases a personal touch is a potential candidate for the market.



Special to The Pearl News.

Applicants are asked to specify the number of booths they will need, not to exceed two booth spaces per merchandiser.

Vendors may use racks, pegboards and/or shelving units to display merchandise, but no tents or tent frames are allowed inside the Muse Center.

The cost for each booth is \$150, with a \$25 discount for returning vendors and current Pearl Chamber of Commerce members. Vendors fees cover the cost of a six-foot table with two chairs and an eight-foot by ten-foot booth. There is a limit of a two booth spaces per vendor.

An additional cost of \$50 will be charged for any vendor requiring access to electricity.

Applications should be mailed to the Pearl Chamber of Commerce at P.O. Box 54125 Pearl, Mississippi, 39288. The Chamber will contact each applicant directly via email if their vendor application has been approved.

Participants can begin merchandise set-up on Friday, December 2, after lunchtime until 6 p.m. that evening.

Saturday, December 3, the doors will open at 9 a.m., with activities winding down around 4 p.m.

The Muse Center is located on the Rankin Campus of Hinds Community College at 515 Country Place Pkwy, Pearl, Mississippi 39208.

For more information, contact the Pearl Chamber of Commerce at 601-939-3338.



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Richland-Florence Garden Club recent meeting



Special to SW Rankin News.

Deborah Tucker demonstrates how to put together fall arrangements to members of R-FGC.



Special to SW Rankin News.

The Richland-Florence Garden Club (R-FGC) met recently at the Richland Community Center. Pictured are hostesses Gaynell Ainsworth (left) and Connie Snow (right). R-FGC is federated with The Garden Clubs of MS, Inc., a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., The Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Natchez Trace District.



Special to SW Rankin News.

Elizabeth Hawthorne, with a door prize she won at a recent R-FGC meeting.

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PUE and PJHS students recognized for high scores



Special to SW Rankin News.

Pearl Upper Elementary (PUE) fifth grade students were recognized for their high scores on an end-of-the-year test taken last spring. Pictured (l to r) are: PUE Principal Gavin Gill, Melinda Luna, Lucia Trejo, Jasmine Welsin, Eric Sebastian, Carlos Cedeno-Arreola, Miguel Cedeno-Arreola, Jay Cardenas, Nella Paulus, Savana Ulloa, Vaneza Muralles-Torres, Mia Oberto and Odulia Anthony. Not pictured are Ava Diaz and Kevin Martinez-Cabrera.



Special to SW Rankin News.

Pearl Junior High School sixth-grade students were recognized for their high scores on an end-of-the-year test taken last spring. Pictured (l to r) are: PUE Principal Gavin Gill, Alicia Hernandez, Aiden Ortiz, Braxton Duron, Jailene Amaya-Morales, Mikayla Ramirez-Uscanga and Odulia Anthony. Not pictured are Giovanni Pabon and Skarlet Pinto Deras.

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McLaurin High announces 2022 Homecoming Court



Special to SW Rankin News.

McLaurin High School recently announced their 2022 Homecoming Court. Members of the court included Senior Maids Maylayna Almenares, Sara Coleman, Ryleigh Johnson, Madison Morin, Paisley Tew and Erika Russell; Junior Maids Izzy Fonville, Baileigh Grisham and Allyson Hughes; Sophomore Maids Lani Collinsworth, Gabriella Taylor and Haley-Anna Russell; Freshman Maids Katelyn Bates, Lillian Hogg and Terin Long; Eighth-Grade Maids Ava Johnson and Avery Weeks; and Seventh-Grade Maids Autumn Barnes and Emma Georgen.

FOOTBALL

By Jameson Thompson

RICHLAND RANGERS

The Richland Rangers varsity football team is off to a solid start this season. At press time, following the first seven games of the season, their record stands at 3-4. The Rangers have beaten opponents such as the Wingfield Falcons, the Pisgah Dragons, and their cross-county rivals, the McLaurin Tigers.

The Rangers are in class 4A, region two and, at press time, have a district record of 0-2 – a district that features opponents such as the Newton County Cougars, the Mendenhall Tigers, the Quitman Panthers and the Northeast Jones

Tigers. The Rangers are looking to have a strong presence in district play as they play their third district game on the road against Mendenhall, who in their first seven games have a record of 6-1.

Richland has lost to their opponents by a combined score of 178-114 within the first seven games of the season.

Head Coach JJ Plummer talked about how proud he is of his young group of players.

“Being as young as we are and not returning a lot of starters, I am very pleased,” said Plummer. “We have taken two tough losses, but yet they were two games where I knew it would be a hard battle. I am very pleased to be sitting

where we are. We are growing and getting better as a team. At the moment, all I am concerned about is effort and growing up.”

Plummer believes that, while his district opponents may be returning a lot of experienced players, his team should not be counted out.

“We know our district would be loaded this year. A lot of teams are bringing back a solid amount of their starters back,” he said. “We get four shots of making the playoffs. If we win one, we make it. We’re going to give it our best shot.”

Throughout the season, Plummer has been coaching a very young team. His main focus at the



moment is helping his guys mature and gain experience.

“We are going to get more mature as a football player with game experience. We have a lot of players without varsity experience,” said Plummer. “We see improvement in every area of the game.”

MCLAURIN TIGERS

The McLaurin Tigers varsity football team has started their season with a record of 1-6.

At press time, the Tigers, who are in class 3A, region six, are 0-2 in their district so far this season, putting them in fifth place. The Tigers started district play with a loss to the Magee Trojans, followed by another district loss to Crystal Springs. Their remaining district opponents include Hazlehurst, who currently has a 7-0 season, Raleigh and Wesson.

Head coach Will Hedgepeth understands that this district is a tough one.

“We happen to be in a district with a lot of teams that will be competing for the state championship,” said Hedgepeth. “This district is very talented. Our goal throughout district play is to stay the course and try to get better every week.”

As the Tigers start to get into the most important part of their schedule, Hedgepeth highlighted some things his team is looking to improve on.

“This is the time of the season where you really want to play clean football. Although the score didn’t show it, I believe we played some of our best football against them,” he said. “I think our guys

are really starting to play their assignments and doing it to the best of their ability, which is something we have been working on all season.”

The Tigers have battled injuries throughout the season. Hedgepeth said while this may be a challenge, his guys have not given up.

“Something I love about this group of guys is that I’ve seen them be relentless,” said Hedgepeth. “We have had a couple of guys go out with season-ending injuries, which means we have made constant changes throughout the lineup each week. Even though we haven’t had a consistent group of eleven, we try to get better ev-



ery day, and our guys are starting to buy in.”

The Tigers will be looking to turn their season around in hopes of making the playoffs, arguably a tough task, but the Tigers hope to close out their season on a positive note.

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FOOTBALL

By Jameson Thompson

PEARL PIRATES

At press time, the Pearl Pirates varsity football team is currently in seventh place, with a district record of 1-3 in a highly competitive district and an overall record of 2-6. This district, class 6A region three, includes the number one team in Mississippi, the Brandon Bulldogs, who are currently sitting in first place with an overall record of 6-0, and the Oak Grove Warriors, who fell just one play short in the South

State Championship game.

The Pirates have allowed 269 points to be scored against them, accumulating 167 points themselves in their first seven games.

Head Coach Justin Hunter lost twenty-seven seniors from last year and had to replace those players with younger ones.

“This year, we have a small senior class, but we have a lot of young, hard-working guys,” said Hunter.

The Pirates have a tough road

ahead of them regarding district play, as they have to play Warren Central, who has started their season with a record of 5-1; Oak Grove, in Hattiesburg; and Brandon to close out the season.

“Our kids have to be ready each and every week, especially when we play Brandon,” said Hunter. “There’s a reason it’s called the ‘Super Bowl of the South.’ Our kids know their kids. Our coaches know their coaches. Our community knows their communi-



ty -- which makes the matchup against them very important.”

However, while the road may be very tough, the Pirates say they believe they can get the job done.

FLORENCE EAGLES

At the end of the 2021-22 football season, the Florence Eagles finished with an overall record of 1-9 and finished in last place of their district.

However, this year is an entirely different story.

The Florence Eagles varsity football team is having a spectacular start to the 2022-23 season. At press time, after their first seven games, the Eagles have a record of 5-2 and have outscored their opponents a combined total of 233-89. Some key victories include a 42-0 win over cross-town rival Richland and

a close 28-27 victory over district opponent Laurel.

The Eagles are currently in fifth place in their district.

“I am extremely proud, because last year was a rough situation,” said Eagles Head Coach Rod Davis. “We only won one game. We lost all of our district games. The kids kept believing, and the result [this year] has been unbelievable. We just have to build off of that and get better.”

Davis said, despite their season’s success, players cannot become complacent.

“We always go by this saying:

collect our flowers, but don’t count them,” Davis said. “We have to take the kind words, but don’t count them. We have to get back to the small things. We typically do the small things very well. We had a hiccup against Wayne County, and I also coached the worst game of my life. We will be better.”

Davis said he particularly loves how his players uplift each other.

“I love how our guys play for one another and are happy for one another’s success. They play for each other and love each other, which is what football is all about,” he said.

“The job of each player is to do their job and play for their brother. As long as you do those things, good things will happen.”

The Eagles will be looking to stay consistent and strong throughout the rest of the season, as they hope to finish at the top of their district, so they can have a high seed for the playoffs.



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DCS honors Teachers of the Month

Discovery Christian School (DCS) recently announced their August 2022 Teachers of the Month. These teachers are chosen by the DCS administrative team for their skill, professionalism, love for their students, and for how well they embody the mission of the school.



Special to SW Rankin News.



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DCS High School Teacher for the Month of August, Diana Buchanan.

DCS Elementary Teacher for the Month of August, Randi Stamps.

SW Rankin Fire Department to host festival on October 22

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Special to SW Rankin News.

On Saturday, October 22, Southwest Rankin Fire Department will host their annual celebration, the Southwest Rankin Fall Festival. Activities are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. and will include food, games, and a space jump for kids. Residents are encouraged to take the opportunity to meet local first responders and check out some of their vehicles.

The festival will be held at Southwest Rankin Fire Department's Station 2, located at 2899 West Mountain Creek Road in Florence.

Parking is available in the yard located across from the fire station. Carpooling is recommended. Southwest Rankin Fire Department serves the Brown Hill, Clear Branch, Enoch Grove and Mountain Creek communities near Florence. The department includes Chief Brian Bennett, Assistant Chief Heath Taylor, Fire Captain Dalton Grantham and Medical Captain Dewayne Rice.

For more information about the festival, contact Southwest Rankin Fire Department via Facebook.

RHS cheerleaders take home UCA camp awards



All photos special to SW Rankin News.



Richland High School (RHS) cheerleaders Isa Alvarado, Cierra Sheppard, Mackenzie Ferguson, Anecia Robinson and Hanna Armstrong were named All-American Cheerleaders at the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Cheer Camp in Fort Morgan, Alabama. They will go on to perform in Orlando, Florida, this fall.



RHS cheer won Overall Small Varsity Grand Champions, first place in Game Day, first place in Sideline and Cheer, second place in Camp Dance, a gold ribbon the first night, blue ribbon on the second night, Spirit Stick, five All-Americans, three Pin It Forward winners and had a Jump Off finalist. Pictured (l to r) first row, are: Co-Captain Breanna Lenard and Captain Mackenzie Ferguson; middle row: Isa Alvarado, Cierra Sheppard, Dixie Rivard, Hanna Armstrong and Anecia Robinson; and back row: Kait Knippers, Gracie Courtney, Madison Archuletta, Simone Turner, Peyton Perkins, Ritchelle Burns and Coach Terri Sullivan.

RHS cheerleaders Anecia Robinson, Isa Alvarado and Simone Turner were awarded the Pin It Forward Award, which is given to UCA cheerleaders recognized for qualities that make them stand-outs at the camp.

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Pearl lends a helping hand during Capital City's water crisis



All photos special to SW Rankin News.

In early September, the City of Pearl urged everyone to "...band together to help our neighbors in their time of need!"



The Pearl Fire Department delivered their first donations on Friday, September 2. The destination was New Horizon Church.



Representatives from the City of Pearl at the distribution site off of Ellis Avenue in Jackson.



Pearl fire fighters, police officers and City officials jumped in to distribute the water to a line of cars.



The City of Pearl, in partnership with Main Street Pearl and the Pearl Chamber of Commerce, recently held a bottled water drive for Jackson residents during their water crisis. The water system failure in the Capital City had left residents temporarily with no water.



Animal Rescue Fund (ARF) of MS, located in Jackson, recently thanked their "community of supporters, which included a shout to the Mayor of Pearl: "Thank you, Jake Windham, we LOVE Pearl!" Mayor Windham had reached out to the non-profit to offer water refills for a tanker truck that was donated from Yates Construction. The tanker truck arrived at ARF full of potable water and was subsequently used to hydrate the dogs and cats under their care.

Florence Elementary receives national recognition for 'Closing the Gap'

Special to The SW Rankin News

On Friday, September 16, Rankin County School District's (RCSD) Florence Elementary School was named a Blue Ribbon School for 2022 by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona for their exemplary achievement as a "Gap-Closing School." With its 39th cohort, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed approximately 10,000 awards to more than 9,000 schools. The National Blue Ribbon School award affirms and validates the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in striving for – and attaining – exemplary achievement.

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona emphasized that the recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

"I applaud all the honorees for the 2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award for creating vibrant, welcoming, and affirming school communities where students can learn, grow, reach their potential, and achieve their dreams," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "As our country continues to recover from the pandemic, we know that our future will only be as strong as the education we provide to all of our children. Blue Ribbon Schools have gone above and beyond to keep students healthy and safe while meeting their ac-



Special to The SW Rankin News.

ademic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. These schools show what is possible to make an enduring, positive difference in students' lives."

"National Blue Ribbon Schools serve as exceptional models for improving student outcomes, closing achievement gaps and implementing effective teaching methods," said Dr. Kim Benton, state superintendent of education, interim. "I congratulate Mississippi's 2022 honorees, including all teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders, who collectively invest in students' overall success."

For Mississippi schools, nominations are submitted through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). FES initially received a call from MDE stating that they were included in the nom-

inations process. Upon discovering that FES was nominated, Principal Amanda Clark says, "We [were] very honored to be one of the four, because there are only four in the state of Mississippi."

Following the nomination notification, they were contacted by representatives from the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program to receive access to the official application form. Information FES gathered to complete the form spanned a three-year period to ensure that the school met certain criteria. MDE subsequently provided official notification that the criteria had been met for closing the achievement gap.

Finally, the winners were announced through MDE, accompanied by a link to a video on the National Blue Ribbons Schools website, [\[RibbonSchools.ed.gov\]\(http://RibbonSchools.ed.gov\), which listed all of the award recipients for 2022.](http://www.NationalBlue-</p>
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This will be the first time that FES has been nominated, and Principal Clark says its confirmation of what she already knew.

"Since I have been here (I have been in Rankin County for nineteen years)...I can tell you that our schools have always gone above and beyond for our students...That is why we got this award, because we really do work for every single student."

On November 3, Clark, accompanied by RCSD Superintendent of Education Dr. Scott Rimes and Assistant Superintendent Karen Schmidt will travel to Washington, D.C. to attend a ceremony hosted by the U.S. Department of Education, where all Blue Ribbon winners will be officially recognized and receive a plaque.

In the meantime, FES will host a celebration of their own to honor students from FES and Steen's Creek (their K-2 school). On October 21, there will be a zone celebration held at Florence High School's newly-completed multipurpose center. FHS cheerleaders, FHS band members, City and County officials, as well as distinguished alumni, will come together to celebrate the students and staff and teachers.

It will be a day to celebrate their teamwork - the successful coming together of every student, teacher, staff member, parent and community member.

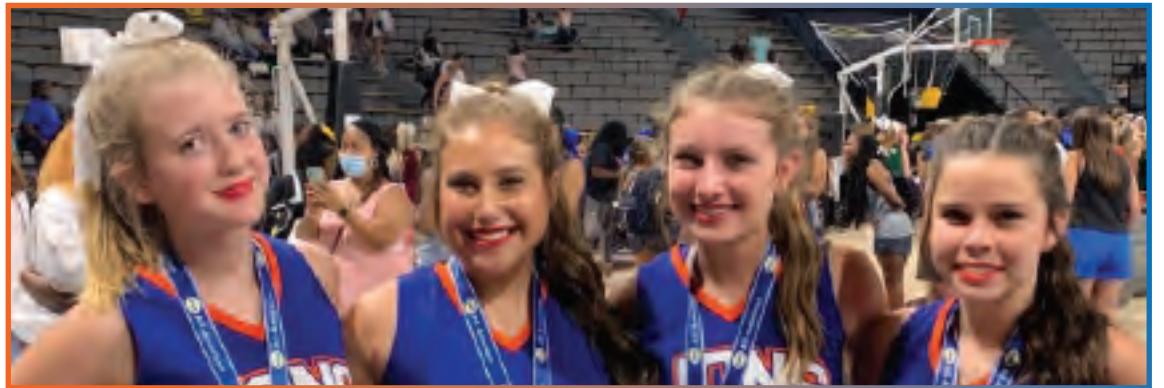
Discovery Christian receives UCA Cheer Camp awards



All photos special to SW Rankin News.



Along with the second-place award as a team, DCS cheerleaders were recognized and awarded in several other areas at the UCA cheer camp in Hattiesburg. They won the spirit stick for showing amazing spirit with the Friday Night Lights theme.



Discovery Christian School's (DCS) Kayleigh Wall, Megan Hardage, Blaire Kelly and Emily Straut made All American at Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Cheer Camp and will be invited to perform at special events across the country.

Cheerleader Megan Hardage was awarded the Pin It Forward Award for being an outstanding individual at cheer camp.

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