

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

East Metro Corridor gets new signal at El Dorado intersection - pg. 3

Richland police chief takes job as Pearl police chief - pg. 5

SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 9, No. 3 | March 2024

The Pearl News

THE RICHLAND NEWS

THE FLORENCE NEWS

Hinds Health Sciences Complex making progress in Rankin County

Special to The Pearl News

The new Hinds Community College Health Complex is now under construction just north of the Muse Center. The new facility will be the home of the new nursing school for the college, as well as other curriculum programs.

“We are proud to have this fifty-million-dollar investment in Pearl,” said Pearl Mayor Jake Windham.

“This is a big deal for us,” said Hinds President Dr. Stephen Vacik. “When I got to Hinds, one of the first things I saw was that we had to do something about our nursing and allied health programs. Now, we can move forward and we can help change lives.”

The Health Sciences Complex will be 160,000 square feet and four floors, with three to be immediately occupied when it is built and the fourth to house future growth. It will consolidate programs now housed



Photos special to The Pearl News

A rendering of the new Hinds CC Health Sciences Complex on the Rankin Campus.

at the Career Technical Education Building on Greenfield Road in Pearl and the Nursing/Allied Health Center in Jackson, which opened in

1982. The Vicksburg-Warren Campus programs will continue.

“We’ve been very fortunate

to be in a facility we’re in right now, but it’s no longer adequate to fit the needs,” Vacik said. “With our health corridor continuing to move further and further to this area, this is the place to be.”

Last year, legislators appropriated \$24 million over two sessions, and Rankin County Supervisors also committed to assisting with the funding.

The new facility will share a parking lot with the Muse Center.



Construction was underway earlier this year at the Rankin site.

Pearl awards contracts for Grandview Heights sewer rehabilitation

Special to The Pearl News

Like many other municipalities, the City of Pearl is facing problems related to the deterioration of aging sewer and water systems.

Pearl Mayor Jake Windham said the City recognized the need to rehabilitate the Grandview Heights sub-interceptor sewer line, which serves over 3,000 homes and businesses. Hemphill Construction Company, Inc. was recently awarded the construction contract, and Pickering Firm, Inc. was awarded the engineering contract for the \$2.8 million project.

Windham said the existing sub-interceptor has a history of failures requiring point repairs, and it is thought to be a primary source for infiltration and inflow in the city. Inflow can result in sewer overflows that threaten public health and diminish the environmental quality of the area. Average flow for the drainage basin is approximately 570,000 gallons per day, which is about 400 gallons per minute. Windham says that,



Special to The Pearl News

during wet weather events, the flows exceed 4,000 gallons per minute, indicating that the Grandview Heights sewer system has significant infiltration and inflow.

“We see it as our responsibility to reconstruct old waterlines and sewer lines throughout the city,” Windham said. “This project is just the tip of the iceberg of many projects that we have planned in the upcoming year and years to come to improve our city’s infrastructure.”

Windham said the project consists of the rehabilitation of approximately 8,300 feet of sewer line. Rehabilitation will include increasing the diameter of the line, providing capacity for future development and rehabilitation of manholes.

“It is a fact that, if you are not repairing old infrastructure, you’re not doing your city or citizens justice for future generations,” Windham said. “This particular project is a generational project that we are excited about moving forward.”

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Plans developing for REDA's Market on the Square

The Richland News

Richland is gearing up for a Saturday of shopping, food and music, with Market on the Square planned for Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Registration is now open for those who would like to be an arts, crafts or food vendor at the event, which is sponsored by the Richland Economic Development Association. The market will be held on the Town Square at 380 Scarbrough Street. In the event of inclement weather, the market will be moved to the Richland Parks and Recreation Center at 460 East Harper Street.

Arts and crafts booths will be \$50 for a 12' by 12' space. Vendors are asked to supply their own tables, chairs, tents, extension cords and electricity. Generators are allowed, but must be muffled to eliminate noise. All tents must be anchored to prevent sudden winds from damaging patrons and other exhibitors, and no vehicles will be allowed to remain in the booth area.

Food vendor booth spaces are limited and are \$50 per spot.

Vendors are not allowed to sell any type of weapon, knives or item that promotes violence and/or is harmful to others, nor can vendors sell or exhibit items that



would be of moral distaste to any person. Additionally, arts and crafts vendors may not give away or sell any food products.

The vendor entrance will open at 6 a.m., and all vendors must be set up by 8:30 a.m. Vendor parking will be on the Town Square past all of the booths. Additional vendor parking will be available at the Senior Center, library, on Town Square Drive and in designated areas

at the Post Office. Vendors are responsible for unloading and loading their own items and setting up their booth in the space allocated.

Booths may be dismantled at 4 p.m. or any time thereafter, but not before.

Vendors will be responsible for their own sales tax, if applicable, and must submit tax forms and all tax monies prior to leaving the premises after the market. Sales tax forms will be available upon arrival.

All applications and associated booth fees should be mailed to REDA, P.O. Box 180875, Richland, MS 39218. Applications are available on the Richland Economic Development Association's Facebook page. Booths are not secured until payment is received.

For more information, call 601-487-2138.



2024-25 Richland Mayor's Youth Council applications open

The Richland News

Richland high school students are encouraged to consider applying for the 2024-25 Richland Mayor's Youth Council, with the application process now open through Wednesday, March 27.

A dynamic one-year program, Richland Mayor's Youth Council (RMYC) offers students leadership experience and active community involvement with the guidance of the sponsor. RMYC's goals include promoting a spirit of pride in the city and strengthening the community.

Members meet monthly and also have additional service opportunities. Meetings are typically held on the second Monday of each month, and attendance at RMYC meetings and other specified community meetings and events is expected.



Students living in Richland or attending Richland High School and entering their freshman, sophomore, junior or senior year during the 2024-25 school year may apply for the competitive process, which includes completing an application, submitting a headshot and references, and writing an essay. Students who pass the first round of the application process may be invited to present for an interview the week of April 8. Up to thirty students may be asked to join the upcoming 2024-25 RMYC.

Applications are available online at www.RichlandMS.org and are due at the Richland Parks and Recreation Center by 4 p.m. on March 27.

For more information, call Stephanie Ward at 601-487-2138.

Richland "Clean Up Week" planned for March 18-23

The Richland News

The City of Richland is asking residents to take advantage of a special "Richland Clean Up Week" to get some spring cleaning completed.

Dumpsters will be at the City Barn, which is located on West Harper Street, for residents to drop off items for disposal. The City Barn will be open Monday through Saturday, March 18 through March 23, from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m.

During this time, Richland residents may transport bulk items, such as paper, plastic, limbs and appliances, to the City Barn for free. No hazardous or toxic items will be accepted, including flammable liquids, potentially explosive materials, paint or acids.

The free service, sponsored by Keep Richland Beautiful, is open to all residents of Richland, but contractors will not be allowed. Those using the service will be asked to present valid proof of identification with a Richland address.

For more information, call 601-487-2138.



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Florence High School soccer teams are state champs!



Congratulations to both the Florence Eagles girls' and boys' soccer teams for winning the 5A State Championships. Photos special to The Florence News

Florence Library completes renovations, wins awards

By James Osborne

The Florence Public Library has undergone some new renovations recently and is being recognized by the regional library system for its efforts.

At the Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) Awards Day ceremony last month, the Florence Library was honored with the Public Library of the Year Award in the medium library category for the CMRLS. In addition, Kimberly Ollison, branch manager of the Florence Library, was also named Branch Manager of the Year for the CMRLS.



Branch Manager of the Year Kimberly Ollison



Special to The Florence News

A new sign has been installed at the Florence Public Library.

"I was surprised," said Ollison. "I was not expecting either award; but I am very happy, and it shows the hard work we have been doing."

The system for recognizing the best library in the CMRLS is based on several analytics, including the number of patrons coming into the library. Florence had a twenty-three percent increase in patronage last year.

"The combined staff have really breathed new life into the Florence Library," said Mara Polk, director for the CMRLS. Polk said she credits the success of the

Florence Public Library to the friendly, knowledgeable and hard-working staff. Ollison is helped in her efforts by two circulation clerks, Taralah Rios and Zoerean Neal, both former teachers in the area.

"The big thing is, she really tries to have fun, try new things, and learn from any mistakes," said Polk about Ollison. "[She] and the staff work hard and use their creativity to work with the community."

Polk also credits the Florence library's success to Ollison's creativity with creating events and new groups at the library. Groups like the library's ATLAS Club

(At The Library After School), an after school program for young patrons, and the Coffee, Crafting and Book Club, a book club where patrons get to choose between two books to read, then discuss the books between coffee and an arts and crafts project.

The Florence library also has a program with Villa South, where they bring a mobile library to the retirement community so that residents can check out books without leaving the facility.

The library has undergone some new renovations recently. After being closed for all of November of last year, the facility reopened with brand new flooring throughout the library, a new and bigger front desk that is now facing the entrance, and freshly painted walls in the area by the front desk.

On February 8, a brand new and bigger sign was placed in front of the library. The new sign was a collaboration between Jared Morrison of Morrison Welding, who furnished material and labor for the sign, combined with Decal Guys owner Jamie Johnson, who provided the art and the sign, and Jace Wicker of the Wicker Brother's business, who powder coated the sign.

Polk said that the library has something for everyone. "We bring it all! We invite people to come and check out what their money is being invested in at the library and all of the services we provide."

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The March book report: *The Tubman Train* by Doug Peterson

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

Doug Peterson wrote *The Tubman Train*, book three of his *Underground Railroad Series*, in 2020. Probably in 1822, “Minty” was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, to Ben and Rit Ross, slaves of Edward and Eliza Ann Brodess. Her parents named her Araminta, calling her “Minty.” She was never taller than five feet, but was physically strong and possessed a powerful hunger for freedom.

Minty grew up behind the Brodess house with her mama, her brothers and sisters. Her father lived at the Thompson place, ten miles away, and she seldom saw him.

At age six, Minty was loaned to the Cook family, so Mrs. Cook could teach her to weave. That first night, Mrs. Cook offered her a cup of milk. Minty loved the smooth taste of milk, but said, “No.” Even at six, saying “no” to the masters gave her a sense of inner strength. Should she not work, her masters would be eager to punish; every opportunity she had to disobey was taken. Minty proved a poor weaver, so Mr.

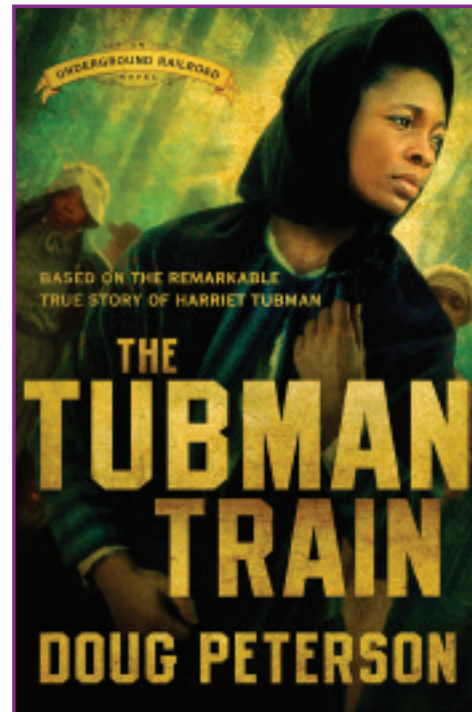
Cook sent her out to the nearby marshes to gather muskrats from float traps while up to her waist in freezing water. She learned where to walk and what to avoid while getting muskrats out of the float traps. She became sick and sank into a deep patch of mud, struggling to get back onto solid ground. She located three muskrats and hauled them in their burlap bag back to the Cook’s house, collapsing near the house.

Mrs. Cook said she had measles, sending her back to her mama.

She grew sicker, and, even though Mr. Brodess wanted her back at work, Minty’s mama said, “No.”

When Minty was better, her mama could not keep Mr. Brodess from shipping her back to Mrs. Cook. Minty was then hired out to Miss Susan, a woman crueler than either Mrs. Cook or Mrs. Brodess. It was from Miss Susan that Minty learned the power of a bullwhip wielded by a heartless woman. She withstood that punishment, because she felt herself growing stronger, and asked God to make her strong in order to resist. She bore the scars of that whip all her life.

In 1833, young teen Minty was inside



a store when an overseer, hunting for an escaped slave, threw a heavy two-pound lead weight directly at the escaping slave. He missed his target, hitting Minty directly in the middle of her forehead, knocking her out; after two days, she came to. She bore that scar to her dying day, suffering severe headaches,

dizziness, extreme sleepiness and having many visions. Raised in a Methodist church, she believed these dreams or visions were messages from God.

Minty worked in a lumber camp in 1844, where she met John Tubman, who asked her to marry him. Mr. Brodess had warned Minty if she did not marry and start shooting out babies, he would sell her down south. After she and John married, Minty took her mother’s name, becoming “Harriet Tubman.”

Harriet never had children of her own. She adopted Gertie, the daughter of her second husband, Nelson Davis. Her last sister, Rachel, never escaped with Harriet; she died a slave, and this always haunted Harriet. Harriet’s sisters, Mariah Ritty, Linah and Soph, had been sold away years before. Her brothers, Ben, Henry and Robert, went north with Harriet, and the family together decided to change their last name to “Stewart.”

In 1913, ninety-year-old Harriet died on March 10, in Auburn, New York. Many of her stories told to family, friends and supporters are within the pages of *The Tubman Train*.

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601-706-9237

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Publisher

Clay Mansell
claymansell@SWRankinNews.com

Editor in Chief

Stephanie Tracy

Writer

James Osborne

Sales Representatives

Clay Mansell
claymansell@SWRankinNews.com

Judy Duke
judy@SWRankinNews.com

Graphic Designer

Holly Embry
designer@SWRankinNews.com

Office Manager

Doris Bynum

Distribution

Ben Barnett

For submission information, email
news@SWRankinNews.com.

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East Metro Corridor gets new signal at El Dorado intersection

Special to SW Rankin News

The East Metro Corridor, a recent project to connect Flowood, Pearl and Brandon, created an intersection at East Metro Parkway and El Dorado Road. A traffic analysis conducted during the project's environmental stage used traffic demand modeling software to predict traffic that would be at the intersection.

The study concluded that a traffic signal was not needed at the intersection, that a two-way stop-control was the best way to handle the anticipated traffic; so the intersection was designed and built to meet the recommendations of the traffic study.



Special to SW Rankin News

The intersection opened to public traffic in December of last year, and Pearl officials were made aware of immediate issues with the intersection. Traffic volumes and turning movements were collected in early January, and the January traffic study concluded that a traffic signal was warranted based on the actual traffic volumes. The Pearl Board of Aldermen made the decision to install a temporary traffic signal at the intersection, while designs are being completed for a permanent mast arm traffic signal.

City officials say they will make every effort they can to fast track the installation of the permanent signal.





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Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



What Is The Gospel?

The word “gospel” is a very common word today. Perhaps because it is so common I wonder if it has lost its meaning. The word “gospel” is defined as good news, good tidings. Is this just a definition or is it a fact? When you hear the word does it produce any emotion within you? If not then maybe this is evidence that we do not know what it means or do not appreciate it.

The word comes into use after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This shows that the earthly work of Christ was necessary before there could be a “gospel” and without Him there is no gospel. It is His because He is first the author and the subject. It is good news about Christ. Everything centers around Him. A record of a historical fact and all the blessedness of the world lies in the story of His life and death and resurrection.

It is a history of one who lived and died for us (Rom.14:1). All that the world needs lies in that story (Jno. 3:16-17). The good news to the world is the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The facts with any other explanation is not gospel.

“It was by the Gospel of Jesus Christ that all saved individuals are introduced to the grace of Christ. Paul noted (Gal.1:6-9) that it was a perversion of that Gospel that caused some to have been removed from that message of grace and from its benefits. Regardless of how angelic or apostolic the messenger might appear to be, if his message differed from the purity of the Gospel delivered by the Spirit-inspired men, such a purveyor of falsehood was to be regarded as one condemned. While the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom.1:16), the doctrines and commandments of men are not. Paul was able to certify that the Gospel he preached was not received from men nor taught to him by man, but came by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12). (David Hayes Prophater – GBN Daily Lift).

The gospel is the good news about Christ, God, salvation and peace. It is the good news which all men need and want. It stands alone, there is no other. The gospel that does not have Christ in His place, God in His place in man's salvation and peace, the Holy Spirit in His place – is no gospel. It does not matter how eloquent the preacher if any omission or modification of these he has no good news for the audience. There is no second gospel. Anything more or less is not gospel and is counterfeit.

It is important to be no less narrow than the truth of the gospel and no more liberal than Paul who would not allow it to be perverted (Gal. 1:7-9). Paul further states it is disaster to our soul if we “do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thes.1:7-9).

Florence church of Christ-220 White Street -Florence, MS 39073
Mailing Address: 219 Morrison Road

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny set for March 23

Special to SW Rankin News

Those who wish to enjoy some time with the season's "hoppiest" visitor are invited to the Richland Community Center on Saturday, March 23, to have breakfast with the Easter Bunny.

Set to begin at 9 a.m., the morning will include breakfast, an egg hunt, a picture with the Easter Bunny, Enchanting Memories Entertainment and more. The event is designed for children ages thirteen and younger

and their parents.

All tickets must be purchased in advance. The \$5 ticket per person includes breakfast and all activities. Tickets can be purchased at the Richland Parks and Rec Center, which is located at 460 East Harper Street. The breakfast will be held at the Richland Community Center, located at 410 East Harper Street.

For more information, call 601-487-9989.



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Richland police chief takes job as Pearl police chief

Special to SW Rankin News

Nick McLendon, who served as Richland Police Chief since February 2022, recently accepted the position of Pearl Police Chief.

McLendon, who started his career in 2004 as a reserve officer for the Pearl Police Department, was sworn in at the March 5 meeting of the Pearl Board of Aldermen.

McLendon has held several assignments through his career at the Pearl and Richland police departments. He worked patrol and SWAT at first, then moved to K9 and criminal interdiction in 2008. He moved to the Richland force to serve as a K9 and interdiction officer at the end of 2008, and was promoted to lieutenant in 2012.

McLendon then became captain over the Richland Flex Division, supervising traffic, narcotics and interdiction, in addition to being the asset, vest grant and equitable sharing manager. When Richland Police Chief Russel James retired in February 2022, McLendon stepped into the spot, where he led the Richland Police Department until accepting



Photos special to SW Rankin News

Former Richland Chief of Police Nick McLendon recently accepted the job of Pearl Chief of Police.

the Pearl position last month.

“It has been an honor to serve the citizens of Richland, Mississippi, in my various roles at the Richland Police Department for the last fifteen years,” wrote McLendon. “Through previous leaders, I have learned immeasurable personal and professional skills, which have advanced



Nick McLendon began his career as a reserve officer for the Pearl Police Department.

my career further than I could have imagined.”

“During this time, I was afforded the opportunity to seize millions of dollars of illicit currency [and] thousands of pounds of illicit contraband,

disrupt international drug trafficking organizations, win first in the nation in narcotics detection in Florida, design and implement the FLEX Unit, attend and graduate the FBI National Academy, obtain my master’s degree in criminal justice, and lead the Richland Police Department into the twenty-first century of policing,” McLendon summarized.

“I’m excited to have Chief McLendon at the Pearl Police Department,” said Pearl Mayor Jake Windham. “He has had a very impressive career during his years in law enforcement, and I know that his success will continue in coming home to Pearl.”

Coming home has meaning, McLendon said.

“It’s a great feeling to come back to the town where I began as a reserve officer,” he said. “Being able to come full circle is an honor I’m really proud of, and I’m excited to step into this new leadership role.”

McLendon succeeds former Chief Dean Scott, who resigned in January of this year. Scott had held the position in Pearl since 2018.



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Pearl Day to feature Ashley McBryde in concert

Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Day, an annual family-friendly event held at Pearl Park, will welcome country artist Ashley McBryde as the headlining performer on April 27.

The day begins with gospel signing and activities at Pearl Park, including inflatables, a dunking booth, a rock climbing wall, a BBQ cookoff and more.

Following that, with gates opening at 6 p.m. at Trustmark Park, the Pearl Day concert will include special guest Rhett Akins, performing at 7 p.m., followed by McBryde, who will take the stage at 8:45 p.m.

McBryde is a multi-award-winning singer-songwriter known for her powerhouse vocals and authentic storytelling. Her career has seen her rise from playing country tunes in biker bars to gracing the stages of some of the world's biggest music festivals. Her talent and dedication to her craft have earned her widespread acclaim and numerous accolades. She burst onto the scene with her major label debut album, *Girl Goin' Nowhere*, which charmed critics and audiences alike, earning her a GRAMMY nomination for Best Country Album.

Notably, she also clinched the title of New Artist of the Year at the 53rd Annual CMA Awards and received two nominations for the 2020 GRAMMYS for Best Country Song and Best Country Solo Performance for her hit, "Girl Goin' Nowhere."



Special to SW Rankin News

Since then, McBryde has continued to captivate listeners with her soul-stirring music and electrifying performances, earning accolades such as the ACM New Female Artist and CMT Breakout Artist awards. She was back in the spotlight in the 65th GRAMMY Awards for her album, *Ashley McBryde Presents: Lindeville*, which was nominated for Best Country Album. McBryde's latest album, *The Devil I Know*, is available now, featuring lead single "Light On In The Kitchen." McBryde recently announced new shows through summer 2024.

Akins is a successful solo artist who has also written chart-toppers for other artists, such as Luke Bryan,

Jason Aldean, Blake Shelton, Dustin Lynch, John Pardi, Parker McCollum and Thomas Rhett. He has had thirty-five number one singles so far, and the first number one hit he recorded was "That Ain't My Truck." Later, his song, "Honey Bee," would become the highest-selling digital debut by a country male solo artist.

Akins was named the number four Billboard Country Songwriter in 2010. The following year, he was BMI's Songwriter of the Year, an honor he repeated in 2014. He went on to win the CMA Triple Play award a total of eight times. In April 2018, he was named Songwriter of the Year and, in September 2019, was named the first

Songwriter of the Decade by the Academy of Country Music. In November 2021, he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Organizers say that, as exciting as the musical guests are, the Pearl Day Concert is more than just a music festival – it's a celebration of community, culture and creativity. Both longtime residents and first-time visitors alike are invited to come together with friends, family and neighbors to share in the joy and camaraderie of the special annual event.

For more information, follow the City of Pearl Government's Facebook page.

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DCS Bray named '24 STAR student



Special to SW Rankin News

Daniel Bray, a senior at Discovery Christian School (DCS), was recently recognized by the Mississippi Economic Council as the school's 2024 STAR student. The program honors exceptional students and teachers across the state, and Bray earned the distinction by scoring a 31 on the ACT while keeping a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. As part of the STAR program, students select a teacher who has significantly contributed to their academic success. Bray chose Jessi George as his STAR teacher in recognition of the impact her teaching has had on his academic journey while at DCS.

Park Place plans Spring Market



Special to SW Rankin News

Park Place Christian Academy in Pearl is bringing in spring with a new Spring Market. Set for April 13 from noon until 6 p.m., the event will include games, popcorn, cotton candy, hamburger and hot dog plates, and more.

Those who are interested in being a vendor at the market are encouraged to contact Jessica Thames at JThames@GoPPCA.com for information about reserving a booth.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Ronda Jackson	60y	Florence, MS	01/26/2024	Chancellor FH
Edward Thomas Barber	76y	Florence, MS	01/27/2024	Chancellor FH
Mary Brown	79y	Florence, MS	01/27/2024	Chancellor FH
Dean Williams	87y	Florence, MS	01/31/2024	Chancellor FH
Roy Souderes Jr.	80y	Florence, MS	02/03/2024	Chancellor FH
Tammy Shook	53y	Florence, MS	02/04/2024	Chancellor FH
Leroy Launius	85y	Jackson, MS	02/04/2024	Chancellor FH
Rachel Breihan	77y	Florence, MS	02/04/2024	Chancellor FH
Betty Jean Squires	81y	Florence, MS	02/06/2024	Chancellor FH
Frances Cathryn Finnegan	39y	Florence, MS	02/07/2024	Chancellor FH
Ramabhai Patel	71y	Flowood, MS	02/10/2024	Chancellor FH
Susan Blake	59y	Jackson, MS	02/11/2024	Chancellor FH
James Cross	79y	Madison, MS	02/13/2024	Chancellor FH
Merton Taylor Whitehead Jr.	69y	Pearl, MS	02/12/2024	Chancellor FH
Debbie Young	68y	Richland, MS	02/13/2024	Chancellor FH
Merle Rester	81y	Richland, MS	02/22/2024	Chancellor FH
Carolyn Matthews	89y	Florence, MS	02/25/2024	Chancellor FH
Richard Neal	85y	Florence, MS	02/25/2024	Chancellor FH

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FHS names Winter Homecoming Queen and Basketball Maid

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) celebrated its Winter Homecoming earlier this year. The students participated in a week of spirit days and pep rallies.

Shortly before the game, the 2024 Winter Homecoming Queen and the 2024 Basketball Maid were crowned by Florence High School Principal Keith Reed, FHS Winter Queen 2023 Laila McCoy and 2023 Basketball Maid Payton Arrington.

The student body selected Miss Reagan King as the 2024 Winter Homecoming Queen. She is the daughter of Traci King and is a member of the Lady Eagles softball and volleyball teams.

Chosen by the varsity basketball teams as the 2024 Basketball Maid was Miss Bree LeFlore. She is the daughter of Charles and Karen LeFlore and is a member of the FHS varsity basketball team, track team, cross country team, and BETA Club.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are FHS Principal Keith Reed, 2023 Winter Homecoming Queen Laila McCoy, 2024 Winter Homecoming Queen Reagan King, 2024 Basketball Maid Bree LeFlore and 2023 Basketball Maid Payton Arrington.

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Richland High School student wins financial competition

Special to SW Rankin News

The Millsaps College Chartered Financial Analyst Research Challenge Team recently flexed their financial analysis skills by taking home top honors in the CFA Institute Research Challenge Mid-South Competition, held at Rhodes College in Memphis. Richland High School graduate Mason Peavy is a member of the team.

The CFA Challenge is a global competition designed to provide university students with hands-on mentoring and intensive training in financial analysis and professional ethics. Each year, students are tested on their analytical, valuation, report writing and presentation skills, assuming the role of a research analyst.

The team of Peavy, Nicholas Nieto, Rigoberto Leon, Raj Aggarwal and Graham Harrison, is comprised of students

who are currently enrolled in the Louis Wilson Fund, which is a student-managed fund class.

“This achievement underscores the dedication and expertise of our students, as well as support from the previous faculty members, Millsaps alums and other members in the Millsaps community. The accumulative efforts of everyone involved has contributed to the Louis Wilson Fund’s success over the years,” said Dr. Ken Qiu, who serves as faculty sponsor and coach.

“We are incredibly proud of our team; this is the fourth year in a row they’ve placed in this event,” said Dr. Qiu. “Their success reflects Millsaps College’s commitment to providing students with real-world experience and preparing them for careers in finance and investment management.”



Special to SW Rankin News

Members (l to r) of the Millsaps College CFA Research Challenge Team, who recently won the CFA Research Challenge Mid-South Competition, include Nicolas Nieto, Mason Peavy of Richland, Rigoberto Leon, Dr. Ken Qiu, Raj Agrawal and Graham Harrison.

Owen promoted with RFD



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland Fire Department’s (RFD) Peyton Owen was recently promoted to the rank of lieutenant for RFD. Owen was pinned by his wife, Ragan, during a meeting of the Richland Board of Aldermen. Pictured (l to r) are Richland Fire Chief Trey Porch, Ragan Owen and Lieutenant Peyton Owen.

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PPSD recognizes December, January Employees of the Month



Dr. Michael Brewer



Brian Quick

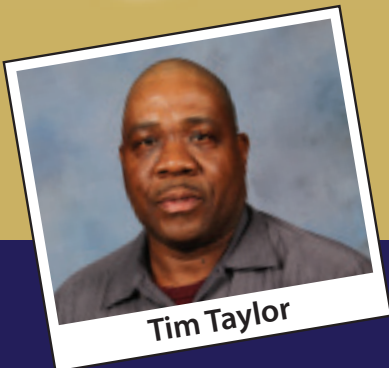


Grant Giles

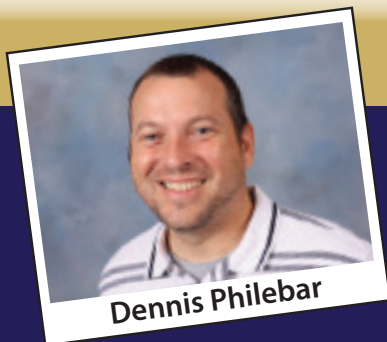
The Pearl Public School District (PPSD) has named seven new Employees of the Month. Honored employees are selected from the nominations submitted each month by employees, parents and community members.

Named PPSD December Administrator of the Month was Dr. Michael Brewer, and Certified Staff of the Month was Brian Quick, both of Pearl High School. Classified Staff of the Month for December were Grant Giles and Tim Taylor, of transportation.

January's PPSD Administrator of the Month was Pearl Junior High School's Dennis Philebar. Certified Staff of the Month was Tawana Prejean, of Pearl Lower Elementary, and Classified Staff of the Month was Manny Garcia, of maintenance.



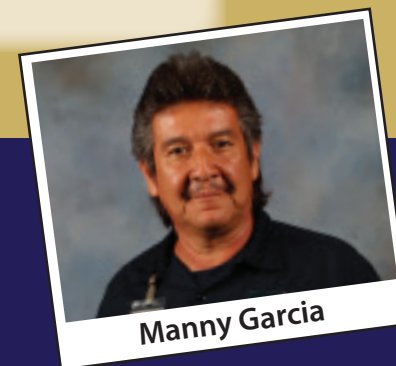
Tim Taylor



Dennis Philebar



Tawana Prejean



Manny Garcia

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EEOC Compliance: Office of Campus Culture and Diversity, PO Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3569 or Email: EEOC@hindscc.edu
Title IX: Associate Vice President Student Services, Title IX Coordinator Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3353 or Email: TitleIX@hindscc.edu.

Photos special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Library has multitude of March offerings

Special to SW Rankin News

The Pearl Library offers a multitude of opportunities each month for citizens to gather at the facility for fun and enriching programs.

For the little ones, **Lapsit Story Time** is held on **select Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.** The next Lapsit is set for **Thursday, March 21**, where attendees will enjoy stories, songs and playtime focused on early literacy for infants and toddlers.

Preschool Story Time is on **Wednesdays at 10 a.m.** and includes stories, music and crafts for preschoolers. Toddlers and babies are welcome, also.

For the kindergarten set, **Pearl Peanuts**, an after-school story and craft time for K-5 children, is offered on **Wednesdays at 4 p.m.**

Tweens, teens, adults



and seniors alike can enjoy the **Quick Drawing Lessons** program every **Wednesday from 3:30 until 4:30 p.m.** and learn the basics of drawing, with the opportunity to advance each week. All skill levels are welcome.

Families with an afternoon to spare can visit the library on **Saturday, March 16**, and enjoy a **movie matinee at 1 p.m.**, complete with free popcorn and drinks. Movies are offered at the library **every third Saturday**. This month's title is *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem*.

Also, on **Tuesday, March 19**, families are invited to a **Coffee and Hot Cocoa class**, where attendees can cook with staff and learn to make homemade hot cocoa and percolated coffee on a stovetop. Class begins at



4:30 p.m., and participants may win a door prize.



Adults and seniors have some of their own programs, including the **Novel-Tea Book Club**, which meets once a month to discuss the group book. This month's meeting is on **Wednesday, March 20, at 6:30 p.m.** or on **Thursday, March 21, at 10 a.m.** The book selection is *Fairy Tale*, by Stephen King. Coffee and tea are provided, and newcomers are always welcome.

Those who enjoy crafts have two separate options remaining this month. The first, set for **Monday, March 25, at 6 p.m.**, is a **Miniature Crafts and Crochet workshop**, where participants will create unique and beautiful miniatures to add to their collections. From beginners to experienced crafters, are all



welcome.

The second upcoming opportunity for crafting at the library is on **Tuesday, March 26, at 6 p.m.** and is designed for adults, who are encouraged to gather friends and come to the library for a **night of fun and creativity**.



The **Friends of the Library** will meet on **Thursday, March 21, at 6 p.m.** Interested individuals are invited to attend and discuss ideas for library programming and fundraising.

Additionally, library visitors can enjoy some **special displays** during the month of March, including **"Birding,"** presented by the Spring Lake Garden Club, and a **March Art Show**, presented by the students of Pearl Public School.

For more information about the library or its programs, call 601-932-2562. The library is located at 2416 Old Brandon Road.

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Jones receives Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement



Special to SW Rankin News

Cadet Lincoln Jones (center), a senior at Florence High School and the Battalion Executive Officer of Florence's Army Junior ROTC Program, was recently awarded the prestigious Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement. The award is presented to cadets who have shown outstanding excellence in military and academic subjects while enrolled in the JROTC program. To be considered for the award, cadets must be in the top ten percent of their JROTC class and have demonstrated outstanding leadership and involvement in both their school and community. This year, only twenty-six Army JROTC cadets from the 314,000 cadets worldwide were chosen as Legion of Valor Recipients.

Dixie National Flag Girls visit Brookdale residents

Special to SW Rankin News

The 2024 Dixie National Flag Girls, which includes Brinkley Boswell of Florence, recently visited Brookdale Senior Living for the facility's Western Day. Flag Girls are selected from a rigorous competition process, and the team showcases their skills during the rodeo, carries sponsor flags and promotes the "Genuine Mississippi" platform. In addition, they serve as dedicated ambassadors throughout the year, spreading awareness of the western way of life

and Mississippi's agricultural heritage and participating in community service events.

The 2024 Dixie National Flag Girl Team includes Mikayla Reeves of Morton, Meredith Mangum and Landri Jo Powell of Mendenhall, Kinley Goodson of Benton, Brinkley Boswell of Florence, Emma Holly of Brandon, Makenzie Moore of Walnut Grove, Rosa Garcia of Pelahatchie, Skyler McCullough of Brookhaven and Harley Grace Vinzant of Vicksburg.



Photos courtesy of Tammie Stephens



Brinkley Boswell (far left) is pictured with members of the 2024 team and a resident of Brookdale Senior Living facility.



Brinkley Boswell of Florence is one of only ten members selected to be a member of the 2023 Dixie National Flag Girls.

"First Words"



3" Then He (Jesus) got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink....9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon." (Luke 5:1-10)

Consider with me some valuable lessons from Luke 5:1-10:

1. Blessings follow obedience. Obedience is not a popular subject. Many Christians want the blessings of God, on their terms. More times than not promises are tied to conditions and instructions. The instructions were clear:

Launch out! Jesus instructed Peter to untie the boat and go where the fish were. Jesus could have commanded the fish to come to where Peter was---but, He didn't. Some churches are waiting for the lost to come to them. Days and weeks and months go by with no salvations. "Launching out" may be done in many ways.

A missions-driven church finds many ways to launch out in their community. The Great Commission is to go and tell not come and hear.

Let down your nets.....cast the nets! In ministry, casting the nets is done by presenting the Gospel through preaching, youth ministry, children's ministry, nursing home ministry, VBS, street ministry, live streaming services...and the list could go on. Presenting the Gospel in the presence of the lost under the anointing of the Holy Spirit produces converts. *Cast the nets!*

2. Blessings follow faith. The obedience of launching out and casting the nets was an expression of Peter, James and John's faith in what Jesus said to do "for a catch". James 2:17 says that faith without works is dead, lifeless and incapable of producing anything. Studying God's Word is an expression of faith. Worship is an expression of faith. Tithing is an expression of faith. Witnessing is an expression of faith. Reaching out into the community is an expression of faith. God blesses faith-driven obedience!

Perhaps you are going through a dry season in your life. Though you have worked hard and long....the nets are empty. There is a deep longing in your heart to see net-breaking blessings in your family, finances and church. First, renounce that voice of condemnation saying it is your fault. In faith-keep doing what God says....pray, preach, launch out, help to meet the needs in the church and in the community. God is faithful...keep sowing....harvest is coming!

Bob Wilburn

Florence Middle students win at Beta convention

Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence Middle School Beta Club recently competed at the National Beta State Convention, and several students brought home awards. National Beta is the largest independent non-profit education youth organization in America. The Beta community recognizes high academic achievement, rewards and nurtures worthy character, fosters leadership skills and encourages service to others.



McKenna Kacarka, Korbyn Russum, Kensley Pitts, Nora Nelson and Parker Hearn took home the first-place award for Performing Arts Small Group Dance.



Reece Guillot won second place in Painting.



Drew Taylor won second place in seventh-grade Science.



Photos special to SW Rankin News
Brycen McLendon won fourth place in eighth-grade Science.

Kiwanis welcome County coroner FHS dance team honored at Capitol



Special to SW Rankin News

The Kiwanis Club of Pearl recently welcomed Rankin County Coroner David Ruth as their guest speaker. Ruth spoke about the many duties of the coroner's office and how he feels his thirty-plus years as a law enforcement investigator has been an asset to the Rankin County Coroner's Office. The Kiwanis Club of Pearl, which hosts multiple fundraisers yearly to assist local schools and students, meets Tuesdays at Moss Creek Fish House starting at noon.



Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence High School double state championship dance team was recently honored at the Capitol with both a State Senate and State House of Representatives resolution. Representative Lance Varner, Senator Brian Rhodes and District 1 Supervisor Sid Scarbrough were all partners in honoring the hard work and accomplishments of the Lady Eagles dance team.

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Florence HS students attend RYL's Capitol Day



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School students Sidney Higdon, Caroline Sanford, Reagan Hearn and Brett Young recently took part in Rankin Youth Leadership's Capitol Day.

White honored for 20 years of RFD service



Special to SW Rankin News


Richland Deputy Fire Chief Randy White (right) was recently recognized by the Richland Board of Aldermen for his twenty years of service with the Richland Fire Department. Alderman John Hamilton (left) presented White with a pin to commemorate the achievement.

Students win RCSD CTE poster contest




Special to SW Rankin News

Avanlea Thornton and Karlee Dolan were recently awarded third place in the Rankin County School District's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month poster contest. They will be recognized at an upcoming School Board meeting and will receive a cash reward. Rankin County School District's CTE Director Dr. Tracy Yates presented them with the award.

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Shepard signs with Central Maine CC



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School volleyball standout Cierra Shepard recently signed a scholarship with Central Maine Community College for the 2024-2025 school year. Pictured (l to r) at the signing are, front row: Susan (Chrissy) Sheppard (mother), Cierra Sheppard and John Sheppard (father); and back row: Principal Dr. Marcus Stewart, Athletic Director Todd Montgomery, Brittany Sheppard (sister), Bonnie Sheppard (grandmother), Stephen Sheppard (brother), Coach Jennifer Osborne and Assistant Principal Corey Yates.

Richland schools recognize students for January awards



Photos special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School recently named their January 2024 Students of the Month, which included (l to r), front row: Laila Smith, Maylee Webb and Ruff Sanford; and back row: Welton Jolly, Orlandria Smith and Maddison Philips. The students were nominated and selected by their teachers for such qualities as dependability, attitude, leadership, attendance and class work.

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Richland High School recently awarded students who have shown exemplary behavior in and out of the classroom with their Top Ranger Award. Recognized students included (l to r), front row: Isabell Spratley, Aaliyah Torres, Angelica Bartolome and Janae Bennett; and back row: Anna Keith, Mia Tisdale, Samuel Lee, Welton Jolly, Anderson Minor, Martavious Lenard, Elijah Hughey, Braiden Bailey and Alexis McGowan.



Richland Junior High School recently recognized their Top Rangers for January. Honored students included (l to r), front row: Shatoria Freeman, Braylynn Dayzat and Aubree McDonald; middle row: Olivia Thompson, Trinitee Sebren, Ty'Kiarra Burns, Laila Smith, Gricelda Ramos and Amy Chavez; and back row: La darion Graham, Jamarie Coffey, Chardai Singleton, Toyler Jones, Dominic Norwood, Sadie Conner, Ta'Kayla Brown, Nigel Abron, Allan Garcia and Jacob Cook. Students receiving the award have been standout students and have continually worked hard at their coursework.

Pearl Upper Elementary students achieve goals, enjoy treats

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pearl Upper Elementary students achieving their second nine-weeks' goals enjoyed a "Float Party," indulging in a variety of soda floats.



Photos special to SW Rankin News

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