



SPORTS

West Jones bumps Wayne County from baseball post-season play. See stories and photos, Pages 1B, 4B.

OBITUARIES — 2, 5A

- Betty Ann Bishop
- Pauline Burgess
- Alice Harrison
- Julius "Buddy" McCaw
- Pauline Hettie Chapman
- Alberta Carter
- Johnny Aaron Stevens
- Ella B. Smith
- Debra Louise Pittman
- Winnie F. Miller
- Lucy Johnson-Oakley
- Dorothy H. Blackledge
- Welbert Ulmer Collins Sr.

The Wayne County News

"Thrives Because It Serves" • Thursday, May 13, 2010 • Volume 120, No. 19 • 75 Cents

Absentee balloting gets under way for primary *Jury returns 4 guilt verdicts against Blakley*

By Sean Dunlap

Those planning to cast an absentee ballot in the Republican primary to decide between Joe Tegerdine and Stephen Palazo to determine which candidate will face incumbent Democrat Congressman Gene Taylor in November's general election have roughly two weeks to do so.

Wayne County Circuit Clerk Rose Bingham said her office is open from 8 a.m. to 5

Primary race set

Voters will go to the polls Tuesday, June 1 for the Republican primary pitting Joe Tegerdine against Stephen Palazo to determine who will face Democrat Gene Taylor in November. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

p.m., Monday through Friday for those desiring to vote absentee for the primary, and will have additional hours over the last two weekends of

the month to help those who might not be able to participate during the week.

"We will be open on Saturday, May 22 and Saturday, May 29 from 8 a.m. to noon for absentee balloting," Bingham said.

"Those choosing to mail in their absentee ballot, (the ballot) will have to be received in our office no later than 5 p.m., Monday, May 31."

See Ballot, Page 6A

By Sean Dunlap

Following two days of testimony, a Wayne County Circuit Court Jury took less than an hour Tuesday afternoon to return four separate guilty verdicts against Assante Blakley in connection with a Feb. 6, 2009, break-in, robbery and kidnapping involving Waynesboro residents Lynn and Norma Mackey.

Blakley was convicted

on charges of burglary of a dwelling, committing a robbery while possessing a firearm and two counts of kidnapping.

Judge Lester Williamson polled the jurors following the guilty verdicts, and accepted the findings.

He then set a sentencing hearing for Blakley at 1:30 p.m., today — Thursday, May 13.

Among those who took the witness stand for the prosecution were the Mackeys,

Waynesboro Police Chief Jimmy Bunch, who was involved with the investigation, and John Robert Everett Jr., who pleaded guilty to burglary late last year for his role in connection with the incident.

Blakley did not take the stand in his own defense, and both sides rested their cases by 1:15 p.m., Tuesday.

See Blakley, Page 6A

Graham spells out goals for panel in board work session

By Paul Keane

During a Tuesday evening work session, the Wayne County Board of Education saw its new president set forth his vision of where he would like to see the panel go, then discussed and approved a handful of matters.

The work session was actually an extension of a Monday, May 3 regular meeting that was recessed into a work session so that members could vote on items that had been tabled at the previous meeting.

New Board President Terry Graham of District 5 presented the panel with a PowerPoint presentation, entitled "School Board Governance." The presentation looked at the role of board members, the president, and the superintendent and administration. Graham said he felt it was important to go over the points so that everyone can work together to help the district and its students.

"We're going to all be approached from time to time to look into personnel matters and other things," Graham said. "This is a chance to educate our constituents that we have a chain of command in place. The first step is to contact the teacher about the matter, then move to the principal if it cannot be resolved and then to the superintendent after that. "Some of these issues may eventually get into this board room, but I think we can resolve many of the issues before they reach us if we just follow the chain of command. What I'm saying is don't be a carrier pigeon for your people."

Graham's view

New Wayne County Board of Education President Terry Graham discusses his goals for the panel. See story on Page 6A.

See Board, Page 6A



A host of local, state and federal dignitaries were on hand for the formal groundbreaking ceremony to begin construction of 12 storm shelters on eight Wayne County School District campuses. The shelters, once constructed, can house 5,192 students, teachers and others on campuses countywide for six to eight hours in the event of severe weather. The project is being supported through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the WCSD.

Ground broken for shelters at county schools

By Sean Dunlap

A joint shelter construction project between the Wayne County School District, the Federal Emergency Management

Agency and Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is officially under way and will help to ensure the safety of public school children, teachers and personnel in the event of severe weather.

A formal groundbreaking was held Thursday, May 6 near the site of one of the shelters on the campus of Wayne County High School in Waynesboro.

In remarks during the dedication service, Deputy Superintendent of Education Keith Clay said the shelters will protect children and school staffers for many years to come.

"This has been a vision of mine for some time, and to be able to reach this point where construction is almost ready to start

is one of my most rewarding moments after 30 years in education," Clay told a standing-room only audience.

Clay pointed in particular to his daughter, Katie, who is a fourth grader at Clara School, and said that, as a parent, he would feel more at ease knowing his child, her classmates and school children countywide would have a refuge in the event of catastrophic weather — namely tornadoes and severe thunderstorms.

"What a great relief it is to know that if the warning goes out, all our children and our staff members will be safe and secure," he continued. "When you look at the tornadoes that have touched places like Yazoo City and other parts of the state, you will quickly realize the importance of these shelters."

The \$7.9 million capital project will involve the construction of 12 storm shelters — which will have the ability to withstand winds in excess of 200 miles per hour — on eight public school campuses.

See Shelters, Page 7A

Landrum to remain as county fire chief, district leadership changes planned

By Sean Dunlap

After considering numerous requests to reverse his decision to step down in June as chief of the Wayne County Volunteer Fire Department, Rufus Landrum told The Wayne County News on Tuesday that he would be staying on for the foreseeable future in that top-level post.

However, he indicated that there will be some changes in the leadership of the rural fire service — possibly as early as July.

"When I announced my resignation last month, I had no idea what kind of response it would generate," Landrum said. "I could go in any store in the past month and people would ask me to consider staying on."

"I also had firefighters from across the county calling me to ask would I be willing to stay as the chief. After a great

deal of consideration, I will continue as county fire chief."

Landrum called the outpouring of support nothing short of amazing and humbling, and said he is looking forward to continuing in his leadership role — but with a less intense and time-consuming pace.

Landrum announced his resignation during the WCVFD's monthly captains and lieutenants meeting at the Wayne County Courthouse on Monday, April 12.

At the time, Landrum cited a medical examination he underwent



Landrum

in January, and said his doctor recommended he limit his stress and look after his health.

"My health remains a concern, and hopefully with some of the changes that are being studied in how the fire department leadership structure works, we can hopefully reach a compromise that helps everyone," he noted.

Landrum said the position of county chief and assistant chief would remain at the top of the chain of command, but the county fire service would look at adding four

district chiefs — one for each of the established fire grading districts.

"This proposal would add another layer of leadership where the district chief would be responsible for the needs of the stations in his or her area," he added.

Landrum said the implementation of the district chief proposal would likely help trim his work load drastically, and help the agency in the future when it decides to elect new county-wide leadership.

See Landrum, Page 7A

Up ... over ... and out

Paul Keane/The Wayne County News

Wayne Academy rising sophomore Garrick Malone (5) gets low while rising senior Chase Hyatt (14) closes in for the tackle to bring down a Heidelberg Academy ballcarrier during Tuesday's spring game at T.F. Giles Field on the Waynesboro private school campus. Wayne Academy, along with Heidelberg, Columbia and Newton County academies took part in the spring football tune-up. For details regarding the contests, turn to Page 1B in today's edition of The Wayne County News. You can also visit our Website at www.thewaynecountynews.com for photos from the games, video highlights as well as archived audio play-by-play of every WA contest played on Tuesday that can be listened to at any time.



Aldermen to prioritize property clean-up lists

By Sean Dunlap

The Waynesboro Board of Aldermen will likely begin efforts to prioritize a list of properties that need to be cleaned-up during the panel's next monthly business meeting on Monday, June 1.

Mayor Joe Taylor has asked members of the board to make a comprehensive list of unsightly, overgrown and unsafe homes and lots in their respective districts and then sit down, as a group, to make a list of areas with the most need for clean-up in which the city will seek immediate corrective action.

"Our goal will be to address the sites that pose an immediate safety or health threat when we get our list together," Taylor told the board during its Tuesday, May 4 monthly meeting. "Now is the time to deal with these properties once and for all, and clean up the city of Waynesboro."

See Aldermen, Page 7A

Aldermen

Those parcels that are deemed to be a nuisance will be noted by city leaders, and a registered letter sent to the property owner asking that anything from high grass and weeds to falling down buildings be addressed within a certain period of time — typically 30 to 60 days.

The letter will seek information from the property owner as to how and when he or she will address the city's concerns.

Ward 1 Aldermen Ben Graves said he favored the effort to prioritize the spots that need to be addressed immediately.

"I'm sure most all of us have sites in our districts that we would like to see addressed," Graves told the panel. "The best way to do that is to bring all of our lists together and move forward from there."

Ward 2 Aldermen Robert "Bobby" Reynolds said he, too, supports the efforts to help

spruce up the looks of the city, and said a good start was the recent effort to tear down the vacant city hall on Wayne Street.

"That building was an eyesore in the truest sense of the word, and with it gone we can focus our attention on other parts of the city," Reynolds

said. "Turning the old city hall site into a parking lot is preferable to looking at it falling down."

Some of the properties that city leaders have discussed at length in the past several months that were characterized as being in dire need of attention include the old Downtown Inn motel on Azalea Drive near the Wayne County Courthouse, the closed Eagle Truck Stop on Mississippi Drive near the Bryant-

Turner Center, and the old Shell service station across from the Azalea Mart shopping center.

Taylor said his concerns are not only business property, but also residential locations.

"This is not about singling any property owner out, but is about taking the steps to help the city's overall appearance," Taylor said. "I get calls all the time from people wanting something done, and we're acting on the people's wishes."

Extension Service health fair held on Courthouse Square

Doris Keane/The Wayne County News
The Wayne County Extension Service hosted its community health fair program Friday, May 7 in the Extension Service parking lot on the Courthouse Square in Waynesboro. Displays included information on fire safety, living tobacco free, dental health, abuse prevention, skin health, fitness tips and much more. There were also height and weight examinations, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, and a community blood drive held in conjunction with the event.



Shelters

Clay said all the shelters combined can hold 5,192 students, teachers and others for a six-to-eight-hour period.

The project will give the school district a combined 43,127 square feet of shelter space once completed.

The mitigation project is being funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency with post-Hurricane Katrina dollars set aside by Congress, and is being managed through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Clay cited another example for the motivation in seeking funds for the storm shelters project — notably a tornado that struck Enterprise, Ala., High School while classes were in session on March 1, 2007.

An EF-4 tornado collapsed parts of that school's science wing, third hallway, gym, and caused severe damage in other areas of the school. "Everyone did what they were supposed to do in the event of a tornado, but the damage was catastrophic," Clay said. "There were injuries and fatalities, and there were lessons learned from that incident. Wayne County will now have storm shelters that have the potential to save lives."

William Brown, represent-

ing the MEMA Office of Mitigation, praised Wayne County officials for what he called the foresight and vision to pursue grant funding to help ensure the safety of those on local school campuses.

"This will be a showcase project for other school systems in the state and elsewhere in terms of dealing with safety issues," Brown said. "Your local officials stayed with this effort and were successful in getting the grant support to make these shelters a reality. Wayne County schools will be a safer place for everyone thanks to the work of your local leaders."

Dan Bass of FEMA said the storm shelters that will be built are a good example of what can happen when agencies at the local, state and federal level come together to address a need.

"Where FEMA is concerned, we deal a lot with mitigation — trying to take steps to head off potential disasters by being proactive with projects like this," Bass said. "This effort is very proactive, and is going to be one of the best things to happen anywhere in Mississippi ... and it will be right here in your own county."

Both Brown and Bass praised the cooperative spirit

of everyone involved from initially seeking the grant to seeing the first shovel of dirt turned.

"Projects of this kind are often complex because there are so many agencies involved, but this has been one of the smoothest operations that I have ever been associated with," Bass said. "One reason for that is because we all understand how important this is to the Wayne County School District and the community, and everyone is working together to make it a reality."

Superintendent of Education Robert Dean praised the work of Clay in seeing the project through from start to finish, and offered his appreciation to members of the school board for approving the construction project and to Wayne County Emergency Management-Homeland Security Director Todd Cleary.

"(Clay) was the one that picked up the ball and ran with it, and we owe him a debt of gratitude for pulling all this together," Dean said. "This was a tremendous undertaking, and Wayne County will benefit from the hard work of everyone that had a hand in this ... thank you for what you have done for our children."

Based on preliminary plans announced by the school

district, three campuses will receive at least two shelters: Beat Four School will have space for up to 579 people; Buckatunna School will be able to house 641 people; Clara School's facility can house 592 people; and the Wayne County Vo-Tech Center will have space for 322 individuals.

All of those buildings will provide between 2,000 and 4,000 square feet of shelter space on each campus.

Other locations will get one shelter building, including Waynesboro Elementary School, Waynesboro Middle School, Wayne County High School and the Wayne County Community Learning Center.

Those shelters will have the capacity to house anywhere from 30 individuals at the Community Learning Center to 1,240 at the high school.

Landrum

"Another goal with having district chiefs is to promote leadership within the ranks as a means of having those that want to fill the county fire chief's position in the future," he said.

"Our volunteers are what make the fire department work ... it's not me as chief. I want to do what I can to support the continued growth of the fire department."

Landrum along with Assistant Chief Terry Hutto have held top leadership posts

within the fire service for the past six year.

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In addition, the agency has promoted volunteer training, which has given the county a large number of certified firefighters as well as emergency

medical technicians.

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"I felt like this was the action that I needed to take, and I am thankful for the confidence that the firefighters and the communities have placed in me," Landrum said. "I look forward to continue serving as chief to do what I can to keep the fire department moving forward."

From Page 1A

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2010 Wayne County High School



We Love You!
Mom, Tim, McKinnley,
Mamaw & Papaw



Congratulations!

TYREE LEFLORE



Waynesboro Elementary School
4th Grade Graduate
Love,
Grandma & PawPaw



MAKESHIA LEFLORE



University of Southern Mississippi Graduate
Love,
The Beal Family



Tynes, Ivey to be united in holy matrimony on Saturday, May 15, 2010

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ivey of Foley, Ala., have announced the engagement and forthcoming marriage of their daughter, Robyn Francis Ivey, to Barrett Austin Tynes of Waynesboro.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Mrs. Margaret Kustura of Semmes, Ala., Mr. Bob Ivey of Foley, Ala., and Rocky and Bobbie Wolfe of Grove Hill, Ala.

The prospective groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Greg Tynes of Waynesboro, and is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Gene A. Cochran and the late Rev. and Mrs. J.W. Tynes.

The couple is planning a Saturday, May 15, 2010, wedding ceremony to be



held at Calvary Baptist Church in Waynesboro. All friends and family are

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