



PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



November 2024 ■ Volume 13, Issue 11 ■ Pelahatchie, MS

Spirited Rivalry: Tensions Brew Over Pelahatchie's Liquor Laws



By Shaun McInnish, Sr.,
City Beat Writer, Pelahatchie News

The ink has barely dried on Pelahatchie's new liquor ordinance, but the town is already facing a critical challenge. Just weeks after

approving the measure to allow liquor stores within city limits, multiple business owners are eager to capitalize on the opportunity. However, with the ordinance permitting only one liquor store per three square miles, the town's small size is creating gridlock for new ventures.

At the Board of Aldermen's regular meeting on Monday, October 7, Pelahatchie businessman Joe Lane Kelly, a well-known figure in the community and owner of the local

Fairway Foods grocery store, addressed the board second on the agenda. Kelly came before the board to request the removal of the old NAPA building from the Pelahatchie Heritage District so he could completely remodel the building and "take that eyesore and make something out of it." He stated he wanted to open a liquor store in that location to bring a new business and more tax revenue to Pelahatchie.

However, barring an amendment to the existing city ordinance, Kelly's request will likely be denied due to the proximity of another liquor store already approved for the town.

That store, set to be opened by Chris Watkins, a newcomer to the Pelahatchie community, was the fourth item on the agenda. Watkins was approved to move forward with his liquor store, American Spirits, at 309 Second Street, a property

he owns along with adjacent lots. It is close to the current Dollar General Market store.

Watkins said he has been working with the city on this project for over two years and plans to pave the entire gravel parking lot soon.

According to Mayor VanHorn, the town's liquor ordinance states that liquor stores must be physically spaced at least three miles apart from

each other. Kelly rebutted that Pelahatchie is made up 5.9 square miles and that he interpreted the ordinance as it allowing one liquor store per every square 3 miles of the town, thus allowing two liquor stores total. Kelly added that the current ordinance doesn't say anything about the actual liquor stores having to be 3 miles apart. The current ordinance reads that liquor stores are limited to one liquor store or package store per three square miles.

With Pelahatchie spanning just 5.9 square miles, the approval of Watkins' store means that Kelly's planned location falls well within the restricted radius, making it ineligible under current rules. Kelly stated that the town's total area should technically allow for two liquor stores, but due to the spacing



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Come see what's available at Pelahatchie Farmers Market

By Guest Columnist A. DaSilva

Local residents looking for a great way to spend a Saturday morning should check out the Pelahatchie Farmers Market. Located on Go Forth Street by Muscadine Park, The Market is normally scheduled for the first Saturday of the month, but due to the Muscadine Jubilee, it was held on the third Saturday in October. Featuring products from local farmers and artisans, it offers residents an opportunity to strengthen ties within the community as well as within the local economy.

Each month there are at least eight different vendors with varying products and selection. Infinity Farms Beef has been a staple at the market. Mr. Scott brings his dry aged beef and pork products from his farm in Union, MS at prices cheaper than the local grocery store. For example, a pound of farm raised ground beef runs \$6.50. Infinity Farms coffee rub is also a popular item.

The Market also offers desserts and other baked goods. Something



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Sweet of Lucedale, which had its first appearance at the Market this October, carries baked goods such as their popular carrot cake cookies. Hotmess Homestead carries cot-

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The importance of American flag retirement ceremonies



By Guest Columnist
Robin Sanders, Principal,
Pelahatchie Elementary School

Special to
Pelahatchie News

This Veteran's Day, our 6th grade students will have the opportunity to attend a flag retirement ceremony hosted by Pelahatchie High School's JROTC, led by Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Brandon Herd. Prior to their attendance, students will learn about the significance of a flag retirement ceremony, and why it is an important ceremony to honor one of our nation's symbols. This solemn event will not only educate young minds about the significance of the American flag, but also instill values of respect and patriotism as we show our gratitude for the sacrifices made by our veterans.

The Importance of our American Flag

The American Flag is displayed on military uniforms, flown over military bases, carried into battle, and draped over the coffins of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in support of our freedom. The U.S. flag represents the people and ideals service men and women are fighting for and defending.



The Importance of American Flag Retirement Ceremonies

In communities across the United States, the sight of a tattered or faded American flag often prompts a profound sense of respect and reflection. When a flag becomes worn, it symbolizes not only the passage of time, but also the sacrifices made by countless individuals in service to the nation. To honor this symbol of freedom, many organizations and communities hold American flag retirement ceremonies.

What Is a Flag Retirement Ceremony?

A flag retirement ceremony is a dignified and respectful way to dispose of flags that are no longer fit for display. According to the United States Flag Code, when a flag is no longer in a con-

dition that is appropriate to display, it should be retired in a manner befitting its status. This typically involves a ceremonial burning of the flag, allowing participants to reflect on its significance while ensuring the flag is retired with honor.

The Significance of the Ceremony

The purpose of a flag retirement ceremony extends beyond merely disposing of a physical object. It serves several vital functions:

- 1. Respect for the Flag:** The ceremony reinforces the importance of the flag as a national symbol. It acknowledges the values of liberty, justice, and sacrifice that the flag represents.
- 2. Community Engagement:** These ceremonies often bring together com-

munity members, veterans, and local organizations, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. They provide an opportunity for individuals to connect over their common values and experiences.

3. Education: Flag retirement ceremonies serve as a platform for educating participants about the history and significance of the flag. Many ceremonies include readings from the U.S. Flag Code, explaining the proper treatment and retirement of the flag.

4. Remembrance and Reflection: The act of retiring a flag allows participants to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who have served in the military and to honor their commitment to protecting the nation.

American flag retirement ceremonies play a crucial role in honoring the nation's values and the sacrifices of its heroes. By providing a respectful means of retiring worn flags, these ceremonies ensure that the symbol of freedom continues to be treated with the dignity it deserves. As communities come together to celebrate the flag's significance, they reinforce their commitment to the ideals it represents, creating a stronger bond among citizens and a deeper appreciation for their shared heritage.

Both articles continued from front page



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Tensions brew over liquor laws



Special to Pelahatchie News

requirement, there's no room left for another within city limits.

Taking a short roadtrip, starting at 309 Second Street (two buildings westbound from our Dollar General Market), one would have the option to head east or west along Highway 80 (Second Street), or make their way to the bustling four-way stop in town. From there, they can travel north or south on Highway 43. Either way, they would find that they exit Pelahatchie's city limits well before reaching the three-mile mark on the odometer, and well past any commercially zoned property.

The board acknowledged the issue, and Alderman Eddie Jones recommended they take a closer look at the ordinance and consider revisions to accommodate the town's unique geography. They voted unanimously to revisit the matter at their next meeting, scheduled for Monday, November 4.

This situation presents a conundrum for Pelahatchie: the ordinance is designed to prevent liquor stores from clustering too closely together, but the town's limited commercial space and small size are now preventing more

than one store from opening at all.

In the end, Pelahatchie's future relies not just on ordinances and board decisions, but on the active involvement of its residents. By attending monthly Board of Aldermen meetings and sharing their concerns, community members can ensure their voices are heard. Elected officials can represent their wards effectively only when they understand the needs and aspirations of the people they serve. By cultivating a culture of participation, Pelahatchie can transform from a small town into a thriving community, where each resident plays a role in shaping its narrative.

As Pelahatchie prepares for its November meeting, both residents and business owners are left questioning whether town leaders will approve the establishment of another liquor store or if Watkins' business will remain the sole option for now. The coming weeks will show if the town is ready to balance its growth with the needs of a thriving local economy—or if, when it comes to competition, the glass is already full.

Come check out Farmers Market

tage-made sourdough breads as well as starter kits for those looking to make their own.

Vendors carrying pickled vegetables are very popular at the Pelahatchie Farmers Market. Side Hustle Salsa carries homemade vanilla, artisan flavored pickles, and their special "Send It" all-purpose seasoning. Local honey has



also made its way to the market. White Oak Ranch of Florence offers local honey at 3 pounds for \$20.

Local crafters are becoming more popular at the market. Past vendors have carried items such as paintings, create-your-own pens and keychains, handmade plushies, headbands, baby items, tumblers, custom door hangers, and lawn emblems.

The last dates for the Pelahatchie Farmers Market in 2024 are scheduled to take place on November 16 and December 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more information, visit the Pelahatchie Farmers Market Facebook page. Details on individual vendors can also be found on their Facebook pages.



PHS SPORTS SCHEDULE: NOVEMBER



MON NOV 4, 2024 - ALL DAY JH BASKETBALL VS PISGAH
TUE NOV 5, 2024 - ALL DAY BASKETBALL VS. VELMA JACKSON
THU NOV 7, 2024 - ALL DAY JH/V BASKETBALL VS. LEAKE Co.

SAT NOV 9, 2024

ALL DAY BASKETBALL @ QUITMAN
ALL DAY BOYS BB @QUITMAN CLASSIC
ALL DAY PHS PAGEANT

MON NOV 11, 2024 - ALL DAY JH BASKETBALL @MAGEE

TUE NOV 12, 2024 - ALL DAY BASKETBALL VS. RICHLAND

THU NOV 14, 2024

ALL DAY BASKETBALL @ MENDENHALL
ALL DAY SOCCER VS PHILADELPHIA

SAT NOV 16, 2024 - ALL DAY CHEER COMPETITION JACKSON

Mon Nov 18, 2024

ALL DAY JH BASKETBALL @PUCKETT
ALL DAY SOCCER VS CLARKDALE

TUE NOV 19, 2024 - ALL DAY BASKETBALL @PROVINE

THU NOV 21, 2024

ALL DAY BASKETBALL VS. NE LAUDERDALE
ALL DAY SOCCER VS RAYMOND

FRI NOV 22, 2024 - 5:30PM FINE ARTS NIGHT

Mon Nov 25, 2024

ALL DAY BASKETBALL @ WEST LAUDERDALE

Pelahatchie Library November Events

**"DON'T SALT IT:
MAKING SALT-FREE
BLENDS FOR EVERYDAY
COOKING"**

Monday, November 4,
11:00 a.m.

Natasha Haynes with
the MSU Extension
Service will be here to
teach us how to make
salt-free blends for
everyday cooking.

"A TIME TO REMEMBER"

Thursday, November 7,
5:30 p.m.

Share memories and
support with others
experiencing loss of a
loved one

SENIOR CITIZENS' SOCIAL
Tuesday, November 12,
11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, November 26,
11:00 a.m.

ADULT BOOK CLUB

Wednesday, November 20,
11:00 a.m.

Discussing
SEND DOWN THE RAIN
by Charles Martin



Knox Ross Named to Kettering University's Summer 2024 Dean's List



Special to Pelahatchie News

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Knox Ross of Pelahatchie was named to Kettering University's Summer 2024 Dean's List. Ross is majoring in Mechanical Engineering and is a member of the class of 2026.

The Dean's List recognizes overall academic performance based on the student's term grade point average (GPA). To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must satisfy the following requirements: be a degree-seeking student with a minimum term grade point average of 3.5, no grades below B, and a minimum of 16 earned credits for the term.

"Being named to the Dean's List is a testament to the dedication and excellence of our students," Kettering University Provost James Zhang said. "It reflects their hard work and their ability to thrive in a challenging academic

environment. Our rigorous programs are designed for driven students to push boundaries and inspire growth. I am very proud that so many of our students have risen to that challenge with remarkable success."

More than 250 Kettering University students were named to the Summer 2024 Dean's List.

Since 1919, Kettering University has pioneered unique educational experiences that blend classroom instruction with real-world wage-paying work at cooperative employer partners. The university is world-renowned for its programs that produce some of the brightest, most successful entrepreneurs and business innovators. Kettering is consistently ranked among the country's best universities for return on investment and career preparation. Learn more at kettering.edu.

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PHS Beta leaders qualify for national convention

Senior Beta Leaders attended the Leadership Summit at USM. The PHS Beta Club qualified for National Beta Convention in Lead Outside the Box, Project Proposal, and Collaboration Connection. Senior Beta Leaders are Melanie Ball, Kyra Bryant, Jamaal Longino, Christian Beeman, and Talia White. Not pictured is DaMarion Snow.



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| MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT | | MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT | | MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT | | MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT | | MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT | |
|--|-----------------|--|---------------|--|-----------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|
| Property & Casualty Insurance Companies Abstract of the Annual Statement As of December 31, 2023 TRM Specialty Insurance Company 15 Independence Blvd. Ste. 430 Warren, NJ 07059-2713 | | Property & Casualty Insurance Companies Abstract of the Annual Statement As of December 31, 2023 Trustgard Insurance Company 671 S. High St. Columbus, OH 43206-1066 | | Property & Casualty Insurance Companies Abstract of the Annual Statement As of December 31, 2023 U.S. Specialty Insurance Company 13403 Northwest Freeway Houston, TX 77040-6006 | | Property & Casualty Insurance Companies Abstract of the Annual Statement As of December 31, 2023 Union Insurance Company P. O. Box 1594 Des Moines, IA 50306-1594 | | Property & Casualty Insurance Companies Abstract of the Annual Statement As of December 31, 2023 Unique Insurance Company 7400 N. Caldwell Ave. Niles, IL 60714 | |
| Total Assets | \$53,153,304 | Total Assets | \$85,333,402 | Total Assets | \$2,482,008,062 | Total Assets | \$202,835,156 | Total Assets | \$201,696,837 |
| Total Liabilities | \$36,844,297 | Total Liabilities | \$2,137,685 | Total Liabilities | \$1,857,134,250 | Total Liabilities | \$151,369,464 | Total Liabilities | \$172,641,948 |
| Capital Stock | \$4,200,000 | Capital Stock | \$2,500,000 | Capital Stock | \$4,200,000 | Capital Stock | \$5,000,000 | Capital Stock | \$2,500,000 |
| Surplus Funds | \$12,109,007 | Surplus Funds | \$80,695,717 | Surplus Funds | \$620,673,812 | Surplus Funds | \$46,465,692 | Surplus Funds | \$26,554,889 |
| Total Capital & Surplus | \$16,309,007 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$83,195,717 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$624,873,812 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$51,465,692 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$29,054,889 |
| Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$53,153,304 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$85,333,402 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$2,482,008,062 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$202,835,156 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$201,696,837 |
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| Total Assets | \$2,634,239,186 | Total Assets | \$745,727,470 | Total Assets | \$195,261,954 | Total Assets | \$15,413,684 | Total Assets | \$451,229,392 |
| Total Liabilities | \$1,901,682,772 | Total Liabilities | \$461,024,165 | Total Liabilities | \$45,567,092 | Total Liabilities | \$239,957 | Total Liabilities | \$364,833,750 |
| Capital Stock | \$ | Capital Stock | \$4,200,000 | Capital Stock | \$4,200,000 | Capital Stock | \$5,280,000 | Capital Stock | \$2,750,000 |
| Surplus Funds | \$732,556,414 | Surplus Funds | \$280,503,305 | Surplus Funds | \$145,494,862 | Surplus Funds | \$9,893,727 | Surplus Funds | \$83,645,642 |
| Total Capital & Surplus | \$732,556,414 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$284,703,305 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$149,694,862 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$15,173,727 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$86,395,642 |
| Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$2,634,239,186 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$745,727,470 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$195,261,954 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$15,413,684 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$451,229,392 |
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| Total Assets | \$306,940,056 | Total Assets | \$392,951,508 | Total Assets | \$34,145,619 | Total Assets | \$9,361,669 | Total Assets | \$49,912,908 |
| Total Liabilities | \$156,317,099 | Total Liabilities | \$300,492,613 | Total Liabilities | \$24,685,008 | Total Liabilities | \$2,698,276 | Total Liabilities | \$28,047,172 |
| Capital Stock | \$4,000,000 | Capital Stock | \$2,500,000 | Capital Stock | \$3,000,033 | Capital Stock | \$2,500,000 | Capital Stock | \$2,600,000 |
| Surplus Funds | \$146,622,957 | Surplus Funds | \$89,958,895 | Surplus Funds | \$6,460,578 | Surplus Funds | \$4,163,393 | Surplus Funds | \$19,265,736 |
| Total Capital & Surplus | \$150,622,957 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$92,458,895 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$9,460,611 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$6,663,393 | Total Capital & Surplus | \$21,865,736 |
| Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$306,940,056 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$392,951,508 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$34,145,619 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$9,361,669 | Total Liabilities, Surplus & Other Funds | \$49,912,908 |
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Gipson announces October as Agritourism Month

Special to Pelahatchie News

Recently, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson held a press conference announcing October as Mississippi Agritourism Month at a local agritourism operation, Moseley Meadows Farm in Gluckstadt. Governor Tate Reeves recently signed a proclamation designating October as Agritourism Month.

Commissioner Gipson was joined by Benton Moseley, owner of Moseley Meadows Farm, and Stanley Wise, president of the Mississippi Agritourism Association, as well as several farmers from other agritourism operations around the state. Mississippi is currently home to 103 registered agritourism farms.

“Today, we are proud to promote the farmers and farm families that keep agritourism growing in Mississippi,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Not only do these farms have a positive impact on our ag industry, as they are still a producing enterprise, but they also build up Mississippi’s tourism industry. These venues provide the unique opportunity of introducing people who would not normally encounter this kind of lifestyle to a working farm. Agritour-



Special to Pelahatchie News

Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson held a press conference recognizing Mississippi Agritourism Month at Moseley Meadows Farm in Gluckstadt. Pictured L-R: Lynn and Jim Newman of Farmer Jim’s Pumpkin Patch & Corn Maze in Rolling Fork; Stanley Wise, President of the Mississippi Agritourism Association; Benton and Kate Moseley of Moseley Meadows Farm in Canton; Commissioner Gipson; Lisa Cross and Shane Pickard of Back 40 Pumpkin Patch in Pelahatchie; Dana Nowell of Twelve2 Farm in Taylor; and Wendy and John Ellis, with their granddaughter Waverlee, of Red Bird Farms, LLC, in Kosciusko.

ism operations provide an educational and fun experience for all ages to learn more about where our food, fiber and shelter comes from.”

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) administers the Mississippi Agritourism Limited Liability Program. These farms offer a variety of experiences for

visitors including pumpkin patches, hayrides, corn mazes, kids’ activities, petting zoos, Christmas trees, u-picks and much more. Find registered agritourism operations in Mississippi, and more information, now at www.msagritourism.org. Visitors can also filter through farms by selecting specific activities they would like to participate in.

In addition, Commissioner Gipson recognized Amanda Crawford of Cagle Farm in Kosciusko, one of the oldest farms within MDAC’s Centennial Farm Family Program. The Cagle Farm celebrated 175 years of operation this week.

“My message today to all farmers is to keep on farming,” continued Gipson. “I know it’s difficult, but Americans depend on our farmers for everything, for our very survival. There is a no more important job than farming, and I want to thank all our Mississippi farmers for continuing to provide for us all. It is quite a feat for farms to be in operation for 100 years or more, so our agency is making concerted efforts to revamp our Centennial Farm Family Program and honor these incredible families.”

The Centennial Farm Family Program was established in 1976 under former Agriculture Commissioner Jim Buck Ross to honor Mississippi families who have owned and operated a farm or ranch for 100 years or more. Since 1976, over 260 farm families have qualified and been presented an official certificate recognizing their farm as a Centennial Farm.

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City Beat: Mayor, Alderman meeting for October 7, 2024



By Shaun McInnish, Sr., City Beat Writer, Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Mayor and Board of Aldermen held their regular meeting on Monday, October 7, at Town Hall. Mayor Karl VanHorn called the meeting to order, with Scott May with SSM Builders leading the prayer invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. All board members were present, including Alderwoman Diane Hill, Alderwoman Sandra Harvey, Alderwoman Margie Warren, Alderman Eddie Jones, and Alderman James Harrell.

Residents and Visitors' Business:

1. Scott May of S & S Builders of MS (SSM) requested preliminary plat approval for a 45-home neighborhood at 607 College Street in downtown Pelahatchie. He emphasized the need for more homes to keep local families and requested the board's support to move forward with engineering studies. The proposed development includes 45 lots on 18.35 acres, with homes ranging from 1,650 to 2,000 square feet. Concerns were raised about traffic, watershed impact, and the smaller home sizes. May noted that his proposal exceeds the town's current R1 zoning requirements. Alderman Jones made a motion to table the decision

until the next board meeting and Alderman Harrell seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

2. Joe Lane Kelly, owner of Fairway Foods, addressed the board requesting the removal of the old NAPA building from the Heritage District for



remodeling into a liquor store. He argued that the store would generate additional tax revenue for Pelahatchie. However, Mayor VanHorn reminded him that the newly passed liquor ordinance permits only one liquor store per three square miles in town. Kelly pointed out that with Pelahatchie's total area of 5.9 square miles, the ordinance could allow for two stores since it does not specify that they must be three miles apart. The board discussed potential changes to this "three-mile rule," but VanHorn cautioned against altering the ordinance too broadly. He noted that approximately five individuals have expressed interest in opening liquor stores. Alderwoman Hill asked about the selection process, while Alderman Jones mo-

tioned to table the discussion for further consideration, which was seconded by Alderman Harrell and unanimously approved.

3. Renee Buyner was scheduled to speak about a nuisance issue, but she was not in attendance.

4. The fourth and final visitor was Chris Watkins, who came before the board to get approval to open his liquor store, American Spirits, at the old hair salon building located at 309 Second Street. He stated he did not live in Pelahatchie, that he had opened a bank account at one of the town's local banks, and that he intended to fully pave his liquor store's parking lot. He says remodeling construction on the building was started about a year ago and was about 90% complete and if approved it would open in a week or two. He said he already started his ABC application, and his building meets ordinance regulations. He said he opposed another liquor store being opened so close to his store. Alderman Jones made a motion to approve the liquor store as conditional use and Alderman Hill seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Department Discussions:

Pelahatchie Chief of Police Robert MaHaffey asked for the board to approve three donated government vehicles (from the Gaming Commission) to the town of Pelahatchie and Pelahatchie

Continued on page 8

Holmes recipient of Hinds CC Foundation 2024-2025 scholarship



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Hinds Community College Foundation recognized 2024-2025 scholarship recipients, donors and other honorees at a reception on Oct. 10 at the George-Oakes Building on the Vicksburg-Warren Campus.

Among those being recognized were, from left, Ashley Decatur of Jackson, Angela Ellis of Florence, Brianna Shivers of Brandon, **Madison Holmes of Pelahatchie**, Corshonte Henderson of Flora, Abigail

Thomas of McComb, Anveiona Robinson of Jackson and Rebekah White of Madison, all of whom received the Vicksburg Medical Foundation Nursing Scholarship. They are with Dr. Gordon Sluis, center.

The Hinds Community College Foundation will award more than 800 scholarships during the 2024-2025 academic year. The deadline to apply for a scholarship for fall 2025 (academic year 2025-2026), is Feb. 15, 2025. For more information, visit www.hindscc.edu.

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Opinion Column: The Growing Threat of AI Deepfakes

By Guest Columnist Michael Watson,
Mississippi Secretary of State

In a conference room at a recent cybersecurity training, I found myself squinting at a screen, playing a high-stakes game of “real or fake.” The assignment was straightforward—sort out which images projected in front of us were authentic and which were AI-generated. Most in the room, myself included, struggled to tell the difference.

It was a wake-up call. If a group of AI-informed participants had trouble distinguishing fakes, how easily could these deceptions skew the information creeping into the feeds of Mississippi voters?

As we approach Election Day, it is imperative Mississippians arm themselves with knowledge of the growing threat of AI deepfakes. These hyper-realistic, AI-generated forgeries of videos, images, and pieces of audio aren’t just a sign of an advancing technological landscape—they pose a real risk for our elections.

In today’s digital age, technology has the power to bring us a world of new opportunities but poses great challenges. On one hand, we’ve seen AI open doors to incredible innovation, with the power to transform industries and reimagine how we live and work. This same technology has also

birthed sophisticated tools of deception including deepfakes.

According to a recent Microsoft report, state-sponsored actors like Russia and China have already weaponized disinformation to destabilize democracies. In the U.S., deepfakes have targeted candidates from across the political spectrum—Vice President Kamala Harris, former President Donald Trump, and many others down the ballot—turning elections into fertile ground for digital deception. Their goal is to mislead, confuse, and weaken Americans’ faith in our electoral system.

Why should Mississippi voters care? In short, a single deepfake circulated at the right time could mislead thousands of voters, change the outcome of a race, damage trust in elections, and most importantly, causes democracy to falter.

In Mississippi, our team worked with the legislature during the 2024 Legislative Session to

pass Senate Bill 2577, which ensures bad actors are penalized for the wrongful dissemination of deepfakes. We have also implemented tools like Elections 101 and the My Election Day online resource as sources of trusted information.

Many tech companies also signed an AI Tech Accord earlier this year to assist the public with detecting and preventing the spread of deepfakes, thus helping voters retain the right to decide who governs them. Innovations like watermarking, content credentials, and advanced detection tools are being developed and deployed to help differentiate the real from the fake.

In the end, the final line of defense is you—the voter. Every voter must take responsibility for the information he or she consumes. Learn to recognize the red flags of deepfakes, like unusual lighting, mismatched audio, and awkward lip movements. Question sensational media and only share reputable content. The onus is on all of us.

As November approaches, remember this: technology may arm us with powerful tools to combat deepfakes, but public awareness remains our strongest weapon. The power to protect our elections lies in our hands. Let’s make sure we use it.



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Continued from page 6

Town meeting for October 7

Police Department inventory (which were three 2008 Chevrolet Impalas). One vehicle would be used as a Pelahatchie PD vehicle, one as a Pelahatchie PD backup vehicle, and one marked as a Town of Pelahatchie administrative vehicle. Alderman Jones made a motion to approve. Alderman Hill seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

There were no discussion items from the maintenance, clerk, or zoning departments.

New Business:

1. Approval of the minutes from the September 3, 2024 regular board meeting. Alderman Harrell made a motion to approve. Alderman Hill seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

2. Approval of the unpaid claims docket. Alderman Jones made a motion to approve, and Alderwoman Harrell seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

3. Approval of a \$1,044.70 payment to Morgan and White Insurance. Alderman Jones made a motion to approve, and Alderman Harrell seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

4. Approval of an \$8,010.76 payment to Blue Cross Insurance. Alderwoman Warren made a motion to approve, and Alderman Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

5. Approval and ratification of payment of payroll for September 2024 with \$70,724.03 from the General Fund and \$26,352.25 from the Enterprise Fund. Alderman made a motion to approve, and Alderman Harrell seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

6. Discuss, consider, and vote to amend the 2023 fiscal year budget to actual. Alderman Jones made the motion the approve the motion, Al-

derman Harrell seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Executive Session:

Pelahatchie Chief of Police Robert MaHaffey asked the board to enter an executive session to deal with a Pelahatchie Police Department personnel matter. Alderman Jones made a motion to enter executive session, and Harrell seconded the motion; the motion carried. The mayor, all five aldermen, the city attorney, and the police chief all entered a secured back room where no one else was allowed in at 6:47 p.m. City Attorney Kimberly Banks made announcement of the executive session at 6:48 p.m. Everyone returned into the meeting room at 6:52 PM and the meeting continued.

Alderman and Mayor Discussions:

Alderman Jones said he had heard complaints about the spur at the Brooks Street railroad crossing. A railroad crossing spur is a stub track that branches off from a main track to provide access to commercial or industrial areas. Jones also mentioned that ERCO was still needing donations to carry supplies to storm victims in North Carolina. Mayor VanHorn asked for a motion for approving compliances and Alderman Jones made the motion. Alderwoman Hill seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The mayor also asked for motion to rezone Kenneth Martin's property from residential to commercial, because the property is currently landlocked. Alderman Jones made the motion, Alderwoman Hill seconded the motion and the motion carried. Mayor VanHorn then asked for a motion to give the development ordinance more clarity on what steps to take to develop anything with developers, but the motion was tabled, and the board meeting was concluded.

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



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PELAHATCHIE AREA

• COMMUNITY FEATURE WRITER

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Homecoming at PHS: A Celebration of Tradition and Community



By Guest Columnist
Voncille Anderson, Principal,
Pelahatchie High School

Special to
Pelahatchie News

The annual Homecoming festivities at Pelahatchie High School brought students, faculty, alumni, and community members together in a spirited celebration of school pride, tradition, and unity. This year's Homecoming was a

resounding success, filled with memorable events that highlighted the deep roots and connections that make PHS such a special place.

The week kicked off with Spirit Week, where students and teachers donned themed outfits, transforming the campus with creativity and enthusiasm. Each day brought a new theme, with students dressing in western attire, togas, island-inspired outfits, and more. The joy was palpable, and the colorful attire and school-wide energy truly showcased PHS's unique school spirit.

The week's excitement culminated with the much-anticipated Homecoming Parade. The community came



Homecoming
2024

out in full force to cheer on the parade participants, with families, alumni, and friends lining the streets to show their support. Following the parade, a spirited community pep rally brought everyone together to celebrate our athletes and build anticipation for the game.

PHS welcomed back the Class of 2014 as our honored guests. They took on the role of honorary game captains, and the 2014 Homecoming Queen added a meaningful touch to the game with the ceremonial coin toss.

The Homecoming crowning ceremony was a highlight, with this year's Queen, Ava Till, and Football Maid, Rylee Covert, reigning proudly before their schoolmates, friends, and family. The festive evening continued with a dance, where students enjoyed music, food, and friendship.

Homecoming at PHS is more than just a game—it's a cherished tradition that binds generations. The week brought out the best of our school and community, reminding us all of the shared values and memories that define PHS.

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Smith wins 1st Place at Festival



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pictured from left: Berkeley Ceaser, **Sarah Smith**, Kendra Quarterman, Bobby Alsworth, Skye Ogilvie, Gabby Kyzar, and Francess Broome. Pelahatchie student Sarah Smith wins 1st Place in Tennessee Williams Festival. Students from The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) Theatre Department recently competed in the Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival Student Drama Competition in Clarksdale. High School students from across the state competed with Tennessee Williams monologues, scenes, and "Stella!" Call. The student competition is always a festival favorite, and winners were presented cash prizes and trophies. Congratulations to these MSA students. Monologues: **1st Place, Sarah Smith**, a Senior from Pelahatchie. 3rd Place – Kendra Quarterman, a Senior from Jackson. Scenes: 3rd Place – Frances Broome, a Junior from Hattiesburg and Gabby Kyzar, a Junior from Pascagoula. "Stella" Call: Finalist – Bobby Alsworth, a Junior from Brookhaven. Judges Award: Best Costume – Skye Ogilvie a Junior from Long Beach. Judges Award: Best Nonverbal Acting – Berkeley Ceaser, a Junior from Picayune.

Growing Pains: Pelahatchie considers 45 home development



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Shaun McInnish, Sr., City Beat Writer, Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie is considering a significant development that could reshape the town's landscape with the proposed construction of a 45-home neighborhood at 607 College Street. Scott May of S & S Builders of Mississippi (SSM) presented the plan to the Pelahatchie Board of Aldermen, requesting approval to begin preliminary plat work for the site, located downtown on 18.35 acres. The homes, averaging 13,775 square feet (about 0.3 acres) per lot, would range in size from 1,650 to 2,000 square feet, with prices projected between \$280,000 to \$340,000.

May emphasized that the town needs more homes to keep young families from moving to larger cities. Speaking before the board, he emphasized the need for more housing options in Pelahatchie, especially for younger generations looking to settle down. "Pelahatchie is a great place to live," May said. "But like many small towns, we need more homes for our children and grandchildren so they won't have to move elsewhere." While most of the homes would meet the town's 1,800 square feet per home zoning requirements, May did ask for consideration from the board to build 15 smaller homes (about 1,650 square feet) to offer a few more affordable housing options.

Several board members raised concerns about the impact of the development on infrastructure. Alderman Eddie Jones pointed out potential issues with traffic and drainage, suggesting that the addition of 45 homes might create significant congestion along College Street. With the area already experiencing frequent speeders, Jones questioned whether the current road system could handle the increase. Jones also mentioned coming up with a more thorough plan for the main entrance and exit of the neighborhood off of College Street.

Additionally, the strain on existing water and sewer lines was brought up, as well as the proposed retention pond for managing water runoff in the development. While May reassured the board that a retention pond doesn't have mosquito problems, further questions about its long-term viability remained.

Public opinion on the proposed neighborhood was mostly positive. In an informal online poll, many residents expressed excitement, stating that the development could bring a big eco-



nomie boost and attract more families to town. Pelahatchie resident Jessica Emily Hope Kotzé stated, "The average household size in Rankin County is 3ish. Let's say 4. Even then, that's only 180 new residents. I think that's great for our local businesses and restaurants. Maybe it'll encourage a new fast food place to open! I just really hope it doesn't get bought up by renters, and gives home buyers a chance to build a family in our sweet little town."

Another resident, Susie Walker Herring, commented, "I think this is a wonderful idea! Pelahatchie is prime for growth and development and long overdue! Would certainly be welcomed - do it right from the beginning!"

However, some residents voiced concerns over traffic, infrastructure, and the potential stress the new development could place on the town's already aging systems. A local businessman, Billy Clark, stated, "I think it would be awesome. As long as it is done with the future in mind. If we throw up a 45 home neighborhood and do not have infrastructure in place to support it, it would be disastrous for the homes and town. I am sure that is all being worked out by the people involved."

Local resident Barbara Tarver commented, "People are leaving Brandon because of the congestion. Pelahatchie is a wonderful small town...that is its charm. Do you really need more restaurants? Sitting around the family table is a dying tradition. Isn't it nice to leave Brandon or Flowood and come home to a small town where you don't hear sirens at all hours of the night? Isn't it nice not sitting through the intersections and red lights? Having more is not always the answer... enjoying serenity is. Clearing land for 'Development' makes money for a few people and problems for a lot of people."

Despite any concerns, Scott May remains optimistic, stating that his

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



PAST HEADLINES

2014 - 10 years ago

- "House and Senate Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus supports the right to hunt, fish, and trap in Mississippi"
- "Don't assume a Wifi hotspot is safe"

2019 - 5 years ago

- "Observe hunting safety with firearms and tree stands"
- "Pelahatchie native, Col. Jason Tate to be promoted to U. S. Army Colonel"

2023 - Last Year

- "Bridging Knowledge and Community at Pelahatchie Library"
- "Jellystone Park Halloween festivities a success"

Answers on how to manage six common insect problems



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

1) Fire Ants: Every property owner in Mississippi has fire ants--and need to know how to control them. One of the best ways to control fire ants is the two step approach.

A) Apply granular fire ant baits like Amdro, Extinguish Plus, or Advion two to four times per year, depending on how serious you are in controlling them. B) Use a dry mound treatment containing acephate to spot treat individual mounds. Use liquid drenches containing permethrin, in place of dry mound treatments for mounds that must be killed immediately.

2) Termites: Termite control is not a do-it-yourself project. Every building in the state is susceptible to termites and needs to be professionally protected from termites. There are two main methods of termite control: soil applied liquid termiticide treatments or in-ground termite bait stations. Both methods are effective when properly applied and can provide long-term protection. Although homeowners do not need to treat their homes for termites themselves, homeowners need infor-

mation to help them understand termite biology, why buildings need to be proactively protected from termites, and how to work with a professional pest company, to assure their home or building is protected.

3) Cockroaches: The first step in dealing with cockroaches is to determine what kind of roaches are involved. Large roaches, like American and smoky brown cockroaches, are much easier to control than German Cockroaches, though good sanitation practices are important for both groups. Large cockroaches can be controlled with a combination of good exclusion, exterior perimeter sprays of pyrethroid insecticides, such as bifenthrin cyfluthrin, and indoor crack and crevice sprays of ready-to-use pyrethroids. German cockroach control is more challenging, especially in multi-family housing. Sprays and total release foggers are not very useful against German cockroaches. Bait treatments are better options for these little roaches, but the right baits must be applied, properly and repeatedly, in combination for cockroach control. Some households will prefer to hire a professional pest control company for cockroach control.

4) Fleas: The key to flea control is to treat them everywhere they occur, on



the pet, in the house and in the yard. Use on-pet flea treatments, which are administered either topically or orally, to control fleas on the pet. Only adult fleas live on the animal. Flea larvae live on the floor or the ground in areas where pets spend time resting. Focus treatments for immature fleas in these areas. Flea control is best done preventively. Expect it to take time and repeated treatments to control established infestations. Understanding flea biology helps understanding flea control.

5) Insects in Home Vegetable Gardens: Every vegetable crop has insect pests, but some crops have more consistent problems than others; fruitworms, hornworms and stink bugs on tomatoes, squash bugs and vine borers on squash, and stink bugs on peas and

okra. Zeta-cypermethrin (GardenTech Sevin Insect Killer) is one of the more useful insecticides for home gardens. It controls a wide range of insect pests and can be used on most vegetables. This is an effective treatment for all 3 of the above-mentioned situations. Other pyrethroids also work, but tend to have longer pre-harvest intervals. Spinosad, (Bonide, Fertlome, Monterey, etc.) is another useful product, especially for caterpillar pests and leaf feeding beetles. Spinosad is especially useful for cool season gardens. When applying pesticides to vegetables, always be aware of the pre-harvest interval.

6) Crepe Myrtle Bark Scale: We first notice Bark Scales on Crepe Myrtles several years ago in North Western Rankin County. The disease has continued to spread eastward across the county. Heavily infested trees are easy to spot. The trunks and the ground beneath are covered in black sooty mold and limbs may be encrusted with white, felt-covered scales. Fortunately, a soil drench of imidacloprid applied once a year around the base of the infested trees usually provides excellent control.

Source: "Answers for Common Insect Questions," *Bug Eye View*, Blake Layton, Mississippi State University Extension, April 2022



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Ludlum names RCSD September Elementary Teach of the Month



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary School congratulates Mrs. Sindee Ludlum. Mrs. Ludlum (4th Grade Math) was named RCSD's September Elementary Certified Teacher of the Month.

Pelahatchie High School celebrates Homecoming 2024



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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Pastor's Perspective: Looking to the Harvest of Good News



By Guest Columnist
Spencer Sullivan, Pastor,
Pelahatchie Baptist

Special to
Pelahatchie News

Well, I hope you enjoyed that week of fall! Hopefully, there will be many more lovely fall days ahead, but we Mississippians know to enjoy each day that actually feels like fall because we never know how many of those days we will get. But, whether the temperatures are cool and pleasant or the leaves change so we can enjoy all of the beautiful colors, we do know that the holiday season is just around the corner, beginning with Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays on the calendar. There are many reasons why, but mostly, I love how the holiday leads us to be thankful to God. After all, He is truly the giver and provider of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). The holiday's origins include the celebration of thankfulness to God for a great harvest of crops that would sustain the people through the cold months of winter. This remembrance and emphasis on

the harvest during Thanksgiving certainly influences many of our fall themed decorations and also celebrations and activities like Harvest Festivals.

This idea of harvest is a theme that is found in the Bible as well, even in the words of Jesus. In Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus says: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." These words of Jesus came as a compassionate response after seeing helpless crowds that had been harassed. He compared them to sheep without a shepherd. People are often compared to sheep in the Bible. There's a lot that can be drawn out of that comparison, but the main thing to understand is that we all need a shepherd. We need someone that we can trust to guide us through this life. We need a Good Shepherd who is willing to lay down His life in order to save the sheep. The Bible tells us that Jesus is that Good Shepherd and that He laid His life down as a sacrifice for us!



Special to Pelahatchie News

But even though the Gospel story took place over 2000 years ago, there are still so many people who have never heard that Good News or don't understand why that news is really, really good. It is believed that there are 3.2 billion people in the world today that would fall into that category. They are sheep without a shepherd.

It's hard to believe that many people in the world today don't know who Jesus is or at least haven't been told about the Good News. But, that reality means that Jesus' words still ring

true. The harvest is plentiful. But it also means the rest of His statement is true...but the laborers are few. If you are one that calls Jesus Lord and you have been gloriously saved by His life-giving sacrifice, that alone means you have much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. But, I challenge you during this Thanksgiving season to think about the harvest that Jesus speaks about. Are you willing to labor in the harvest, at least in the fields around you where you live, bringing people to Jesus? Are you willing to pray earnestly to the Lord to send out laborers into His harvest

fields all around the world? Would you allow the decorations and celebrations that will be prevalent during this season to remind you to pray concerning Jesus's harvest? If you have yet to respond to the Good News or if you are still unsure what it's all about or what it is, I encourage you to visit a church in the area and ask them about the Good News of Jesus and why the news is so, so good. May you all enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving! Let us be thankful to the One who saves us and sustains us!

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East Rankin Academy celebrates Homecoming 2024



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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Growing pains: 45 homes

company has been in business for 25 years and has built quality homes across Mississippi, including nearby towns like Brandon, Pearl, and Florence (readers can see some of their completed homes on their website at <https://www.sandsbuildersofms.com>). He urged the board to consider the benefits of growth for Pelahatchie's future. However, Alderman Eddie Jones remained hesitant, suggesting more planning for neighborhood entrances and exits to mitigate traffic concerns and more research from engineers for the city.

The board ultimately decided to table the decision until November's meeting, with Alderman Eddie Jones making the motion and Alderman Harrell seconding the motion. Mayor Karl VanHorn noted that the town's Comprehensive Plan is still under development and that a step-by-step approach might be necessary. The city attorney also suggested proceeding cautiously to ensure the project aligns with long-term goals for the town.

During the town meeting, Alderman Diane Hill asked Mayor VanHorn if he supported having this neighborhood built in town. The mayor responded that he is "working diligently to getting (the) neighborhood built."

As Pelahatchie continues to grow, the proposed development represents both opportunities and challenges. While more housing could strengthen the tax base and keep younger generations from leaving, questions about infrastructure, traffic, and drainage remain. For now, the fate of the 45-home neighborhood rests in the hands of city officials, as further research is conducted to determine its feasibility. Whether it leads to prosperity or new challenges, one thing is undeniable—Pelahatchie is on the verge of transformation, and the decisions made now will leave a lasting mark on the town's future. That might lead us to a new 45-home neighborhood being built. Let's hope it leads to a Cheesecake Factory being built, too.

Pelahatchie High School Band participates in recent competitions



PHS Drum Major, Junior Madeline McFadden



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

The PHS Band recently competed at the Titan Invitational Festival and State Evaluation competitions. At the Festival, the band earned an excellent rating in Color Guard, Percussion, and Overall Band. A superior rating was also earned in Drum Major. At the State Evaluation, the band finished the season with a Superior in Drum Major and an Excellent rating for Drums and Overall Band.



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ERA Cross Country Girls win fourth MAIS 5A Championship



L-R Front: Caroline Fountain, Lane Riemann, Breland Moulds, Jensen Baker, Jewel Baker, Audrey Mayatte, Emma Raines, Chandler Hunt, Kate Bryant, Arin Hawk, Haley Headrick. L-R Back: Paige Mayatte, Leslie Scarberry, Addison Vowell, Lily Kanengiser, Audrey Hawk, Emily Williams, Marlee Rakinic, Rachel Smith, Katie Simpson, Kylee Holfield, Abby Raines. (Not pictured: Lydia Collipp and Ava Ogden)

ERA Ladies Varsity Soccer win District, runner-up at 5A State



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