



# PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



January 2024 ■ Volume 13, Issue 1 ■ Pelahatchie, MS

## Coach Brooke Rhodes, ERA Girls win 20th game

By Robert Wilson, Mississippi Scoreboard

The East Rankin Academy girls won their 20th game of the season Tuesday night with a 56-26 victory over Tri-County Academy at Tri-County's gym in Flora.

The Lady Patriots might be the first team in the country to win 20 games. No one in Mississippi has won 20 – the second most is 14 – and no one in the MaxPreps National Top 25 has won 20 either. There is no national database on current team wins, but if East Rankin isn't the first to win 20, it doesn't take long to call the roll. It's unheard of for a team to win 20 games before Christmas. Most teams don't play 20 games before Christmas.

East Rankin coach Brooke Rhodes – yes, the same one who dominated the MAIS 13 years ago – is trying to bring back the winning ways to the Pelahatchie private school when she swished jump shot after jump shot in consistent fashion. Rhodes averaged 21.4 points and led East Rankin to a 35-2 record and the MAIS Overall



Photo by Brad Bridges

Coach Brooke Rhodes

Tournament championship for the first in school history. She scored 35 points in the Overall championship win over Pillow and averaged 32 in three Overall games. Rhodes scored 2,568 points in her high school career.

These days, Rhodes is helping her girls put the ball through the hoop. And they are doing a pretty good job of it, rolling to a 20-4 record so far this season.

No. 20 came Tuesday as 6-foot-2 freshman forward Liz Stevens had a game-high 14 points and sophomore forward Addison Derrick added 11 points. East Rankin defeated Class 5A power and last year's Overall semifinalist Leake 68-62 in a District 2 game last week.

East Rankin is not only a contender for the 5A state title, but the Lady Patriots also have a legitimate shot of the Overall title. Their losses are two 5A Brookhaven Academy (10 points), 5A Pillow Academy (two points), 5A Simpson Academy (six points) and 5A Central Hinds Academy (one point). East Rankin has defeated 6A Jackson Prep and 6A Jackson Academy.

"We played in some early preseason games because we are so young and I think playing games got us some

Continued on Page 2

## ERA robotics team, breaks record, qualifies for state competition

Special to Pelahatchie News

The East Rankin Robotics Team competed in the FIRST Tech Challenge Tupelo Qualifier Tournament on December 9. The team was selected for the Think Award for being the team the judges felt best reflected the journey of the engineering design process.

The team was also captain of the Winning Alliance in the final rounds of the robotics competition finishing 1st place in the tournament!

During the qualifying matches, the East Rankin team broke the state scoring record for the 2023-2024 season with a match score of 234 points!

The team qualifies for the Mississippi FIRST Tech Challenge State Competition to be held on March 8 and 9 on the campus of the University of Mississippi.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pictured left from right: Paige Mayatte, Hudson Hawk, Audrey Hawk, Jackson Fountain, Byrnes Fountain, and Tyler Upton.

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# PHS participates with "Vegetable Box Giveaway"

Special to Pelahatchie News

United Way of the Capital Area in partnership with Atmos Energy, and Pelahatchie High School held the "Vegetable Box Giveaway" in Pelahatchie, MS. Volunteers distributed 200 ten-pound vegetable gift boxes to Rankin County residents. The project aims to reduce disparities in access to fresh and healthy food in underserved communities.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



Continued from Front page



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## RHODES, ERA GIRLS WIN 20TH GAME

early experience and will help us down the road," said Rhodes, who is in her third season at East Rankin. She was a star at Delta State and Southern Miss and was an assistant coach at Central Arkansas, Jones College, Presbyterian College, and Western Carolina for a combined six years before deciding to come home.

"I learned a lot and it was a great experience coaching college, but I knew I always wanted to be a high school coach," Rhodes said. "It is so cool to coach where my Papa's name (Rhodes' and former East Rankin coach Billy Rhodes) is on the (East Rankin) gym. It is special. He comes to some of the practices and comes to the games."

Rhodes starts one senior (Addison Brown), one junior (Presley Thompson), two sophomores (Holly Jackson and Derrick) and one freshman (Stevens). Sophomore Ashley Miller is the first player off the bench.

"I think this group has a chance to go far into the playoffs if we will continue to play hard and be unselfish," Rhodes said. "We have the guard play and post play and have several people who can have a big night on any given night."

"I'm really proud of this group. We are young as a whole but have great leadership from Addison. She has been so consistent in how hard she plays and practices. This group is so special because it hasn't been just one or two players who have been the leading scorers in our games."

Stevens – whose older sister Abigail was a star as a sophomore and was on the PriorityOne Bank/Mississippi Scoreboard Metro Jackson Team but decided not to play her junior and senior years to concentrate on softball (she signed with Mississippi State this fall) – leads East Rankin with 13.1 points



Photo by Brad Bridges

and 10.2 rebounds per game. Jackson is second with 11.4 points per game.

Rhodes sees similarities in this team and her senior year, but one big difference. And then there is the difference that Rhodes is coaching, not playing on this team.

"This group can play fast and shoot it at times better than that overall group," Rhodes said. "The main difference to me is we were mostly juniors and seniors (on the Overall title team) and this group is mainly sophomores and freshman."

East Rankin is off for a week then play three games in three days next week – Class 4A Riverfield, La., Academy on Wednesday, Class 4A Clinton Christian Academy on Thursday and Class 5A Bowling Green, La., Academy on

Friday in the Copiah Academy Tournament at Gallman.

East Rankin has 35 scheduled games going into the playoffs in late January. A 40-win season – never done before at East Rankin – isn't out of the question.

East Rankin is ranked No. 16 in Mississippi and fifth among MAIS teams in the latest MaxPreps rankings, behind No. 4 Pillow, No. 8 Madison-Ridgeland Academy, No. 10 Leake Academy and No. 15 Rossville Christian, Tenn.

Rhodes would like to take this team deep into the playoffs and possibly get into the Overall Tournament at Mississippi College where she once won it all.

Said Rhodes: "We just have to keep getting better every game."





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# Pelahatchie Elementary School student spotlight



Bria Gardner



**Bria Gardner** is being recognized for her kindness. She brought hand-written note of encouragement to every student in her class. What a way to make everyone feel special!



Katie Phillips



**Katie Phillips** is being recognized for her acts of service. Katie has helped a new student in her class this week. Being new can be scary, but Katie's kindness has helped her new friend adjust to a new environment.

Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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# RCSD Elementary teacher of the year



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to our Elementary Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Nelson. Ms. Nelson teaches STEM at Pelahatchie Elementary School. Thank you for all that you do to support Pelahatchie Elementary and the RCSD.



# Pelahatchie celebrates the season with Christmas Parade



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

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# Pelahatchie HS FFA teams place at Federation contests

Special to Pelahatchie News

FFA had a good day at Federation contests: Sr Opening and Closing Team, 1st place; Jr Opening and Closing, 2nd place; Jr. Creed: Bailey Joy Key, 1st Place; National Creed: KatieBelle Herrington, 1st Place; Sr. Creed: Alice Lopez, 2nd Place.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

# Pelahatchie Library January Events

**SENIOR CITIZENS SOCIAL**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 11:00 A.M.**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 11:00 A.M.**

**ADULT BOOK CLUB**  
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**DISCUSSING THE LAST EXCHANGE**  
**BY CHARLES MARTIN**

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# Rankin County Court Judge Kent McDaniel takes oath of office

*Special to Pelahatchie News*

Rankin County Court Judge Kent McDaniel took the oath of office to continue his work as Youth Court judge at 10 a.m. on Dec. 28. Judge McDaniel was sworn in along with other Rankin County officials. The ceremony was held in the large Circuit Court courtroom at 301 E. Government Street in Brandon.

Gov. Tate Reeves appointed Judge McDaniel to fill the vacancy created by the death of County Court and Youth Court Judge Thomas Broome. Judge McDaniel's one-year appointment is effective Jan. 1, 2024, and will end on Jan. 5, 2025. The Governor scheduled a special election for Nov. 5, 2024, for the Place 2 judgeship on the Rankin County Court.

Judge McDaniel retired Sept. 30, 2021, after 24 years of service as Rankin County Court Judge. He returned to the bench on April 20 by appointment of the Supreme Court as a special judge to assist after Judge Broome became ill. Judge Broome died May 21. The Special Judge appointment by the Supreme Court was scheduled to end Dec. 31.

Rankin County Court Judge David Morrow Jr. said, "Judge McDaniel has a true servant's heart. His willingness

to answer the Governor's call to help the troubled youth and families of Rankin County is an answered prayer. We are all better as a Rankin County community because of his desire to serve."

Judge Morrow administered the oath for Judge McDaniel to begin the gubernatorial appointment.

Judge McDaniel has 40 years of public service. He began his career of state public service with the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics as one of the original agents in 1972. He worked undercover for three years, then supervised investigations in 27 counties in south Mississippi.

He was Deputy Commissioner of Corrections 1979-1980. His duties included dealing with the budget and Legislative appropriations for MDOC.

In 1980, he became director of the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy. He served as director until 1986. After that, he was in private law practice for about three years.

He served as First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi from 1989 to 1995. He returned



*Special to Pelahatchie News*

*Judge Kent McDaniel*

to the private practice of law in 1995 and was Flowood Municipal Judge from November 1995 until his appointment to

the Rankin County Court bench by former Gov. Kirk Fordice on Sept. 1, 1997.

Judge McDaniel served as chairman of the Conference of County Court Judges for more than 10 years. He was appointed to the Commission on Judicial Performance in January 2015. He was Commission Chairman when he stepped down shortly before his 2021 retirement.

Judge McDaniel grew up in Sandersville in Jones County. He graduated with honors from Belhaven College in 1969, then earned a master's degree with honors from the University of Southern Mississippi. He earned a Juris Doctor degree from Mississippi College School of Law, graduating first in his class. In 2013, he was awarded a Doctor of Laws degree from Mississippi College School of Law, where he served as an adjunct faculty member for 25 years, teaching trial practice.

He served with the 20th Special Forces Group of the Mississippi Army National Guard from 1968-1973 and with the 112th MP Battalion, MANG, from 1973-1978, leaving the service with the rank of First Lieutenant.

## Cross Roads Baptist Church



### Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. - Worship Service  
10:30 a.m. - Sunday School for all ages

### Wednesday Schedule:

5:30 p.m. - Family Dinner (Call to make reservations)  
6:30 p.m. - Prayer Meeting; Youth Worship; Children's Activities;  
Couples Support Group; College Age Bible Study; Ladies Bible Study

### Online Worship Opportunity:

(Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook Page)  
9:00 a.m. - Worship Service every Sunday

Cross Roads Baptist Church, 104 Crossroads Road, Pelahatchie, MS 39145  
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# Pelahatchie High School honors November award winners



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

PHS students and teacher for the month of November pictured left to right: 12th - Jimmy Holifield, 9th - Kendall Gordon, Teacher - Mr. Jordan (Fine Arts and Dual Credit Comp 1 and 2), 10th - Rylee Watson, 11th - Soyun Kim, 8th - Jackson Fayete, 7th - Bradley Denton.



Congratulations to Payton Sanders on being named the Student-Athlete of the Month. Payton plays multiple sports that are in season consecutively. At the moment, she plays for the Lady Chiefs Basketball team and the Lady Chiefs Soccer team. She often travels from practice of one sport to a game of the other. Payton gives her all to each sport she is playing and represents our Tribe well.



Congratulations to Walker Lytton on being recognized for his characteristics of Gratitude. Gratitude is our counselor's word for the month of November. Walker shows gratitude to his teachers, coaches, and classmates. He is always smiling and finding ways to show appreciation to others. Thank you Walker for making our Tribe better today than it was yesterday. You represent us well.

## Griffin Family Medical Clinic

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6:00-6:45 - Beginner/Intermediate  
6:45-7:30- Adult/Advanced



## Residents urged to plan ahead for winter weather

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), in partnership with the National Weather Service and the Mississippi Department of Transportation, urges Mississippians to plan ahead for winter weather this year. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center forecasts a "wetter than average" winter for the state.

Mississippians should be prepared for cold temperatures, the potential for flash flooding and prolonged power outages this season.

"While we may not experience lots of snow in Mississippi, we are prone to ice during these cold months. All citizens should have a disaster go-kit that can get them through at least seventy-two hours without power," says MEMA Executive Director Stephen McCraney. "Check on your neighbors and elderly, too."

"As winter approaches in Mississippi, it's crucial to prepare for cold temperatures, potential snowy and icy conditions. Stay informed, have emergency supplies like blankets

and non-perishable food on hand, and ensure your home is adequately insulated. Preparedness is key to navigating winter weather effectively in Mississippi. Now is the time to prepare," says Michael Hill, National Weather Service Jackson Warning Coordination Meteorologist.

The winter season can also make roads and bridges treacherous for drivers.

"As we've seen in recent years, winter weather and extreme cold events capable of impacting Mississippi highways can strike quickly this time of the year," said MDOT Executive Director Brad White. "With that in mind, MDOT offers the public preparedness resources for the winter months, including safe driving tips, a car kit checklist, and car care information at [GoMDOT.com/winter](http://GoMDOT.com/winter)."

More preparedness tips can be found at [MSEMA.org](http://MSEMA.org).



### To WINTERIZE A HOME:

- Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for the fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- Insulate walls and attics; use caulk and weather-stripping around doors and windows. Install storm windows, or cover windows with plastic.
- Winterize the house, barn, shed, or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment.
- Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks, and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic, and allow faucets to drip slightly during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and ensure everyone in the house knows how to use them.
- Learn how to shut off water valves, in the case of a pipe bursting.
- Know ahead of time what should be done to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors, or employees.

### DISASTER GO-KIT CHECKLIST:

- NON-PERISHABLE FOOD FOR FAMILY AND PETS
- EXTRA BLANKETS
- ADDITIONAL MEDICATIONS
- PHONE CHARGER
- FLASHLIGHTS
- WATER (1 GALLON PER PERSON PER DAY)
- DRY FIREWOOD
- FIRST AID KIT
- HYGIENE ITEMS
- EXTRA BATTERIES

### CAR KIT CHECKLIST:

- WINDSHIELD SCRAPER
- JUMPER CABLES
- BLANKETS
- WATER/SNACKS
- FLASHLIGHT WITH EXTRA BATTERIES
- FIRST AID KIT
- CELL PHONE CHARGER
- EMERGENCY FLARES OR REFLECTORS

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### Students selected for All-State Clinic



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to Kyra Bryant, Madeline McFadden, and Brooklyn Williamson who were recently selected to represent Pelahatchie High School this year at the MS All-State Band Clinic in Natchez, MS. The clinic lasted for three days, and auditions were held for chair (order) placement. The participants performed a concert at the Natchez Convention Center on the final day.

### Wilson receives RCSD award



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to our Elementary Assistant Administrator of the Year, Kristy Wilson. Mrs. Wilson is the assistant administrator for Steen's Creek Elementary School. Thank you for all that you do to support Steen's Creek Elementary and the RCSD.

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# Pelahatchie Elementary Hosts Family Engagement Events



By Robin Sanders, Principal, Pelahatchie Elementary School

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary is excited to host a new event on January 18th, 2024, that will bring families to the campus to experience and learn ways to incorporate on-going learning with everyday activities at home. The theme, Cozy Up with Cocoa & At-Home Learning, focuses on ways families already stay warm and cozy during the cold months while at home and seeks to add an educational aspect to the at-home environment. There will be a hot cocoa and coffee bar, stations with grade level activities in math

and reading, a STEM/science station with ways to talk about science at home with all ages, and a station that provides information on the 3rd Grade Reading Sum-Assessment (GATE). The school hopes to have many families attend to have loads of fun interacting with each other while learning creative ways to incorporate learning with everyday activities that happen at home.

This event will be the fourth family engagement

event of the school year. In November, the school welcomed nearly 300 students and families at the annual Family STEM Night and Book Fair event. This event is a highly engaging and interactive way for families to learn more about different areas of STEM, science, technology, engineering, and math. This year, the school welcomed professionals from the community to help lead stations and motivate students to learn more about STEM careers. We also have in-

vited families to join us for Thanksgiving and Christmas lunch with their students. Information was provided about our STEM program and information about the MS Literacy Based Promotion Act.

These events are one way Pelahatchie Elementary is working to fulfill areas identified as a priority among parents and other stakeholders. This information is gained through the Title 1 annual needs assessment survey. The survey is completed by parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders at the end of each school year.

To learn more about Title 1 and provide feedback on our schoolwide plan, please visit [pes.rcsd.ms/resources/title-1-information](https://pes.rcsd.ms/resources/title-1-information).



## PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK

### PAST HEADLINES

#### 2013 - 10 years ago

- “Fred's opens to public”
- “Clark Medical Clinic cuts the ribbon”

#### 2018 - 5 years ago

- “Board keeps water rights to parts of subdivision, increases line of credit”
- “Snow blankets Pelahatchie”

#### 2022 - Last Year

- “Pelahatchie 'By the Numbers' from the 2020 Census”
- “How to properly use carlights”

## East Rankin takes tops place in All-sportsstandings for fall season

Class 5A All-Sports Award Standings	
East Rankin Academy	15
Simpson Academy	15
Pillow Academy	13
Brookhaven Academy	12
Lamar School	12
Bowling Green School	11
Parklane Academy	11
Adams Cnty. Chr. School	10
Copiah Academy	10
St. Aloysius	10
Starkville Academy	9
Cathedral Catholic School	9
Oak Forest Academy	6
Providence Classical Academy	4
Bayou Academy	3
Columbia Academy	3

*Special to Pelahatchie News*

*Thank you and congratulations to Coach Worrell, our athletic administrator, our student athletes, our coaches, and supporters who share the efforts in sacrifices and successes! We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication to East Rankin Athletics!*



# Tree destruction: Pine beetles and other insects



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

During the fall, we have had so many questions, nearly every day, about pine trees dying. The trees were weakened by the drought, and many were attacked by Southern Pine Beetles.

The scientific name for Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) is *Dendroctonus Frontalis Zimm*, which means "tree killer". The SPB has been just that in Mississippi Pine Stands for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Many landowners have suffered losses, ranging from a few hundred trees to entire stands. At low population levels, SPB still attacks stressed, damaged, or overly stocked stands. However, at high populations, SPB will attack mass numbers of trees, killing them regardless of age, size, or conditions.

Inadequate monitoring and failure to control known infestations can result in loss of valuable stands of pine timber. Producers will lose money when they have to clear cut prematurely or harvest stands during poor market conditions to avoid an expected loss to the SPB. With proper monitoring and control efforts, losses should be less than 10 percent

of the stand over the course of an epidemic period. It is important to recognize the SPB, to know what control tactics are available, and to make informed decisions concerning this pest, if you were to have an infestation on your property.

The first indication of an attack is usually yellowing or browning of needles. The trunk will usually reveal white, yellow or sometimes red-brown pitch tubes, about as large as a wad of gum, and from a distance may look like popcorn. Under drought conditions, these pitch tubes may be very small or absent, and only reddish-brown boring dust will be present. Removal of the bark will show a distinctive winding "S" shaped gallery pattern. This pattern is quite different from the "Y" or "H" shaped gallery patterns of the Ips Beetle and is a good identification characteristic. Anytime the temperature increases above 55 degrees F, they continue to develop or even move to new trees to continue the infestation.

In a forest situation, there are several control techniques available for SPB infestations:

1) Salvage removal, many times the trees involved in the infestation can be



Special to Pelahatchie News

sold. Even if it is sold as just pulpwood, and the logging operation just breaks even. The pine beetles are removed from the property with the trees.

2) Cut and leave, this technique is the same as salvage removal except that the trees are not removed from the area. It is important to fell the trees toward the middle of the infestation. However, we need to avoid a large pile of wood that shades the infested bark. Direct sunlight can increase the temperature enough to kill the beetles. The technique is the least expensive of the 3 methods. Since higher temperatures play a high role in the success of this tactic, it is restricted

to the summer months when temperatures average above 85 degrees F.

3) Pile and burn, this is probably the oldest of the control tactics. It is very effective when properly used, but the labor required to cut, stack and burn the infested trees can be expensive.

On a landscape setting Onyx can be used. Onyx is a chemical used for pine beetle prevention. It is available, but it is available only for ornamental pines. Onyx is applied on the outside bark of the tree, and it kills beetles on contact for 4 to 6 months. Onyx will not stop beetles from killing an already heavily infested tree.

It is best used on uninfested trees next to others that are infested.

## Ips Beetles

The Ips beetle is a common beetle of landscape pines. Attacks are normally focused on the trunk and large limbs located in the upper, or crown area of a tree. Pitch tubes and red boring dust can be found in bark crevices in trees under attack from Ips beetles. Adult Ips Beetles bore through the outer bark and excavate galleries in the inner bark, or cambium layer. The larvae construct their own feeding galleries. When the larvae mature and emerge from the tree as adult beetles, they leave numerous

Continued on Page 12

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## Pine beetles and other insects, cont'd.

small, round emergence holes that cause the bark to look as though it has been shot with birdshot.

Keep trees well watered during dry periods. Avoid injury or stress on trees. Trees that have been physically injured are more likely to be attacked. Once a tree gets stressed, it is less able to defend itself. Avoid situations that cause soil compaction, root injury, or drought. Remove dead or dying trees as soon as possible, to prevent beetles from moving to healthy trees. Because Ips Beetle attacks are concentrated in the crown area, preventive insecticide treatments are very difficult to use effectively.

### Black Turpentine Beetles

Black Turpentine Beetles are one-fourth to one-third inch long, barrel-shaped, and reddish brown to black in color. They bore holes through the outer bark of pine trees and lay their eggs in the cambium layer. Popcorn-sized masses of dried resin, which are called pitch tubes often mark the spot to show where

the tree is under attack. These pitch tubes usually contain reddish-brown boring dust. Attacks by black turpentine beetles are usually on the lower 6 to 10 feet of the trunk. As with other beetles, trees suffering injury or stress are most susceptible to attack.

One of the best defenses against black turpentine beetles, is to keep trees well-watered during drought periods. Another control method to use when infestations of black turpentine beetles are evident on nearby trees is to use sprays containing a permethrin. Several brands are labeled for homeowners. Be sure to use a permethrin that lists use of pine trees to control borers. Homeowners may need to repeat sprays several times during the summer for adequate protection.

Sources: Mississippi State Extension Publication 2748. "Southern Pine Beetle in Mississippi: An Overview".

Mississippi State Extension Publication 2369. "Insect Pests of Ornamental Plants in the Home Landscape".

## PHS Band Alumni spotlight



Special to Pelahatchie News

Hinds Community College Wind Ensemble recently performed at the MBA All-State Clinic. Pelahatchie Band alumni present included: Mariah McGill, Cameron Rayborn, and Levi Goldman.

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# Pastor's Perspective: January Calls for a New Year's Resolution



By Guest Columnist, Spencer Sullivan, Pastor, Pelahatchie Baptist

Special to Pelahatchie News

Happy New Year! Can you believe it's 2024 already? I'm sure you've either asked or heard that question a time or two already during these first days of January. Well, have you made a resolution to keep for this year? Better question, are you still on track and motivated to keep your resolution? I hope so!

New Year's resolutions are popular because the start of a new year can represent a fresh start. And who doesn't need a fresh start in some area of life? Typically, New Year's resolutions are made in order to improve a certain aspect of your life. According to an article in USA Today last January, the 3 most common resolutions for this past year all had to do with improving health. They were (in order from most popular): exercise more, eat healthier, and lose weight. More than any other time of year, people are motivated to improve their health. These are all certainly worthwhile goals for New Year's resolutions. In fact, I may or may not have made all 3 of these resolutions personally for 2024! Goal setting or New Year's resolutions can be good and provide needed motivation for personal development.

While so many of these kinds of goals or resolutions are related to physical health, and rightfully so, have you ever thought about setting goals or making resolutions that are spiritual in nature? We often look at our-



Special to Pelahatchie News

selves in the mirror and determine that some lifestyle changes are needed to improve our physical condition. In the same way, it is good for us to reflect on our spiritual condition so that we can consider what changes might be in order to improve our spiritual health. Let's remember the 2 most common New Year's resolutions: exercise more and eat healthier. What if we associated our need to exercise with our need to pray, our spiritual exercise (Philippians 4:6) or our need to eat healthier with our need to read the Bible, our spiritual food (Matthew 4:4)? Spending time with God is critical for our spiritual health and growth. But, just like getting into a good exercise routine and eating healthier both

require discipline, developing your prayer life and reading the Word of God also requires discipline. You start by developing a plan. And the plan starts with protecting some time each day for your time with God. Before you stop reading, I don't mean you should start with an hour a day. If you're not a runner, but you want to run, you don't go out and try to run a 5K on the first day. If that's your plan, you might not get yourself up for day 2! Instead, you go out and try to run for 5 minutes and build yourself up from there. In the same way, if you're starting from zero, begin by spending a few minutes with the Lord each day. You can start by reading a chapter a day of one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) and then use the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) as a template for your prayer time. You don't need fancy words. Just speak to God about what He lays on your heart. You can even pray through the Scripture that you just read.

We can be disciplined for what we believe is important. If you start small and develop some consistency, I'm confident that you will become more comfortable speaking to God and listening for His voice as you read His Word. It is incredible to realize that the God of the Universe actually desires to be in relationship with us. He has and continues to pursue a reconciled relationship with us through His Son, Jesus. Let's reciprocate that pursuit for relationship by faith in Jesus and by spending some time with Him each day. Imagine the spiritual gains that are ahead of you!



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# Pelahatchie Elementary Hosts Family Engagement Events



By Guest Columnist, Voncille Anderson, Head Principal, Pelahatchie High School

The holiday season is a magical time for families, churches, communities, and schools. Not only is this a season to pause to celebrate the birth of Jesus and anticipate the excitement of a new year, it is also a time to relax and refresh before the spring semester begins.

The fall semester at PHS was special in a number of ways. We welcomed new staff members who are now fully ensconced in our Tribe. We held our first Chiefs Holiday Market and Fine Arts Showcase. This event offered students in art, agriculture, and engineering classes the opportunity to display items they created, sell those items, and fund-raise for programs such as Rise Against Hunger and the Angel Tree Network. The PHS Concert Band provided Christmas music to add to the event's ambiance while the Student Council sold hot chocolate.

During the fall semester, we also launched our T.R.I.B.E. Cards Incentive

Program. This program is a positive way to encourage Pelahatchie students to "take pride in our Tribe." The acronym TRIBE stands for the following:

**Trust:** Firm belief in the reliability, truth, or strength of someone

**Respect:** Deep admiration for someone elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements

**Integrity:** Quality of being honest and having strong moral principles, moral uprightness

**Bold:** Showing the ability to take risks; confident and courageous

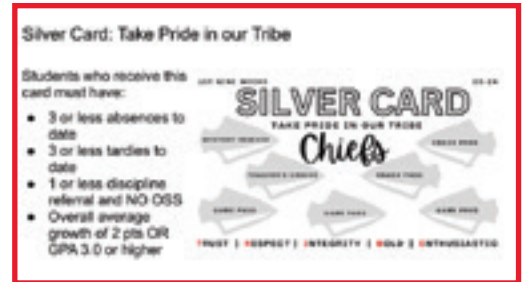
**Enthusiastic:** Having or showing intense and eager enjoyment, interest, approval

Our leadership team was intentional with the rollout of the cards. At the beginning of the school year, all students received a card. If students returned to Pelahatchie, they received a RED Card to welcome them back to school. If they were new to the school, they received a WELCOME Card. Each card offers incentives that students may redeem throughout the nine weeks. These cards focus on attendance, academic achieve-

ment, and behavior. Students who attend school regularly, perform well in their classes and on assessments, and have few behavior problems can Level Up at the beginning of the next term.

After each nine week period, the leadership team assesses each student and determines who will move to the next level. Additional levels include the Silver Card (2nd Nine Weeks), the Chieftain Card (3rd Nine Weeks), and the Tribe Card (4th Nine Weeks). The Tribe Card is elite and places students at this level in a drawing for a large prize that will be presented on Awards Day. This incentive program has helped promote the qualities that an employer seeks: a person who comes to work on time, does the job well, and is a team player. We are proud of our students who continue to meet the expectations so they can Level Up. After the holiday break, our faculty and staff look forward to passing out Chieftain Cards to those students who have earned them.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year! Go Chiefs! Level Up!



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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## PES 6th grade field trip AG Museum

Special to Pelahatchie News

Our 6th graders recently went on a field trip to the MS Ag Museum and the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame Museum. They had a great day of learning about different aspects of Mississippi history.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Yogi bear™, Cindy bear™, and Boo Boo™ would like to welcome you to Jellystone Park™ in Pelahatchie, MS.

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# Special visitor at PHS campus ERA shooting south state results



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School had a visitor on campus recently. He caused quite a stir but definitely put our students and faculty in the holiday spirit. Special shout out to Coach Corley being a part of this. He brought a lot of laughter (and some scares) to campus.



Photo by Vince Bynum

### SQUAD FINISHES:

- 1st - Brayden Warner, Gabe Nutt, Lana Jones
- 2nd - Addison Brown, Parker Davis, Abe Rowell
- 5th - Tyler Burgess, Garreth Barham, Grayson Williams
- 8th - Evan McIlwain, Olivia Griffing, Chylen Williams
- 18th - Payson Knight, Briggs Moses, Hudson McMillian

(These 5 teams finishing in the top 25 will advance to the State Competition in the Spring. Also, our 3 teams finishing in the top 5 will advance to the Southeastern Regional Competition.)

**TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL FINISHERS (VARSITY):** Brayden Warner, Addison Brown, Gabe Nutt, Lana Jones, Parker Davis, Tyler Burgess

**TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL FINISHERS (JV):** Seth Peden

**SOUTH STATE TOP LADY:** Addison Brown

**TOP 10 LADIES:** Lana Jones, Evan McIlwain, Olivia Griffing

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