

Burna student is chosen for Craft

Livingston Central High School student Alena Carolynn Edwards of Burna is among 120 juniors selected from across the state to join the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics at Morehead State University for the fall of 2027.

The Craft Academy offers academically gifted high school juniors and seniors a residential, dual-credit experience on MSU’s campus, allowing them to complete their final two years of high school while earning college credit. Students are chosen through a competitive application process based on academic performance in STEM fields, standardized test scores, essays, recommendations and interviews.

The program emphasizes project-based STEM+X courses, innovation and civic engagement while preparing students for postsecondary success.

EQUIP program deadline Sept. 26

Landowners, farmers and producers have until Sept. 26 to apply for assistance through the USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) if they want to be considered for the next round of funding.

While the USDA–Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts applications year-round, funding selections for EQIP and other conservation programs are made at set times during the year. Applications received by the September cutoff will be evaluated for potential cost-share contracts during this cycle.

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial private forestland owners to address concerns related to soil, water, air and other natural resources. Participants work with NRCS to implement voluntary conservation practices in exchange for reimbursement for a portion of the costs.

The program is open to those engaged in livestock or



agricultural production, as well as owners of eligible forestland. In fiscal year 2025, Kentucky NRCS provided more than \$25 million in EQIP assistance.

For more information, visit www.ky.nrcs.usda.gov, contact the Crittenden County Conservation Office at 118 E. Bellville St., Marion, or visit the USDA Service Center in Salem.

KDFWR explores lake pontoon rental

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources will host a public hearing next month on a proposal to operate a commercial pontoon boat rental business on Lake Beshear.

The meeting is scheduled for 7–8 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 3, at the Pennyrile State Resort Park Lodge. Officials from the department will take public comments on the request by Corey and Kristin Merrill to locate a pontoon rental service on the lake, which lies in Caldwell and Christian counties.

Impounded in 1962, Lake Beshear is part of Pennyrile Forest State Resort Park and is a popular destination for boating, fishing and other outdoor recreation.

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider the proposal at its Sept. 19 meeting. A summary of all comments made at the public hearing, along with written remarks submitted in advance, will be provided to commissioners for review.

Those unable to attend the meeting may submit written comments by mail or email by 5 p.m. ET Wednesday, Sept. 17. Correspondence should be labeled “Lake Beshear Public Comment” and include the sender’s name, county and state of residence, and, if applicable, their organization and position.

Written comments may be mailed to: Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, 1 Sportsman’s Lane,

Frankfort, KY 40601. Email comments may be sent to fw.fisheries@ky.gov with “Lake Beshear Public Comment” in the subject line.

The lodge is located at 20781 Pennyrile Lodge Road, Dawson Springs, KY 42408. For more information, call 270–797–3421.

KDE plans to scrap ACT for SAT for Jrs.

Kentucky Department of Education plans to replace the ACT with the SAT for all high school juniors beginning this school year, ending an 18-year practice of requiring the ACT. Unlike the ACT, the SAT does not include a science section — an area where Kentucky students have consistently struggled.

The switch was announced to superintendents during a July 15 webcast after KDE awarded a testing contract to SAT. However, Jefferson County Public Schools spokesman Mark Hebert said Aug. 12 that districts have yet to receive guidance. ACT officials have appealed the decision, a move similar to challenges SAT filed in other states.

Kentucky law requires all juniors to take a college admissions exam but does not specify which test. When legislators mandated the ACT in 2006, then–Sen. Dan Kelly said it helped more students see themselves as “college material.”

The change comes amid declining science proficiency scores. In 2024, only 6% of high school students were proficient in science, compared to 22% in middle school and 34% in elementary. Education Commissioner Robbie Fletcher has called for a statewide review of science instruction and performance. KDE has not disclosed how much the state spends to provide the tests for free.

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our YouTube Channel.
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Crittenden Press Letter to the Editor

Healthy living should be personal responsibility

To the Editor,

Chris Evans’ article in the Aug. 14, 2025 newspaper entitled “So here we are” is missing the point that our health should be our personal responsibility and not rely on medical advancements.

We have a responsibility to live healthy, so we don’t have to rely upon medical advancements. Our lives begin the same; however, as we grow we are affected by genetics and environmental factors.

Environmental factors include what we decide to put into our

bodies, if you watch TV commercials, everything is good for us. Yes, we can treat our bodies without regard to what is good for us and when we get older our doctors can prescribe drugs to give us more time with loved ones.

But at what cost, just because we can rely on the doctors to help us, should we?

It is our responsibility to treat our body the best, by eating healthy and exercise and when we cannot control genetics, we have the doctors to help us.

Chris Evans’ original article used statistics so here is mine. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) studies on adult and child obesity and overall health of U.S. citizens state that 40.3% of adults 20

years and older in the U.S. are considered obese and 1 in 5 children are obese.

The Crittenden Press is a good source of information for our local community, and it is my belief that these articles should assist in the health and well-being of our community. I thank Chris Evans for publishing the article and hopefully getting more than me thinking about the health of our community.

For additional information reach out to the many community nutrition programs to educate ourselves to live healthy lives and limit the amount of medical advancements we need.

Martha Westgate
Marion, Ky.

SOLD

Continued from page 1 what had once been one of Marion’s cornerstone businesses. The sale price was \$525,000, slightly above the stated appraisal price of \$500,000 announced prior to the sale by Master Commissioner Rebecca Johnson.

For Colby Davis, the purchase marked both a leap of faith and a pivot. For months, he and his wife had been working toward constructing a new indoor training facility on land they acquired next to Marion-Crittenden County Park. State-approved engineering plans were already in hand when the auction notice appeared in the newspaper.

“I had actually tried to buy True Value in December, but it was too far along in the bankruptcy process to be saved,” Davis said in an interview. “On the day I

got my engineering specs back with a stamp of approval, the auction was published. We prayed about it and decided to call an audible.”

Instead of breaking ground on new construction, the Davises shifted their focus to repurposing the True Value complex. Davis envisions a phased development, beginning with a community fitness center, a turf training area, and space for agility and weight training.

Future plans include batting cages, softball and baseball instruction, and expanded programming through partnerships with professional trainers and performance labs. He said agreements are already in place with nationally recognized organizations.

Medical partners are also expected to occupy space in the complex.

“This entire project has been a leap of faith

for me and my family,” Davis said. “We’re not entrepreneurs by trade. We both work full-time jobs. But we want this to be affordable and accessible to the community.”

Davis is a Paducah native and Heath High School graduate. He has served 19 years in the Kentucky Army National Guard and is awaiting promotion to major. On the civilian side, he works in safety, claims and engineering for Irvin Cable Construction.

Bethany (Heaton) Davis is a familiar face in Marion. For years, she worked at Farmers Bank now she’s an occupational therapist at local hospitals.

The property they acquired has a layered history. True Value closed its doors in late 2023 after the Madisonville owners defaulted on loans. By early 2024, bankruptcy filings revealed the local store was part of a broader fi-

nancial collapse tied to multiple properties and creditors. The Marion location sat idle for more than a year.

Now, the Davises hope to revive the space, not as a hardware store but as The Launch Pad for healthier lifestyles and athletic opportunities.

Phase one, Davis said, could open as soon as renovations are complete in the storefront portion of the building. Beyond gym memberships, the couple plans to participate in the SilverSneakers program to provide access for qualifying seniors. They are also exploring sponsorship options to assist young athletes who cannot afford training fees.

“Our location is at the epicenter of a lot of college programs in western Kentucky and southern Illinois,” Davis said. “We believe Marion can be on the map in a way it hasn’t been before.”



FIFTY YEARS AGO THIS WEEK — A group of eight fifth- and sixth-graders from Crittenden County attended Camp Currie, one of three conservation education camps operated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The campers, all participants in the Department’s Conservation Education Program in the schools, spent the week swimming, boating, and fishing, and also received instruction in boating safety, conservation, and safe gun handling. Pictured are (front row, from left) Carissa Bigham, Rhonda Fox, Roxanne Binkley, Le Anne Malcolm, Angela James; (middle row) Tracey Bebout, Shelly Clark, Lisa Brewer; and adult leaders and counselors. This photo appeared in *The Crittenden Press* in August 1975. See this photo in living color on our Early Bird Facebook page.

10 YEARS AGO

Aug. 20, 2015

■ The road leading to Industrial Park North off U.S. 60 east of Marion was named for longtime Crittenden County Judge-Executive Pippi Hardin.

■ Crittenden County High School cheerleaders pictured in *The Press’* football preview were Sydney Leibenguth, Katie Travis, Lauren McKinney, Kali Travis, Hayleigh Bradham, Makensie Simpkins, Shelby Wallace, Hannah Cooksey, Hannah Bell, Jaylin Blackburn, Brittany Minton, Kirsten DeBoe, Shelby Brown, Jenna Potter, Jessie Potter and Ellie McGowan.

■ Seniors on the Rocket football team previewed in the newspaper were Jesse Belt, Seth Birdwell, Nick Castiller, Tyler Coleman, Alex Cosby, Travis Fitzgerald, Dylan Hicks, Dylan Hollis, Tony Hood, Devin Hopper, Gary McConnell, Austin McKinney, Bryce McKinney and Travis McKinney.

■ Lauren Gilchrist, an eighth grader, finished 36th out of 107 golfers in Kentucky at a match at Central Hardin.

25 YEARS AGO

Aug. 24, 2000

■ Five residents of Greenwood Heights subdivision filed criminal complaints against Tyson chicken broiler house owners due to odor emitted on the east edge of Marion, putting the question to the court system as to whether odors can trespass.

■ After four months of discussion, the Marion City Council voted to remove parking meters from the downtown.

■ Jason Guess won the 16-18 age division of the Marion Country Club Junior Tournament with a one-over-par 73 for the 18-hole tournament. Winner of the 13-15 division was Justin Travis; Jon Brantley won the 11-12 division; and Janson James the 8-10 division. Paxton James won the driving and putting contest, and Cole Foster won the chipping division.

■ Crittenden County soccer won its opening game of the season 1-0 over University Heights in double overtime with a goal by Andie Turley in the last minute.

50 YEARS AGO

Aug. 21, 1975

■ Just over 1,770 students were due to start school with several big changes, including the opening of a new high school, creation of a middle school for seventh- and eighth-graders in the former high school, and the establishment of a floating principal to oversee Frances, Tolu and Mattoon elementary schools.

■ Students of Mrs. Dexter Marsh presented a piano recital, including Daphne Dodson, Judy Workman, Stacy Hunt, Pam Dorris, Tina Latham, Beth Towery, Mark Latham, Maria Shewcraft, Paul Akridge, Rita Shouse, Patty Dorris, Faylena Crawford, Caryn Shewcraft and Margie McClure.

■ Crittenden County youth attending Camp Currie were Tracey Bebout, Shelly Clark, Lisa Brewer, Carissa Bigham, Rhonda Fox, Roxanne Binkley, Le Anne Malcolm and Angela James.

■ Mike Stone won Marion Country Club’s Club Tournament with a pair of 68s for the 36-hole event. Annabelle Pfunder took first place in the women’s division with rounds of 90 and 84 for a 174 total. First flight winner was Roy Cooper; second flight winner Mike Allison; third flight Pete Hickey; and fourth flight Bobby Rogers.

■ Crittenden County’s girls softball team ended its season with an 11-5 record. Team members were Judy Belt, Molly Asbridge, Janis Johnson, Anna Browning, Debbie York, Ramona Artman, Lorrie Harris, Cindy Jepsen, Debbie Jepsen, Market Brown, Cheryl Hina, Janet Loyd, Mona Kirk, Connie Gilliam, Madeline Henderson and Sherry Martin.

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Chris Evans, editor & publisher

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