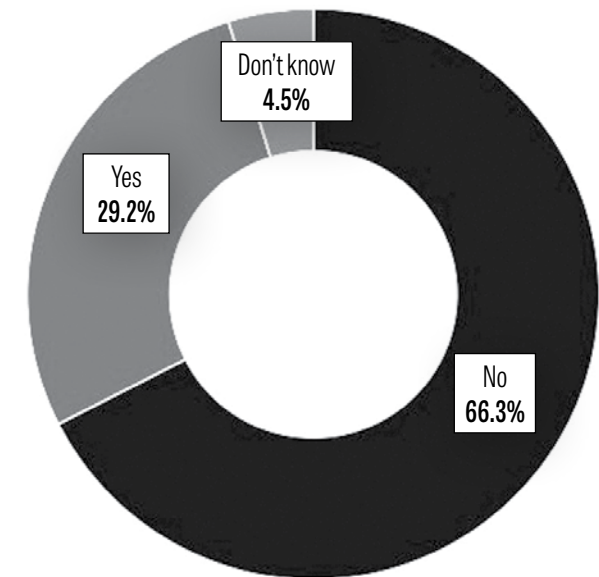


ONLINE POLL:

Are you surprised by how long it has taken for President Donald Trump to approve Kentucky's disaster declaration?



This poll reflects the opinions of 404 respondents.
Visit www.state-journal.com to take part in today's poll.

EDITORIAL

Asking for REAL ID deadline extension the right call

Long lines, limited appointment availability, a new vision screening requirement, weather closures and an influx of 15-year-old testing for driving permits have created a perfect storm at regional licensing centers for Kentuckians trying to become REAL ID-compliant before the May 7 federal enforcement date.

Fortunately, Senate Transportation Committee Chair Jimmy Higdon, R-Lebanon, and 27 Senate Majority Caucus members sent a formal letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security earlier this week requesting a delay in the enforcement date. And while it remains to be seen if the request will be approved, we believe it is definitely necessary.

“Rural residents, seniors, and families still have hurdles in front of them, and in a lot of cases, may not be aware of their options. Only about 40% of our residents have a REAL ID, but I would also like more time to help Kentuckians understand that they may not need a REAL ID. Kentucky has made a good faith effort, but we just aren’t there yet,” Higdon explained. “We’re not asking for anything out of the ordinary in our request letter, but simply a continuation of the same thoughtful flexibility previously granted when readiness concerns have been brought forward.”

As part of post-Sept. 11 national security reforms, Congress passed the REAL ID Act in 2005, which established federal standards for state-issued identification cards. Originally, REAL ID enforcement was to begin in 2008, but numerous delays — including the COVID-19 pandemic — have led to several postponements of the deadline.

Kentucky became REAL ID-compliant in 2019, but began transitioning from local circuit court clerks administering licenses to a regional licensing model because the circuit court clerks’ office were not technologically equipped to handle the federally mandated responsibility.

Senate Bill 43, which was passed in the last session, will allow third-party entities to assist with license renewals and improve access. However, the legislation does not go into effect until June 27 — leaving a gap of more than a month after the May 7 federal deadline.

In the letter, lawmakers state up to two additional years will give time for improvements that are already in motion to take effect. We commend legislators for listening to residents’ concerns and taking proactive measures to extend the REAL ID deadline.

Nowhere but here

I read with great interest all the news I could find about the recent devastation resulting from the flood here in Frankfort. Unfortunately, I am much too familiar with floods and what they leave behind. But there is a little more to this than washed away roadways and sodden sofas.

I have stood in the doorway of my house back in the mountains and shoved it open. Strength was needed because the wooden floors and doorframe had swollen from the floodwaters. There is little in this world more dismal than to see a brown rill of creek water run out of the living room and across the porch. I’ve walked from room to room, the air still and thick from too much humidity and too much pain, gauging by the stain on the walls just how high the water reached. Wondering if the washing machine would still work, if it was dangerous to use wall plugs that had been immersed, finding a sodden magazine that had fallen when the table was set up on milk crates.

On April 10, I saw Hannah Brown’s heartbreaking image of Katie Carney looking at the damage in her South Frankfort home. Ms. Carney, there in her cheerful pink rubber boots, blue gloves and white mask, surrounded by a scum of dull brown Kentucky River mud, a small chest nearby, overturned by the rising water. That woman is a sister to me and everyone else who has stood amid the wreckage of their homes. After the dread and the shock and the sinking thoughts of “How will we get this clean? Where will we sleep tonight?”, someone will say “Oh, well, let’s start right here. Help me get this chair out to the street.”

That moment is the sure sign of survivors. No point staring at it

anymore. Go make sure the toilet flushes and get the hose from the shed if it hasn’t washed off. Anything upholstered has to go. You can’t get the smell out and the bacteria in it could kill a platoon of Marines. When did you get your last tetanus shot? Where are the garbage bags? With that, we start to make the damaged house into our home again. If a news crew shows up with their cameras and asks why we stay or if we will rebuild, we all say the same thing: This is home. We’ve got nowhere but here. This is all we have. This is our home.

The neighbors will come by to compare their ruins with yours. Front yard planning meetings are quick and pointed. Decisions are made to start with one person’s house, then move to the next, everyone working for each other. Big kids are told to put away their phones and pick up push brooms. The sky has finally cleared, the sunlight helps, so open all the windows that will lift and get things dried out.

Help arrives, as it always does. The fire department, the health department, the Red Cross, some folks from church, earnest college kids with bandanas and Clorox. Later, pizza boxes cover a car hood for a brief community stand-up supper.

And just as we always have, we carry on.

I can offer nothing but praise for the mayor, the county judge-executive, the Frankfort Plant Board people, every single person who works for the county and the city. They worked from before

sunrise to way past dark in deplorable conditions to save our town. Slinging sandbags and building dikes like their lives depended on it, even though some live high up on a hill. One hardly expects to find a hero in squishy boots and purple gloves, but those are the ones we saw everywhere. Those are the people who made a difference.

Now, I value the organizers, too. Somebody has to handle three simultaneous phone calls on landlines and two cellphones all at once, trying to figure which resources to apply to which situation, where the National Guard can park a water buffalo, how do we get some roll-off dumpsters, what did Andy just say on TV, has anyone heard from FEMA.

This is the part that starts to count. No one could do anything about the rain or the rising water. But when the water falls, there are meals to provide and cases of water to distribute. There are clothes to sort and hands to hold. Information must be shared, truth must be gently told. Lives are reassembled into regular routines and Frankfort is still good old Frankfort. Our community has shined at this awful time, lighted by effort and love and care. This is home. We’ve got nowhere but here. This is all we have. This is our home.

A year from now, the kids will be in school, life has gone on and things will be pretty normal, even if the front door still sticks a little.

John Arnett, of Frankfort, is a State Journal columnist, financial regulator in public service and a longtime coach for Frankfort Parks and Rec in the summer. He can be reached at bigdukeinky@icloud.com.



SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
The State Journal encourages readers to submit letters to the editor. Letters should be the original work of the author, no form letters, and be fewer than 330 words. The State Journal reserves the right to edit letters for grammar and brevity. To submit a letter email letters@state-journal.com.

LETTER

WATER TREATMENT PLANT SUPERINTENDENT KEPT CITY’S WATER FLOWING DURING FLOOD

Dear editor,

During the recent flooding, as our community faced rising waters and dangerous conditions, one man quietly stepped up to protect something we often take for granted: our clean, running water.

Brandon Powers, superintendent at the Frankfort Plant Board Water Treatment Plant, worked around the clock to ensure that critical systems stayed online. When the river rose to alarming levels and equipment was at risk, Brandon never wavered. He didn’t just show up — he stayed, he solved problems, and he made the right calls.

Thanks to his leadership, the water never stopped flowing. He brought in the right people, made quick but smart decisions, and prevented

what could have been a catastrophic failure. He kept electrical equipment dry and functioning — no small feat given the magnitude of the flooding.

While many of us watched the water rise and hoped for the best, Brandon was already doing the work — often behind the scenes and without any expectation of recognition.

In moments like these, we are reminded that real heroes aren’t always on the front page. Sometimes, they’re standing in the mud at 3 a.m., making sure the lights stay on and the taps still run.

To Brandon Powers: Thank you. Your tireless efforts, calm leadership, and commitment to our community made all the difference. You didn’t just do your job — you went the extra mile, and you saved the day.

Frankfort is lucky to have you.

*Stephanie Powers
Frankfort*

THE State Journal

Joe Imel , Publisher 270-783-3273 joe.imal@bgdailynews.com	NEWS Linda Younkin 502-209-6336 linda.younkin@state-journal.com Phil Case 502-682-5995 phil.case@state-journal.com Linda Boileau , Editorial Cartoonist linda.boileau@me.com	ADVERTISING SALES Meri Latek , Director of Advertising 502-395-3434 meri.latek@state-journal.com CLASSIFIEDS/LEGAL NOTICES classifieds@state-journal.com public.notices@state-journal.com 502-871-4559	MAIN OFFICE Sheri Bunker , Director of Customer Service 502-209-6305 sheri.bunker@state-journal.com Jim Wainscott , Bookkeeper 502-209-6301 jim.wainscott@state-journal.com	The State Journal (USPS 520-160) is published Wednesday and Saturday mornings by Frankfort Newsmedia LLC, 1216 Wilkinson Blvd., Frankfort, Kentucky, 40601. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The State Journal, P.O. Box 368, Frankfort, KY 40602. State Journal EZ Pay subscription rates: Monthly by mail, \$11.00 per month; three months - \$33.00; six months - \$66.00; 12 months - \$132.00. Plus tax. For home delivery call the circulation department at 502-227-4556. Periodical postage paid at Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. Unclaimed credit balances will be forwarded to our Newspaper in Education Program.
---	--	---	---	---