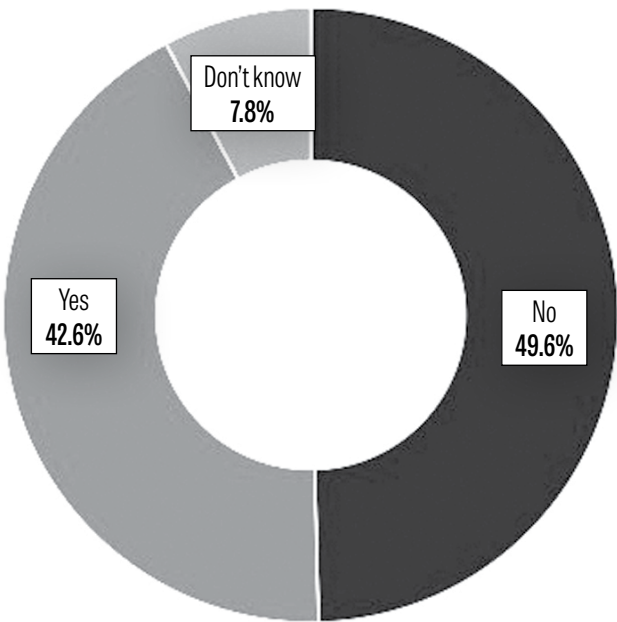


ONLINE POLL:

Kentucky State University and Ale-8-One released Pawpaw Ale-8 recently. Do you plan on trying it?



This poll reflects the opinions of 244 respondents.  
Visit [www.state-journal.com](http://www.state-journal.com) to take part in today's poll.

EDITORIAL

# Free, easy call to 811 could prevent disruptions, save lives

It is only fitting that on Aug. 11, Gov. Andy Beshear issued a proclamation designating the day as “Kentucky 8-1-1 Underground Facility Protection Day.” Adopted in 2007 via the Underground Facilities Damage Prevention Act, 811 is an easy-to-remember number for Kentuckians to call to have utilities located and marked prior to excavating.

Known nationally as Safe Digging Day, 811 is a joint effort by state and federal regulators, underground utility call centers, pipeline operators and others to draw attention to the call-before-you-dig requirement as well as the need for safe excavation methods.

According to Kentucky Public Service Commission Chair Angie Hatton, digging into buried lines is not only a problem for utility companies.

“The PSC recognizes that damaged underground facilities interrupt vital services, damage property and, in the case of gas and electric lines, can even cause injury or death,” she explained. “Despite ongoing efforts to promote the use of 811, dig-ins continue to happen. This is why we emphasize the importance of using the 811 ‘Call Before You Dig.’ It’s a simple, free call that can prevent significant disruptions, costly repairs and even save lives.”

There have been 886 damages reported to the PSC — which regulates more than 1,100 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in the state — since Aug. 1, 2024. With an average of 2.42 strikes per day, the most recent data is slightly below the rate from the previous year. However, the statistics also indicate that nearly 23% of all violations occurred because 811 was not contacted to obtain a locate ticket.

We, like Beshear, encourage Kentuckians to call 811, which is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, prior to digging. For locations of underground facilities owned by utility service providers that do not belong to Kentucky 811, residents and business owners should notify the company directly. A list of all owners of underground utility lines may be obtained from the county clerk.

For more information about Kentucky 811, visit [www.kentucky811.org](http://www.kentucky811.org) The PSC consumer hotline is 800-772-4636.

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# Will MAGA label work for Nate Morris?

FANCY FARM — Just how MAGA is Kentucky? More pertinently, how MAGA are Kentucky Republicans? And most proximately, how MAGA are the people who will vote in the state’s May 2026 Republican primary for U.S. senator?

Senate candidate Nate Morris may provide the answer to the last question, at least. The wealthy Lexington businessman says he “supports Donald Trump 100% of the time.” He’s trying to be Kentucky’s version of the president, with a candidacy based on outrage — and rhetoric that was once deemed outrageous but Trump has made routine.

At the Fancy Farm Picnic, Morris’ main target was the man he wants to succeed, Mitch McConnell, and his most personal attack sounded like one Trump made on the senator earlier this year.

Saying he would “trash Mitch McConnell’s legacy,” Morris said that goal “is pissing off a lot of people, but I have a serious question — who here can honestly tell me that it’s a good thing to have a senior citizen who freezes on national television during his press conferences as our U.S. senator? It seems to me, maybe just maybe, that Mitch’s time to leave the Senate was a long time ago.” After loud boos from the crowd, Morris mentioned former president Joe Biden and asked, “Why is it you all get so defensive when I talk about a man who’s older than Biden, just as mentally compromised and holds the same positions on Biden on amnesty, Ukraine funding and his hatred for Trump?”

Plain talk and cutting rhetoric are expected at Fancy Farm, but those lines didn’t seem to set well with most of the audience in and around the St. Jerome Church pavilion. They had repeatedly cheered and applauded McConnell, 83, who left before the speeches by Morris and his main

opponents, 6th District U.S. Rep. Andy Barr and former state attorney general Daniel Cameron.

Earlier, at the Graves County Republican breakfast before Mc-

Connell arrived, Morris was more polite and diplomatic. He said he was “very, very disappointed” in the senator’s votes against three Trump nominees.

“I know in this room that makes some of you all uncomfortable,” he said, “but as an outsider and a disrupter, my job is not to make people comfortable, it’s to get results, and to bring something totally different. In Mitch McConnell I saw amnesty I saw blank checks to Ukraine, I saw somebody who wasn’t standing with the president, and I saw two guys who if they were to get that spot they would be more of the same. Both these guys are puppets for Mitch McConnell, no different.”

The night before, in his first campaign speech before an unmanaged audience, Morris dominated the smaller room at the Marshall County Republican dinner — until he started ragging on McConnell. That brought an interjection from Frank Amaro, the Todd County GOP chairman and 1st Congressional District vice chairman: “Mitch is not running. What are you running on?”

Morris said Barr or Cameron “would be Mitch 2.0,” judging from who supports them — then mentioned his main platform plank, a “full moratorium” on immigration until all illegal immigrants are deported. The impracticality of that was conceded by state Rep. John Hogsdon of Fisherville, who manned Morris’ merch-and-signup table. He told me, “It’s like saying we want to cure cancer.” In other words,

as MAGA folks have often said of Trump, don’t take him literally. In a state Trump won by 30 points, Morris may think he can say the sorts of things that only Trump has been able to get away with — and capitalize on McConnell’s unpopularity among Republicans. Caldwell County Chairman Steve Meadows, a banker who hasn’t picked a candidate, told me the party needs “a new direction,” away from McConnell, but he said Amaro made a good point by challenging Morris.

Folks like Meadows and Amaro once led local opinion that shaped primary votes. Now voters seem more guided by partisan media sources such as Fox News, the Daily Signal and Breitbart, which is promoting Morris. But some such sources have raised questions about Morris’ business record, which he needs to answer.

Morris, Cameron and Barr all want the president’s endorsement, which likely would decide the primary. Morris’ full-MAGA approach will appeal to Trump’s ego, and Morris counts Vice President JD Vance and Donald Trump Jr. in his corner. But the president hates to endorse losers or take unnecessary risks, and thus seems unlikely to make a pick unless he thinks he can get credit for the win. That won’t keep the candidates from sucking up to him, and if he keeps acting like a dictator, that could backfire on Republicans before the Jan. 9 filing deadline. Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear says he won’t run, but he keeps getting asked. If not, he should find a good alternative. That might look presidential.

Al Cross, of Frankfort, was a professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky after covering politics for the Louisville Courier Journal and serving as president of the Society of Professional Journalists. He can be emailed at [al.cross@uky.edu](mailto:al.cross@uky.edu).

## LETTER

### COUNTY SOLID WASTE ACCEPTING AMERICORPS APPLICATIONS

Dear editor,

I am writing to inform our community that the Kentucky Environmental Education Council’s AmeriCorps member application is available now.

The Franklin County Fiscal Court Solid Waste Division is looking for a member of our community to serve as an AmeriCorps member under the “EELCorps” Environmental Education Leadership Corps—branch.

This is a 900-hour service role, starting from Sept. 1, 2025 (flexible start date) to Aug. 31, 2026.



This service term would include educating at community events on what is recyclable, hosting demonstrations on how to compost, creating educational materials on pedestrian safety, hosting litter pick up events, teaching K-12 classroom lessons on recycling an average of six times a month, and promoting recycling and waste reduction within businesses/universities/government entities in Frankfort.

This service term includes a \$10,500 stipend, a \$3,697.50 education award, on-site training, and shared office space in downtown Frankfort — with access to a desktop computer and phone.

Applicants must be able to work most Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Service members will teach in Frankfort between 18 and 25 hours a week.

Interested individuals can apply on KEEC’s website at <https://keec.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

Ally Hall  
Franklin County Solid Waste Coordinator  
Franklin County

### SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The State Journal encourages readers to submit letters to the editor. Letters should be fewer than 400 words. To submit a letter email [letters@state-journal.com](mailto:letters@state-journal.com).

