

Frankfort Update

By R. Travis Brenda
State Representative
Lawmakers continue
examining issues facing
Kentucky children and
families

It is hard to believe there are only a couple of months left before the 2021 Regular Session convenes, but we are making progress on the issues that must be tackled in January. Some of the challenges we face existed well before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic also provides us with an unprecedented challenge. However, we continue to work to find solutions and this pandemic has allowed us to discuss the potential for improvements in multiple facets of the state's system. It will enable us to be better prepared for other unexpected events Kentucky may face.

Many of us know the great joy as well as the incredible exhaustion that comes with being a parent. This is also true for the thousands of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members who are raising a child because parents are unable to do so. During this week's meeting, members of the Child Welfare Oversight and Advisory Committee expressed concern over reported incidences of child abuse, child abuse court cases, and other services needed by families in the child welfare system since the pandemic. According to data from the courts, 2,191 neglect and abuse cases were filed in March 2019, and 2,002 were filed in April 2019. Representatives compared those to the numbers to March and April 2020, where 1,476 and 903 cases were filed. A family court judge shared with lawmakers that, although COVID-19 safety protocols have changed how the court operates, courts did not close. He shared that the judicial centers continued to allow physical access for those seeking emergency orders for domestic violence, dating violence, and child welfare.

Also during this week's meeting, a kinship caregiver shared information regarding a new infor-

mative booklet for kinship families. This is vital for many kinship caregivers because they may not know what to expect after taking custody of their loved ones. Foster parents and kinship caregivers need services to allow them to have a break, whether it's to shop alone, see a movie or enjoy a much-needed date night with a spouse. Respite care is essential to these caregivers, but unfortunately, it is not offered to kinship caregivers. COVID-19 has created significant barriers to respite care due to stay-at-home orders and social distancing. Another issue we continue to hear about affecting multiple citizens is little to no access to the Internet. Many parents have voiced frustrations with internet issues around virtual learning and Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI). The same goes for foster parents, kinship, and fictive kin caregivers. Many parents and caregivers work at home and try to adjust to this new normal. Families who do not have consistent access to the Internet are being left behind. During the pandemic, it is a basic need for families. This is especially true for families in more rural areas.

The Tobacco Settlement Agreement Oversight Committee members heard a report on considering project funding from the Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy. The Deputy Executive Director shared several updates on projects receiving tobacco settlement funds that will help build up Kentucky's agriculture to further success and education across the state. Committee members also heard from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood and local childcare center owners to discuss initiatives taken to provide a strong foundation for Kentucky's youngest children. In total, for FY 2021, the Division of Early Childhood Development received \$25,439,100 in tobacco funds to provide high-quality early learning experiences that are critical components of K-12. They face a challenge: the lack of a coordinated, comprehensive prenatal to age five system, which is a massive obstacle to advancing large-scale social

change. Kentucky stands out among other states in the pandemic due to our comprehensive professional registry, integrated systems to support quality, monetary incentives for high quality and a balanced approach to Child Care and Development Fund mandated activities. At the beginning of March, nearly 28,000 children were being served in childcare assistance programs. Since the statewide closure, 94 centers have opened. More centers opened in 2020 than in 2019. There was a 40 percent loss since the shutdown, but Kentucky has preserved more centers than other states.

In the wake of the opioid epidemic and rise in substance use due to government shutdowns, the General Assembly made it a priority to enact policies that help people struggling with addiction during the past several years. The Substance Use Recovery Task Force continues building on this trend by examining pathways for reentry to society for substance involved individuals. This will be an essential issue that the General Assembly is likely to investigate during the 2021 Legislative Session because it affects many people across the Commonwealth, including our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. We must connect people struggling with substance use disorder to existing resources to help them successfully overcome addiction. Some of the reentry barriers include high treatment costs, lack of transportation to and from appointments, and lack of access to long-term outpatient treatment options. We must break down these barriers so those struggling with addiction can receive gainful employment and become productive, healthy society members.

As your representation here in Frankfort, I am always available to discuss your concerns, policies, or issues facing our community. I can be reached through the toll-free message line at 1-800-372-7181, and you can contact me via e-mail at Travis.Brenda@lrc.ky.gov. You can also keep track of committee meetings and potential legislation through the Kentucky legislature's website at legislature.ky.gov.



On Saturday, October 17th, the Friends of the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve, with other valuable contributors, took 128 bags of trash, tires, a TV, car parts and other items off of Mullins Station Road. Working from U.S. Highway 25 to the bridge past the quarry, a total of 3 miles, the group combed through the fallen leaves to find as many single use bottles, food containers, household trash and dumped paint/chemicals, as possible. This effort was made possible by the Rockcastle County Solid Waste \$100/mile Roadside Litter Clean-Up Program. For more information about the Friends Group contact: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofgsp>

Agricultural News

By: Warden Alexander, FSA Director

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2

Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) began on Sept. 21, 2020 and will continue through Dec. 11, 2020. CFAP 2 provides eligible producers with direct financial assistance due to market disruptions and associated costs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check out our brief video about the program.

CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, now referred to as CFAP 1. Farmers and ranchers who participated in CFAP 1 will not be automatically enrolled and must complete a new application for CFAP 2. Details on how to apply can be found on farmers.gov/cfap/apply.

CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder

Many more commodities are eligible for CFAP 2 than CFAP 1. Interested in finding the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 payment rates for the eligible commodities you grow or raise? Our new, easy-to-use CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder makes finding payment rates specific to your operation simple. From yam to alpaca farmers – and

everyone in between – the payment rate information you need is just a few clicks away. Try it today on your desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

Call Center

A call center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. The call center can provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

At this time, due to the COVID-19, Rockcastle Co. Service Center is conducting business by online or by phone. No customers shall be in the building at any time. Anyone wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call the following phone number (606) 256-2525. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our

producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus

NEXT COC MEETING

Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 8:30 A.M. at the Mt. Vernon USDA Service Center.

Important program dates and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans-Direct = 1.250%
Farm Ownership Loans-Direct = 2.250%
Limited Resource Loans = 5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans-Direct Down Payment = 1.500%
Emergency Loans = 2.250%
Farm Storage Loans = 3 yrs. = 0.125% 5 yrs = 0.250% 7 yrs = 0.500% 10 yrs = 0.625% 12 yrs = 0.750% 15 yrs = 1.000%

Commodity Loans = 1.125%

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users)

City of Mt. Vernon

1st Annual

Halloween Decoration Contest



HOW IT WORKS

1. TO ENTER: Pick up application at City Hall.
2. Deadline: Applications must be submitted to City Hall by Wednesday, October 28th 2020.
3. Entries will be Judged on Thursday night October 29th (for those who have light displays) and Friday, October 30th 2020.
4. Winners will receive a sign to place in their yard and have a picture of their victory put in the signal.
5. Entry must be Halloween themed.
6. No Inappropriate or Political themes.
7. Decorations may include (but are not limited to):

- Window displays (inside or out)
- Front porch displays
- Entrance ways
- Yard displays
- **OUTSIDE ONLY** (inside of residence/business will not be judged)
- **MUST BE WITHIN MT. VERNON CITY LIMITS**

