

# 2025

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the local area and closed the school system, judicial and county and city government offices.

### Nicholas appointed county attorney

John Nicholas was appointed as LaRue County Attorney on Jan. 1. He entered the position midterm, fulfilling the role previously held by Kyle Williamson, who is now the Commonwealth's Attorney for the 10th Judicial Circuit. Nicholas has now filed for the seat in the 2026 election.

### Jamboree, Restaurant temporarily closed

The Lincoln Jamboree and Family Style Restaurant closed at the beginning of the year to carry out a slew of various renovations, including an overhaul of the flooring, new seating, an update to the audio-visual system and more. Although owner Jay Henderson had anticipated opening just a few weeks later, the business did not hold its Grand Reopening until March 15.

### FEBRUARY

#### EF-1 tornado confirmed

An EF-1 tornado touched down on 31-E in Magnolia, approximately one mile south of the LaRue/Hart County line, on Feb. 6. The tornado touched down at 6:07 a.m. EST with 95 mph peak winds and was on the ground for 0.5 miles.

### Hornback returns to JEOPARDY!

Skylar Hornback, who won Jeopardy's 'Kids Week' in 2013 at 12-years-old, returned to the stage for the Jeopardy! Tournament of Champions on Feb. 18. The LaRue County High School graduate and PhD student placed 2nd overall and came home with a prize of \$5,000.

### Flooding, snowstorms affect county

Several rounds of severe weather accumulated approximately four to eight inches of snow and just over four inches of rain during the third week of February. The weather caused substantial flooding throughout the county, making multiple roadways impassable and requiring a water rescue for a man standing on top of his car, and also closed schools and local businesses. Governor Andy Beshear reported the deaths of 11 Kentucky resident in connection to the severe weather.

### McConnell won't seek reelection in 2026

U.S. Republican Senator Mitch McConnell officially announced that he would not be seeking reelection in 2026, ending a decadeslong tenure. McConnell, the longest-serving Senate party leader in U.S. history, chose Feb. 20, his 83rd birthday, to share his decision to retire when his current term ends in Jan. 2027.

### Lee retires as PVA

Scotty Lee, LaRue County's Property Value Administrator since 2014, retired effective Feb. 28.

### MARCH

#### Dangerfield, Duncan honored by LCS

During an employee recognition dinner, LaRue County Schools announced Tori Dangerfield as the 2024-25 ExCEL Award recipient and Marsha Duncan as the 2024-25 FRED Award recipient. The awards are given annually to an innovative teacher who is a role model that maintains personal relationships and are personally committed to continued development and a classified (support) staff member who has a heart for people, changes ordinary moments into memorable ones and chooses to make a positive difference each day.

### Thomas crowned Homecoming Queen

LaRue County High School Senior Ella Thomas was crowned the 2025 LCHS Basketball Homecoming Queen. She was escorted by Wyatt Peterson.



file photo

**Lincoln Days featured activity is Pioneer Games that celebrated its 45 year anniversary in 2025.**

### 5 YEARS LATER

March 2025 marked five years since the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe, leaving isolation, shuttered doors and more than 7 million deaths in its wake. As of the anniversary, nearly 5,000 cases had been confirmed in LaRue County and 91 residents lost their lives to the disease.

### Speech team celebrates historic regional win

For the first time in its nearly 60-year history, the LaRue County High School Speech team claimed the prestigious Regional Championship Title in the Kentucky High School Speech League. Team members included Madden Davis, Ava Cheeseman, Peyton Claycomb, Ainsley Walsh, Alma Mehicic, Izzy Pierce, Cooper Braden, Henry Allen, Tamryn Miller, Kinzleigh Hack, Adalee Farmer, Juhie Patel and Coaches Katy Cecil, Eric Cecil and Kate McCubbin.

**Jail deputy arrested, accused of promoting contraband**  
LaRue County Detention Center jail deputy Paul Henry Dyer, 59 of Lebanon, was arrested and being accused of allowing inmates under his supervision to possess and use contraband. He was charged with first-degree official misconduct and first-degree promoting contraband.

### APRIL

#### 7 juveniles charged with assault

After receiving reports of a minor being assaulted, the Hodgenville Police Department charged six juveniles with unlawful imprisonment and assault and placed one of the six under arrest. The investigation led to charges for a seventh juvenile after they were identified as a suspect accused of fighting at McDonalds on a different date.

### Preserving the Past

Pearman Forest – a natural, thriving ecosystem at the LaRue County Environmental Education and Research Center – was inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network. The 80-acre forest features more than 170 species of plants, more than 25 different native tree species, has trees dating back to the late 1800s and trunks measuring up to 30 to 36” in diameter.

### HISTORIC FLOODING IN LARUE COUNTY

LaRue County received more than 15 inches of rain during a four-day unprecedented weather pattern that brought catastrophic flooding, tornadoes, hail and strong winds to Kentucky. The weather caused landslides, numerous impassable roads and school closings. It took more than two weeks for all floodwaters to recede and be moved by pumps into streams throughout the county.

### Hodgenville approves Restaurant Tax

The Hodgenville City Council unanimously approved to implement a 3% tax to the bill of any fixed or mobile commercial establishment that prepares and serves ready-to-eat foods sold within the city limits. Revenue garnered from the tax is disbursed to the Hodgenville Tourism & Convention Commission and must be utilized for projects and undertakings that promote and develop recreational, convention and tourist activity within the city.

### DUI driver enters guilty plea

Robert Wilson, 35 of Elizabethtown, plead guilty to two counts of vehicular homicide while under the influence and two counts of first-degree assault from an incident that occurred on Bardstown Road in July 2022 that resulted in two fatalities and two other individuals with serious life-threatening physical injuries. Wilson was sentenced to 30 years in prison and will be required to serve a minimum of 20 years before he is eligible for parole.

### Upton Farmer's Market

The Upton Community Connect – a grassroots volunteer effort organized by community members – launched the Upton Farmers Market in 2025. The market provided visitors with an assortment of local produce and farm products and educational experiences.

### MAY

#### Newspaper celebrates 140 years

*The LaRue County Herald News* is the oldest continuously operated business in LaRue County, having served the county since May 1885. In celebration of the anniversary, a summary of the newspaper's history and a facsimile of the first page of the first edition was printed.

### Prom King and Queen

The LaRue County High School's 2025 Prom King and Queen were Colson Nicolas and Sophia Thompson.

### Local students selected for prestigious summer programs

Five rising seniors from LCHS were selected to participate in intensive collegiate experiences: the Governor's Scholars Program (GSP) and the Governor's School for the Arts (GSA). Selected students for GSP were Isabella Day, Bridget Faulkner, Joslyn Hinton and Morgan Skaggs. Madeline Fulkerson was selected for GSA.

### Choate named incoming principal

LaRue County Schools announced the appointment of Whitney Choate as the next Principal of LaRue County High School. She previously served on the LCHS staff as a math teacher from 2017 to 2019. Choate officially began her new role on July 1, succeeding former LCHS Principal Justin Craft.

### Driver hits Papa Johns

A juvenile driver ran into the front doors of the Papa John's location on Shawnee Drive in Hodgenville on May 9. Although the driver on sustained minor injuries, major structural damage was made to the building. No employees or customers were injured and the site reopened for business with a temporary entrance two days later.

### LaRue certified as a Recovery Ready Community

The designation as a Recovery Ready Community is given to cities and counties that have proven to have established services for residents who are seeking help for drug or alcohol addiction. LaRue County received the certification on account of The Mobile Unit, a high-tech medical mobile vehicle that visits Hodgenville weekly; a partnership with the Kentucky Chamber to ensure residents have access to recovery housing; and the Hodgenville Police Department's operating of one of the longest-running police social worker programs.

### JUNE



file photo

**Students and staff of the LaRue County Band of Hawks are pictured with their trophy and awards earned from being the fifth-place winner of the Class AAA State Finals competition on Saturday, Oct. 25**

### Puyear ready to serve community

William 'Chad' Puyear was appointed by Gov. Andy Beshear to fulfill the LaRue County PVA vacancy. He was one of nine eligible individuals for the position and has since filed for election for the seat in 2026.

### Heavy trucks, light budget

Following the establishment of two industrial businesses along Weldon Loop Road in Upton, the roadway began rapidly deteriorating into an obstacle course of potholes, missing asphalt and crumbling shoulders. Despite being previously allocated \$1.3 million by the state legislature to reconstruct the road, commencement of the project was stalled when the transportation cabinet refused to pay out.

### 11-Year-Old Rodeo Athlete headed to Nationals

Alli Marshall traveled to Des Moines, Iowa to compete in the National Junior High Finals Rodeo. She qualified in pole bending and was featured on The Cowboy Channel during the 10-day event. Olivia Leasor also competed.

### Council member Hornback served Hodgenville well

Hodgenville City Council member Sharon Hornback passed away on June 20. She had served on the council since Jan. 2015, following her retirement from the local Dollar General where she was known as the 'have a super safe one' lady for 15 years.

### JULY

#### Denied, Again

After conducting a court-ordered trial-type public hearing regarding requests to rezoning more than 230 acres along Tonieville Road in Hodgenville from A1, agriculture, to I2, heavy industrial, the LaRue County Fiscal Court voted for the third time to overturn the requests. Numerous community members spoke in opposition of the rezoning, expressing concerns ranging from possible water contamination to potential traffic concerns if industry was developed in the area.

### Lynn selected as incoming HES principal

LaRue County Schools announced the appointment of Tori Lynn as the next Principal of Hodgenville Elementary School. Previously serving as the Assistant Principal at Morningside Elementary School in Elizabethtown, Lynn began her new role on July 1, succeeding former HES Principal Patrick Reed.

### Decades of Dedication

A celebration was held for Chuck Lee and Mike Mather to honor their 50-year anniversary as members of the Hodgenville and LaRue County Fire Departments. Lee and Mather reminisced over their memories from the past five decades and said they had no plans to retire any time soon.

### Johnson appointed to City Council

Steve Johnson was appointed to the Hodgenville City Council to fulfill the vacancy created by the passing of Councilwoman Sharon Hornback; he will retain the seat until Dec. 2026.

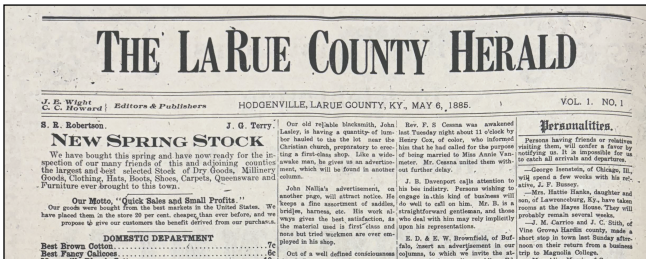
### High-speed chase prompts 14-count indictment

Herman Patel, 44 of Jersey City, New Jersey, received a 14-count indictment from the LaRue County Grand Jury after his alleged multi-county high-speed chase ended when he crashed into a house and two vehicles in Hodgenville. Nine of the charges were felonies, and Patel faced an additional 21 charges in



file photo

**Lincoln Square in downtown Hodgenville was packed with hundreds of visitors for the 2025 Lincoln Days Celebration**



file photo

**Newspaper celebrates 140 years: The LaRue County Herald News is the oldest continuously operated business in LaRue County, having served the county since May 1885. In celebration of the anniversary, a summary of the newspaper's history and a facsimile of the first page of the first edition was printed.**



file photo

**Known as a 100-year flood, catastrophic flooding occurred in LaRue County in April. FEMA was called in to evaluate the flooding and assist home and land owners with federal assistance. Pictured is flooding on Walter Reed Road in Hodgenville.**



file photo

**For the first time in program history, the LCHS Junior Chef program was selected as the Champion of the Farm to School Junior Chef competition. Hungry Hawk team members Noah Selman and Austin Harp, who each received a scholarship to Sullivan University, were coached by Abe Miller.**

Taylor County.

### Miss 2025 LaRue County Fair

Shaylee Hampton, of Caneyville, was crowned Miss LaRue County Fair 2025.

### AUGUST

#### Proposed Tractor Supply prompts questions, concerns

A project proposing to construct a 21,930-square-foot Tractor Supply Company on Eagle Lane in Hodgenville was met with questions and concerns by the community, including traffic flow at school drop-off and pick-up times, HES student safety when utilizing outdoor facilities and potential parking issues.

### Mother of the Year

Elizabeth Jean Hornback was honored as the 2025 Mother of the Year.

### Faith, Family, Farms & Food

The 12th annual LaRue County Farm Bureau AgStravaganza was held on Lincoln Square in Hodgenville. Award recipients include Ryan Bivens with the 2025 Lead Where You Stand Award and Bro. Billy Curle with the 2025 Half Century Farmer Award.

### School proposes nickel tax

The LaRue County Board of Education made public

its consideration to increase funds for capital and building expenses in the district with the implementation of an additional tax levy. Despite equaling less than five cents, the proposed tax is considered a nickel tax because it ultimately allows the district to satisfy state requirements needed for the possibility to receive additional state funding.

### Juveniles accused of attempted murder

Two juveniles who ran away from The Life Connection in Sonora were charged with attempted murder after they allegedly tried to shoot a property owner in Magnolia. The individuals, who reportedly admitted to stealing three vehicles and several guns before their apprehension, also faced additional charges in Christian and Marshall Counties.

### Lincoln, Hodgenville, and Kentucky Scholar

The passing of Hodgenville resident Carl Howell Jr. was more than the loss of a local historian and lawyer – it was the loss of a neighbor, friend and mentor whose kindness