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Wethington's sentence of 30 years finalized

Caal-Garcia's trial now set for Aug. 25

BY DENIS HOUSE
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On April 3, David Wethington pleaded guilty to multiple sex-related charges against a minor and was sentenced to 30 years.

On June 26, Wethington, 40, appeared before Judge Todd Spalding in Marion Circuit Court Division for his final sentencing, which confirmed the original sentence imposed by Spalding. Wethington was charged with eight counts of first-degree unlawful transaction with

a minor, illegal sex act under 16 years of age, and six counts of first-degree unlawful transaction with a minor, illegal controlled substance under 16 years of age (one count was dismissed), for which he received 20 years from Judge Todd Spalding; eight counts of second-degree unlawful transaction with a minor (5 years, enhanced by first-degree persistent felony offender for a total of 10 years), one count of human trafficking-commercial sex activity under 18 years of age (20 years), eight counts of promoting a sex performance by a minor under 16 years of age, (10 years, enhanced on one count and 20 years on the other seven counts), 17 counts of third-degree rape (5 years enhanced for a total of 10 years), seven counts of third-degree sodomy

(5 years, enhanced, for a total of 10 years), five counts of first-degree sexual abuse (5 years enhanced), eight counts of first-degree trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (greater or equal to 2 grams of methamphetamine) (10 years, enhanced), and first-degree possession of a controlled substance, third or greater offense (methamphetamine) (3 years to run concurrently). The charges of second-degree trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (less than 20 dosage units drug unspecified schedule 3), and two counts of second-degree possession of a controlled substance-drug unspecified were dismissed. All counts will run concurrently.

He must also register as a sex offender for life and have no contact

with the victim or her immediate family.

CAAL-GARCIA'S TRIAL NOW SET FOR AUG. 25

The trial of a man charged in the death of two individuals stemming from an automobile accident will now go to trial on Aug. 25 after the accident reconstruction report has been completed by the Kentucky State Police.

Franklin Ontoniel Caal-Garcia, 19, of 372 Lake Avenue, was originally scheduled to go to trial on June 30, but when he appeared in Marion Circuit Court Division 1 on June 12, Judge Spalding remanded the trial because the accident reconstruction report hadn't been finished by KSP.

"The court finds the failure of

KSP to have completed this report within seven months is a complete neglect of their professional responsibilities and beyond ridiculous," Spalding noted at the time, setting the case for review on June 26 with hopes that the report would be completed by that date.

On June 26, Caal-Garcia found out that the report had been completed and Spalding set a pretrial conference date of Aug. 7 at 9:00 a.m., and a jury trial scheduled for Aug. 25 at 8:30 a.m.

On Nov. 2, 2024, KSP Post 15 troopers responded to a two-vehicle collision on US 68 around 6:30 p.m. near the intersection of Jessietown Road. A 2005 Dodge Ram, driven by Garcia, was traveling west on

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Maker's Mark receives honor from Whiskey University

BY DENIS HOUSE
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LORETTO—One of the most decorated bourbon distilleries can add another title to its accomplishments: One of the decade's top tourist and distillery locations in the United States.

On June 6, Whiskey University visited the Loretto distillery to present an Award of Distinction to the employees of the distillery. Whiskey University is located in Tennessee, and they teach classes in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

"We have over 1,300 instructors worldwide and they voted on this particular award," said Colonel Craig Duncan, president and founder of the university.

Duncan said that this award is based on a set of criteria related to both the products Maker's Mark produces and the tourist experience they provide to

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Photo Submitted

On June 6, Whiskey University presented Maker's Mark with an Award of Distinction to the employees of the distillery for the passion that they share with their tour visitors. Pictured are, left to right: Colonel Craig Duncan, President and Founder of Whiskey University, Thomas Bolton, Senior Manager-Visitor Experience and Education Maker's Mark Distillery, Trevor Bowles, Manager of VIP Experience & Trade Engagement, and Jim Silliman, Dean of the Bourbon Capital Region at Whiskey University.

Local man indicted in Washington County for vehicular homicide

BY JANE REID KLEYN
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Brian Alan Blanford, 46 of Lebanon, was indicted in connection to a three-vehicle accident on Hwy. 150 near Frederickstown in July 2024 that took the life of one motorist and sent three to area hospitals.

Blanford was indicted by a Washington County grand jury on Wednesday, June 25, for vehicular homicide when under the influence, two counts of second-degree assault, first-degree wanton endangerment, first-degree criminal mischief, operating a motor vehicle under the influence (second offense), failure to give oncoming vehicle one-half of highway, and disregarding traffic regulation.

According to a report from the Kentucky State Police (KSP) the incident occurred around 5:45 p.m. on Sunday, July 7.

The KSP report stated, "The preliminary investigation revealed that Brian Blanford, age 45 of Lebanon, was traveling east on US

150 in a 2016 Chevrolet Traverse when he crossed the centerline of the roadway and sideswiped a 2008 GMC Sierra traveling west on US 150 that was operated by Justin Phillips, age 36 of Springfield. After the first collision, Mr. Blanford's vehicle continued to travel further into the westbound lane. Mr. Blanford's vehicle then collided head-on with a 2007 Toyota Solara operated by Logan Dailey, age 31 of Louisville."

Three patients were transported via air medical to area trauma centers with critical injuries. Dailey was pronounced deceased at the scene by Washington County Coroner Len Benedict.

A passenger in Dailey's vehicle, Gerald Neal, age 35 of St. Catharine, was transported to the hospital with serious injuries.

Blanford, along with a juvenile in his vehicle, were also transported to the hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

Bond for Blanford was set at \$100,000 full cash.

County receives grant for Tucker Road Bridge

BY JANE REID KLEYN
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FRANKFORT – Last week Gov. Andy Beshear announced the latest round of funding recipients from the County and City Bridge Improvement Program, awarding \$6.5 million for 13 critical bridge projects across 12 Kentucky counties and the city of Hardin. The funding will repair, replace or preserve bridges to improve

safety, extend their lifespan and maintain important community links for Kentuckians.

Included in the awards was a grant to Marion County Fiscal Court of \$260,475 to repairs to the Tucker Road Bridge. On June 19, the fiscal court enacted an emergency declaration regarding the failing superstructure of the bridge. The bridge was closed earlier that week. County Judge-Executive David Daugherty said the emergency

declaration allows the county to begin construction without going through the normal bidding process meaning construction can start immediately without the time delay of advertising, taking bids, approving the final bid, and awarding the contract.

According to a press release from the Governor's office, nearly \$25 million has been awarded to local governments in the first year of the program to address bridges

that are closed, have posted traffic limitations, or in need of repair.

"Bridges link more than roads; they link Kentuckians to the places that matter most like school, work or health care," said Gov. Beshear. "This program keeps local bridges in a good state of repair so they can remain in service as safe and efficient connections for the families, first responders and businesses that rely on them."

This third round of awards funds:

10 new bridges that will replace existing structures.

3 bridges that will be repaired or preserved to extend the life of existing structures.

All 13 bridges are currently posted with weight restrictions or closed.

Each project was reviewed and validated by Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) engineers to ensure the most effective solutions.



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