

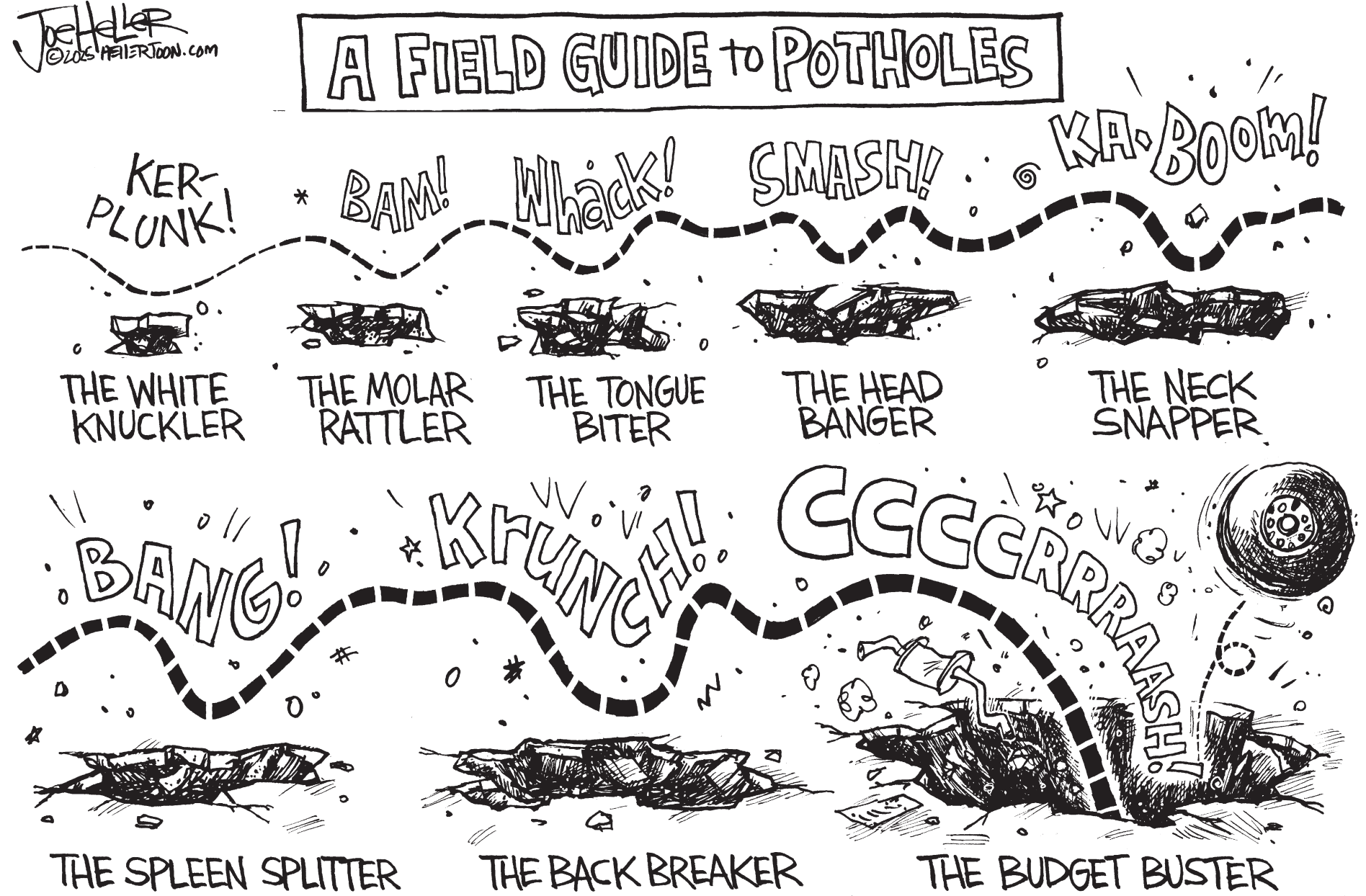
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OPINION

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Joe Heller
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FUTURE,

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project.

Working in concert with Louisville Gas and Electric (LG&E), the city hopes to switch the majority of its streetlights to LED bulbs.

In a resolution read by Russell Springs City Clerk Christopher Ramsey, the city is seeking to promote “energy efficiency, fiscal responsibility (and) enhancement of public safety” with the changeover.

Ramsey said only 67 of the city’s street lights utilize LED bulbs.

“The city desires to convert the remaining 635 street lights to LED in order to reduce long-term energy consumption and maintenance costs,” the resolution said.

The city’s current monthly bill for streets lights is approximately \$9,342, Ramsey said.

“The conversion to LED will result in a new, monthly bill for approximately \$9,868 for the first 60 months—which includes a conversion fee representing a temporary increase of \$526 a month,” he explained to the council. “After the initial, 60-month period, the monthly cost will decrease to to approximately \$7,779—resulting in a monthly savings of \$1,563 compared to the current billing rate.”

“The city is projected to reach the cost-savings, break-even point approximately 83 months (roughly five years) after the start of the LED conversion,” Ramsey said.

“Sounds like a win-win to me,” Councilman Cody Wilson said.

Veteran Councilman Timmy Hudson inquired about how many street lights the city currently has in operation.

“We have 702 street lights, total,” Ramsey answered.

“I think it sounds like a good idea,” Councilwoman Sherry Bottom-Daniel said.

“It’s going to save us money,” Wilson opined, and a made a motion, seconded by Bottom-Daniel, to accept the resolution.

The council voted unanimously in favor of the matter.

Mayor Thomas also delivered an enthusiastic and optimistic “State of the City Address.”

The annual report is as follows:

“As Mayor of the City of Russell Springs, I’m honored to deliver this year’s State of the City address. It’s an opportunity to reflect on the progress we’ve made, acknowledge the people who made it possible, and share our vision for the road ahead.

This past year has been one of growth, hard work, and quiet but meaningful victories. Across every department, our city team showed up, stepped up, and delivered for our residents.

—Our Water and Sewer Departments, led by Utilities Supervisor Allen McQueary, had an exceptional year. In 2024, they completed 183 water taps and 123 sewer taps, a reflection of the continued growth happening across our community. Perhaps most impressively, there were no violations from the Kentucky Division of Water. That level of excellence doesn’t happen by accident—it comes from careful planning, attention to detail, and a deep sense of responsibility to the people we serve.

—Our Fire Department has taken major steps forward. In 2024, the

Russell Springs Volunteer Fire Department responded to 422 calls for service, the most in our history. They also showed up for 40 community events, proving once again that our firefighters don’t just protect our city—they help build it. The department added new members, and I’m proud to report that two firefighters earned Level 1 certification while four others reached Level 2. Behind the scenes, we secured major upgrades—our first-ever ladder truck, brand-new radio equipment, and improved safety gear for our personnel. Much of this was made possible through state and federal grants, which allowed us to stretch our local dollars further while ensuring that our firefighters have the tools they need to stay safe and save lives.

—Our Police Department also had a strong and meaningful year, marked by moments of courage, compassion, and professionalism. We are proud to have a team that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Officers Brenton Llane, Clete McAninch, Vance Davis, and Mason Miniard were each recognized with awards for outstanding service. These commendations reflect the kind of dedication and heart that make a real difference in the lives of our residents. I want to personally thank Chief Bryan Shepard for his steady leadership and the culture of integrity and excellence he continues to foster within the department. The safety and trust of our community depend on the work of our officers, and this year they have once again earned both.

—Our Parks and Streets Department, under the steady leadership of Daniel Buster, focused this year on practical

improvements that make a big difference. The team continued work on our ballfields, made enhancements to the splash pad, and added a brand-new playground for families to enjoy. They’ve been out with the street sweeper, keeping our roads clean, and they’ve edged sidewalks and painted curbs on Main Street to enhance safety and appearance. During the winter months, they handled snow removal with efficiency and care. And in the spirit of the season, they brought fresh energy to our Christmas decorations with new light scenes that added joy to our community.

Economic development has also had a very busy year. Under the direction of our Economic Development Director, Jeramy Coffey, we have responded to more RFIs—requests for information—and conducted more site visits than ever before. That means Russell Springs is on the radar. Businesses are taking notice. Companies are asking questions and showing up to take a look around. This increased activity reflects not only our potential but also the confidence that investors are beginning to place in our community.

One area I’m especially excited about is the development taking shape behind Five Star. This is a project that we’ve had high hopes for, and now, it’s starting to become a reality. The first addition to that site will be the Shogun restaurant—a well-known and well-loved name that will bring new dining options, new jobs, and new energy to that part of town. It’s a sign of progress, and it’s just the beginning of what we believe will be a vibrant new commercial area for our city.

We’ve also been hard at work chasing down

opportunities to invest in our city’s future. Over the past year, we’ve pursued several grants that will directly improve water and sewer infrastructure and allow us to keep pace with growth while maintaining high service standards. We’re also seeking grants that will enhance quality of life—including funding for a new Par 3 golf course, which would be an exciting addition to our city park and provide another recreational outlet for residents and visitors alike. These efforts take time, coordination, and perseverance—and I want you to know that we’ve put in the work. We’ve traveled miles to Frankfort and to Washington, D.C., meeting with state and federal leaders, making our case, and asking for help. We’ve told the story of Russell Springs—the story of a small city with big dreams—and we’ll continue to show up, advocate, and push for the resources we need to keep moving forward.

At City Hall, we’ve also been making changes—important ones. We’re in the process of modernizing how our offices function and making city government more streamlined and accessible. Change is not always easy, and it’s certainly not always fast. But it is needed, and it is worth it. These improvements will help us serve our residents more efficiently, respond faster, and build a more professional, responsive local government.

None of this could happen without the people who keep City Hall running each and every day. I want to thank Chris, Tommy, Brian, Suzanne, Allie, Amy, and Justen—not just for their work, but for being the face of the City of Russell Springs. Whether it’s answering questions, helping residents, keeping records

straight, or making sure everything behind the scenes is handled, they are absolutely vital to city operations. I’m proud of the work they do, and I hope you’ll join me in thanking them for it.

All of these efforts—whether seen or unseen—contribute to a better quality of life for everyone who lives in Russell Springs. They reflect our commitment to maintaining a city that is clean, safe, welcoming, and forward-looking.

As we look to the future, our goals remain ambitious but grounded. We will continue investing in our infrastructure. We will keep pursuing outside funding wherever we can find it. And we will support the people and departments who make this city function day in and day out.

Before I close, I want to take a moment to thank everyone for your prayers and kind words during my recent health scare. It truly has been touching to know that so many of you were lifting me up in your thoughts and prayers. Your support meant more than you’ll ever know, and I am incredibly grateful to be here with you tonight, continuing the work we started together.

Russell Springs is growing. We are investing in ourselves, and in the people who call this place home. I believe our best days are still ahead, and I believe in the strength and spirit of our community.

I want to thank our City Council, our department heads and staff, and most of all, the citizens of Russell Springs for the trust you’ve placed in us.

It’s an honor to serve as your Mayor. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the City of Russell Springs.”