

OBITUARIES

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Rodney Ballenger

Rodney Lyle Ballenger, 72, of Somerset, Kentucky, passed away on April 6, 2026.

Born on January 7, 1954, and raised in Russell Springs, Kentucky, Rodney lived a life defined by hard work, resilience, and generosity. He spent many years serving his community through his role as Assistant Executive Director at Lake Cumberland Community Action Agency (LC-CAA), where he took pride in helping those in need throughout Pulaski County. Even after retirement, he remained dedicated to that mission, continuing to serve on the organization's Board of Directors.

Rodney was a man of sharp intellect and quiet curiosity, with a deep appreciation for mathematics, engineering, and the way the world worked. He was also a devoted father and grandfather who found great joy in his family. He shared a deep and loving bond with his wife, Vicki, and cherished the life they built together.

He is survived by his sons, Mark Kevin Ballenger and Matthew Brandon (Amanda) Ballenger; his grandson, Hunter Ballenger; and his brothers, Curtis (Gale) Ballenger and Glenn Ballenger, along with many nieces, nephews, and extended family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Rudolph and Margaret Ballenger; his brothers, Alan Ballenger and Dennis Ballenger; and his beloved wife, Vicki Ballenger.

A memorial service in his honor will be held on April 18, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET at Pulaski Funeral Home in Somerset, Kentucky.

Pulaski Funeral Home, 165 KY-2227, Somerset, KY 42503, (606) 678-4166



Republican supermajority overrides most of Kentucky governor's vetoes

SARAH LADD
AND MCKENNA HORSLEY
KENTUCKY LANTERN

FRANKFORT — The Kentucky General Assembly overrode most of Gov. Andy Beshear's vetoes on Tuesday, including the judicial branch budget and most of the two-year state budget.

Votes and floor speeches were largely along party lines. Democrats defended Beshear's vetoes as House Floor Leader Steven Rudy, R-Paducah, called one veto "petulant and unconstitutional" and Speaker Pro Tem David Meade, R-Stanford, said Beshear "just chooses not to follow the law because he doesn't want to."

Meanwhile, with just one day left in this year's regular session, the House and Senate are still trying to find agreement on a housing bill. Lawmakers sent Senate Bill 9 to a conference committee to hash out differences; it contains a number of proposals supported by housing advocates but also a controversial provision preventing local governments from regulating short-term rentals. A veto of the bill from Beshear would make SB 9 "dead" for the year because lawmakers would not have an opportunity to override the veto.

The legislature also moved forward with the judicial branch budget that the Administrative Office of the Courts has said would put the judicial branch in a deficit and drug, mental health and veteran courts at risk of closure. Beshear cited those concerns in his line-item vetoes of House Bill 504.

Majority Whip Jason Nemes, R-Louisville, called it "a responsible budget" and questioned the con-

cerns raised by the courts and Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert.

"The courts were treated more favorably than most areas of state government in this budget," Nemes said. "While all areas of state government face funding pressures at times, it remains the responsibility of agency leadership to prioritize core functions and manage resources accordingly."

He added: "Based on the information provided by both court and legislative budget staff, we do not believe the courts are facing the underfunding that has been suggested, and we will continue to work collaboratively with the Chief Justice and her staff to address any ongoing needs."

House Bill 500, the two-year state budget, had the most debate in the Senate Tuesday. Democratic Floor Leader Gerald Neal, of Louisville, highlighted the repeated "unfunded mandates" that Beshear had vetoed. Neal said that while "a lot of good things happen in this budget," Beshear continued to find unfunded mandates.

"I trust that the governor, and his scrutiny of this, raises concerns that this bill creates fiscal and policy uncertainties that could impact long term stability," Neal said. "We should be cautious. We should be cautious stewards of public resources."

In response, Republican Senate President Robert Stivers said that the line-item vetoes often encompass "things have been in the base budget for years." He renewed Republican criticism of the Beshear administration for not providing information to the legislature to make the budget.

"Who sets the priority of policy? Not the governor, not the Supreme Court, the General Assembly," Stivers said. "So, if you wanted to help yourself execute on our policy, why did you not give us the details of what you believe to be in the base? Because you don't want to be transparent. You want to spend the way you want to spend."

Sen. Karen Berg, another Louisville Democrat, slammed papers down on her desk toward the end of Stivers' comments. She then said that the budget does not fund the state's Medicaid costs in 2028 and argued that saying there are no unfunded mandates is "extraordinarily disingenuous."

Sen. Chris McDaniel, a Ryland Heights Republican who is the Senate's budget chair, said the governor's vetoes are "input into the process" and argued that it is the General Assembly's responsibility to enact appropriations while the executive branch executes the law.

"It is his job to find ways to appropriately effectuate it and to be efficient with it. And we can stand up here and debate whether things are and aren't funded all day, and we're probably all pretty firmly in our trenches," McDaniel said, adding that Kentucky's Medicaid costs have doubled by \$10 billion in the last decade.

Beshear had issued about two dozen vetoes Monday evening.

In the two-year state budget, lawmakers provided the Beshear administration with \$12 million over the next two years to implement a 2024 law to help kinship care families. It included a \$6 million appropriation for Senate Bill 151 for each fiscal year.

Resetting a Pandemic Friendship

Dear Annie: My neighbor and I became friendly during the pandemic.

We'd pick up things for each other at the grocery store, help water each other's plants, chat on our porches in the evening.

Somewhere along the way, she decided we were much closer than I did.

Now she'll drop by unannounced and even text things like, "I miss you, haven't seen you today!"

If I don't respond quickly.

This type of thing was fine when we were all locked at home, but we're not living in a pandemic anymore.

I'm too busy to entertain her all the time.

She's a really nice woman, but she's just... too much. I've tried hinting that I'm busy, but she doesn't seem to get it.

How do I create space without hurting someone who hasn't done anything wrong? — Neighborly, but Not Neighborly Enough

Dear Neighborly:

You changed your rhythm during COVID; you can change it again. Don't answer every knock or respond to every text message. When you see her, be polite but honest:

"I'm going to head inside for some down time," or "It's been great seeing you,



ANNIE'S
MAILBOX

Annie Lane

but I have some work to finish up."

Left unchecked, this will turn into resentment, and that's far more damaging than a little honest bound-

ary-setting now.

Dear Annie: I'm the maid of honor in my cousin's upcoming wedding, and I really *am* honored. I'm happy to do pretty much anything she needs. But I've been quietly dreading one part of the job: the speech. I am terrified of public speaking — not just nervous but heart-racing, hands-shaking, forget-my-own-name scared.

The bride keeps saying the speech isn't that big of a deal — just a few minutes to share a heartfelt memory or two. But it's not the content of the speech I'm worried about; it's the prospect of standing in front of nearly 200 people and having them all stare at me.

I want to support her and go through with this, but the thought of the speech is making me anx-

ious months in advance.

Is there a graceful way to step back from giving a speech without letting her down? — Shaking in Satin

Dear Shaking in Satin: You can step back — but you may also step into a regret that lasts longer than the speech ever would.

Most wedding speeches aren't remembered for polish; they're remembered for heart. Reframe the speech not as a perfor-

mance but as an opportunity to tell your cousin how much she means to you. Look right at her, not at the crowd. They'll blur. She'll remain in focus.

Stack the deck in your favor: keep it short, write it out and practice until it feels familiar. You might want to consider a course, such as the Dale Carnegie public speaking course, specifically designed to help people overcome public speaking fears.

If you truly don't want to deliver a speech, ask your cousin if there's something else you can do in its place — maybe a heartfelt letter or a video compilation.

But if some small part of you does want to speak, listen to that voice. Nerves can be loud. Regret is quieter, but it lingers.

"Out of Bounds: Estrangement, Boundaries and the Search for Forgiveness" is out now!

PUBLIC NOTICE

Todd A. Clayton, 402 East Mt. Vernon St. Somerset, KY 42501 hereby declares intention(s) to apply for a Retail Malt Beverage Drink License, Quota Retail Drink License, Special Sunday Retail Drink License, and Supplemental Bar License on April 16th, 2026. The business to be licensed will be located at 402 East Mt. Vernon St., Somerset, KY 42501 doing business as Makers Mill Somerset.

Owner, Todd A. Clayton of 402 E Mt Vernon St., Somerset, KY 42501.

Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the license by writing to the Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control 500 Mero St. 2NE33, Frankfort, KY 40601 within 30 days of the date of this legal publication.

Need Cash For Your Business?

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, a non-profit economic development organization, has been serving eastern Kentucky businesses for over 50 years. Our goal has been, and continues to be, to help homegrown, small business owners like you with the financing you need for expansion or to start a new business.

We have many types of loans from **\$500 to \$10 million** for businesses ranging from a small, family-owned startup to the most sophisticated manufacturer or service company.

We hope that you will stop by and see us when we are in your area to see how we can help you succeed. You can also call us at anytime at our offices in **London, Kentucky at 606-864-5175** and learn how we can help you with your business financing needs.

Come meet with a member of our staff:

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Pulaski County Public Library
Community Room

304 S. Main Street, Somerset, KY

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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