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Cost for new animal shelter increases by over \$100K

BY JANE REID KLEYN
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The cost to build the new animal shelter will be more than \$100,000 higher than anticipated.

Blevins Construction was awarded the contract for the construction of the new animal shelter in November and came back to the Marion County Fiscal Court on Thursday, Feb. 19, with a major revision to the contract.

Blevins stated that an error occurred causing a portion of the bid to not be included in the total bid amount. Stating that since it was an error on Blevins' part, some of the project was adjusted and the profit margin for Blevins removed from the bid. Even with these adjustments, a spokesperson for Blevins said the bid was still \$103,750 short. He requested the court

approve an adjustment in the contract. Magistrates looked at other previous bids for the project and approved the change to the contract.

Blevins said the animal shelter should be completed in eight to nine months.

Also at the court meeting, the Fiscal Court presented a \$1,000 check from the Kentucky County Judge Executive Association to the Marion County Heartland Coalition. Jessica Bickett accepted the check on behalf of the coalition.

The court also had multiple requests for funding from the county. The first came from Connie Rakes and Thomas Smith on behalf of the Bridge The Gap program for at risk teens. Another was presented by Emma Bamba of Lincoln Trail CASA program. Both were tabled until the next meeting to allow the court

to research each program before making commitments.

The court did approve two other requests. Desmond Spalding requested \$1,000 for the Marion County Youth Center to help fund ongoing programs and Cornbread Heritage Festival, Inc. also requested \$1,000. The funds would be used to help offset the cost of the Black History program. Both requests were unanimously approved by the magistrates.

Economic Development Director Brooklyn Leep informed the court that Marion County Economic Development has been approved for a \$2 million grant from the Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet for infrastructure at Crossroads Industrial Park on Veterans Memorial Highway.

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JANE REID KLEYN/The Lebanon Enterprise

Magistrates join County Judge Executive David Daugherty in presenting a check to Jessica Bickett and Brandon Wilson of the Marion County Heartland Coalition. Pictures are magistrates Jackie Fogle, Larry Mattingly, Judge Daugherty, Jessica Bickett, Brandon Wilson, magistrates Calab Buckman, Joe Pat Kirkland, and Craig Bishop.

House committee passes bill to modernize Kentucky's insurance laws

FRANKFORT — Last week, members of the House Standing Banking and Insurance Committee passed HB 527, a bill that would tighten insurance licensing rules and give regulators more power to police bad actors. This bill, sponsored by Representative Michael "Sarge" Pollock of Campbellsville, would update and clarify insurance statute and enforcement.

"Kentuckians deserve an insurance system that is transparent, accountable, and fair," said Pollock. "This legislation would update our insurance laws to ensure bad actors are held responsible while protecting consumers and maintaining confidence in the marketplace."

The bill ensures that individuals and businesses that sell, manage, or handle insurance in Kentucky are

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Photo courtesy of Legislative Research Commission

Representative Michael "Sarge" Pollock (right) confers with Representative Michael Meredith (left) before the House Standing Banking and Insurance Committee meets.

Three arrested, charged with child abuse

BY DENIS HOUSE
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Three people have been arrested following an indictment by a Marion County grand jury.

Karleon S. Dupree, 25, 4600 Tipsy Circle, #4201, Louisville, and Maria E. Gallegos, 24, 411 North Street, Lebanon, were arrested by Corporal Chris Young of the Lebanon Police Department on Feb. 18 at 1:02 a.m. at a location on West Mulberry Street, and charged with first-degree criminal abuse-child 12 or under, and first-degree wanton endangerment. A third individual,

Tedra Gallegos, 44, was also arrested.

The three appeared in Marion Circuit Court Division 1 on Feb. 19, where they pleaded not guilty to first-degree criminal abuse, child 12 or under, and three counts of first-degree wanton endangerment. Judge Todd Spalding ruled that as a condition of the bond reduction, they must have no violations of the law, no use of drugs or alcohol,



Maria E. Gallegos



Karleon S. Dupree

and no contact with the three children except under Cabinet supervision.

A pretrial conference was scheduled for April 16 at 9:00 a.m., and a jury trial was set for July 13 at 8:30 a.m.

Dupree and M. Gallegos were lodged in the Marion County Detention Center on \$50,000 cash bonds, later reduced to \$2,500 full cash. Gallegos made bond, while Dupree remains incarcerated.

Gone but never forgotten

BY JANE REID KLEYN
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Lt. Brian Hatt's sacrifice in the service of Marion County will not be forgotten as the Marion County Fiscal Court unanimously approved a resolution to designate a portion of KY 84 near Raywick in honor of Lt. Hatt.

Hatt, a volunteer firefighter with the Raywick Fire Department, was tragically killed on August 22, 2025. The Raywick Fire Department was responding to a fire in

Loretto when the tanker truck driven by Hatt wrecked, taking his life and seriously injuring fellow firefighter Leonard Winkler.

The resolution proclaims the portion of KY 84 from Sallie Ray Pike Road to 5815 Raywick Road is now designated as the Lt. Brian Hatt Memorial Highway.

The proclamation states, "Brian Hatt demonstrated extraordinary courage,

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Lt. Brian Hatt

Collins visit Frankfort with Friends of KET



Photo provided/AP Photo

Lebanon resident and Friends of KET member, Jamie Collins (wearing black sweater and glasses) recently met with members of the Kentucky General Assembly to thank them for supporting KET's programs and resources. As a member of the Friends of KET, Collins serves as a key connection to audiences across the Commonwealth.



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