

Heartland Coalition presents Renew & Recharge

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Good mental health is essential for overall well-being. With that statement in mind, the Marion County Heartland Coalition hosted the Renew & Recharge event at the Marion County Public Library on Saturday, February 21.

The event included education, self-care, and resources.

The education portion included information on Credible Mind, suicide awareness and prevention, mental health and counseling, nutrition on a budget, and grief counseling.

Self-care provided chair massages, chair yoga, tips on meditation and breathing,



Photo by Amanda Knopp

Morgan Trigg, SNAP-Ed Program Assistant for the Marion County Cooperative Extension Service provides education at the Heartland Coalition's Renew & Recharge event on Saturday, February 21.

and painting for joy. the event was informative and well received with a very good turnout of community residents for the event.

Kentucky to host largest annual "Archery in the Schools" state tournaments

More than 9,200 student archers from more than 400 Kentucky schools will compete

FRANKFORT — Kentucky will host the nation's largest annual school archery tournaments March 13-14, 2026, as 9,241 student archers from 415 schools are expected to compete in the Kentucky National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Bullseye Tournament. More than 3,000 of those students are also competing in the NASP State 3D Tournament.

Held at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville since 2016, the tournament has grown into one of the largest state-level sporting competitions held anywhere.

The in-school, co-ed program introduces students in grades 4-12 to international-style target archery. Students learn archery as part of their school curriculum and are then eligible to compete in school-hosted events for the opportunity to qualify for state and national tournaments. Each year, more than 160,000 Kentucky students learn archery during the school day as part of their physical education curriculum, and approximately 17,000 compete in Kentucky school-hosted NASP tournaments as part of after-school teams.

In 2002, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources debuted NASP in Kentucky with 21 pilot schools and it has since expanded to more than 900 schools statewide. Nationally, approximately 1.2 million students from more than 9,500 schools participate annually. Since its inception, NASP has put a bow and arrow in the hands of more than 18 million students and has awarded nearly \$5.4 million in cash scholarships to more than 2,000 students.

"Nationally, 50% of student archers say archery in the schools was their first archery experience and 90% of kids learning archery as part of their curriculum said they love it," said Lisa Johnson, state NASP coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Schools embrace NASP programming because archery is a sport that fits within their curriculum at relatively inexpensive cost. Archery is naturally inclusive of all students irrespective of physical traits and has a near

50%-50% male to female ratio. It doesn't surprise me to see how many kids love archery."

The 2026 Kentucky NASP state championships will feature two competitions: a traditional bullseye tournament, where archers shoot at a multi-ringed target, and a 3D tournament, where archers shoot at six lifelike foam targets representing various North American game animals. Top-scoring teams and individual archers will advance to the NASP Eastern Nationals scheduled May 7-9, 2026, also at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

The state tournament will take place in the North Wing, South Wing A-C, and the East Hall, with competition flights starting daily at 9:30 a.m. (EDT) on both Friday and Saturday, March 13-14. Spectator admission is free. Parking is \$15 per vehicle and \$30 per bus.

Elementary, middle and high school archers will compete for individual and team honors. The top senior boys and girls from the bullseye and 3D championship will be awarded scholarships from \$500 to \$1000 to the postsecondary school of their choice. Additionally, 10 senior academic archers will be randomly selected to receive \$500 scholarships.

All Kentucky NASP archers and teams are encouraged to participate in the 3rd Annual "Archers Aiming to Reduce Hunger" food drive to support Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry and Feeding America Kentucky's Heartland to help relieve hunger in Kentucky communities. Participating archers are asked to bring one can or boxed food item. Donations will be collected in the South Wing lobby near the team registration desk.

Kentucky NASP coaches, alumni and friends of NASP will also have an opportunity to participate in a tournament of their very own. Centershoot Ministries will be set up in South Wing A for these adults to have an opportunity to compete for fun. Proceeds will go to community archery outreach programs.

Complete tournament results will be available online at NASP Tournaments. For more information, visit the National Archery in the Schools Program webpage on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website (fw.ky.gov), or call the department's Information Center at 1-800-858-1549, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (EDT) weekdays, excluding holidays.

New license plate reflects Kentucky agriculture pride

'Friends of Agriculture' plate proceeds will go toward the 'Ag Tag' fund

FRANKFORT — Kentucky drivers can now show their appreciation for the state's agriculture community with a new license plate. The "Friends of Agriculture" special license plate is now available for all vehicles, Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell has announced.

"Kentucky is beautiful, and Kentucky agriculture is a special way of life for many," Commissioner Shell said. "This new plate allows everyone to showcase their appreciation for farming and all it brings to this state and community. It's a simple way to show your pride and enthusiasm for the agricultural lifestyle."

The new plate was made possible after House Bill 157 (HB 157), which was sponsored by Reps. Ken Upchurch, Adam Moore, and Mitch Whitaker, passed during the 2025 legislative session. HB 157 expands the eligibility for an agriculture special license plate. Before its passage the previous agricultural special license plate was only applicable for those with a qualified farm vehicle.

The "Friends of Agriculture" plate does not replace the farm plate. The new plate is an additional way for individuals to show their pride in Kentucky agriculture, but don't qualify for the farm plate.

FFA and 4-H members from across the state submitted designs for the new



plate. The final plate design features a scenic rolling hills farmland highlighted with an image of the flag of the United States in the corner.

The design was inspired by the submitted artwork from two students, Caden Penn, a sophomore and FFA member at Crittenden County High School, and Alyssa Woodard, a sophomore and FFA and 4-H Club member of Henderson County High School. Each student received a \$250 award for their winning submission.

Penn, 16, the son of Jessica and Brian Penn, said he was excited to use his graphic design skills to create a license plate that he could put on his own truck.

Woodard, 16, the daughter of Heather and Bill Woodard, incorporated the American flag in her design because she loves the meaning behind it and its classic red, white, and blue color scheme.

"As long as I can remember, I've used it when making things," she said. "I used the American flag in the background to add some personality."

The purchase and renewal of the special license plate include a \$10 fee that will go into the "Ag Tag" fund and be divided equally among Kentucky 4-H, Kentucky FFA, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), the organizations that provide for Kentucky's agricultural

future.

Through the years, Kentucky's farm license plate, through a \$10 voluntary donation, has raised millions for the Ag Tag fund and agricultural endeavors. 4-H councils used Ag Tag dollars to provide 4-H camp scholarships and travel for life-changing educational experiences to enable local 4-H youth to grow as leaders and engaged citizens. FFA chapters used the money to meet the greatest needs in their community, such as FFA jackets for students in need or helping cover travel costs to leadership events.

KDA uses its portion for various programs such as the Ag Athlete of the Year awards, the Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award, Kentucky Women in Agriculture, the University of Kentucky Grain and Forage Center of Excellence, and the Farm to School Stars program that rewards Kentucky schools for using Kentucky food products in meals.

Proceeds from the new plate, which can be purchased by anyone, not just those who qualify for a farm plate, will be used in the same way as the traditional "Ag Tag" funds.

The new plate, which can be personalized, is available for purchase at County Clerk offices across the state or on the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's website.

2026-2027 Kentucky fishing and hunting licenses available

New license year for outdoor recreation in Kentucky begins March 1

FRANKFORT — The 2026-2027 Kentucky license year for fishing, hunting, boating and more begins on Sunday, March 1, 2026. Outdoor enthusiasts are able to purchase all the licenses, tags and permits they need to enjoy Kentucky's outdoors through the end of February 2027.

Licenses and permits are sold online through the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resource's License Sales portal and the My Profile app, both searchable on the department's website at fw.ky.gov. Licenses and permits also are sold at agent locations across the state. A list of license agent locations by county is available on the department's website.

The 2026-2027 license and permit fees will remain the same as the current license year ending Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. License and permit fees for the 2025-2026 license year were increased slightly across the board in January 2026 following a new, inflation-based pricing system measured on the Consumer Price

Index (CPI), the national measure of inflation calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Federal Duck Stamp and application fees were exempt from CPI adjustments.

In Kentucky, a license covers basic hunting or fishing for many species, whereas additional state permits are required when pursuing specific species, such as fishing for trout or hunting for migratory birds, deer, wild turkey or black bear. Sportsmen's-type licenses include multiple species permits as well as basic hunting and fishing privileges.

For newcomers to all the great outdoor opportunities that Kentucky has to offer, a reduced-cost sportsman's license is now available for resident first-time buyers. Only individuals who have not purchased an annual Kentucky hunting or fishing license - or a combination license that includes an annual license - since 1996 are eligible. The \$37 license includes a resident hunting and fishing license, spring turkey permit, fall turkey permit, trout permit, state migratory bird and waterfowl permit and statewide deer permit.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife provides a number of resources to assist avid outdoor enthusiasts and newcomers alike with information on waterbodies,

public lands, fishing and hunting education and all the regulations to help anglers and hunters make the most of their time outdoors via its website and the hunting and fishing guides it produces annually. This includes the new Fishing and Boating Guide available online and in print.

Another great resource is the Fish Boat KY app. Available free from the Apple App Store and Google Play, the app helps anglers find waterbodies, boat ramps and other water access from the palm of their hand. Users can also search by species of fish, store copies of their licenses, and much more using the smartphone app.

The department receives its primary funding through revenue raised by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and permits, as well as federal excise taxes generated by the sale of recreational firearms and ammunition, archery gear and fishing equipment.

For questions, the public may refer to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Licenses webpage or type "Licenses" into the search bar on the agency website (fw.ky.gov), or contact the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Information Center at 800-858-1549 or at info.center@ky.gov, weekdays 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Eastern), except holidays.

Red Cross offers free A1C testing for blood donors

Successful donations will receive free testing in March, \$15 Amazon Gift Card by email for coming to give March 1-31

The American Red Cross urges donors to help the national blood supply recover from a severe blood shortage and empower their health by making an appointment to give blood or platelets in March. As a thank-you for helping save lives, successful donations will receive free A1C testing, commonly used to screen for prediabetes and diabetes, in March (one result per calendar year).

New Red Cross data reveals 1 in 5 blood donors have elevated A1C levels — a sign that prediabetes and diabetes are prevalent among adults in generally good health. The findings are based on the first year of free A1C screening offered by the Red Cross, which provided results to more than 920,000 blood donors nationwide over three testing periods in 2025. Among donors with elevated A1C levels, 80% had readings indicating prediabetes — a condition that can often

be reversed through lifestyle changes such as a balanced diet and regular exercise.

"Too many people still face gaps in access to preventive care, and the Red Cross is proud to help close them by giving our 2.5 million blood and platelet donors easy access to essential health information, like their blood sugar levels," said Dr. Courtney Lawrence, Red Cross medical director. "By giving blood and downloading our Blood Donor App, individuals can be informed and empowered to better manage and advocate for their health."

The A1C test does not require fasting and provides an average blood sugar level over the past three months. Visit RedCrossBlood.org, use the Red Cross Blood Donor App or call 1-800-RED CROSS to schedule your March donation appointment. All who come to give blood, platelets or plasma March 1-31, 2026, will also receive a \$15 Amazon Gift Card by email. See RedCrossBlood.org/March for details.

Donating blood in March is part of Red Cross Month, a national campaign that encourages people to deliver support when help can't wait by also making a financial donation, volunteering or taking a lifesaving skills class.

ECTC Fall 2025 President's and Dean's Lists

ELIZABETHTOWN - ECTC has announced the Fall 2025 President's and Dean's Lists. Earning those honors from Marion County are:

PRESIDENT'S LIST - FULL-TIME

Courtney Collins, John Followell, Joseph Hall, Autumn Hill, Kaylee Leake, Kendra Lyvers, Joseph Mattingly, Dawson McCarty, Brandon Miles, Levi Newton, Charles Spurlock, Mary Wilkerson

PRESIDENT'S LIST - PART-TIME

Matthew Batchter, Nia Flowers, Dylan Hall, Cole Hayden, Larry Lanham, Chloe Leake, Ann Mattingly, Madison Mattingly, Ashton Mattingly, Nicholas Orberon, Katrinka Purdom, Joshua Raney, Payten Smith, Emily

Wathen

DEAN'S LIST - FULL-TIME

Ana Pilar Alvarez, William Ballard, Aaron Bickett, Marli Filiatreau, Lani Gribbins, Alexander Hernandez, Macy Keeling, John Lee, Shaylin Logan, John Mattingly, Joshua Mills, Breanna Moore, Roland Oakes, Leslie Pittman, Morgan Ried, Jewel Ritchie, Jack Smothers, Ian Thomas, Andrew Thomas, Nathan Tungate, Tristan Whitlock, James Withrow

DEAN'S LIST - PART-TIME

Shane Bartley, Summer Blanford, Savannah Clark, Brandy Douglas, Celeste Franklin, Addison Gordon, Michael Gribbins, James Lucas, Johnnica Luckett, Haley Mattingly, Christopher Mattingly

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