

2025, Year in Review part 3...



Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Joseph Billman, left, is administered the oath of office by Vanceburg City Attorney Stephen McGinnis at the conclusion of a special meeting of Vanceburg City Council to fill the unexpired term of Dane Blankenship who stepped down.

October 21, 2025

Billman will complete unexpired Vanceburg mayor's term in office. Vanceburg City Council has appointed longtime law enforcement officer Joe Billman as mayor to complete the unexpired term of Dane Blankenship, who submitted his resignation from the position on October 11. Plans Board hears audit report, project updates. Members of the Vanceburg Electric Plant Board met last week to hear an annual audit presentation and receive updates on current and upcoming utility projects. Dummitt jailed in Scioto County. Kelly F. Dummitt has been arrested in Scioto County, Ohio, on probation violation charges and a warrant for failure to appear in court. Dummitt, 26, who had been lodged in the Montgomery County Detention Center, was released from that facility on September 16 for "Minimum Expiration," according to records. She had finished serving the minimum time required on an earlier sentence and was released from custody. Dummitt had been returned to the Montgomery County facility in November 2024 following a mistrial in Lewis Circuit Court. Moore named Sheriff of the Year. Shelby County Sheriff Mark Moore, a Lewis County native, has been named the 2025 Kentucky Sheriff of the Year by the Kentucky Sheriffs Association. His parents were the late Clarence and Delours Moore of Garrison. The honor, presented during the association's annual conference in Bowling Green, recognizes exceptional service, leadership, and dedication to public safety. For Moore, the award carries special meaning because it comes from his peers, those who serve in sheriff's offices across Kentucky.

October 28, 2025

County awarded \$237K Wildfire Defense Grant. Lewis County Fiscal Court has been awarded \$237,460 from the USDA Forest Service under the federal Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program, a key step toward developing a comprehensive wildfire-protection strategy for the county. The ceremonial presentation took place Thursday in Frankfort, where Gov. Andy Beshear formally announced the funding during his Team Kentucky Update. Chaney named to Hall of Fame. A lifetime of service, leadership, and dedication to the fire service was recognized Saturday, October 18, as Carl Chaney of Black Oak was inducted into the Buffalo Trace Firefighters Association Hall of Fame. Chaney becomes the latest Lewis Countian to receive the prestigious honor, joining fellow Lewis County Hall of Fame members James "Bubbles" Switzer, Gary Thomas, Arthur Stafford, and Marty Strong. With some 48 years of service, Chaney is widely regarded as one of Lewis County's most committed fire service leaders. Howard urges facts, civility, & readiness. Trace Creek Construction founder and CEO Sam

Howard told Lewis County Fiscal Court that the county is seeing a "definite shift" in the number and size of economic-development inquiries. During the October meeting of the court, he asked local leaders and citizens to lean into facts, civility, and readiness as opportunities advance. Howard, whose firm is headquartered in Vanceburg, said Trace Creek has spent years promoting Lewis County directly to site selectors and companies. Trick-or-Treat is Friday. Trick-or-Treat night for Vanceburg and all of Lewis County has been set for Friday, October 31, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

November 4, 2025

Governor puts \$5 million into food banks. Gov. Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency Friday and directed \$5 million from the state's budget reserve trust fund to food banks that are part of the Feeding Kentucky network. This came on the same day a federal judge ruled that the US Department of Agriculture's decision to halt funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during the government shutdown is illegal. Dillow is candidate for magistrate. Dear Voters of Lewis County District #3, For those of you that don't know me I am Kathy Everman Dillow and I have declared my candidacy to become your Magistrate for District #3. I am the daughter of Jim Everman of Garrison and Ethel Mae Anderson Everman of Firebrick. My husband Rusty and I live on Montgomery Road in the Garrison community. Fiscal court meets. Lewis County Fiscal Court heard from representatives on several projects and initiatives underway in the county, including recreation development, emergency management updates, and statewide leadership appointments for Sheriff Johnny Bivens. Celebration to honor Pedersen. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will host its 21st Star Spangled Celebration on Friday, November 14, honoring veterans, with Tollesboro resident Steve Pedersen among those being recognized. The program will take place at Fields Auditorium on the campus of Maysville Community and Technical College.

November 11, 2025

City to sell George Morgan Thomas House. Vanceburg City Council has voted to sell the historic George Morgan Thomas House, a landmark structure that has served as a private residence, a hotel, a community museum, and most recently the city's official visitor center. Council members took up the matter during their regular meeting last Monday evening, the first meeting presided over by Mayor Joe Billman, who was appointed to complete the unexpired term of former Mayor Dane Blankenship. Mayor Billman chairs first council meeting. Vanceburg City Council met in regular session last week, the first meeting for Mayor Joe Billman, who was appointed to

portunity for Lewis Countians to share what matters most to them and their families. Burkeroe is Red Cross Rookie of the Year. American Red Cross Kentucky Region volunteer and Rookie of the Year Award recipient Mary “Enie” Burkeroe has spent the last year offering help to various people and places in need.

November 25, 2025

Lewis is Recovery Ready Community. Gov. Andy Beshear announced Thursday that Lewis County has been officially certified as a Recovery Ready Community, expanding addiction treatment and recovery resources to the county's residents. The certification was celebrated in Frankfort during the Governor's Team Kentucky Update, where members of the Lewis County Recovery Ready Committee joined Gov. Beshear for the announcement. Critical need for foster volunteers. With volunteer numbers critically low in Lewis and surrounding counties, Citizen Foster Care Review Boards are calling for immediate community support to help review the cases of children in foster care. CFCRB volunteers provide essential oversight and recommendations that directly impact a child's safety, well-being and permanency. Plant Board projects are moving forward. The Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg is moving forward on several major operational and administrative initiatives, Superintendent Bill Tom Stone reported during the board's November meeting. The update covered ongoing system improvements, personnel updates, regional project coordination, and upcoming needs within the utility departments. Dog concerns addressed at meeting. Lewis County Fiscal Court met in regular session, working through an agenda that included recognitions, grant presentations, road and bridge matters, board appointments, and dog concerns brought forward by citizens. Faith Walje expressed her concerns of what she called a pack of four pit bull dogs in her neighborhood causing concern for her and some others. Walje said she would work with Magistrate Mark Horsley in an effort to address her concerns. Mike Stone addressed court members concerning high adoption fees at the dog shelter and the need for more assistance at the facility.

December 2, 2025

Agencies participate in weather exercise. Several local agencies gathered recently for a Tornado Tabletop Exercise (TTX) designed to test Lewis County's ability to respond to a destructive storm event. The session, held at the Lewis County Extension Office, simulated a fast-moving April tornado impacting neighborhoods west



Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Gary Kidwell, The Old Right Handers, passed away Saturday in Vanceburg after a long journey with dementia. Sen. Robin Webb says he was a “media icon.”

of Vanceburg. The exercise was facilitated by Lewis County Emergency Management and prepared in coordination with the National Weather Service office in Wilmington, Ohio. Sheriff Bivens files for re-election. I am humbled and grateful to announce that I, Johnny Bivens, will be seeking re-election as Lewis County Sheriff in 2026. Since being elected Sheriff in 2010, I have overseen many positive implementations within the Sheriff's Office. We have modernized tax collections, created a Chaplaincy Program, created the first dual-purpose canine program, and currently have two certified handlers and K-9s on patrol. One airlifted following ATV rollover incident. A rollover involving an off-road buggy left one person injured and prompted an air-medical response on Thanksgiving Day, according to Sheriff Johnny Bivens. The incident occurred near Briery Creek Road, on a steep hill known as Undeclared, shortly before 4:00 p.m. Following patient transfer, emergency units remained on scene to assist with cleanup, incident documentation, and area safety until the helicopter cleared the area. Parade schedule will keep Santa busy. Lewis County will ring in the holiday season with three community Christmas parades across the county leading up to the big day, each offering its own blend of seasonal traditions, decorated floats, and family-friendly celebration.

December 9, 2025

Board of Ed meets in regular session. The Lewis County Board of Education met in regular session outlining academic progress goals, approving guidance for the superintendent search process, and taking action on safety and district financing matters. Board members reviewed organizational mission statements emphasizing grade-level achievement, annual academic growth, and college

and career readiness for graduating students. Mark Horsley is candidate for re-election. Since elected as Lewis County Magistrate for District 4 in January 2023, I have worked diligently and with the highest integrity to represent the residents of District 4 and citizens of Lewis County. Today, I am pleased to announce that I have officially filed for re-election as Magistrate for District 4 in the 2026 election. Eddie Gayheart is candidate for magistrate. I was born and raised right here in Lewis County. My earliest memories come from these back roads, school halls, ball-fields, and the people who make this place feel like home. This county shaped me through hard work, strong families, and neighbors who look out for each other. I have taken a meaningful step for myself and my community: I officially filed to run for Magistrate for District 3. Crackdown continues on telephone robocalls. An investigation into four of the country's largest voice providers to further crack down on the robocalls that pester Kentucky families, said Attorney General Russell Coleman on Friday. As part of an ongoing investigation, the bipartisan Anti-Robocall Multi-state Litigation Task Force, which is led by state attorneys general from across the country, has directed Inteliquent, Bandwidth, Lumen, and Peerless to stop transmitting suspected illegal robocalls across their networks.

December 16, 2025

Board of Ed meeting showcases students. The Lewis County Board of Education handled a wide range of instructional, operational and facilities matters during its December meeting, while also scheduling a special session later in the week to address calendar and personnel issues. Thompson to retire as KPA chief. David Thompson is retiring as executive director

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