

Sewage backs up into city hall

BY CHARLIE VANLEUVEN
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Workers at Liberty City Hall were surprised and disgusted on Tuesday, Feb. 4, when sewage started flowing out of the toilet and into the office. Cleaning, decontaminating, and the reconstruction of walls and flooring are underway, but will close the building to the public for at least the next three weeks.

Akins Excavating Company, Inc., of Corbin was conducting work related to the Phase 1 sewer rehabilitation project on Middleburg Street when something went wrong.

“They were slip-lining the (sewer) line right in front of city hall, on Middleburg Street, and sewage starting coming in,” said Bridgett Blake, City Clerk.

She said she ran outside to tell the workers about the problem and they appeared shocked.

Blake said that she doesn’t believe that anyone fully understands how this happened.

The flow of the sewage impacted the city council chambers and the Liberty Tourism and Convention Commission office the most. Carpet and furniture that touched the sewage will be replaced, along with two feet of drywall along the floor.

A cleaning company was called in, and the process began immediately to dry and disinfect the building.

In the meantime, paperwork and documents at Liberty Tourism has been moved. Tourism Director Heather Cundiff and Assistant Director Shelby Hatter in a Feb. 6 meeting with the Liberty Tourism and Convention Commission asked for advice as to where they could temporarily relocate.

The board agreed that Cundiff could utilize discretionary spending to temporarily relocate operations of Tourism.

Those working in city hall that weren’t impacted as much are still working inside the building.

Meanwhile the Liberty City Council meeting was moved to the Casey County Judicial Center. Those needing to pay utility bills or other city business must go through the drive through, make payment by phone, or use the drop box.

Tourism and the City of Liberty are working with their insurance companies, along with Akins’ insurance company, to rectify the situation.

Blake said that the resulting cost wouldn’t impact the city’s budget.

“It shouldn’t impact the city financially in any way,” she said.



By Allen Sparr

The carpet was being torn out of the Liberty Tourism and Convention Commission office in this photo. Sewage backed up and into Liberty City Hall on Feb. 4, which created an unsanitary and disgusting mess. City hall will be closed to the public while repairs are made.

Widespread illness shuts schools

BY CHARLIE VANLEUVEN
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Widespread cases of respiratory illness, like influenza, RSV and COVID-19 led Casey County School District officials on Wednesday night to call off in-person classes until Monday.

In a message to parents, Superintendent Barry Lee said that student and staff absences, along with concerns for public health, drove the decision.

“The decision was made to prioritize the health and well-being of our school community. During this closure, all school facilities will undergo thorough cleaning and sanitation to prepare for our students to return on Monday,” he wrote.

The district utilized NTI day #7 and #8 for Thursday and Friday. It has in total

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Small animal club



By Charlie VanLeuven/cvanleuven@caseynews.net

Zeke Lowe feeds lambs some milk at the Feb. 3 4-H Small Animal Club event at the Casey County Extension Office’s Education Room. The lambs, named “Snow,” “Cookie,” and “Moose,” are owned by Gayle Blevins.

Unemployment rate up nearly 2% over prior year

BY CHARLIE VANLEUVEN
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The unemployment rate in Casey County jumped 1.7% from December 2023 to December 2024, rising from 3.7% to 5.4%.

According to a Jan. 30 release from the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency with the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, the unemployment rate—people who are actively looking for jobs—increased to 363 people in Casey County, a rate of 5.4% of the labor force.

This is an increase of a half of a% from the prior month, or from 4.9% in November 2024 to 5.4% in December.

The increase in unemployment follows a statewide trend. All 120 counties in the Commonwealth saw an increase in unemployment, according to the release.

The county with the highest unemployment rate was Martin County in Eastern Kentucky, with 12.4%. The

county with the lowest unemployment rate was Woodford County in Central Kentucky with 3.8%.

The statewide average was 5.1%.

For Casey County’s region, called the “Lake Cumberland” region, the average was 5.8%. The county with the highest unemployment in the region, McCreary County, was 7.0%. The lowest was Cumberland County with 4.3%.

Casey County was fourth lowest in the region with 5.4%. The counties in the region with better rates were Cumberland, Taylor (4.6%), and Green (4.8%).

Neighboring counties not in the region included Adair 5.9%, Marion 4.1%, Boyle 5.5%, Lincoln 6.9%, Pulaski 6.1%, and Russell 6.6%.

According to the release, the month-over-month unemployment rate doesn’t accurately reflect seasonal or holiday employment, and a more accurate comparison is

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Tourism commission gets updates, picks candidates for replacement

BY CHARLIE VANLEUVEN
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The Liberty Tourism and Convention Commission in a Feb. 6 meeting, heard Director Heather Cundiff’s report on projects, grants, and tax revenue, approved paying for the July 4 fireworks, and also approved three names for a potential new board member.

Cundiff in the directors report announced that the December restaurant tax receipt total was \$29,294.48. This was a \$1,443.30 increase, 4.3%, over the prior year. This continues a trend for tourism. November was 9.36% above the prior year and October was 9.37% above the prior year.

A 3% tax on transactions at restaurants is the primary revenue generator of tourism. The anticipated budgeted revenue for the year is \$367,000. For the six months July through December, Tourism had received \$194,651.

Other revenues include grants.

Cundiff reported that \$720,000 of total grant funding was made available for towns

that were certified as Kentucky Trail Towns, which Liberty-Casey County gained in 2022. She has applied for grant funding, which would go toward developing and improving outdoor recreation.

The federal pause on grants caused some concern but she learned that everything was still in process.

“I have not gotten any word yet on that (trail town grant),” Cundiff said. “Of course with all this grant scare of things being cancelled, there was at least a full day thinking that all of our grants and the land and water conservation fund (grant for the Lake Liberty Park) was just indefinitely halted. However, everything’s going forward as best we know.”

Related to the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for \$200,000, Cundiff said that Tourism has worked with its engineer to redesign the Lake Liberty Park project.

“Now I feel like it’s going to be within budget and we’re getting ready to go to rebid,” she said.

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BRIEFS

Happenings

• The Liberty-Casey County Chamber of Commerce will hold its monthly luncheon at 12 p.m. Feb. 12 in the Pork Producers building at the Central Kentucky Ag/Expo Center in Liberty.

Public meetings

• There will be a public hearing at 4:45 p.m. Feb. 17 on whether to remove Shannon Drive from the county road inventory in the Casey County Judicial Center.

• The Casey County Fiscal Court will meet at 5 p.m. Feb. 17 in the Casey County Judicial Center.

• A Farmers Market Board Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Feb. 18. Location is to be determined.

• The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Liberty-Casey County Economic Development Authority would be at 5 p.m. Feb. 24.

OBITUARIES







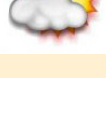
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WEATHER

	TODAY Rain High: 47 Low: 30
	THURSDAY Cloudy High: 35 Low: 19
	FRIDAY Partly Cloudy High: 45 Low: 37
	SATURDAY Rain High: 55 Low: 40
	SUNDAY Wintery mix High: 43 Low: 23
	MONDAY Partly cloudy High: 39 Low: 26
	TUESDAY Partly cloudy High: 48 Low: 37



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