

REVIEW

From A1

Stephen Centers, 27, of Roots Branch, was charged with three counts of attempted murder, attempted first-degree assault, and second-degree assault following the incident on Roots Branch Road. The attacks reportedly occurred just after the family had returned home from church.

- Family, friends, and former students are mourning the tragic loss of a beloved retired educator, Ms. Sherri Smith, who was killed late Friday night when severe weather swept through southeastern Kentucky. Smith, a longtime English teacher at Clay County High School, was struck by flying debris at her home in London around 11:30 p.m. during the violent storm.

- "We dodged a bullet." That was the assessment from Clay County Sheriff Patrick Robinson after a powerful tornado devastated parts of neighboring Laurel County late Friday night, narrowly missing Clay County as it tracked eastward.

Sheriff Robinson, along with several deputies, traveled to London to assist with search and recovery efforts following the deadly storm. While the destruction in Laurel County was severe, Robinson acknowledged how close Clay County came to a similar fate.

Meteorologists had warned that the tornado was traveling in a straight line along the Hal Rogers Parkway from London, putting Clay County directly in its projected path. Many residents across the county reported hearing the "roar" of the storm in the skies overhead.

- The Tiger basketball family lost one of its greatest athletic icons on Saturday with the passing of Ray Mills, a basketball standout whose name has long been etched into the foundation of the county's winning basketball tradition. Mills, a 2004 inductee into the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame, was 91.

- Clay County's oldest citizen and Kentucky's oldest living World War II veteran, Oakley Hacker, passed away peacefully on Monday, May 12, at the age of 108. A proud U.S. Navy veteran and lifelong Kentuckian, Hacker's life spanned more than a century and included firsthand witness to some of the most pivotal moments in American and world history.

- In a landmark move for education in Clay County, the Board of Education has approved the largest employee pay raise in district history, granting a 5% salary increase for certified employees and a \$1.50 per hour raise for classified staff.

•JUNE 2025

-The Clay County Day's Festival returned with a large crowd in downtown Manchester.

- Mayor Steve Collins and the City of Manchester have secured a \$1,000,000 grant from Environmental Protection Agency for installation of a new 100,000 gallon fresh water storage tank. This tank will be instrumental in serving the residents of Manchester. The current water system covers over 330 miles and serves several critical facilities including Advent Health. This project was a joint effort with the City of Manchester, Advent Health Manchester and Cumberland Valley Area Development District.

• JULY 2025

- A peaceful but pointed standoff unfolded in downtown Manchester on Friday as two sharply divided groups gathered to voice their opposing views in a display of political activism that drew dozens of onlookers and heavy traffic.

- The City of Manchester has secured \$2 million in state funding to support major upgrades to its water treatment facility and river pump system, thanks to the efforts of Senate President Robert Stivers and State Representative Derek Lewis.

- Despite growing rumors and online speculation, local hospital officials are firmly denying claims that AdventHealth Manchester will be shutting its doors under a newly proposed federal policy.

- Aaron Asher, who served as principal of Big Creek Elementary during the 2024-25 school year, has been named the new principal of Paces Creek Elementary.

- In a historic tribute to nearly five decades of gridiron glory, Clay County High School has unveiled the inaugural class of its new Tiger Football Wall of Fame. The first eight honorees, selected unanimously by a special committee, will be formally inducted at halftime of the Tigers' first home game on September 5.

The inductees are: Dr. E.P. "Jake" Mobley; Terry Wilson; Eugene Hensley; Victor Hyland; Michael Todd Walker; Zach Lewis; Sean Pennington; DeShae Henson.

• AUGUST 2025

-Justin Begley won the Big Hickory Invitational Championship. Deron Sizemore won the 1st Flight; Charles Lucas 2nd Flight; and Zach Patterson 3rd Flight.

- Years of planning, persistence and investment came to life Monday night as members of the Clay County Board of Education toured the newly completed Clay County Technology Center, a \$15 million facility that will serve generations of students in the county. The evening was marked by pride and gratitude as the Board formally dedicated the building to two instrumental figures in its development: longtime Board member Leewood Cornett and former member Norman Cornett. Both men were honored with plaques recognizing their lasting contributions to the county's educational progress.

-Tyler Culver was named the new principal at Big Creek Elementary

- The city of Manchester is mourning the sudden loss of one of its most beloved community figures, Lida Becknell, co-owner of Rebecca Leigh Accents and a longtime local supporter known for her unmatched eye for design and her giving spirit. Becknell died in her sleep Thursday at her home in East Manchester.

- A longtime magistrate and feature writer for the Enterprise is mourning the loss of their son due to a tragic vehicle accident Saturday. Cashton Warren, 19, son of Sixth District Magistrate Bill Warren and Enterprise Feature Writer and Columnist Melissa Garrison, was killed in a one-vehicle accident in

Laurel County Saturday.

- Two fugitives from Missouri were taken into custody in Clay County after U.S. Marshals and the Clay County Sheriff's Department staged a raid in the rugged Otter Creek area.

-Clinton Everett Hahn, 51, and Amanda Davis, 46, were wanted on fugitive warrants out of Missouri. Authorities said Hahn was convicted in 2005 of raping a 15-year-old girl in Hannibal, Missouri, and was wanted for failing to register as a sex offender.

- The City of Manchester has received a clean bill of financial health following the completion of its most recent independent audit, city officials announced this week. Abner & Cox, PLLC, a certified public accounting firm based in London, conducted the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The report concluded that the city's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects" the financial position of the City of Manchester, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States.

- Manchester and Clay County are taking center stage this month after being named Community of the Year at the upcoming Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) Summit, set for Aug. 26-29 at the Corbin Arena.

- 1 Clay County (1CC) is proud to announce that Michael J. White has been named Interim Executive Director, effective August 14, 2025.

•SEPTEMBER 2025

- Organizers say this year's Manchester Music Festival may go down as the best yet after a record crowd packed downtown Friday night to watch The Creekers take the stage.

Festival Chairman Tim Parks said the turnout exceeded all expectations and showcased the power of music to bring the community together.

"We knew The Creekers would be a big draw, but this was something special," Parks said. "It felt like the whole county was here, shoulder to shoulder, singing along and enjoying the night. It's the kind of moment you dream about when you plan an event like this."

- A Wednesday morning raid on Paw Paw Road led to the arrest of a Clay County man on multiple drug trafficking charges, following a joint operation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) drug task force and the Clay County Sheriff's Department. Dempsey Delph, 57, was taken into custody and charged with trafficking in a controlled substance 1st degree (methamphetamine), trafficking in a controlled substance 3rd degree, and intimidating a participant in the legal process.

- The roar of engines and the sight of black smoke rising from the pavement filled Elk Mountain last weekend as the annual *Battle of the Streets* drew thousands of visitors to Clay County.

-Carlie Wolfe was crowned the CCHS Homecoming Queen.

- One of Manchester's most historic landmarks was damaged Tuesday night when the roof of the Becknell Building collapsed, sending debris crashing down and drawing an emergency response to Courthouse Hill.

•OCTOBER 2025

-1 Clay County is taking the lead in boosting outdoor tourism by installing a new kayak ramp on Goose Creek, a waterway local officials say is perfectly suited for paddling adventures. The project is part of a broader effort to enhance the plaza area, with riverbank cleanup underway and crews finishing a new retaining wall for the Kayak/Welcome Center parking lot.

- A Laurel County man was arrested Wednesday morning after authorities say he shot his mother and assaulted two other people with a pistol at a home just south of London.

The Laurel County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect as Beve Dewayne Begley, 39, formerly of Clay County. Begley is charged with attempted murder, two counts of first-degree assault, and five counts of first-degree wanton endangerment involving the discharge of a firearm.

- A Manchester man has been arrested after investigators used a GPS tracker hidden inside stolen telecommunications cable to trace a major copper theft case in Clay County. This marks the second arrest in a week in the case.

- Sheriff Patrick Robinson reported that a decomposed body was discovered Monday afternoon in the Brushy Branch area of Burning Springs.

- An emergency services late-night search in the Lyttleton area ended in tragedy when the body of 23-year-old Jeffrey Sizemore, of Manchester, was discovered in Goose Creek early Saturday morning.

- More than \$40,000 in cash and a large quantity of illegal drugs were seized during a raid conducted by the Kentucky State Police Post 11 on Collins Road, off Bowling Branch, according to arrest documents filed Sunday evening.

- The family of Clyde Allan Frost is preparing for confirmation that human remains discovered Monday in the Brushy Branch area of Burning Springs are his. Frost has been missing for nearly two years, and relatives say the discovery has brought both heartbreak and long-awaited closure.

- Manchester Distilling Company marked a major milestone this week as its very first bottling run officially got underway. More than 80 bottles of the distillery's Founder's Reserve Kentucky Bourbon were filled and are now awaiting labeling — a proud moment for the company and the community alike.

- Clay County is set to make motorsports history this fall with two adrenaline-filled events taking place over one exciting weekend. Manchester hosted a highway Autocross, followed by the Shamrock Mountain Hillclimb, bringing racers and fans from across the region to downtown Manchester and the scenic hills of Clay County.

- The Manchester City Council voted Monday night to move forward with the potential sale of Big Hickory Golf Course, a move city leaders say could bring new energy, investment, and long-term growth to one of the community's most scenic assets.

- A Manchester man was killed Wednesday night after being struck by two vehicles while walking along U.S. Highway 421 North near Young Drive, according to the Kentucky State Police Post 11 in London.

- The City of Manchester is mourning the loss of Councilwoman Donna Allen, 68, who passed away Wednesday, October 22, 2025. A lifelong resident of Clay County, Allen was known for her years

of public service, her dedication to her community, and her warm and caring personality.

-Hundreds of Clay County students are stepping into fall with brand-new shoes thanks to the generosity of county leaders from across Kentucky. The Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association (KMCA), headquartered in Frankfort, delivered over 800 pairs of new shoes to Clay County Schools on Wednesday, Oct. 22, beginning distribution at Big Creek Elementary School before expanding to the entire district

•NOVEMBER 2025

- A long-running criminal case involving alleged theft from the North Manchester Water Department has been dismissed without prejudice, according to court records and prosecutors.

The case originated in January 2020, when a Clay County Grand Jury returned a 70-count indictment against former water department manager Jim Mathis, accountant Charles Stivers, and former employee Luke Mathis. The charges stemmed from an investigation into more than \$75,000 allegedly stolen from the utility between late 2012 and 2015.

- Retired educator and former Manchester Tourism Commission Chairman Alma Faye Gregory has been appointed to serve on the Manchester City Council, filling the vacant seat left by the passing of Councilwoman Donna Allen.

- A longtime local business entered a new chapter Monday morning as Jackson's Manchester Lumber officially opened its doors at a new, expanded location at the junction of U.S. 421 and Ky. 80. of the community that has sustained their family business for decades.

- A familiar downtown roadway will soon bear a new name that ties together Manchester's growing tourism and redevelopment efforts.

During this week's Manchester City Council meeting, 1 Clay County representative Brian Jackson and Executive Director Mike White presented the proposal to officially rename Bridge Street to Jockey Street. The council voted in favor of the change, noting that a small section directly in front of the Clay County Public Library will retain the Bridge Street name for location continuity.

- The Clay County school community is mourning the loss of Sherry Bush Whitaker, a longtime Manchester Elementary School physical education teacher, who passed away Monday after a courageous battle with cancer.

- Clay County Schools are celebrating one of their strongest academic showings in years after the release of the 2024-2025 KSA (Kentucky Summative Assessment) scores, which revealed dramatic districtwide improvement—including four Blue Schools, an exceptional blue-rated elementary program, and major gains across multiple campuses. Four schools—Burning Springs, Goose Rock, Manchester, and Oneida—all achieved Blue School status. The strongest performance came from Oneida Elementary, which ranked #1 out of 717 Kentucky elementary schools, taking the top spot statewide. Close behind was Burning Springs Elementary, which earned an impressive #2 statewide ranking.

- The story of Trevor Wayne Dykes, a young father murdered in a 2015 murder-for-hire plot, reached a national audience this week with the premiere of an episode of *Who Hired the Hitman?* on Investigation Discovery. The hour-long episode, titled "The Witch Doctor," aired Tuesday night and featured emotional interviews with Trevor's family, who say they participated in the documentary in hopes of giving him a voice he never had in court.

•DECEMBER 2025

- Clay County's long-awaited bourbon era officially begins next week as Manchester Distilling will sell its first bottles of world-class, locally crafted bourbon during its Grand Opening celebration on December 5th and 6th. The event marks a historic moment for downtown Manchester and for the growing craft-spirits industry taking root in the heart of the county.

- For generations in Manchester, Christmas didn't truly begin until Santa Claus appeared in the front window of First State Bank's downtown lobby—standing tall, glowing gently, and waving at every child who pressed their nose to the glass. He wasn't just a decoration. He was a tradition. A memory. A piece of our town's heart.

- Clay County High School's Legends Hall Basketball Museum has quickly become one of Kentucky's most celebrated high school showcases, drawing more than 25,000 visitors in its first full year.

- Clay County is grieving the loss of one of its most influential spiritual and community leaders following the passing of Pastor Doug Abner — a mentor, encourager, and driving force behind some of eastern Kentucky's most impactful faith-based and anti-drug initiatives.

DID YOU KNOW?

Almost 9 out of 10 newspaper readers vote in local elections.

	Ky adults	Newspaper readers	Non-newspaper readers
Vote in state/national elections	69%	71%	60%
Vote in local/school board/city elections	84%	86%	72%



Your Local Newspaper



Source: The Kentucky State Study 2023. Conducted by Coda Ventures, Base: Total adults