

Meade County Angel Ministry Online Auction biggest success ever



Photos submitted by MCAM

Some of the items that were donated to the MCAM to be sold for the online auction. Over 200 items were donated for auction.

Earlene Bohannon
Editor

The Meade County Angel Ministry (MCAM) has done an online auction for five years. Hannah Joiner, a Meade County resident and teacher, started the online auction from the ground up in 2021. The auction is hosted only online. The auction depends 100 percent only on the generosity of donations from donors in and around the Meade County community.

Businesses from as far away as Louisville and Indiana have donated items to support the auction. However, the majority of the donations for the online auction are from Meade County.

Donations range from homemade art items, donations from local businesses such as Meade County Bank, Napa, The Meade County Messenger, and countless others. Home-based bakers have donated to help support the ministry. More than \$1000.00 was raised this year from cookies created, baked, and donated by Patty Higdon and Brenda Rhodes. Every time a donation comes in, a Facebook post is made giving the individual or the company a shout out for donating to MCAM. There were 231 items donated for the 2025 online auction. Koritney Ashmore was given the task of creating Facebook posts to send out thank you's for monetary donations and other items that were donated.

Running the auction is no easy task. Joiner begins preparing for the auction each year during September. She creates a google form that is used to keep track of who donates and what they donate, to include the monetary value of what the donation is. The auction runs for four days—Sunday through Wednesday, beginning and ending at 6 pm on the respective days.

For 2025, Joiner teamed up with Ashmore and Christina Hull to tackle the task of gathering the donations, working on the behind-the-scenes responsibilities, and handling the online duties of declaring and announcing the winners of each item. Once the auction closed on Wednesday, Joiner and Ashmore set up a command central location at the Meade County Angel Tree gift shop to meet with each auction winner to confirm the win and to arrange for collection of the items, "We truly couldn't do it without all of the other volunteers helping. We had runners pick up items, gather donations, keep up with sending out messages to winners, and go out in person to seek donations. This was a total team

effort. It took a large team and a lot of time to complete this task. There were so many hands involved in this auction and it needs to be recognized that many, many volunteers were involved in helping."

The work that goes into the success of the auction has become a well-oiled machine to those who have worked the auction each year, "Once the auction starts, or sometimes before the auction begins, an item is donated. We take pictures, write a description, and prepare to accept bids. People can bid on items all the way up until 6 pm on the day the auction ends. Once the auction is over, the winner is contacted with what item (or items) they have won and what their total amount is due. They come to the gift shop to pay for their items and pick them up. Many times, auction winners will come in and pay for an item, telling the MCAM staff to "keep the change" or they will make an additional cash donation on top of the amount they owe. This helps a lot!"

This year was, by far, the most successful year of the online auction. In 2021, the auction garnered \$6,150.00. In 2022, it was \$6500.00. 2023 saw a rise to \$7877.00 and in 2024, the auction earned \$8457.00. This year, the highest amount earned for the MCAM online auction was over double last year with \$17,547.00.

Joiner said, "it's important for people to know that the money raised in this auction is not just for Christmas. The MCAM supports Meade County Schools and families in need year-round."

Shelia Foster, who heads up the MCAM, said, "It is true that during December we pull in 90% of our funding, and that is HUGE! A lot of folks do not realize that we guarantee their clothes, their shoes, their blankets, and their coats. So, if the Angel does not come back to us with those items, the ministry will need to purchase them. We also try to do our best to get them their wishes, so a lot of our funds during December are spent on unclaimed children and fulfilling the items that didn't come in with the Angels. It's a lot of work. People don't realize everything we do, and I really think it's important that the people in the community know."

Joiner finished off by saying, "the whole team at the Meade County Angel Ministry is so blown away by this year's support. We want to highlight that none of this would be possible for our county if it was not for our generous and giving community."

The time Santa Claus came to Flaherty Primary



Photo submitted by Joe Hager

Santa and Mrs Claus gathered for a glad visit with the children in Mrs. Kristi Pike's 1st Grade class.

Joe Hager
Messenger Staff

Christmas is such a fun time for children. Their excitement for the season gives us an idea of what joy is really like. Santa and Mrs. Claus witnessed some of this joy as they arrived at Flaherty Primary School this past week. Arrangements had been made for the special guests to greet all the children as they made their way into the school cafeteria for breakfast. And of course, Santa had a small gift for each

of them as they entered. He is the Great Gift Giver, after all. Their choice was between a candy cane or lollipop.

Mrs. Claus looked really beautiful and got a lot of hugs from the little ones as they came to where the Clauses were sitting. Santa was kept busy distributing the candies and inquiring if the boys and girls had been good this year. He took several requests for special gifts on Christmas morning and made sure to ask if Mom or Dad was aware of the request.

There were several discussions about the conduct of Elves on the Shelf in students' homes. Several reported that their Elf on the Shelf was acting in a mischievous manner and causing trouble in the household by committing acts of naughty behavior.

Since the invitation to visit came from Mrs. Kristi Pike's first grade class, Santa and Mrs. Claus moved to her classroom and Santa read an animal version of "The Animals' Christmas Carol" to the

children. The story concerned Scrooge Goat and the dream he had on Christmas Eve. Tiny Tim received a great gift from Scrooge. The students enjoyed the story and were able to interview Santa after it was completed. Some interesting questions were posed, especially the one from a young man concerning what Santa was going to do to the Grinch. It does seem the Grinch is now on the right path.

Merry Christmas to all and may peace reign on earth.

Fiscal Court deals with the A.I. moratorium



Photo submitted by Joe Hager

Members of Fiscal Court assemble and prepare to take their seats prior to convening.

Joe Hager
Messenger Staff

As has been the case over the past several meetings, the Fiscal Court once again found itself dealing with the Data Center that applied to build a large plant on Highway 313 near Garrett. A twelve-month moratorium on such construction anywhere in the county was again introduced. When time for discussion was called for, several people in the audience rose to urge the Court to make certain the ordinance would get the job done by denying initial approval from Planning and Zoning. There were questions about whether the Court would follow through and permanently continue to deny access to data centers. They were assured that Planning and Zoning would do so. The first reading was approved. One more reading and final approval is still required.

Judge Troy Kok asked those gathered for a few moments of silence in honor of former Fiscal Court member, Randall Hardes-

ty, who had served on the Court for several years. He passed away on Monday.

Jerome Morgan, EMS Director, asked the Court to reject all bids for the new ambulance as the two bids came back much higher in cost than expected. Jerome stated he would re-write the bid specifications and make it easier for bidders to deal with. He hopes to get more bids submitted from suppliers this time around.

Susan Masterson, Meade County Court Clerk, submitted her proposed budget and financial statement to the Court for approval for 2026. Her office handles over \$10 million each year in fees, and her employee salaries are about \$935,000 per year. The Court approved the budget and financial reports.

Court House closure dates for the Christmas Holidays were approved. The dates of December 25 and 26 were designated specifically. Judge Kok suggested calling the office you need to visit on December 23rd since some

will close early that day as well.

Under Committee Reports, Magistrates serve with various committees and reports on those. Esquire Webb reported he had attended an Otter Creek meeting. The Department of the Interior is holding up the deed transfer to the County, due in part to a 3.5-acre plot of ground that once served as a landfill area for the City of Louisville to dispose of some Otter Creek Park waste materials and is still owned by the city. That issue is being addressed. Steve Wardrip attended a Water Department meeting, and that group is ready to replace a major waterline between the Flaherty Tower and the Garrett Tower to enhance water availability to the area. Gary Chapman announced that the Public Library has a new website. Eli Dix also attended the Otter Creek meeting and a Buttermilk Falls meeting.

First reading and approval were given for Planning and Zoning to change the zoning classification of

850 Arnold School Road from R-1 to A-2 and 3391 Liberty Road from R-1 to A-2. There will need to be another reading and vote on these items for them to be approved. As for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Jacob Mattingly and Tim LaTondress were appointed by the Court to serve four-year terms. Andrew Barr was appointed to fill an unexpired term of 1.5 years.

Esquire Sipes and Judge Kok have been working with the Kentucky Department of Transportation to produce a plan to reduce the number of accidents at the Highway 313 entrance road into the Flaherty area near Flaherty Elementary School. The right-hand turning lane from 313 blocks the vision of drivers coming out of old Highway 144 from the school onto 313. The Highway Department will move the turning lane as far to the right as possible, which will improve the sight of drivers coming on to 313.

The Court then adjourned to go into Executive Session.