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ICED OVER!

Thousands without power, businesses close as storm dumps half inch of ice

Staff Report
ENTERPRISE NEWS

MANCHESTER — A winter storm that fell short of predicted snowfall totals still delivered a powerful and disruptive punch to Manchester and Clay County, as ice accumulation crippled power infrastructure, toppled trees and left roadways dangerously slick across the region.

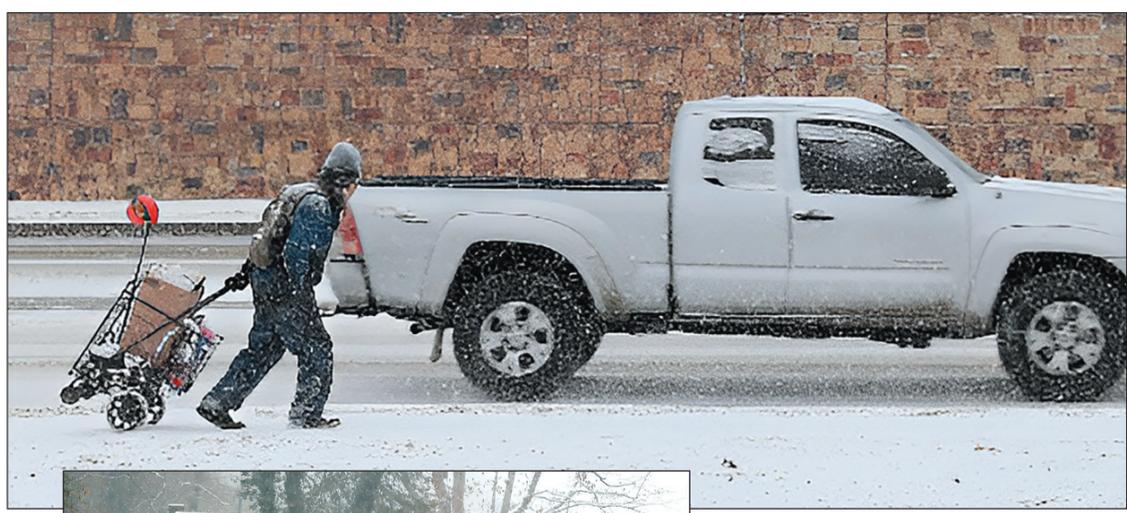
While forecasters initially warned residents to prepare for heavy snow, the storm instead coated much of Clay County with a glaze of ice — in some areas measuring up to a half inch thick. The ice proved far more destructive than snow, snapping tree limbs, pulling down power lines and knocking out electricity to thousands of customers served by Jackson Energy and Kentucky Utilities.

As of Monday morning, utility officials confirmed that thousands of residents remained without power, with some households experiencing outages lasting more than 24 hours. Crews from both Jackson Energy and Kentucky Utilities worked continuously throughout the weekend, often battling impassable roads and hazardous conditions to reach damaged lines.

County Judge-Executive Tommy Harmon said the storm tested both infrastructure and patience, but praised local crews and emergency responders for their around-the-clock efforts.

“This wasn’t a snowstorm like we’re used to — the ice is what did the damage,” Harmon said. “When you’ve got trees coming down and power lines snapping under that weight, it creates a dangerous situation for everyone involved. Our road crews,

See **STORM A6**



(TOP) This man pulls his groceries near the Clay Detention Center Saturday as the snow started to fall at the beginning of the storm. (LEFT) Russell Jewel, Superintendent of the Clay State Maintenance Crew, cleans Town Branch Road. State, county, and city road crews have worked around the clock to battle the snow and ice.
Photos by Mark Hoskins



General Excellence 2nd Place
Weekly Class 3

The Manchester Enterprise

Second place in KPA contest

General Excellence

Newspaper wins 13 awards in state contest

Staff Report
ENTERPRISE NEWS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — *The Manchester Enterprise* was recognized with numerous top awards, including multiple first-place finishes and a second-place overall ranking in Weekly Class 3, during the annual statewide newspaper competition honoring excellence in journalism.

Weekly Class 3 represents the largest circulation category for weekly newspapers in Kentucky, placing *The Manchester Enterprise* among the top publications in the state based on overall quality, consistency, and impact.

The awards recognize work published over

See **CONTEST A6**



If we don't receive the bids we think will improve the course, we won't sell it and will continue to operate it as is.

Mayor Steve Collins --
on the sale of Big Hickory Golf Course

City declares golf course as surplus

Bids will be accepted to purchase course, improve it

Staff Report
ENTERPRISE NEWS

MANCHESTER — The future of Big Hickory Golf Course took center stage during Tuesday-night's Manchester City Council meeting as council members formally declared the city-owned course surplus property and approved a process that will allow the city to seek bids for its sale.

The action clears the way for the city to advertise and accept bids on the golf course, which has been appraised at \$530,000, though city officials stressed that the highest dollar offer will not automatically determine the outcome.

Mayor Steve Collins said the council's primary goal is ensuring Big Hickory continues to

See **COURSE A6**

TRAGIC HOUSE FIRE

House fire claims man near Clay line

Big Creek Fire Department responds to scene of tragedy

Staff Report
ENTERPRISE NEWS

BEAR BRANCH, Ky. — A structure fire near the Clay–Leslie County line claimed the life of a Bear Branch man Friday evening, according to Kentucky State Police.

Kentucky State Police Post 13 in Hazard was notified at approximately 6:58 p.m. Friday, January 23, of a residential fire on Turkey Foot Road in the Bear Branch community of Leslie County. The location is near the Clay County line.

Firefighters from Big Creek Fire Department, along with Leslie County Fire Services, responded to the scene and worked to extinguish the blaze. The Leslie County Sheriff's Office and Kentucky State Police also responded.

After the fire was brought under control, responders discovered the body of a deceased individual inside the residence. Detectives were notified and immediately began an investigation.

The deceased was later identified as Rex Smallwood, 68, of Bear Branch, who is believed to have been the sole occupant and resident of the home. The Leslie County Coroner's Office pronounced Smallwood deceased at the scene.

Authorities say no foul play is suspected at this time. Smallwood's remains were transported to the Kentucky Medical Examiner's Office for an autopsy as part of standard procedure.

The incident remains under investigation and is being handled by Kentucky State Police Detective Darrell Hicks. No further details were immediately available.



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