

JUDGE

FROM PAGE A3

others have come to me and said we screwed up.”

Castlen also stands by his decision to largely put forward his own nominees for seats on the Daviess County Public Library board, with Al Mattingly being the exception. Critics have accused Castlen of stacking the board with members who want to be the authorities on what children are allowed to read.

“I know Janie blasted me on Al Mattingly’s appointment, but I can only say as a former judge-executive, I thought given where we were at the time, that he would be beneficial to have on that board,” Castlen said. “He did not embrace where the majority is now, and is still not embracing it, as far as relocating books that some people find problematic. I would challenge anybody that takes opposition to me on my board appointees, go to the website that exists and read every word of every book that’s listed as a concern, and then make your decision. Then if you want to come in and argue with me, fine.

“I’ve read every book on the list that was given to me, and it was hard reading, and to especially consider that my grandchildren — the oldest is 5 now — in six or seven years, according to the library, would be able to read that same material. I don’t have a problem with the things that are happening right now. Elections have consequences.”

Castlen said fiscal court has been doing a great deal

of research as to what it’s legally allowed to do to help mitigate the drainage issues in the county, but that it’s a red-tape quagmire understanding what the county can and can’t do legally. He takes great issue with those who don’t believe it’s been a priority for the court.

Castlen said a topography report of the county showed there were a combined 9,300 dams and levees built, which can have a tremendous negative impact on water flow in other areas.

“(Commissioner) Chris Castlen started learning what can we do and how can we go about doing it; but you can’t spend public tax dollars for private purposes,” Castlen said. “I got a call from a gentleman who said, ‘You all don’t care.’ I said, ‘I’m not going to let you get by with saying we don’t care.’ If we could snap our fingers, remove the Clean Water Act from the law, remove the Environmental Protection Agency from the law, I guarantee we wouldn’t be having this conversation, because we would have already gone out there and done what we could, and if we couldn’t have done it, we would have worked with farmers to get it done.”

Castlen said he would love to see more new industry come to the county, and he disputes the assertion the county lacks land for business ventures.

“One of the things that I’ve heard since I’ve been judge-executive, and the mayor has been very free with saying it, is Daviess County doesn’t have any land,” he said. “Daviess County has as much land today as it had the day

that Daviess County became a county, to my knowledge; just as many acres. But one of the things that I did early on as judge-executive, is we did tax amendments to make it easier to rezone land to industrial if it fronts (one of the major thoroughfares) in the county. All of those are easier to rezone now.

“The Murphy property right next to our operations center on Highway 81, they are doing their own economic development spot. I’m looking at it as that’s just the beginning of what can happen in Daviess County, because we’ve opened the doors. We’ve made it easier to find affordable land and to say, ‘Hey, I’m going to go do this right here.’ I’m excited that is happening. It is the first piece.”

Castlen, who is seeking re-election, said he can’t foresee a situation moving forward where he’d be influenced to do something he normally wouldn’t do because of Marksberry running against him for judge-executive.

“My charge as an elected official is to do the right thing, and that’s what I have tried to do from the time I was a city commissioner, my time as a county commissioner and my three years as judge-executive,” he said. “I have a year left, and I don’t foresee it changing. I do believe Commissioner Marksberry will use every opportunity she has to make something into a political benefit for herself if she can.

“I believe she’s one that appreciates AI, artificial intelligence, and I don’t doubt she’s using that to coach herself.”

DECOR

FROM PAGE A4

She stared at me for a moment and then said, “I think I’m quite all right here. There is nothing here that you can do to organize this room. Just go to your messy office and get back to work.”

I chuckled all the way down the hall towards my office. What would her room look like if I organized it? I’m pretty sure she would not be able to find anything she needed for any of her crafts.

Whereas in my “messy office,” I can find anything I want. If I can’t find it, I don’t need it. And if I don’t

need it, I’m not going to worry about it. Life can bring you a lot of lemons, but I would rather have ice tea.

Sometimes, as I walk around in my office looking at my library, I see a book I haven’t seen for a long time. With great delight, I go to my chair and begin reading it.

All the books in my office have created a beautiful display that I enjoy every day. Since my retirement, I can go in and out of my office as I please.

Recently, both The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I had the flu. All week I wore my pajamas when I went into my office. I could go in and out as I pleased, dressed

as I pleased.

As I was sitting in my office, thinking about this, I was reminded of a verse of scripture that addressed it. The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

According to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, my office may be a mess. That’s not the important issue. The thing that must be organized is my service to the Lord. That is the only thing that is crucial in my everyday life.

USDA

FROM PAGE A5

displaced by the historic flooding in July 2022, he found himself and his two pugs living with friends and family. But he worked with one of our housing non-profit partners and now owns a home in a higher ground development.

We also helped over 100 families make necessary repairs to their homes, including 50 through our disaster repair grant programs.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Small businesses play a vital role in the economic prosperity of rural Kentucky. From multi-million dollar guaranteed loans to small energy efficiency

grants, we’re here to help rural businesses grow, create jobs, and be profitable. We also have programs to help trusted non-profits provide technical assistance to small businesses.

In 2025, we invested over \$63.5 million, saving and creating over 200 jobs across the commonwealth. Some of these investments will have a long-lasting impact, like the grant awarded to Kentucky Community & Technical College System’s Hazard campus. That grant will be used to help establish a mobile plumbing training programing to good paying jobs in our state.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Communities can’t exist without infrastructure and essential services like law enforcement, health care

and emergency response.

We recently announced a \$73.8 million investment in Livingston Hospital, which will be used to create 56,000 additional square feet of treatment space and improve access to quality care in that region.

That’s just one of over 40 infrastructure investments we made in rural Kentucky totaling over \$893.6 million.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

We’re just getting started! I can’t wait to see what 2026 brings us to rural Kentucky. President Trump and Secretary Rollins are committed to ushering in a new era of prosperity for rural American and my team and I will spend every day making sure we are doing just that here in Kentucky.

MUSEUM

FROM PAGE A3

“In March 1899, the Field Coal Co. boiler sprang a leak in the fire box. Silas Davis and a Mr. Mosely repaired it. On Sunday evening, July 16, 1899, lightning struck the telephone wire near the Field company store. James Hall, sitting in front and leaning against the building, was badly shocked. Dr. C. D. Almon, standing by the corner, was slightly shocked, as were a boy and three or four men at the Field mines.

“The Field mines were closed for the last two weeks of August 1899. They shut down one week for repairs and one for a strike. On Aug. 29, they resumed operation. What the strike was over, or how it turned out, is not reported.

“Meanwhile, their former bank boss had quit and they ‘procured Gaddis, of Central City.’

“After the two weeks shut down, they began making preparations to ‘get out a great deal of coal.’

“Other coal companies also improved equipment. The Island Coal Co. purchased a new boiler from the Southern Iron Works in late 1899. They had it up and running in October.’

“In late August 1899, the miners ‘seated the grove’ in Island and a series of religious meetings were undertaken. Initially, Rev. William Tate did the preaching, but others were expected to join him. ‘The miners are a very irreligious class of people,’ the reporter admitted. ‘It is to be hoped that great good may result from these meetings.’

“Other changes also took place in Island the last two years of the 19th

century.

“In the fall of 1898, the O. & N. Railroad built a new station in Island. In October 1898, William Bryant traded his McKenney property to a Mr. (Charles) Houghland, of Central City, for a farm near Sacramento. Mr. Houghland planned to run a boarding house and livery stable.

“W. T. Ferguson moved into his new house. At the same time, the firm of Ferguson & Drake dissolved their partnership, with Ferguson buying out Drake. Meanwhile, L. P. Drake and his brother, W. P., bought Rowan Holbrook’s interest in the Field Coal Co.

“W. T. Ferguson employed Mat South, of Central City, as clerk and druggist in his store, but the following March, W. T. closed his business and went back to his farm.

“In November 1899, W. F. Ferguson sold his stock of goods to J. C. Howell. ‘Mr. Howell expects to have a large line of goods soon.’ That same month, J. W. Patterson sold C. L. Fields the mill lot, sold only a short time before to Patterson by Elihu Houghland. Fields expected to convert the millhouse into a dwelling and build some more houses on the lot to rent.

“But not all change was seen in a good light, at least initially.

“On April 9, 1899, the Island Church burned to the ground. Apparently, the fire started from a defective flue. Rev. Smith filled his regular appointment earlier in the evening. There was a fire in the stove. It was believed soot in the flue caught fire and was spread to the woodwork through a crack. The church and all the furniture were a complete loss. About a year before, the roof had caught fire from a spark and burned over a square

before it could be put out.

“The church served several denominations in Island. Immediately, subscriptions were opened and a new church planned for rebuilding as soon as possible.”

Here I insert another paragraph, written a week after the fire occurred.

“The Baptists will have a meeting Saturday evening at the Island school house to take some steps towards building a new house of worship. The house recently destroyed by fire belonged to four denominations—Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterians and Christians. The Baptists will build a house of their own.”

Due to snow, Harold Wilson’s presentation on the Boys from Camp Calhoun has been rescheduled to 6 p.m. this coming Monday, Feb. 2, at the Owensboro Museum of Science & History. Everyone is invited to attend. Admission is \$5.00, and doors open at 5:30 p.m. The Owensboro Museum of Science & History is located at 122 E. 2nd Street, Owensboro, and their phone number is 270-687-2732. Harold will have his Boys from Camp Calhoun books available for sale for \$27.

The McLean County History Museum and the Treasure House Thrift Store are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, unless it’s a major holiday or the roads are hazardous. Come in and take a free tour of the museum and research center. The museum is located at 540 Main Street in Calhoun, and the Treasure House is next door, at 530 Main Street. Our museum number is 270-499-5033. I wish everyone a great week ahead! For any comments or input, please email secretary@mcleancountyky-museum.org.

EVILLECON

FROM PAGE A2

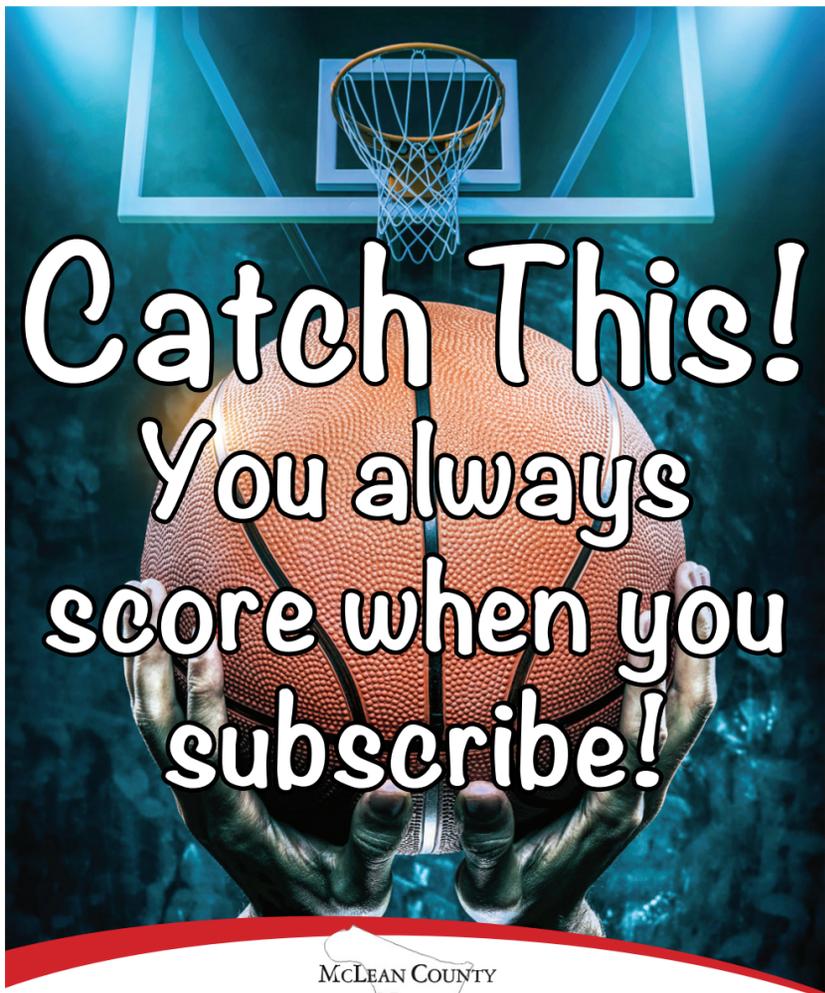
and merchandise.

With booths open daily from noon to 6 p.m., guests should find smaller lines.

EvilleCon will have a

cosplay contest where guests can showcase their creative designs, with judging based on craftsmanship.

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JOHNSON

FROM PAGE A1

“Part of it is it’s an ongoing effort on our part for truth in sentencing,” Johnson said. “If you are going to be sentenced to something, you

should serve the majority of your sentence.

“It’s simply an understanding we need truth in sentencing,” Johnson said.

Johnson said the bill could be heard by the full House this week and that he plans to ask House leadership to bring the bill to the floor.

Although Johnson said he has not discussed the bill with members of the Senate, he expects it will find support there.

“Anything that is going to help protect our children gets pretty good support,” Johnson said. “I expect that’s what will happen here.”