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The Renfro Valley Bingo Parlor caught fire on Wednesday afternoon. Mt. Vernon fire chief Garry Hansel is shown giving instructions to firefighters who were preparing to enter the building. The building was heavily damaged by the fire, although firefighters were able to contain the blaze to the kitchen area.

Front page photos by: Richard Anderkin



Albert Powell surveys the damage to the granite sign at the entrance to his driveway.

Powell offers \$1,500 reward

A \$1,500 reward is being offered for information that would lead to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the destruction of a road sign.

Albert Powell of Conway is offering the reward.

Powell said that someone destroyed a granite sign Saturday night leading to his property. "I have already ordered another one, but this really is upsetting," he said.

Powell says the reward could go higher. The Kentucky State Police is investigating the incident. Anyone with information can call Powell at (606) 256-4132.



Bingo Parlor at Renfro Valley burns Wednesday

The Renfro Valley Bingo Parlor was heavily damaged by fire Wednesday afternoon.

Members of the Mt. Vernon and Brodhead fire departments responded to the call around 2:30 p.m.

Mt. Vernon fire chief Garry Hansel said the fire apparently started in the kitchen area of the parlor.

Members of the fire department used breathing equipment and went into the building and extinguished the blaze.

E. Howard Saylor established the

parlor as a fund-raising tool for Rockcastle County athletics and the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame.

Saylor said that it would be at least 30 days before the Bingo parlor re-opened.

"We think it was an electrical fire," he said.

Saylor had no estimate of the cost of the damage from the fire.

Saylor is also a former Rockcastle County businessman and a candidate for Rockcastle County Judge-Executive.

Ford says seat belt bill dead

Rockcastle County's State Representative Danny Ford doesn't think you should have to buckle up if you don't want to.

Apparently the Kentucky Senate thinks so as well.

Ford was one of many legislators who voted against House Bill 68 two weeks ago, but the House barely passed the bill anyway.

Ford said this week that the bill is dead in the Senate.

Under the House bill version, Kentucky police could stop motorists solely for not wearing seatbelts and fine them \$25.

Ford said that he was glad that the bill was apparently dead because he thought it went too far.

"It was too much an invasion of privacy," he said.

Advocates of the bill said an estimated 75 lives a year would be saved by the mandatory bill.

About Community Development

Dr. Vaughn Grisham to speak to Rockcastle Countians

In the Mt. Vernon Signal over the past couple of weeks you may have read about a small town in Mississippi named Tupelo - a rural area that over the past few decades has risen from being the state's most impoverished area to being a model for successful community and economic development. Now is your opportunity to hear the rest of the story.

Dr. Vaughn Grisham, a University of Mississippi sociologist, has been invited by the Rockcastle County Development Board to share the informative story of Tupelo's journey to community success. A public meeting will be held March 29 with a reception beginning at 6:00 p.m. and Dr. Grisham's presentation beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Rockcastle County High School. The meeting is being held to encourage public involvement in a long-term development plan for Rockcastle County.

Grisham will discuss how the residents of Tupelo banded together to rebuild a community torn apart physically and emotionally by a tornado and a series of strikes at area cotton mills. He will share his observations of how nurturing broad-based civic engagement is crucial to the

community and economic development process.

If you've wondered how purchasing a prize jersey bull could lead business owners in Tupelo down the road to community prosperity, learn how at this meeting. If you are surprised that a relatively rural area can create more than 1,000 manufacturing jobs each year, come hear about Tupelo's approach to development. If you want to see Rockcastle County become a prosperous home where people can find meaningful, well-paying jobs, come consider your part in the plan to achieve this goal.

For more information, contact Bige Towery at the Rockcastle

County Development Board, 256-8007.



Dr. Vaughn Grisham

3 injured in Hwy. 150 wreck

Last Thursday at approximately 6:40 a.m. Trooper Coby Smith responded to a two vehicle accident west of Brodhead on US 150 in Rockcastle County.

According to the report, Kimberly McGowan, 44, of Mt. Vernon was driving a 1997 Chevrolet Blazer east on US 150 toward Brodhead, when she lost control of her vehicle in a curve crossing into the westbound lane.

Upon crossing into the westbound lane the Chevrolet Blazer struck a 1994 GMC Pickup driven by William Day, 55, of Brodhead head on. McGowan, William Day and his passenger, James Day, 52, were all

triated at the scene by the Rockcastle County EMS and transported to the Rockcastle County Hospital in Mt. Vernon for treatment. James Day was treated and released. Kimberly McGowan, a department head at the hospital and William Day after receiving treatment were transported to

the UK Medical Center in Lexington for further treatment.

According to officials, Mrs. McGowan was seriously injured.

Trooper Smith is continuing the investigation and was assisted at the scene by the Mt. Vernon Fire and Rescue, and the Brodhead Fire Department.

