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Mount Vernon Signal

Castle County Since 1887

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Monday is last day to register for election

Those who wish to vote in the May 28 Primary Election must register by close of business on Monday, April 29.

Rockcastle County Clerk Norma Hook will accept voter registration cards in her office until 4 p.m. that day and will accept all voter registration cards postmarked April 29. You can also register to vote at the same time that you renew your driver's license.

Over 2.6 million Kentuckians are already registered to vote, according to Secretary of State John Y. Brown, III. But there are still nearly 400,000 Kentuckians who are eligible to vote, but who have not registered.

In addition to the numerous local races, this year's ballot will include races for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and the Kentucky Senate and House.

Police search Stewart property

Agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, Mt. Vernon City Police officers and a Kentucky State Trooper searched two mobile homes at Orlando, early Tuesday morning.

According to police, the search involved an investigation concerning Sammy Stewart, 26, of Rt. 1, Orlando.

Police declined to comment on the investigation, but no arrests were made. The investigation continues.

Local officers involved were Mt. Vernon Chief Bill Mink, assistant chief Eddie Delaney, officer Ed Robinson and State Trooper Jason McCowan.

"This is an important election year, with many offices on the ballot," said Brown. "I encourage those who are not yet registered to do so and to make their voice heard at the polls."

High school students who are not yet 18 years old, but will turn 18 on or before the General Election in November, are eligible to register and vote in the May Primary. Election information and voter registration cards are available at Hook's office or through the Kentucky Secretary of State's web page at www.kyso.com.

Mrs. Hook said that it is too late for people to change their voter registration and vote in the May Primary.

There are 13,340 Rockcastle residents currently registered to vote. 8,826 are Republicans, 2,999 are Democrats and 425 others are registered Independent or in a lesser known party.

5,582 Rockcastle men are registered to vote and 5,758 women are registered.

Mrs. Hook said that it was very unusual for more women to be registered to vote than men, because at times their have been hundreds more men than women registered to vote in Rockcastle County.

There are 15 contested races and 58 candidates on the May ballot.

Local woman involved in Interstate 75 crash

A panic stop at highway speeds started a crash which saw the driver land underneath the car last Wednesday afternoon on Interstate 75.

Witnesses said the vehicle suddenly started overturning across the northbound lanes and ejected the driver from his Chevrolet Blazer.

"All I saw was them flipping," eyewitness Scarlet Glanton, who was driving southbound near the 27 mile marker said.

"They flipped about five times. As the truck was flipping, so was he. The Blazer landed on his head."

Glanton said she and two other motorists stopped, pulled a female passenger from the vehicle and two men lifted the Blazer and freed the driver, identified by police as 29-year-old Jackie Davidson of London.

There were no other vehicles around the Blazer when it started flipping, Glanton said.

The three witnesses and rescuers huddled together in the grass while emergency personnel and firefighters tended to the patients.

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Lambert still Chief Justice

The Supreme Court of Kentucky has elected Joseph E. Lambert to a second term as Chief Justice. Seven Justices, elected from districts across Kentucky, comprise the Supreme Court, which is Kentucky's highest

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Conley Jones, 32, of Wildie and two children escaped serious injury last Wednesday evening, after he lost control of his Chevrolet pick-up on U.S. 25 at the top of Green Fish Hill. Members of the Mt. Vernon Fire Department had to remove a tree from the roadway that was knocked down in the crash. Steve Renfro is shown at left, cutting the limbs of the tree. None of the three were seriously injured.



Former Brodhead Principal Bigg Tawery presented former Brodhead head basketball coach Billy Riddle and assistant Johnny Hamm with a plaque during the annual Alumni Banquet. Looking on is Brodhead Principal Caroline Graves. 270 people attended the annual event. A number of photos will appear in next week's Signal.

Open House at local landmark May 18-19

The annual Open House at Rockcastle County's Great Saltpetre Cave is set for May 18th and May 19th.

There will be free cave tours, music and food. The open house begins at 10 a.m. on the 18th and at Noon on the 19th.

The cave has a great history.

In 1798, John Baker discovered a large cave opening from the hillside along Crooked Creek, in what was then still part of Madison County. The next day, he brought his wife and two children back to the cave to explore its depths by the aid of torches. What began as a lark became a terrifying experience when the torches burned out and left them stranded in the lightless depths of the earth for two days. Baker and his family finally reached safety, but the long and colorful history of Great Saltpetre Cave was just beginning.

James Kincaid of Madison County had purchased property in Rockcastle County in 1796, five years later, in 1801, he mortgaged 9,500 acres including "Kincaid's Cave" to the Lexington firm of Trotter and Scott. Meanwhile, the Madison County court issued a certificate

to George Montgomery for "two hundred acres of land lying and being in the County of Madison on Crooked Creek emptying into round stone." This land also included the same cave. During the winter of that year, the mining of saltpetre began in the cave on a small scale. Within two more years, Montgomery had sold his interest in the cave to Kincaid. Large-scale mining would soon begin.

Kincaid's early operation employed about twenty workmen (slave labor) in the cave, with furnaces and vats at both of the cave entrances. About 1,000 pounds of saltpetre were produced each week. Kincaid foresaw the potential for greatly increased production, and began to seek partners who might have the wealth to expand his operation. Among those who expressed an interest in such a partnership was Dr. Samuel Brown of Lexington.

The odds were against James Kincaid, however. Long on vision but short on cash, he remortgaged the property again to Trotter and Scott in March, 1804. Unable to meet his payments to that firm, a large piece of his property, including the cave,

was sold at a sheriff's auction in Lexington in May of that year. Alexander Scott, co-holder of the mortgages, purchased the cave and property for \$400. Later that year, acting on motion from Scott, the Madison County court issued an order to build a road from the State Road to the Great Saltpetre Cave.

Dr. Brown had not forgotten about the cave. He formed a partnership called Brown, Hart & Company and purchased the cave property, about 1,000 acres, from Scott in November, 1804. At about this time, Brown ran an advertisement in the Lexington Kentucky Gazette, stating this his company wished to hire:

15 or 20 NEGRO MEN
To be employed at their Salt Petre Works in Madison County. For each of whom they will give \$0 dollars, and they will in addition to the above, give to each negro 20 dollars at the end of the year, provided he conducts himself with propriety.

Brown intended to turn the saltpetre works into a major operation. He promptly hired John James DuFour of Jessamine County as an engineer to construct a greatly improved and expanded operation. Over

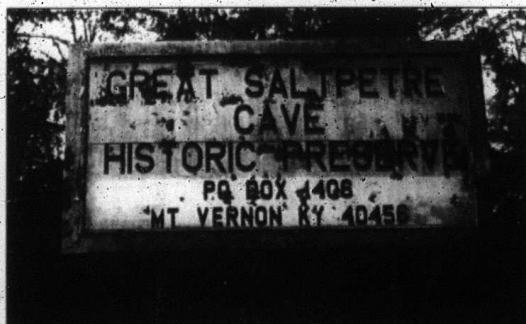
a period of a few months, DuFour made many improvements and innovations. The saltpetre mining operation later built at Mammoth Cave by

Charles Wilkins of Lexington was copied from DuFour's designs.

In 1805, Brown wrote a paper on the manufacture of saltpetre and gun-

powder and sent a copy to President Thomas Jefferson. This paper describes Great Saltpetre Cave and the

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An Open House is scheduled for May 18-19 at Great Saltpetre Cave, one of Rockcastle County's most historic sites.