



Mount Vernon Signal

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County uses grant money, prisoners to save historic facility

Livingston School gym looking good

During the 1930's, almost a quarter of all adults were out of jobs and their families faced starvation.

The federal government, in an effort to combat poverty and get people off the streets, created the "Works Progress Administration (WPA)."

Among their many tasks were the construction of highways, trails, major dams and public buildings.

Aside from some bridges and maybe one small building, the Livingston School gym is the only large surviving structure in Rockcastle County from that era.

The building is made from hand-cut sandstone quarried near Livingston, and has a six-foot deep foundation which was built under the supervision of the WPA and the Livingston Independent School Board.

After the school was closed in 1994, the gym and classroom buildings were heavily damaged by vandalism.

Only four months ago the gym's bleachers had fallen to the ground because the floor had fallen through and there were other major problems.

In addition to the roof leaking, the interior walls on either side of the stage had disintegrated from rot. The main interior walls were blistered from weather. Every single window in all buildings was gone, including the glass basketball boards.

The Rockcastle County Fiscal Court was able to take over the buildings this year and thanks to State Representative Danny Ford a \$100,000 state grant was secured for clean-up and renovation.

"In all honesty, when I look back at photographs we took prior to renovation, I really wonder what the magistrates and I must have been thinking," Rockcastle County Buzz Carlottis said.

"The exterior of the building's stones were covered in two coats of blue, then red, paint. On top of that graffiti," he added.

"Had it been a living object, it would have been very, very sad. Many suggested that we tear it and the main building down and put in a parking lot," Carlottis said.

"I believed its 'bones' were far too good to demolish, and that it just needed a lot of tender, loving care. Thankfully, the magistrates agreed," he continued.

"I had our county's work release inmates under the direction of Bill Sowder, begin work this past spring ripping out the old flooring, scraping walls, pulling down old conduit, tearing down decayed walls, and cleaning up eight years of vandalism and neglect. They erected scaffolding and put 136 gallons of paint on the ceiling alone. They reconstructed the floor out of natural white oak, tongue-and-groove and were able to completely lay 5,400 sq. ft. of flooring from Monday afternoon through the following Saturday.

"This was no small feat. Every single plank of bleachers was sanded, in hopes of restoring them to their original clear-coat finish. This was not possible, however, due to the years of abuse. Finally, we decided to paint them," Carlottis said.

The stage's proscenium arch was blackened by old varnish and graffiti. The decision was made to sand it and use enamel on its surface to highlight its architectural details.

Because the building was constructed during the art deco era, which was noted for its curves and multiple horizontal lines, every attempt was made to take advantage of its curved window openings by using horizontal stripes in the school's colors.

While the building was one of many thousands of such structures built by the WPA around the country, the buildings were not cookie-cutter copies of each other. Each was unique, depending upon what the owner wanted.

Using work release prisoners who are overseen by Bill Sowder and James Renner, as many as 15 inmates work on the building and have utilized their many talents, from professional painters to floor layers, to drywallers. Air conditioning is on the county's wish list for another year if funds become available.

When all is said and done, the

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Police raid house in Mt. Vernon

Components which are used in the manufacturing of the illegal drug Methamphetamine were apparently found at a Mt. Vernon residence on Monday night.

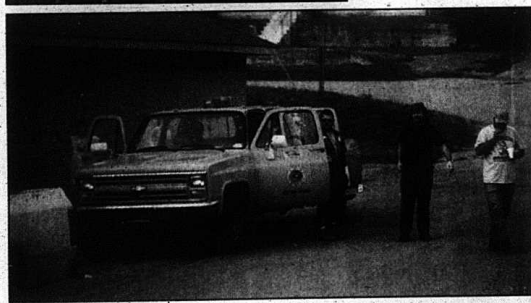
According to police, the home of Danny "Bird" Burdette, 33, at 310 Paul Street, was the subject of the search.

Police said that a storage unit in the Bee Lick area was also searched the same night and more components of Meth and other stolen items were

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Local contractors Jimmy Brummett and Greg Rose, along with county supervisors and work release prisoners were on the job early Wednesday morning at the former Livingston School property. The county has used labor provided by work release prisoners and a \$100,000 state grant secured by State Representative Danny Ford to renovate the old Livingston Gym, which will be used once again during the Livingston Homecoming. The more modern former classroom building on the school property has also been renovated and is used by the city of Livingston. Above, Rockcastle County Judge-Executive Buzz Carlottis stands in front of the stage on the new hardwood floor in the gym.

Photos By:
Richard Anderkin



In Livingston

Homecoming Labor Day weekend

Livingston Homecoming will begin Friday, August 30th at 7 p.m. with a gospel singing.

Saturday morning, a pancake, bacon or sausage and drink breakfast will be served from 8:30-10:00 a.m. The Lake Cumberland Cloggers will dance at 9:00 in the gym parking lot.

The parade line up will begin at 10 a.m. at White Star, with the parade beginning at 11 a.m. At 12:30 p.m. the Recognition Program will begin on the Firehouse Platform. All county firemen will be honored.

At 2 p.m. The Pretty Man Contest will begin. For more information contact Sam Stallworth, The Mason Jars will perform at 3 p.m. and the Pretty Baby Contest will be at 4 p.m. For more information contact Cleo Bryant at 453-4213 or Rita Mize at 453-4605. \$5 entry fee.

The Livingston Homecoming Queen will be crowned at 5 p.m.

At 6 p.m. the Old Timers' Ball Game will begin in the gym.

Music will be from 8 p.m. until midnight at the Firehouse. Sunday will begin at 12 (noon)

with the devotional service with Gary Parker and Billie Wayne Bryant. At 2 p.m. the awards ceremony will begin, with an auction at 3 p.m.

Music by the Gravity Band will be playing from 8:00-10:00 p.m. with fireworks at 10 p.m., then the music will resume.

When student hits school bus

No one injured

No one was injured in a wreck on Monday involving a Rockcastle County school bus.

According to Rockcastle County School Superintendent Larry Hammond, about ten students were still on the school bus when a Rockcastle County High School student crossed the center line of Hwy. 1505 and hit the bus.

Randal Adams was driving bus 963, when the accident occurred as he ran his afternoon bus route.

Police said that it appeared that there was no way possible for Adams to avoid the car driven by the student.

Another bus was taken to the scene to transport the students on to their homes.

AAA and police issue alert

AAA and Police Chief Bill Mink have issued a pedestrian alert as schools were in session on August 15th. Approximately 2,900 children

will be entering the morning and afternoon traffic mix as they travel to and from school by car, bus, bicycle

(Cont. to A-10)



Buge Tower, who is the Executive Director of the Rockcastle Development Board and a tireless warrior in his efforts to make a better community is shown with Jim Cox of Cox Hardware and Jim Earl Hammons of J&J Oil during Saturday's clean-up effort in Mt. Vernon. Below with Tower and Hammons are Mrs. Martha Cox and Carol Bryant. The property which was cleaned up is at the corner of Main and West Main Streets and may eventually be used to house offices for many local agencies, including the Development Board. See other photos inside this week's newspaper.

