



PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



July 2026 ■ Volume 15, Issue 7 ■ Pelahatchie, MS

Big Backpacks, Bright Smiles: Pelahatchie ES Prepares for the First Day of School



By Guest Columnist Robin Sanders,
Principal, Pelahatchie Elementary School

The quiet of summer is officially winding down as the familiar rhythm of yellow buses, morning traffic, and packed backpacks prepares to return to Pelahatchie Elementary. With the first day of school officially set for Thursday, July 30th, local families, teachers, and administrators are putting the final touches on preparations for the 2026–2027 school year. Reminder: Registration codes will be emailed to returning students July 10th. If you have a new student that needs to register, come by the school before school begins. Students will not be placed on class roles until registration is complete and residency is approved.

A Focus on Routine and Mental Wellness

While fresh school supplies bring plenty of excitement, experts note that the psychological shift from open summer days to structured school nights can be tough on kids. Transitioning from

the relaxed freedom of summer back into a school routine can be a jarring shift for elementary minds and bodies. Shifting into “school mode” is a gradual process that should start well before the first bell rings.

The biggest hurdle for elementary students often isn’t the academics; it’s the sudden shift in structure and stamina. In June and July, they can graze on snacks and play whenever they want. By late July, they have to navigate a timed schedule, sit at desks, and practice active listening.

To combat back-to-school anxiety, educators encourage starting the transition early. Families are advised to pull bedtime back by 15 minutes each night leading up to the first day, ensuring children are well-rested, confident, and ready to learn.

Community Spirit and Getting Involved

To help students ease those first-day jitters, Pelahatchie ES is hosting a Meet the Teacher event

on Tuesday, July 28th. To accommodate varying family schedules, the school has opened two dedicated time slots for families to tour classrooms and connect with staff:

- Morning Session: 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
- Afternoon Session: 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

As the countdown ticks away, teachers are already back in their classrooms—arranging furniture, decorating vibrant bulletin boards, and planning engaging lessons for the start of school.

For the staff at Pelahatchie ES, every year feels like a fresh start. The hallways may be quiet now, but the team is more than ready to welcome students back. We’ve deeply missed the energy of the kids, and we can’t wait to see what they accomplish this year.



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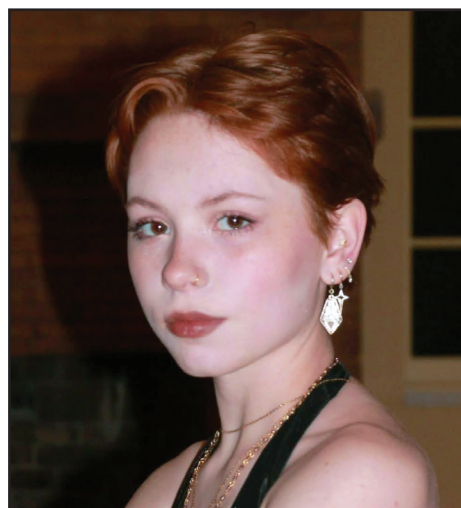
Local teens named in poet laureate competition

Special to Pelahatchie News

Big congratulations to Mississippi’s first-ever Youth Poet Laureate, Nadia Wright of Jackson!

A nationally recognized poet, community advocate, and rising sophomore at North Carolina A&T, Nadia continues to represent the incredible talent and creativity coming out of Mississippi.

We’re also proud to celebrate finalists Sasha Harvey of Starkville and Savannah Massey of Pelahatchie, whose voices and work



Savannah Massey

Special to Pelahatchie News

reflect the bright future of poetry in our state.

Selected by Mississippi Poet Laureate Ann Fisher-Wirth, these young writers are already making an impact through storytelling, service, and artistic excellence.

The Mississippi Youth Poet Laureate is administered by the Friendly City Books Community Connection, a special project of the CREATE Foundation, with the support of the Mississippi Arts Commission and the University of Mississippi Department of English.

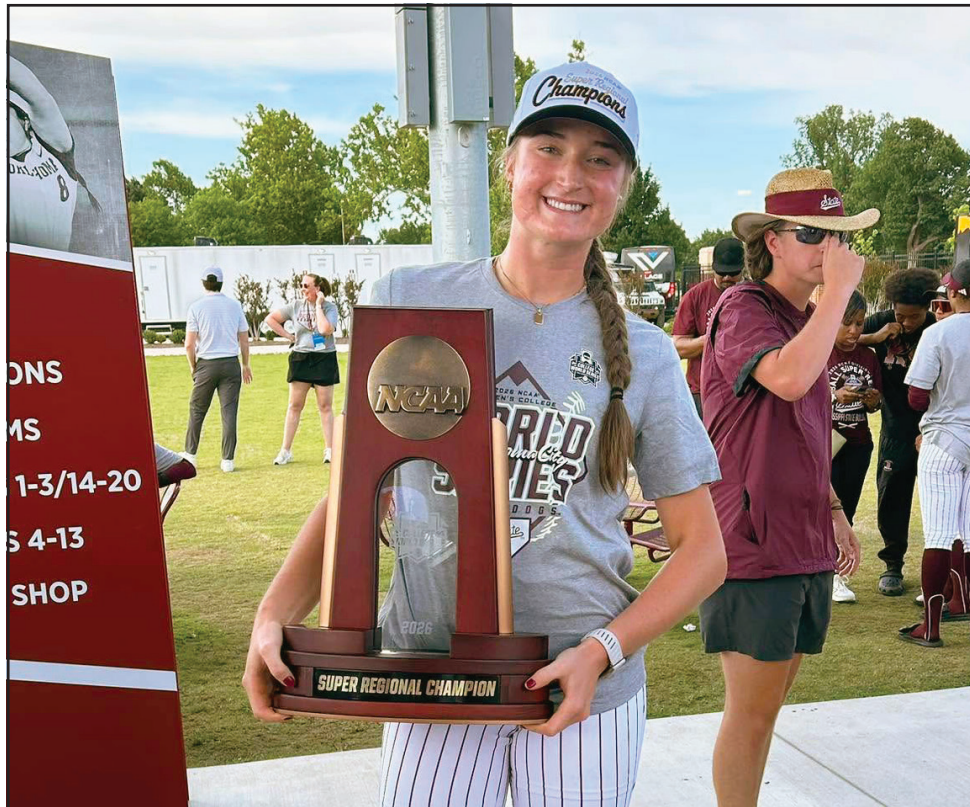
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Summer!

Former Patriot Stevens to play in Women's College World Series



Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy (ERA) is proud of former Lady Patriot player, Abigail Stevens. Stevens is playing at MS State and now will be playing in the Women's College World Series! Congratulations Abigail, ERA is rooting for you!

PES welcomes Megan Cooper



Special to Pelahatchie News

My name is Megan Cooper, and I am excited to be a Chief this school year," Megan Cooper said. "I have eleven years of experience as a speech language pathologist, and I enjoy helping students communicate more effectively. I am married to my husband, Jeremy, and we have a five month old son, Finnley. I look forward to a wonderful year working with students, families, and staff at Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES)."



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Soil testing: Improving the quality of your garden



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

High crop yields, abundant gardens, high forage pastures, and beautiful lawns require management and large amounts of plant nutrients that must be supplied in proper balance.

Soil constantly undergoes physical and chemical changes. Some plant nutrients are removed in harvested crops or harvested hay. Some are lost by leaching or erosion. Soil tests measure available nutrients in the soil and serve as the best guide to profitable liming and fertilizing materials.

The soil reaction, or measure of acidity or alkalinity, is based on a scale of 1 to 14 and is referred to as pH. A pH of 7.0 is neutral. Any values below 7.0 are acid, and any values above 7.0 are alkaline. In areas with high rain-



Special to Pelahatchie News

fall like Mississippi, soils are generally acid.

The pH of the soil tells you if the soil needs lime. Where it is needed, lime is the most effective and inexpensive aid available for soil improvement.

Acid soil results in poor plant growth, partly because of poor root growth. This means greater susceptibility to drought stress and less efficient use of soil

nutrients. Plants growing in acid soil may show deficiency symptoms of several nutrients.

The best time to lime is 3 months before planting. Thoroughly mixing with the soil, plowing or disk-ing lime in, will allow the lime time to react more completely. Soil should be tested every 2-3 years.

Soil tests measure available nutrients in the soil and serve as the best guide to profitable liming and fertilizing materials. You can drop by office at 601 Marquette Road, Brandon, MS to pick up a soil testing box, or boxes. You can also just bring your dirt to us. Usually, a quart zip lock sandwich bag is enough. We will send it to MSU for you. The cost is \$10 per sample.

It usually takes two or three weeks to get the results.

PriorityOne Bank promotes Courtney Norris-Fountain

Special to Pelahatchie News

Robert J. Barnes, President and CEO of PriorityOne Bank, recently announced the promotion of Courtney Norris-Fountain to Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager for the Morton and Pelahatchie locations. Barnes stated, "Courtney's journey with PriorityOne is a great example of dedication and growth. She has built her career by serving others, and this promotion reflects the positive impact she makes every day in her branch and community."

Norris-Fountain joined PriorityOne in January 2014 and has served in a variety of roles, including Teller, Receptionist, Customer Service Representative, and Personal Banker/Branch Officer. She is a graduate of Lake High School, where she was valedictorian of the Class of 2006, and attended Hinds Community College. She is also a graduate of the Mississippi School of Banking.

Courtney is active in her community as a



Courtney Norris-Fountain

Special to Pelahatchie News

member of the Morton Lions Club and a former board member of the Morton Chamber of Commerce. Within PriorityOne Bank, she has been recognized for her performance and commitment, earning the Rising Star Award in 2023 and the Difference Maker Award in 2024 for the Rankin Division. She is also a member of PriorityOne's Blue Ribbon Society, an honor recognizing employees who demonstrate exceptional performance, leadership, and a strong commitment to the bank's values and customer service excellence.

She resides in Lake with her husband, Terrence Fountain, their children, Te'Kenyon and Khaiden, and their dog, Gizmo.

PriorityOne Bank, based in Magee, Mississippi, operates seventeen offices in thirteen Mississippi communities: Collins, Seminary, Sumrall, Hattiesburg, Purvis, Magee, Mendenhall, Richland, Brandon, Flowood, Ridgeland, Gluckstadt, Pelahatchie, and Morton. The bank has assets of over \$1.1 Billion.

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It's Not a Democracy — And That's a Good Thing

By Kenneth A. McDade

Every few years, usually around election time, I hear someone say, “Well, we’re a democracy.” Now, before somebody throws a biscuit at me, let me clarify. We are democratic in how we choose our leaders, but the United States was never designed to be a pure democracy. We are a Constitutional Republic.

And believe it or not, that’s one of the reasons this old American experiment has managed to survive for nearly 250 years. A pure democracy sounds wonderful at first. Everybody votes. The majority wins. End of story. Simple, right? Well, so is a hammer. That doesn’t mean you should use it to repair a watch.

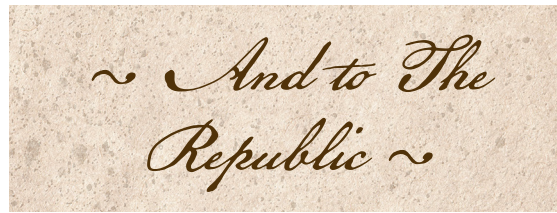
The Founding Fathers spent a great deal of time studying history. They looked at ancient Greece, Rome, and every government they could find. What they discovered was that pure democracies often have a nasty habit of turning into mob rule. Imagine ten people sitting around a table. Six decide they want the four others to pay for dinner every night for the rest of their lives. In a pure democracy, six wins. Case closed. The minority gets steamrolled. The loudest voices dominate. The largest populations control everything. Smaller groups and smaller regions become little more than spectators in their own government. That’s exactly why our founders built safeguards into the system.

The Constitution limits government power. The Bill of Rights protects individual freedoms. The Senate gives equal representation to states regardless of size. And yes, the Electoral College exists to ensure that candidates cannot simply campaign in a handful of large population centers while ignoring the rest of the country. Without it, states with smaller populations would have far less influence in presidential elections. A candidate could spend nearly all of their time in a few massive metropolitan areas and still have a realistic path to victory.

The founders wanted presidents to build broad coalitions across the nation, not just rack up votes in a few crowded places. Now, does that mean the system is perfect? Of course not. Nothing involving human beings ever is. We argue over it constantly. We tweak it. We debate it. We complain about it. Then we complain about the complaining.

That’s about as American as sweet tea and arguing about football rankings. But the remarkable thing is that the system has endured. Think about that for a moment.

For nearly 250 years, this nation has survived wars, depressions, assassinations, scandals, riots, pandemics, political upheaval, and enough campaign commercials to make a person swear off television forever. Empires that once seemed invincible have come and gone. Kings have



risen and fallen. Entire governments have disappeared. Yet here we are. Still arguing. Still voting. Still debating. Still free to disagree. That is not normal in human history. In many ways, it is extraordinary.

Some have called America an experiment. They’re not wrong. The miracle isn’t that the experiment started. The miracle is that it has lasted this long.

Now, being patriotic doesn’t mean believing America is perfect. Goodness knows we have made mistakes. Every nation has. Patriotism is not pretending your country has no faults. Patriotism is loving your country enough to acknowledge its flaws while working to improve it. It’s the difference between loving your family and pretending your family never argues. A patriot can criticize America. A patriot can demand better from America. A patriot can point out problems. But a patriot also recognizes what is worth preserving. The freedoms we enjoy.

The rights protected by our Constitution. The opportunity to speak our minds without fear of imprisonment. The ability to worship—or not worship—as we choose. The right

to vote. The right to own property. The right to pursue our own dreams. Much of the world still struggles to secure these basic freedoms. Many who have left America in search of something better have discovered that what they took for granted here was not nearly as common elsewhere as they imagined.

America has problems. Every nation does. But America also possesses something rare: a system designed not around perfect people, but around the understanding that people are imperfect. That may be the greatest wisdom of the founders.

They didn’t trust any one person with too much power. They didn’t trust any one branch of government with too much authority. And they certainly didn’t trust temporary passions and popular fads to determine the fate of the nation unchecked. Instead, they built a Constitutional Republic.

A system meant to protect the voice of both the majority and the minority. A system designed to slow things down when emotions run high. A system that has survived longer than many thought possible.

So the next time someone says, “We’re a democracy,” smile and gently remind them: “No, we’re something even rarer.”

We’re a Constitutional Republic.

And after nearly 250 years, that’s still worth celebrating.

PES welcomes Scarlett Thompson



Special to Pelahatchie News

Meet Scarlett Thompson. Thompson is entering her third year of teaching and is excited to be coming home to her alma mater, Pelahatchie. Thompson is married to her husband, Zachary, and they recently welcomed their son, John Paul. Scarlett is thrilled to be back where her journey began and looks forward to loving, educating, and helping her students grow. Once a Chief, always a Chief!

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AMERICAN NATIONAL PARKS STICKER BY-NUMBER CRAFT JULY 9 AT 2:00 P.M.	PELAHATCHIE PETALS GARDEN CLUB JULY 16 AT 5:00 P.M.
SENIOR SOCIAL JULY 14 AND 28 AT 11:00 A.M.	LEFT ON READ: TEEN BOOK CLUB JULY 22 AT 3:30 P.M.
	MY AMERICA 250 MOSAIC FLAG PROJECT JULY 23 AT 2:00 P.M.

HAPPY 250TH BIRTHDAY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

The Church at Shiloh is building a home for a Pelahatchie family

By Susie A. Wolfe

The Rux family on Ragan Road live in an eleven hundred square foot house that is more than one-hundred-years-old with their two grandchildren under ten. Much of the wood is rotten and the floor and ceiling are weak. Since there is no insulation, their electrical bills run four to five hundred dollars a month in the winter.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

The Ragan Street Project. There is a Facebook page where the community can keep up with the progress of the building and donate to help. There are other materials and services needed to complete the house.

“We are blown away by how God has touched us,” said Lynn Rux. “The wonderful people at the Church at Shiloh have had garage sales, raffles, and donations of time and money, not to mention prayer, to build this house.”

According to Dr. Edwards, just under



The groundbreaking for the new home was held April 18, 2026, and approximately thirty loads of dirt was donated for the pad and foundation.

“The deacons from The Church at Shiloh were made aware of the need at the Rux residence. After a site visit, it was decided that the existing house was beyond repair. It made much more sense to build a new house,” said Dr. Charles Edwards of Crooked Creek Animal Hospital.

So, The Church and the community in and around Pelahatchie began a mission to provide a new home for Randy and Lynn Rux and their grandchildren, Ralynn and Sebastian, on Ragan Street in Pelahatchie.

The house, which is currently under construction, will be eighteen hundred square feet, which the Town of Pelahatchie requires, with three bedrooms, two baths, a pantry and laundry room.



The community has been very generous and donated all materials and labor for the construction of the foundation.

forty thousand dollars has been donated thus far. Other churches and people in the community are also donors.

Donations of money, time and materials have made all the difference. HVAC, sixty yards of concrete, thirty loads of dirt, and so much more. Here is a list of the contractors that have thus far contributed to the Ragan Street Project Facebook.



Randy Rux, who is an ex-cabinet carpenter with asthma, tried to help by putting together eleven corners as they worked to put the walls up, but according to Lynn, it was too much for him. He has two types of cancer, had three strokes, and a mild heart attack, and is currently being evaluated for Hospice.

The Church has been holding fundraisers for months and has received



Generous community donations include workmanship for electrical, sheetrock, plumbing, insulation, HVAC, and cabinets.

donations from building-related suppliers and craftsmen to build this new house under a non-profit called

- Aerus Home
- Born Again Roofing
- Brandon Lighting
- Clyde Williams
- Consolidated Electric Distributors
- Crooked Creek Animal Hospital
- Cross Roads Baptist Church
- Elcon Electrical
- ESS Electrical
- Fairway Foods
- Freddie Rowell
- Frierson Bailey Lumber
- Graybar Electric Supply
- Hearst Construction Inc.
- HR Squared
- Infinity Air
- Insul Pro Plus
- J's Plumbing
- Leonardo's Custom Designer / Interior Decorating Service
- LJ Land and Cattle
- MMC Materials
- Third Floor Plans
- Thrash Commercial Contractors
- Two Wire Electric Supply

For more information on the status or to donate to The Ragan Street Project, visit the page, The Ragan Street Project Facebook or The Church at Shiloh's webpage.



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Rankin County Co-op



Pelahatchie High School welcomes new staff for 2026-27



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

"I desire to help students develop strong literacy skills so they can thrive in their academic and social environments," Kristen Davis said. "I believe in meeting students where they are so they can reach their full potential to obtain success in their future careers. My motto is 'Growing and Glowing in ELA.'"



For Jacob Lockhart, education is all about impact and purpose. His "why" is rooted in the profound reward of knowing he played a meaningful part in student success. Pelahatchie High School (PHS) is thrilled to welcome his passion and leadership to the Chief family and look forward to an incredible school year ahead.



My "why" has always been that teaching provides the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life," Courtney Leibenguth said. "Every small action both inside and outside of the classroom has the chance to create a positive change for both students and teachers. Teaching is a partnership where both parties can learn great things from the other."



I am incredibly excited to join the Tribe and truly look forward to meeting and getting to know the wonderful students and staff members at PHS," Cherie Brooks said. "Connecting with people and building a strong, supportive community is at the heart of what I do. I can't wait to learn your stories, collaborate with such a dedicated team, and work together to make this a fantastic and impactful school year."



"I chose education because I believe it is one of the most powerful ways to impact lives and shape the future," Arlandas Johnson said. "Seeing students overcome challenges, build confidence, and achieve their goals is what motivates me every day. Education and coaching are more than careers to me; they are opportunities to serve others, make a lasting difference, and help prepare the next generation for success in life."



Bringing over 17 years of experience and a wealth of English knowledge to the Tribe, Lindsey Bates is driven by a powerful and inspiring "why". "I chose education because I always hated school and I wanted to be the teacher who changes the minds of the kids who are like me," stated Bates. Her incredible empathy, passion, and dedication to reaching every single student make her a perfect fit for the school community, and PHS is thrilled to have Bates on board.



My "why" has always been rooted in the core belief that every student and educator deserves the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of reading and writing in a supportive environment," Cindy Christian said. "Developing strong readers and writers is a true passion of mine, and I am incredibly excited to bring that dedication to PHS for the 2026-27 school year. I look forward to joining the Tribe, collaborating with the amazing staff, and fostering a community where our students can truly thrive and discover their own voices."

Wolf announces candidacy for Chancery Court Judge

By Michael Wolf

Michael Wolf is pleased to announce his candidacy for Rankin County Chancery Court Judge, offering more than three decades of legal experience, a record of public service, and a steadfast commitment to integrity, impartiality, and faithful adherence to the law.



their two families, with four adult children, of which three are teachers and one a minister in the making. Their home is a place of love and laughter.

Michael has served the youth in this community as a Sunday school teacher, and by coaching soccer, football, and mock trial teams.

For over 33 years, Michael has practiced law across multiple jurisdictions with extensive experience in trial courts, appellate courts, and public service. His legal career has included appearances before state and federal courts, including the Mississippi Supreme Court, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, as well as writing briefs before the United States Supreme Court.

Michael's professional experience has prepared him for the job of Chancery Court Judge. He has served as a certified mediator, hearing officer, former senior deputy city attorney, and a managing partner. Those roles required thoughtful decision-making, fairness, careful evaluation of evidence, and respect for the rule of law, which have absolutely prepared him for the job of judge.

Michael Wolf seeks the opportunity to serve Rankin County with independence, integrity, humility, and an unwavering commitment to fairness in the law.

A longtime resident of Rankin County, Michael has built his life around family, faith, and community. He holds the unwavering belief that faithfully following the law protects those values. He and his wife Rebecca, a teacher, are committed to strengthening those same values that make Rankin County a place that families are proud to call home.

While the scope of the Chancery is broad, it does serve as the Court where issues of Family are considered. Faith and family define Michael Wolf. His faith was tested in 2021 when he and his children suffered the sudden loss of Stacy, an amazing wife and mother. Luckily their lives were already well rooted in Christ, and this experience did not undue that faith but strengthened in them the knowledge that God is love, even in our pain.

With this faith, Michael has since been blessed beyond measure, finding love again and marrying Rebecca. They have blended

Crooked Creek Animal Hospital

Charles Edwards II, DVM
Katlyn Henning, DVM
Jenny Sowell, DVM
Carter Hill, DVM

123 Pleasant Pace Dr.
Pelahatchie, MS 39145
crookedcreekanimal.com

Phone: 601-854-7808
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Crooked Creek Lodge
Phone: 601-812-8012
ccahlodge@gmail.com

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PHS new staff 2026-27 cont'd.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

I chose education because I have always had a passion for helping and encouraging others to reach their full potential," Chrystianna Beeman said. "Throughout my life, I have been inspired by teachers and coaches who invested their time, knowledge, and support in me, and I want to have that same positive impact on the next generation. Education gives me the opportunity to make a difference both inside and outside the classroom by helping students grow academically, build confidence, and develop important life skills. As a teacher and coach, my goal is to create a supportive environment where every student feels valued, challenged, and empowered to succeed. Returning to my hometown to teach makes this journey even more meaningful because I have the chance to give back to the community that played a significant role in my own growth and success."

My "why" is my children," Shauna Williams said. "All three of my children have dyslexia, and watching my older two struggle in their school districts had a profound impact on me. Seeing the challenges they faced motivated me to return to school and pursue a career in education. I want to be an advocate for students who struggle with reading and learning differences, just as my own children have. Through my experiences as a parent, I have developed a deeper understanding of the importance of effective literacy instruction, patience, and individualized support. My goal as a teacher is to help students build confidence in their abilities and provide them with the tools they need to succeed. I hope to create a classroom where all students feel supported, valued, and capable of achieving their full potential, regardless of the challenges they may face."



As Jonna Shoemaker steps into her new role at Pelahatchie High School, she brings with her a deeply rooted passion for shaping the future. Driven by a desire to make the same kind of positive, lasting impact on her students that her own teachers had on her growing up, Jonna views education as a powerful catalyst for personal transformation. Her mission is to cultivate an environment where curiosity thrives, inspiring her students to never stop learning, evolving, and striving toward their full potential. At PHS, Shoemaker is dedicated to empowering every individual who walks into her classroom to dream big and become whoever they choose to be.

I am incredibly excited to officially join the PHS Tribe for the 2026-27 school year," Alayna Keeton said. "For me, education is all about helping students develop the skills and confidence they need to be successful in school, at work, and in life. I love building genuine relationships with my students, supporting them as they work toward their goals, and celebrating their growth along the way. Watching a student accomplish something they once thought was difficult is one of the most rewarding parts of being a teacher, and I cannot wait to bring that passion to this amazing community."



I am excited to join the PHS team this year in the Exceptional Education department," Gabrielle Fielding said. "My mission as an educator is to help every child reach their full potential through tailored, individualized support, patience, and constant encouragement. The most rewarding part of my work is seeing a student gain confidence and smash their goals. I am deeply motivated to walk alongside the students with disabilities, and I can't wait to see all that everyone can achieve together this year."

Griffin Family Medical Clinic

HAPPY 250TH BIRTHDAY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

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Pelahatchie Petals Garden Club members attend district meeting

Six Pelahatchie Petals Garden Club members attended the June 4th Natchez District Garden Club Meeting at the Mississippi Museum of Art. After touring the gardens, President Jearlean Holly presented a review of the previous year's activities as did other clubs in the region.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

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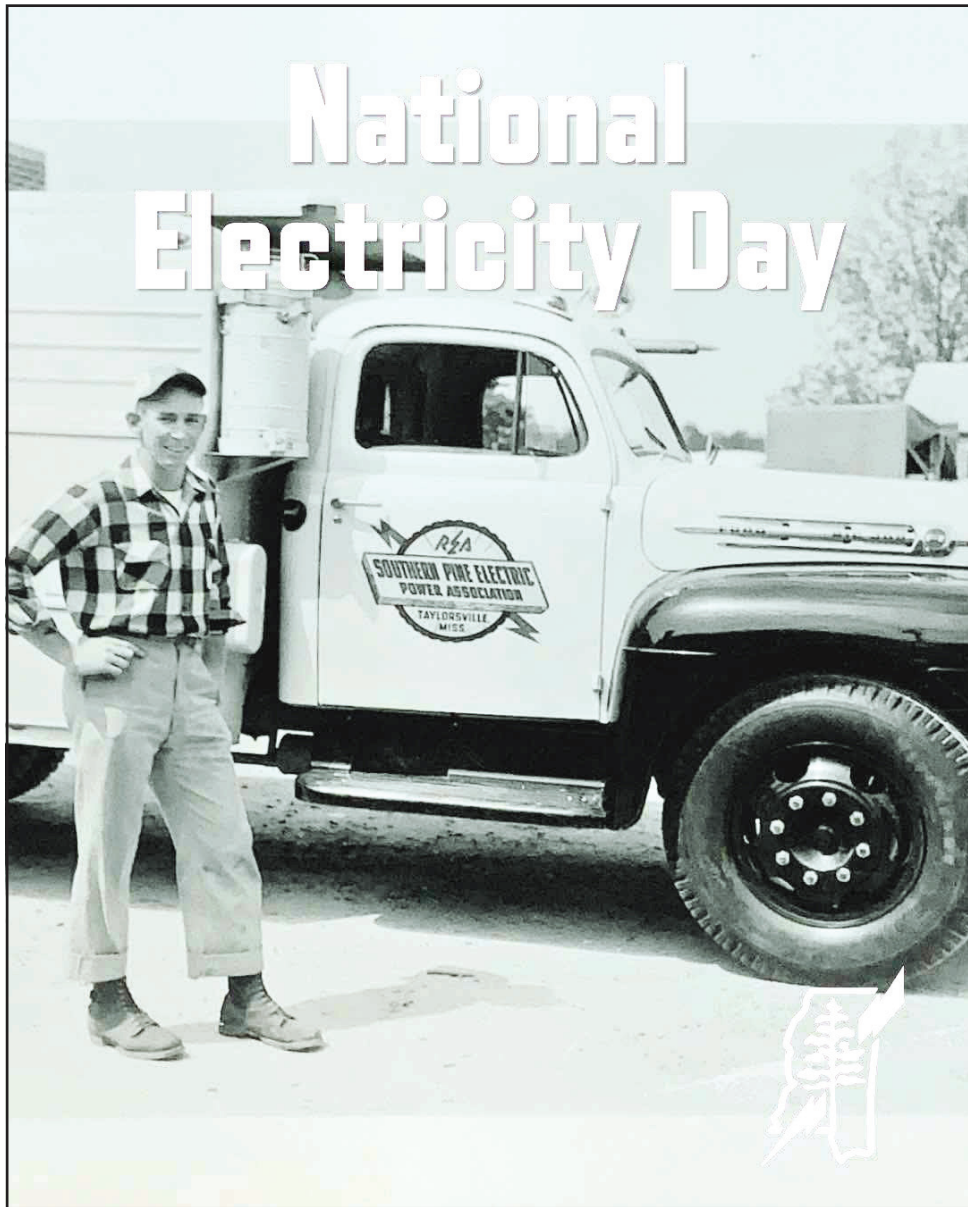
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www.priorityonebank.com

Southern Pine Electric says Happy National Electricity Day



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

Recently, on June 15, Southern Pine Electric celebrated National Electricity Day. When Southern Pine Electric was chartered in March 1938, the mission was simple: bring reliable electricity to 481 homes and farms across rural Mississippi. Today, more than 88 years later, Souther Pine is proud to serve over 70,000 meters across 11 counties, powering homes, businesses, schools, farms, and the communities we call home. While technology has changed dramatically since 1938, the commitment remains the same: safely providing reliable, affordable electric service that enhances the quality of life for Southern Pine’s members.

Pelahatchie Farmer’s Market features Restoration Ministries & Bark Boutique



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

Restoration Ministries has many great things to offer those who stop by the booth at Pelahatchie Farmer’s Marker. There’s plenty homemade banana bread and other treats available, plus other merch that includes brand new Recovery Ranch t-shirts!

And for all of jelly lovers, there are homemade jams and jellies. The staff has been working hard on some incredible flavors, and wants everyone to try them.

As always, every purchase helps support the men of Restoration Ministries

Recovery Ranch as they grow in faith, learn life skills, work the land, and discover the purpose God has for their lives.

This place is filling up quickly, hearts are being changed, and the staff is grateful for every person who prays, shares social media posts, volunteers, and supports the Ranch.

“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

Come see us, grab some banana bread, check out the new shirts, and hear what God is doing at the Ranch.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Stop by the Pelahatchie Farmers Market and treat your pup to something special from The Bark Boutique. The Boutique booth has handmade reversible bandanas, bow ties, and cute accessories perfect for stylish pups of all sizes. Come shop small, support local, and grab your furry best friend something adorable.

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PHS names 2026-27 marching band

DRUM MAJOR Lennon McFadden		
FLUTE Natalie Hand ~	TRUMPETS Audrey McFadden Braylee Akins Henry Hyde	SNARE Logan Rovano ** Lela Jordan
CLARINET Hannah Dominguez Brooklyn Williamson Lyndsey King	TROMBONES Kali Redmann Kaden Sanders Royce Kelly Hunter Sanders	TENOR Jose Cortes
ALTO SAX Somaya Hillie ** Nevaeh Maddox	EUPHONIUMS Jack Herrington **~ Tuff Parker	BASS Nolan Stephens Alexis Chandler Julius Wash
FRENCH HORNS Sara Myers ~ Jesse Ingram	TUBAS Branch Boyer Julian Wash	SYNTH/PIANO Brayden McCurdy
		MALLETS Mikayala Lee
		RACK Brianna Brown Bobby Jaynes
COLOR GUARD Maren McCartney **~ Breanna Roberson Trinity Buckner Aubrey Hudson Kenlee Johnson		
BAND MANAGER Isabella Compton		

**** = CAPTAIN**
~ = SENIOR



Special to Pelahatchie News

Auditions for the 2026 Marching Band are officially complete. Congratulations to all of these students. Pelahatchie High School is looking forward to the next school year with this group.

PES welcomes Laina Dillon



Special to Pelahatchie News

Laina Dillon comes to Pelahatchie with four years of experience. Dillon received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi State University. Dillon is married to her husband Kyle. They have one son, Dean. She is excited to join the Pelahatchie family to continue building relationships and educating students.

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



PAST HEADLINES

2016 - 10 years ago

- "Nitty Gritty Dirt Band headlines 2016 Muscadine Jubilee"
- "Pastor's perspective: Cross Roads Baptist Church is celebrating 100 years"

2021 - 5 years ago

- "Parade names Yogi 'Best Park in State'"
- "Ward inducted into MAC Coaches Hall of Fame"

2025 - Last Year

- "Jackson Communications, Inc. wins bid to replace weather warning sirens"
- "Kevin Belt leads effort to restore Pelahatchie Park for the next generation"

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Pelahatchie Farmer's Market holds second day event of the season

The Farmer's Market had another great Saturday with a record number of vendors, plenty of fresh produce, delicious treats, and handcrafted goods—it was a great day at the market! All those involved with the Pelahatchie Farmer's Market are so thankful for the sunshine, summertime, and most of all, this incredible community that continues to show up, supports local, and makes each market special. The Market staff appreciate every vendor, customer, and visitor who spent part of their day with at the Pelahatchie Farmer's Market.



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City Beat: Mayor, Alderman meeting for Monday, June 1, 2026



By Shaun McInnish, Sr., City Beat Writer,
Pelahatchie News

The June 2026 Pelahatchie Mayor and Board of Aldermen regular meeting was held on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 6:00 PM at Town Hall. Mayor Karl Vanhorn presided and called the meeting to order. Alderwomen Diane Hill and Sandra Harvey, along with Aldermen David Gray, Eddie Jones, and James Harrell, were in attendance.

Carter Smith:

Carter Smith addressed the board regarding his campaign for Circuit Court Judge, seeking to fill the seat of the retiring Judge Mills. Smith highlighted his 20 years of practicing law, including previous public defender work, emphasizing the need for a candidate with strong trial court experience.

Department Discussions:

Police Department:

The board discussed and considered the purchase of Flock surveillance cameras and license plate readers for the police department to be installed in entrances into the town. The equipment will be paid for mostly by the Department of Homeland Security for two years, with a three-month wait expected for installation, and with any additional amounts needed would be paid out of the seizure fund. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with a 5-0 vote.

New Business:

The board discussed, considered, and voted to approve the minutes from the previous regular board meeting held on May 4, 2026. Alderwoman Hill made the motion to approve. The measure passed with all in favor.

The board discussed, considered, and voted to

approve the minutes from the previous special board meeting held on May 18, 2026. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with all in favor.

The board discussed, considered, and voted to approve the payment of the unpaid claims docket. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with a 3-2 vote.

The board discussed, considered, and voted to approve the disbursement of a bank draft payment to Morgan and White Insurance in the amount of \$1,061.66, which is secondary to BCBS and utilized the AmFirst Card. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with all in favor.



The board discussed, considered, and voted to approve a bank draft payment to EMC Insurance for property insurance in the amount of \$7,099.13. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with all in favor.

The board discussed, considered, and voted to approve a bank draft payment to Blue Cross Insurance in the amount of \$8,534.16. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve, and Alderman Harrell seconded

the motion. The measure passed with all in favor.

The board discussed the approval and ratification of the payment of payroll for May 2026, which included \$72,246.09 for the General fund and \$28,385.34 for the Enterprise fund. Alderman Jones made the motion to approve the payroll, and Alderman Gray seconded the motion. The measure passed with a 3-2 vote.

Executive Session:

The board entered into an executive session to discuss a single personnel matter within the Police Department. Alderman Jones made the motion to enter the session, and Alderwoman Hill seconded the motion. The measure passed with all in favor, and the board entered the session at 6:15 PM. Upon exiting the executive session at 6:22 PM, Town Attorney Banks stated that a hire had been made.

Alderman Discussions and Adjournment:

Alderwoman Hill asked about the status of local streets and playground equipment, and mayor noted that street lights are being marked again this weekend to be repaired. Alderwoman Hill also inquired about clearing the voter rolls. Attorney Banks advised referring the matter to the elections commission.

Alderwoman Harvey asked about hosting a movie night in the park.

Alderman Jones reminded the community of the Fourth of July celebration planned for Friday, July 3. The town will serve hamburgers and hot dogs, and is currently looking for donations of watermelons. Jones also reminded attendees that it is the first day of hurricane season and advised residents to plan ahead.

Mayor VanHorn noted that the Mississippi Rural Water class starts on June 16. He also reminded graduating MML members to get their paperwork submitted.

With no further business from Aldermen Gray or Harrell, Alderwoman Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Jones seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 PM.

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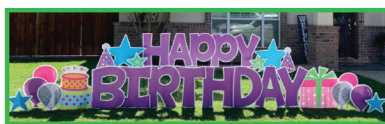
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Pastor's Perspective: A Call to the Nations



By Guest Columnist
Spencer Sullivan, Pastor,
Pelahatchie Baptist

Special to
Pelahatchie News

To be a Christian is to know and follow Jesus. It is to be saved by His grace alone through faith in what He did for us that we could not do for ourselves. As His followers, we then live in obedience to Him as our risen King. Following His resurrection, but before His ascension into Heaven, Jesus' last words for His followers were these: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." As His disciples, we are to make disciples. We are all to make disciples among those where we live, but we are also to make disciples of all 'nations'. The original intent of that word is meant to mean 'ethnic groups' or what today we often refer to as 'people groups'. There are over 12,000 unique people groups



in the world and the leading missiologists indicate that at least 7,000 are still considered unreached by the Gospel of Christ. Many of those are unengaged, which means there is no one currently even trying to get the Gospel to them. I first became aware of this reality in college, and it was during that time that God began to stir in my heart a calling to take the Gospel somewhere and to a people among the 7,000. God would end up calling our family to live overseas for 12 years. While circumstances brought us back to the US, our calling has not changed. How we live out that calling certainly has.

In May, seven individuals from our church went on an international mission trip for ten days to the North Africa and Middle East region. There we were able to meet and interact with some from one of the many unreached people groups in that region. These particular people are from a country that has been involved in conflict for over a decade, while also suffering from insufficient water, electricity, among other resources we often take for granted. A good friend of ours, that we know from our time overseas, led a training to equip 50 men and women from this people group to build



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

solar cookers/ovens that are not dependent upon electricity or butane gas, because these resources are unreliable or scarce. But the training wasn't meant to end with them. They were trained and then tasked to train others from their communities so that many others can benefit. Our role was to build meaningful relationships with them. Thankfully, the people were kind and hospitable to receive us and allow us the privilege of getting to know them. We got to hear their stories of heartbreak and tragedy from living in a war-torn country for so many years. It is incredible how in the few days we were together that real, relational bonds were formed. We were able to pray over different ones in the name of Jesus. With others we

were able to have Gospel conversations, pointing them to the Bible and to consider Jesus. Thanks to technology those relationships have continued as have those meaningful conversations. In fact, in the days since our return, faith conversations have only gone deeper. I encourage you to pray that these precious people will one day repent of their sin and trust Jesus to save them and lead them.

To be abundantly clear, this isn't meant to brag or lift up me, our church, or anyone who went on this trip. The intent is to spread awareness to the abundant and often unseen need of the world. There are many problems in the world, but none are greater than lostness. And there are millions dying everyday into a Christless eternity not because they have directly rejected Him, but because they have never heard. For those that know Him, we cannot be ok with that reality. I encourage you to pray for the unreached. I encourage you to give sacrificially to support those taking the Gospel to the unreached. And if you have the opportunity to go on a trip to experience it for yourself, by all means go!

We did several fundraisers in the community to support our trip and many of you contributed to make this trip possible. We want to say thank you for supporting us!

Cross Roads Baptist Church



Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. - Worship Service
10:30 a.m. - Sunday School for all ages

Wednesday Schedule:

5:30 p.m. - Family Dinner (Call to make reservations)
6:30 p.m. - Prayer Meeting; Youth Worship;
Children's Activities; Ladies Bible Study

Online Worship Opportunity:

(Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook Page)
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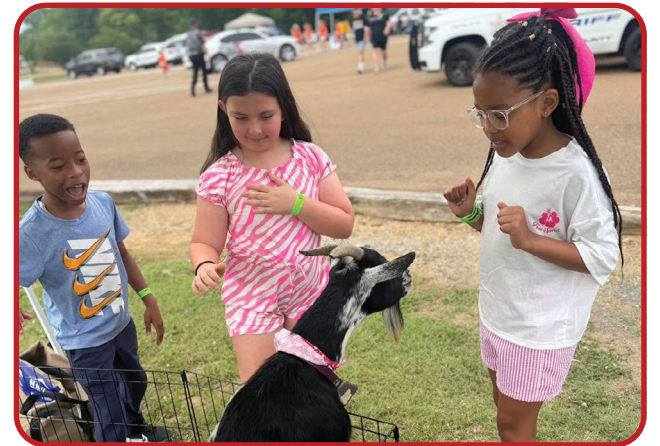
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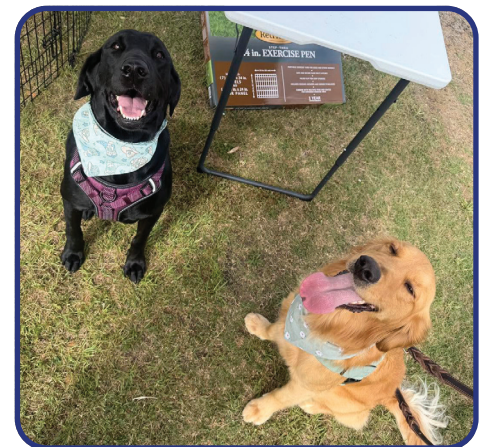
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Crooked Creek Animal Hospital participates in D.A.R.E. Fun Day

Crooked Creek Animal Hospital had the privilege of attending the Rankin County D.A.R.E. Fun Day. It was so much fun showing off each of the different animals and pets. The kids were so excited to touch each one of them.



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Southern Pine delegates attend 2026 Cooperative Youth Tour in DC

Special to Pelahatchie News

Five high school juniors representing Southern Pine Electric Cooperative recently joined 78 other students from across Mississippi for the 2026 Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Representing Southern Pine were Carly Gibson of Seminary High School, E'Miyah Rhodes of Lawrence County High School, Jordin Woods of Bay Springs High School, Payten Myers of Simpson County Academy, and Ryder Ivy of Raleigh High School.

During the weeklong trip, delegates experienced many of the historic landmarks, museums, and memorials that tell the story of America. Students toured Arlington National Cemetery, the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian museums, Washington National Cathedral, and the Museum of the Bible. They also visited the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean War, World War II, Jefferson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King Jr. memorials.

The students attended a Washington Nationals baseball game, enjoyed a dinner cruise on the Potomac River, explored the National Harbor, toured The People's House: A White House Experience, and watched the U.S. Marine Corps Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial. Throughout the week, they had the opportunity to meet and interact with students from electric cooperatives across the country.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

A special highlight of the trip was meeting with Mississippi Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith and learning more about her role in representing Mississippi in Washington. The delegates also visited Capitol Hill and gained a firsthand look at the legislative process and the workings of the federal government.

"Youth Tour gives students the opportunity to see our nation's history come to life," said Southern Pine President and CEO Drummonds McAlpin. "From standing where history was made to visiting some of our country's most important landmarks and institutions, these experiences help young people gain a greater appreciation for our nation and the freedoms we enjoy. The members of this cooperative are proud of Carly, E'Miyah, Jordin, Payten, and Ryder for representing Southern Pine so well."

The Cooperative Youth Tour has provided high school students with an unforgettable Washington, D.C., sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, along with local electric cooperatives. The program introduces young people to the nation's capital while showcasing the history, traditions, and institutions that shape America.

Southern Pine congratulates these outstanding students on their participation in the 2026 Youth Tour and thanks them for serving as excellent representatives of their schools, communities, and cooperative.



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The Crooked Creek Happy 4th of July Summer Cutie Corner

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July 17-19

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