

East Rankin recognizes 2025 Star Students

Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy is excited to again have two students named as Mississippi Economic Council STAR Students. If a school has more than one senior with an overall ACT composite score of 35 or above and an overall average of 93, each student is designated a STAR Student.

Jackson Fountain is the son of Jeff and Lyn Fountain of Forest. He is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Mathematics Honor Society), and ERA's ACT 30 or Above Team. Fountain is also a member of the school's state championship soccer team, and he serves as co-captain of ERA's state championship robotics team. Fountain has been accepted into the Center of Manufacturing Excellence program at the University of Mississippi where he will major in computer science. His future career plan is to work for a software developer in the field of robotics. Fountain chose Mrs.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy's 2025 Star Students: Audrey Hawk and Jackson Fountain.

Gerry Britt as his STAR Teacher.

Audrey Hawk is the daughter of Damon and Kristi Hawk of Brandon. Audrey is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Mathematics Honor Society), and ERA's ACT 30 or Above Team. She is also the captain of East Rankin Academy's Academic Quiz Bowl Team. Hawk is a member of her school's state championship

cross country team, and she serves as co-captain of the ERA state championship robotics team. Audrey has also been named a National Merit Finalist. Audrey has been accepted into the Honors Engineering Program at Texas A&M University with future plans to work in the field of engineering. Hawk chose Mrs. Rachel Stroh as her STAR Teacher.

ERA Valedictorian and Salutatorian on page 14

Stanley honored for service at PES



Special to Pelahatchie News

Linda Stanley and Pelahatchie Elementary Head Principal Robin Sanders.

Special to Pelahatchie News

Linda Stanley was recently recognized for her exceptional work and dedication as a vital member of the school office team. Stanley has dedicated 52 years of service to Pelahatchie Elementary. She has consistently demonstrated outstanding professionalism, organization, and a positive attitude in her role, making her truly deserving of this honor.

She is always the first person to greet visitors, parents, and staff with a smile and a willingness to help. Her patience and professionalism, even in busy or stressful situations, create a welcoming atmosphere for everyone who walks through our doors. She treats people with grace and care, making sure that everyone feels valued and heard. Stanley's positive attitude is infectious and contributes to the overall morale of our school office. She approaches each task with enthusiasm and is always willing to lend a helping hand, whether it's assisting a parent or staff member or taking on additional responsibilities when needed. Her team-oriented mindset fosters a collaborative and supportive work environment. Congratulations to Ms. Stanley.

Pisgah's Irby named top archer

By Susie A. Wolfe

Kyleigh Irby, an honors student at Pisgah High School, competed in three different archery events on Saturday, April 12, 2025 at the State Archery Match. She competed in the Extreme Division, an event that's new to both her and the school. She scored a 294, earning the title of Top Female Archer in the Extreme Division.

In the first competition, Irby shot a 293 in the traditional bullseye style. This earned her top female out of 1,114 female high school archers.



*Special to Pelahatchie News
Kyleigh Irby*

On Friday, April 11, she took part in the All-Stars Match, which featured 144 of the top archers in the state, selected based on their South State scores. Irby delivered a personal best and set a new school record with a score of 295. This was not only the top score in her division but also the highest score among all 144 All-Star competitors.

Irby concentrates on this one sport because "she loves archery," her dad said. She goes to the B & B Archery Range in Pearl to practice just about every Saturday. She joined the Pisgah Archery Team in the seventh grade.

Irby is the daughter of Kyle and Rachel Irby and has an 8-year-old sister, Raegan.

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A CARING & FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

Saint Studios Films: Big Dreams, Small Town, and a Dash of Movie Magic

By Kenneth McDade

Nestled in the charming town of Pelahatchie, Mississippi—where the tea is sweet and the dreams are sweeter—Saint Studios Films, LLC is proving that you don't need a Hollywood zip code to make movie magic. Since its official rebranding in 2008, the independent film company has grown under the creative vision of its founder, Curtis Everitt, who affectionately refers to it as “the community theater of independent film production.”

Everitt's journey into filmmaking started not with a camera, but with a dream of being on screen. “I used to want to be an actor,” he said. “But then I discovered actors have very little control over the final product. That didn't sit right with me—so I decided to get behind the camera and call the shots. Literally.”

Everitt first started making movies in 2004 under the youthful (and appropriately nostalgic) banner of Kids Co. “By 2008, I was no longer a kid—and let's be honest, the name needed a glow-up,” he joked. That glow-up



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

came in the form of Saint Studios, a name inspired by the Val Kilmer film *The Saint*. “In the movie, you have to perform three miracles to be a saint,” Everitt said. “For us, those miracles are pre-production, production, and post-production. If you can pull all three off, you're basically a saint in my book.”

Over the years, Saint Studios has rolled out an eclectic mix of films—from the suspenseful *Dr. S*, to the charmingly peculiar *Bird's Eye*,

the feel-good comedy *Just Act Cool*, the nostalgic *Fire Summer*, and the sci-fi mind-bender *Solar Eclipse*. Each film is a labor of love, crafted with a unique blend of imagination, determination, and the occasional caffeine-fueled editing session.

“I like to give actors roles they

wouldn't normally get to play,” Everitt said. “When someone reaches out wanting to work with me, the first thing I ask is, ‘What's your dream role?’ Then I do my best to make it happen. We're dreamers around here—dreamers with a camera and a deadline.”

Though he once dabbled in wedding videography, Everitt has since hung up his bouquet-filming boots. “After my divorce, the thrill of filming weddings kind of faded,” he said with a chuckle. “Now I focus on the stories I really want to tell—the ones that keep me up at night, in a good way.”

In Pelahatchie, where neighbors are friends and creativity grows like wild honeysuckle, Curtis Everitt and Saint Studios Films are keeping the independent film spirit alive—one dream, one camera, and one miracle at a time.

To follow Saint Studios Films or get involved in upcoming projects, check them out on social media or reach out online.



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Thrash serves as page in Mississippi State Senate



Special to Pelahatchie News

Elizabeth Thrash of Pelahatchie recently served as a page for the Mississippi Senate. Pages generally run errands for officials and Senate staff. Elizabeth is pictured with Lieutenant Governor C. Delbert Hosemann Jr. and Senator Brian Rhodes, who sponsored her visit. Elizabeth is the daughter of Josh and Susan Thrash and attends East Rankin Academy. When asked about the week, Elizabeth said, “This week, as I paged for Senator Brian Rhodes, I enjoyed getting a firsthand look at what truly happens in the Mississippi Senate. It was fascinating to hear about the bills being passed and see how the voting process works. One thing that stood out to me was the camaraderie among the senators, regardless of their party affiliation. There was rarely a moment when someone wasn't joking or laughing with a colleague in the Capitol! It was truly a wonderful experience and a great way to learn more about our state's leaders.”

Sanders named new RCSD superintendent



Special to Pelahatchie News

Mr. Shane Sanders was recently named the new Superintendent of Education for Rankin County School District. A lifelong Rankin County resident and current Deputy Superintendent, Sanders has served our district for over 30 years as a teacher, coach, principal, and administrator. His deep roots and strong commitment to students and staff make him the perfect fit to lead RCSD into the future. “Rankin County is a special place, and I am incredibly honored to serve as superintendent in the community that I have called home my entire life,” Sanders said. “I look forward to working alongside our dedicated staff members, students, families, and community members as we build upon the strong foundation already in place.” Superintendent Sanders starts his new role beginning in July. The staff and students of Pelahatchie High School would also like to congratulate Mr. Sanders – once a chief, always a chief.

East Rankin Academy students turn stock market skills into big win

Special to Pelahatchie News

Searching for financial advice? You might just find the best advisor at your local school. These students elevated their learning to new heights, earning top honors in the Spring 2025 Mississippi Stock Market Game (SMG). Students from East Rankin Academy, coached by Gary Harris, were named First Place winners in the High School Division of the Mississippi Stock Market Game (SMG).

ERA seniors Truitt Lewis (from Brandon), Gabe Nutt (from Morton), and Jonathan Soto (from Forest) captured the top position among 542 teams from public and private schools across the State of Mississippi. The winning team's portfolio outperformed the S&P 500 by 23.05%.

"I'm very proud of Truitt, Gabe, and Jonathan on rising to the top spot against so many teams from around the state. To my knowledge, this is the first team from East Rankin to garner the 1st place designation in more than 30 years," Harris said. "I'm also proud of all our teams



Special to Pelahatchie News

(left to right) Gary Harris, ERA Dean of Students and economics teacher; Gabe Nutt (Morton, MS); Jonathan Soto (Forest, MS); and Truitt Lewis (Brandon, MS).

who learned so much about a difficult sector of the financial arena. We also had three other teams finish in the Top 100."

The Stock Market Game is an educational simulation that allows participants to experience the dynamics of the market in a risk-free environment. The game is used in Mississippi 4th-12th grade classrooms as part of investment education. Through this interactive experience, players learn about investment strategies, risk management, and the factors influencing stock prices. It is not only

a tool for teaching financial literacy but also fosters critical thinking and decision-making skills in a dynamic and engaging way. The benefits of students playing are the following:

- **Financial Literacy:** It provides an opportunity for students to learn about finance, investing, and the stock market in a practical and hands-on way. They can learn key concepts such as stocks, bonds, diversification, risk management, and the impact of economic events on markets.
- **Critical Thinking:** Managing a

virtual portfolio encourages students to analyze information, make decisions, and evaluate the consequences of their actions. They must research companies, industries, and economic trends to make informed investment choices.

- **Risk Management:** Through simulated trading, students can learn how to assess and manage risks. They can experiment with different investment strategies and understand the relationship between risk and return.

- **Math and Analytical Skills:** Tracking stock prices, calculating returns, and analyzing financial data help students strengthen their math skills and analytical abilities. They may also develop proficiency in using spreadsheets and financial analysis tools.

- **Decision-Making Skills:** Investing in the stock market game requires students to make decisions under uncertainty and deal with the consequences of their choices. This helps them develop decision-making skills and learn from both successes and failures.

Continued on page 5



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Defending your home lawn with fire ant control



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

Fire ants are the most common insect pests of home lawns. They occur in nearly every lawn in Mississippi. Even if you can

achieve a totally fire ant free yard, it probably won't stay that way for long, because newly mated fire ant queens will quickly recolonize it. New colonies seem to thrive in areas that are free of other competing colonies. Fire ant control can be an ongoing battle, but there are steps you can take to keep your yard relatively free of fire ants.

1) Granular Baits: The easiest, cheapest, and most effective way to control fire ants is to use baits. Learn to use baits properly and preventively and the number of fire ants in your yard can be reduced by 80 to 90 percent. The key to success with baits is applying them as broadcast treatments instead of treating only individual mounds. When properly applied, granular fire ant baits are low cost, quick and easy to apply, they are safe to children and pets, and give up to 80% control. Baits are "fire ant-edible" granules that contain low doses of slow acting insecticides or insect growth disruptors.

It may take two to six weeks to see the full benefits of a bait. Early spring is the best time to apply fire ant baits because fire ants are actively foraging for food at this time of year. If you are just going to treat one time of year, do it in the spring. But you can improve control by treating in midsummer and a third time in the fall. A rule of thumb is to broadcast a granu-

lar bait over your yard three to four times a year - around Easter, around Independence Day, and around Labor Day - and you should not have very many fire ants in your yard.

2) Dry Mound Treatments: Can't wait a few weeks for a bait to control that big mound by the edge of the patio?

A dry mound treatment is the most convenient way to kill fire ant mounds. Keep a can of dry mound treatments on hand to spot treat the mound you see in your yard. As you find fire ant mounds, just sprinkle the labeled amount of the product on the mound and walk away. The use of a combination of granular baits and dry mound treatments are very effective in controlling fire ants.

3) Liquid Mound Drenches: This is the fastest way to kill individual fire ant mounds, but they are the most time consuming to mix and apply. Use a watering can to mix and apply liquid drenches. Just mix the specific amount of insecticide in water and pour over the mound. The key to success with liquid drenches is to use enough liquid to thoroughly soak the mound. Depending on the size of the mound, it could range from 1 to 2 gallons of mixed drench.

Begin by applying about ¼ of the total volume to a 10-12 inch band around the outside of the mound. This will help prevent the queen from escaping through those underground foraging tunnels and improves control of workers. Then apply the rest of the drench directly to the mound. Failing to use



enough drench to thoroughly soak the mound is the main reason for problems with mound drenching fire ants.

4) Broadcast Insecticide Treatments: Broadcast insecticide treatments are contact insecticides that are applied over the entire lawn. These are generally more time consuming and more costly than baits. These are used more in highly managed areas such as athletic fields and golf courses, than home lawns. Broadcast insecticide treatments may be formulated as liquids, which are mixed according to label instructions and then sprayed over the lawn areas, or as granular treatments, which are spread over the lawn areas using an appropriate spreader.

Don't get granular insecticides and granular baits confused. Baits are impregnated with oil or some other food substance and a small amount of slow-acting insecticide. Worker ants actively collect

the bait granules and carry them back to the colony. Granular insecticides are simply granules that are impregnated with insecticide. These are not attractive to ants. Instead, the insecticide in the granules moves into the soil and controls foraging ants and newly settled queens by contact activity. Obtaining uniform coverage is more important when applying broadcast insecticide granules than when applying granular baits.

One benefit of applying insecticides used as broadcasts treatments for fire ants is the insecticides also control other lawn pests, such as chinch bugs, white grubs, and mole crickets. Choose the right insecticide and you can control mole crickets, fire ants, and white grubs. Before purchasing a broadcast insecticide, read the label carefully to be sure that the insecticide you choose controls the particular group of pests you need to control.

Source, "Control Fire Ants in Your Yard". Mississippi State University Extension, Publication 2429

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ERA Stock Market 1st Place

• **Real-World Application:** The stock market game provides a simulated environment that mirrors real-world investing, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. It bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-life experiences.

• **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Some versions of the stock market game involve team-based competitions, fostering teamwork, collaboration, and communication skills as students work together to manage their portfolios and achieve investment goals.

• **Long-Term Perspective:** Students learn the importance of long-term investing and the benefits of patience and discipline in achieving financial goals. They can see how compound interest works overtime and understand the power of staying invested for the long haul.

“The simulation is one of the most effective learning tools available about the free enterprise system for students in grades 4-12,” stated

Selena Swartzfager, President of the MS Council on Economic Education. The program enables teams of students to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in the stock market over a 13-week period. Winners are determined on the percentage return above or below S&P 500 growth.

“Last year, we had a 94% increase in student participation with a total of 6,746 students. Students participating in the Mississippi Stock Market Game, and this year we are experiencing another year of growth, Swartzfager said, “This tells you how popular and effective this program is in the classroom. Students in all Mississippi schools should have the opportunity to learn about investing for their future. All it takes is a willing teacher to implement the program in the classroom.”

MCEE will award prizes to each first, second, and third place team from each division during a Stock Market Game awards ceremony held at Jackson State University on Friday, May 9, 2025.

Pelahatchie Library May Events

**FAMILY NIGHT:
STAR WARS**
May 8th at 5:00 p.m.

SENIOR SOCIAL
May 13th at 11:00 a.m.

**A TIME TO REMEMBER
GRIEF CLUB**
May 15th at 4:00 p.m.

GARDEN CLUB
May 15th at 5:30 p.m.

**PELAHATCHIE
ADULT BOOK CLUB**
May 21st at 11:00 a.m.

SENIOR SOCIAL
27th at 11:00 a.m.



Hairston awarded MPE scholarship

Special to Pelahatchie News

Rebekah Hairston, a resident of Pelahatchie and an education major at Belhaven University, is the recipient of a 2025 Linda Anglin Teacher Preparation Scholarship from the Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE). In addition to the \$500 scholarship, Rebekah also received a complimentary membership to MPE for her first year of teaching. Hairston is a President's List Scholar, the head tutor of the writing lab, and an active member in the Reformed University Fellowship campus ministry.

Founded in 1979, the Mississippi Professional Educators is Mississippi's largest and premier organization for professional educators, serving approximately 12,000 teachers, administrators and support personnel. MPE serves members in pre-K through graduate education in both public and private institutions with the purpose of promoting better education for the children of Mississippi. MPE offers an annual scholarship to an MPE student member from each School of Education at Mississippi's fifteen public and private institutions of higher learning.



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Rebekah Hairston



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Rankin County Co-op

City Beat: Mayor, Alderman meetings for March 31 & April 7, 2025



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

Pelahatchie March Public Hearing

Summary: The Pelahatchie Mayor and Board of Aldermen held a public hearing to gather public input on several zoning and ordinance-related matters on March 31, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. The city attorney was not present in person for this meeting (only on phone).

New Business:

1. Rezoning Request – Kenneth Martin (Highway 43 North): Kenneth Martin requested that two residential lots on Highway 43 North be rezoned to commercial zoning. Martin was asked to return to the next regular board meeting for consideration and a formal vote.

2. Rezoning Request – Luke Shivers (North Avenue): Luke Shivers was not present for the hearing. His request sought to rezone property on North Avenue from R-1 to High Density Residential for the purpose of constructing a future apartment complex within city limits. Due to his absence, no action was taken.

3. Ordinance Amendment – Heritage District: The board discussed adding language to the Heritage District ordinance that would specifically ban liquor stores. David Gray's name was called multiple times, but it was announced that he was not present. Joe Lane Kelly, a local businessman, expressed his opposition to this amendment, stating that it would block him from building a liquor store in the Heritage District.

4. Special Conditional Use Permit Request – Joe Lane Kelly: Joe Lane Kelly submitted a request for a special conditional use permit to open a liquor store in the Heritage District. The matter was left for further discussion and action at the April 7 regular board meeting.

Pelahatchie April 2025 Board Meeting Summary: The Board of Aldermen for the Town of Pelahatchie held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, April 7, 2025, at Town Hall. Mayor Karl VanHorn called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Invocation by Alderman Jones and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: All five members of the Board were present: Aldermen Diane Hill, Sandra Harvey, Margie Warren, Eddie Jones, and James Harrell.

Residents and Visitors' Business: An update from the Pelahatchie Public Library was listed on the agenda; however, no representative was present to deliver the update.

New Business:

1. Approval of March 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman Diane Hill. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Unpaid Claims Docket: Motion was made by Alderman Margie Warren and seconded by Alderman Eddie Jones. The motion passed 3-2.

3. Approval of Bank Draft Payment to Morgan and White Insurance (\$1,082.27): Motion was made by Alderman Jones and seconded by Alderman Hill. The motion passed with all in favor.

4. Approval of Payment to Blue Cross Insurance (\$8,293.24): Motion was made by Alderman Margie Warren and seconded by Alderman Eddie Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Payment to EMC Insurance for Property Coverage (\$5,916.32): Motion was made by Alderman Margie Warren and seconded by Alderman Eddie Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of March 2025 Payroll: General Fund: \$70,457.69; Enterprise Fund: \$26,846.85; Motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman James Harrell. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Rezoning Kenneth Martin's Properties Along Highway 43 from Residential to Commercial: Motion was made by Alderman Jones and seconded by Alderman Harrell. The motion passed with all in favor.

8. Amending the Heritage District Ordinance Verbiage to Ban Liquor Stores From Being Built in the Heritage District: Motion was made by Alderman Jones and seconded by Alderman Harrell. The motion passed 3-2.

9. Request for Conditional Use Permit For Joe Lane Kelly to Open a Liquor Store in Heritage District: A motion to explicitly deny Joe Lane Kelly's request for a conditional use permit was made by Alderman Jones and seconded by Alderman Harrell. The motion to deny Joe Lane Kelly's conditional use permit passed in a 3-2 vote.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Margie Warren and seconded by Alderman Eddie Jones. The motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 6:14 P.M.



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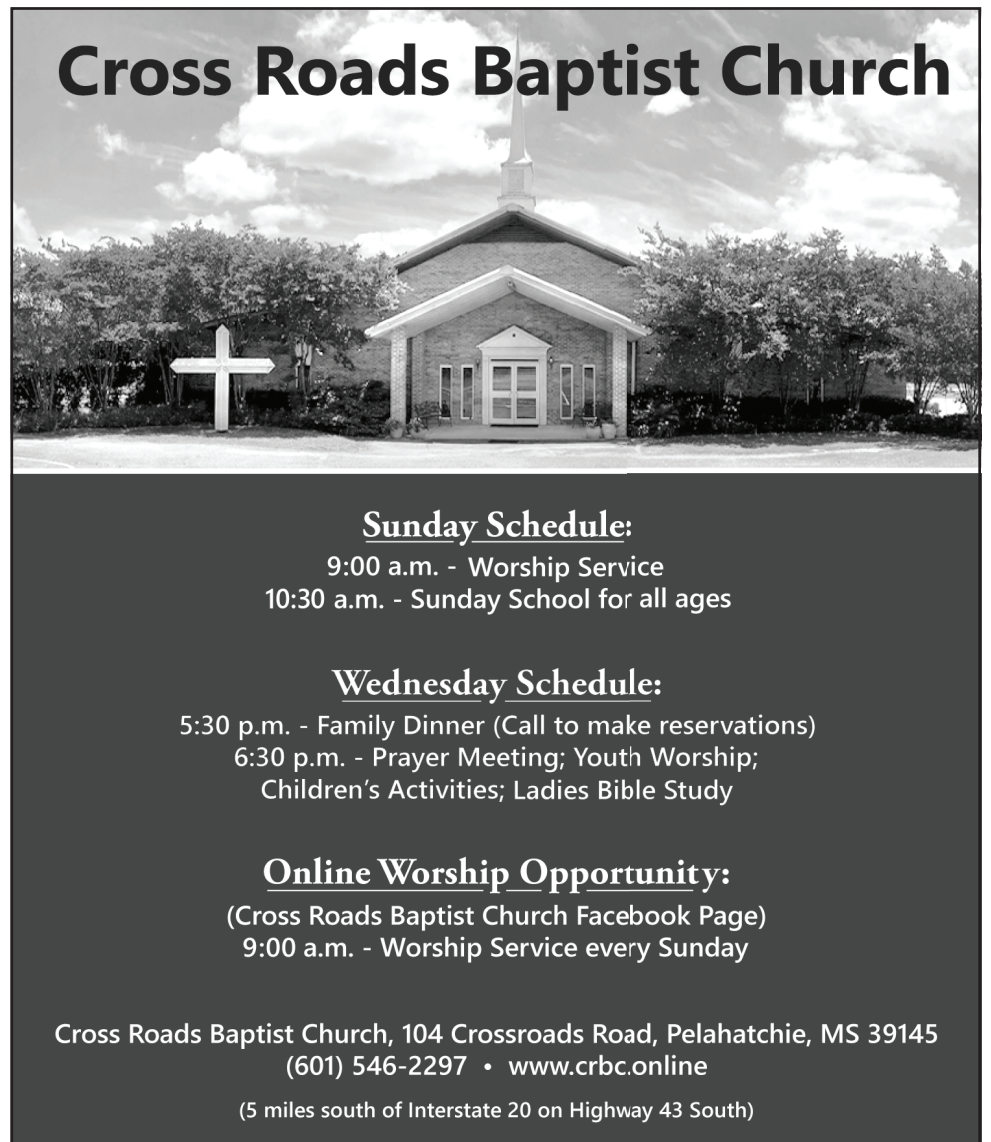
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ERA sisters heading to State Track Championship

By Susie A. Wolfe

Emma and Abby Raines picked up second and fourth in 300 hurdles for the East Rankin Academy (ERA) track and field team at the District Meet in April. They have qualified for the State Meet to compete in their last track meet together which was held on May 2, 2025, at Jackson Academy and May 3 at Jackson Prep.

The sisters are currently Overall District Champions and four-time 5A cross-country state champions. Abby, a graduating senior, has been participating in hurdles and high jump for seven years while Emma, a ninth grader, has been participating in all events for four years.

“Both are good girls who have worked hard for me, ERA Coach David Hopper said, “Abby was in the first group I coached at East Rankin. Emma is a mainstay and one of the top five runners in our group.”

Abby qualified for State in high jump with a 5.0 jump, which is a personal record. She graduated May 2, 2025 and plans to study physical therapy at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, where she won a cheerleading scholarship. She said she is not planning to run competitively in college.

“Emma has a great deal of potential,” Hopper said. She is a versatile runner and is currently the District Meet champ finishing first in 100m hurdles. She also placed in 400m dash, and 4x400m relay. She holds the school record in both 100m hurdles and 300m hurdles.

Hopper said there is another 11-year-old Raines sister that has already unofficially started running with the team, though it may be a while before she competes.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Abby and Emma Raines have been competing together in ERA cross country and track and field for four years. They have helped the team become four consecutive 5A cross-country state champions.



Abby and Emma Raines have qualified for the State Track Meet in Jackson in May. Abby qualified with a personal best 5.0 high jump. Emma qualified with 2nd place in 300m hurdles and 400m run.

Pelahatchie HS 2025 Prom King and Queen



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to the Pelahatchie High School 2025 Prom King Mickey Jennings and Queen Melanie Ball.

Pelahatchie HS and ES celebrate National Assistant Principal Week



Pelahatchie High School Assistant Principals Mr. Philip Nelson and Mr. Tony Martin.



Recently, Pelahatchie High School and Pelahatchie Elementary School celebrated National Assistant Principal Week 2025 by acknowledging the presence and contributions of Mr. Philip Nelson, Mr. Tony Martin, and Mrs. Mijia Ward.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary School Assistant Principal Mrs. Mijia Ward.



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Pelahatchie ES robotics teams place at competition

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) 4th & 5th grade robotics team recently participated in the STEM Skills Competition sponsored by NISSAN and Mississippi Robotics. Each grade placed 3rd overall in their grade level and placed 3rd overall as a team.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary School 4th and 5th grade robotics team with Rebecca Nelson PES STEM teacher.

Student Grade Level Awards:

Kastiel Walker - 2nd Place RC Car Derby, 3rd Place Binary Coding, 3rd Place Measurement, 4th Place Trim Triangle, Overall 3rd Place for all of 4th Grade and Overall 4th Place of all Attendees

Addie Harrell - 3rd Place Binary Coding, 3rd Place RC Car Derby, and 4th Place Math

Cameron Banks - 3rd Place Math, 3rd Place Trim Triangle, 4th Place Binary Coding, 4th Place Measurement

Ayden Hill - 3rd Place Binary Coding, 3rd Place RC Car Derby

Michael Lee - 3rd Place Math, 4th Place Binary Coding

Karsyn Vanderford - 1st Place Math, 2nd Place Measurement, 4th Place Binary Coding, 4th Place RC Car Derby



Pelahatchie Elementary School 6th grade robotics team with Rebecca Nelson PES STEM teacher.

The PES 6th grade robotics team competed at the 6th-8th grade STEM

Skills Competition sponsored by NISSAN and Mississippi Robotics. The six member team showcased their problem solving and teamwork skills while tackling all of the challenges. Ainsley Grammar and Henry Hyde earned 2nd place in the Sumo Robotics event and the team placed 3rd overall in 6th grade.

Student Grade Level Awards:

Ainsley Grammar - 2nd place Sumo, 2nd place Electricity, 4th Place Binary Coding, and 3rd place RC Car Derby

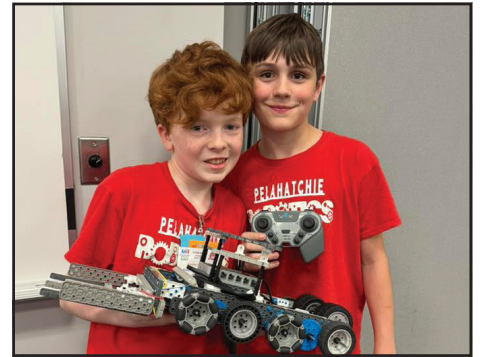
Henry Hyde - 2nd place Sumo, 2nd place Electricity, 3rd place Trim Triangle, 4th place Math, 4th place Binary Coding, and 4th place RC Car Derby

Kinley Simpson - 2nd place Binary Coding and 3rd place Math

Julian Wash - 3rd place Trim Triangle, 3rd place RC Car Derby, and 4th place Math

Kenlee Johnson - 1st place Binary Coding, 2nd place Trim Triangle, 2nd place RC Car Derby, 3rd place Math, 3rd place Measurement and Overall 3rd place 6th grade student

Morgan Perry - 3rd place Measurement and 4th place RC Car Derby



PES 6th grade robotics team members Ainsley Grammar (left) and Henry Hyde (right) placed 1st in Small Bot Sumo in the high school division.

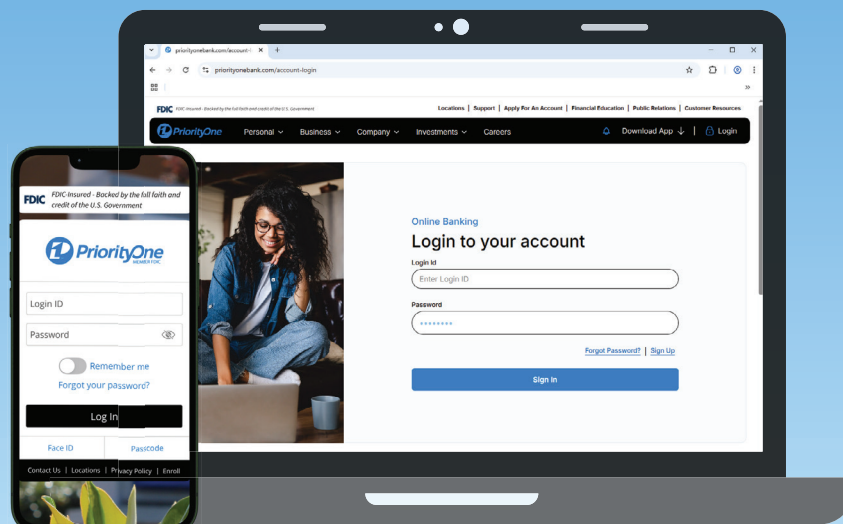
Ainsley Grammar and Henry Hyde were invited back on April 12 to compete with the high school division. PES would like to congratulate them for finishing 1st place in the Small Bot Sumo Robotics Competition. They battled through other previous winners as well as high school students to earn the top spot.

They also gained a wealth of knowledge about the large bots from the high school students who were excellent mentors to the younger students. Thanks to Mississippi Robotics and Nissan for sponsoring this event and allowing these students the opportunity to grow their passion for robotics and STEM. A special thanks to the parents and grandparents for supporting their passion as well.



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Pelahatchie High School students win weightlifting championship

Congratulations to Pelahatchie High School (PHS) weightlifting team members Erin Winder and Korbin Boydston, who each won the 2A State Powerlifting Championship in their weight class. These two students were recognized at a recent Rankin County School District board meeting.

PHS would also like to congratulate Senior Melanie Ball. She recently placed 1st in the USPA Nationals junior division age 17-19 at Mecca 5 in Tupelo, MS. She set state records for squat (215 lbs), bench press (88 lbs), and deadlift (260lbs).



Erin Winder



(center) Korbin Boydston



(front center) Korbin Boydston and Erin Winder hold the certificates they received when they attended recent RCSD board meeting.



Melanie Ball

Photos special to Pelahatchie News

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



PAST HEADLINES

2015 - 10 years ago

- "Pelahatchie School softball field dedicated to Coach Bishop"
- "E-cigarette use triples among middle and high school students"

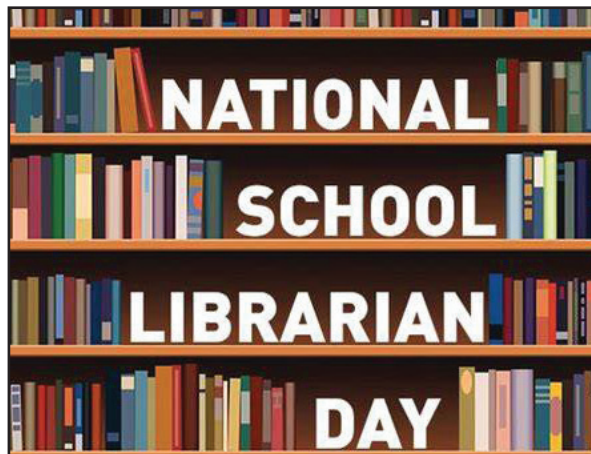
2020 - 5 years ago

- "A fond tribute to Jackie Thompson"
- "VFD drives Easter Bunny around town"

2024 - Last Year

- "A journey to Remember: Witnessing the Total Solar Eclipse in Texas"
- "Love Out Loud event at Jellystone: A Community Gathering for Hope and Help"

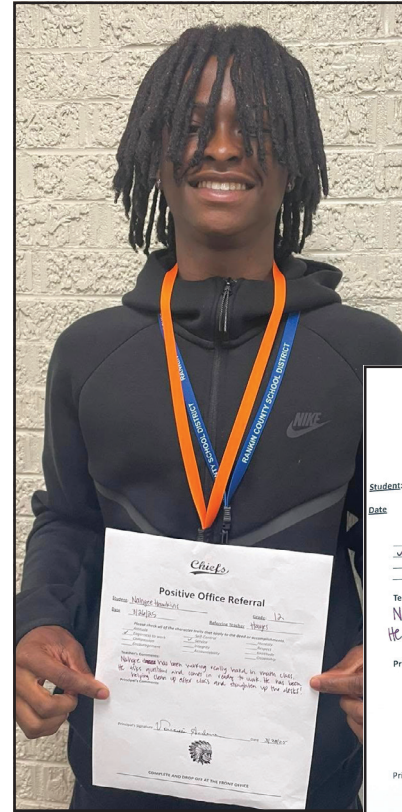
PHS celebrates National Librarian Day



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School (PHS) recently celebrated Eles Renfro, the heart of the PHS Library and a true champion for our students and staff. Whether she's helping students find their next great read, supporting research projects, or creating a welcoming space for all, Renfro does it all with passion, patience, and purpose. Renfro sparks curiosity, encourages lifelong learning, and makes the library a place where everyone feels seen, supported, and inspired. Exploring Computer Science students Kendall Gordon and Laura Pohlyova created an LED circuit card for Renfro to celebrate her on National Librarian Day.

PHS student feature: two positive office referrals



Chiefs

Positive Office Referral

Student: Nahgee Hawkins Grade: 12

Date: 3/26/25 Referring Teacher: Hawes


Please check all of the character traits that apply to the deed or accomplishments.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Honesty
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagerness to work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respect
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compassion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gratitude
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizenship

Teacher's Comments:
Nahgee ~~has~~ been working really hard in math class. He asks questions and comes in ready to work. He has been helping clean up after class and straighten up the desks!

Principal's Comments:

Principal's Signature: Vanessa Andrus Date: 3/28/25



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Recently, the Chiefs wrapped up the school week by celebrating some amazing efforts by two young men. Nahgee Hawkins received a positive office referral based on his personality and perseverance in class. He has stood out amongst peers showing how hard he works in class and how he is willing to ask questions to gain a better understanding. The tribe is proud of you, Nahgee. Keep working hard.



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Chiefs

Positive Office Referral

Student: Jaylyn Watson Grade: 11th

Date: 3/26/25 Referring Teacher: Foster


Please check all of the character traits that apply to the deed or accomplishments.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Honesty
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagerness to work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respect
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compassion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gratitude
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizenship

Teacher's Comments:
In class, a student spilled ~~something~~ a drink, and Jaylyn jumped in to help without being asked. Also, he has no missing work for O's English!

Principal's Comments:
Very proud!

Principal's Signature: Vanessa Andrus Date: 3/28/25



Chiefs

Positive Office Referral

Student: Jaylyn Watson Grade: 11

Date: 3/26/25 Referring Teacher: Hayes

Please check all of the character traits that apply to the deed or accomplishments.


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Honesty
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagerness to work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respect
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compassion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gratitude
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizenship

Teacher's Comments:
Jaylyn had a GREAT day in class today. He came in without his hood on and did NOT put his head down. He chose to move seats today to work with a friend. He completed his notes and worked very hard on his assignment (and mixing work). He never gave up and never put his head down.

I AM SO PROUD OF HIM!!!!

Principal's Comments:

Principal's Signature: Vanessa Andrus Date: 3/28/25



The other young man was Jaylyn Watson. Two teachers submitted positive referrals for Jaylyn showing how his positive efforts are being seen and celebrated by many. From staying on top of assignments, to jumping in to assist without being prompted, to actively participating in class, Jaylyn has been doing it all. Thank you Jaylyn for showing your peers what leadership looks like. Your efforts are not going unnoticed.

Yogi on the Lake and ERCO join together for Love Out Loud

Approximately 1,500 Pelahatchie area citizens attended the 12th Annual Love Out Loud. It was presented by Ever Reaching Community Outreach (ERCO) at Jellystone Park - Yogi on the Lake on Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Lunch and activities like face-painting and bounce houses were free for attendees. Local groups also exhibited and offered games for the kids. ERCO serves those in need as a MS Food Network food pantry, a donation center with free items, a resource network, and a provider of hope sharing the message of love and faith in Jesus Christ in the community and around the state.



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East Rankin Academy Patriots honored at MS state capitol



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

The East Rankin Academy boys soccer team was recently honored at the Mississippi state capitol for their MAIS DII championship win. This was the first soccer championship win in the history of the school. "I was honored to welcome the East Rankin Academy Patriots boys soccer team to the Capitol today to celebrate their State Championship win," Senator Brian Rhodes stated.



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Pastor's Perspective: What are you expecting from Easter?



Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist
Spencer Sullivan, Pastor,
Pelahatchie Baptist

When the calendar turns to May, there's a lot of expectation and anticipation related to summer being just around the corner. There's the anticipation of school letting out for a couple of months. And, whether you like it or not, there's always the anticipation of the hot and sticky Mississippi summer weather. Perhaps there's also the anticipation of a summer holiday to get away and relax for a few days. But as I anticipate each of these summer traditions, I currently find myself still reflecting on Easter, or more specifically, the resurrection of King Jesus. I hope that each of you were able to enjoy a meaningful Easter or Resurrection Day celebration. I hope your experience was one full of the worship of Jesus and also the tremendous hope that only the resurrection can bring you. As I continue to reflect on the resurrection, there's a part of the old, old story that just hit differently for me this year. Before Jesus went to the cross, Jesus explicitly told His disciples that He

would suffer at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, but then rise from the dead on the third day. He did this on at least three different occasions (Matt. 16:21-23, Matt. 17:22-23, & Matt. 20:17-19). We know that Jesus' claim was known beyond just His disciples because in Matthew 27, the chief priests went to Pilate and asked him to put guards at the tomb in case His disciples would try to steal His body and claim that He actually rose from the dead. So, if Jesus made the effort to give His closest followers a heads up that He would rise again, why does Matthew 28 not begin with the eleven camping out at the tomb, anticipating the dawn of the third day? Sure, the guards were there, but why not be around the corner or watching from a distance on the hillside? Instead, we see the ladies arrive at the tomb. But, they were not anticipating His resurrection either. They were there to finish anointing Jesus' dead body. And even beyond Him explicitly telling them what would happen, just days prior to the Passion Week, they had all witnessed Him raise His friend Lazarus from the dead after he had been in a tomb for 4 days! Yet, after all they had witnessed and heard, the third day dawned and there was zero anticipation



that He would rise from the dead as He told them He would. Why? Even after three full years of following Him and being taught by Him and witnessing His miracles, is it possible that they still didn't fully grasp all that He was and is? Notice, in a few instances, Jesus's followers had an encounter with the resurrected Christ, and yet still did not know who He was. In John 20:15, Mary Magdalene mistook Him for the gardener. In John 21, some of His disciples who were fishing did not immediately recognize Him. On the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, two of His disciples didn't recognize Him until later in the day even after spending considerable time with Him. In each case, they finally recognized Him when Jesus clearly revealed Himself to them. He was the One to open their eyes to see

and their hearts to believe. Only after their encounters with the resurrected Jesus, did they fully understand. For me, there are a couple of takeaways. First, it is certainly possible to know who Jesus was and is, and even know all that the Bible says about Him, without truly knowing Jesus in His fullness. It's possible to know all about Him, attend church regularly and listen to sermons, but still not know the life changing hope, peace, and joy that result from the resurrection. That's a scary thought to consider. If you haven't experienced true hope, the peace that doesn't make sense, and the fullness of His joy regardless of life's circumstances, I challenge you to press into Jesus and ask Him to open your eyes to everything that He is: Comforter, Joy Giver, Friend, Savior, King, and so much more! But, for those that truly know Him, do you live expecting Him to do great things in, around, and through you? Do you live expecting Him to fulfill His promises? Do you live confidently in hope? Do you live in obedience to His commands, all because of the hope of the resurrection? While Easter is a day that we rightfully and joyfully celebrate His resurrection, let us live in that hope every day, because He is forever risen!

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ERA names Valedictorian and Salutatorian for Class of 2025



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy's 2025 Valedictorian and Salutatorian: Audrey Hawk and Abram Rowell.

Special to Pelahatchie News

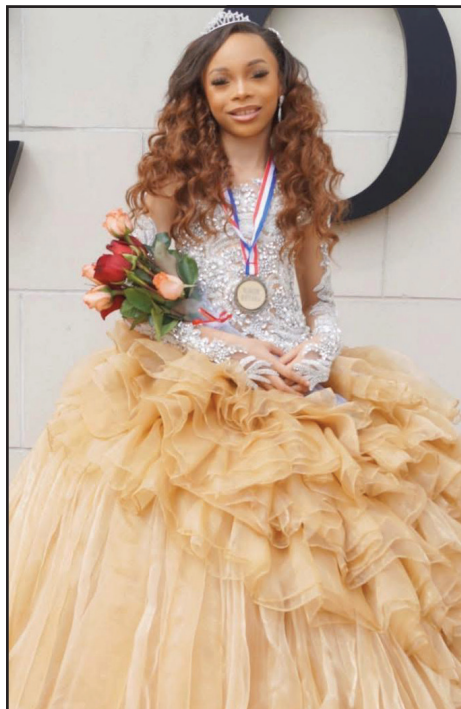
Audrey Hawk and Abram Rowell were named East Rankin Academy's Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively.

Audrey Hawk, valedictorian, is a member of Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, ACT 30+ Academic Team, the ERA Chapter of the National Honor Society, and serves as captain of East Rankin's academic quiz bowl team. She also serves as co-captain of the ERA state championship robotics team and is a member of ERA's state championship

cross-country team. Audrey has been named a National Merit Finalist and is also one of ERA's STAR Students. She plans to major in mechanical engineering at Texas A&M University.

Abram Rowell, salutatorian, is a member of the ERA Chapter of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, and ACT 30+ Academic Team. He is also a multi-year participant on East Rankin's state championship shooting sports team. Abram plans to major in accounting at Mississippi Christian University.

Beecham and Todd shine at local beauty pageants



Statuned Media @Rod Beechem

Ramzey Beechem recently won the Over All Beauty title for the 4th Grade Division Pageant held Saturday, March 29, 2025 at Pelahatchie HS. Her hair was styled by Ericka Sibley; Make-up: Melanin Monroe; Dress: Sherry Wilson; Managed by: Ryshonda Beechem; and Pageant Coach: Ryshonda Beechem.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Weslyn Todd recently participated in her first school pageant in Pelahatchie. She won overall beauty in her division.

Pelahatchie High School concert band attends to State competition



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie High School concert band recently attended the MSHAA Concert State Evaluation at Pearl High School. The band performed a concert featuring three pieces: Sky Bound by Jon Bubbet, Gentle River by Rob Grice, and A Jubilant Spirit by Carol B. Chambers. The band earned an Overall Excellent Rating on Stage and an Overall Superior Rating in Sight Reading.

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East Rankin Academy boys tennis doubles advance to North State



Special to Pelahatchie News

(not listed in order) Congratulations to East Rankin Academy's boys doubles teams — Channing Diveley & Dalton Mcdill and J.P. Pierce & Hudson Hawk — for advancing to North State.

ERA's robotics team takes 1st place



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to East Rankin Academy's Robotics Team for finishing 1st place in the MAIS First Tech Challenge Robotics Tournament after successfully competing against Lamar School and Park Place Christian Academy in the final rounds of competition.

Crooked Creek Animal Hospital feature: Spring cleaning for pets

By Beth van Mullem

Spring is here and it's a good time to do some spring cleaning for your dog or cat. Here are some good cleaning tips.

1. Food and water bowls. Wash the bowl with regular dish soap and hot water and give it a good scrub. If the bowls are dishwasher safe, run them through the dishwasher after initial deep cleaning. Be sure to check for cracks in the bowls and replace when necessary.

2. Bedding. Remove bedding, blankets, covers, etc and wash them in the washing machine per instructions on the items. Be sure to dry completely to avoid mildew and mold.

3. Toys. Inspect your pet's toys to make sure they are still safe. If broken or cracked, throw the toys away and get new ones. If the toys can be washed, follow instructions on the item and give them a good washing in the washing machine or hand wash and dry completely. Be sure to follow the instructions on your washer and dryer too.

4. Kennel and crate. For an outdoor

kennel, remove all bedding, mats, toys, etc from the kennel and thoroughly clean the kennel with a pet friendly cleaning solution or disinfectant. Use a hose to rinse and spray down everything until clear from dirt and grime and chemicals from the cleaning solution or disinfectant. Let the kennel dry before letting the pet and bedding back in. For an indoor crate, remove all bedding, mats, toys, etc, from the crate and clean all surfaces with a pet friendly cleaning solution or disinfectant and rinse thoroughly. Make sure the crate is dry before letting the pet and bedding back in.

5. Litter box. Empty the litter box. Inspect the litter box to make sure that it is in good shape, not cracked, or stained from too much use. If it is still in good shape, fill the litter box with hot water and dish soap and let it soak for a few minutes. After a good soak, empty the water and give it a good scrub using a pet friendly disinfectant spray and rinse thoroughly. Let it dry completely before you putting new litter back in the box.



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ERA's Upper School concert band earns All Superior



Special to Pelahatchie News
The East Rankin Upper School Band received an All Superior Rating at the MAIS Spring Band Concert.

ERA's varsity wins MAIS 5A district



Special to Pelahatchie News
Congratulations to both East Rankin Academy's Varsity Boys and Varsity Girls Track and Field teams for winning the MAIS 5A 2025 District Championship.



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