



PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



February 2026 ■ Volume 15, Issue 2 ■ Pelahatchie, MS

Local businesses shine in Rankin County's Best of the Best awards

Crooked Creek Animal Hospital: Best Veterinary Clinic



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to Crooked Creek Animal Hospital (CCAH) for winning Rankin's Best Veterinary Clinic. The staff felt blown away by the amount of support that was shown by the CCAH family and feels honored to serve the community by doing what they love. CCAH was also a Top 5 finalist for pet boarding services and best veterinarian, Dr. Edwards.

Crooked Letter Kitchen: Best Food Truck, Best Chef



Congratulations to Crooked Letter Kitchen (CLK) for winning Rankin's Best Food Truck and Best Chef. The staff felt honored to be voted Best Chef and Best Food Truck in Rankin County. CLK was also a top five finalist in the categories of Appetizer, Burger, Catering, Dessert, and Non-franchise Dining. This recognition means a lot to the staff at Crooked Letter Kitchen.

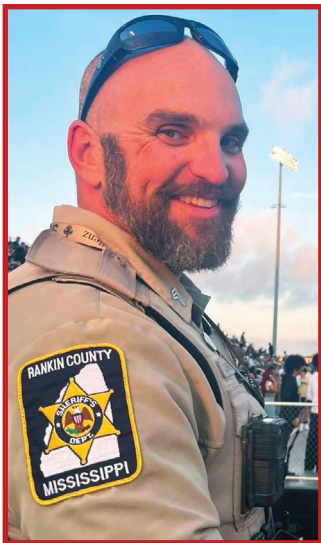
Irvin achieves high school athletic career milestone



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to Pelahatchie High School's Duna Irvin (center) for reaching the 1,000 points mark in basketball.

PHS and PES thank officer



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Pelahatchie High and Elementary Schools recently celebrated Law Enforcement Appreciation Day by honoring School Resource Officer Chance White. The staff and students are grateful every day for the law enforcement professionals who serve the schools and local community. Thank you for answering the call to serve Officer White.

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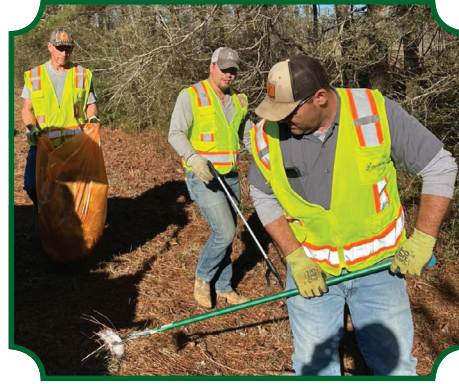
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Southern Pine Electric holds statewide day of service

In recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, all Southern Pine districts and headquarters participated in Cooperative Day of Service activities in January. Headquarters, Taylorsville, Newton, and New Hebron teams contributed through roadside cleanup efforts, while the Brandon district supported a local food pantry through a Stuff-a-Truck food drive. Southern Pine Electric is committed to service, stewardship, and strengthening the communities they serve.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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Being Proactive Could Save Your Forest

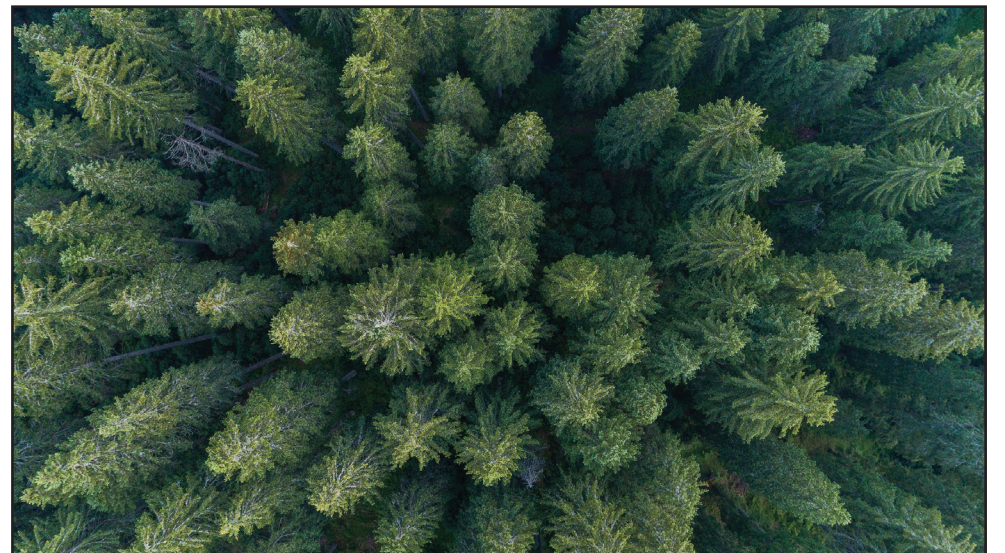


Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Doug Carter, Rankin
County Extension Agent

Forest health is the perceived condition of a forest derived from concerns about its age, structure, composition, function, vigor, presence of insects or disease, and resilience to disturbance. Landowners' idea of forest health has changed over the years. The old way of thinking was that if a stand was managed properly the health was guaranteed. Traditional management is essential, but it is no longer enough. A proactive approach is needed to ensure that your forest stays healthy. An example is the summer and fall of 2023, when the drought and bark beetles killed so many pine trees in Central Mississippi.

Insects, disease, water quality, natural disturbances and invasive species can all affect forest health. In my opinion, invasive species are our biggest threat, and may be either plant, insect or disease. Invasive species not only threaten our trees directly, but they also outcompete



Special to Pelahatchie News

native plants and animals to negatively alter forest ecology. The best way to control invasive species is through proactive management.

Being proactive means first educating yourself. Trees may exhibit signs and/or symptoms when under stress, such as boring dust or loss of foliage, etc. However, simply knowing the dangers isn't enough; you must visit your forest on a regular basis. If you're not able to see your property regularly, then edu-

cate your family, friends, hunting camps, and others that are able to visit your property. Know who to contact if a problem should arise. In most cases your county forester or forestry consultant is a good place to begin. Early detection, treatment, and monitoring are critical for overcoming forest health issues.

Source: The Overstory, College of Forest Resources, Extension Forestry, Mississippi State University Extension, August 2013

Scott completes 4 week study at Crooked Creek Animal Hospital

The staff at Crooked Creek Animal Hospital (CCAH) has loved having Sodiya Scott for the past few weeks. Sodiya is a third-year veterinary student at MSU who spent her time learning more about both small and large animal medicine at CCAH. Not only did she expand her own knowledge, but she was also a huge help to the daily hospital operations. She showed up every day with a friendly smile, a compassionate heart, and a strong work ethic that did not go unnoticed. The staff at CCAH wants to thank Sodiya and wish her the very best of luck in her future endeavors.



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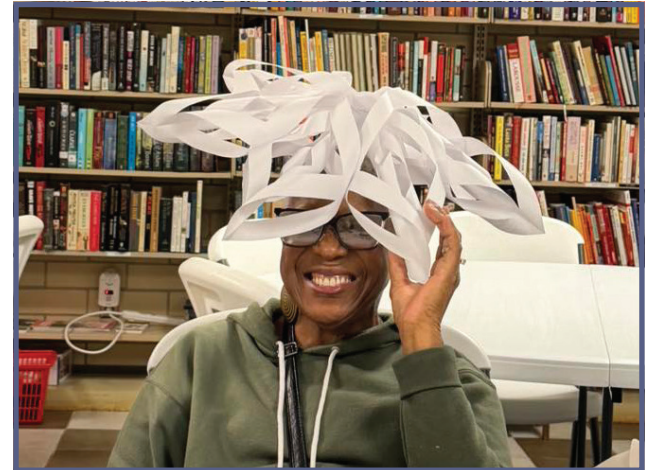
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by
Rankin County Co-op

Pelahatchie Public Library holds classes on snowflakes, container gardening

The Pelahatchie Public Library recently held a crafts class on making 3D snowflakes. Participants enjoyed the class despite having warm weather that day. The Pelahatchie Library also held an educational class today on Container Gardening in conjunction with the Pelahatchie Petals Garden Club. Pelahatchie Library Branch Manager Brenna Renfro stated that 65 people came to learn how to build a successful container garden from Dr. Eddie Smith, Pearl River County Extension Agent, with Mississippi State University Extension.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



Petals' President Jearlean Holly with Dr. Smith



Master Gardener Interns with Dr. Smith (center)



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Pelahatchie Library February Events



PRIDE & PREJUDICE MOVIE NIGHT
FEB. 5 AT 4:00 P.M.

SENIOR SOCIAL
FEB. 10 AND 24 AT 11:00 A.M.

VALENTINE'S DAY CRAFT NIGHT
FEB. 12 AT 5:30 P.M.

BRUNCH & BOOKS: ADULT BOOK CLUB
FEB. 18 AT 11:00 A.M.

LEFT ON READ: TEEN BOOK CLUB
FEB. 18 AT 3:30 P.M.

PELAHATCHIE PETALS GARDEN CLUB
FEB. 19 AT 5:30 P.M.

SEATBELT SAFETY WITH MDOT
FEB. 26 AT 5:30 P.M.



PES December Character Counts: Joy

During December, the Character Counts focus was JOY. These students were recognized by their teachers for bringing and sharing joy in the classroom. They even respond to challenges with positivity.

Photos special to Pelahatchie News

 Leila Johnson	 Glorianna Richardson	 Teagan Lewis
 Kip Sharp	 Empress McFarland	 Forrest Dickerson
 Liliana Boyles	 Freddchechkia Ficklin	 Lilly Simmons
 Paisley Stokes		 Maci Kate Vanderford
 Lorelei O'Brien	 Lawson Holly	 Brixton Martin
 Xzaiver Lee	 Angel Cortes	 Kastiel Walker
 Whitney Gordon	 Gabi Diaz	 Ava Keeton
 Bailee Goodin	 Abel Ingram	 Bo Scruggs



Crooked Creek Animal Hospital

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

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City Beat: Mayor, Alderman meeting for Monday, January 5, 2025



Special to
Pelahatchie News

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

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the town of Pelahatchie met in regular session on Monday, January 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall. Mayor Karl VanHorn called the meeting to order, followed by the invocation by Alderman Jones and Pledge of Allegiance. A roll call was taken with Aldermen Diane Hill, Sandra Harvey, David Gray, and Eddie Jones present. Alderman Harrell was not present.

Residents' and Visitors' Business:

Willie Mae Micklin addressed the Board regarding a request to place a trailer within city limits at 207 North Avenue, providing a diagram for the Board's review. Pamela Kimble of 1107 Second Street reported a tree that had fallen on a fence. Bradley Foster and Chad Robinson addressed the Board regarding a four-home project on Highway 43.

Department Discussions:

There were no reports discussed for Police, Maintenance, Clerk, or Zoning departments.

New Business:

The Board discussed and considered approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on December 1, 2025. A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman Diane Hill to approve the minutes, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board then considered approval of the payment of the unpaid claims docket. A motion was made by

Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray. The vote resulted in a 2-2 tie, with Alderman Diane Hill voting nay. Mayor VanHorn voted to break the tie, and the motion passed.

The Board next discussed, considered, and voted to approve the disbursement of a bank draft payment to Morgan and White Insurance in the amount of \$1,114.23 (secondary to BCBS). A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman Diane Hill. The motion passed 3-1, with Alderman Sandra Harvey voting nay.



The Board then considered a bank draft payment to EMC Insurance in the amount of \$6,509.53 for property insurance. A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed and considered approval of a bank draft payment to Blue Cross Insurance in the amount of \$9,862.28. A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board next discussed approval and ratification of

payroll for December 2025, including General payroll in the amount of \$120,434.53 and Enterprise payroll in the amount of \$37,784.09. Alderman Hill requested a breakdown of the payroll. A motion to approve was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray, but Alderman Hill and Harvey voted no. The vote resulted in a 2-2 tie, which was broken by Mayor VanHorn to pass the motion.

The Board discussed and voted to approve a resolution to allow wastewater system repairs regarding the lagoon project. A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed and voted to approve the Section 3 Plan Resolution regarding MDA Authority. A motion was made by Alderman Eddie Jones and seconded by Alderman David Gray, and the motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Discussions:

Alderman Diane Hill asked about a \$14,000 street repair bill. It was stated that this amount covered multiple projects. Alderman Sandra Harvey inquired about lines on repaved roads. Questions were also raised regarding shoring up pothole repairs on Highway 80 near the car wash.

Mayor VanHorn noted that the MS Rural Water Association class is required for Aldermen and must be taken at the 811 building. The Mayor also discussed the tornado sirens, noting that wiring is still needed on some of the sirens to get them working.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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RCSD and Rankin Chamber honor Pelahatchie Elementary



Congratulations to Adrienne Manning for being named RCSD Elementary Teacher of the Month for December! Ms. Manning guides her kindergartners to excel in the classroom.



Congratulations to Riley Jordan, who received RCSD Elementary Student of the Month for December! Riley is a 6th Grade student who is always willing to help others and makes the PES campus more warm and inviting.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to 2026 Rankin Chamber Teacher of the Year, Lynn Hill! With a career spanning 39 years, Hill has been teaching at Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) since 2024. Hill's dedication to education is inspiring. Hill is known for her unwavering passion and drive to always put what is best for her students first. PES is proud to have her representing the school!

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ERA Patriots Breland siblings finish strong



Special to Pelahatchie News

Siblings Will and Jillian Breland ended their day at the MLK indoor meet in Birmingham with a strong finish. Jillian was Top 10 and the top sophomore, and Will was the top 8th grader throwing indoor shot put!

East Rankin welcomes new 2025-26 National Honor Society Inductees



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to the East Rankin Academy's (ERA) 2025-2026 National Honor Society Inductees! ERA is proud to recognize these outstanding students for their excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Your hard work and dedication represent the very best of this school.

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Pelahatchie Farmer's Market ends second year, part 2

The Pelahatchie Farmer's Market wishes to thank all the vendors, customers, supporters, and friends that helped support the market in 2025. It was a full, prosperous year at Pelahatchie Farmers Market with great weather, smiling faces, and vibrant creativity. Special thanks to Market sponsors Magnolia Storm Shelters and K&M Rentals. For now, be on the lookout for the Market's upcoming 2026 vendor form and dates.

Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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PAST HEADLINES

2016 - 10 years ago

- "Multicraft renovates downtown house as international headquarters and meeting center"
- "Business Spotlight: Fusion Martial Arts trains the mind, body, heart, and soul"

2021 - 5 years ago

- "Goss named Yogi assistant general manager"
- "Pecan Phylloxera can be successfully controlled"

2025 - Last Year

- "Pelahatchie HS students dive into the future with Lobaki VR Partnership"
- "Tornado sirens in Pelahatchie remain silent despite recent tornadoes"



ARCHERY SCHEDULE - 2026 -

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
1/28	BRANDON BULLDOG CUP TOURNAMENT @ RANKIN COUNTY MULTIPURPOSE CENTER (HS TEAM ONLY)	10AM
2/10	HS AND MS @ PISGAH	6PM
2/17	HS AND MS VS PISGAH	5PM
2/19	HS AND MS @ PUCKETT	TBA
2/24	HS AND MS @ SCOTT CENTRAL	5:30PM
2/26	HS ARCHERY @ MORTON	4:30PM
3/2	MS RCSD TOURNAMENT@ BRANDON	12PM
3/3	HS RCSD TOURNAMENT@ BRANDON	10AM
3/5	HS AND MS VS PUCKETT (SENIOR NIGHT)	5PM
3/17-20	SOUTH STATE QUALIFIER FORREST COUNTY MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER	TBA
4/14-17	HS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP @ MS STATE HORSE PARK	TBA
4/28-29	MS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP FORREST COUNTY MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER	TBA
4/30	ALL STARS@ FORREST COUNTY MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER	TBA

PELAHATCHIE HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS SCHEDULE

2/9 FOREST HOME 4:00PM
2/12 SEBASTAPOL HOME 3:00PM
2/17 MIZE HOME 2:30PM
2/23 COLLINS HOME 3:00PM
2/26 CLARKDALE HOME 2:30PM
3/2 PUCKETT HOME 2:00PM
3/3 PISGAH HOME 2:00PM
3/5 PEARL AWAY 4:00PM
3/16 NORTH FORREST HOME 3:00PM
3/19 MORTON AWAY 4:00PM
3/25 DISTRICT TOURNAMENT @ COLLINS ALL DAY
4/1 REGIONAL TOURNAMENT TBD TBA (ALL DAY)

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PHS boys and girls powerlifting teams compete at regionals



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



Congratulations to the boys powerlifting team who competed recently at the Regional Meet. The following young men will move on to compete at South State on February 24th which is hosted at PHS: (not in order) Korbin Boydston, Jaterious Loper, Jamauri Hollis, Lucas Gardner.

Congratulations to our Lady Chiefs Powerlifters and their success in placing 2nd at the Regional Meet. The following Lady Chiefs will be moving on to South State on Feb. 23rd: Harlee Jones, Lilly Grace Brunt, Aubrianna Key, Leighanna Merritt, Lela Jordan, Mollie Jo Shoemaker, Mary Taylor Nutt, Mahogani Hollis, Baelah Belle Crosby, Arly Irby, and Somaya Hillie. Special thank you to Noelle Gardner for taking photos of the meet and to the students and teachers who assisted with making the meet happen.

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Pastor’s Perspective: The Thing No One Wants to Talk About



Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist Spencer
Sullivan, Pastor, Pelahatchie Baptist

Do you ever try to avoid certain topics of conversation? Sometimes certain things can be difficult to talk about. Certain topics can cause conflict. There are some subjects that can be awkward. Some matters are considered taboo. Spiritual conversations are often avoided by many in our culture and for all of the reasons listed above. But, within the broad genre of spiritual conversations, the specific subject of Hell is often avoided most of all. Some don’t want to even acknowledge the possibility of Hell. You’ll find that the reality of Hell is not avoided in the pages of the Bible. In fact, Jesus spoke on the subject more than anyone and it’s not close. One day, Jesus shared a parable on the subject. It is often called the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. I encourage you to give it a quick read. You can find it in Luke 16:19-31.

By sharing this story, Jesus is communicating the reality of Hell as a warning to all who have ears to hear. Pastor and author John MacArthur says: “The story has one purpose: to warn the hearers that Hell will be full of people who never expected to be there.” The story centers on 2 primary characters: the rich man and Lazarus. Jesus makes it clear that the rich man is over-the-top wealthy. Purple garments and clothing were rare and incredibly expensive. They were reserved for royalty and those that could pay the exorbitant price. In addition, Jesus tells us that he didn’t just eat, but that he feasted each day. He was also a religious man.



Special to Pelahatchie News

This is evidenced by how he addressed Abraham. For those listening to Jesus on this day, their immediate assumption was that this man was blessed by God. Of course, Lazarus was the exact opposite in every way. He wasn’t just on the poorer end of the social spectrum. He was among the poorest of the poor. Each day, he was laid at the rich man’s gate to beg. Lazarus had a miserable existence. And just like the hearers would have considered the rich man blessed (worthy of Heaven), in the same way, they would have considered Lazarus cursed (worthy of Hell). Yet, the story that Jesus revealed was completely flipped. Lazarus was in Heaven, while the rich man was suffering the torment of Hell.

But why was the rich man in Hell in the first place? To be clear, all are sinners and guilty of breaking God’s

Law, but no egregious sins were charged against the rich man. Only that he was uncaring to the obvious needs of Lazarus who was daily laid at his gate. His plea to Father Abraham was to send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water to cool his tongue for some measure of relief. Abraham reveals that it is impossible and that the chasm is far too wide. No one can go from one to the other. The destination in that moment is final and no relief is possible. Therefore, the rich man’s last plea is to send Lazarus to his father’s house so that he can warn his 5 brothers. Perhaps it is easy for us to resonate with the rich man’s thinking here. If a dead man comes back to life, surely it would get the attention of his beloved family members enough to lead them to repentance and faith! But, notice Abraham’s final and firm response: “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”

So, what’s the point of the story? Interestingly, a few months later, a man named Lazarus actually died, but this time it wasn’t a parable. When Jesus arrived, he had been dead 4 days. Jesus raised Lazarus back to life. It is one of Jesus’ most remarkable miracles. However, miracles do not save. That was never their purpose. Miracles merely validated the message of Jesus. Through this parable, Jesus affirms the reality of Hell and the scary part is that people will be there that didn’t expect to be. Our hope is Jesus and Jesus alone. I urge you not to dismiss the subject of Hell as if it isn’t real. However, by repenting of your sin and placing your faith alone in Jesus, assuredly Hell will not be your final destination. Eternal life in Heaven is the free gift of God for all who believe!

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Farewell to the Penny: America's Smallest Coin Takes Its Final Bow

By Kenneth A. McDade

Well, folks, after more than a century of riding in our pockets, clogging our car cupholders, jingling in our dryers, and hiding in that mysterious kitchen drawer everyone pretends to organize once a year, the penny is finally retiring. Yes, the humble one-cent coin—our nation's longest-running, least-respected employee—is clocking out for good.

And I, for one, feel like I'm saying goodbye to an old friend. The kind of friend who never accomplished much, but always tagged along anyway.

We've spent generations insisting, "A penny saved is a penny earned," despite the fact that most of us refused to bend down and pick one up unless destiny, karma, or childhood superstition demanded it. Because let's be honest: if you grew up in America, you've whispered at least once, "Find a penny, pick it up, and all the day you'll have good luck." A business plan? No. A national pastime? Absolutely.

The penny has always been a coin of contradictions. Nearly worthless, yet lovingly stuffed into birthday cards as if it were a down payment on a college education. Easy to lose, yet idiomatic enough to shape our emotional lives. After all, someone offers "a penny for your thoughts," but you respond with "my two cents," meaning there is—quite suspiciously—a one-cent profit margin hiding in human conversation. Say what you want, but the penny understood economics.

It starred in our heartbreaks, too. If tears were pennies and heartaches were gold, plenty of us would be running a modest personal mint by now. And in the realm of bravery, it coached us through commitment: "In for a penny, in for a pound." Not bad advice from a coin that

could barely buy a gum wrapper.

For decades, Americans tossed pennies into fountains and wells with all the hope of romantics on a tight emotional and financial budget. We flung them over our shoulders for luck—tiny copper frisbees of optimism soaring through the air. Honestly? Charming. Illogical, but charming.

Not every penny behaved, of course. The "bad penny" always turned up—usually sticky, suspiciously discolored, or fused to an unknown substance that made you seriously rethink the cleanliness of the national currency supply. And then there was "penny ante," the card game you played only when you didn't want anyone to know you were broke.

But behind all the nostalgia lies the real reason for the penny's retirement: it simply costs too much. Since the early 2010s, each penny has cost more than one cent to produce—a financial irony the penny would have appreciated if it had feelings. Even inflation, which usually boosts everyone's value, couldn't rescue our smallest metallic buddy this time.

Still, the penny leaves us with one final lesson: "Watch the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves." True, we can no longer watch them very closely—they're disappearing, after all—but the sentiment remains solid. Small things matter. They add up.

So goodbye, dear penny. You were thin, coppery, occasionally grimy, sometimes lucky, frequently ignored, and always scrappy in that lovable underdog way. You made the world go 'round—well, not literally, but you did fuel a century of wishes, hopes, superstitions, and spare-moment generosity.

Not a penny more, not a penny less—we'll miss you all the same.

**Official U. S. Mint production ended: November 12, 2025.*

Loss of a Spouse seminar to be held at Cross Roads Baptist on February 14

Special to Pelahatchie News

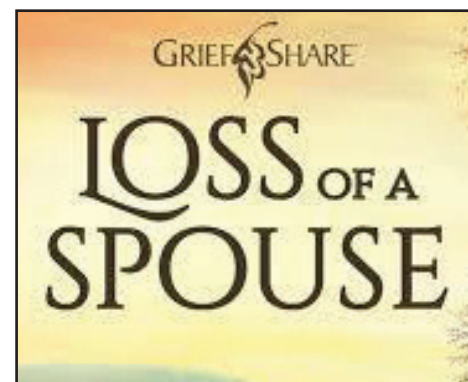
Loss of a Spouse is a two-hour seminar for people grieving a spouse's death. It will be held Saturday, February 14, 2026, at Cross Roads Baptist Church at 104 Crossroads Road in Pelahatchie off Highway 43 South. The Griefshare seminar will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The seminar features video interviews with counselors, grief experts, and widowed men and women. They offer helpful insights on:

- What to expect in the days to come
- How to deal with the loneliness
- What to do with your spouse's belongings
- Why it won't always hurt this much
- And other practical help for dealing with the challenges of widowhood

Everyone who attends will receive a booklet with over thirty short readings on how to live with grief and eventually rebuild your life.

For more information, call the church at 601-546-2297 or Jo Ann Brown at 601-942-4439.



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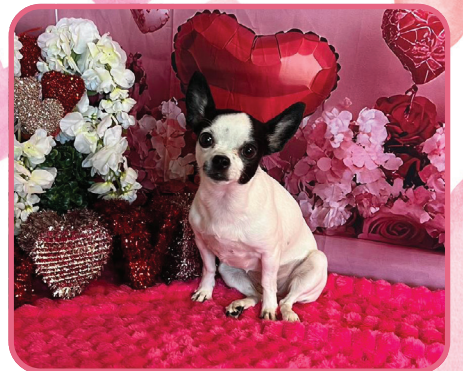
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Crooked Creek Animal Hospital recently spread some Valentine's cheer with a special photo booth for pets and their owners, inviting the community to stop by and snap a festive picture. The display drew plenty of "photo booth cuties" as families captured memories with their furry friends. The Pelahatchie News is proud to highlight local businesses like Crooked Creek that create fun, community-focused events. Learn more about their services at crookedcreekanimal.com.



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