

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK

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August 2025 ■ Volume 14. Issue 8 ■ Pelahatchie. MS

Pelahatchie's Past Preserved in the Lessel House

Special to Pelahatchie News

Tucked near the old railroad line in downtown Pelahatchie stands a structure that has quietly witnessed the town's transformation for more than a century. Known locally as the Lessel House, this historic building—once a bustling boarding house—offers a rare glimpse into Pelahatchie's past and the early days of Mississippi's railroad era.

Built in the late 1800s or early 1900s, the Lessel House originally served as a hotel for travelers arriving by train. Back when the Alabama & Vicksburg Railroad was a lifeline for commerce and communication, Pelahatchie was more than just a whistle-stop—it was a place of opportunity. For salesmen, laborers, and visitors passing through, the Lessel House provided food, rest, and a sense of familiarity in an unfamiliar place.

The building's location near Railroad Street and Brooks Avenue placed it squarely in the middle of the town's activity. Trains would bring passengers, goods, and news from across the region, and the boarding house thrived as a result. At its peak, it was said to be one of the busiest buildings in town.



Special to Pelahatchie News

In 1987, the Lessel House was added to the National Register of Historic Places, officially recognized for its role in Pelahatchie's commercial and transportation development. Though time has weathered its walls, the building remains one of the oldest surviving structures tied to the town's railroad heritage.

While the house no longer operates as a hotel, its legacy continues. It stands today as a private property, its quiet presence a reminder of a time when railroads drove the economy and local inns were essential links in the chain of Southern commerce. Residents often recall stories passed down from grandparents who remembered the steady stream of travelers coming and going, their footsteps echoing on the wooden floors.

Local historians and and those passionate about preserving Pelahatchie's heritage have expressed hope that the building might one day be restored or repurposed, preserving it not just as a relic, but as a living part of the town's story. In a place like Pelahatchie—where tradition runs deep and change comes slowly—structures like the Lessel House carry more than historical value. They hold the memories of a community shaped by movement, growth, and resilience.

As Pelahatchie continues to move forward, the Lessel House remains a symbol of where it's been. Weathered but standing, quiet but remembered, it tells a story that still belongs to the people who call this small Mississippi town home.

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Warren retires from Board after 40 years of service

By Susie A. Wolfe

On Saturday, July 12, 2025, a reception was held at the Knox Ross Community Center to honor Alderwoman Margie Warren for her forty years of service to Ward Three in Pelahatchie.

After Mayor Karl VanHorn gave her a plaque from the town, State Senator Brian Rhodes, District 36, read a proclamation highlighting Mrs. Warren's lasting impact for Pelahatchie that was signed by Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann.

Known for her love of children and as the MAIS statistician for East Rankin Academy basketball games, "Miss Margie" or "Granny" has been a mentor and encourager for kids around town. She has also helped with Vacation Bible School at Pelahatchie Baptist Church for many years.

"I love this town, and most of all, I love these children in this town," said Warren to the gathered crowd, "They are just like mine."

"I'm here if you need me," She continued saying, "You just have to call me. I will do what I can as long as [Mayor] Karl [VanHorn] lets me."

Many townsfolk, supporters, and family showed up to wish Warren a happy retirement including former Mayor Knox Ross and Rankin County Supervisor Steve Gaines. The town hosted a buffet with a cake to celebrate.



Photo by Susie A. Wolfe

Longtime Pelahatchie Alderwoman Margie Warren was given a proclamation by the Mississippi State Senate read by State Senator Brian Rhodes at her retirement ceremony in July.

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PHS Welcomes Alumni Chance White as New School Resource Officer

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School is proud to welcome a familiar face back home as Chance White steps into the role of School Resource Officer (SRO). A graduate of Pelahatchie High School himself, White brings not only professional experience in law enforcement but a deep-rooted connection to our school and community.

For White, this new position is more than just a job; it's a homecoming. "It's funny you asked," he shared. "I walked the halls today, and so many memories came flooding back. I would say my fondest memories are from football and baseball. Coach Bill Ward and the late great Johnny Bishop, my uncle, had a huge impact on growing and overcoming challenges not only in sports, but in life."



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Last week, White joined other SROs from across the state at the 2025 Mississippi Association of School Resource Officers Conference. There, he worked alongside the Rankin County School District Law Enforcement team to enhance his skills and strengthen his commitment to school safety and professionalism. This training underscores White's dedication to ensuring Pelahatchie High remains a safe, supported, and successful environment for all students.



Chance White and family

White's decision to return to Pelahatchie is rooted in love for his hometown and family. "My family brings me home. I'm from Pelahatchie, live here, and I'm raising my kids here," he said. "Who doesn't want a job where they can see their babies every day? Watch them learn in the same classrooms as you did? Thankfully, they are all smarter than myself!"

When asked what he looks forward to most, White responded with the heart of a true Chief: "Building positive relationships with students, staff, and parents of Pelahatchie. Having a positive impact on our community. Making sure to create the safest possible learning environment for our students and staff."

We are truly blessed to have White on campus. His leadership, passion for Pelahatchie, and commitment to our students make him an invaluable addition to our Tribe. Welcome home, Officer White!

Pelahatchie NEWS

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PHS welcomes students back to business, back to school



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist Voncille Anderson, Head Principal, Pelahatchie High School

A brand-new school year is here — a fresh start, a blank page, and a chance to write your own success story. Whether you're stepping into high school for the first time or preparing to cross the graduation stage, this year is full of potential, and you hold the pen.

We are excited to have you return and look forward to a successful year filled with academic achievement, athletic excellence, and meaningful extracurricular opportunities.

There will be challenges, but there will also be opportunities — to learn, grow, connect, and lead. Don't be afraid to set big goals and chase them with purpose. Show up. Work hard. Be kind. And most importantly, believe in your ability to make this your best year yet.

This year, our theme is "Unfinished Business." We are picking up where we left off — ready to grow, to improve, and to reach new heights together.

As we begin, I want to share a few important reminders:

- **Attendance matters.** Our classes are 96 minutes long. When a student misses just one day, that's 384 minutes — over six hours — of valuable instruction lost. Every minute counts.
- **Tardies matter too.** Arriving on time sets the tone for a successful day. Please help ensure students are at school and in class promptly each morning.

We have great plans in place and are eager to work alongside our students, families, and community partners to make this a year to remember. Together, we can ensure all students reach their full potential.

Let's get to work! We have unfinished business — dreams to reach, goals to crush, and a legacy to build. Let's rise to the challenge and make this year one to remember.

Go Chiefs

CHIEFS

SOME IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE:

OPEN HOUSE
AUGUST 5, 2025
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

MEET THE CHIEFS
AUGUST 15, 2025
6:00 PM

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

PROGRESS REPORTS
SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

FALL BREAK
OCTOBER 6 - 10

1ST NINE WEEKS REPORT CARDS
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

Pelahatchie HS welcomes new teachers for 2025-26

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School (PHS) is thrilled to welcome new teachers for the 2025–2026 school year. From the classroom to the field, these passionate educators and coaches are bringing fresh energy, big goals, and a heart for students. Our Tribe is growing stronger, and we couldn't be more excited. As we count down the days until the first bell rings, we're gearing up for another incredible year of learning, leading, and living out what it means to be a Chief. Help everyone at the school to give a warm Pelahatchie welcome to the newest members of the PHS family.

A word from Michael Gregory: I'm incredibly excited to become a part of the Pelahatchie High School family and experience all the great things happening here. Becoming a Chief means joining a tradition of pride, growth, and community-and I'm honored to be a part of that. My 'why' is simple: I want to make a difference in the future by making a positive impact on students today. I believe in the power of relationships, hard work, and creating an environment where students feel seen, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.



A word from Meia Hampton: Education is the cornerstone for personal development, society advancement, and a brighter future. It enables individuals to think critically, act ethically, and make important contributions to their communities. Education creates opportunities, breaks poverty cycles, and inspires innovation. It enables people to discover their passions, develop essential skills, and gain confidence in an ever-changing world. At its foundation, education is about more than just learning knowledge; it is about shaping lives, developing potential, and building a more just and informed society.



A word from Kramer Sowell: The agriculture educators' creed says, "I am agricultural educator by choice, not by chance." I chose this profession so that I might be able to make a positive difference in my students lives, just like my ag teachers did in mine.



A word from Mark Edwards: I am thrilled to join the Pelahatchie family. I am eager to work alongside a great team of educators and meet all the students. My 'why' and goal as a teacher is to build positive relationships with as many students as possible. I am excited to serve and support Chief Nation each day this school year!



A word from Kavy Bui: I've always loved math and helping my classmates or tutoring younger students in math. I was told from an early age that I made math easier to understand when helping friends that struggled. I like seeing the "light bulb moment" when a student figures something out. It's the best.



A word from Brittany Thrash: I wanted to get into education to support students of all abilities in reaching their full potential. I hope to help to create an inclusive environment where every child feels seen, valued, and capable of success.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School seniors continue creative tradition



Special to Pelahatchie News

Recently, the Class of 2026 left their mark on Pelahatchie High School (PHS), not just in paint, but in heart. Carrying on a beloved senior tradition, these students brought the sidewalks to life with creativity, pride, and unity. One space holds a special tribute to PHS student Roshea McCoy who passed away last school year. This heartfelt design is a beautiful reminder that once a Chief, always a Chief. PHS is incredibly proud of the Class of 2026 and the way they lead with strength, love, and tradition.

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Mary Ann Griffin, CFNP • Kim Risher • Keli Robertson
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Continued from front page

Margie Warren retires from Pelahatchie Board after 40 years of service





















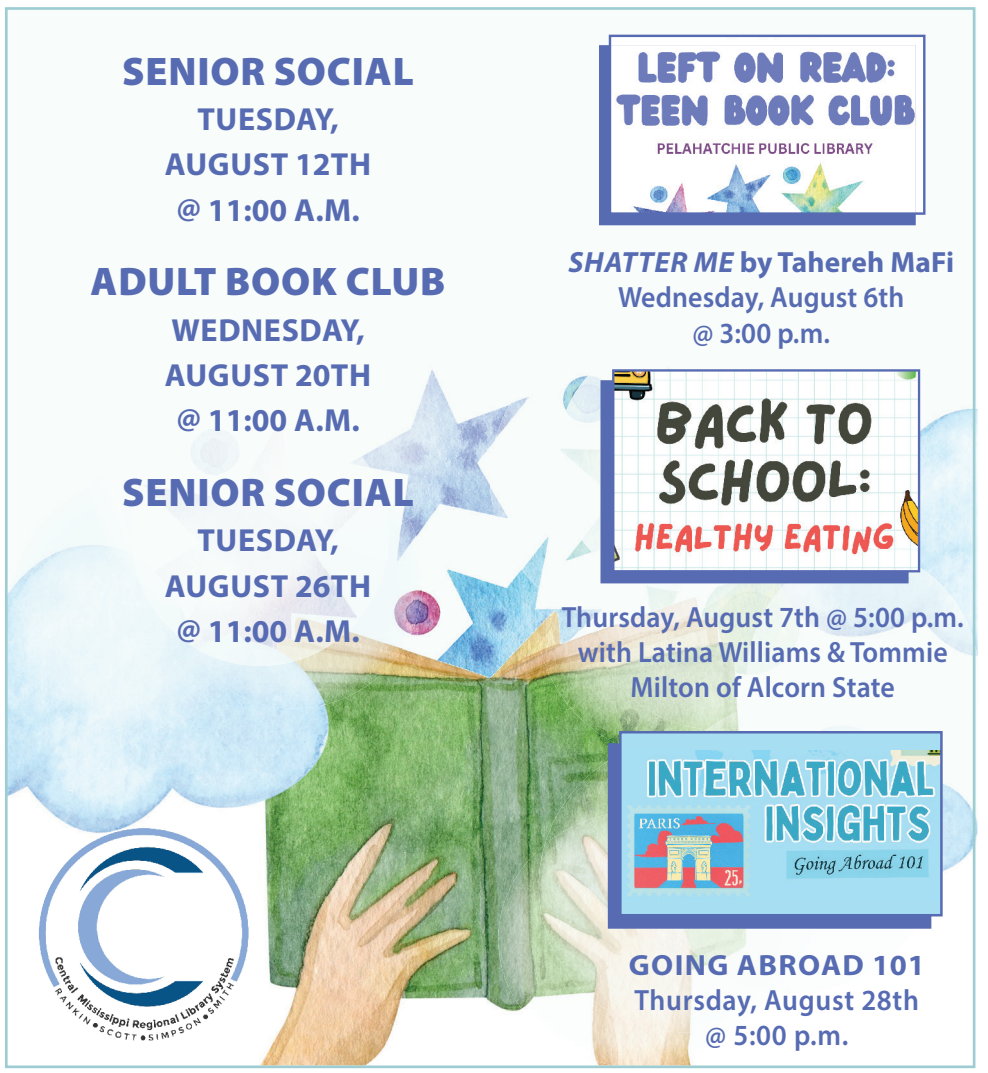


Photos by Susie A. Wolfe

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Pelahatchie Library August Events



Chief Sensei Rials earns Master rank



Special to Pelahatchie News

Master WIlliam Rials is the Chief Instructor at Fusion Martial Arts in Pelahatchie, MS. Rials has spent the last year in the Master program with GTMA, and on Wednesday, July 23rd, 2025, he earned the title of Master, which was awarded to him in Little Rock, AR at the Eternal Grand Master H. U. Lee International Gate and Garden. Rials has had the opportunity to instill the Tenets of Taekwondo into thousands of students over the decades that he has been practicing martial arts. Those he teaches say that he looks for the spark in each student and works hard to help the student grow in their walk, not just in Taekwondo, but also to take those tenets into their day-to-day life. Rials has a passion to empower others to go out and try to leave the world better than they found it.

Pelahatchie ES welcomes new teachers for 2025-26

Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) welcomes Mrs. Kimberly Phillips as a second grade teacher. Phillips, a graduate of Pelahatchie High School, previously served PES as an assistant teacher. PES also welcomes Mrs. Kristi Johnston as a first grade teacher and the newest member of the Chiefs' faculty.

A word from Kimberly Phillips: Hi Everyone, my name is Kimberly Phillips, and I'm so excited to be joinging the team as a second grade teacher this year. As a graduate of Pelahatchie High School, I truly call this place home. I recently graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and spent time as an assistant teacher before stepping into this new role. I'm passionate about helping young learners grow and creating a classroom where every student feels valued, safe, and exicted to learn. I can't wait to get to know my students and their families as we kick off an amazing school year together.



A word from Kristi Johnston: Hello, my name is Mrs. Kristi Johnston. My husband and I, along with our two daughters, have proudly called Pelahatchie home for the past eight years. I earned both my Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Mississippi State University, and completed my Specialist degree at Delta State University in December. I began my teaching career in 2014 at Lake Elementary School in Scott County School District. During my time there, I served as a kindergarten assistant for two years, taught fourth grade for one year, and spent eight years teaching kindergarten. I am excited to begin this new school year as a first grade teacher at Pelahahtchie Elementary School.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

City Beat: Mayor, Alderman meeting for July 7, 2025



Special to Pelahatchie News

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

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the Town of Pelahatchie held their regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Monday, July 7, 2025, at Town Hall. Mayor Karl Vanhorn called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All board members were present: Alderwoman Diane Hill, Alderwoman Sandra Harvey, Alderman David Gray, Alderman Eddie Jones, and Alderman James Harrell.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to amend the agenda to include the voting for Mayor Pro Tem. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

A vote was held by ballot for Mayor Pro Tem. Alderman Eddie Jones received three votes, while Alderwoman Sandra Harvey and Alderwoman Diane Hill each received one vote. The city clerk announced the result that Alderman Eddie Jones won the vote and became new Mayor Pro Tem.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to accept the results of the Mayor Pro Tem vote that announced him as the winner. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones then made a motion to amend the agenda and move to executive session. Alderman James Harrell seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

After entering executive session, Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to move to closed session. Alderman David Gray seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

The 2023–2024 audit with Windham and Lacey was discussed, but it was stated that no action was taken.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to return to executive session. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones then made a motion to move from executive session back into regular session. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Residents or Visitors' Business

Renee Buynar of College Street was listed on the agenda but was not present. Mayor VanHorn stated that he had spoken to her prior to the meeting. She has appeared on the monthly meeting agenda numerous times over the past year.

Myrtis Champion and Gerald Watson were also listed concerning a modular home on Clayton but were not present at the meeting.

Mrs. Holly with Pelahatchie Petals addressed the board and requested to continue beautification efforts around town. Attorney Banks stated she is working on a Memorandum of Understanding between Pelahatchie Petals and the Town.

Department Discussions

Police Chief Mahaffey stated he is preparing notifications for delinquent properties and hopes to hold a public hearing by the next board meeting.

Alderwoman Harvey asked for an update on Rick's Auto Shop. Chief Mahaffey stated that he did not have one and had been unable to reach the owner.

New Business

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to reinstate all current town employees. Alderman James Harrell seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2025, regular board meeting. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Continued on page 7





Cross Roads starts new GriefShare series; Adds Loss of Spouse session

Special to Pelahatchie News

Cross Roads Baptist Church (CRBC) will host the loss of a spouse session on Saturday, August 9, 2025, at 10 a.m. and the fall GriefShare series will start August 16, at 10 a.m.

No matter what the circumstances, grief is a painful, confusing process. A GriefShare group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. At this 13-week support group program, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.



At each weekly meeting starting August 9, you will view a video featuring respected counselors, pastors, and healthcare professionals on grief-related topics, plus you'll hear relatable personal stories of grief. After that is a small-group discussion to allow people time to talk, share support, and personally apply what they learned on the video. Everyone will receive a book to take home filled with valuable exercises for navigating their personal grieving process.

Topics include how to manage grief-related emotions such as loneliness, anxiety, sadness, anger, and regret; how to cope with the changes in your life and relationships; and how to recognize what's normal in grief and what to do if you feel stuck or hopeless.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

GriefShare group participants have repeatedly shared that they feel comforted and encouraged by being in a place where people truly understand what they're going through and that they feel a sense of relief when they're given guidance and tips on how to deal with the daily challenges.

Your bereavement experience may be recent or not so recent. No matter how long it's been, this is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling.

If you have experienced the death of a family member or friend, you are invited to attend. For more details, and to find and register for a group, visit griefshare.org. Or contact JoAnn Brown at CRBC at 601-942-4439.

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Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve payment of the unpaid claims docket. Alderman James Harrell seconded the motion. Alderwoman Sandra Harvey and Alderwoman Diane Hill voted nay. All other board members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve the disbursement of a bank draft payment to Morgan and White Insurance in the amount of $1,082.27 (AmFirst Card, secondary to BCBS). Alderman David Gray seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve the bank draft payment to Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance in the amount of $9,052.36. Alderman David Gray seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve the bank draft payment to EMC Insurance in the amount of $5,916.31 for property insurance. Alderman David Gray seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to approve and ratify the payroll for June 2025, with General Fund payroll totaling $112,003.71 and Enterprise Fund payroll totaling $42,103.50. Alderman David Gray seconded the motion. Alderwoman Sandra Harvey and Alderwoman Diane Hill voted nay. All other board members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Aldermen and Mayor Discussions

Alderwoman Sandra Harvey shared that she recently attended a meeting about wildlife improvements and intends to contact representatives to see if Pelahatchie could benefit from similar programs.

Alderman Eddie Jones reminded residents that hurricane season is ongoing and encouraged everyone to stay weather-aware.

Mayor VanHorn requested a motion to remove former Mayor Pro Tem Margie Warren from all town bank accounts. Alderman Eddie Jones made the motion. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Alderman Eddie Jones then made a motion to add himself, as newly appointed Mayor Pro Tem, to all town bank accounts. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

Mayor VanHorn also reported that a business in town has failed to update its privilege license. He stated that Attorney Banks would be sending a violation letter to the business owner. The business was not identified.

Adjournment

Alderman Eddie Jones made a motion to adjourn. Alderwoman Diane Hill seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

ERA's softball team has fun at training camp to start new season



Special to Pelahatchie News

The East Rankin Academy Lady Patriots recently attended the Copiah-Lincoln Community College softball camp as they prepared for the upcoming season. Copiah-Lincoln, located in Wesson, offers athletic camps throughout the summer to help student-athletes develop their skills and train with college-level coaches.





Pelahatchie Baptist Church hosts Vacation Bible School

Recently, Pelahatchie Baptist Church hosted a Vacation Bible School. All of those in attendance had fun learning about magnifying God through worship, games, and creative crafts.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

GRIEVING THE DEATH OF YOUR SPOUSE?

GRIEFSHARE

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Saturday, August 9
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Summer fun can be found at the Pelahatchie Farmers Market

The Market is held every last Saturday of the month at Muscadine Park and Goforth Avenue from 8-12 in the heart of Pelahatchie, MS. A great tiime to share with those in the community.





Photos special to Pelahatchie News

















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- "Rankin County residents "Laugh Away SMA"

2020 - 5 years ago

- "Megan Hall knows the Pelahatchie real estate market"
- "Herrington attends space camp"

2024 - Last Year

- "Discover Southern Charm at Down Right Southern, LLC in Pelahatchie"
- "Members Helping Members: Small Change to Make a Big Difference"

The history of the American chestnut tree in the South



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

Recently, I visited with a local landowner, who is an avid deer hunter. He discussed with me about planting hybrid chestnut trees for deer. The American chestnut once dominated portions of the eastern U.S. forest. The tree was among the largest and fastest growing trees in the forest. Because it could grow so rapidly and attain huge sizes, the American chestnut was often an outstanding feature in both urban and rural landscapes.

American chestnut trees were once the mighty giants of America's eastern forests, these trees reached heights as great as 100 feet tall and trunk diameter over 6 feet wide. Fast growing, rot-resistant, straight-grained, and prolific nut producers, these trees had many exceptional qualities. An ideal building and furniture wood, chestnut lumber was a vital part of the economy.

In colonial times, chestnut wood was the preferred wood for log cabins foundations, fence post, flooring, and caskets. Later, railroad ties, and both telephone and telegraph poles were made from chestnut, many of which are still in use today.

What many people in Mississippi don't realize is that the American chestnut was once found along the east-central part of the state, from Corinth, MS to south of Hattiesburg, MS This population represented the extreme western part of the chestnut's natural range.

Chestnuts fed billions, from insects to birds and mammals, and was a significant contributor to rural agricultural economics. At one time nut-ripening and gathering nearly coincided with the holiday season. Nineteenth century newspapers often featured articles about railroad cars overflowing with chestnuts to be sold fresh or roasted in major cities.

All of this began to change around 1904 when a fungus was accidentally moved from Asia to New York. The fungus known as the chestnut blight, ran unchecked through the vast range of the American chestnut that covered over 200 million acres of the eastern United States. By the late 1950s an estimated 4 billion American chestnut trees were reduced to snags and stumps. This fungus attacks chestnut with toxins, including oxalate, which creates cankers and kills the tree by disrupting the flow of water and nutrients to its branches and stems.

These trees were not ready to give up the fight and have continued to spout for stumps only to have the growing trees live for a short period of time before again dying back. The blight cannot kill the underground root system as the pathogen is unable to compete with the soil microorganisms. Stump sprouts grow vigorously in cutover or undisturbed sites where there is plenty of sunlight, but inevitably succumb to the blight. The cycle of death and rebirth has kept the species alive.

The American chestnut remains a beloved part of many communities and family histories. Today's volunteers in restoration efforts carry on the legacy of generations who fought to save the species. The American chestnut is firmly etched in our cultural memory.





Photos special to Pelahatchie News



Southern Pine Offers Tips to Help Members Lower Summer Electric Bills

Special to Pelahatchie News

With extreme summer temperatures gripping Mississippi, Southern Pine Electric is encouraging members to take simple steps to reduce their energy use and keep electric bills manageable during the hottest part of the year.

"When temperatures soar into the 90s and 100s, it's not just uncomfortable—it drives up energy use across our entire service area," said Kristen Thorne, Director of Member Services at Southern Pine Electric. "Air conditioners are running harder and longer, and for many families, that means higher bills. We want to help our members stay safe, stay cool, and stay in control of their energy costs."

Southern Pine is offering practical, no-cost and low-cost tips for reducing usage during peak demand times—typically from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.—and easing the strain on both wallets and the electric system:

- Set thermostats to 78 degrees or higher when home and even higher when away.
- Use ceiling fans to circulate air, but turn them off when leaving a room.
- Close blinds and curtains to block direct sunlight, especially during the hottest hours of the day.
- Avoid indoor cooking during peak hours. Instead, consider using an outdoor grill or small appliances like air fryers, microwaves, or slow cookers.
- Delay running heat-producing appliances like dishwashers and clothes dryers until later in the evening.
- Change air filters regularly and service air conditioning systems for maximum efficiency.
- Download and use the free MyPower app to monitor daily use and set alerts to avoid billing surprises.

"Members can take charge of their energy use and see the difference on their bills," Thorne said. "These are easy steps anyone can take, and they really add up—not just for your home, but for the entire cooperative system."

Southern Pine Electric encourages members to visit www.southernpine.coop for more energy-saving ideas and to access the MyPower usage monitoring tool. Members may also contact the cooperative to schedule a free home energy audit.

"Mississippi summers are tough," Thorne added. "But with a little planning and a few smart habits, we can all stay cooler and save money while we do it."

Southern Pine Electric is a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative that distributes electricity to more than 70,000 members in 11 counties in central and south Mississippi. Headquartered in Taylorsville, Southern Pine has offices in Brandon, Newton, Hattiesburg and New Hebron.

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Pastor's Perspective: You want me to surrender?



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By Guest Columnist Spencer Sullivan, Pastor, Pelahatchie Baptist

I don't know how it is for you, but sometimes it's hard for me to believe 2020 was 5 years ago. It was a very difficult time for many, and it was an incredibly frustrating time for all of us. The virus had significant implications for those that endured serious cases. For those that were largely unaffected physically by the virus, the worst part of the Covid-19 experience was the isolation. For months, we could barely leave our houses. School was exclusively done online. For those that were able to continue working, that also was limited to what could be done through an internet connection. One business that thrived during this season was Zoom Communications. Through Zoom and other like software programs, people are able to communicate 'face to face' through video conference technology. During that season of life, many came to realize that this technology is a wonderful substitute when in-person gathering together is impossible. But it is a substitute. It's still not close to the same thing as being in the physical presence of people. Nothing can replace being in the same place, especially with those we love to spend time with. Presence is powerful.

King David certainly realized this. He prioritized presence, especially the presence of God. In Psalm 27 he made a remarkable statement: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple." He is essentially saying, if I have only one thing that I can request of God, this is it. I want to be with God all the days of my life. Why do you think this was David's one request? God certainly isn't a genie in a bottle, but He is all powerful and the source of every good thing. But, David didn't ask Him for wealth or power. He didn't ask for romantic love. He didn't ask for health and a long life. More than anything else, He just wanted to be with God; He wanted to always be in His presence. Why? In the rest of the psalm, David talks about the valuable effects that result from pursuing the presence of God.



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God's presence implies His protection, which then eliminates fear and produces confidence. In this psalm, David speaks with immense confidence as it relates to any threat posed by his enemies. He does so because God is his stronghold and safe place. In addition, as David pursued God's presence, he was after joy and satisfaction. This is what Adam and Eve experienced in God's presence before sin entered and necessitated a separation between them and the unique presence they previously enjoyed. This kind of presence is what Jesus died to restore and that those who repent and believe will one day experience for eternity. David sought after and experienced joy and satisfaction as he gazed upon the beauty and glory of the Lord. Finally, David found that God's presence produces peace and security. In this life, there is no greater sense of peace and security than the love and protection provided by a loving mom and dad. David wrote that even if his own mother and father abandoned him, the Lord would take him in.

David experienced confidence, joy, satisfaction, peace, and security all through his pursuit of God's presence. If you had one request of God, would it match David's? Within Psalm 27, God Himself speaks. He says, "Seek My face." David's response is "Your face, Lord, do I seek." God says to you and me today: "Seek My face." What is your response to this call? Will you seek His face and His presence and then experience these same realities the way that David did? May our response be "Your face, Lord, do I seek!"

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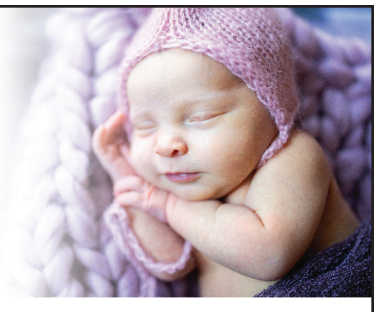
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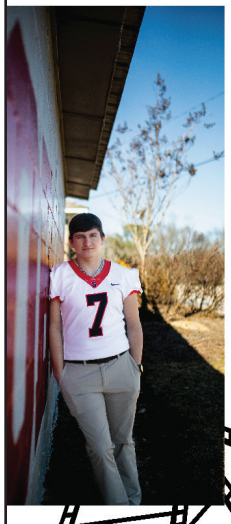
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Jellystone Park welcomes a wild summer weekend

Jellystone Park recently had a wild and wonderful weekend. Thank you to Joe Tyrell Green for bringing the jungle to the park and thank you to all the wonderful guests for coming by.












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The Crooked Creek Cuties Corner

Here are just a few of the sweet faces who recently visited Crooked Creek Animal Hospital.



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Pelahatchie HS alumni Burnham graduates from fire academy

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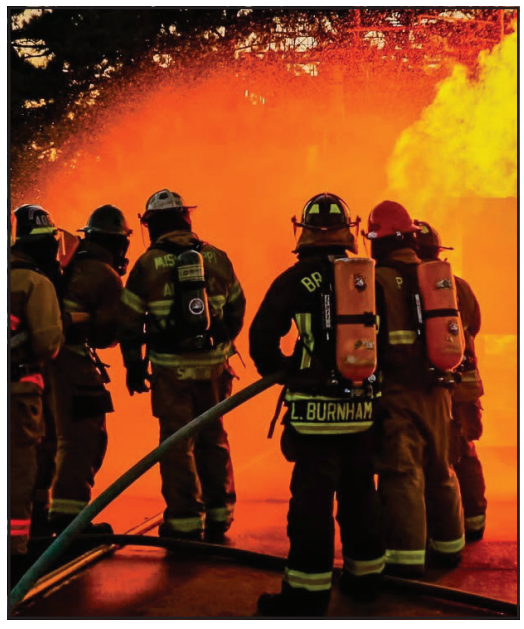
Firefighter Lawton Burnham of the Brandon Fire Department is making a difference. Burnham has graduated Class 216 from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Firefighter I-II course, held at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson, MS.



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Lawton Burnham of Pelahatchie, a 2024 graduate Pelahatchie High School, graduated July 31 from the Mississippi Fire Academy NFPA 1001 FIREFIGHTER I-II Class 216. He's currently employed with Brandon Fire Department, and he volunteers with Walter's Fire Department.

This intense seven-week course combines online, classroom, and hands-on instruction in the areas of fire behavior, fire suppression, rescue, incident command, hazardous materials, and other fire-related topics. This course meets and exceeds the



National Fire Protection Association for Firefighter Qualifications and the uniform minimum training standards stated in the Mississippi Code section 45-11-7.

The Mississippi State Fire Academy is a division of the Mississippi Insurance Department. State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney and Academy Executive Director Kelly Elliott conclude that firefighters, through their newly acquired skills and knowledge, will be an asset to the fire departments they represent. "We are confident the immediate impact and positive difference these firefighters will make, not only within their departments but also in their communities, will truly be substantial." Director Elliott said.



Community Churches Support Educators with Back-to-School Meals

By Shaun McInnish, City Beat Writer

As the 2025–2026 school year kicks off, Pelahatchie school staff were met with an extraordinary show of support from local churches, who provided meals and encouragement throughout the final days of teacher planning.

On Monday, The Church at Shiloh treated staff to a generous BBQ lunch, complete with homemade desserts. The meal served as a welcome boost during a busy week of preparation.

Tuesday brought another act of kindness as Pelahatchie Baptist Church hosted school staff for lunch. The church has long been a consistent supporter of the district, and its continued hospitality helped staff feel appreciated and uplifted heading into the school year.

The week of support concluded Wednesday with a lunch provided by Crossroads Baptist Church. As teachers finalized classroom setups and prepared for students to arrive, the meal marked a moment of community connection and gratitude.

The shared meals gave staff a chance to come together, recharge, and reflect on the work ahead. With the first day of school just around the corner, the encouragement and generosity from these churches have helped set a positive tone for the year.

Pelahatchie schools begin the new academic year with a strong sense of community backing, thanks to the care and commitment of local faith partners.









Photos special to Pelahatchie News

CCAH welcomes new patients



Special to Pelahatchie News

Ferret Takeover! As some people know, Crooked Creek Animal Hospital (CCAH) is a mixed animal practice that accepts more than just cats and dogs. Recently, Ferrets Coco, Bailey, Cleo, and Benny came in for wellness exams and rabies vaccines with Dr. Kate. The hospital staff enjoyed loving on them and are happy to report they all received a clean bill of health.

