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INSIDE DCHS threat rumors prove unfounded **2A**

SPORTS DCHS basketball coach steps down **1B**

Student charged for threatening teacher

DUANE SHERRILL
News/Sports Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

A 13-year-old middle school student has been charged with making threats toward his a teacher.

On Monday, February 26, a 13-year-old juvenile, who is a

student at DeKalb County Middle School, has been charged with a delinquent act of making threats toward a Middle School teacher.

"The juvenile made the threats on social media to another person about pointing a weapon at a teacher earlier this month," reported Sheriff

Patrick Ray of what prompted the delinquency charges. "Due to Friday's school threat, the school staff at DeKalb Middle School spoke to students and advised them everyone was OK, but if they ever heard a rumor or knew about someone who was going to do harm to the school, to tell someone."

That is when a student told school staff about the threat toward the teacher today (Monday). The school staff then advised the School Resource Officer, who then contacted Sheriff Patrick Ray.

Sheriff's investigators then started an investigation. "Throughout interviews and

obtaining social media messages, detectives were able to determine the student did make the threats," the sheriff said, noting the juvenile is currently being held in the Putnam County Juvenile Detention Center.

Continued on **3A**

Wreck sends one to hospital



Duane Sherrill photos
A Chevy Cobalt driven by Billie Johnson was struck on West Broad Street Thursday afternoon when the Kia Optima driven by Louise Page crossed over the four-lane from Dry Creek Road and slammed into the front driver-side of the westbound Chevy. Page said she accidentally hit the accelerator after the impact, causing her vehicle to cross into the Tractor Supply sales lot and ramp on top of a piece of machinery. Johnson went to the hospital for treatment while Page escaped injury.

Driverless car runs over mother, daughter

DUANE SHERRILL
News/Sports Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

The investigation continues into an incident on Valentine's Day at City Walk Apartments in which a woman and her daughter were run over by a driverless car.

The victims, Angelia Burke, 50, and Alicia Burke, 32, were both injured when they were struck by a 2005 Chrysler PT Cruiser owned by Vickie Alvis. The elder Burke was rushed to Vanderbilt University

Medical Center in Nashville for treatment of serious injuries while her daughter was treated at St. Thomas DeKalb.

According to Highway Patrolman Bobby Johnson, the incident happened just before 3 p.m. on Feb. 14 in front of City Walk Apartments. Witnesses said there had been an argument involving the Burkes and Alvis and at some point the Cruiser was put into reverse and began rolling.

"The PT struck Angelia Burke and then hit Alicia Burke, knocking them both to

the ground," the trooper revealed, noting the driverless car continued backing counter-clockwise. "The car then continued, striking another vehicle and then coming back around to run over Angelia Burke who was still on the ground."

The Cruiser came to rest after it struck another vehicle, with the elder Burke still trapped underneath its weight. A jack had to be used to free her from the entrapment beneath the wreckage.

Johnson said the incident remains under investigation with charges pending.

Elections could lead to shake-up

DUANE SHERRILL
News/Sports Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

The battle lines have been drawn for the upcoming DeKalb countywide elections, leaving some incumbents in peril while at least a couple will get a free pass back into office.

"I think there'll be a lot of interest in this year's ballot," said Director of Elections Dennis Stanley, pointing to four countywide positions that are being contested.

County Mayor will take shape sooner than later as three of the four candidates seeking the county's top office are asking for the Democratic nomination.

Among those challenging incumbent County Mayor Tim Stribling, who is now serving his first term in the office, is the man he replaced four years ago. Former county mayor Mike Foster has tossed his hat in the ring in hopes of winning back his old office. The pair will be joined by 3rd District County Commissioner Bradley Hendrix who has chosen not to seek reelection to his post so he can run for county mayor.

The winner of the Democratic showdown on May 1 will move ahead to face independent candidate Randy Paris.

In the race for Circuit Court Clerk, three hopefuls have emerged as long-time clerk Katherine Pack has chosen not to seek office. The candidates include Mark Milam and Nicole Wright, both of whom will be seeking the Democratic nomination on May 1. The winner of that match will take on Republican nominee Susan Martin. The Republicans opted not to hold a primary but instead had a convention where they caucused to determine their candidates for the August election.

The race for sheriff will also come down to August as incumbent Patrick Ray has secured the Republican nomination and will face Michael Agee who is running unopposed in the Democratic primary. If he wins, it will be Ray's fourth term. Agee was defeated last election in the Democratic primary.

Another Republican-Democrat showdown will happen for Road Superintendent as Republican Danny L. Hale will take on Jimmy Sprague for the office.

Meanwhile, three candidates can save the cost of signs this election cycle. Trustee Sean D. Driver, County Clerk James (Jimmy) Poss and Register of Deeds Jeff McMillen have no opposition.

Flu prompts school closure

DUANE SHERRILL
News/Sports Smithville Review
Smithville, Tennessee

The flu has taken its toll on DeKalb County schools, forcing closure of the system for a day as absences skyrocketed amid the outbreak.

"We've been struck hard," revealed Director of Schools Patrick Cripps, noting the major uptick in absenteeism due to illness began right after Valentine's Day. "We had about 91 percent attendance on Valentine's but right after that it dropped to 83 percent."

Cripps said that the flu took its toll on students and teachers alike. "We were losing students, teachers, bus drivers and staff and it was getting hard to find enough substitutes," he noted.

With the writing on the wall, Cripps said a decision was made to dismiss school the Friday before Presidents Day. "That gave us a four-day weekend which we hoped would break the cycle," Cripps said, adding the day off left the school system with a single bad weather day for the school year.

Cripps said the long weekend help alleviate the high absentee rate

as they saw attendance back up to about 92 percent. A normal day sees 94 to 95 percent of DeKalb students in school.

"The high school was especially hard hit by the flu," Cripps noted of the 815-student campus. The DeKalb school system has about 3,000 students.

Cripps added that while he hopes the worst is over, there are still reports of flu and even a new stomach virus circulating around the schools.

"Our teachers and staff are being proactive about reminding students to wash their hands regularly," Cripps said.



DeKalb County High School was especially hard hit by the flu bug. School administrators hope the worst is over for influenza this year as only one more day off remains available.

