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WEDNESDAY

MARCH 7, 2018

McMinnville, Tennessee
southernstandard.com

Vol. 140
No. 28

75¢

Southern Standard



Suspicious fire



Pictured is what remains of an RV that exploded and caught fire Thursday on Victor J. Young Road. The fire has been deemed suspicious, but no arrests have been made.

Jacob Dodd photo

Explosion under investigation

BY **JAMES CLARK**
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

An explosion that destroyed an RV and left a man on fire has been deemed suspicious, but no charges may be filed, according to Sheriff Jackie Matheny.

"We are investigating it but the RV was a total loss," said Sheriff Matheny. "There's really no way to know how the fire started. There's nothing left."

The fire erupted last week on

Victor J. Young Road, which is in the Rock Island area. According to the next door neighbor, he heard an explosion around 5 a.m., which woke him from his sleep.

"It shook my trailer so hard, I thought lightning had hit the ground," said neighbor Larry Linder. "When I went outside, he was rolling around in the yard screaming, 'Help me, help me! I'm on fire.'"

While the explosion is consistent with that of a meth lab, the man and woman who were inside the RV at the time have denied the allegations

when questioned by law enforcement.

"He had burns to his hands and face which are consistent with that type of thing," said Matheny. "But they are sticking to their story that they were hooking up a battery to a battery charger when the explosion took place and fully engulfed the RV."

Matheny says charges are unlikely at this point because the RV was damaged so extensively there is no way to retrieve any type of evidence from the scene.



McMinnville Police Lt. Ben Cantrell says it's vital not to freeze if an active shooter opens fire. He says run first, if possible, and fight like your life depends on it if cornered.

Don't freeze if gunman starts shooting

BY **JAMES CLARK**
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

It's time to think about the unthinkable.

As mass shooters continue to gun down Americans, the proper response during a time of chaos can mean the difference in life or death when bullets start to fly.

"Nobody is helpless," said McMinnville Police Department Lt. Ben Cantrell. "I don't care how big or how small you are. Never stop fighting. It's so important to remember that."

Cantrell presented an Active Shooter Awareness program Monday night at Warren County High School. He discussed how to react if a shooter opens fire in your vicinity — be it at school, work, church, or a store.

"Everybody expects a

magic answer and that answer doesn't exist," said Cantrell. "But the worst thing you can do is to do nothing."

Cantrell outlined steps to follow. Those include, in order: 1) fleeing if possible, 2) locking and barricading yourself in a room if you can't escape, and 3) fighting the gunman with all your energy if confronted face to face.

"Fighting fair is out the window," said Cantrell. "At all costs protect yourself. Grab a pen and go for an eye if that's all you have."

Unfortunately, there are natural human reactions which can inhibit clear thinking and proper action, according to Lt. Cantrell. Many people freeze, then go into denial about what's happening, wasting valuable seconds.

Continued on **5A**

City worried about decorative poles

BY **LISA HOBBS**
Reporter for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The Tennessee broadband battle has hit home.

McMinnville Vice Mayor Ben Newman says a telecommunications bill currently under consideration by the Tennessee General Assembly would allow AT&T and other cell carriers to use public right of ways across the state without allowing cities and counties to refuse.

"This bill allows them to place small, wireless facilities in ROWs (right of ways) on city-owned light poles, signs, traffic signals, towers, bridges, etc., while giving us little to no ability to regulate their placement," said Newman, who voiced displeasure for the bill.

Companies will also be allowed to replace any pole it deems cannot be used for the devices.

"The bill also allows the industry to replace city-owned poles, signs, and light fixtures with minimal ability of the city to regulate the replacement, when the replacement is for the placement of a small, wireless facility," said Newman. "We've spent thousands on our decorative poles. By this legislation, the company could replace any pole that can't be used for its devices."

House Bill 2279, as introduced,



McMinnville City Hall is seeking to halt proposed state legislation that would allow AT&T and other wireless providers to place antennas on any pole owned by local government.

enacts the "Competitive Wireless Broadband Investment, Deployment, and Safety Act of 2018."

Continued on **6A**

Home destroyed



Lisa Hobbs photos
Volunteer firefighters with Harrison Ferry and Collins River fire departments spent most of the afternoon Tuesday battling a blaze atop the mountain at 8915 Harrison Ferry Road. According to officials on the scene, the property is owned by Penny Bryant. No one was at home and no injuries were reported. Firefighters concentrated their efforts on containing the blaze as the structure is a complete loss.

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