



Pictured at the Saturday morning ribbon cutting for McMinnville's new skate park are, from left, Mandy Eller, Matt Feno, Kate Alsbrook, Scot MacDonald, Trevor Galligan, Everett Brock, Steve Harvey, Scott McCord and Ben Newman.

Skate park flying high

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

The city's new skate park is open, dude. Eagerly waiting the grand opening Saturday morning were skateboard enthusiasts of all ages. "I've been skating since I was 10 years old," said Dustin Smith, 31, who also mentioned he has hopes to open a Christian skate shop in McMinnville in the near future. Friends of the Greenway kicked started the skate park project by obtaining a grant from the Steve and Kate Smith Trust. First National Bank oversees the trust and donations are given to nonprofit organizations for projects that focus on children. "We are really excited to see the completion of this project that was a joint effort between the Friends of the Greenway and the city of

McMinnville to expand active and healthy recreational opportunities like skating," said Friends of the Greenway president Trevor Galligan. "The skate park would not be possible without the generous contributions of the Steve and Kate Smith Trust at First National Bank. The park turned out great and I hope will see more kids skating who may not exactly enjoy or participate in traditional sports." In addition to \$90,000 from the trust, organization members secured \$10,000 from the Tennessee Department of Health for installation of a concrete pad. McMinnville officials provided space for the park at the Civic Center, as well as additional \$65,000 in the budget of its Parks and Recreation Department for anything else the park would need such as fencing, and signage. The skate park is named after Steve and Kate Smith.



Lacy Garrison photo
Skateboard enthusiasts went airborne for the city's new skate park. It officially opened Saturday at McMinnville Civic Center. Pictured is Dustin Smith, 31, who was among the first skaters to enjoy the new amenity.

House fire claims one life

A Sunday afternoon fire in Van Buren County has reportedly led to the death of a person inside the home. According to Hansel Moore of SpartaLive.com, Van Buren County volunteer fire departments responded to a call of a fire at 107 Crain Hill

Cemetery Road, which is off Rocky River Road. The fire was reported around 1 p.m. Sunday. Surrounding volunteer fire departments, including several from Warren County such as Rock Island/ Campaign, Harrison Ferry, Collins River and Centertown

reportedly responded to the blaze. The large, brick home was fully engulfed. On Monday, fire officials with the state and agents from the TBI were on the scene, according to SpartaLive.com, to try to sort through the charred remains for possible clues about what happened. When contacted by the *Standard*, Van Buren County Sheriff Eddie Carter said he had no information about the fire. *The Standard* has contacted the TBI in hopes of gaining more information.

School system awarded grant for reinforcing fencing, security

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

Warren County School System is looking to improve campus security at six of its schools. "We are working on a Governor's Safety Grant," said Director of Schools Bobby Cox. "It is for \$180,890. We received a state Safe Schools Grant in the amount of \$72,360." The Safe Schools Grant match is \$18,340 for a total of \$90,700. The majority of those funds are earmarked for fencing. The majority of the governor's grant will be used for interior upgrades. "With the Governor's Safety Grant, we are hop-

ing to use \$119,568 for vestibule upgrades at the middle school, high school, Dibrell, and Hickory Creek that would put a barrier between those entering the building and the students. The Bobby Ray project already has an upgrade to its entry. We hope, with a good bid, so will West Elementary." The remaining balance of \$61,322 will be added to the funds earmarked for fencing. "With the balance for the governor's grant at \$61,322 and the state Safe Schools Grant and match we have \$152,022 to use for fencing," said Cox. "We hope to fence the middle school, Bobby Ray, and West with

that amount or at least get some of those projects completed." The information was presented during a county Education Committee meeting. "If you get the grant and it's less than what you asked for, what's the priority?" asked Commissioner Carlene Brown. Cox says the funds received and the individual cost to do each project will be examined. "We'll just have to see which cost works the best. If it looks like we can do one large project or two smaller ones and get two complete, we might go with the two complete projects over the one large

one," said Cox. Brown asked if one school has been determined to be at the most risk. "West Elementary is wide open," said Cox. "Of course, Bobby Ray does have some fencing and they are going to have construction onsite. The middle school is also open, but there is a little bit of fencing around that. If we had to choose one or two, it would probably be West Elementary and maybe Bobby Ray and the middle school." Grant deadline to apply is Aug. 31. No timeframe was given for grant award notification.

Delane

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The alleged victim could not recall many details of the night – or the actual rape. She was reportedly passed out at the time. The most potentially damaging claim was that Alex Delane was seen on top of the woman without his clothes on. However, that eyewitness admitted she never saw any penetration. "The rape kit came back negative and my son was still indicted," said Dave Delane. "To me this seems like malicious prosecution and I don't see how it happens. This case has set us back tens of thousands of dollars. Bond was set at \$100,000 so it cost me \$10,000 just to get him out of jail so he wouldn't be stuck in jail for a year for something he didn't do. That's money we're never getting back." Delane says the prosecution's case was so weak, Judge Bart Stanley instructed the jury not to consider the top charge of rape in its deliberations. The charge which went to the jury was reduced to attempted rape and it only took minutes for a not-guilty verdict on that lesser charge.

Zavogiannis says rape kits often come back negative because the man uses protection or does not finish. She points out Alex Delane was indicted by the grand jury, a panel of citizens separate from the DA's office which determines if there's enough evidence for criminal charges to be brought. Zavogiannis said the grand jury was aware there was no physical evidence and that the victim's clothes and her bedsheets had been lost by the Sheriff's Department. Still the grand jury issued an indictment. "The grand jury heard all this and still thought she should have her day in court," said Zavogiannis. "Think how you would feel if this was your daughter and you came to us under the same circumstances and we told you we aren't going to prosecute." Zavogiannis said it's unfortunate a large sum of money had to be spent, but Delane family members did get the verdict they wanted. "One thing you can take from this, and this is a good lesson for all young people, is watch your level of intoxication," said Zavogiannis.

Sparta Street

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Drivers will have to access the bypass at the lighted intersection. Likewise, drivers on the bypass will have to access Sparta Street from the lighted intersection. Removing the merges is meant to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents. "There are a huge amount of wrecks right there," said city administrator Bill Brock, of the merge onto the bypass from Sparta Street going outbound. "It is unbelievable the number of accidents we have right there." Hagewood replied, "This should solve all that. Our traffic analysis people have analyzed the traffic to make sure this new connector would handle the flow." Residents will have time to become accustomed to the change. While a set timeline is not available at this stage, an estimate of up to three years has been given. "We are probably looking at around 36 months for development time," said Hagewood. "Hopefully, a little bit less. We have to have environmental clearance before we can move into right of way. You're probably looking at 12 to 18 months for the right-of-way process, somewhere

in that timeframe. We will also hold a right of way field review. Everyone who wants to will have a chance to review and make comments on those design plans before we move forward." The city was awarded a \$948,080 grant from TDOT in 2015 to install a sidewalk along Sparta Street. Hagewood wants to include the intersection portion of that sidewalk into the redesign project rather than construct the sidewalk and risk the possibility of a construction crew damaging it. "I think the best scenario is for us to include that sidewalk design," she said. "They can transfer that grant money into our project for that portion of the sidewalk. They are going to give me a scope of work to make sure we include that in our project. I have concerns. If we start construction on this project, our construction equipment is actually going to tear up the sidewalks that you just installed. It's not feasible to do it that way. I think this will give you a better finished product at the end of the day." The sidewalk project on Sparta Street not in the area of the intersection can move forward. TDOT will be providing updates throughout the project's phases.

Southern Standard

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ATTENTION SOUTHERN STANDARD CUSTOMERS

Due to a recent decision by the management of Northgate Shopping Center, we will no longer be allowed to provide rack locations in the shopping center. We have other rack and dealer locations throughout McMinnville, adjacent to other retail stores that will continue to provide you with your hometown newspaper. We apologize for any inconveniences this may create for our readers and our retail customers at Northgate.

I sincerely want to thank the voters of the 4th District who elected me County Commissioner. I will do my best for all of Warren County.

Thank You

David DUNLAP 273-3635

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