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Investigation continues into student struck by bullet

By Matthew Breazeale

Law enforcement agencies Holmes County Sheriff's Department, Mississippi Bureau of Investigations and Mississippi Highway Patrol are continuing an investigation for answers in the shooting of a 10-year-old boy.

On Wednesday evening, March 27, a bus transporting elementary and middle school students in the Mileston area was the target of an alleged drive-by shooting.

According to Holmes County Sheriff Willie March, a high powered rifle was used in the incident. "The

bullet that was recovered is still being processed at the state crime lab," said March.

A press release issued from the Holmes County Consolidated School District on Wednesday evening said the victim was recovering after being shot in the hand.

"A bus transporting elementary and middle school students on their way home was the target of a drive-by shooting Wednesday evening, March 27, 2019.

The bullet from an unidentified shooter entered the bus just under the window of an unoccupied seat and struck the hand of a 10-year-old

male student sitting in the next row. The bullet was found on the floor of the bus following the incident.

The student was taken to an area hospital where he was seen by medical professionals and is under observation. According to his mother, he is expected to make a full recovery.

School officials notified all parents of the matter and assured them that their children's safety is our top priority in the Holmes County Consolidated School District. All of the other students on the bus were delivered (Continued on page 7.)

Central Holmes track teams rank first at Canton meet

Staff Reports

Central Holmes Christian School high school boys and girls teams along with the junior varsity girls team competed and placed number one in the Canton Academy Invitational Track Meet on March 27.

The junior high boys team took fourth place in the tournament.

The competitive meet hosted runners from Starkville Academy, Oak Hill, Benton, Park Place, East Rankin, Jackson Victors, Delta Streets, Winston, and Porters Chapel. Central Holmes runners garnered several first placing in the events.

Varsity girls: 100-meter dash, Jordan Pritchard, 1st place; 800-meter run, Breann

Bell, 1st place; two mile run, Breann Bell, 1st place; and long jump, Jordan Pritchard, 1st place. Girls varsity also placed first in 4 x 100, 4 x 200 and 4 x 800 relays.

In varsity boys: 400-meter dash, Owen O'Briant, 1st place; 110-meter hurdles, Owen O'Briant, 1st place; and 300-meter hurdles, Artino Brown, 1st place.

A track meet was held on Wednesday, April 3 at Jackson Academy.

Multiple bridges closed across state, Pinchback Road bridge closed in county

Under the authority of Gov. Phil Bryant's April 2018 emergency bridge closure proclamation, the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) today was directed to begin immediately closing at least 34 local bridges.

"If these bridges remain open, it will not only present a safety hazard to the

traveling public but will also threaten \$530 million in federal funding, which is about 50 percent of MDOT's overall budget," said Melinda McGrath, P.E., MDOT Executive Director.

According to its most current list, the Office of State Aid Road Construction discovered 34 deficient bridges were open to traffic. State

Aid ordered counties to close some of the listed bridges by September 2018. State Aid is a separate state agency that enforces federal guidelines for county and city-owned roads and bridges and does not report to the Transportation Commission or MDOT.

"MDOT and the Department of Public Safety will begin immediate closures to prevent danger to the traveling public," McGrath said. "While MDOT understands closed bridges are inconvenient, open bridges at risk of imminent failure are a detriment to public safety."

The current closures are a continuation of a 2017 report

2019 Central Holmes High School Baseball Team



Pictured above front row (from left): Josh Haymer, Barrett Fondren, Ellis Harris, Noah Steen, Peyton Killebrew, Elijah Steen and Nathan Taylor; Back row (from left): Coach Patrick Marter, Riley Patton, Austin Hanson, Jackson Ellis, Alex Arnold, Landon Rawson, Wes Hudson, Luke Smith, Leslie Burden. Not pictured are Coach Daryl Tucker and Coach Tony Banks. (Photo by Lamb's Photography)

2019 Central Holmes Junior High Baseball Team



Pictured above front row (from left): John Hudson Word, Mason Wiysel and Hudson Haffey; Back row (from left): Coach Patrick Marter, Michael Jones, Ashton Tate, Cayton Edwards and Kaden Adams. (Photo by Lamb's Photography)

from federal inspectors who determined many bridges in the state were deficient. The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) worked with State Aid and MDOT to schedule repairs or closures.

The Pinchback Road bridge in Holmes County that crosses Millstone Bayou is among those ordered closed due to unsafe conditions.

In April 2018, FHWA notified State Aid that many of

the most dangerous bridges were not in compliance with federal bridge guidelines. FHWA warned if the bridges were not immediately closed, Mississippi would be in danger of losing federal funds. In response, Gov. Bryant directed MDOT and the Department of Public Safety to immediately close over 100 non-compliant bridges.

The closures led to a Special Legislative Session and the creation of the Mississippi Infrastructure Modernization Act (MIMA) of

2018. Under MIMA, the Emergency Road and Bridge Repair Fund was created. It authorized issuance of up to \$250 million in bonds to repair public roads and bridges in the state.

Earlier this year, the Mississippi Transportation Commission allocated the MIMA emergency funding for projects replacing or repairing 200 bridges across the state, including 99 that are currently closed and another 91 that have posted weight

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