UPDATE continued from page one

needs with a responsibility to the men and women who get up every day, go to work, and pay taxes. Every dollar spent is an investment in moving our state forward.

The House budget includes a record level of funding for education, including an increase in the per-student allocation sent to schools (SEEK), monies to implement the school safety act, and increased investment in postsecondary education. The bill also includes a debt service ratio of 5.3 percent and a Budget Reserve Trust Fund ending balance of \$392.4 million. This fund is basically a savings account we often refer to as the "rainy day fund."

Education Funding: The House budget proposal includes a record level of per-student education funding, with \$4,061 in the first year and \$4,112 in the second year of the budget. All certified and classified school district staff will receive a one percent salary increase, paid through SEEK funds. Education funding also includes \$1.13 billion over the biennium to fully fund the Teacher's Retirement System's actuarial required contribution (ARC). An additional \$61.7 million is committed in the first year to cover health insurance premiums for those who retired after 2010.

Postsecondary Education: The House proposal includes \$26 million in additional funding for our post-secondary institutions, \$16 million of which will be invested through the Performance-Based Funding Mechanism. Performance-Based Funding has proven to be an effective method of ensuring that higher education institutions continue to focus on educating students for successful career paths.

school districts hire new guidance counselors to meet the goals of the School Safety Act.

Social Workers: Like many states, we have a critical need for social workers in order to ensure the safety and well-being of children and others placed under state care or oversight. Our budget creates a hundred new positions, but also a five percent raise to retain those who already work for us.

General Government: All state employees will receive a one percent annual increase in wages in both fiscal years, including constitutional officers. The House budget also provides restricted funds support of \$4.8 million for vacant nursing positions in the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. The proposal also increases support for the Local Government Economic Development fund from zero percent to 70 percent of coal receipts, which equals approximately \$23 million.

Public Pension: The House budget proposal fully funds the state's pension contributions in both fiscal years. For the second budget in a row, legislators are not contributing to the legislative retirement plan. The state's public pension crisis has left us with a more than \$44 billion liability and, frankly, that will take a long time to pay.

Debt Service and Budget Reserve Trust Fund: The budget proposal approved by the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee includes a debt service ratio of 5.3 percent. Also, the ending balance of the Budget Reserve Trust Fund will be \$392.4 million, more than \$76 million more than the original proposal issued by the Governor in January.

In addition to the executive branch, or general government, budget, we also approved the legislative branch budget and the revenue component to the spending plan. All of these bills now go to the Senate for their consideration. I expect that we will have a final product to send to the Governor by April 1 in order to ensure adequate time for review and, if necessary, to override any vetoes he might issue on the document.

If you have any comments or questions. I can be reached during the week from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (EST) through the toll-free message line at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via e-mail Bart.Rowland@lrc. at ky.gov. You can keep track of committee meetings and potential legislation through the Kentucky Legislature Home Page at https:// legislature.ky.gov/ and you can also follow me on Twitter @KYRE-PROWLAND.



Carol's Reads Book Review Possum Gulch is a page turner



Possum Gulch delightful book with well-developed characters and a plot that moves like silk on a spool.

It's 1963, and life in the sleepy town USA is seemingly ordinary, but times are changing, and it is no different for Possum Gulch. The town and its citizens soon come unhinged when an anonymous letter sets into motion a series of sometimes witty and more often comedic series of events.

For instance, Mayor Sweenv is under pressure to rename the

Carol Perkins town, and as dedicated to his community as he might be, he is dealing with a secret that lies in the local cemetery. There is the aging town doctor who has more secrets than he does credibility, the postmistress who knows everyone's business because she reads their mail (and lines away for the doctor), and the pharmacist with his ongoing affair with a married woman until a single lady comes to town.

> Meet Doyle, the guy who has never been in love, but hopes to win the heart of the new lady, Little Q's where locals dine is the hub of the community and where the action begins and ends.

Jennifer Moonsong has worked as a journalist for over a decade and familiar to the Herald News readers as the paper's General Manager. From an early age, she displayed her love for reading and writing. Her ability to engage the reader from the first page to the last makes her recently released work of fiction. Possum Gulch, a book that turns its own pages.

Join Jennifer on March 20, 2020 at the Metcalfe County for her first book signing. A copy of Possum Gulch is like owning a piece of smalltown charm. From 2-4 on March 22- I urge you to show your support for another hometown author.

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School Safety Funding: This budget includes the first step in funding the school safety programs called for by the School Safety Act we passed last session. The measure adds \$18.7 million over the biennium to fund facility changes needed to implement the requirements of SB 1, as well as an additional \$2.9 million transfer from Restricted Funds in the first year of the budget. The House also included \$48.75 million to help

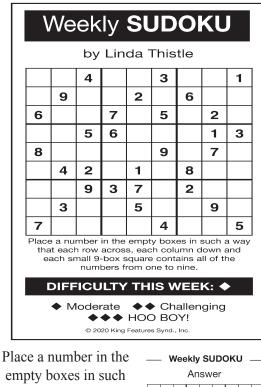


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CROSSWORD ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 2

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HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.



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is shorter. 4. Shirt is different. 5. Cup is missing. 6. Water is off. Differences: 1. Polka dots are added. 2. Knob is different. 3. Towel

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