

Mesonet displays weather data in new online format

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One of the country's most expansive state weather and climate monitoring networks, operated within the Kentucky Climate Center at Western Kentucky University, has received the largest overhaul for its webpage in close to a decade.

Kentucky Mesonet's official website, kymesonet.org, was revised last month and now offers new maps, graphs and other interactive

features. While on the homepage, users of the website can click on one of the 80 counties that houses a Mesonet station to view real-time data, webcam and forecasts.

A box featuring that county's other latest weather information, including temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind speed and direction, and solar radiation will appear to the right.

All data updates online in real-time, every five minutes, 24 hours a day.

Also among the website's new features are the addition of National Weather Service warnings and advisory map overlays as well as local NWS forecasts for a selected county.

General information about the network, network instrumentation and other frequently asked questions can be found under the 'about' tab on the homepage. In addition, full screen maps, along with links to daily extremes and more downloadable

data options are now available.

The site also contains customizable graphs for a wide range of weather parameters, including soils, under its 'data' tab. Meteograms, graphs which include multi-day plots for variables such as temperature, wind, pressure and more, have been added to the website. Historical data extremes for several parameters are also available.

An 'outreach' tab featuring the Mesonet's latest news head-

lines and social media posts has been added.

Pre-existing features such as an expansive map catalog along with monthly climate summaries for each site can still be found within the data tab. Links to the Kentucky Climate Center, along with a data request tool remain a part of the new-look site.

"The new website opens new opportunities for using weather information in new and creative ways," explained Kentucky

Mesonet Director Dr. Jerry Brotzge. "State weather networks are a critical tool used in a variety of important daily activities. For example, farmers use Mesonet data for knowing when to plant, fertilize and harvest, and public health officials use Mesonet data to know when to open shelters during extreme temperature conditions. The new website better facilitates these needs by providing specialized graphical information in easier to access formats."

Keeping homes cool without high energy costs



Katelyn M. Squires
Green County Family & Consumer Science Extension Agent

Extreme heat can make homes uncomfortable and unsafe, especially for families without air conditioning. High indoor temperatures increase the risk of heat illness, dehydration and other health problems. Older

adults, young children and people with long-term health conditions can be at greater risk.

Running air conditioning for long periods can raise energy bills and strain household budgets. Because of this, low-cost cooling strategies are important for protecting health and managing costs.

How Heat Enters the Home

Homes stay cooler when heat is kept

out in the first place. Sunlight shining through windows and onto walls is a major source of indoor heat. Blocking sunlight is an effective and affordable way to reduce indoor temperatures.

Airflow also matters. Letting cooler outdoor air move through your home at the right times of day can lower indoor temperatures and reduce the need for air conditioning. These strategies are especially helpful for

renters or households that cannot make major home changes.

Why Cooling Strategies Matter

Keeping homes cooler supports health and helps families manage rising utility costs. Simple actions can reduce indoor heat, improve comfort and lower energy use during heat waves, when power systems are under heavy demand. Low-cost options

help ensure that heat safety is not limited to those who can afford air conditioning.

Ways to Keep Homes Cooler

Block direct sunlight with curtains, blinds or outdoor shade during the hottest part of the day.

Open windows early in the morning or in the evening to let in cooler air.

Use fans to improve airflow and increase comfort.

Close windows and doors during peak heat to keep hot air out.

Drink plenty of water and monitor indoor temperatures during extreme heat.

Small, practical steps can make a meaningful difference in comfort, health and energy use during hot weather.

Contact your Green County Extension office for more information on saving home energy costs.

Don't limit the planting: Native trees for the landscape



Kara Back
University of Kentucky Horticulture Agent

Sure, we love our dogwoods and redbuds in the spring, but why limit ourselves to using only those two trees? There are many native trees that could add beauty and variety to your landscape over all four seasons. Plus, a diversity of plantings will attract and sustain more native wildlife. Well-landscaped homes can improve resale value by 7% to 10%.

Here are some native trees that could work well in your landscape.

Yellowwood is thought to be our best medium-sized, native flowering tree. Its white, fragrant, pea-like flowers hang in 15-inch-long clusters in spring, and the tree offers attractive yellow fall foliage. Its fruit is a typical yellow-green legume pod and ripens in the fall. Yellowwood also has a beautiful framework of branches with smooth, gray bark that provides winter interest, but the tree's multiple trunk habit makes it can make it prone to limb breakage at the crotch. It must be pruned to ensure good branch angles.

Allegheny serviceberry is a multi-stemmed small tree reaching up to 25 feet

tall. It produces large white flowers very early in spring and bluish green fruit that attracts birds. Allegheny serviceberry grows best in partial shade; it will show signs of stress if grown in full sun in dry areas. The cultivar A. laevis 'Cumulus' usually grows from a single stem and has a moderately columnar growth habit. It is offered more commonly than the species. Allegheny serviceberry is especially attractive when planted in front of an evergreen background. There are many other types of serviceberries. You can't go wrong with any of them.

Blackgum, with its waxy spring foliage, brilliant orange to scarlet red to deep purple fall color and striking winter form, has great ornamental value. As it grows older, its graceful, drooping branches add to the distinct form and beauty of this tree. Blackgum adapts to extreme climates, tolerates wet conditions and is resistant to drought. Although it will grow in full sun or partial shade, its fall color is enhanced by sunny conditions. Flowers are small and insignificant. The bitter, half-inch blue-black drupes are not particularly ornamental but are favored by wildlife.

Sourwood. Truly a tree for all seasons, sourwood is one of our most beautiful na-

tives and is ideal as a small specimen tree. It has lovely flowers that open in mid-summer, excellent fall color and hanging clusters of fruit in the winter. Fall color ranges from red to purple to yellow, and all three colors are often on the same tree. It has the best red of any of our natives. The tree can be grown in full sun or partial shade although flowering and fall color are best in full sun. Sourwood trees are very attractive to bees and sourwood honey is common in the South. In order to grow well, it requires an acidic soil high in organic matter. Limestone in the soil or soils derived from limestone are a prescription for failure.

Green hawthorn is an adaptable, urban-tolerant tree that offers winter interest with its abundant and attractive orange-red fruit. It has pretty red to gold foliage in fall and handsome silver-gray peeling bark that shows orange underneath. Its lower branches need to be pruned to a height of 6 to 8 feet in high-traffic areas because of the tree's inch-long thorns. 'Winter King' is an excellent cultivar for the landscape and is superior in flower and fruit production.

Carolina silverbell is a good small tree for shrub or woodland borders. It may have a rounded, pyramidal or vase-shaped habit. Its white, bell-shaped

flowers bloom in April and May and are best seen from below the tree, since they hang on pendulous stalks. Carolina silverbell is relatively pest resistant as long as it is in a good soil and not stressed by drought. The tree is especially attractive

when set off against an evergreen background. Rhododendrons, which also require a good, organic soil, grow well beneath it.

Information about these and other native trees can be found at <https://www.uky.edu/hort/Native-Trees->

of-Kentucky. For more information on how to train or prune a tree for a good branching habit, consult an ISA Certified Arborist. You can find one near you at <https://www.treesaregood.org/>.

Source: William Fountain

Four reasons a 529 plan might make sense for your family



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Key takeaways

- Despite their tax advantages, just 14% of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study.
- 529 funds cover college, vocational programs, registered apprenticeships and can be used towards K-12 education.
- In addition to tuition, 529 funds can pay for students' day-to-day needs like internet, computers, qualified room and board, and certain K-12 tutoring costs.

A 529 education savings plan might sound like something only families with college-bound kids need. But the versatility of a 529 account may surprise you, whether your child heads to a four-year university, a trade school or elsewhere.

1. What are the tax benefits of a 529 education savings plan?

Earnings in a 529 plan grow free from federal taxes, and withdrawals used for qualified education expenses are also federally tax-free. While 529 contributions are not federally deductible, many states allow a deduction on your state return.

Despite their tax advantages, just 14% of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study. Instead, most families rely on traditional personal savings accounts.

2. Can a 529 be used if my child doesn't attend a traditional college?

Beyond four-year colleges, you can use 529 funds for community colleges, graduate schools and vocational programs. Apprenticeships in fields like plumbing, electrical work and welding qualify too, provided they are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.

If your child earns a scholarship, you can withdraw up to that amount from your 529 account without penalty, though earnings may still be taxable.

3. What does a 529 plan cover beyond tuition?

Qualified costs for 529 plan withdrawals include books, supplies, computers, internet access and educational software. For students enrolled at least half time, room and board also qualify, including off-campus housing up to what the school sets as its cost of attendance.

Recent changes in the law expanded 529 plan qualified expenses. Some new eligible expenses include certain testing fees, instructional materials, academic tutoring, and educational therapies for students with disabilities.

For K-12, you can use up to \$20,000 from your 529 account per year for tuition, certain tutoring and curriculum materials.

4. What if I don't use all the money in my 529 account?

If one child doesn't need the 529 funds, you can transfer that account to a sibling, another qualifying family member or even yourself. You can also use 529 funds to pay up to \$10,000 in student loans, roll them into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary up to \$35,000 (subject to certain limits and criteria) or roll them into a disability savings account (ABLE account) for the beneficiary or a family member.

With so many options for investing, withdrawals and redirecting the money, a 529 plan is one of the more flexible tools available for families thinking about education costs. A financial advisor can walk you through the details and help you choose a plan that fits your overall financial strategy.

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NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Business: Green County Conservation District
103 Industrial Park Rd
Greensburg, KY 42743
Phone Number 270-932-4961

Position: District Administrative Coordinator

Employment: Part Time Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 8:00 – 4:30

Pay: \$16.00

The Green County Conservation District will be accepting applicants for a part-time District Coordinator starting at \$ 16.00 per hour. Must have experience in book-keeping and be familiar with Quicken and Microsoft Office. Agriculture knowledge/experience is a plus. Applicant will be working directly with landowners, Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service to perform clerical, accounting, educational and programmatic duties. Must be willing to work within the school systems to coordinate and present conservation education material. All applicants will be required to have a background check. **Resumes with 3 references and a cover letter will be accepted until close of business June 15, 2026.** Return or mail resumes to the Green County Conservation District, 103 Industrial Park Rd. Greensburg, KY 42743 or e-mail to: gccd@hotmail.com.