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JOSEPH BLACKMON



JUSTIN CLARK



MASON TOT DENTON



AIMEE DIAL



KELSEY EDWARDS



MARY ANN GARRETT



ALEX GOODMAN



BRANDY KEY



BOBBY LENEAVE



MALLIE MYERS



JOHN OLIVER



AARON OSBRON



LAURA OSWALD



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Dr. Joseph Blackmon

38

Dr. Joseph Blackmon excited to practice Mohs surgery, dermatology, while raising family in hometown of Paducah

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Dr. Joseph A. Blackmon was born in Paducah 38 years ago. In returning to his hometown to practice at Paducah Dermatology, after two decades of living in large metropolitan areas, he's pleased to be back.

Blackmon became a medical doctor upon graduation from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He went on to complete a dermatology residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He also is a board-pending Fellow of the American College of Mohs Surgery, following a Mohs Fellowship in Dayton, Ohio.

Mohs surgery is "a surgical procedure used to treat skin cancer. Individual layers of cancer tissue are removed and examined under a microscope one at a time until all cancer tissue has been removed," according to www.cancer.gov. The name "Mohs" comes from the last name of the surgeon who developed the technique. Blackmon successfully has performed more than 12,000 Mohs surgeries.

He and his birth family lived in Paducah until the summer of 2000, just before his senior year of high school. Both parents were long-time teachers. While at Tilghman High School, Dr. Blackmon's father, Bob, was a football coach and biology teacher. His mother, Cara, was a chemistry teacher and cheerleading sponsor.

Both parents went on to earn school administration degrees and found employment in 2000 in the Bardstown Independent School District. "That's where I finished high school and my parents reside," Dr. Blackmon explained, "but when asked where I'm from, I always



Drs. Halden Ford and Joseph Blackmon

answer, 'Paducah.'"

He was graduated magna cum laude in 2006 from the University of Louisville, with a bachelor's degree, majoring in chemistry and minoring in biology. He earned the doctor of medicine degree, graduating with high distinction from the University of Kentucky in 2010. His residency training began with a transitional internship at Indiana University Health.

In dermatology, the initial internship is followed with a three-year residency in specific dermatology. His took place at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo. Upon graduation from it, he completed a fellowship in what now is called micrographic surgery and dermatologic oncology. He completed the residency in 2014

and the American Cancer Society-accredited fellowship the following year at Dayton (Ohio) Skin Cancer Center. Blackmon is a Fellow of the American College of Mohs Surgery.

Returning to his hometown is especially gratifying, he said. "I've just joined with Dr. Halden Ford and the other providers at Paducah Dermatology. The vast majority of the time I will perform Mohs surgery. I also will see some patients for general dermatology and cosmetic dermatology issues one day a week."

Blackmon credits his career choice to his parents' subject matter for teaching, which loomed large in the family's daily life. "You either love it or develop a dislike being around something so much," he explained. "I always was curious and from an

early age wanted to be a physician."

As for focusing on dermatology and Mohs surgery, Blackmon credits a mentor who assigned him to shadow a Mohs surgeon. "On the first day, I had that 'Aha!' moment," Blackmon recalled. "Mohs surgery has a high cure rate, considered the gold standard for skin cancer removal. So, to be able to give that to a patient is super gratifying and what motivates me to get better at my profession every day."

Dr. Heidi Donnelly, owner and medical director of Dayton Skin Care, is the Mohs surgeon he shadowed. "She was an excellent mentor to me," he said. "Her phrase was, 'You treat every patient as family.' I stay true to that."

Blackmon seeks to educate the community on skin cancer awareness, what Mohs surgery is, and the fact that skin cancer is the most common cancer in humans. "From St. Louis to Nashville, there is a shortage of dermatologists providing the kind of practice we're providing," he said. With satellite clinics in Benton, Ky., and Martin, Tenn., he's pleased to serve areas where access has been limited.

Blackmon's wife, Mandy, is a 2010 graduate of the UK College of Dentistry. She has chosen early retirement to be a stay-at-home mom to their daughter Caroline, 9; twins, son Booker and daughter Georgia, 6; and youngest son, Shepherd, 19 months. She might work part-time as a dentist in the future.

Dr. Joseph Blackmon says he's blessed and seeks to put God first, followed closely by family and work. "Aside from that, I'm a big U of L football fan because I walked on there briefly," he said. He also likes the Pittsburgh Steelers and exercising.

Justin Clark 40

Justin Clark says helping farmers succeed, helps him succeed

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Justin Clark might be described as “comfortable in his own skin.” Wictionary.org’s defines that as, “Relaxed and confident in one’s manner of presenting oneself and interacting with others....”

Clark, of Wingo, recently turned 40. The Graves County High School graduate attended West Kentucky Community and Technical College, and studied agriculture and marketing at Murray State University.

“My family (were) tobacco growers and didn’t know what the future of tobacco would be,” he explained. “So, I started with a small, independent company in Salem and went to work at Security Seed and Chemical. From there, he went to Nutrien. “We saw the independents in the ag retail industry start slipping away,” Clark said. “It was more corporate than I thought it should be or than the farmer wanted.”

Finally, he and business partner, Patrick Conyee, decided if they ever got an opportunity to make it as an independent, “We’d roll the dice and see what came of it. Some independents were bought out in our area and we decided the time was as good as any.”

C&C Ag Solutions is a retail store, selling seed, nutritionals, fertilizer, chemicals, and they even offer some crop consulting. The business is located in Mayfield in the Graves Industrial Park at 30 Opportunity Drive.

The partners moved there in the fall/winter of 2019 and plan to grow. “We sold the building we’d occupied and built a new one,” Clark noted. “We’ve expanded our building size



and warehouse space and are moving in early July. It’s the second move, due to the need for more space within the past couple of years, thanks to our customers.”

Clark believes, “Service is what our industry is about. We hope to provide things to growers they’re not getting elsewhere, to be more prescriptive for their farms and narrow down limiting factors. We don’t want to just sell them stuff. We want there to be a reason for us to be on the farm.”

Summarizing his philosophy, Clark noted, “Lou Holtz was a great football coach and he said, ‘If you’re not growing, you’re dying.’ I’ve always thought that was pretty applicable to business. If you’re not doing something to progress, you’re going backwards.”

In conclusion, Clark stated, “I always like to mention we’ve been blessed. God’s been good to us. And, we just hope we’re doing what we’re supposed to be doing with what He’s given us.”

Mason Denton 30

Mason Denton is there for others, like a good neighbor

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Mason Tot Denton, 30, graduated from Murray State University with a Bachelor of Science degree, as a biology major, in 2013. He’d considered pursuing a medical career, but found another way to help people, via a family connection.

Denton recently opened his State Farm Insurance agency, offering home, auto, and life policies in mid-town Paducah, at 202 Lone Oak Road, Suite 100. “I can see the Coke plant out my office window,” he said.

Opening his office followed a year of interning on the corporate side of State Farm, a company with whom he has a family connection. “I grew up with State Farm. I’m a third-generation agent, following my mother, Susan Waldon Denton, and my grandfather, Tot Waldon, who became an agent in 1958. My grandfather’s twin brother, Dot Waldon, also was a State Farm agent in Florida,” he explained.

“We want to be an integral part of our community,” Mason Denton continued, “working for charities, helping local businesses. We want to make sure our policy holders are protected and have the right coverages that fit them so we can prevent devastating circumstances from hurting them.”

Denton relates to and takes to heart his company’s long-time slogan: “Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.” He said, “Someone recently posted about us on Facebook. They were in Florida and somebody hit their vehicle, parked at their house. They called us and we told them to go ahead and enjoy their vacation. We got the police report, got the claim set up with the

auto body shop, and had a rental car ready when they got home. They didn’t have to worry about anything. That’s what we want to do for our customers.”

In conclusion, Denton said, “It’s awesome to have a job where you’re making a difference in people’s lives. We’re offering products people need. That’s why this matters to me. I mean, I have baby pictures, dressed in State Farm gear, because of the love that my mom and my grandfather have had for policy holders and how much they’ve cared. We treat everybody who walks through our door like family. Our motto is ‘At Mason Tot Denton State Farm, we’re a family, our community is a family, and we’re going to protect you like family.’”

Mason and his wife, Aimee (Beasley) Denton will celebrate their seventh wedding anniversary in September. Their two daughters are Riley, 3-and-a-half years old, and 3-month-old Charlie.





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Aimee Dial 35

Aimee Dial helps people fall in love with the vehicle they're going to buy



By Greg LeNeave
Publisher

Aimee Dial, 35, is a client advisor for Watermark BMW in Paducah. Dial has worked for the company for a few years now, starting out as a BMW Genius servicing the customers. "It was Joe Langston, the current BMW Sales Manager, that arm-wrestled me into the sales side of the business," she said.

Dial is originally from Calloway County, growing up in the Kirksey area. She graduated from Calloway County High School in 2004, and furthered her education at Murray State University. She earned a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communication in 2008, and then her master's degree in 2013.

As a client advisor for BMW, she says, "I help people fall in love with the cars they are going to buy!" With her pleasant outlook and delightful

personality, she is successful in doing just that, with several accolades to show for it. She won the BMW Gold Award twice, Bronze Award once, and the Platinum Award once. As for the Watermark Group, she has won the top sales person in 2019, and finished second in sales for 2020.

For the future of her career, she wants to continue moving up in the company. "I love working for Watermark Auto Group," she said.

When she isn't helping clients fall in love with their new vehicles, you could find her spending time with her daughter, Madison. Dial praised her daughter by saying, "The possibilities are endless for her. She is everything that I saw in myself, plus what I couldn't do, she strives right through it. She's a great young lady. She's amazing and tough!" Dial also enjoys time spent with her dogs and working out. She loves to hike, and loves the lakes and ocean.

Kelsey Edwards 26

Kelsey Edwards, Paducah Parks help bring people together

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Kelsey Edwards coordinates special events for the City of Paducah, under the auspices of Parks and Recreation. She started working there straight out of college, as an intern, which led to a part-time job, and now a full-time position. So, she's already been on the job four years.

The 26-year-old is a 2013 graduate of Marshall County High School. She then earned a bachelor's degree at Western Kentucky University, majoring in recreation administration with a concentration in event and facility management.

"I just love to help provide events for the community," she explained. "We have events, including the farmers' market, movies, the Independence Day Celebration, and others for people to gather, regardless of their demographics."

Edwards sees Parks and Recreation as a public service organization, "because all of our events are presented to the public free of charge," she said. "We want to get people out of their homes and active outside in events to hold in common among citizens. That helps build community. All our events are kid-friendly. So, families, single people, and more can enjoy them."

A new venture this year already proving successful is the movie series outside on the riverfront. "All the movies we handpicked are for both kids and adults," Edwards noted, "whether with family, a large group, or whoever they're with, people can enjoy our events. All are held outdoors."

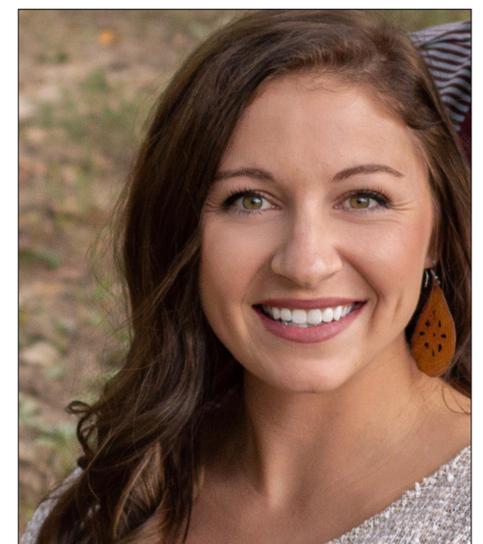
This year, the city purchased a movie screen that's 30 feet high by 17

feet wide. "It's a blow up, so we put it up on the riverfront in a large, green space area," Edwards said. "There's a whole sound system that goes with it. The system has the capability of broadcasting, as many drive-in movie parks do, via an FM radio transmitter. It's broadcast to the entire area within listening distance."

Paducah's longest-running, current event is the farmers' market, which has expanded to three locations on Saturdays from May to October.

"I couldn't ask for more support from the community," Edwards concluded. "People come out for every one of our events. They continue to help us grow and provide more for them."

Kelsey is married to Andrew Edwards. They have one daughter, Amelia, who is 18 months old. The Edwards family have been members for several years of Twin Lakes Worship Center. As if balancing work, family, church and more isn't hectic enough, Kelsey adds, "Oh, and we actually are dachshund breeders, too."



Mary Ann Garrett 24

Mary Ann Garrett, 3rd generation farmer

By Pat Thomann
KPI Staff Writer

Although 24-year-old Mary Anne Garrett wasn't born in Kentucky, her father Danny Garrett was born and raised here. Danny's occupation training horses took him all the way to California, where Mary Anne was born.

Her dad eventually wanted to return back to his roots and start farming, so the family moved back. The business started slowly with just a table at the present location on John Puryear Drive, but quickly grew as people discovered the quality of produce they provided.

Mary Anne graduated from

McCracken County High School in 2014 and continued her education at the University of Kentucky where she studied agriculture, economics and business. She graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree and went to work for a lawn care business in Lexington.

Mary Anne moved back to Paducah to help her dad in his farming business and she loves it. "I knew agriculture was going to be for me. I like being outside and providing for people, supporting local farmers and watching things grow from a little seed to a big plant producing food."

The Garrett's, along with Mary Anne's boyfriend, Adam Martin, farm

50-60 acres of their 80 acre farm growing sweet corn, tomatoes, strawberries, a variety of peppers, squash, zucchini, watermelon, cantaloupe, peaches and they just planted a bunch of blackberry bushes.

They also grow and sell a wide variety of flowering plants, fresh milk, eggs and cheese and in the fall they grow pumpkins and mums. The store also sells canned goods made by the Amish in Hopkinsville, Kirchhoff's baked goods, locally made honey, jams and jellies, fresh ground spices, local homemade candles and soaps, seasonal pecans and in winter they make different sizes of fruit baskets ideal for gifts.

A buyer from Chicago sends a truck to the farm to buy produce that supplies several produce stands in the Chicago area. The Garrett's are also members of the Kentucky Association of Food Banks, selling Grade 2 produce to the KAFB Farm to Food Bank program. They in turn provide produce, at no cost, to food banks for the needy.

Mary Anne says that the pandemic actually helped their business because people didn't want to shop in crowded groceries, so many started home canning many of the items they grow



and sell. The biggest seller for canners was corn, tomatoes, green beans and pickling cucumbers.

The Garrett's have six greenhouses full of tomatoes that will soon be ready. Their produce can be found at their main location on John Puryear Drive, at Rural King on Cairo Road and they are at the downtown Paducah Farmers' Market on Saturdays.

Check them out for all your canning needs or just pick up some delicious farm fresh produce for tonight's dinner. Mary Anne and Adam will be happy to assist you in any way they can or answer your produce questions.



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Alex Goodman 30

Alex Goodman, Mayfield businesswoman, volunteer

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Alex Goodman is a Mayfield native who continues to live in Graves County. Following graduation from Mayfield High School in 2009, she attended Murray State University and trade school simultaneously. She dropped out of MSU, then returned, graduating in 2020 with a double major in political science and history, just before turning 30.

"I purchased Awardmasters,

which was founded in 1990, the year I was born," she explained. "It had combined two third-generation businesses – Lookofsky's Sporting Goods and Lindsey Jewelers to form Awardmasters." She purchased it in 2019 from Doug Lindsey and Joe Lookofsky.

Awardmasters continues to create trophies and other recognitions, utilizing laser etching and engraving. The business has expanded into the construction contracting side of its field with electrical panel labels, based

on wiring tags on overhauled air compressor tags they ship throughout the country. The business now even makes international deals.

"I've known Joe and Doug my entire life," she said. At one point, she decided she wanted to be in control of her own destiny. So, she asked whether the business was for sale. When the answer was "yes," the three sat down on a Tuesday night to talk and by Thursday they'd signed a contract.

"It started with just me, but we have grown and expanded. Now, we have six employees and expect to hire two more this fall because we're growing that much," she explained.

Goodman remains active in the community, serving as treasurer of the Mayfield-Graves County Tourism Commission; secretary and past president of the Mayfield Lions Club; Chairperson of Mayfield-Graves County Housing Authority, and more. In fact, she hopes to grow the business with enough work to the point where she could hire employees and find time to volunteer more in the community. The Barton-Davis Museum is one interest she advocates eventually to be located at the Icehouse. "I want to dedicate more time to that with my



friends John Davis and Ed Richard," she said.

Her husband, Tyler Goodman, who works for FNB Bank, also is community minded, serving as a Graves County Commissioner.

In summarizing her worldview, Alex Goodman concluded, "I share a birthday with Alben W. Barkley, who was from Graves County. His motto, 'I'd rather be a servant in the house of the Lord than to sit in the seats of the mighty' inspires me. I want to use my time away from the job to give back."

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Brandy Key 39

Paducah woman finds fitness key to full, fun life

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Brandy Key was born in Paducah 39 years ago, raised in Ballard County, graduated from Ballard Memorial High School in 2000, and since has pursued work and family with energy, enjoyment, and excellence.

“My mom was a pharmacy technician,” Key explained. “So, I’ve been in and out of pharmacies my whole life. When it came time to pick what I was supposed to do, I thought, “That looks good.” So, she earned a Doctorate in Pharmacy degree from the St. Louis College of Pharmacy. “It’s been a super rewarding career,” she said.

That includes working as the pharmacist-owner of West Towne Pharmacy at 2755 W Park Dr. in Paducah. It also includes co-owning and operating the Cross Fit Dig Deep gym on McGuire Avenue with her husband, Doug Key. “Operating” the business in this case means coaching



clients.

“As for being a gym owner, I’ve always dabbled in fitness my whole life,” Brandy Key explained. “When I walked into a Cross Fit gym, I fell in love with it. It changed my life. When the opportunity came up for me to become the owner of that gym, my husband and I jumped on it.”

That doesn’t mean that’s their only key to success. “We’re really big entrepreneurs,” she said. “My husband owns a couple of other businesses as well. We’re really go-getters and we’ll try literally anything. My husband also owns Smart Path Performance, a human resources consulting firm. We also have a real estate holding company.”

And, financial success isn’t the only goal involved, either. “I really just want to be successful and make a difference in our community,” Brandy Key said. “That’s really been my goal in everything. I believe our goal in general is just to leave a legacy for our family and make our community better.”

Asked for a favorite quote, Brandy Key cited Phillipians 4:13, which says, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.” That’s definitely one I fall back on.” Given the opportunity to say anything else, she grinned and provided another favorite quote: “Underestimate me... that’ll be fun.”

The Keys have four children. Sons Colbee, at 22, and Braiden, at 20, are oldest. Another boy, Tristen, is 14, and the only girl is the youngest: Sophie, 11, who plays softball.

Considering the family’s active lifestyle and full days, Brandy Key grinned and concluded, “You usually can find us at the gym or the softball field.”




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Bobby LeNeave 30

Bobby LeNeave carries on the family business

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Bobby LeNeave's approach to both his day-to-day work and to 21st century life in general clearly reflect both his family heritage and the generation into which he was born.

The 30-year-old Paducah native earned a bachelor's degree at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green with a major in organizational leadership and a double minor in business administration and psychology. He also proudly has served his country through a four-year stint in the United States Navy.

"As circulation manager for Kentucky Publishing, Inc., I take care of the needs of the drivers and work as an assistant to the publisher," he explained about overseeing regular, weekly distribution of several different newspapers to the public in a significant geographic area.

"Since it is my family's business, I had been around it most of my life and

it was natural for me to be a part of it," he added. "In my first year since graduating from college, I have been tracking who goes where on their (distribution) routes and how to serve our coverage area best."

Work and family clearly intertwine in his daily life. Meanwhile, his heritage as a member of the Millennial Generation in many ways reflects his viewpoint, interests and concerns about living life in the 21st century world.

For example, LeNeave lists his hobbies as video games, ultimate Frisbee, disc golf, and weightlifting, all favorites among his age group.

When asked about his hopes for the future of his workplace, he responds, "To develop a recycling program here." Extrapolating his vision and that of many other Millennials to the larger society, he explains that he hopes Americans will "seek more patience and understanding in this country between the far left and the far right."

Mallie Myers 26

Mallie Myers set to practice law in Nashville; her Ballard County roots will continue to influence her to be her best

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Mallie Myers has spent most of her 26 years in the Kevil/Gage area of Ballard County, but now she's preparing to move to Nashville, Tenn., to pursue a career as an attorney. One thing that won't change is maintaining her wide field of interests. Another is her Ballard County roots.

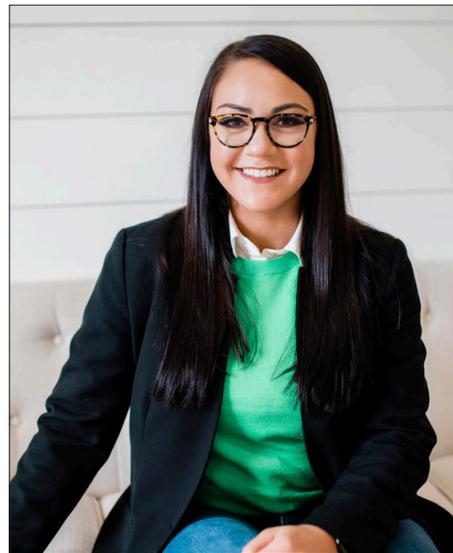
She graduated in 2013 from Ballard Memorial High School. Then, in December 2016, she completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Kentucky, majoring in agriculture economics with minors in business and political science. Most recently, she completed UK law school in May 2020.

Her motivation for her career started in wanting to earn a post-graduate degree. "I always enjoyed writing and public speaking," she said. "I thought those were skills that translated well to the law and that would be a good fit for me."

Since then, she has worked as an attorney in the U.S. District Court for the western district of Kentucky. This September, she will join the law firm of Bass, Berry, and Sims, in Nashville, Tenn.

"Going into my first year as an associate at a large law firm, I want to gain experience in various areas of the law and to learn about various types of litigation," she said. "I'll have the opportunity to work on different types of cases. I'm excited to learn about different aspects of law. I think that also will help me connect to other young attorneys in the Nashville area."

A quote that often has come to her mind in recent years is from John



Wooden, the famous basketball coach at the University of California at Los Angeles. She said it helps guide her along the way in life and career. Wooden said, "Never try to be better than somebody else; but never cease trying to be the best you can be."

Although relocating will change her daily life, she plans to stay in close touch with her family. "I enjoy spending time with my parents and my two brothers," she explained. "One brother is a year older than I am; the other is in seventh grade. I enjoy watching him play basketball and football."

When Myers does take I-24 northwest from Music City, she not only will spend time with her family, but also plans to pursue some of her favorite pastimes. "I like duck hunting, deer hunting, and hanging out with my dogs," she concluded. "I have five golden retrievers and a black lab at home."



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John Oliver 31

John Oliver works with anything computer related

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

John Oliver of Kevil has earned one academic year's worth of college credits in computer technology at Murray State University and another year's credits at West Kentucky Community and Technical College. While those classes certainly have helped him, the 31-year-old says most of what he has learned about internet technology has been self-taught. "I turned out to be better at it than I really thought I was," he said with a laugh. "It's a family business and so that's where I get the business side from."

Connecting Point Computer Center is the name of that family business. "We work with anything computer-related," he explained, "including networking, computer repair, physical repair, servers, data recovery, back-up, phones ... all of it. There is not anything we don't do, really."

So, what drew Oliver to the business of technology? "It is something I like to do," he stated forthrightly. "It was natural and easy for me; plus, it is an indoor job and I had been working outdoors in the weather on construction. So, it was not hard at all to convince me to work indoors instead."

During the seven years in which he has labored in the field, he has developed a number of clients – satisfied customers who call on his company regularly. "I say we are firefighters with different uniforms because we put out fires for our clients," he explained.

Oliver hopes to continue to grow



his company, much as the field of technology has developed and continues to grow as a factor in business worldwide. He is pleased that through the years he maintains many clients from the very beginning and attributes such loyalty to his company's determination to make a difference and its record of doing good work.

As a native of Ballard County, known for its outdoors, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and generally spending lots of leisure time in nature. Although those are not necessarily typical hobbies of most techies, he very much enjoys the fact that those hobbies are virtually 180 degrees from technology, providing him a real change of pace, a chance to get away from his daily work. Oh, and just in case that is not enough of a change of pace, Oliver and his wife also keep busy with a very active 3-year-old daughter.

Aaron Osbron 35

Aaron Osbron's career path unconventional, rewarding

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Aaron Osbron found his life's calling down a winding road.

"I always was good with math," the now 35-year-old explained. "So, guidance counselors pushed me toward engineering, but it didn't have much interaction with people and I'm a social person. I always was interested in construction, but there was a stigma about it; so, it was my Plan B."

Eventually, Osbron discovered that a job that didn't necessarily require a

college degree fit him. "That was never an option from guidance counselors," he remembered. "The question was 'where are you going to go to college?'"

Upon graduation from Lone Oak High School in 2004, he completed a year at the University of Kentucky College of Engineering in Paducah, then transferred to UK's Lexington campus. "(College) isn't for everybody," he said. "Even if you're out in the field, you can make just as much money, if not more than these people who get a business or management degree and you can make money now."

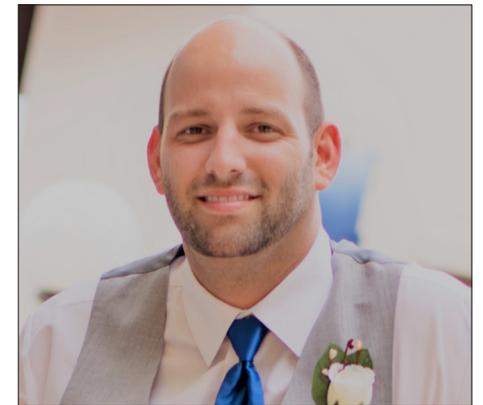
Osbron worked summers for Johnson

Plaster through high school. "When I discovered you need to be strong in math as a construction estimator and it could be profitable, I thought, 'That's exactly what I've been looking for,'" he said, returning to Paducah in 2008, working full time there still. "I'm now vice-president," he said. "We're an interior specialty contractor, working in commercial, residential, and industrial settings."

Eventually, America's emphasis on the college degree and the retirement of millions of baby boomers from the construction career trades have left a shortage of workers in those trades, which now pay well. Meanwhile, many college graduates can't find well-paying jobs for many other majors.

Osbron gladly participates now in programs like Construction Career Day the Associated General Contractors of Western Kentucky and Murray State University present each fall. Other key participants include West Kentucky Community and Technical College, trade unions, and individual contractors. They show high school students many unfilled construction jobs pay well. Most require two years or less of trade or technical training.

The Paducah Innovation Hub is a game-changer. "I've toured it and it's unreal," he said. "It's like its own college campus next to Tilghman High School, with everything from automotive painting and body work



to carpentry, building wall panels. A major focus is on 3-D building information modeling, where you can see the job before it's built to minimize change orders. It's all about collaboration. If we get these kids involved in middle or high school, they'll come out with that experience and completely change our area in commercial construction."

He and his wife have been married four years. She's a nurse at Baptist Health Care. Between them, they have an 8-year-old son and a daughter, Ava, 3.

Osbron enjoys his work, family, and travelling. He volunteers with the McCracken County Youth Soccer organization, serving on its board and in facility maintenance.

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Laura Oswald 32

Creating destination opportunities

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Laura Oswald is Director of Marketing for the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau, the city's official destination marketing organization. She's called the western Kentucky region home since childhood and earned a bachelor's degree at Murray State University majoring in public relations and minoring in marketing.

"We strive to create new economic opportunities through destination marketing, management and tourism development," she explained. "I

focus on developing awareness and preference for Paducah through several channels to drive visitation and increase tourism."

Her interest was piqued at MSU, when she discovered destination marketing, a career she previously didn't know existed, and how it played into her own passion for travel.

"As director of marketing, I'm proud to be part of a CVB team that's small but mighty," said Oswald, 32. "We collaborate with diverse partners in the community, the hospitality industry and beyond to tell Paducah's story and invite visitors to discover all

western Kentucky offers."

A particular highlight is Paducah's designation as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization "Creative City"—among only nine in the U.S. and 246 worldwide. "We planned and hosted the first international meeting of the UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts and Folk Art in 2017, an incredible experience and spotlight on Paducah to delegates from four continents," she explained. That connected with media and travel writers on the local destination experience here.

More than 1 billion media impressions generated through publications including National Geographic Traveler, Forbes and USA Today mean people throughout the world now know more about Paducah and the creativity and cultural heritage that make it unique. As people increasingly seek travel inspiration online, Paducah.travel reaches visitors throughout the world with guides, local stories, event listings and curated maps connecting them directly to Paducah's local flavor, culture, art and architecture.

"Paducah reflects an authentic sense of place, which attracts and delights visitors from around the world,"



Oswald said. "Our heritage, cultural attractions and local flavor set us apart from other cities our size."

Oswald and her husband, Patrick, live in Paducah's Fountain Avenue neighborhood and are proud parents of infant daughter Riley and two Labrador Retrievers.

"During the past year, the CVB really adapted because of the pandemic," she concluded. "We've developed new stories, guides, and maps on Paducah.travel, not only with the goal of serving travelers in their current interests, but also inviting local people to see their home with new eyes."

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Ron & Don Parks 34

Ron and Don Parks continues farming tradition

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Ron and Don Parks are identical twin brothers, born 34 years ago and raised in Union City, Tenn., just outside Hickman, on the Kentucky state line. They and their families continue to live on the same farm on which they grew up.

Both are graduates of Obion (County) Central High School in Troy, Tenn. Both then earned business degrees at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

“Don, two other partners, and I own and operate First Choice Farm and Lawn, a Kubota tractor flag dealership,” Ron explained. “Kubota is our main line, but we sell lots of other different brands. We’re headquartered out of Union City with stores in Dyersburg and Savannah, Tenn.; and Mayfield, Ky. We’re launching new stores in August in Memphis and then Jonesboro, Ark.”

Their father always used Kubota tractors they all admired. “When I graduated college in 2009, I worked for a gentleman who purchased the store in Union City,” Ron said. “In 2013, Don and I, along with Roger and David Williams of Williams Sausage Co., purchased that company. We started with six employees, Don and me in January 2013 and it has grown quite rapidly.”

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Parks brothers and their partners, still

Ron noted, “We have a pretty good-sized sporting goods store in Dyersburg called Cypress Creek Outdoors and we’re launching a new power sports store called First Choice Can-Am in Savannah, Tenn.”

Even with the variety of businesses and quality products they offer to people in west Tennessee and Kentucky, Ron says, “The biggest accomplishment I see is we have so many wonderful people who work for this company, right at 100 now.”

He hopes “to continue to see these businesses develop and succeed in each community. We want to be a household name. So, when anybody needs something, we’re the first people they think of,” he said. “The biggest thing is trying to do the right thing all the time and taking care of people the way you expect to be taken care of. Those are the only solutions for real success, in my opinion.”

Ron and wife Kristen are parents of a girl, Poppy, and a boy, John Ira. Don and wife Brooke are parents to Charlie and Amelia.

Asked for a favorite quote, Ron chuckles, referring to a saying of his dad: “If you worked 12 hours today, you only worked half a day.” Even so, he then admits that when possible, he and his brother “duck hunt down around Rigley, Tenn.,” noting with a grin, “That’s our passion.”

Anna Puckett 31

Anna Puckett - Harris Auction Director of Operations

By Greg LeNeave
Publisher

Graves County native, Anna Puckett, is the Director of Operations for Harris Real Estate and Auction. For many years she was a ‘Mayfield Country Club kid’ before her family moved to the Wingo/Pryorsburg area.

Puckett, 31, graduated from Graves County High School in 2008. She went on to further her education at Murray State University. She earned a degree in Organization Communication and Marketing in 2013.

As Director of Operations, she describes her role there by saying, “I facilitate the marketing and work with our auction clients for smooth closing. I also assist and help out with the real estate side of the business. I even help by taking out the trash.”

Before starting with the company in 2016, Puckett was a stay-at-home mom. However, when she got into the real estate and auction business, she said it was something that just came natural to her. She caught on quickly to the ways of the business.

Commenting on the successfulness of the business, Puckett notes the entire process of following through on an auction. “Seeing the entire process of the auction from start to finish; gathering info, and having a successful auction. Working it all the way through and having clients enjoy a successful experience.”

Personally, Puckett picked up a

recent accomplishment of earning her apprentice auctioneer license in March.

For the future of the business, she wants to see Harris Auction continue to grow in Kentucky, while also adding even more business from other states.

Puckett’s six-year-old son, Adler, is growing up around the business. “I want him to know the value of work. He already helps with signs and is going to be a good worker.” As for her hobbies, Anna enjoys gardening and hanging out by her swimming pool.



Dr. Ethan Shelton 30

Shelton making patients smile

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

When asked why he chose to pursue dentistry as his profession, Dr. Ethan Shelton of Paducah's Broadway Dental Care, responded, "The easy answer is that my father

is a dentist; so, I was introduced to the career at an early age."

However, in reality, "It took me well into my college career before I considered dentistry as my calling," he explained. "After shadowing my father and a few other dentists, I knew that it was the profession for

me."

The 30-year-old Paducah resident earned bachelor's degrees at the University of Louisville in finance and biology. He then completed the Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry degree at U of L.

Asked about his greatest accomplishments, Shelton replied, "Helping people improve their health and returning someone's confidence in their smile." He added, "Fortunately I often get to accomplish that daily."

In terms of future goals, "I just want to continue to serve my patients to the best of my ability and to strive for excellent results," he said.

As for his participation in this article series, he noted, "It's a great honor to be selected to the '20 under 40.' I appreciate the invitation."

In his free time, Shelton says



he enjoys playing golf, reading, cooking, and spending time with friends and family.

Asked to share his favorite quote, he grinned widely and replied, "Brush your teeth at night to keep your teeth... brush your teeth in the morning to keep your friends."

Bill Schroeder 30

AQS has new owner

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Bill Schroeder recently continued a family tradition for which Paducah is widely known, when he purchased

the American Quilter's Society from his parents. He and wife, Tori, also welcomed their son, Brooks, into the world, introducing a new generation.

Schroeder, 30, earned a bachelor's

degree in business administration from Mid-Continent University. Besides the American Quilter's Society, he also owns Rainbow International of Paducah, a restoration company designed to combat fire, water, and mold damage. "We go into a building, clean it up with whatever gets it back to dry, and then rebuild it," he explained.

"The American Quilter's Society Annual Show and Contest each April in Paducah is obviously our biggest show of those we do," he continued.

"We've done as many as eight national shows and next year we're slated to do four shows post-COVID. The upcoming shows will be in Branson, Mo.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; and Daytona Beach, Fla."

Schroeder is pleased and proud of the tradition he continues. "With AQS, it's a family thing," he said. "I'm the third generation to take it over. I purchased it in April. My grandparents, Bill and Meredith Schroeder, had started it. Back when my grandfather was alive, he was my best friend. So, I just really wanted to carry on the tradition and legacy that he had built and try to take it in a direction that he would be proud, along with my parents, Bill and Julie Schroeder."

He reflected on the beginning of his own involvement. "Right after I graduated college, I started here in 2015 as the national accounts manager, selling ads in the magazine and



working with sponsors and vendors at the shows. I left to be president and CEO of Rainbow International, the restoration company. Then in April, I came back and now I am president and CEO of the American Quilter's Society."

Asked his vision for the organization, he responded with a grin and chuckle: "Successful!" He then added, "Obviously, Paducah is my home and the Quilt Show brings a lot of revenue to Paducah. We have more than 30,000 quilters here each year. They stay in the hotels, eat in the restaurants, and spend money here. For Paducah to thrive, that is one of the main reasons I wanted to take over the quilt show and see it grow."

To relax, Schroeder said he enjoys two other western Kentucky traditions: hunting and fishing.



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Tori Smoyer 37

Tori Smoyer a marketing guru

By Greg LeNeave
Publisher

Marketing Liaison for the Orthopaedic Institute of Western Kentucky, Tori Smoyer, handles all aspects of the marketing pertaining to the business. Smoyer, 37, is originally from Jackson, Tennessee with a background in meteorology.

Smoyer graduated from Peabody High School, where she was active in band. She played the French horn. She also played soccer. From there, she went to

college at UT-Martin. Furthering her education, she then went to Mississippi State in Starkville. While there she earned her degree in Broadcasting and Meteorology.

After college, she landed her first job in Newbern, NC at an ABC affiliate. After her stint there, she was hired by WPSD where she worked for three years as their Meteorologist.

Smoyer went down a new career path when accepting the position as marketing liaison. "I enjoy implementing the creative side of the

business," she said.

"I feel like I've kept up with the latest trends in marketing. In addition, I'm very pleased with the social media / online part of the business. I've helped with the 'local aspect' by keeping the Orthopaedic Institute of Western Kentucky in touch with the neighbors in our area."

When talking about the future of the business, Smoyer said, "My vision for the company is to uphold and continue to build upon the brand that is The Orthopaedic Institute of Western Kentucky. We've got a group of exceptional physicians doing amazing procedures that change people's lives for the better. It's so cool! I'm excited, honored, and thankful to be given the opportunity to be a part of a team that is motivated to make the best even better."

Personally speaking, Smoyer said, "As for a vision for myself, I never thought 5 years ago, as my professional career came to screeching halt, I would be recognized as a Top 20 under 40. It means more to me than most people realize. It wasn't in my vision then, but it shows hard work, drive, and not giving up does



pay off. I wake up with the goal of giving my best every day because it's what you do, right?"

Outside of the job, Smoyer enjoys playing the French horn and piano. She is in the Paducah Community Band. You could also find her working out, by either running or boxing. She is married to Ty Smoyer. They have two boys, Keaton and Ronan.

Lindsay Tatum 22

Lindsay Tatum takes the reins of KYGRRO



By Teresa Pearson
KPI Staff Writer

Lindsay Tatum, a 22-year-old Ballard County native, has recently taken the position as Executive Director for the Kentucky Great River Road Organization, or

KYGRRO.

Tatum graduated from Ballard Memorial High School in 2017. In 2020, she graduated from the University of Kentucky with a bachelor's degree in Hospitality Management and Tourism. She is currently working on her master's in Retail and Tourism Management at UK.

When asked about her position and what KYGRRO does, Tatum said, "We are the tourism bureau for the river counties: Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman, and Fulton. I am new to this position, but very excited to help bring tourism to Western KY."

She went on to add, "I have always

been very proud of where I was born and raised and believe the area has so much potential. I want others in the area to feel the same and showcase what we have to offer to others through tourism."

Tatum has an internship with Lexington's visitor's bureau under her belt, which she believes was a great learning opportunity for her. "I am able to take what I learned there and bring it back to our area and make it specific to our area. I have gotten great contacts in the tourism industry in Kentucky which will be very beneficial for us down the road."

When presented with the question of what she wants for the future of her career, she answered, "I want people to see Western KY as a great place to visit and live. We offer many different activities in each county, making each one unique. I want the community to be proud of where they come from and want to share it with others."

When Tatum has free time, you will find her hiking or going to concerts with her friends. She's also a bourbon fanatic who loves learning about and trying new bourbons.





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Sara Tedder 36

Sara Tedder works to provide safe homes for community

By Teresa Pearson
KPI Staff Writer

Sara Tedder, 36, took on a career path that deals with affordable housing. She is a Community Manager at Beacon Property Management, which manages the Jackson House and WB Sanders.

Tedder oversees a community of roughly 300 apartment homes that are income based. These homes are to help provide a safe and independent living experience for the elderly and/or disabled that are currently located in Paducah, or looking to relocate back to Paducah, to be with family and friends. So, as you could imagine with a community of this size, there is a lot that goes into the daily aspects of the job from payroll, accounting, to being a strong

leader and a solid team player.

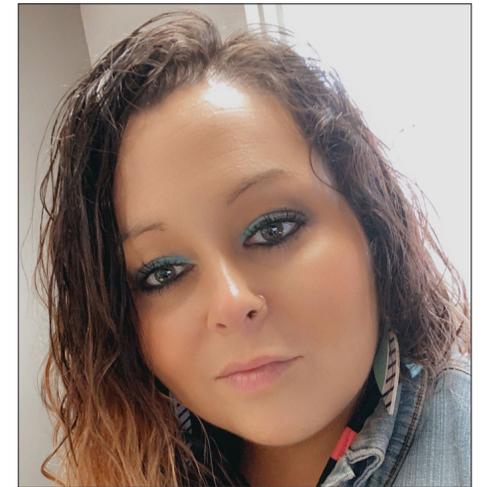
Tedder is from Sedalia, graduating from Mayfield High School. She went on to earn her associate's degree in Business Science from West Kentucky Community and Technical College.

When asked why she chose this career, she said, "To be completely transparent, I did not choose this career, it chose me. I knew nothing about affordable housing other than it was a blessing to many that lived with tight or fixed income. I will say on a general level my motivation is being a single mother of two amazing sons. I strive hard every single day that I am blessed to open my eyes and know I have a career to provide for them. To speak on a business level of motivation, I can say that knowing I am a part of something that provides safe,

affordable, and independent living for our elderly or disabled members of today's world to live and thrive in, is one of the best feelings one could imagine."

Tedder's work ethic was noticed in 2015, when she was initially hired as a temporary administrative assistant, and only two months later, she was offered an interview to work full time. After she took her new position, she did a comprehensive study of HUD's housing guidelines and regulations to obtain a certification as a Certified Occupancy Specialist. In 2017, she was offered a promotion to become the Leasing Agent/Resident Retention Specialist, entangled with management duties when the community manager was not on site. In the beginning of 2021, she earned her Novogradic Property Compliance Certification, which is an accredited indication of up-to-date knowledge with compliance guidelines in the low-income housing tax credit industry. Most recently, in June, she was offered a promotion to step into the Community Manager position.

As for the future of her career, Tedder aspires to continue to have success in providing safe homes to the ones in our area that meet the eligibility requirements, as well ensuring they have a positive and peaceful community to thrive in. "I want us as a business to keep moving forward with a more digital streamlined approach of work practices, as well with



the application/leasing processes. We are a world of technology, and looking towards the future, it is only going to grow our overall success as it will soon be the way of doing business."

Outside of work, Tedder loves to travel and see new places. She says she is a bit of a 'nature junkie' with hobbies like horseback riding, hiking, hunting, fishing, and packing up a cooler to head out to the lake with the jet skis. She added that she has two amazing young men in her life, her two sons. Landon, who will be a senior in high school this year, and her youngest, Malachi, who will be a sophomore in high school.



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Laurna Todd 23

Laurna Todd enjoys working one-on-one as a Registered Behavioral Technician

By Paul Schaumburg
Editor, West KY News

Laurna Todd, as a Registered Behavioral Technician, works primarily within the therapy setting, assisting children with autism ranging in age from 3 years old to the mid-teens.

An RBT works in clinical settings under the supervision of Board Certified Behavior Analysts to implement therapy treatment plans for clients with challenges.

Most of her life, 23-year-old Todd has been a resident of Graves County and

is a graduate of Graves County High School. In 2020, she earned a bachelor's degree in social work at Western Kentucky University and now pursues a master's degree with the same major via WKU online.

"I'd never worked one-on-one with people in this population until this job," she explained. "I never thought I'd be doing work like this, but it really is so much fun. You can tell the difference you can make in these kids' lives from the therapy within a week. You see the kids become more independent or hear them say a word, when they haven't been able to talk

before."

Some children attend for eight hours at a time. "That's a long time to work just one-on-one with someone," Todd said. "Especially since they couldn't play one-on-one with other kids during the COVID virus. So, we who work with them become the ones they play with. I think that makes it all more positive to see happening."

Participating in her professional training during the coronavirus pandemic carried specific requirements with it. "In my RBT program, I had to have supervision from someone above me to make sure I knew what everything meant," she reflected. "There are so many different types of languages. After that, along with the training online, you have to score at a certain level."

Meanwhile, another part of her studies provided some variety. "I am hoping to further my career in therapy, just a different type. I still will use what I've learned from this career in my future one." She pursues the new degree via WKU, but now online.

Free time pursuits vary, but a favorite is taking her dogs on walks, she said.

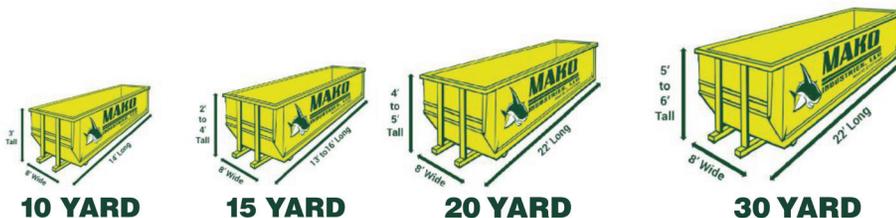
Her career hope long-term is to work



with individuals who have different abilities. Whatever form that takes is rooted in the attitude by which she seeks to live. "Being a generous person is what I try to be," Todd summarized. "I try to make other people happy, while staying happy and healthy myself."



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Jackson Purchase Energy announces no lost time

Paducah, KY - As of June 15th, the employees of Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative (JPEC) have reached another safety milestone, 250,000 without a lost time injury due to an on-the-job incident. Due to the number of employees at JPEC, 250,000 hours is the threshold to qualify the Cooperative for the Governor's Safety and Health Award.

"Above all else, the core principle that our cooperative is built upon is safety," said JPEC President & CEO Greg Grissom. "Safety is present in everything we do, from our work practices to the electricity that comes to your home through our distribution lines. We strive for safety in all we do. This milestone reflects our desire to move in a safe and positive direction."

During the time that these hours have accumulated, JPEC's workforce of 68 men and women have worked through numerous major weather events on the JPEC system as well as providing mutual aid to fellow electric

cooperatives near and far.

JPEC also desires to make the communities they serve as safe as possible by providing on-site safety demonstrations for schools, fire stations, public works departments, community events and more. Contact us today!

To learn more about our community involvement, like us on Facebook and view our website at www.jpenergy.com.

JPEC is a non-profit, member-owned rural electric cooperative headquartered in Paducah, KY. The Cooperative provides electric service to more than 30,000 consumer-members and maintains more than 2,900 miles of line in all or portions of six counties: Ballard, Carlisle, McCracken, Graves, Marshall and Livingston. JPEC is one of 24 rural electric distribution cooperatives in Kentucky, which together provide electricity for 1.5 million Kentuckians in 117 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

Schaumburg hired as new Editor at KPI



By Teresa Pearson
KPI Staff Writer

Paul Schaumburg of Paducah has been hired as the new Editor of the West KY News and the Paducah Business Journal at Kentucky Publishing, Inc.

He is a native of Paducah, a lifelong member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, and an Eagle Scout.

He graduated from Heath High School and then earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Western Kentucky University with a double major in Mass Communication and Speech Communication. He then earned two Master's degrees at Murray State University: one in Mass Communication, the other in Organizational Communication.

Between 1977-1995, he worked at WPAD/WDDJ in Paducah, WCBL AM-FM in Benton, and WMOK in Metropolis, Ill. From 1995-2001, he was a reporter for the Mayfield Messenger newspaper.

Paul retired within the past year after 18 years as Director of Public Relations for the Graves County Schools. He won two major K-12

education honors in 2018: Kentucky Association of School Administrators' Administrator of the Year Award and Kentucky School Public Relations Association's O.V. Jones Memorial Award for outstanding service to KYSPRA and the school PR Profession.

He taught public speaking, interpersonal and organizational communication as an adjunct professor for more than 20 years, including at MSU, Shawnee Community College, PCC/WKCTC, and Mid-Continent University.

Paul has three children, sons Brent Schaumburg and Evan Schaumburg, and daughter Laura Oswald; a son-in-law, Patrick Oswald, and his first grandchild, a girl named Riley Jane Oswald.

"I'm very excited to work with Kentucky Publishing, Inc. It's a vibrant organization with traditional values covering the west Kentucky news in unique and insightful ways," Paul said. "I enjoy learning about people, places, and what's happening in our area." He concluded, "I also enjoy sharing that information and those insights with other people through media."

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Paducah to host lunch stop on 2021 Great Race

Paducah, Ky., will host a lunch stop on the 2021 Hemmings Motor News Great Race presented by Hagerty Wednesday, June 23, race organizers have announced.

The Great Race, the world's premiere old car rally, will bring 120 of the world's finest antique automobiles to town for the \$150,000 event, with the first car rolling into historic downtown at the intersection of Water and Broadway streets starting at noon.

In all, the participants in the event will cover more than 2,300 miles in 9 days. The start will be in front of the Alamo in San Antonio, on June 19. The race will finish June 27 in Greenville, S.C.

Teams and cars from Japan, England, Germany, Canada and every corner of the United States will be participating in their vintage automobiles dating back as far as 1916.

"There are more than 500 people just in our entourage from all around the world taking part in this incredible adventure," director Jeff Stumb said.

Along the route, competitors will travel through 10 states – Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The Great Race, which began 38 years ago, is not a speed race, but a time/speed/distance rally. The vehicles, each with a driver and navigator, are given precise instructions each day that detail every move down to the second. They are scored at secret check points along the way and are penalized one second for each second either early or late. As in golf, the lowest score wins.

Cars start – and hopefully finish – one minute apart if all goes according to plan. The biggest part of the challenge other than staying on time and following the instructions is getting an old car to the finish line each day, organizers say.

Each stop on the Great Race is free to the public and spectators will be able to visit with the participants and to look at the cars for several hours. It is common for kids to climb in the cars for a first-hand look.

Cars built in 1974 and earlier are eligible, with most entries having been manufactured before World War II. In the 2019 Great Race a 1916 Hudson won the event from Riverside, Calif., to Tacoma, Wash. The 2021 winners will again receive \$50,000 of the \$150,000 total purse.

A 1916 Hudson Pikes Peak Hillclimber and a 1917 Peerless racer are the oldest cars scheduled to be in

the 2021 Great Race this summer.

Over the decades, the Great Race has stopped in hundreds of cities big and small, from tiny Austin, Nev., to New York City.

"When the Great Race pulls into a city it becomes an instant festival," Stumb said. "Last year we had a couple of overnight stops with more than 10,000 spectators on our way to having 250,000 people see the Great Race during the event."

The event was started in 1983 by Tom McRae and it takes its name from the 1965 movie, The Great Race, which starred Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, Natalie Wood and Peter Falk. The movie is a comedy based

on the real life 1908 automobile race from New York to Paris. In 2004, Tony Curtis was the guest of the Great Race and rode in his car from the movie, the Leslie Special.

The Great Race gained a huge following from late night showings on ESPN when the network was just starting out in the early 1980s. The first entrant, Curtis Graf of Irving, Texas, is still a participant today.

The event's main sponsors are Hemmings Motor News, Hagerty, Coker Tire and Reliable Carriers.

For more information, go to www.greatrace.com or contact Jeff Stumb at jeff@greatrace.com or by calling him at 423-648-8542.



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Blockware Mining expanding in Paducah

Greater Paducah Economic Development is pleased to announce Blockware Mining, Inc. is expanding in Paducah, KY. Blockware Mining is a technology-based company specializing in cryptocurrency mining. Blockware will be investing \$50 million and hiring 20 new employees over the next 24-36 months in a new technology center on five acres in

Industrial Park West. Upon completion of the new facility, Blockware is anticipated to have a \$5.7 million recurring annual economic impact on the community.

GPED has been working with Blockware for approximately one year on the expansion project. "The culmination of today's announcement represents teamwork and the

ability to get a deal done between numerous organizations. We have diligently worked with Navier (a leading expert in mining digital currency), Big Rivers Electric, Jackson Purchase Electric, Paducah Power, the Paducah McCracken County Industrial Development Authority, the City of Paducah, McCracken County, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development and numerous community partners to pull this deal together. We have come together as a community to make this investment happen. It is a great thing! We are seeing an increased interest in Paducah as a hotspot for cryptocurrency miners due to the relationship we have with Navier, our ability to offer competitive power rates, and the recent enacted legislation by the state of Kentucky," stated Bruce Wilcox, President of GPED.

Big Rivers is also investing an additional \$12.7 million in additional utility infrastructure upgrades to Industrial Park West to accommodate

100 megawatts of power. "Big Rivers is happy to partner with Jackson Purchase Energy to bring economic development project to this region," said Bob Berry, President & CEO of Big Rivers Electric Corporation. "Blockware's announcement to located in Paducah is good news that will benefit our entire cooperative member system."

Michael Stoltzner, Blockware CEO, stated "... with the support and guidance of Greater Paducah Economic Development facilitating introductions to key people and organizations throughout the process, Blockware qualified for the Kentucky Business Investment Program enabling us to secure a robust incentive package allowing us to effectively grow within the bitcoin network community and keep our costs low. Additionally, GPED assisted in obtaining a 10-year Power Purchase Agreement with Big Rivers/Jackson Purchase Energy, which will allow us to build out a mining facility with the potential to reach up to 100MW."



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State News Briefs

Bourbon tourism shaking off pandemic slump in Kentucky

By **BRUCE SCHREINER**
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) _ With tourists flocking to distilleries, concerns about a pandemic hangover for Kentucky's world-famous bourbon industry are quickly evaporating.

A \$19 million tourist center that Heaven Hill Distillery opened just days ago in the heart of the state's bourbon country is already overflowing _ with reservations filling up quickly to learn about whiskey-making and sample its spirits, including its flagship Evan Williams whiskey.

It's a similar story for the numerous other distilleries in the region that last spring were temporarily closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a year later, the businesses are facing such overwhelming demand for tours that one industry official has started encouraging people to call ahead or check tour availability online before pulling off the highway.

Starting last summer, some distilleries began allowing limited numbers of visitors in accordance with virus restrictions. With capacity limits now lifted, the attractions are gearing up for a full

resurgence of guests, many from outside Kentucky.

"We saw it coming, but I don't think we saw it coming this quick," said Kentucky Distillers' Association President Eric Gregory.

"We were a hot destination before COVID cooled us off considerably," he added. "But now we're getting back to the point where people want to get out, they want to have fun."

Gregory predicted that bourbon tourism will quickly rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

"I think next year will be more of a normal year and if this trend continues, I think it will be another record-setting year," he said.



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Ms. Lippy's Bayou Blends gets a start in Kentucky

By **Teresa Pearson**
KPI Staff Writer

When Denise and Buddy Nash started looking to move from a subdivision in Louisiana to a more rural location they never dreamed they would end up in western Kentucky.

The couple started a Youtube channel they named Gemini Homestead because they are both born in between May 21 and June 21. Their search for a rural home and having friends in the area led them to sell their home in Louisiana and buy a property just outside of La Center, KY. Gemini Homestead can be found on YouTube and on Facebook.

Denise, who goes by the nickname Ms Lippy, grew up around the restaurant business where she learned at an early age how to cook. Denise is an excellent cook and makes amazing dishes on their Youtube channel. She has started a line of spices from some old recipes that her dad handed down. She has called her spices Ms. Lippy's Bayou Blends and she currently features 3 flavors.

Ms Lippy says her seasonings, Swamp Mix, Cluck N Good and Pork N Good are not exclusive to meats, she says they are good on veggies and almost anything else, including popcorn.

Denise says she is working on more blends and opening a website. She currently sells on Etsy or for Kentucky residents she can be reached at geminihomestead@gmail.com, to save on Etsy's shipping charges.

Ms Lippy's Bayou Blends can now be found at Greg's Market in La Center.



Denise and Buddy Nash



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Commissioner Quarles congratulates Dr. Marcus Bernard on MANNRS election

FRANKFORT – Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Ryan Quarles congratulated Dr. Marcus Bernard, an associate professor at Kentucky State University, on his election as national president of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANNRS).

“I wish to congratulate my friend Dr. Marcus Bernard on his election as national president of MANNRS,” Commissioner Quarles said. “The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is a huge supporter of this organization, which aims to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups in agriculture. Since the time when my late mother taught at Kentucky State University, I have always felt connected to the mission of MANNRS and KSU. I am looking forward to working with Dr. Bernard not only in my role as Agriculture Commissioner, but also as president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.”

Dr. Bernard serves as an associate professor of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Kentucky State University. Prior to this appointment, he served as the director of the Rural Training and Research Center for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund in Epes, Alabama. He completed his doctoral studies at the University of Kentucky in Rural Sociology and Medical Sociology.

“It is an honor to serve as



president-elect for National MANNRS,” Dr. Bernard said. “As MANNRS president, I pledge to be the greatest ambassador for Kentucky and Kentucky State University possible. I look forward to working with Commissioner Quarles at both the state and national levels to advocate for the future of our agricultural industry.”

MANRRS is a non-profit organization promoting academic and professional advancement by empowering minorities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences. MANRRS has a reach of more than 8,000 students, alumni, and professionals within six regions, and 65 collegiate chapters across 38 states and Puerto Rico.

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Agri-Business

UK and Arq partner to build a more sustainable future

By Carol Lea Spence

LEXINGTON, Ky., — Through a public-private research collaboration, the University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture and Arq are working to create a more sustainable future for Kentucky and the planet.

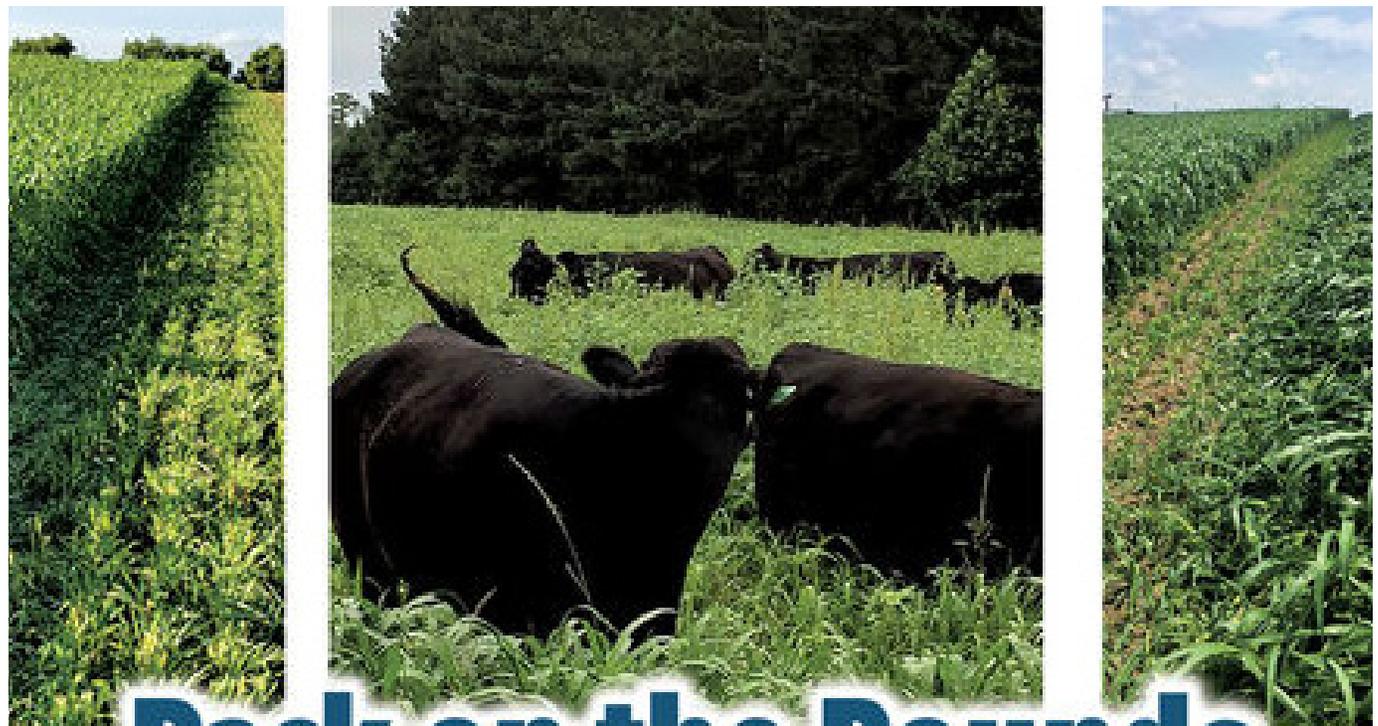
“I’m excited to be working with Arq, because its mission is completely in line with our departmental mission of developing science-based recommendations and guidelines to help guide decision-making to make agriculture as sustainable as possible,” said Professor Mark Williams, chair of the Department of Horticulture in the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. “We’re very interested in closing waste streams and recycling them back into agriculture to make the system more sustainable.”

Arq is a technology company based in London, United Kingdom, with offices in Lexington. Its first industrial-scale plant operates in Corbin. The company is committed to tackling the world’s environmental challenges by rethinking and transforming mining waste into high-performing materials. Arq’s process separates mineral matter from mining waste to create valuable, high-performing additives that help customers work toward sustainability, circularity and a net-zero future.

Allison Flynn, head of sustainability at Arq, believes that recycling mining waste can provide the world with much needed products for future industries as well as critical minerals for depleted soils.

“We see a future where waste is recovered and reused to create high performing materials that grow sustainable businesses and regenerate our planet,” she said. “We are delighted to be partnering with the world-class research facility at the University of Kentucky.”

Researchers at the UK Horticulture



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Aerial view of UK's Horticulture Research Farm in Lexington.

Photo by Matt Barton

PARTNER

continued from page 25

Research Farm will test two agricultural products. The first is Arq mineral™, a soil mineral with a high carbon content that has potential as an agricultural soil amendment. Greenhouse and field experiments will be conducted to assess its influence on root growth, crop yield, soil biology and nitrogen dynamics. Farm superintendent Steve Diver said they also will test for synergies between Arq mineral™ and microbial fertilizers to promote plant growth and the sequestration of carbon dioxide.

The second is a biodegradable agricultural mulch film that integrates Arq mineral™ into the film. Vegetable growers often use plastic mulch film as a growth-promoting micro-environment for single-season crops such as tomatoes, peppers, squash, sweet corn or pumpkins. The technologically innovative plastic will be compared to the standard film in terms of how it promotes plant growth, yield and weed control.

“There’s a real synergy between Arq and UK on this collaborative project, because it is a Kentucky-based company generating mineral products from the coal industry that have potential value in the horticulture industry,” Diver said. “We have a lot of research protocols at the farm. Companies come to the Horticulture Research Farm because of our sustainable agricultural theme and our open-minded approach to innovative technologies.”

Williams believes in the benefits that can come from partnerships like this one.

“Through public-private partnerships we make our resources at the university available to promote innovation and entrepreneurship for transformational technology. Arq’s technology could play an important role in the future of sustainable agriculture,” Williams said. “If we can find a way to practice regenerative agriculture by enriching the soil while improving the efficiency of food production, it’s an important contribution to food security.”

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Construction News

Greater Paducah Economic Development announces Millwork Products, LLC expansion in Paducah

Starting from its original location in 1945 as Bass & Company, Millwork Products, LLC has become one of the region's largest wholesale distributors of pre-hung doors and millwork. Along with its subsidiary Jenkins Millwork, LLC located in Wilkesboro, NC, the two operations cover a nine-state market area and currently employ 157 people.

Millwork Products, Paducah location currently operates in a 95,000 square foot facility utilizing 34,000 square feet for office and production space and 61,000 square feet for warehousing material and additional mill production.

Robert K. Allen, President of Millwork Products stated, "The continued growth of sales in the markets we service has really put a strain on warehousing space and our ability to increase production to keep pace with our customers' demand for our products". To solve these growth issues, the company is investing \$1.5 million in a new 33,000 square foot building to house an additional production line and additional warehousing space. Construction of the new facility is anticipated to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year. Total expansion investment will

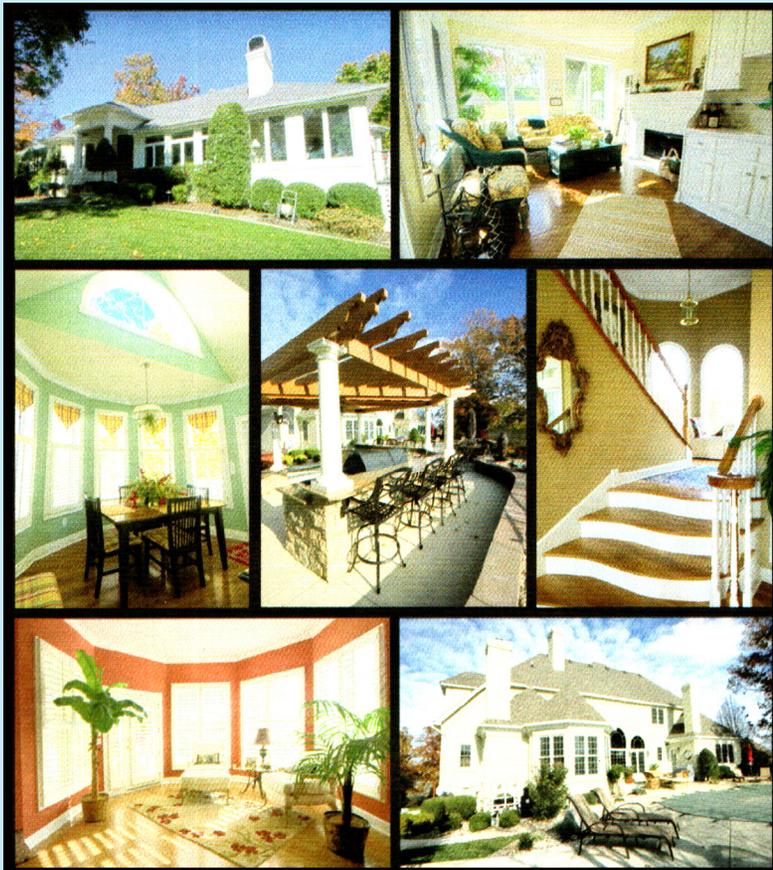
approximate \$2 million and is anticipated to have a recurring \$4.1 million annual economic impact on the local economy.

Mr. Allen stated, "the company has partnered with Greater Paducah Economic Development (GPED), and the Kentucky Business Investment (KBI) Program to make the expansion happen." Under this agreement the new expansion should increase employment by 15 new Kentucky fulltime employees.

Mr. Allen said, "We would like to thank GPED, the Kentucky Cabinet of Economic Development, and the City of Paducah for all the

assistance in pointing us in the right direction with all aspects of this project and helping us along the way. This is the 4th time we have expanded our company in the Paducah area. We are committed to this community and we take pride in our people, products, and the services we provide. We want to continue to grow our markets in the areas we service, along with the local economies. We have good paying jobs available and we encourage people to join our team."

For additional information contact Bruce Wilcox at 270-210-7392.



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Semi-trailer manufacturer coming to Bowling Green

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – A well-known semi-trailer manufacturer, which ended production in the U.S. almost a quarter of a century ago, is returning with a new facility in Kentucky.

Fruehauf Inc., which makes trailers and other truck equipment, plans to locate its first U.S. facility in nearly



Semi-trailers like this one will be manufactured in Bowling Green at a plant that is expected to create 288 fulltime jobs in the years ahead.

(Fruehauf Inc. photo)

25 years in Bowling Green, with a \$12 million investment expected to create 288 full-time jobs in the years ahead.

“The nearly 300 jobs to be created through this project will greatly benefit families in South Central Kentucky as we continue to attract quality opportunities for our people across the state as we sprint out of this

pandemic,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “I am proud to welcome Fruehauf to the commonwealth as we build on our already diverse base of automotive-related companies in Kentucky.”

The new dry van trailer manufacturing operation will locate in an unfinished spec building in Bowling Green’s Kentucky Transpark. The new location will allow the company to better serve its customers in the U.S. and Canada with components primarily manufactured offsite and assembled at the new location. Fruehauf’s production operations are currently located exclusively in Mexico, having closed its U.S. facilities in 1997.

“We are excited to have our U.S. plant investment here in Bowling Green. We have chosen a community with a strong automotive heritage, something we believe our founder,

August Fruehauf, would appreciate given the central role he played in the development of the automotive industry and his later induction into the Automotive Hall of Fame,” said Tom Wiseman, president of Fruehauf USA and Canada.

Fruehauf has a history of manufacturing transportation products dating back to the company’s founding in Detroit, Michigan, in 1890. Its founder, August Fruehauf, was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame in 2017 as the inventor of the semi-trailer. In addition to semi-trailers, the company’s related products include dollies, platforms, container chassis, tanks, hoppers and turns. Fruehauf is now a subsidiary of the Fultra Group, a diversified manufacturing company based in Mexico.

Bowling Green Mayor Todd Alcott said the company’s new location will have a positive impact throughout the community.

“By investing in Bowling Green, Fruehauf is creating additional opportunities for all of the businesses in our community,” Mayor Alcott said. “The impact of their investment will be felt by local retailers, restaurants, banks, service providers and more. Within our community, we understand that we all rise together, and this inspires our pro-growth mindset.”

Fruehauf adds to Kentucky’s existing presence of Mexican-owned operations, which includes nine facilities employing more than 3,400 people in the state.





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River Region News

Women In Maritime Operations making an impact

By Teresa Pearson
KPI Staff Writer

Women represent only two percent of the world's 1.2 million seafarers and 94 percent of female seafarers are working in the cruise industry. WIMO is changing all of that a little at a time.

WIMO is a 'grassroots' non-profit organization seeking to connect women working in the maritime industry, by fostering deeper community, and offering networking and professional development opportunities.

They are a 501c3 organization, first incorporated in Louisiana in August 2017 offering membership to all women working in marine operations in the gulf coast and upriver markets.

Even though women are not the majority in the maritime industry, WIMO are definitely making an impact.

WIMO works directly for maritime operation both on water and shoreside. Thanks to their success more and more women are pouring into the industry.

With a large list of companies who support them and a chapter in western Kentucky, these women are making a huge impact in our area for women. WIMO chapters get together and share in events and meetings to support each other and their communities, while also providing important information in the industry.

Find more information at <https://www.wimos.org>



WIMO photo taken from <https://www.wimos.org>



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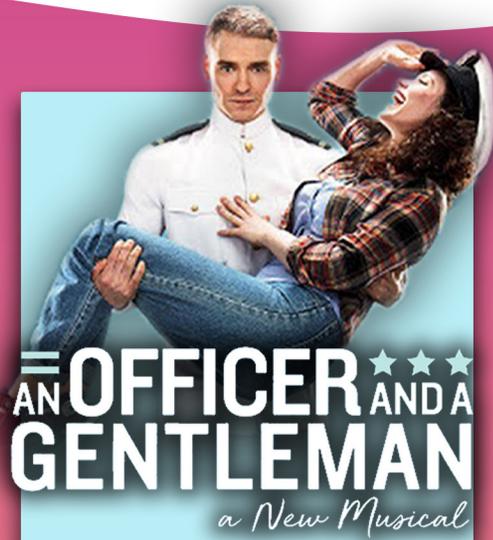
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