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# The Crittenden Press

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## Magistrates set to discuss budget

Crittenden County Fiscal Court meets at 9 a.m., Tuesday at the courthouse. Among other items on the agenda is the first reading of the 2007-08 budget.



## Dozens visit local job fair Monday

Nearly 100 individuals visited the 20 employers represented at Monday's job fair at the Ed Tech Center in Marion. Hundreds of job openings were advertised at the fair, including more than 500 from a coal company and a multitude of openings—from nursing to file clerks—at a regional health center.

## Miller pulls out of governor's race

Jonathan Miller, a Democrat, has pulled out of the Kentucky governor's race, citing declining poll numbers and a concern that the glut of Democratic candidates in the May 22 primary could harm the party's chances to defeat the eventual GOP nominee in November. Miller, current the state's treasurer, has endorsed Steve Beshear.

Miller's name will still appear on the ballot, as absentee voting has already begun, but votes for his ticket will essentially be ignored.



MILLER

## Election board to test machines

Members of the Crittenden County Election Board will meet at 9 a.m., Friday to test and approve all 24 of the county's electronic voting machines. There are two electronic balloting devices for each of Crittenden's 12 precincts. The board goes through each machine to make sure it's in proper working order and to make certain the ballot on the machine matches the corresponding precinct.

## Local meetings

**MONDAY**  
•Marion City Council meets 7 p.m. at City Hall.  
**TUESDAY**  
•Crittenden Fiscal Court meets 9 a.m. at the Courthouse.  
•Crittenden School Board meets 6 p.m. at Rocket Arena.



**40% RAIN  
T-STORMS  
83/62  
THURSDAY**



**RAIN-40%  
SHOWERS  
81/63  
FRIDAY**

### Rain gauge

Last 7 days .....1.00"  
Last 30 days .....3.84"  
Year-to-date .....15.87" (-2.06")  
UK Ag Weather Service, Observations at Paducah as of Tuesday

THIS WEEK'S Home Mortgage Rates		
Type	Rate	Points
30 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	0.5
15 Yr. Fixed	5.87%	0.5
*Rates from FreddieMac.com Other variables may apply		

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# Third party buys delinquent tax bills

## Texas company places liens on 37 parcels

STAFF REPORT

A third-party Texas-based company has purchased delinquent tax bills on 37 Crittenden County properties.

Tax Ease Lien Investments of Dallas completed the purchase and placed liens on several properties Monday, including farms, homes and rental property.

Crittenden County Clerk Carolyn Byford said it's the first time she ever recalls a third-party company buying delinquent tax bills as an investment.

Crittenden County Attorney Rebecca Johnson said that while this is the first time it's happened here, such practices are common elsewhere. In fact, she said the matter of

third-party investment groups buying tax assignment certificates was a "hot topic" during a recent prosecutor's conference in Kentucky.

Generally, the state purchases all of the tax bills – or certificates of delinquency – itself and later collects the bills either as late payment or sometimes after the county attorney threatens to force the sale of the property to satisfy the tax debt. On rare occasions, the property is foreclosed on to collect the tax.

The Dallas-based company stands to earn at least 12 percent interest on each of the tax liens it filed this week. State law also allows tax lienholders to collect other court or legal fees

associated with the purchase of the delinquent tax bill.

Byford said that in years past, a small handful of tax bills may have been purchased by individuals, but never in bulk by a company speculating on a return. When the sheriff's tax sale was held April 20 at the courthouse door, no bills were purchased. However, the Texas company has since identified and purchased roughly three dozen of about 200 delinquent tax bills issued by Crittenden County.

The bills purchased by Tax Ease Lien Investments were all from 2006. The company paid the county

\$29,211 for the assignment and received a certificate of sale for each one. By law, the company may collect the interest due, plus the face value of the tax lien.

For the property owner, it means that their tax bill is now due to the Texas company and in most cases, can no longer be paid at the county clerk's office.

"The property owners need to attempt to pay these taxes and interest within the next 12 months to avoid the filing of a collection or foreclosure action," Johnson said Tuesday morning. Otherwise, the

"The property owners need to attempt to pay these taxes and interest within the next 12 months..."  
—Rebecca Johnson

See **BILLS**/page 7A

# Unlucky strike



DARYL K. TABOR

An Atmos Energy repair crew clad in safety gear works to repair a natural gas line ruptured Monday afternoon on West Carlisle Street in Marion during ongoing construction of the new Crittenden County Jail.

# Gas leak evacuates jail, library

By DARYL K. TABOR

MANAGING EDITOR

Dressed in stripes and orange jumpsuits, 18 prisoners in the Crittenden County Jail shuffled safely across the street Monday to the courthouse to wait out a ruptured gas line at the nearby construction site of the new jail.

The inmates, as well as patrons and workers at the neighboring public library, were evacuated Monday afternoon out of concern that the fumes from the leak could ignite or at least cause temporary health issues.

Tammy Robertson, chief deputy at the jail, said the transfer to the upstairs courtroom went smoothly.

"(No problems.) None, whatsoever," said Robertson, in charge at the facility this week while Jailer Rick Riley is

off for vacation.

None of the prisoners were shackled as they were transferred. Robertson said none of the inmates could be considered violent offenders.

Judge-Executive Fred Brown, who helped escort the inmates from the jail to the courthouse along with deputy jailers, constables, Sheriff Wayne Agent and a state police trooper, said he did not believe anyone was in serious danger from the leak, which spewed gas for almost two hours after being ruptured by a digging backhoe after 2 p.m. He said it was simply a precaution, keeping the health and safety of the public in mind.

No nearby homes or businesses were evacuated, but police cordoned off the area until repairs could be made by Atmos Energy, owners of the

natural gas pipeline ruptured by the backhoe. Utility workers were quickly on hand to assess the situation, but a repair crew outfitted with breathing apparatus was not on scene until almost an hour after the leak occurred.

While the smell of the leaking gas could at times be detected a block away on the courthouse square, whipping winds quickly dispersed the fumes, which could be easily seen by the dust it carried out of the digging site.

The rupture occurred as workers with jail contractor B.H. Green and Son, Inc., of Paducah were removing pavement on West Carlisle Street to place an apron for an entrance to the new 129-bed detention center. Gas

See **GAS**/page 5A

# Postage rates up starting Monday

By DARYL K. TABOR

MANAGING EDITOR

Internet bill paying may just get a little more popular starting next week, and Christmas card lists could get a little smaller this winter.

New postage rates go into effect next Monday, raising the price of a first-class stamp two pennies to 41 cents. This is the third postage increase in the last five years, enacted to compensate for increased expenses reported by the U.S. Postal Service.

But whatever the reason, individuals and local businesses will feel a little sting after Monday, particularly companies like a bank that mails hundreds of statements each month on top of regular correspondence.

Joe Ann Asbridge at The Peoples Bank in Marion said the rate increase will amount to about a 1-percent increase in postage expenses. With approximately \$2,000 spent by the bank each month at the post office, that equals about \$20 per month or close to \$500 for the year.

Asbridge said the bank has to budget for such increased expenses, but doesn't anticipate any fall-out from the hike.

"I don't think it's gone up as much as groceries," Asbridge said of postage rates over the last few years.

In fact, the price for each additional ounce over the standard 1-ounce, 41-cent rate has

See **USPS**/page 5A

### Postage history

Monday's new postage rates will be the latest in a history hiked made since 1863 when rates were 3 cents. See Page 5A for a full history.

USA FIRST-CLASS FOREVER

# Data show storms costly, heat deadly

By DARYL K. TABOR

MANAGING EDITOR

Mother Nature has a lot of tricks up her sleeve when it comes to the havoc she can wreak on her sister, Mother Earth.

In Crittenden County, Mother Nature's most deadly concoction seems to be summertime drought and heat. Since record-keeping by the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) began in January 1950, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration agency reports 80 injuries and two deaths here from excessive heat and \$224 million in crop damage

## STORM SERIES

April and May generate some of the most dangerous weather. The Press continues this week with a series of articles that will help you be prepared for severe weather or other types of natural disasters.

from drought.

Though records prior to the 1990s seem to be sporadic, drought and heat have far and away combined for more damage in Crittenden County than tornadoes, floods, wild

fires, thunderstorm winds and extreme cold. In fact, a summer heatwave here in July 2005 accounted for 69 of the 94 casualties reported by NCDC from 1950 to Dec 31, 2006. Droughts in 1999 and 2002 accounted for the crop millions in damage.

Some believe we have been fortunate to skirt the destruction and death from storms like the one that leveled tiny Greensburg, Kan., last week.

"I don't recall any deaths from tornadoes in my lifetime," said Judge-Executive Fred Brown.

However, the majority of property damage here in the

last six decades is from the ever-present danger of late-spring and summer storm systems that spawn tornadoes, high winds, lightning and flash floods. In fact, during the months of April and May, atmospheric conditions in the midsection of this country are at their peak for this witches brew of disasters courtesy of Mother Nature.



BROWN

Locally, April and May weather has accounted for three injuries and \$558,000 in property damage in the last 56 years, according to NCDC figures. On a single day, April 28, 2002, tornadoes in Marion, Sheridan and Shady Grove accounted for \$123,000 in damages.

Tornadoes are not restricted to spring and summer, though. Most recently, a November tornado tore through the Mattoon community in 2005. The F-3 twister scattered debris and caused minor injuries, but Brown

See **STORMS**/page 3A



# State&RegionalNews

Briefs from around the state and region from The Associated Press and staff reports.

## Flags at half-staff for Iraq casualty

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Gov. Ernie Fletcher has directed that flags at all state office buildings be lowered to half-staff in honor of Staff Sgt. Christopher N. Hamlin.

According to the Department of Defense, Hamlin, 24, of London, died May 4 in Baghdad, Iraq, from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle. He was assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Calvary Regiment, 1st Calvary Division, in Fort Hood, Texas.

Flags will remain at half-staff in honor of Hamlin until sunset on the day of his funeral, which has not yet been determined.

## 10-year-old dies in motorcycle race

PADUCAH, Ky. (AP) — A 10-year-old western Kentucky boy died after his motorcycle crashed into a concrete wall during an amateur race.

Ethan Gillim crashed Saturday evening during the second lap of a youth race that was part of the American Motorcyclist Association Southeast Amateur Nationals at Paducah International Raceway. He died of head, chest and abdominal injuries later that night at a local hospital, McCracken County Deputy Coroner Don Pitt said.

As Gillim was entering the turn, he apparently lost control, Pitt said. The front end of the 85cc motorcycle started oscillating, and the bike took a sharp turn to the right. He crashed head-on at high speed into the retaining wall.

The boy was wearing all the protective gear required of racers, including a helmet, gloves, boots and a leather racing suit with knee and shin pads and a chest plate, Pitt said.

## Earthquake risk obstacle for plant

PADUCAH, Ky. (AP) — Working around a fault line is the biggest obstacle to Paducah landing a nuclear fuel recycling plant, according to a study submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Paducah Uranium Plant Utilization Task Force, which conducted the study, also said state law forbids building an associated advanced burner-reactor in western Kentucky until the Public Service Commission concludes that the federal government has identified and approved a way to dispose of high-level nuclear waste, the study says.

The task force said the recycling plant can be made earthquake resistant and that the Public Service Commission is willing to help resolve uncertainties in the

## Livingston I-24 bridge lane closed

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is planning a number of lane closures on western Kentucky highways this week for bridge work in Livingston, Marshall and Calloway counties.

A lane closure continues on the Interstate 24 Tennessee River Bridge at the Marshall-Livingston County line. A contractor is continuing joint and deck repair work at the site at mile point 29.136.

Today (Thursday), state road crews will return to Livingston County to continue work on Ky. 135. That work will require one lane traffic. The work on Ky. 135 today will be about a half-mile north of U.S. 60 near Burna.

All work is scheduled on a weather permitting basis. In case of rain the work schedule will automatically move to the next working day.

Motorists traveling on these routes are advised to slow down, buckle up and use appropriate caution in the work zone where equipment, flaggers and maintenance personnel will be on the roadway in close proximity to traffic flow. Appropriate caution is advised.

law to allow the burner-reactor's construction.

The facility would generate electricity while destroying a large amount of highly radioactive waste left over from fuel rods. A group of local business and government representatives comprise the task force, with the goal of creating jobs once the 1,100-employee Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant closes starting in 2012.

Paducah is one of 12 cities competing for the project. The Energy Department will decide by June 2008 whether and where to build one or more of the plants.

U.S. Geological Survey scientists think Paducah is above the New Madrid Fault, where huge earthquakes in 1811-12 formed Reelfoot Lake and briefly caused the Mississippi River to flow backward.

## Barkley Lodge gets high AAA rating

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Lake Barkley State Resort Park has become the third resort park to recently receive a three-diamond rating from the American Automobile Association.

The new rating will appear in the 2008 AAA tour books later this year as well as the organization's Web site.

"This rating recognizes the improvements we've made at Lake Barkley State Resort Park and the hard work of our employees," said Gov. Ernie Fletcher. "These upgrades are making our state parks more attractive to guests."

Lake Barkley's lodge rooms are currently undergoing a \$5.87 million renovation to upgrade the 124 lodge rooms with new granite-top vanities, carpet, wall coverings, furniture, refinished woodwork and mechanical and electrical upgrades. New heating and cooling systems with individual room controls are also being installed.

About half of the rooms have been completed and the remaining rooms are scheduled to be completed in mid-May.

A three-diamond rating from AAA means the establishment appeals "to the traveler with comprehensive needs.





PHOTO BY DARYL K. TABOR

Sue Parrent (far right) with the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service shows information on diabetes and eating healthy to Crittenden EMS workers at last Friday's health fair at Marion Baptist Church Family Life Center. The annual event sponsored by Crittenden Health Systems provides an opportunity for the community to obtain valuable health-related information and screenings. Vendors provided information on a variety of health-related topics including smoking cessation, sleep disorders, drug prevention, nutrition, exercise and more.

## PURSUANT TO KRS 424.290, "MATTERS REQUIRED TO BE PUBLISHED," THE FOLLOWING RACES WILL APPEAR ON ALL THE VOTING MACHINES IN CRITTENDEN COUNTY FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION, MAY 22, 2007.

### OFFICIAL BALLOT FOR CRITTENDEN COUNTY - 1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT PRIMARY ELECTION HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2007

 <b>REPUBLICAN PARTY</b> Primary Election May 22, 2007	 <b>DEMOCRATIC PARTY</b> Primary Election May 22, 2007
GOVERNOR and LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Vote for One)	GOVERNOR and LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Vote for One)
<b>Ernie FLETCHER</b> Robbie RUDOLPH REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Steven L. BESHEAR</b> Daniel MONGIARDO DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Billy HARPER</b> Dick WILSON REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Gatewood GALBRAITH</b> Mark WIREMAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Anne NORTHUP</b> Jeff HOOVER REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Stephen L. HENRY</b> Renee T. TRUE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
ATTORNEY GENERAL (Vote for One)	<b>Otis "Bullman" HENSLEY</b> Richard ROBBINS DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Tim COLEMAN</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>William Bruce LUNSFORD</b> Gregory Damron STUMBO DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Philip C. KIMBALL</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Jonathan MILLER</b> Irv MAZE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Jon LARSON</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Jody RICHARDS</b> John Y. BROWN III. DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Stan LEE</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	SECRETARY of STATE (Vote for One)
STATE TREASURER (Vote for One)	<b>S. Bruce HENDRICKSON</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Lonnie NAPIER</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Dick ROBINSON</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Brandon D. SMITH</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>MaDonna J. WHITE</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Ken UPCHURCH</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	ATTORNEY GENERAL (Vote for One)
<b>Melinda L. WHEELER</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Robert V. BULLOCK</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
COMMISSIONER of AGRICULTURE (Vote for One)	<b>Jack CONWAY</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
<b>Richie FARMER</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	STATE TREASURER (Vote for One)
<b>Don STOSBERG</b> REPUBLICAN PARTY	<b>Patrick R. DUNMIRE</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
	<b>L.J. "Todd" HOLLENBACH</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
	<b>Mike WEAVER</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
	<b>Jack D. WOOD</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
	COMMISSIONER of AGRICULTURE (Vote for One)
	<b>David NEVILLE</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY
	<b>David Lynn WILLIAMS</b> DEMOCRATIC PARTY