

Mount Vernon Signal

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1999 year in review

Editors Note: This week we conclude the top stories of 1999 by looking back at the final six months of this millennium.

By: Richard Anderkin

July began with the announcement that United States President William Jefferson Clinton would visit neighboring Jackson County and hold a town meeting in Hazard.

Local residents Wayne Stewart and William McClure both members of the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation were among local residents who met with President Clinton at the Mid-South Electronics plant in Annville.

The President told the group that he would do what he could to help areas such as Appalachia prosper along with the rest of the country.

It was learned that Integrity Tool and Die of Berea would locate in the Rockcastle Industrial Park #1 and the newly elected council at Rockcastle County High School re-posted the principal's job and began the interview process.

The local 911 board began taking applications for a new director and the Rite-Aid Drug Store opened a new store in Mt. Vernon.

Local youths from the First Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon traveled to Texas to help in a summer program to build and repair homes and the site based council at RCHS could not reach agreement to change their by-laws on the hiring of a new principal.

Work began on widening of the Hwy. 461 by-pass and three Rockcastle baseball teams all advanced to state tournament play.

Ruth Allen was chosen as the new principal at RCHS and Brindle Ridge residents were cleaning up after a dangerous thunderstorm moved through the area.

August

Local attorney Debra Hembree Lambert was nominated for a new Circuit Judgeship that deals strictly with domestic problems and the 9 and 10-year old finished runner-ups in the state tournament at Pikeville. The annual Little World's Fair kicked off in Brodhead and the Cedar Rapids Dolphins finished third in the conference meet.

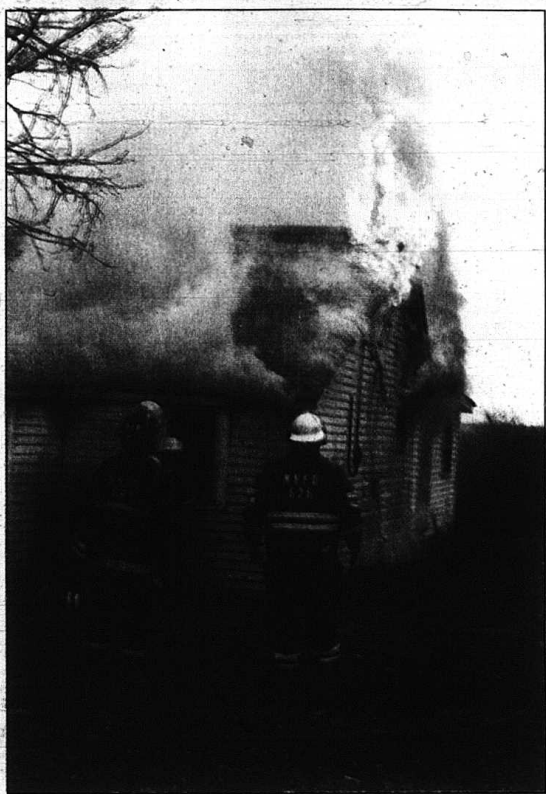
The Mt. Vernon City Council began discussion concerning the raising of city taxes and privilege license fees and Betty Jo McKinney was hired as assistant principal at RCHS.

Debra Lambert was appointed Circuit Judge by Governor Paul Patton and the Rockcastle County Fiscal Court created a new board which will run the events held at the Brodhead Fairgrounds in 2000, including the Little World's Fair in August.

The RCHS Rockets kicked off what would be a very successful 1999 season and the residents again had to boil water after a waterline break at Renfro Valley.

All of the county's taxing districts except for the soil conservation district took their four percent increase in property tax assessments and the Rockcastle Water Association held a ceremonial ground break.

Cont. to A-9



The Mt. Vernon Volunteer Fire Department responded to a house fire off Barnett Road near Lake Linnville Thursday morning. The fire apparently started in the back of the house and firefighters believe that faulty wiring probably caused the blaze. The house is owned by Roy Adams, Sam Ford and Danny Ford and was not occupied at the time of the fire.

Tobacco settlement checks currently being mailed

The Kentucky Tobacco Settlement Trust Corporation, chaired by Governor Paul Patton, announced today that the trustee of the National Tobacco Growers Settlement Trust began mailing approximately 252,000 checks to over 167,000 Kentuckians. The Trust was established earlier this year by tobacco state political leadership and the four largest cigarette manufacturers, to offset income lost by tobacco quota holders and farmers as demand for tobacco drops in the wake of last year's \$246 billion settlement between the cigarette industry and 46 state attorneys general.

Kentucky's checks account for 43.4 percent of the total funds being

distributed by the Chase Manhattan Bank, the trustee, throughout the 14 states that are party to the Trust. Kentucky burley producers will receive \$108,882,042.73 of the \$250 million being distributed by the Trust. The funds set aside for Kentucky during the first year of the 12-year program totaled \$113,177,543.43 after administrative expenses of \$603,839.42 paid to Chase Manhattan and \$355,076 paid in federal income tax were deducted. The Kentucky Tobacco Settlement Trust Corporation Board of Directors requested reimbursement of \$728,199 spent by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in the administration of the trust fund. The Board instructed the

Trustee to pay qualified recipients 8.65 cents per pound of 1998 basic quota to quota owners, and 7.84 cents per payment pound, the average of 1998 effective quota and 1998 to tobacco marketings, to growing farms and growers/processors. KTSTC announced that recipients will receive a separate check for each category in which they qualify. For example, a tobacco quota owner who raises her/his own quota on her/his

Cont. to A-9

Committee will meet Thursday to discuss tax

By: Richard Anderkin

Mt. Vernon Mayor Karen King had hoped that she could get some type of payroll and net profits tax passed before the first of the year, but to date, she has been unsuccessful.

After a large crowd showed up in protest of the tax at the last city council meeting in December, the council rescinded the first reading of a payroll tax ordinance they had passed in November.

Then Mayor Karen King said she would appoint a committee to come up with a payroll tax that everyone could live with.

Members of that committee are the Mayor, council members Clark Mullins, Lou Vanhoose and Daryl Smith and local residents Carol Bryant and William Gibbons.

The committee has met only once and very little was accomplished.

Mrs. Bryant said that committee members were reluctant to come up with any recommendation for the council until some very important things had been put on the table.

Mrs. Bryant said that the committee asked the Mayor for a plan prioritizing the use of the money and the committee also wanted to know exactly how much the city's deficit actually was.

Mrs. Bryant said that no hard figures concerning the city's debt was presented and that each member of the council was very persistent in their request for those figures.

Mrs. Bryant also said that there was some question as to whether the city was even qualified under state law to impose a tax because they are a fifth class city.

City Clerk Kaye Rader said Wednesday that the Department of Local Government in Frankfort had told her that the city was eligible to impose a tax, but that she was doing further research to make sure.

City Attorney John Clontz is also looking into the qualification matter as is legal counsel for the Kentucky Press Association.

The next committee meeting will be held Thursday night to see if the committee can come up with a recommendation for the entire council which meets on Monday night at 7 p.m. at city hall.

It has been estimated that the original proposed 1.5 percent payroll and net profits tax would generate in excess of \$500,000 annually for the city, but that seems like a very low

estimate.

Tax on employees of two of the city's employers, the Rockcastle County Board of Education and the Rockcastle Hospital would generate in excess of \$300,000 from their wages alone.

Until a tax rate is set and the city receives documentation from all employers, business owners and professionals no one really knows how much money will be realized.

However, some believe at 1.5 percent the city could receive nearly \$1 million annually from the tax.

Mayor Karen King has said that part of the money would be used to give city employees raises, building a new building for the city and pay on city projects such as the new city park on Williams Street.

The Mayor has also said that the city owes its own water and sewer department \$250,000, which has been put in the general fund over the years to make ends meet.

Mrs. Bryant said that she and other members of the committee hope the Mayor had the necessary information ready for the committee on Thursday night, so they could complete their recommendation to the council.

At November's meeting most of those in protest of the tax said they understood that they city needed money to operate on, but they thought that 1.5 percent was excessive.

If the council does pass a first reading of a payroll and net profits tax again next Monday night, they must then publish the ordinance in the Signal seven days prior to a second reading and final vote.

CenterNet approved

Hilda Gay Legg, Executive Director of The Center for Rural Development in Somerset, has announced the approval of Rockcastle County's CenterNet site application. CenterNet is a regional network bringing vast telecommunications capabilities to counties in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. The network, which currently includes 20 counties, will eventually cover The Center's 40-county region.

Rockcastle's CenterNet site will be located at the Rockcastle County Courthouse. Installation of the site is

David Tapp announces candidacy

Submitted By: David Tapp

David Tapp announced today his intent to seek election as Commonwealth's Attorney for the 28th Judicial Circuit which is comprised of Rockcastle, Lincoln and Pulaski counties. In his first bid for elected office, Tapp emphasized his qualifications: "Since college, I've worked only in the criminal justice system—both in law enforcement and the courts. If the people want a politician in that office, I'm not their candidate. But if they want a prosecutor, that's me."

Tapp has prior experience as a state court felony prosecutor and was responsible for several significant convictions, particularly involving defendants charged with sexual offenses, crimes of violence and drug offenses. In 1994, Tapp secured the conviction and 20 year sentence of a day care worker on five molestation charges. Tapp also represented the Commonwealth in the resulting appeal and won state supreme court approval for children to testify by closed circuit television rather than in the courtroom itself. In 1995, Tapp prosecuted a man for the rape of an eight year old girl in Nancy, and obtained a 40 year sentence. A 1995 Rockcastle County child pornography case prosecuted by Tapp resulted

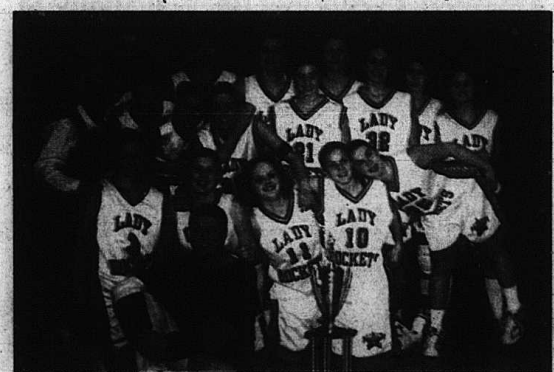
in two convictions: a Brodhead woman who permitted her own daughter to be exploited received a 15 year sentence; her boyfriend was likewise convicted of 20 counts of using minors in sexual performances, sexual abuse and of being a persistent felony offender and received a 22 year sentence. Also in 1995, Tapp prosecuted a Somerset man responsible for a series of sexual attacks in Pulaski and Boyle counties. That defendant received a 20 term of imprisonment. In his last appearance before entering private practice, Tapp prosecuted a Somerset man for the robbery and attempted slaying of a laundromat employee. That defendant was sentenced to a 30 year term of imprisonment.

Some of Tapp's most satisfying efforts come from cases he was unable to personally finish before leaving public service. Tapp was the attorney initially assigned to prosecute Gary Casper McKinney, who was later convicted in the death of his wife and her two children. "Laying the ground work for that case, and seeing it reach fruition years later with a conviction was gratifying. Everybody likes to feel like they've done a good job. I'm just glad that case was finally resolved. We need more prosecutions like that one. We have too many serious cases which do not receive the prosecutorial at-

tention they deserve." Tapp likewise expressed his frustration with the untold victims of Cody Gibson and Linda Garrett. "Someday, there will be a break. I hope I'm around when it happens."

Prior to becoming a state court prosecutor, Tapp worked as a contract employee at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Kentucky where he assisted in the investigation, prosecution and related forfeitures of numerous federal drug, pornography, gambling and health care fraud offenses.

Cont. to A-9



The Lady Rockets won their annual Holiday Hoopla Tournament with a great 63-58 win over the Harlan Dragons. Shown with their championship trophy are front row, Ken Hopkins. Second row from left: Jessie Rickels, Amber Hall, Amanda Barnett, Jessie Hayes, and Laura Beth Bell. Third row from left: Coach Chrysti Noble, Rachelle Falmann, Brandy Reynolds, Brooke Roberts, Ashley Lawson, Jessica Cobb. Back row from left: Amber Denney, Leslie Carpenter, Ashley Mink, Angie Boreing, and Amy Barnett.