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Mount Vernon, Kentucky 40456 - Volume 115 - Number 1- Ph. (606) 256-2244 - .50 a copy - Thursday, October 4, 2001

Open House at Brodhead set for Oct. 14

An open house at the new Brodhead Elementary School has been scheduled for Sunday, October 14th.

The open house will take place from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., according to Brodhead Principal Caroline Graves.

The $6 million facility is not quite finished, but Mrs. Graves said that all the major things, such as the gymnasium are basically finished.

"There is still some electrical work and some other small things that will not be finished when we have the open house, but for the most part the school, including the gym are finished," she said.

That still doesn't mean that students will be allowed outside of the building anytime soon.

In fact, Mrs. Graves said that because there is no grass in the playground areas, it is highly unlikely that any outdoor recess or activities will be held at Brodhead this school year.

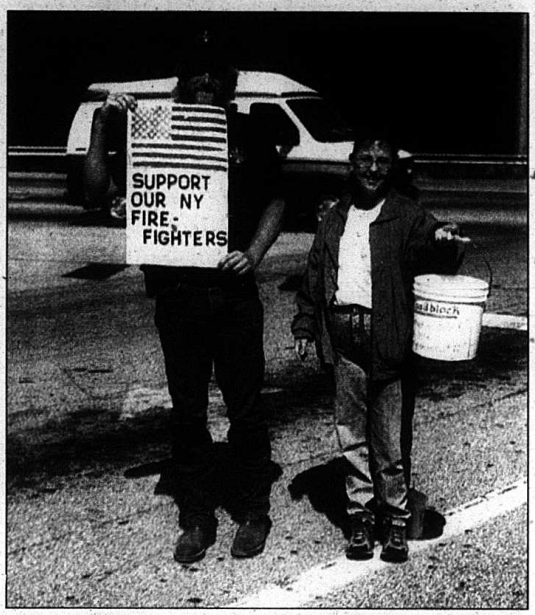
Brodhead students went to school eight days later this school year than everybody else, because the school was not finished.

Employees at Brodhead reported at the same time as all other school employees in the district in order to help get the school building ready as soon as possible.

Rockcastle County School Superintendent Larry Hammond has said that Brodhead will not have to go the missed eight days at the end of the school year because Brodhead actually in school each day longer than they are required to be by state law.

The missed eight days are being made up a few minutes a day.

Brodhead school has approximately 460 students.



Firefighters raise $4,500 for victims

On Saturday, members of the Brindle Ridge, Livingston and Brodhead Fire Departments and the Brodhead Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary held a roadblock at Hwy. 150 and Hwy. 461 to raise money for the families of the fallen firefighters in New York. Over $4,500 was donated on Saturday. The Brodhead Fire Department will also donate the profits from their fish fry this Saturday night. The money is being donated through the International Brotherhood of Firefighters. Many school groups, churches, civic organizations, etc., have donated money to the relief effort, after the September 11th attacks in New York and Washington, D.C.

Supreme Court orders new trial for McKinney

Gary McKinney has gotten a stay of execution from the Kentucky Supreme Court after a ruling handed down last week.

McKinney, 34, of Level Green, was convicted in July 1998 of the brutal murders of Shirley Bowles, also of Rockcastle County, and her two young children.

In September of 1998 McKinney was sentenced to death.

He has been on death row at Eddyville ever since.

Commonwealth Attorney Eddy Montgomery said it was his understanding the main reason the Supreme Court ordered a new trial for McKinney is because the defense was not allowed to call an expert witness.

Montgomery said that expert was to testify as to why McKinney showed no emotion the day the burnt bodies of his wife and her two children were found in Pulaski County.

"He cried the day the jury recommended the death sentence and the Judge went along with that recommendation," said Montgomery.

According to testimony presented during the three week trial, McKinney shot Shirley Bowles, 29, several times with two different guns.

The commonwealth also presented evidence that McKinney shot three-year-old Amy Bowles in the mouth with a rifle and he shot 11-year-old Brian Bowles several times, at least once in the back of the head.

After murdering the three, he set the farm house on fire, where the family had lived for a short time.

The house was located in the Plato Community, near the Rockcastle-Pulaski County line.

Brian was a student at Mt. Vernon Elementary School at the time.

McKinney and Shirley Bowles had been married about a month before the slayings.

McKinney was first arrested after police received a tip from a friend of McKinney's who told him he had killed the three.

No new trial date has been set. The case will likely return to Circuit Judge Dan Venters' court.

Ottawa man dies in wreck

A well-known elderly Rockcastle County man died last week following an auto accident on Hwy. 150 in Mt. Vernon.

Curtis Bradley, 86, of Ottawa died in the University of Kentucky Medical Center helicopter enroute to the Medical Center in Lexington on Wednesday afternoon.

According to Rockcastle Deputy Sheriff Joe Rush, Bradley was traveling toward Mt. Vernon around 3 p.m. Wednesday when he drove his Chevrolet Caprice off the right side of the road, over corrected and crossed into the westbound lane.

Rush said Bradley's car then traveled over a steep embankment before hitting a large tree.

It took several minutes before local rescue workers could remove Bradley from the vehicle.

Bittersweet Festival set for weekend

City of Mt. Vernon to donate flags

The City of Mt. Vernon is taking donations to assist the September 11, 2001 victims who were killed in the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

The City has purchased 1008 12 inch by 18 inch United States flags mounted on a wood staff with a gilt spear. The cost to the city was $1,450.

Flags can be picked up at City Hall 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., where you can also make your charitable donation, according to City Hall staff member Phyllis Deatherage.

Deatherge said the money donated will go to the American Red Cross through the Daniel Boone Chapter in Berea.

She said that one hundred percent of the money donated will go directly to aid the victims.

No administrative costs will be deducted from the donated money, according to Deatherage.

Test scores indicate Rockcastle School system on right track

By: Richard Anderkin

The report card is in for the Rockcastle County School System and from all indicators students scores are improving at most county schools.

Rockcastle County School System Testing Coordinator Claudinna Cash released the scores on Tuesday, which showed an overall gain for the local school system.

"We are in pretty good shape, but of course there is always room for improvement and I have no doubt that our teachers and administrators are making every effort to reach their respective goals," Rockcastle County School Superintendent Larry Hammond said.

The best scores in the county were recorded at Roundstone Elementary, which actually had the 13th best overall scores in the state.

Their scores increased eight points from a year ago.

Roundstone has consistently had the best scores in the county over the past few years and has been recognized nationally for their high scores.

"I know it is hard to believe but we really don't make high test scores a top priority," said principal David Pensol.

Pensol, who has been principal at Roundstone for seven years credited his staff and the community as a whole.

"Our parents, teachers, bus drivers, custodians, cooks, everybody right down the line seems dedicated to making Roundstone a good school and I think that has made a big impact in our test scores," he said.

"We put a plan in place several years ago to make sure we were doing the best we could with our curriculum and obviously we are seeing the benefits," Pensol said.

"We simply have some of the best teachers and instructional assistants who put their students first," he said.

Roundstone's total score was 94.6 out of a possible 100.

Pensol said that another factor was the number of students who attend Roundstone. "Because we are the smallest elementary school we are able to avoid some of the problems that larger schools have to deal with," he said.

Because of the formula used by the state Roundstone could actually drop over 16 points next year and still qualify for cash rewards from the state.

The state passes out money to successful schools and offers help from the state level to schools who are considered in decline.

All county schools qualified last year for rewards and at Roundstone the council there voted to use the money to upgrade their playground, send fifth graders on a reward field trip and blacktop the parking lot.

Roundstone was the only school where that took place - the other school councils voted to give some, if not all of the reward money to their staffs.

According to the test results, all of the county's schools are considered progressing schools and the state does not consider any of our schools to be in decline at this point.

"We are really tough on ourselves and I think that because of that all of the schools work really hard to provide a good learning environment," said Mrs. Cash.

Just by the numbers, Mt. Vernon Elementary School scored 75.7 compared to a score of 72.4 a year ago.

At Brodhead students scored 79.7 compared to a score of 86.1 a year ago.

The 79.7 was still one of the top scores in the region.

At the high school, this year's score was 65.5 and last year's score was 64.4.

The Rockcastle County Middle School had a score of 79.4, up from 72.8 a year ago.

In fact, a group of educators from Texas will soon be conducting an educational survey at the middle school to see what they are doing right at the school, which is considered an impoverished school.

The number of students on free or reduced lunch at a school determines whether it is considered impover-

(Cont. to A-10)

Miss Angela Boreing, center, daughter of Bobby and Becky Boreing of Mt. Vernon, was crowned 2001 football homecoming queen at Rockcastle County High School on Friday night. At left is Miss Tammy Dees and at right is Miss Elizabeth Matekovich, runners-up.

Hospital buys Nursing Home

Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center, officials announced Monday that they have reached an agreement to acquire Sowder Nursing Home, a 114 bed nursing facility located in Brodhead.

"The decision to acquire this nursing facility is based on the hospital's mission of providing a broad range of healthcare services for the people of Rockcastle County," said Joseph E. Lambert, Chairman of the Board at the hospital. "We are pleased that Rockcastle Hospital is acquiring a facility that has a long tradition of quality care in this area," Lambert said.

Lambert praised the managers of Sowder Nursing Home for their efforts in maintaining a well-run and well-respected facility.

"We commend Linda Whitt, Diane Masters, Cynthia Plummer and all the employees of this facility for the dedication they have shown to their residents and to the community. We look forward to working with them as a team to continue to enhance the services offered," he said.

Sowder Nursing Home was established in 1962 by the late John and Worth Sowderand has been continuously operated by the Sowder family since that time.

Bige W. Towery, Jr., Executive Director, Rockcastle County Development Board and a member of the hospital board of directors, has a positive opinion of Sowder Nursing Home, based on care his family members have received there.

He pointed out that many organizations are consolidating in order to operate as efficiently as possible. However, he said the hospital doesn't plan to make any reductions in the number of personnel.

"This acquisition by Rockcastle Hospital is a positive economic move. It will ensure jobs remain in the county and that the facility will continue to generate revenue for the local economy. In addition, it is yet another opportunity for us to expand our outreach of services," Towery said.

"The hospital and its subsidiaries will employ nearly 500 people, making it the largest employer in the county," Towery added. "That size will enable them to recruit, train and manage personnel in an even more efficient manner. In today's healthcare environment, facilities need every advantage they can get to hire and keep good employees."

Hospital CEO Lee Keene weighed

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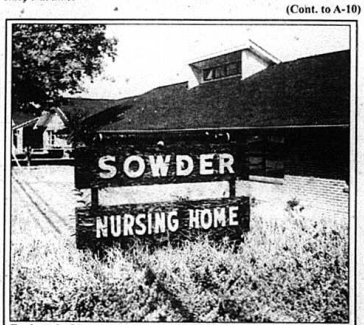

Rockcastle County Hospital Inc. has purchased the Sowder Nursing Home in Brodhead and will take over operations in January. Rockcastle Hospital will be the county's largest employer.