Mount Vernon Signal

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Mount Vernon, Kentucky 40456 - Volume 118 * Number 8 - Ph. (606) 256-2244 - .50 a copy - Thursday, December 4, 2003

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Hayes named first-team all-state
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"An Evening of Music" **was the theme for this year's tree-lighting ceremony at Mt. Vernon on Friday night, November 28th. The event, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, was aptly named since many groups and individuals contributed to the entertainment. The top photo shows the Christmas Tree and other decorations shortly after Mt. Vernon Mayor Clarice Kirby threw the switch to officially light the tree. At right are members of the RCHS band brass choir waiting to perform at the event. The band will be performing their annual Christmas Concert on Monday night, December 8th at the high school auditorium and the Rockcastle County Middle School Band will be performing Thursday night, December 11th at 7 p.m. in the middle school gymnasium.**

In Brodhead

Petition filed by firefighters, city council

Over fire protection territory

Members of the Brodhead Volunteer Fire Department and the Brodhead City Council have filed a petition with Rockcastle County Clerk Norma Houk's office to rezone the fire districts under the coverage of the city and of Western Rockcastle Volunteer Fire Department (formerly Brodhead Rural Volunteer Fire Dept).

Captain David Witt, of the Brodhead Volunteer Department said Wednesday that members of the Brodhead Fire Department felt, along with the city council, that they were doing citizens an injustice by not filing the petition asking for their territory back and for return of a tanker truck, which is currently housed outside the city limits at Brock's Auction Barn on US 150.

Brodhead actually has two fire departments and firefighters who are members of both departments, but the two departments have been at odds for months over equipment, trucks and areas around Brodhead concerning who should respond to fire calls.

Because the other Brodhead fire department, Western Rockcastle Volunteer Fire Department, is considered the county department they serve all of the territory outside the Brodhead City limits, which is not served by Mt Vernon or Crab Orchard.

Witt says the problem is that the rural department is housed at the former Robbin's Muffler Shop on Hwy. 70 and it is unnecessary for people, who have property on fire, to wait 20 or 30 minutes longer than they should for a response. Under the present zoning, the rural fire department, at times, has to drive through Brodhead to get to a fire.

Witt said a rezoning would definitely help the people in Copper Creek, on Hwy. 1505 and Negro

(Cont. to A-9)

At a special meeting of council

Mt. Vernon revamps health care coverage

Employees will have to contribute for first time

It will be a savings of $70 to $80,000 dollars a year for the City of Mt. Vernon's coffers but city employees will feel the pinch in their paychecks when a new health plan takes effect in January.

In the past, the city has paid 100% of the premiums for employee health coverage, at a cost of $202,085 in fiscal year 2003. Because of budget constraints, the council decided they would no longer be able to afford to pay the full premium for employees.

Switching insurers was the first step, from Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield to CHA at a much lower rate and the council then decided to pay a flat $288.36 per employee each month plus 60% of the cost of the plan chosen.

For example under CHA, single coverage cost is $312 per month. With the city's contribution of $288.36 plus 60% of the balance ($14.19), the employees with single coverage will only be out $9.45 per month. However, on the other end of the scale, a family plan costs $780 per month. The city's contribution of $288.36 plus $294.99 for the 60% share still leaves the employee to pay $196.65 per month.

Employees who participate in the parent plus plan will pay $71.85 per month and a couples plan will cost $165.45 monthly.

Under the Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan, the city was paying 100% of premiums for all employees. Single coverage was $361.61; parent plus $650.90; couples $759.38 and $1157.65 for families.

Employees who do not participate in the health plan will receive $100 a month, not as flex pay, but figured in with their salary and taxes taken out.

(Cont. to A-9)

Mt. Vernon officer resigns

Incident allegedly occurred while officer off-duty

The City of Mt. Vernon and a police officer have been sued by a local man who claims he was assaulted by the officer while the officer was off-duty.

John Kevin Falin of Mt. Vernon filed suit in Circuit Court alleging five counts against Sim Thacker, a Mt. Vernon police officer since 2002.

The counts include assault, battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, outrage, false arrest and negligent hiring and retention (aimed at the city).

The suit stems from an incident on November 11th of this year and alleges that Thacker "wrongfully and unlawfully stopped at gun point a vehicle driven by the plaintiff (Falin) and proceeded to use excessive and unnecessary force against the plaintiff."

The suit also alleges that, after stopping Falin's vehicle, Thacker ordered Falin, at gun point, to exit the vehicle and lie face down with his arms outstretched to each side of the roadway and then committed a battery against Falin by "kicking the plaintiff in the face and head and stomping the plaintiff in the neck and back."

Count three of the suit says that Thacker "committed the intentional infliction of emotional distress against the plaintiff by stopping the plaintiff's vehicle at gun point, threatening to kill the plaintiff and subsequently placing the plaintiff on the ground and injuring the plaintiff by kicking and stomping him."

The fifth count of the suit (negligent hiring and retention) alleges that the "City of Mt. Vernon's conduct was grossly negligent and exhibited a reckless indifference to the rights of others in its hiring and retention practices and the plaintiff is entitled to punitive damages."

Willis Coffey, attorney for Falin, said Wednesday that another suit will be filed within the week on behalf of Roger "Crow" Mink. Coffey said the suit will be filed over an alleged incident, earlier this year, in which Thacker, while on duty and in front of witnesses, beat Mink excessively during an arrest.

A civil suit tells only one side of the incident.

On Tuesday of this week, a closed hearing was held at City Hall and, at that time, an attorney for Thacker told the council that his client was resigning, effective immediately, with written notice to be given within 72 hours.

Santa will arrive in Mt. Vernon and Brodhead this Saturday

First appearance is scheduled for Mt. Vernon

Children in Rockcastle County can get a double dose of seeing "Jolly Ole Saint Nick" this Saturday as he will arrive in both Mt. Vernon and Brodhead during their parades.

Mt. Vernon will officially kick off the holiday season with their parade, scheduled for 1 p.m. Line-up will begin at 12 noon at Mt. Vernon Elementary School.

Grand Marshal for Mt. Vernon's parade will be members of the United States military, active and inactive.

Holiday entertainment in Mt. Vernon will begin around 12:30 on Main Street and again after the parade. Included in the entertainment will be various church youth groups and carolers and Santa's Workshop, in front of Community Trust Bank, will be open after the parade.

For more information, contact Phyllis Deatherage at City Hall, 256-3437.

Participants in Mt. Vernon's parade are being asked to journey on to Brodhead to participate in their parade.

Saturday's activities will begin with an old fashioned country breakfast, put on by the Brodhead Volunteer Fire Department from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

For more information on Brodhead's parade, call "Santa's Hotline" and ask for Victoria at 606-355-2971, Larry at 606-758-8221 or City Hall 606-758-8635.

Brodhead Parade

The annual E.J. Taylor Memorial Christmas Parade will be held at Brodhead at 3 p.m. with line-up beginning at 2 p.m. at Brodhead Elementary School.

Grand Marshal for this year's parade will be Trey Grayson, Republican-elect Secretary of State who will take office on Tuesday, December the 9th.

In addition to awards for the parade, winners of the best decorated home and business will also be recognized.

Santa Claus at Senior Citizens Center Friday

As a preview to Santa's official arrival in Mt. Vernon during Saturday's parade, he and Mrs. Claus will kick off the holiday season Friday night by hosting a fundraiser at the Senior Citizens Center in Mt. Vernon Friday night from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. for children up to five year of age. The session for older children (6 and older) beginning at 7 p.m. Brothers and sisters can arrive at the same time, regardless of age.

Santa and Mrs. Claus and their elves will be on hand to greet children and their parents and there will be cookies and ice cream, an ornament to decorate, storytelling by Octavia Beverly Sexton and a photo opportunity with Santa will be available.

Admission to the event is $5 per child with half price admission for more than two children in the same family.

Also during the evening, a name will be drawn from children attending this event and that child will get to ride with Santa and Mrs. Claus in Saturday's parade.

Proceeds from this event will go to the center's "Meals on Wheels" program for the elderly in the county.

Early deadline

The Dec. 25th issue of the Signal will be printed Tues., Dec. 23. Deadline for news and ads that week is noon Monday, Dec. 22.

Blood Drive

Blood is needed everywhere, every day. Rockcastle County community asks you to ensure blood is available for area hospital patients by donating on Thursday, December 11 between the hours of 1 and 6 p.m. at the Rockcastle County Extension Office. The drive is being sponsored in conjunction with Central Kentucky Blood Center.

Every three seconds in the United States, someone receives a blood transfusion. Blood and blood components are used to treat accident and burn victims, cancer patients and other patients undergoing surgeries and medical treatments.

Donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in good general health. The complete process takes less than an hour, with the actual donation of one pint lasting 10 minutes. Blood can be donated every 56 days.

Through the support of volunteer donors and drive sponsors like Rockcastle County Community, Central Kentucky Blood Center provides blood to 65 hospitals in 61 Kentucky counties.

All donors on December 11 will receive a free t-shirt for donating. For more information, call Loretta Robinson at 1-80-775-2522.

High speed chase starts on by-pass

On Monday, Kentucky State Police arrested Johnny L. Burchett, 25, of Somerset after a 54-mile pursuit.

The pursuit started at 7:40 AM in Mt. Vernon when the accused ran a traffic light at US-150 and KY-461 almost striking an unmarked Kentucky State Police cruiser.

The accused traveled northbound on I-75 at speeds that exceeded 110 miles per hours. The pursuit continued northbound on I-75 through the State Police Richmond Post 7 area. The fleeing vehicle was able to avoid stop sticks and continued northbound on I-75. The pursuit entered into Fayette County where the Kentucky State Police Frankfort Post and the Lexington Fayette Urban Co. Gov. Police Department joined in. The accused was stopped at the 111.4 - mile marker in Fayette County after Kentucky State Police used legal intervention to end the pursuit. During the pursuit the accused also struck another vehicle.

The Kentucky State Police arrested the accused and charged him with Driving under the influence 4th (Drugs), Wanton Endangerment 1st, Resisting Arrest, Fleeing and Evading Police 1st, Possession of Controlled substance (Methamphetamine), Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine Precursor 1st, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Johnny L. Burchett was lodged in the Fayette County Jail. The accused also has charges pending in Rockcastle County, which include disregarding a traffice control device, no seat belt, operating on suspended license, no insurance, failure to register a transfer and expired registration of tags.