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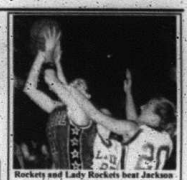

Rockets and Lady Rockets beat Jackson
See Page A8

Home heavily damaged by fire

The home of Doug and Jearl Bullock was heavily damaged by fire Saturday.

The Bullock's home, which is located on Liberty Drive in Mt. Vernon, caught fire Saturday around noon.

Mt. Vernon Fire Chief Garry Hansel said the fire apparently started in the utility room, when the Bullock's dryer caught fire.

No one was home at the time of the fire. A neighbor spotted smoke coming from the back of the house and called firefighters who were in line at the time for the annual Mt. Vernon Christmas Parade.

"Response time to the fire was almost immediate," said Allen Pensol a neighbor of the Bullocks.

Although firefighters were on the scene in about a minute, the fire had apparently been burning for sometime.

Fireighters also rescued a house dog of the Bullocks, who was trapped inside the house.

Santa and Mrs. Claus (David and Willetta Owens) were a big hit after Mt. Vernon's Christmas Parade last Saturday. Children received treats and told Santa what they were wanting for Christmas.

Indictments returned

Three more indictments were released this week, all for alleged drug related crimes.

Mark A. Miller, 42, of Mt. Vernon was indicted on four counts involving a June incident, in which he is accused of introducing marijuana into the Rockcastle County Detention Center.

Miller is also accused of tampering with physical evidence and being a persistent felony offender.

Michelle York, 41, and Timmy York, 38, both of Castle Village Apartments in Brodhead were indicted for trafficking in a controlled substance. They are accused of selling Oxycodone and schedule II controlled substance to a confidential informant on May 23rd of this year.

More indictments will be released next week.

Larry Taylor drives Brodhead's vintage fire truck and gives Santa Claus (John Holbrook) a ride in Brodhead's Christmas Parade last Saturday. Both parades had lots of participants and good crowds.

School attendance down because of flu bug

Superintendent of Schools Larry Hammond said Wednesday that school attendance was a "little better" Wednesday after a low of 329 absences Tuesday, including 27 teachers. However, 34 teachers were absent on Wednesday.

Hammond said the flu bug and several different viruses were causing the problem.

$13 million more included in budget for PRIDE

U.S. Congressman Hal Rogers has included more than $13 million in the federal budget for the Eastern Kentucky PRIDE program.

"Thanks to PRIDE and the thousands of volunteers that have generously given their time, energy, and resources, our water is cleaner than ever before," Rogers said today. "Although we still have a ways to go before our land and water sources return to their original pristine state, we are making progress every day.

(Cont. to A-11)

Dallas Rigsby, Amber Falin and Floyd Baker led Mt. Vernon's annual Christmas Parade last Saturday. The military, active and veterans, were the Grand Marshals for the parade. Also in the photo is Courtney Alexander.

Mt. Vernon makes change in employee health coverage

Payment for non-covered employees changed to $288.36

The savings to the city on health insurance coverage for employees will be reduced somewhat after the council changed one part of the policy at Monday night's meeting.

Instead of the $100 a month approved for employees who do not require the health coverage, the council raised the payment to $288.36 which is the amount they pay for every employee. In addition, they pay 60% of the difference of the premium for the plan selected by the employee and, of course, employees not signing up for the coverage will not receive this amount.

The action came after Asst. Police Chief Eddie Delaney told the council that health coverage for his family where his wife works would cost them $168.16 a month and, if he took coverage with the city, the city would be out $288.36. He requested that the city pay the amount of his wife's coverage each month, instead of the previously approved $100, up to the $288.36.

Mayor Clarice Kirby, who had lobbied hard earlier for the payment to be $200, instead of $100, for employees not requiring the coverage, told the council that another employee had made the same request to her and she asked the council to approve the change. After some discussion, the council made the change to $288.36 for each employee, regardless of whether they signed up for the coverage or not.

City Clerk Kaye Rader said only about four or five employees are not signing up for the health insurance and, with this change, the cost to the city would be around $10,000 per year of the expected $70 to $80,000 savings.

The fact that the city no longer pays 100% of employee health insurance was also a factor used by Mayor Kirby to recommend no action on a request by 911.

Kirby told the council that the city had been asked to pay for an additional full-time employee with full county benefits needed for 911 dispatching.

However, Kirby reminded the council that she didn't feel the city could (legally) pay a county employee and "it is not in our budget and we just got through taking our employee's (full) insurance coverage."

At the time that former Mayor Karen King took office, the city quit dispatching their own calls and joined the 911 system and King apparently agreed to fund one employee for the system since it saved the city salaries for four employees. However, that action was never reflected in the city's minutes, Kirby said.

Councilman Bryan Hansel said he would like to help (911) but didn't know if the council had money to or not.

Police Chief Terry Jackson told the council that 911 "does a lot of dispatching for the city of Mt. Vernon" but Mayor Kirby responded that the city is part of Rockcastle County and "just to be frank, this is not the city's problem, it's the county's."

The amount requested would be approximately $1,568 per month plus county benefits.

No action was taken on the request.

(Cont. to A-11)

Adult Center Ribbon-Cutting Rescheduled

A ribbon-cutting at the new Wayne Sewart Adult Health Center, scheduled for Tuesday, December 16 has been rescheduled.

The event will now be held Tuesday, January 6 from 10 to 2.

For more information, call 606-256-0595.

Mt. Vernon receives $480,000 to improve sewer service in city

Representative Harold "Hal" Rogers has secured a total of $480,000 for the City of Mt. Vernon to improve sewage service. This project is part of the PRIDE wastewater improvement program.

"This investment in the community's sewage system is vitally important to the future of Mt. Vernon and Rockcastle County," Rogers said. "It brings us closer to our goal of connecting greater numbers of our people to safe and sanitary sewer service, and protecting our rivers and streams for generations to come."

The money will be used to install a gravity sewer line and pump station to service a number of older homes that have outdated and limited septic systems. The area flows into a sinkhole, which most likely impacts the drinking water supply. The project will improve sewage service to approximately 50 households.

The funding announced today is included in the final version of the FY 2004 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which is comprised of 7 different spending bills. The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to approve the legislation next week. The bill will also go to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

Rescue workers had to use the Jaws of Life to free Alice Butler, 54, of Quail, after she left the roadway, hit a tree and snapped it in two. Ms. Butler was traveling on Hwy. 70 toward Quail when the accident occurred Monday afternoon. She is in critical condition at the UK Medical Center. On Saturday night, Gina Nicole McClure, 16, was seriously injured in an accident on Hwy. 25 in front of Grace Baptist Church when she lost control of her car after hitting black ice and hit a tree. Her car caught on fire but she was rescued by Clayton and DeeAnna Burdette. McClure is now home recovering from her injuries.

New program designed to increase local leadership

Leadership Rockcastle, a program developed by the Leadership Task Force of the Rockcastle County Development Board, is designed to increase the number of citizens directly engaged in community development and civic life. Fifteen citizens will be selected for the first year of the program, which begins in February 2004. The program is in conjunction with the Brushy Fork Institute of Berea College.

"Leadership development was on of the top priorities identified in last year's community strategic plan and this new program is an important step in implementing this plan," according to John Clontz, Development Board Chairman.

"We are looking for a cross section of the community—both recognized leaders and people who are new to leadership roles," says Task Force member Corey Craig. The new program is designed to strengthen the human, organizational, and economic development skills of local citizens and business people. It will prepare them to more effectively guide development initiatives by increasing their knowledge, networking, and leadership skills.

The program is being offered to individuals as well as to employees of local businesses. Employers who send their employees to the program will benefit from it by having better educated and prepared employees. Employees who will be able to tackle new leadership challenges within their organization and their community. These employees will also have a broadened perspective of critical issues facing their state and their community.

The program will kick off with a two-day session at Dale Hollow State Park on February 27th and 28th. This session will provide classmates with an overview of the eight-month program; allow them to understand their personal style of leadership; begin to identify community development opportunities; and allow them to establish mutual respect and cooperation. Transportation to this session will be provided, as well as meals and lodging.

The remaining nine sessions will be held on the third Thursday of each month, from 9 a.m. to noon and will conclude in December 2004. They will cover topics such as effective meetings, communication skills, understanding governance processes and dealing with conflict. "We plan to bring in a variety of highly re-

(Cont. to A-11)