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Mount Vernon Signal

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Mount Vernon, Kentucky 40456 - Volume 113 - Number 24 - Ph. (606) 256-2244 - 50¢ a copy - Thursday, March 16, 2000

Board approves final plans for Brodhead School

By: Richard Anderkin
The Rockcastle County Board of Education got a detailed look at the plans for the new Brodhead Elementary School and approved the second phase of the project.

The architect for the project explained the drawings to the board and told them phase two was ready to submit to Frankfort.

Finance officer Richard Bray told the board that the plans were the result of many hours of work and planning by the building committee at Brodhead, which had received input from teachers, instructional assistants, cooks, bus drivers and parents.

The Architect said the facility would be approximately 6,100 square feet, which included the gymnasium and cafeteria.

The new school will face the same direction as the old school, it will just sit farther back from the road.

Bray said that the playground will be behind the building and beside it and where the old building is now, will be used for parking.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$5.5 million.

The architect said he hoped that construction could begin sometime in June with completion in the summer of 2001, before the opening of school in August.

In other discussions the board heard from Kentucky Tech Principal Donna Hopkins, who discussed a recent incident, in which a student was expelled for making a homemade weapon in his welding class.

Mrs. Hopkins said that the student tried to take the weapon home with him and in no way threatened any other student.

She said that it was virtually impossible for the welding teacher to watch all of the students working on the equipment all the time.

But board member Martin Vanzant said his main concern was that a previous assignment a couple of years ago in welding class called

for students to make medieval type weapons for a special project.

Vanzant said he thought there could be some conflict between that assignment and expelling a student for making the same type weapon.

Mrs. Hopkins agreed with Vanzant about possible conflict and said it should be looked into.

The board also agreed that when the student made his weapon, no such assignment had been passed out.

The student was expelled by the board for the remainder of the grading period after he attempted to sneak the weapon home.

The board also approved a recommendation from Superintendent Larry Hammond and finance officer Bray for a 2.5 percent raise for all school employees for the next fiscal year. Last year employees got a 2.3 percent raise.

Bray told the board that if the legislature did not approve enough money for those raises they could rescind their action before June 30.

The board also created a director and coordinator position for the 21st Century Community Learning Center to be housed at the Rockcastle County Middle School.

Hammond told the board that the school was successful in obtaining a federal grant for \$600,000 for a three

year period for the learning center.

Hammond said the learning center would probably operate from eleven or twelve in the morning to seven or eight at night.

Hammond said that the parents of the students using the center would be encouraged to participate in the programs the center would offer.

Hammond said that the center would be extremely technology oriented.

The board also approved the guidelines for the S.B.D.M. allocations at each county school.

Finance officer Bray told the board that 65 percent of all allocated money would go for salaries at each school.

Bray also told the board that Mt. Vernon Elementary School would lose two teachers because of a drop in enrollment and that the middle school would lose one Title One teacher.

MVES Principal Rose Brown said that the Site Based Council had discussed the matter at length and that no home rooms would be affected and that more than likely no teachers would lose their jobs because of the cut in allocation.

Mrs. Brown said that MVES only has 99 entry level students this year compared to 120 in the past and that enrollment has dropped slightly each year in the past few years.

For their allocation, 657 students are counted at Mt. Vernon.

But Mt. Vernon has 724 students which attend school there daily. Kindergarten students are only counted as a half because they attend a half day and pre-school students are not counted at all, because that program is separate from the S.B.D.M. allocation.

The board also discussed the new alternative school for the school system, which will begin next school year.

The alternative school will serve 30 students from both the middle school and high school and will be located in a mobile unit at RCMS.

RCMS principal John Hale said three things could cause a student to be placed in alternative school.

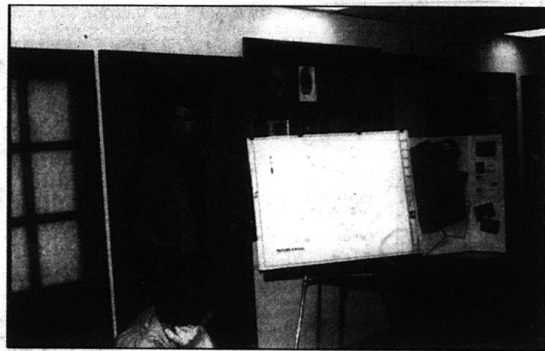
Treasury problems, discipline problems and severe academic deficiencies.

The school will likely have two teachers, two instructional assistants and a counselor from camp car on staff.

"Students will receive a lot of one on one attention to help them get any problems they may have straightened out," Hale said.

Board member Vanzant also

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Architect Joe Samokar explained the plans for the new Brodhead School to the Rockcastle County Board of Education on Tuesday night. Also in the photo is board member Terry Burton.

Graves to head DES

The Rockcastle County Fiscal Court unanimously approved Keith Graves, of Brodhead, as the new director of Rockcastle County Disaster and Emergency Services.

Graves' name was submitted by Rockcastle Judge-Executive Buzz Carlotis during Tuesday's Rockcastle Fiscal Court meeting.

Graves, who is retired from the Ky. National Guard, will replace Gary Asher, who resigned last year after several years in that capacity.

Graves was one of four appli-

cants interviewed by the court on February 29. The other three were Don Gabbard, Lued Nielsen and Tim Cameron.

The job pays about \$4,500 a year with benefits.

In other business the court accepted the annual settlement from Rockcastle County Clerk Norma Houk, who turned over \$30,000 in excess fees to the county.

They also approved the recognition of the Southeast Fire and Rescue Department in Livingston as a new

department.

Sam Stallworth, Secretary/Treasurer of Southeast told the court that the new fire department needed to be

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McKinney to retire at Brodhead

The site based council at Brodhead Elementary School is in the process of hunting for a new principal.

Current BES Principal Mark McKinney has announced that he will retire on June 30, after 33 years in the education field and 31 in the Rockcastle County school system.

McKinney has spent the last ten years at Brodhead school, eight and half of those as principal. Before that he was assistant principal.

Under McKinney's direction, Brodhead has consistently had the best test scores in the county and some of the highest in the state.

Rockcastle County School Superintendent Larry Hammond said that he had received eight applications for the job. The deadline is

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Contracting tobacco big threat to farmers

After tears and testimonials over tobacco funds, Kentucky's House leadership sent the highly controversial legislation, House Bill 611, to their Senate counterparts for consideration. But how to spend the tobacco settlement funds is "the biggest agricultural challenge" facing Kentucky's Senators next week.

Contract tobacco farming is the real threat to end profits for Kentucky's thousands of small family tobacco farms.

Senator Ernie Harris' legislation, the Tobacco Farmer Protection Act,

will protect small and large tobacco farmers from the predatory practices of contracting and is a reason to Philip Morris' announcement of a pilot program in contract tobacco this season.

"The goal is to protect the small tobacco farmer," said Harris in an interview with the *Courier-Journal* last week.

The Tobacco Farmer Protection Act is a collaboration of efforts from several farm organizations. Agriculture leaders realize that without some

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County to be sued over Toddy Payne road action

By: Richard Anderkin

It is amazing how much controversy a virtually impassable road in Rockcastle County can cause.

On Tuesday, the Rockcastle County Fiscal Court heard arguments from many local residents concerning the Toddy Payne Road at Pine Hill.

Those residents complained about landowner Mike Gates' attempt to have the county close the road, although Rockcastle County Judge-Executive Buzz Carlotis repeatedly told the group that the court was behind their efforts to keep the road open.

Two months ago the court voted to leave the road open, although Gates had requested that the county close it.

Gates and his wife Lori have purchased 800 acres, which lies along the Toddy Payne Road between Pine Hill and Maple Grove.

They are in the process of building a retreat for the blind and physically disabled.

Gates, who was blinded himself in a hunting accident eleven years ago, asked Judge Carlotis a few months ago to close the road for several reasons.

Gates says the road splits his property and that people use the road to illegally dump garbage and so, Gates says, use the road to get to their marijuana patches.

Gates said that when he began clearing his property he built a quarter mile of new road from the blacktop off Toddy Payne into his property.

"That portion of the road was almost unpassable itself and because we needed to work in the area, we did the work ourselves," Gates said Tuesday.

During Tuesday's court meeting several of those in opposition to closing the road told Carlotis and the Fiscal Court that they were being pushed around by somebody with money.

Several people also pointed out that Gates had blocked the road with dirt piles between the blacktop off Toddy Payne and a cemetery that is on Gates' property.

They said that Gates had also locked a gate on the road at the entrance to his property on Toddy Payne Road on several occasions.

One man suggested the county tear down the gate at the entrance to Gates' property with a bulldozer and another person said citizens should block the road with dirt on the blacktop portion of the Toddy Payne Road so that Gates would not have access to his property.

Carlolis told the group that the county road crew would fix the portion of the road where the dirt piles were on Wednesday morning.

But Carlolis also said the case was headed to Circuit Court and that he really couldn't do much else.

Magistrate Donald Bullock, whose district the road is in, is also in opposition to closing the road and said he had several complaints about the gate being locked.

Carlolis said Gates cooperated with the county on Wednesday morning to fix the road between the blacktop and the cemetery, but Carlolis said Gates told him he was seeking an injunction against the county so they could not work on it while the matter was in Circuit Court.

Gates' attorney, Jerry Cox of Mt. Vernon, said a suit would be filed on Wednesday against the county for

several reasons, and Cox said that Gates was well within his rights to seek closure.

"Mr. Gates owns all property that lies along that road and no one would be landlocked by its closure and as far as we can tell the road has never been on the county work program," Cox said.

Judge Carlolis said his administration had worked the road from time to time from the blacktop to the cemetery, but not beyond that point.

Since 1992 the road has been referred in the minutes of the fiscal court and in every recording there is no mention of the road being accepted as a county road.

In fact on December 18, 1992, the minutes read that the road "is not a qualified county road."

And on August 3, 1993 the minutes read, "The court discussed the fact that this road is not on the county road work program and that the county has no interest in the road concerning closure."

Gates has said that he would allow access to the cemetery and that he would even provide money to clean the cemetery up and maintain it, something that hasn't been done in quite some time.

Gates also said that if the road was not closed, those attending his retreat would be put in danger by traveling along the road. "I simply think it is a reasonable request to close a road that I am the only property owner affected - no one will be landlocked and the road is impassable except by horseback or on a four wheeler," Gates said.

Carlolis told the group Tuesday that he would keep them informed

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Eight foot high gates stand at the entrance to the Mike and Lori Gates property at Pine Hill. The Gates are building a retreat and have asked the Rockcastle Fiscal Court to close the road.



The Rockcastle County road department gravelled a portion of the Toddy Payne Road at Pine Hill Wednesday morning. In the photo is landowner Mike Gates who wants the road closed.