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FOOTBALL SEASON PREVIEW • THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2010

2010 FOOTBALL PREVIEW AND EXPANDED SPORTS COVERAGE INSIDE

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- TC Taylor
- Willard Charles Mapp
- Shirley A. Hutto
- Geneamo “G” Burton
- Atherton Brett Jr.
- Johnny Chapman Sr.

The

Wayne County

News

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# WCSD probe reports of missing man

By Sean Dunlap

Local authorities are looking into the case of a 35-year-old Wayne County man, who had been missing since Thursday, Aug. 12, and whose body might have been found on Country Road 242 in Clarke County near the Jasper County line around 8:30 p.m., Tuesday night. The Wayne County Sheriff's Department confirmed a missing persons report had been filed involving Joe Michael Ruffin, but authorities had not made



Ruffin

an official statement as to whether or not the body found in neighboring Clarke County was that of Ruffin. Family members indicated to media outlets late Wednesday that the body was indeed that of the missing local man. “Ruffin was last reported seen at a relative's house on Martin Luther King Drive in Waynesboro around 11 p.m., last Thursday night, said WCSD Investigator Kevin Stevens. Ruffin, who was last reportedly seen driving a 2003 Cadillac DeVille, was said to be headed to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

See Ruffin, Page 8A

# WPD makes arrest in hit-and-run incident

By Sean Dunlap

The Waynesboro Police Department has arrested a 21-year-old Wayne County man in connection with a Friday, Aug. 6 hit-and-run incident on Rankin Street. WPD Chief Jimmy Bunch said his agency took Stevie Cooley of Pugh Road into custody and charged him with a misdemeanor count of leaving the scene of an accident. Authorities said James Terry Miller was reportedly walking along Rankin Street and was talking to someone when he was struck by an automobile around 10 p.m. “When Miller was hit, the vehicle involved allegedly sped off and left the scene,” Bunch said. “(Miller) was hit so hard that it knocked

him out of his shoes.” Miller was taken to Wayne General Hospital in Waynesboro for his injuries, which police said were mostly bruises and lacerations, and were considered not life-threatening. “Because the accident did not result in serious bodily injuries to Miller, state law mandates that Cooley be charged with a misdemeanor rather than a felony in connection with the case,” Bunch said. The chief credited WPD personnel Chris Harris and Spencer Davis in helping bring the case to a close, and Wayne County Sheriff's Deputy Michael Patton, who took Cooley into custody for the police department.

See Arrest, Page 3A

# Supervisors set public hearing on FY 11 budget

By Sean Dunlap

The Wayne County Board of Supervisors will take up the local public school system's request for \$812,000 in additional support through a possible ad valorem tax increase during a community budget hearing scheduled for early next month. The five-member panel will also make final adjustments regarding the budgets for county agencies — everything from the sheriff's department to garbage collection — to prepare a finalized revenue and spending plan for fiscal year 2011, which begins on Oct. 1. The annual public hearing regarding the county's proposed budget will be held at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 7 in the Supervisors' Board Room at the Wayne County Courthouse. Comptroller Sylvia Chancellor told The Wayne County News recently that most agencies held the line or actually reduced their revenue requests for fiscal year 2011. “We made it clear throughout the year that we were going to be working with some tight budget numbers,” Chancellor said. “Wayne County has been fortunate in that we have been conservative with our spending and with our revenue estimates ... we're not in the same situations as other counties and government agencies elsewhere that are facing serious funding problems.”

## Hearing set Sept. 7

The Wayne County Board of Supervisors will hold its annual budget hearing beginning at 9 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 7 in the Supervisors' Chambers at the Wayne County Courthouse in Waynesboro. The meeting is open to the public, and residents will be allowed to voice their opinions on the county's FY 2011 revenue and spending plan.

See Hearing, Page 5A

# Cheering on the War Eagles and Jaguars



Paul Keane and Sean Dunlap/The Wayne County News  
The Waynesboro Elementary School Pep Squad, pictured above, and the Wayne Academy pee wee cheerleaders, at left, took part in the annual “Meet the War Eagles” and “Meet the Jaguars” pre-season programs, respectively, in Waynesboro on Thursday, Aug. 12. Photos from both events can be found on Pages 3B and 4B of today's edition of The Wayne County News. Also appearing in today's newspaper is the annual Gridiron publication spotlighting area varsity football teams from Wayne County High School and Wayne Academy as well as middle school teams from Beat Four, Buckatunna, Clara and Waynesboro Middle School. The football season for WCHS starts Friday on the road against Laurel High School with kickoff set for 7:30 p.m., and WA will travel to Toxey, Ala., to face off against South Choctaw Academy at 7 p.m.

# School board splits vote on funds request

County's public education system asking for \$812,000 hike through ad valorem taxes

By Paul Keane

By a 3-2 vote last Wednesday night, the Wayne County Board of Education approved a measure to ask for an \$812,000 increase in ad valorem tax revenue for the public school system's budget year. After looking at various options and alternatives, School Board District 1 representative Leah Parson rescinded her motion from the Monday, Aug. 2 meeting requesting an increase in tax revenue from property owners and those purchasing automobile tags, the two things that produce ad valorem tax revenue. Parson then put forth a motion asking that the ad valorem tax revenue be increased to \$4,472,604.49, an increase of \$812,000 over last year's request of \$3,660,604.49. The measure passed by a 3-2 vote, with District 2 representative Sybil Taylor and Charles Chapman of District 3 voting against the measure. The increase has been brought about by various factors, including cuts in state funding and the need to build up a reserve so that the school district does not fall into receivership where the state could take over control of the district because of financial insolvency. The increase millage on property, homes and car tags means that a home valued at \$34,780 in the county would see property taxes increase by \$24 per year. A home valued at \$109,060 within the city limits of Waynesboro will see a tax increase of \$65 per year. Someone driving a 2008 Lincoln MKX would see the cost of a car tag increase by \$39 per year. Superintendent of Education Robert Dean presented the school board with six courses of action involving tax increases, cutting more timber, furloughing all 535 district employees for one or two days or combinations of those measures.

See Funding, Page 5A

# State Line seeking vendors, entertainment for Oct. 2 festival

By Sean Dunlap

The Town of State Line's Beautification Committee has announced plans for its annual fall festival, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 2 in the community square. The committee is presently

seeking vendors that want to take part in the community celebration, according to Kathy Hinton, who is helping coordinate the event. “This year's booth fee will be \$55 for locations with water and electricity, and \$35 for a regular vendor space,” Hinton said. “Vendors should contact State Line Town Hall at 601-

848-7755 for registration information.” Hinton said for those who were vendors at last year's festival, a registration form is being mailed with additional contact numbers for the committee members. “We would really like to have a number of vendors from throughout

the area to take part because this is one of our larger community-themed events in State Line,” Hinton said. In addition, local entertainers are currently being sought to perform on the festival stage throughout the day of the program.

See State Line, Page 3A

## State Line event set

Area vendors and entertainers are being sought to take part in the annual State Line fall festival, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 2 in the town square. Prospective vendors can call State Line Town Hall at 601-848-7755 for information while prospective entertainers are asked to call Barbara Reynolds at 601-848-7752. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, Sept. 25.

# Aldermen to issue summons to ‘non-compliant’ commercial property owners

By Sean Dunlap

Following a 54-minute discussion involving the need for the city to move ahead with cleaning up dilapidated properties last Thursday night, the Waynesboro Board of Aldermen decided to issue summons to several parcel owners to answer why a sufficient effort has not been made to address city leaders' public safety and health concerns. Aldermen voted 4-0 to have city attorney John Gunn issue summons for owners of the old Downtown Inn and the old Shell service station,

both on Azalea Drive just west of the Wayne County Courthouse, to appear before the board to address concerns about the vacant and reportedly unsafe properties. Ward 3 Alderman Tammie K. Wilson was not present for the meeting, and did not vote on the action. In addition, the panel also asked Gunn to send initial letters to four other commercial property owners asking that they take steps to clean up their structures or sites. Among those locations that will reportedly get initial letters are Chancellor Feed Store on Missis-

sippi Drive, Pinkerton Computers on Azalea Drive at Fagan Avenue, the old McCoy Warehouse (behind the Amoco service station) off Azalea Drive and the old Lomax Tractor Co., building on Azalea Drive near Lomax Avenue. The initial letters from the city ask the property owners to take steps to address concerns about the sites — namely unsafe conditions that could pose a threat to the public or community health and safety. Those getting the summons — according to city leaders — have already received letters from the

municipality to take corrective steps, but have done little or nothing to make changes that would address concerns that have been raised. Ward 2 Alderman Robert “Bobby” Reynolds said he felt the city has not done all it can to address public concerns about unsightly and potentially unsafe properties. “This has been on the agenda time and again, but we really haven't done anything to show people we're seriously about cleaning up the city,” Reynolds said. “Now, we're going to get down to business and do what should have been done a long time

ago.” Gunn said the city's initial efforts in addressing clean-up concerns centered primarily on commercial properties. “Our policy has been to send letter asking that action be taken, and if nothing is done, we can ask the property owner to come in for a hearing about why nothing has been done,” Gunn noted. “We had sent letters to a number of businesses asking that something be done, and it looks like one party did something.”

See Clean-up, Page 8A



# Clean-up

Waynesboro Zoning Director Ken Roberts said the owner of the old Eagle Truck Stop, which was also known locally as Britton's and the "76" station — on Mississippi Drive near the Bryant-Turner Head Start Center — has made an effort to clean up the location, but that other property owners had taken little, if any, corrective action.

"Some little things look like they have been done in the other locations, but the concerns that were raised by the city have not been addressed to the satisfaction of the board at the Downtown Inn and Shell station," Roberts said.

Among the problems cited by the board with the Downtown Inn is that the rooms are open to the elements as entrance doors remain open — promoting problems such as vagrancy and the potential for illegal activity inside.

The Shell service station is located near a residential neighborhood and portions of the canopy are falling and the windows and doors are broken and pieces of loose, shattered glass are everywhere.

"This is more than cutting weeds and sweeping up dirt and debris," Roberts said.

"The issue has to do with public health and safety, and the city has certain responsibilities in dealing with properties that are deemed a nuisance," Gunn said.

Gunn said owners of the Downtown Inn, the Shell service station and the Eagle Truck Stop were sent letters with some action requested by June 1.

"These were primarily courtesy letters asking the property owners to work with the city to deal with the problems at the locations," Gunn said.

"There has been no action from the city since those letters went out and the deadline has long since passed."

Ward 4 Alderman Johnny R. Gray questioned as to how much time was specified for corrective action to be taken by property owners in the courtesy letter from the city — which is about 30 days.

"We all get complaints about unkept property in the city, and we need to take action," he continued.

"At the same time, we need to follow the letter of the law when it comes to dealing with these kinds of issues. If someone is not going to voluntarily clean-up like we ask him or her to, and the law is on our side,

then we have to move to the next level."

Mayor Joe Taylor said he has received numerous calls about wanting to see the city spruced up, and said the major effort thus far has focused on commercial properties.

"We wanted to start with the sites that are high profile in the community before we move on to dealing with residential clean-up," Taylor said.

"Once this effort begins, I think people are going to see that we're serious, and they're going to get with the program and clean-up their properties."

"Like everything, you'll have some that won't lift a finger to do what they need to do. But there are actions we can take that will move this process forward."

Roberts indicated the city has a number of residential locations in mind that will need clean-up eventually, but said he agrees with the plan to deal with commercial properties first.

"These are the places that people coming into the city see and wonder why something isn't being done," he said.

"This effort will not happen overnight, and we've got to move one step at a time as specified under the law."

In addition, Gunn indicated the city is not driving the concept of clean-up down anyone's throat, rather the municipality wants to open lines of communications with property owners to spell out what corrective actions can and should be taken.

"We want to give property owners the chance to do what they have to," he said.

"If something is a major hazard to public health, the city has to take actions to address concerned raised by citizens."

Ward 1 Alderman Ben Graves said any clean-up will have to be promoted by the city's leaders to be successful.

"If the property owner won't do something, then the option is for the city to take action and tear it down and put a lien on the property or seek

civil action," Graves said.

"To me, that would make it feasible for the property owner to want to do something on their own rather than face punitive legal action."

Taylor warned that Waynesboro does not have the manpower on its payroll to go onto property deemed a public nuisance and begin tearing things down.

"Our city crews are already pushed to the limit with obligations in keeping up what we have," the mayor continued.

"We would be hard pressed to do too many of these kinds of major outside projects."

Both Graves and Reynolds are promoting the idea of the city having a code enforcement officer — who would have the authority to go out and address public safety issues regarding property within the municipality.

"This would be someone on staff that would go out and have the authority to look for and deal with the problems before they get to the board," Graves said.

"A code enforcement officer would also be a one-stop person for information related to city codes and state statutes."

Taylor, pointing to the city's finances, said he would not favor adding another person to the municipal payroll at this time to handle code enforcement duties.

"I want the city cleaned up as much as you do, but we cannot just run out and hire someone to do this kind of work," he said.

"That's a decision we'll have to think long and hard about."

Gunn said, when it comes down to it, the issue is one that the city should not even have to concern itself with.

"It's just a shame that we have to be put into a position where we have to force someone to clean-up his or her own property," Gunn said.

"It makes you wonder if we have a lack of a sense of pride in our community, and convinces me that the people who actually care are in the minority."

From Page 1A

# Ruffin

From Page 1A

The vehicle containing the body of the yet-unidentified man was described as the same as the one that belonged to Ruffin.

The body will reportedly be

taken to Jackson for an autopsy to determine the victim's identity, and authorities have not made any statements as to what might have caused the individual's death.

# Farm Service Agency report CRP sign-up continues locally through Aug. 27

**Contacting the FSA**

The Wayne-Greene counties office of the Farm Service Agency can be reached by calling 601-735-6651 extension No. 2 or by visiting their offices on Azalea Drive in Waynesboro next to Ramey's SuperValu supermarket.

that assists farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits.

Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers in exchange for rental payments, cost-share, and technical assistance.

CRP protects millions of acres of America's topsoil from erosion, and is designed to improve the nation's natural resources base.

Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years.


In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices.

By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP also protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams.

Acreage enrolled in the CRP is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to wildlife population increases in many parts of the country.

## SUPER FOOTBALL SAVINGS

### NEW 2010 FORD F250 CREW CAB



Lariat - Diesel - Chrome Pkg - Trailer Tow Pkg - Stk#1946	\$50,780
Ford MSRP	\$3,500
Woolwine Discount	\$6,000
Retail Customer Cash	
<b>YOU PAY ONLY</b>	<b>\$41,280*</b>

### NEW 2010 FORD MUSTANG



Automatic - V6 - Pony Pkg - 18" Alum Wheels - Stk#2106	\$27,235
Ford MSRP	\$1,553
Woolwine Discount	\$3,000
Retail Customer Cash	
<b>YOU PAY ONLY</b>	<b>\$22,682*</b>

## PROGRAM VEHICLES

2010 Lincoln Town Car (25 miles - Stk#F0649) \$37,998

2010 Mercury Grand Marquis (LS - 10 in stock - Stk#F9239) Starting@ \$21,498

2010 Lincoln MKZ (3 in stock - Stk#F9667) Starting@\$27,998

2010 Ford Flex (SEL - Stk#F0903) \$27,498

2010 Ford F150's (2 & 4 wheel drive - 8 in stock) \$SAVE

2010 Ford Explorer's (3 in stock - Stk#F4891) Starting@ \$24,498

2010 Ford Expedition (EL - Stk#F3514) \$32,998

2010 Ford Escape (XLT - Stk#F8590) \$23,498

2010 Ford Edge (SEL - 3 in stock - Stk#F1611) Starting@ \$27,998

2010 Ford Mustang (6 in stock - Stk#F6541) Starting@ \$19,998

2010 Ford Focus (2 in stock - Stk#F086) Starting@ \$14,998

2009 Lincoln Town Car's - 6 in stock

2009 Lincoln MKS - 5 in stock

2009 Ford Flex - 4 in stock

2009 Ford F150's - 3 in stock

2009 Ford Escape's - 4 in stock

2009 Ford Taurus - 4 in stock

2008 Ford F150's - 4 in stock

2008 Ford Escape's - 3 in stock



## PRE-OWNED VEHICLES

2009 Ford Escape (XLT) \$20,998

2009 Ford F150 (Super Cab, XLT, 22,000 Miles) \$22,498

2008 Ford Fusion (SE, 24,000 Miles) \$15,498

2007 Nissan Sentra (48,000 Miles) \$11,998

2007 Lincoln Town Car (Signature, Limited) \$18,498

2007 Mercury Mariner (Premium Pkg) \$16,498

2007 Ford F250 (Crew Cab - 4x4 - Diesel) \$29,998

2007 Ford F350 (Crew Cab - Dually) \$30,998

2007 Ford Escape (XLS) \$12,998

2007 Ford Edge (SEL) \$16,998

2007 Ford Crown Vic (LX - Leather) \$11,998

2007 Dodge Charger (33,000 Miles ) \$14,998

2006 Lincoln Town Car (Signature - 45,000 Miles) \$15,998

2006 Ford F150 (Super Cab, 4x4) \$13,998

2006 Ford Fusion (SEL) \$11,498

2005 Mazda RX-8 (49,000 Miles) \$11,998

2005 Ford F150 (Reg Cab) \$7,498

2005 Ford Mustang (Automatic) \$9,998

2005 Ford Mustang (GT - 25,000 Miles) \$16,498

2004 Ford Explorer (XLT) \$9,998

## NEW 2010 FORD ESCAPE



XLT - Power Moonroof - Sync - Stk#2270	\$25,960
Ford MSRP	\$800
Woolwine Discount	\$2,500
Retail Customer Cash	
<b>YOU PAY ONLY</b>	<b>\$22,660*</b>

## NEW 2010 FORD F150 SUPER CAB



XLT - Chrome Pkg - Sync - Trailer Tow - V8 - Keyless Entry - Stk#2242	\$31,665
Ford MSRP	\$1,695
Woolwine Discount	\$2,500
Retail Customer Cash	\$1,000
XLT Bonus Customer Cash	\$1,000
Ford Credit Retail Customer Cash	\$1,000
Promotional Bonus Customer Cash	
<b>YOU PAY ONLY</b>	<b>\$24,470*</b>

\*Must finance thru Ford Credit, WAC, tax + title extra

# WOOLWINE

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