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ISSUE 23 VOLUME 38

FARRAGUT, TENNESSEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 • 1A

Chambers push lawmakers on jobs, childcare, healthcare

Tammy Cheek

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Economic development, education, workforce development, childcare and healthcare were among the number of concerns East Tennessee Chambers of Commerce want addressed in state legislature.

Six area Chambers gathered for a Regional Legislative Agenda Breakfast in Hilton Knoxville Airport, Alcoa, Friday, Jan. 30, to collaborate on what issues they want to bring before Tennessee General Assembly. One of those was Farragut West Knox Chamber, represented by its president/

CEO Julie Blaylock.

"I thought the Blount Partnership did a wonderful job this year hosting the legislative breakfast," Blaylock said. "I thought it was a fantastic event."

"I heard there were 400 to 450 attendees," she said. "Our Chamber was certainly grateful to be represented."

"We brought a contingency of about 40 attendees with us, including our board of directors, Knox County staff, Town of Farragut elected officials and staff, as well as several of our business members. LCUB was with us. Our legislative committee representatives came with us."

"I thought it was a

great morning," Blaylock said. "I thought it was wonderful for them to have Mark Cate [owner of Stones River Group, formerly serving as Gov. Bill Haslam's chief of staff] facilitate questions and answers from the legislators."

With the Regional Legislative Agenda, the document and then the breakfast, "every year there are six Chambers that collaborate to create the legislative agenda document, and each Chamber now takes a turn hosting the breakfast and where it is presented," Blaylock said. This year, Blount Part-

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Photo courtesy of Prince Hyder

Mark Cate, owner of Stones River Group, formerly serving as Gov. Bill Haslam's chief of staff, facilitated this year's Regional Legislative Agenda Breakfast at Hilton Knoxville Airport, Alcoa, Friday, Jan. 30. Six area Chambers of Commerce presented their agenda of concerns to state legislators, such as state Sen. Becky Massey, seated far right, and state Rep. Jason Zachary, seated beside Massey.



Staff photo

Leonard Green & Partners, L.P., a private equity funds manager, completed its purchase of Topgolf Callaway Brands on Jan. 1, 2026. The transaction was valued at \$1.1 billion. Topgolf Knoxville in Farragut was part of the transaction.

Topgolf tees up next chapter

Tammy Cheek

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Topgolf is starting the new year with new ownership in its Farragut location at 11400 Outlet Drive.

"Callaway Golf owned us before, and they still own about 15 percent of the company, which is similar to what it was before we [Topgolf] merged with them back in 2021 or 2022," Topgolf director of sales Aaron Gicking said. "So, we're still going to have all their equipment, the golf balls, the golf

clubs, all of that."

"[Callaway] are definitely more focused on the retail side of things, whereas, we are more entertainment and food and drink," he said.

Still, "I'm very sure they were very happy with everything," Gicking said. "We continued to grow under their leadership, and we're going to continue growing even though we are now with the Leonard Green company now."

"They have a really strong showing for everything they've

done in the past," he said. "We're really looking forward to everything that is coming in the future now that they are here at Topgolf, too."

According to a news report by Ella Masters of News and Events, Topgolf Callaway Brands sold a majority stake in its Topgolf business to a "private equity heavyweight, Leonard Green & Partners."

Leonard Green & Partners,

See TOPGOLF on Page 2A

Options explored to prevent mail fraud

Tammy Cheek

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Five tips to protect against check theft

- Use direct or online payments whenever possible so funds transfer electronically between financial institutions rather than through the mail.
- Mail checks inside the post office, not in outside or drive-up blue collection boxes.
- Avoid residential and business street mailboxes when sending checks; hand mail directly to a postal clerk or carrier when possible.

- Write checks with a black gel pen that uses pigment-based ink, which helps prevent "check washing" and other alterations.
- Monitor bank accounts closely and report suspicious activity immediately to your bank and law enforcement.

would lead us to believe it is occurring daily.

"The numbers we are seeing are just a snapshot of the greater prob-

See MAIL on Page 4A

Knox County election 2026, Candidates share their goals for office

Tammy Cheek

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Almost 70 people attended the Concord-Farragut Republican Club meeting at Fruition Cafe on Thursday, Jan. 5, to hear three candidates seeking Knox County offices. Larsen Jay, Knox County commissioner for At-Large Seat 10, is running for the county mayor's seat. Meanwhile, retired Knox County Sheriff's Office officers Mike

Davis and Brent Gibson are seeking election as sheriff.

Other candidates and public officeholders also attended the Jan. 5 meeting.

They are among the candidates seeking 16 county offices in the Tuesday, May 5, primary election. There also will be 23 state seats and three Farragut seats on the ballot.

See VOTERS on Page 6A



Jay



Davis



Gibson

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Topgolf From page 1A

L.P., a Los Angeles-based private equity investment firm has acquired many companies, such as Whole Foods, Petco and David's Bridals, Gicking said.

Master stated in her article, "The deal values Topgolf at approximately \$1.1 billion — a significant drop from the implied about \$2 billion valuation when the two companies merged in 2021."

"Callaway is selling a 60 percent controlling interest to Leonard Green & Partners but will retain a 40 percent minority stake," she stated. "Callaway expects to pocket roughly \$770 million in net proceeds, which will likely be used to pay down debt and buy back stock."

"The deal is expected to close in the first half of 2026," Masters added. "When Callaway fully acquired Topgolf in 2021, the thesis was synergy: Callaway would own the equipment, and Topgolf would own the new wave of casual golfers. It was supposed to be an unbeatable ecosystem. So what went wrong?"

"Despite Topgolf's popularity, building massive entertainment venues is expensive," she stated. "The capital-intensive nature of Topgolf weighed heavily on Callaway's balance sheet, dragging down the stock price even when the equipment side was performing well. Investors grew tired of the volatility."

Also, Masters added, "Callaway is a premium equipment and apparel company — think drivers, Odyssey putters and Travis Mathew."

"Topgolf is a hospitality and entertainment business," she stated. "Managing both under one roof proved difficult with distinct operating models that didn't blend as seamlessly as hoped."

"Once the deal closes, the parent company will rebrand," Masters stated. "Topgolf Callaway Brands will disappear, and the company will revert to its classic name, Callaway Golf Company."

"Even the ticker symbol is going back to its roots," she stated. "They are ditching MODG (Modern Golf) and bringing back CALY. This signals a clear message to the market: Callaway is refocusing on what it does best — mak-

ing world-class golf clubs and balls."

"For the average golfer," Master stated, "don't expect your local Topgolf to close. In fact, private equity ownership often brings an injection of cash to streamline operations, which could mean better service or refreshed technology at venues."

"For Callaway loyalists, this is good news," she stated. "With the distraction of running a massive venue business removed, Callaway can pour its resources back into R&D. We might see even more aggressive innovation in the equipment space as they look to defend their market share against Titleist and TaylorMade."

In all, Masters stated, "This split proves that in the golf business, 'bigger' isn't always better. The synergy of 'on-course' and 'off-course' golf sounded great in a boardroom, but the market clearly prefers a specialist."

"Callaway is betting that by cutting Topgolf loose, it can unlock the value that has been trapped in their stock for years," she added. "It's a bogey on the merger, but hopefully, a birdie for the future strategy."

Still, Gicking said, "Nothing with Topgolf is changing. Everything is still going to be as great as anything."

"We're still going to have the same great culture," he said. "We're going to continue expanding."

"I know there were talks of doing upward of five new venues a year across the United States," he said. "We have four in Tennessee, and they're continuing to grow and expand across the United States, and we've got several that are international venues as well."

At Topgolf, its customers can expect more competitive prices.

"We understand that there's a lot more competition now than when Topgolf first opened, not just here," Gicking said, noting at the first Topgolf that opened, there are six eat-and-play locations.

"We're going to continue doing everything we can," he said. "We've got new menu changes every couple of months. They're constantly looking at ways to give us better prices to our players who are coming to the venue so they can get more bangs for their buck."

Letter to the editor

Editor:

Missing from the Mail Theft article is how the thieves got into the drive up mailbox. Can you please follow up on this?

Also, related, I lived in Silicon Valley in 2004 when our neighborhood was hit by a rash of mailbox thefts. Thieves

would simply empty mailboxes in front of our homes hoping to find checks or financial information to steal.

I led an effort to convince my neighborhood of 400 homes to replace our mailboxes with locking mailboxes.

This helped but we still had a few instances of thieves using

tools to break into the locked mailboxes.

I mention this story because I fear we're going to see the same behavior in Farragut. Be forewarned.

Jeff Johnson
Farragut
408-718-7095

KCSO police reports

• A theft and fraud case is under investigation after a check was reported stolen from a Farragut post office earlier this month. According to the Knox County Sheriff's Office, a person of interest in a red SUV yelled at the complainant before throwing a can from the vehicle, striking the complainant's car and leaving a small dent near the driver's side door. Surveillance footage showed the suspect vehicle, a red Ford, leaving the scene, but the driver could not be identified. The case remains under investigation.

• A woman reported damage to her vehicle Jan. 22 while

attempting to get gas at a station on Brooklawn Street. According to the Knox County Sheriff's Office, a person of interest in a red SUV yelled at the complainant before throwing a can from the vehicle, striking the complainant's car and leaving a small dent near the driver's side door. Surveillance footage showed the suspect vehicle, a red Ford, leaving the scene, but the driver could not be identified. The case remains under investigation.

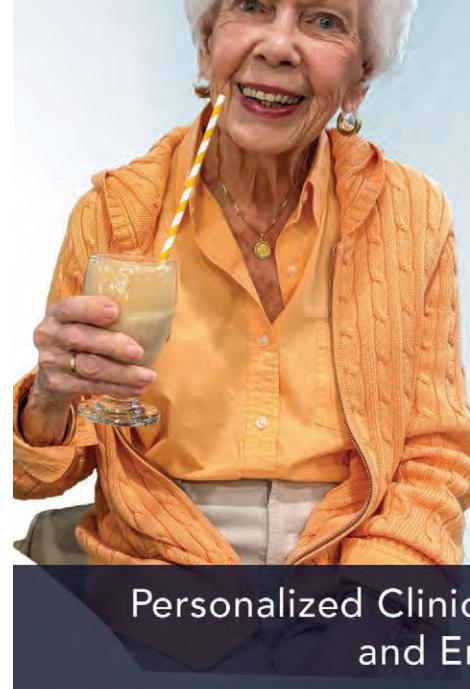
• Deputies responded Jan. 27 to a reported burglary at an apartment on Vista Terrace Way. Two victims told deputies they had not been inside the unit since late November due to health issues but discovered signs of forced entry and the apartment ransacked upon returning. Multiple items, including fishing equipment, coins and household goods valued at about \$5,000, were

reported stolen. Investigators said there was no record of an eviction, and forensics documented the scene. No suspects have been identified.

• An employee of a Parkside Drive barber shop reported vandalism Jan. 27 after discovering the rear door could not be unlocked. Deputies said the deadbolt had been blocked with a foreign substance, causing damage estimated at \$300. Indoor security footage did not show anyone entering the business. The incident is under investigation.

• Deputies responded Jan. 29 to a fraud complaint at a residence on Landing Lane in Farragut. A woman reported she was contacted by phone Jan. 27 by an individual claiming to be with the Federal Trade Commission who told her she had arrest warrants out of Texas for money lau-

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Libelous & malicious comments will not be published; profanity will be edited out • Comments are anonymous

Names of individuals (including public figures) will not be published

Letter to the Editor rules: Must not exceed 400 words • Include name, address & telephone number to be verified

All Letters to the Editor from any citizen must have a minimum four-week period between publication

Must not have inaccurate information, such as wrong statistics, from which to form an opinion

We reserve the right to reject publication based on factors including threats, name-calling and foul language

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Chambers

From page 1A

nership hosted the event.

"We got involved in it about three or four years ago," she said. "So, for 30 years, it was the Knoxville Chamber, the Blount Partnership and the Oak Ridge Chamber."

Then, the FWKCC was added a few years ago. Anderson County Chamber also joined in, and this year Loudon County Chamber joined the group.

"We all work together on the legislative agenda, which, for us, is the most important piece," Blaylock said.

During the annual breakfast, "we come together and look at critical issues affecting all of our businesses in our communities at large," she said. As Chambers, "we are very focused on issues that matter to businesses and their workforce."

She explained the agenda breaks out into different sectors, such as economic development, education, workforce development, healthcare, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and small business.

"But we've added some sections the last couple years," Blaylock said. "Last year, we added a separate section on childcare."

"That used to be wrapped up in another section, [but] we felt it had become such a big issue for many of our employers and their employees that it needed its own section," she said.

Mail

From page 1A

lem," Glenn said. "We have a regional sorting center locally. The reports we see only apply to the victims who reside within in our jurisdiction."

"The local USPS regional sorting center processes mail for a much larger geographical area," she said. "There are reports in other counties and states that we are

not notified about."

Glenn added the main reason for the frequent occurrence of mail theft and fraud is "likely financial gain with minimal risk."

"Our investigations have found that this type of financial theft is less of a single-individual crime and more of a larger criminal conspiracy," she said. "The USPS system becomes the easiest source to obtain checks. Regardless of how

ment. Adult Protective Services was notified, and the case remains under investigation.

• A Farragut man reported Jan. 29 that a check he mailed earlier in the month had been altered and fraudulently deposited. According to the report, the check was mailed from a Farragut Post Office at 11409 Municipal Center Dr. and later deposited at a bank after the payee's name was changed. The loss totaled \$1,900. The incident was reported at a county government building, and the case is being investigated

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To avoid becoming a victim, Glenn recommended "the best option is to use direct payment."

"Most companies allow online or direct payments that go from one financial institution to another," Glenn said. But, "if you are going to mail checks, go inside the post of-

fice. Avoid using the drive-up blue box containers."

She also warned residents to "avoid mailing checks from your residential or business street mailbox. In some cases, hand the mail directly to the mail carrier."

Similarly, resident Alicia Payne offered this advice to people writing checks: "My husband uses a Uni-ball and has for years since he first read about it."

• A Farragut woman reported Feb. 3 that her identity was used to open unauthorized financial accounts. The complainant said she received a letter at the beginning of January and emails indicating that a credit card and debit card account were opened using her personal information but did not realize what the correspondence was until Jan. 28. She reported she did not authorize the accounts and believes her identity was compromised. The case is under investigation.

Report

From page 2A

dering, drug trafficking and other offenses involving law enforcement. The caller said she would be arrested unless she paid money. The victim was instructed to withdraw cash from multiple bank accounts and later handed over a large amount of money to the suspect who arrived at her home. The woman's bank identified the situation as a scam, froze the account and advised her to contact law enforce-

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Boosting non-profits public relations

Tammy Cheek

tcheek@farragutpress.com

East Tennessee non-profit organizations can learn hands-on public relation strategies to boost their visibility, donor engagement and community support.

Ripley PR, an award-winning public relations agency in Maryville, will host AMPLIFY GOOD, a free, interactive workshop designed to help East Tennessee nonprofit organizations strengthen their brand, increase visibility and advance their mission, according to Casey Beaman, media relations specialist with Ripley PR.

The event will take place Tuesday, March 3, from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Blount County Public Library, 509 N. Cusick St. in Maryville.

"Many nonprofits are doing incredible work but don't always have the time or training to share their story in a way that reaches the right audiences," said Heather Ripley, Ripley PR founder/CEO. "AMPLIFY GOOD is our way of giving back to the East Tennessee community, sharing what we've learned so organizations can strengthen their messaging, build credibility and turn visibility into stronger donor support for their mission."

"The workshop is open to area nonprofit organizations in East Tennessee that want to increase awareness and strengthen fundraising through strategic public relations," he said. "Space is limited to 100 nonprofits, and advanced registration is required. Nonprofits interested in attending must apply by Friday, Feb. 20, as applications will be reviewed and accepted organizations will be notified in advance."

"AMPLIFY GOOD will feature hands-on training led by Heather Ripley, founder and CEO of Ripley PR, along with senior members of the Ripley PR team," Beaman said. "Attendees will gain direct access to award-winning PR expertise and learn practical strategies they can immediately apply to improve visibility and donor engagement.

"Backed by global recognition and industry awards, Ripley PR delivers proven media relations expertise to nonprofits and purpose-driven organizations," he added.

Workshop topics include PR strategy planning tied to fundraising goals, media interview preparation for nonprofit leaders, messaging frameworks for mission-driven storytelling and visibility in AI-driven

search platforms.

"Ripley PR has worked with dozens of nonprofit organizations and global foundations, helping them raise awareness, build credibility and support long-term fundraising initiatives," Beaman said.

The session will be interactive, allowing participants to ask questions, share challenges and receive real-time feedback.

Beaman said attendees will gain clear next steps to improve nonprofit visibility, stronger messaging to support donor trust and fundraising, practical guidance they can apply immediately and feedback and insight from Ripley PR senior members.

Eligible organizations must be Knoxville-area 501(c)(3) nonprofits, operating for at least three years, with an annual budget between \$250,000 and \$3 million and able to attend in person. Due to limited space, applications will be reviewed and accepted organizations will be notified in advance.

As an added benefit, Beaman said the first 20 approved registrants will receive a complimentary 10-minute communications audit with a Ripley PR senior member, conducted immediately after the workshop.



Photo submitted

Rob Slaughter, left, and Seth Norris, media relations specialists with Ripley PR, will be on hand to help nonprofits with their public relations needs at the free workshop.

"When nonprofits understand how to communicate their impact effectively, it doesn't just lead to more visibility, it leads to stronger fundraising and greater sustainability," Ripley said.

To learn more or to apply for AMPLIFY GOOD, visit: <https://www.ripleypr.com/blog/nonprofit-workshop/>

Ripley PR is an elite, global B2B public relations agency specializing in home service and building trades, manufacturing and franchising. The agency has been recognized by Newsweek as one of the Top PR Agencies of 2024 and by the Merit Awards as Best Communications/PR Agency of 2025.

Women in leadership focus of upcoming Chamber series

Tammy Cheek

tcheek@farragutpress.com

Women who are leaders will highlight Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce's upcoming 2026 Speaker Series, Women in Leadership: Balance | Self-Care | Resilience, which will take place from 4 to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 18, at Embassy Suites, 9621 Parkside Drive.

Starting with casual networking over wine and charcuterie, it will be emceed by Amanda Hara, WVLT-TV anchor, and the panel for the event will feature Chrystal Armstrong Brown, president/CEO of United Way of Greater Knoxville; Tammy White, president/CEO of Leadership Knoxville; and Missy Wallen, Knoxville chairman of Pinnacle Financial Partners. The panel discussion will begin at 4:30 p.m.

While seating capacity is limited, flat-rate tickets are \$25

each for members and non-members alike.

"We really wanted this to be open to the community," she said. "And, even though it's focused on women, the event is open to gentlemen."



Hara

There is a discount option of two tickets for \$40 for members and non-members. Reserved tables of eight can be purchased for \$400 for members only.

Tickets are available at farragutchamber.com, and people need to register as soon as possible by Friday, Feb. 13.

Sponsorships by members also are available at \$350, \$500 and \$1,000 levels. The presenting sponsor is Pinnacle Financial Partners, and the commu-

nity sponsors are Main Event and Lapis Insurance.

Water Into Wine bistro & lounge is sponsoring wine and other beverages (an ID will be required to be served alcohol), and Euphoric Cheese Shop is sponsoring charcuterie.

"This is a little different from what we've done with our speaker series in the past," FWKCC president/CEO Julie Blaylock said. "First of all, it's an after-hours event. We've never done an after-hours style event with our speaker series. I'm excited about that."

They decided to make it an after-hours event "just to see how it changes the mood and how it changes the audience, the at-

tendees," she added.

"We wanted to do an event that was framed, kind of, as a conversation," Blaylock said. "We've seen, for decades now, women are entering the workforce in increasing numbers, holding positions of seniority within various industries and companies.

"Yet, at the same time, we still see the challenges of being a female in the workforce, especially as your role and your responsibilities rise and still have to juggle the demands of children, especially when it comes to the lack of childcare options and affordability," she said. "Children, households and all the other silent demands that may not seem obvious but are

there and how to balance it all in the modern world, how to maintain and build your own individual resilience so that you can continue to perform professionally, reach those goals you might have in your career and, yet, still meet all the goals and responsibilities you have on the personal side.

"So, we asked three female executives at different industries and different stages of their careers to come and sit and be part of this conversation that's facilitated but with audience Q & A, to just talk about this topic, just share their story and share their experiences and just give what guidance they can," Blaylock said.



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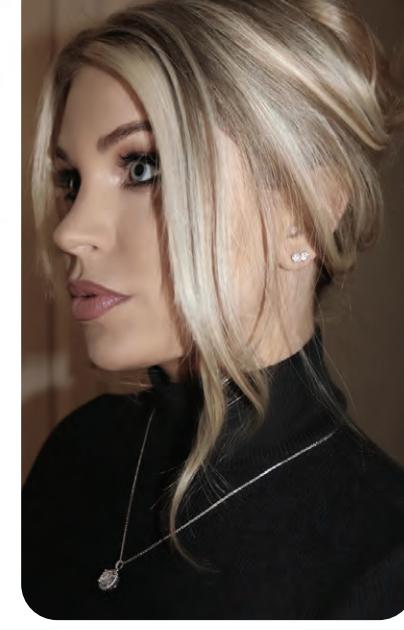


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Voters

From page 1A

The Knox County candidates said they must address concerns including traffic congestion, jail overcrowding, education and public safety.

"Now is a critical time in our community, and it's an opportunity for us to invest in good leadership," Jay said. "It's going to require good common sense, conservative leadership that keeps Knox County strong, safe and prosperous and moving in the right direction as we continue to grow."

"For eight years, I've served as your at-large commissioner, and you put your trust in me to represent everyone across Knox County," he said. "I'm very proud of the work that we've accomplished."

"In that time, we've invested in new schools, raised pay for our deputies and supported critical infrastructure

projects," Jay said. "We've done that all while keeping taxes low."

"This race is not going to be about the next four or eight years," he added. "It's going to be about the next 20 or 40 years because the next Knox County mayor will be at a critical junction of growth and opportunity, where every decision made will pave the way for decades to come."

"It's also going to set the stage for your kids and grandkids who want to live here and actually can live here," Jay said.

"My priorities are very clear and very focused," he said. "First and foremost: infrastructure first. Everything starts with being able to move people, goods and services, keep traffic moving and avoid excessive congestion."

"Behind that comes safe neighborhoods and strong law enforcement," Jay said. "Nothing

great happens in a growing community without a great law enforcement team."

"Then comes excellence in education," he said. "There is nothing more important to invest in than education. It is our workforce and the future of our community."

Both sheriff's candidates assured there would be increased law enforcement presence in Farragut.

"Also departmental transparency, financial responsibility, school safety, public engagement, recruitment and retention" are among the goals Gibson outlined.

"The most important thing about the Knox County Sheriff's Office is people," he said.

"Not just the people who work for you, but also the people of Knox County. The better our communication and relationship with the community, the better off we'll be."

Gibson worked his way through the ranks of the sheriff's office on patrol and in the SWAT team, serving as the team's commander before retiring in 2024 after 25 years of service.

"I love the Knox County Sheriff's Office, and I love Knox County," Gibson said. "I'm trying to give back to my community every chance I get."

"My goal is to make the Knox County Sheriff's Office the preeminent law enforce-

ment agency in this state," Davis said.

Davis, a retired agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Department of Justice, also worked with the sheriff's office as a corrections officer and deputy.

Davis said his priorities include regular departmental audits, strengthening organized crime and drug units, addressing illegal immigration and responding to homelessness.

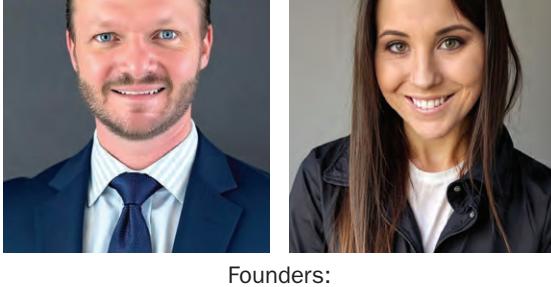
"What differentiates me from any other candidate is leadership," Davis said. "The heart of the organization is who's in charge. Leadership must be transparent, professional and have integrity."

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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sports

FARRAGUTPRESS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 • 1B

Farragut's Laney wins region title to lead wrestling results

Jake Nichols

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Gold and silver TSSAA plaques gleamed inside Farragut's Lynn E. Sexton Gymnasium Saturday with 56 medals laid out beside them.

Given to the team champions, regional victors and sectional qualifiers for each weight class, these awards cut a stark contrast to the bloody noses, twisted knees and general scrapes and bruises suffered by wrestlers in the 2026 Region 2-AA meet on Feb. 7.

Fourteen of those medals went to wrestlers from the Farragut area, signifying their ranking as they advance to next week's sectional round.

Of those 14, only one shone gold, and it went to Farragut High School's Jonathan Laney after his Region AA title in the 138-pound class.

In his championship bout, Laney defeated Halls' Boaz Whaley to avenge his loss to the same wrestler in the Region 2-AA Duals meet on Jan. 21 at Hardin Valley.

"I was pretty pumped," Laney said. "I was super tired, but with that adrenaline rush, it felt awesome to hear the crowd screaming for me."

He led a Farragut team that saw

six wrestlers advance to next week's sectional round. Laney is the sole returner for FHS, as he will look to clinch his second consecutive trip to the state tournament. Other Admiral sectional qualifiers include three third-place finishes in Fletcher Haddad (150), Izaac Koga (175) and Zach Gonzalez (215) and two fourth-place wrestlers in Graham Corn (113) and Declan Crecy (165).

Haddad defeated Oak Ridge's Adam Englehardt to clinch third while the same was true of Koga against Maryville's Seth Smithson and Gonzalez over Oak Ridge's Jose Shipp.

Corn fell to Hardin Valley's Jacob

"I was super tired, but with that adrenaline rush, it felt awesome to hear the crowd screaming for me."

~ Jonathan Laney

Barber, who claimed third in that bracket for the Hawks while Crecy lost to Powell's Clint Fisher by fall.

Hardin Valley advanced seven wrestlers to next week, including Barber and Rosario Arce, who finished third

See LANEY on Page 2B

Farragut pushes, Bearden prevails



Jake Nichols

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Friday, Jan. 16, both Farragut teams struggled against Bearden in their first meetings this season.

Three weeks later, they pushed valiantly for different results.

Neither the Lady Admirals' hot start nor the Ads' late run proved quite enough, however, as the Bulldogs swept FHS in two matchups on Friday, Feb. 6, to lock up the top seeds in District 4-4A.

BHS won 64-58 in the girls' game, storming back from a 12-point deficit. And Jeremy Parrott's Bearden squad won 70-57, holding off a Farragut team that trimmed a 23-point margin to as little as eight.

Natalya Hodge led the Lady Bulldogs with 29 points while MC LeMarbre put up a career-high 25. They outscored a Farragut team that nailed a whopping 11 3-pointers, eight in the first half with four each from Zoe Porter and Gabbie VanAcker.

"Basketball is a simple game," Bearden girls coach Justin Underwood said. "The team that wins is the one that plays harder and wants it more, and I think (Farragut) did in the first half. They shot the lights out of it, and their fans and kids were into it. But I felt like we started picking away at it in the third quarter. We know what we get in Natalya, but I thought MC was a huge lift for us."

For FHS, VanAcker scored 18 on six triples. The last one brought FHS back within two with 1:47 left before a late turnover allowed Bearden to salt the game away.

Lady Ads coach Jason Mayfield noted the output marked a result of VanAcker's hard work, as it was her greatest total since returning from a brutal knee injury.

Meanwhile, Porter totaled 15 with 14 from KJ McNealy to put her alongside FHS guard Parker Lane in the 1,500-point club.

Neither Lane's output nor Dan Lanning's 19 points were enough to stymie Bearden in the boys' matchup, as Justin Nordin led the Bulldogs with 31 points on the night.

"He made a bunch of shots early and got us going," Parrott said. "The way they were guarding him,

See FARRAGUT on Page 7B

HVA splits district road trip at Oak Ridge

Ken Lay

Correspondent

OAK RIDGE — Hardin Valley Academy's basketball teams split a pair of District 4-4A games on the road Friday night, Feb. 7.

The Lady Hawks notched a 64-53 victory over Oak Ridge at Wildcat Arena, avenging a home loss to the Lady Wildcats at home earlier this season.



In the first meeting between the two teams, the Lady Hawks fell behind before nearly pulling off a comeback victory in a 49-43 loss.

"We did a good job digging ourselves a hole and we almost got out of it," Hardin Valley coach Jennifer Galloway said after her team lost to the Lady Wildcats at HVA in January.

The Lady Hawks were behind, 31-28, at Oak Ridge Friday night at halftime, but they quickly seized the upper hand after the break, outscoring the Lady Hawks, 21-5, in the third quarter to open a 49-36 advantage heading into the final frame.

See HVA on Page 7B



Photo submitted

Bearden senior Garrett Bailey, a Louisville signee, won the 1-meter diving championship in the men's division on Saturday.

Gold for Bailey, big night for Aqua Hawks at state

Jake Nichols

jnichols@farragutpress.com

with three other schools for 40th.

HVA took seventh on the men's side with Concord Christian in 14th; Webb in 15th; Bearden 16th; and Farragut in 22nd.

In combined team scores, HVA took sixth at 186 with Webb at 11th (62 points) and Farragut at 15th (42 points).

The Aqua Hawks led the area with 10 top-10 finishes out of 24 events in total.

In the men's 400-meter freestyle relay, HVA took eighth overall at 3:19.19 with Webb at 11th at 3:20.24, Bearden in 14th

See BAILEY on Page 3B

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Defense fuels Webb's rivalry win

Ken Lay
Correspondent

KNOXVILLE — Webb School of Knoxville's girls basketball team got off to a fast start against Cedar Bluff rival Knoxville Catholic at home Friday night, Feb. 6.

And that would be enough to propel the Lady Spartans into the win column against the Lady Irish before a packed and spirited house at Lee Athletic Center in a 56-41 Division II-AA East Region contest.

"I just thought we got off to a great start," Webb coach Greg Hernandez said. "We did a good job on defense. Any time you hold a team to 41 points in a high school game, you should win."

"I thought we did a good job defensively across the board."

The Lady Spartans' defense stifled the Lady Irish throughout much of the contest, although Catholic enjoyed a brief spurt of momentum in the second quarter.

Webb, which led, 20-9, after

the opening frame, went a bit cold offensively in the second stanza, scoring just seven points in the frame. Still, the Lady Spartans held a 27-18 advantage at the halftime break.

Hernandez issued a challenge to one of his players and Kyndall Mays answered.

"I'm so proud of Kyndall," Hernandez said. "I got on her a little bit in the second quarter and halftime and she responded. She's been a little under the weather."

"I'm hard on the team because I want them to be so good."

The coach must have pushed the right button with Mays and the rest of his team.

Webb outscored the Lady Irish, 17-12, in the third quarter and Mays had a big third frame as she scored five of her 11 points in the quarter, helping her team pull away and defeat KCHS for the second time this season.

The Lady Spartans shared the ball well Friday night against Catholic as they boasted a balanced offensive attack.

Meeyah Green and Ivy Napiers also scored 11 points apiece for Webb while Zaniyah Rockett finished the contest with 10 points.

Emery Haws scored a game-high 12 points for the Lady Irish.



Photo submitted

Hardin Valley Academy's Eli Glenn was named to the All-State boys golf team in Class AA, having led HVA to its first state title in the Hawks' first appearance.

Laney
From page 1B

in the 120 bracket by beating Bearden's only sectional qualifier, Jack Cardwell.

HVA's Adriel Roland took second in the 106-pound bracket, losing to Halls' Noah Lance, and William Wimer claimed silver in the 157-lb. lot with a second-place result.

against regional champion Trevor Sexton from Halls. Michael Arce came in second in the 285-pound bracket against Karns' Jesse McGaha, and Hardin Valley saw two fourth-place finishers in Ryder Kolesar (138), who lost to Powell's Camden Sharits, and Samuel Walcott (144), who lost to West's James Martin.

Jake Nichols

Farragut wrestling coaches and sectional qualifiers smile after the conclusion of the Region 2-AA meet on Saturday, Feb. 7, at Farragut High School. Pictured from left to right: FHS head coach Charlie Rohn, 138-pound region champion Jonathan Laney, Zach Gonzalez, Fletcher Haddad, Izaac Koga and Delcan Creecy. Not pictured: fellow sectional qualifier Graham Corn.

Area golfers, runners earn All-State honors

Jake Nichols
jnichols@farragutpress.com

Recently, there were several notable names listed among the Tennessee Sports Writers' Association's golf and cross country selections.

In boys golf, Bearden senior Charlie Culbertson and Hardin Valley senior Eli Glenn were both selected in Class AA.

Culbertson entered the 2025 TSSAA state championship as an individual and finished as the state runner-up. He posted a two-day total of 140, including a 4-under, 68, in the first round. He followed with a 72 on his second day and finished only two strokes back from the state champion, the highest ever individual finish for the boys in school history.

Hardin Valley senior Eli Glenn led the Hawks to the Class AA state championship in their first appearance, shooting 73-68 to earn a tie for third place as an individual.

At the Div. II-A level, Christian Academy of Knoxville sophomore Tyler Stafford was named an All-State selection. He led CAK boys team with a

tie in fifth place at state, shooting 141 over two days.

On the girls' side, Hardin Valley sophomore Addisyn Newman was named All-State in Class AA. She led the HVA team to a second place finish at state and was the state runner-up after shooting 72-69, just one stroke behind the leader. She also led the Lady Hawks to a region championship and medaled in four regular season matches.

In Division II-A, CAK senior Isabella Coughlin was named All-State to end her senior season. Before continuing her career at Western Kentucky, Coughlin finished as a runner-up on a CAK girls team that won the DII-A state title. She shot 74-69 in Sevierville and remained under par throughout the regular season.

CAK will have a notable group coming back, including fellow All-State selection Grady Thomas, who finished with a two-round total of 151 at state — eight strokes behind Coughlin.

In Div. II-AA, Knox Catholic junior Teagan Walker was

See GOLFER on Page 7B



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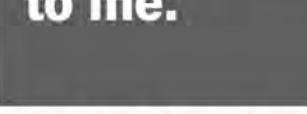
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We will also be discussing the grand opening of the Visit Knoxville Campbell Station Inn Visitors Center, the upcoming Chili Cookoff and future events for 2026.

Please RSVP - hello@shopfarragut.com with the number in your party. We would like to have an accurate count for food and beverage. Questions call 865-274-6431.



Webb pulls away, slams door on Catholic

Ken Lay
Correspondent

KNOXVILLE — The Webb School of Knoxville-Knoxville Catholic High School basketball rivalry is one of the most intense in Knox County and all of East Tennessee.

The two schools, which are separated by just a few miles, renewed acquaintances on the hardwood Friday night, Feb. 6.

The game was contested before a sold-out house at Webb's Lee Athletic Center and after an even first quarter, the Spartans pulled away for a 71-55 victory, completing the regular-season sweep against the Irish.

The game was declared a sell out just seconds before tipoff and the fire marshal required the stop of ticket sales.

"I don't know how you can say there's a better rivalry in Knoxville than this one," Spartans' coach Ricky Norris said. "I mean, you're closing the doors, and this was just a great high school basketball game."

"They're a great team and you have to play well against them to beat them, to win. This was a clean game. I'm sure there was talking because there always is, but this is just a clean and healthy rivalry."

After the opening frame, Webb and the Irish were locked in a 15-15 tie before the

Spartans grabbed the upper hand and opened a 30-25 lead by halftime.

"They came out and did a good job. They smacked us in the mouth," Norris said. "It was a defensive first half and if you loved pitchers' duels then you liked this."

"In the second quarter, we were able to get a little separation."

After halftime, the Spartans (26-2 overall, 6-0 in the region) really pulled away by opening the third stanza with an 8-0 run, fueled largely by a pair of 3-point shots by Wilson Luton and Brayden Hazelbaker.

When asked about his team's effort Friday night, Norris was elated but succinct.

"Proud, just proud, he said. "It just comes down to that."

"This (Catholic) is a team that we have a ton of respect for. We respect their talent and their coaching staff. They've got a good plan and compete really hard, and we know that every time we play them, we have to be at our best."

Webb featured a balanced offensive attack last week against the Irish as Hazelbaker scored 17 points. He was one of four Spartans to post double figures in the scoring column. Owen Lentz added 16 points. Cam Swareengen had 14 points and Houston Torres finished with 13.

Catholic coach Travis Mains

echoed Norris' sentiments about the Cedar Bluff rivalry.

"This was a great game and this is a great rivalry," Mains said. "This was a tight game and they're a great team. It was a physical game."

"It's a close game and then they go on a run or they go on a blitz and then it's over. We were 2-for-12 from beyond the 3-point line and we missed some shots around the rim that we usually make, but a lot of credit for that goes to them because they play so well defensively."

Malachi Brown had 13 points to lead the Irish and Cade Murphy added nine.

Bailey

From page 1B

at 3:21.73 and Farragut in 15th at 3:23.55.

HVA finished in the same spot in the men's 200-yard freestyle relay at 1:29.77 with Webb in 14th at 1:31.46 and Concord Christian after that at 1:32.04.

The Aqua Hawks also led the area in the women's 400-yard freestyle relay, finishing fifth at 3:35.77 with FHS in 11th

at 3:46.03.

HVA took seventh in the women's 200-yard medley relay at 1:48.93, while Hayden Hall and Landon Cleland finished third and sixth, respectively, in the men's 100-yard freestyle.

Cleland also took 11th in the men's 50-yard freestyle at 21.32 seconds while Hall proceeded to take bronze in the men's 200-yard freestyle, as well, at 1:37.48. Behind him was Webb's Dixon Hamilton, who

came in seventh in that event with a fifth-place finish in the men's 500-yard freestyle.

Farragut's Garrett Roberts and Liam Finley took seventh and 13th in that event at 4:42.47 and 4:48.38, respectively, while Webb's Sam Kowalski took 16th at 5:00.38.

In the men's 200-yard medley relay, Bearden took 10th at 1:39.21 with Concord Christian in 12th at 1:39.43 and FHS in 15th at 1:43.05.

Concord Christian's Landon Hall took second in the 100-yard breaststroke at 52.80 seconds, and he finished second in the men's 200-yard individual medley at 1:46.55.

The women's 200-yard individual medley saw HVA's Emma Hackett claim 10th, and teammate Katelyn Dutrow took third in the women's 500-yard freestyle and fifth in the women's 200-yard freestyle.

CAK's Annagail Herzog took

15th in the 500-yard freestyle and placed sixth in the women's 100-yard butterfly.

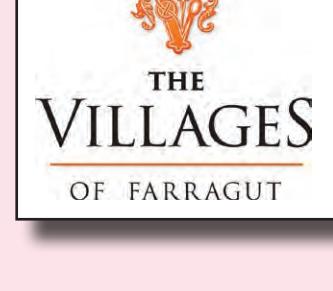
Behind Dutrow in the women's 200-yard freestyle were Webb's Maggie Simpson at 12th and HVA's Caroline Hackett in 15th.

Simpson also placed seventh in the women's 100-yard backstroke at 57.02 seconds while Catholic's Efrosini Kurny placed 13th in the 200-yard backstroke at 1:06.65.

Valentine's Gift Ideas

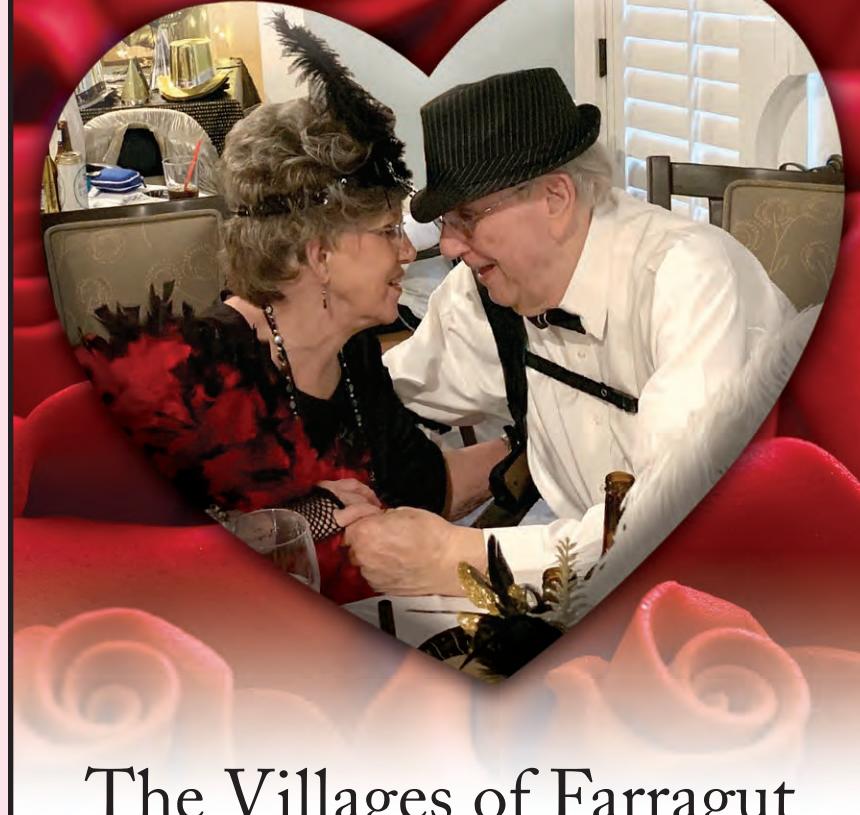
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The Sedonas bring local flair to nationwide audience



Photo by Joey Lax-Salinas

The Sedonas, a band based in Knoxville, has opened for legendary groups, such as the Goo Goo Dolls and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Lead singer and manager James Wike is a Farragut native, as he noted the impact of his native community's support for the group.

Jake Nichols
jnichols@farragutpress.com

If you have attended concerts featuring the Goo Goo Dolls, ZZ Top, Dwight Yoakam, The Steve Miller Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd or even The Who, you may have come across a local band known as The Sedonas.

Founded by Farragut native James Wike, the band features a blend of rock music and Americana roots, blending elements of the blues, country and other genres.

The sound is based on the music Wike grew up listening to, as he noted his idolization of stars, such as Tom Petty and

Bruce Springsteen.

"I got into rap in high school," he said, "but that rock style really formed the foundation of my musical interest."

The only twist? Wike and his bandmates are all under the age of 35, so they bring a younger approach to sounds that have appealed to fans for generations.

It has clearly resonated, though, as they have traveled across the country to open for such notable events — including a date on The Who's final North American tour in 2025.

"I had to break through and get people's attention by continuing to stay on their radar,

just getting them to give us chances," Wike said, adding he has served as the band's manager and lead singer. "A lot of it has just come down to them saying they enjoy our music and wanting to hire us out for shows, then building from smaller to bigger.

"I've got to be really polite about things but also stay on people's radars, and that can be a tricky thing to do," he added. "But I think that's the key to building a connection with folks in this industry."

The band's name came from a Wike family roadtrip to

See **SEDONAS** on Page 5B

Snow day scenes



Photos submitted

As winter weather filled two weekends in a row, farragutpress readers submitted their photos of the snowy scenery.

Clockwise from top left: A snow-covered Virtue Road, submitted by Casey Watkins; a front porch view in Saddle Ridge, submitted by Tracy Turner Vaught; and an excited dog, Hopper, enjoying his snow day in Farragut, submitted by Brittany Barrington Luttrell.

More pictures can be found in the comments on our facebook page at facebook.com/farragutpress, as well as in Westside Faces on page 8B of this week's paper. Thank you to everyone who submitted their photos!

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Sun: Family Bible Hour (9:30 AM)

Sun: Worship Service (11:00 AM)

Recorded Services

Wed: Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (6:45 PM)

Wed: Cultivate (7:00 PM)

On ZOOM

Wed: Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (6:45 PM)

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Above photo by Pat Rogers/Rocksnaps Photography / Right photos submitted

Above: The Sedonas, a local band with one member based in Farragut, has delivered electrifying performances across the country.

Right: Casey Green, the drummer for The Sedonas, attended the University of Tennessee prior to his time in the band. He and lead singer James Wike formed the initial group.

Right, below: James Wike belts out a song during a set for The Sedonas, a band based out of Knoxville. Wike, a Farragut native, is the lead singer and manager for group.

Sedonas

From page 4B

Sedona, Arizona, but Wike and a couple other band mates are plenty familiar with west Knoxville and the support it offers.

Wike graduated from Knoxville Catholic High School in 2016, while his older brother graduated from Farragut High School in 2012.

After receiving his own diploma from Catholic, Wike connected with drummer Casey Green, a Crossville native who attended the University of Tennessee.

Together, the pair released an Extended Play under the Sedonas' name in 2016.

From there, they welcomed Knoxville native Ryan Sise on guitar in 2017 and currently rotate through two different bassists, Sam Fruend and Dre Phelps.

They have played as far as the Palm Desert in California

but have held local shows in Knoxville and Maryville, too. They also have opened for notable acts, such as the Red Clay Strays and The Black Crowes.

Most recently, the band released a live record on Nov. 28 titled, "Opening Selects."

"We've kind of been all over the place," Wike said. "It's extremely rewarding meeting people from all different parts, and with social media now, you have people from across the

country checking in for new music. So that's pretty cool."

Wike noted they plan to return to the studio this year. But as he enters his 10th year in the music business, he noted the journey so far has certainly been fulfilling.

"These artists seem to be extremely happy with where they are in life," he said. "So it shows that when you do something you're passionate about, it will keep you happy for as long as you want to be."



PHOTO BY: MATTHEW VLACHOS

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Jon Day appointed assistant head of school at CAK

Staff Reports

editor@farragutpress.com

The Christian Academy of Knoxville has announced Jon Day, current CAK high school principal, recently appointed assistant head of school.

"Jon has served as CAK's high school principal for the past year, providing steady leadership during a season of transition and growth," a CAK press release stated. "In his time as principal, Jon has earned the respect of both students and faculty through his calm and engaged leadership, thoughtful decision-making and genuine care for the CAK community.



Day

"Students know him as a principal who listens and leads with integrity while teachers value his support, clarity and commitment to academic excellence," the release added.

"Jon has demonstrated exceptional leadership in our high school," head of school Rich Fulford said. "He leads with wisdom, humility and a deep understanding of our mission.

"His ability to build trust with students, faculty and families has been evident from day one, and I am confident he will serve CAK well in this expanded role," Fulford added.

As assistant head of school, Day will continue to support the high school while also working more closely with school leadership to advance CAK's mission, strengthen academic programs and support faculty across divisions.

Poston named to Dean's List

Jonathan Poston, finance major from Farragut, was named to Samford University's Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester.

To qualify for the dean's list, a student must earn a minimum 3.5 grade-point average out of a possible 4.0 while attempting at least 12 credit hours of coursework. The Dean's List is the highest academic recognition given by the school at the end of each semester.

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press planner

• Blue Ridge Yoga is hosting a free Yoga Basics Workshop on Saturday, Feb. 14, at 12:30 p.m., exploring foundational poses in a relaxed environment. There will be space to ask questions, build confidence, and get to know teachers and community. Visit www.yogaknoxville.com to sign up.

• The Farragut Museum has opened a new temporary exhibit on Farragut artists titled "Farragut Focus: A Creative Community." The exhibit features local artists including visual, performing, musical, etc., and will be open through April. The Farragut Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., and admission is free.

• The public is invited to the Town of Farragut Quilt Show, which will take place at the Far-

ragut Community Center Saturday, Feb. 21 through Sunday, Feb. 22. This free event is open to the public from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday.

• The L&N STEM Academy PTSA is hosting a Scholastic Chess Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 21, starting at 8:30 a.m. The tournament will be held at 800 World's Fair Park Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902. Proceeds will benefit the L&N STEM Academy PTSA. Early registration is \$20 by Feb. 11 or \$30 after Feb. 11. Register online at www.reg4chess.com. PTSA will have concessions for sale during the tournament. For more information call 865-567-0569 or email: ColeenMartinez1234@gmail.com

• Visit Farragut will host the eighth annual Songwriters Showcase from 6-8 p.m. Satur-

day, Feb. 21, at Wild Wing Cafe, 11335 Campbell Lakes Drive. This year's event features performances by local singer-songwriters Karen Bowles, David Lauver and Mitch Townley. Tickets are free, but attendees are asked to register in advance at visitfarragut.org/events. A limited number of Songwriters Showcase pint glasses are available to those who register.

• Sunshine Services invites golfers, businesses and community partners to participate in and sponsor the Sunshine Open: \$1,000,000 Hole-in-One Challenge & Golf Tournament on Saturday, March 28, at Avalon Golf & Country Club. Team and corporate sponsorship packages are available. Visit www.sunshineservicesknox.org for registration and sponsorship details.

ragut as an additional insured entity.

Shipley said the event will begin and end at Farragut Primary School, where parking will be available and the staging area will be set up.

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Farragut Board of Mayor & Aldermen Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Workshop

- I. Roll Call
- II. Business Items
- A. Review of FY 26-27 General Fund Draft Base Budget
- III. Adjournment

It is the policy of the Town of Farragut not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, natural origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or veteran status pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Public Law 93-112 and 101-336 in its hiring, employment practices and programs. To request accommodations due to disabilities, please call 865-966-7057 in advance of the meeting.

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MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

- I) Call to Order
- II) Approval of Agenda
- III) Approval of Minutes
- A) Approval of minutes from the January 15, 2026 meeting
- IV) Action Items
- A) Discussion and public hearing on Ordinance 26-06, an ordinance to amend the Farragut Code of Ordinances, Chapter 111 – Stormwater Management Control, Section 111-7, Design Standards for Detention and/or Retention Ponds, to remove the requirement for stormwater detention in the lower portion of a watershed where engineering documentation can demonstrate that this would have a positive effect on overall stormwater management due to the

It is the policy of the Town of Farragut not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, natural origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or veteran status pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Public Law 93-112 and 101-336 in its hiring, employment practices and programs. To request accommodations due to disabilities, please call 865-966-7057 in advance of the meeting.

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Farragut Town Hall | 11408 Municipal Center Drive

FARRAGUT BOARD OF MAYOR & ALDERMEN MEETING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

- I. Roll Call, Silent Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes
- A. January 22, 2026
- IV. Mayor's Report
- V. Ordinances & Resolutions
- A. Ordinances
 - 1. Second Reading & Public Hearing
 - a. Approval of Ordinance 26-02 (recommended for approval by the Planning Commission as Ordinance 25-20), on second reading, an ordinance to amend the Farragut Code of Ordinances, Appendix A - Zoning, Chapter 3, Section XII. - General Commercial District (C-1), Sub-section F. Mixed Use Town Center, 3., Building Facade Requirements, to provide for new buildings to follow the Town of Farragut Architectural Design Standards, as amended, for the Town Center Subarea and remove reference to the Town Center Design Requirements (The Architecture Collaborative, Applicant)
 - b. Approval of Ordinance 26-03 (recommended for approval by the Planning Commission as Ordinance 25-23), on second reading, an ordi-

for approval by the Planning Commission as Ordinance 25-21), on second reading, an ordinance to amend the Farragut Code of Ordinances, Appendix A - Zoning, Chapter 3, Section XVII. Office district (O-1), Subsection B. Permitted principal and accessory uses and structures, to add "Interactive Sports Analysis Services" as a permitted use and to include a definition for "Interactive Sports Analysis Services" in Chapter 2 of the Zoning Ordinance (Christian Miller, Applicant)

c. Approval of Ordinance 26-04 (recommended for approval by the Planning Commission as Ordinance 25-22), on second reading, an ordinance to amend the Farragut Zoning Map to rezone Parcel 05501, Tax Map 152 and Parcel 055, Tax Map 152 (12232 Turkey Creek Road) from Agricultural (A) to General Single-Family Residential (R-2) (Midtown Legal, Applicant)

d. Approval of Ordinance 26-05 (recommended for approval by the Planning Commission as Ordinance 25-23), on second reading, an ordi-

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Golfer

From page 2B

tabbed for All-State after a standout season. She tied for third place at the DII-AA state tournament after shooting 69-72, finishing three strokes behind the leader. She was the top finisher on a Catholic team that earned third place in the class.

The Farragut area also had three selections on the Division II-AA All-State girls cross country team, and they all hailed from Webb School of Knoxville. Twin sisters Calysta and Jazlyn Garner were both selected, finishing off their senior seasons before they continue their careers at Furman.

HVA

From page 1B

Audree Rhien and Sarah Galloway scored 14 points each late last week. Rhien had a double-double as she pulled down 11 rebounds while Galloway, a guard, grabbed seven boards.

Hawks fall to Wildcats: Hardin Valley, which edged Oak Ridge, 70-63, last month at home, came up on the short end of a 76-39 decision Friday night, Feb. 7, in Anderson County.

HVA coach Andy Arendt, who was elated after his squad knocked off the Wildcats earlier this season, was distraught

Calysta Garmer won her second straight Division II-AA state title with a time of 17:05.60. She paced a Spartan team that had four runners in the top 10 for a first-place finish to mark Webb's third team state title in as many years.

Jazzlyn Garmer placed third at state, registering a time of 17:30.34, earning All-State honors as well. Notably, both of the sisters went on to earn All-American status at national events in 2025.

Webb also featured another All-State selection in Carolina Areheart, who penned her next chapter with Vanderbilt cross country. She ended the state meet at 4th overall with a time of 18:07.90.

after the loss to the Wildcats Friday night.

"Tonight was embarrassing," Arendt said. "I thought our effort was decent to start, but once they punched us in the mouth, we just kind of rolled over and took it."

Arendt

"That's the MO with this team. We tend to be front runners. Oak Ridge did a good job working the ball into the post."

Farragut
From page 1B

those are shots he is going to take, and most of the time he'll make them."

Sean Capshaw added 16 points for the Dawgs while Reid Vining and Matthew Dickens scored 12 and 11, respectively, for FHS.

The Admirals' push came after Bearden drew a technical that left Parrott confused and frustrated.

"I was standing on the sideline, and Capshaw comes up and walks around me and says something to me about not thinking he fouled the shooter. He says, 'He's on the court saying that!' But he was walking around me to go sit, so I'm really not sure."

Parrott added his being relegated to the bench brought lapses in communication, thus giving Farragut "some life we shouldn't have given them."

The Ads reeled off a 21-8 run to trim the margin to single digits but could not come



Jake Nichols

Top left: Bearden's Emma Rainey (20) celebrates with teammate MC LeMarbre (11) after LeMarbre hit a layup and drew a foul on Friday, Feb. 6, at Farragut High School. LeMarbre scored a career-high 25 points for the Lady Bulldogs, helping Bearden storm back from a 12-point deficit.

any closer.

"At their place, we didn't even compete. (Friday) we did, and we have improved since

we played them before," Admirals coach J.P. Burris said. "And Dan, to his credit, wasn't scared. He did not back down."

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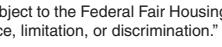
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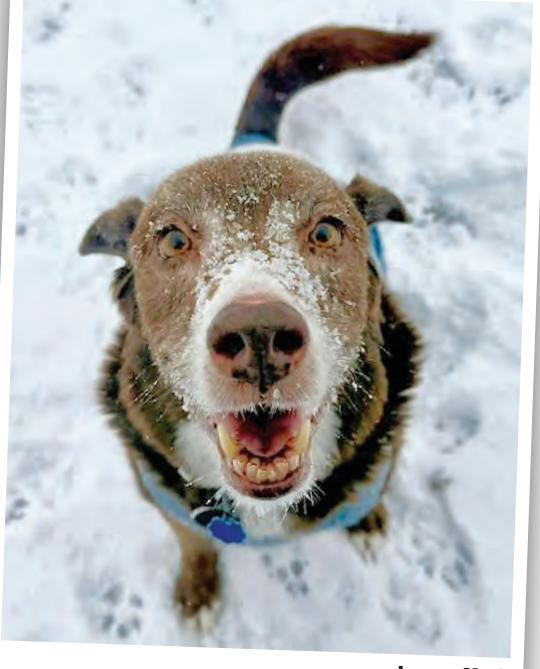
8B • FARRAGUTPRESS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026



Layla McDill



Brittany Barrington Luttrell
Ella Dalton and Andie Luttrell enjoying the snow in Sheffield



Lauren Mack
Vader in Bridgewater neighborhood

WINTER SNAPSHOTS

For two weekends in a row, winter provided the backdrop for the community to experience what is usually reserved for those who live in other parts of the nation. Even the bitterly cold temperatures did not stop kids, families and pets from having some fun. Thank you to all who shared photos on our facebook page.



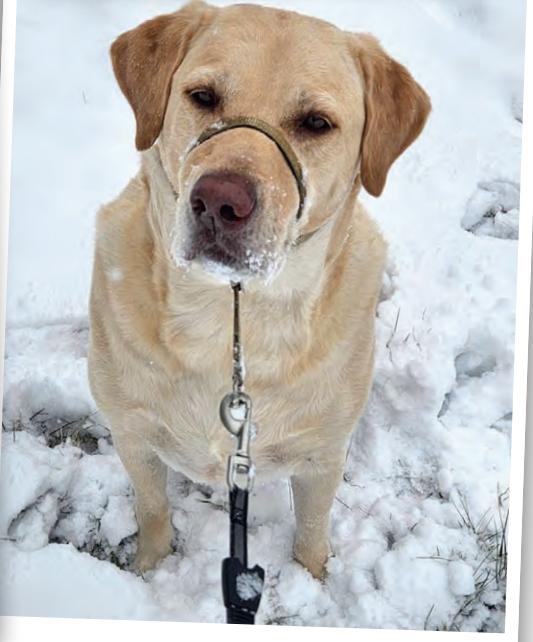
Shaney Carlson
Penelope & her "baby snowman"



Shaney Carlson
Ollie enjoying his snow day



Wendy Bumgarner



Ashley Elizabeth Gober
Scout



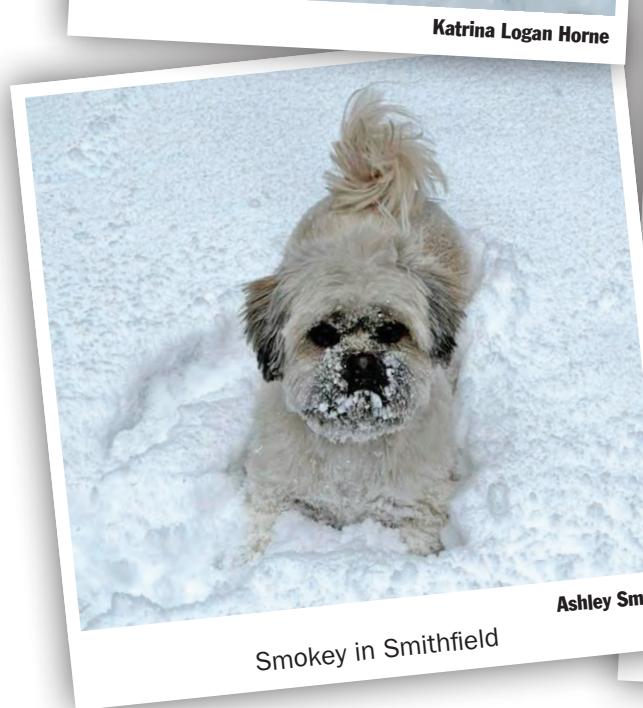
Katrina Logan Horne



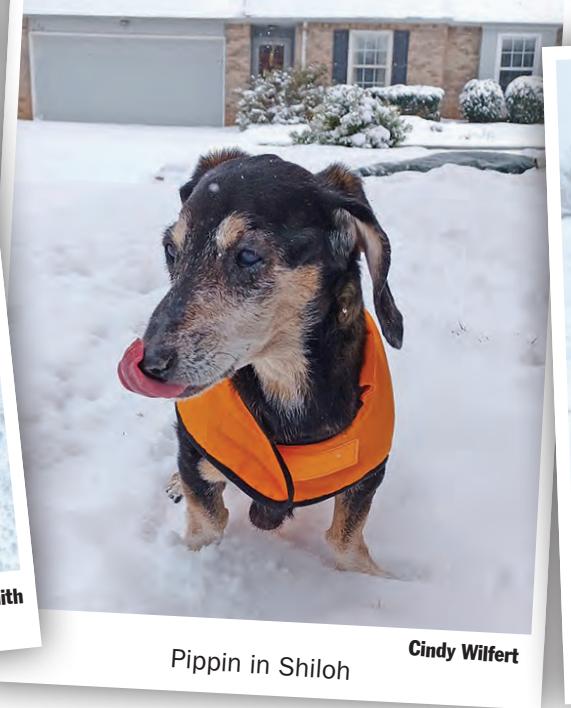
Lauren Mack



Emily Evans



Smokey in Smithfield
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Pippin in Shiloh
Cindy Wilfert



Michelle Proteau Austin

2026 FARRAGUT HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

Presented by



Contributors: Jake Nichols, Alan Sloan

FARRAGUTPRESS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 • 1C



Photo submitted

The Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2026 was inducted on Saturday, Feb. 7, in The Commons at FHS. Back row, from left: Harrison Eldridge, Eddie Courtney, Drew Burnette, Cole Strange, James Thomas and Richard Huff. Front row: Sara Yeager Stokes, Baylee Williams, Katie Green Pinkston, Michelle Brossett and Anna Miller.

FHS Hall of Fame Class of 2026

Jake Nichols

jnichols@farragutpress.com

Saturday, Feb. 7, dozens of lifelong Admirals and well-wishers gathered in Farragut High School Commons for the FHS Sports Hall of Fame's 14th annual induction ceremony.

"This has become one of the bigger events we've had here," Farragut athletic director Donald Dodgen said. "The Hall of Fame committee does such an outstanding job. You look back and see their accolades, either as professional athletes or in business, and a majority of them I've had through here."

The 2026 inductees included a swimming state champion, national champion and 10-time All-American; a 2022

first-round draft pick and current NFL free agent; a four-time All-State soccer player-turned-football punter; a two-time All-State centerfielder and state champion; a track and field standout who is now an aerospace engineer; a four-time All-State soccer player who went on to dish passes in the SEC; a three-time track and field state champion; a digital design teacher who has advised countless students; and a custodian who, in the summer of 2013, went beyond the line of duty to aid kids who roamed the FHS campus in need of help.

Oh, and the coaching inductee, perhaps an unofficial headliner of the event? Only the winningest coach in Farragut football history, 204 games to be exact, whose name is inscribed on

the football stadium and a street sign leading into the campus he has called home for almost five decades.

"We realize what an honor it is to be selected," former FHS coach Eddie Courtney said Saturday, speaking for his fellow inductees in the 2026 class. Earlier in the night, Courtney said he has been "blessed to be at Farragut all these years, just because of what it represents, first-class and doing things the right way."

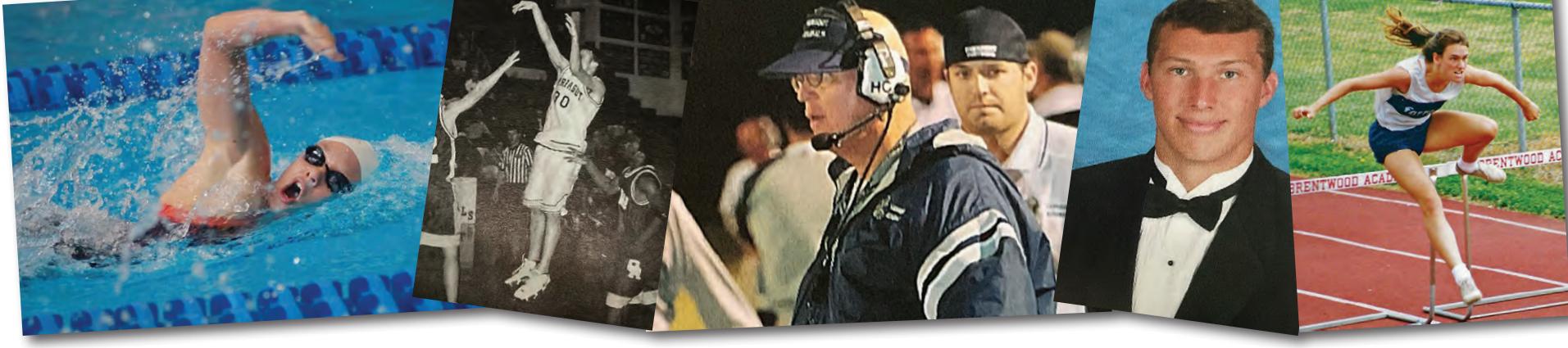
That certainly summarizes this year's Hall of Fame class, whose inductions were filled with countless stories, plenty of laughs and even some happy tears too as emcee Erik Gerhardt reflected on their individual and collective impact.

He was not the only speaker, as cur-

rent student-athletes Ryan McCue, KJ McNealy and Parker Lane took the microphone at separate points in the evening.

Their addresses spoke to the "bright future" principal Dr. John Bartlett said is in store given what he has witnessed firsthand at FHS. But, it also spoke to the launchpad that this school has provided for each FHS Hall of Fame inductee in the past 14 years.

"All these men and women are very successful," Dodgen offered in summary. "When you graduate from Farragut High School, you're ready to go out in the world. Because when they go out there, they say it's harder here than it is in college. And that means a lot to us."



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Brossett, Huff share 15th Service Award

Michelle Brossett, an FHS teacher for 20 years in the school's Career and Technical Education wing where she serves as department head, is one of two recipients of this year's Service Award.

Brossett is a digital design educator who "designs engaging, real-world learning experiences for her students, mentors new teachers and builds strong connections between education and her community," an FHS press release stated.

She was recognized as the Tennessee ACTE Regional Teacher of the Year in 2022.

"Michelle is an outstanding lady and teacher and worker. She will do anything that promotes the school," FHS athlet-

ics director and Hall of Fame Committee member Donald Dodgen said.

"She has done things for various sports programs over the years, kind of behind the scenes, that a lot of people don't know about," Hall of Fame Committee member David Moore said.

Brossett is a former member of the FHS Sports Hall of Fame Committee and has been the FHS yearbook advisor for the past 10 years.

Richard Huff, a custodian at FHS in his 15th year of service to the school — who will not be forgotten for an act of compassion and bravery at the school — is one of this year's Service awardees.

Huff "is always there to



help," Moore said. "He's always there at the softball field to help. And he's always there on Saturday to open the gym"

to youth leagues.

"And he protected two students (who were threatened)," before law enforcement was on

the scene, Moore added.

"Richard is a hard worker and will do anything for us," Dodgen said.

Inductee profiles, archive photos: Hall of Fame Class of 2026

Anna Miller
swimming, 2004



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Anna Miller, left, smiles alongside presenter Betsy Jones during her induction.

Baylee Williams
softball, 2012



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Baylee Williams, left, smiles alongside presenter David Moore during her induction.

Cole Strange
football, 2016



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Cole Strange, left, smiles alongside presenter Ben Lyle during his induction.



Anna Miller cashed in two state champion swims her junior and senior year at Farragut and ended up contributing to a team national champion effort at the University of Georgia as a freshman UGA Bulldog in 2005 (she swam the mile-freestyle along with 500-yard free and 200-free) en route to being a seven-time All-American on the campus in Athens.

She was a state champion in the 200-yard freestyle at state while at FHS — her win as a senior broke a then 10-year state record (Miller's record-breaking time was 1:47.73).

Miller contributed to a pair of UGA SEC titles.

"When being in Chicago, I swam with a Masters team, and it was a multi-times state champion (Illinois)," she said.

"In 2016 we broke a national record in the 4-by-100-yard medley relay; I anchored the freestyle."

Swimming at Science Hill as a high school sophomore, Miller was a state champ in the 50-yard-free-style and 100-freestyle.



Having earned All-Region, All-District and All-KIL middle infielder honors for the 2011 and 2012 Farragut teams, Baylee Williams was named the team's most valuable player her senior season of 2012, when the shortstop hit for a sizzling .496 average. She also led the team with 25 doubles in 2012.

"Coach (David) Moore was an excellent coach and an even better person," Williams said about her head coach, a fellow FHS Hall of Famer. "Definitely taught me a lot about myself and about life and hard work. He provided the stepping stones for me to enter a new chapter of my playing career."

In college, Williams was named a JUCO All-American at Chattanooga State in 2014, where she played shortstop in 2013 and 2014, and where she hit 15 home runs and had 87 hits.

She finished her collegiate career at Lipscomb in Nashville, where she started every game at second base (2015, 2016).

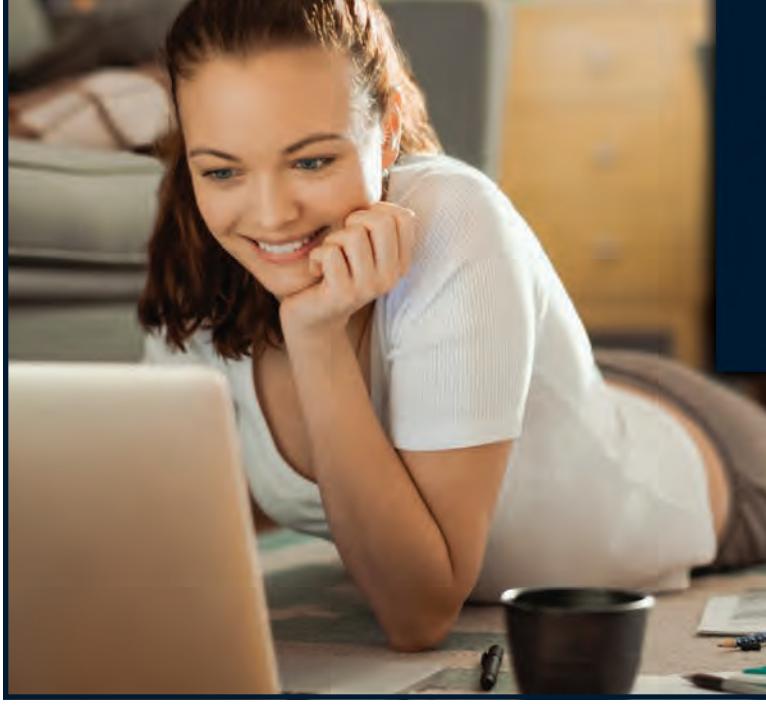


No former Farragut High School football player had been chosen in the first round of the NFL Draft before Cole Strange earned that honor in the 2022 draft from the New England Patriots.

Coming out of FHS as the Defensive MVP of the region his senior year (2015 season) while earning All-State honors, Strange continued his career at UT-Chattanooga. There, coaches turned him into a weapon on the offensive line, where he started four years at guard and was an All-American and three-time All-Southern Conference choice.

He just finished the 2025 season as starting left guard for the Miami Dolphins.

"I remember playing Oak Ridge my senior year at FHS and they were ranked No. 1 in the state," Strange recalled. "Everybody, except us, kind of expected they would come in here and beat us bad. But we beat them 28-14, and they had Tee Higgins on that team (now an All-Pro NFL receiver with the Cincinnati Bengals)."



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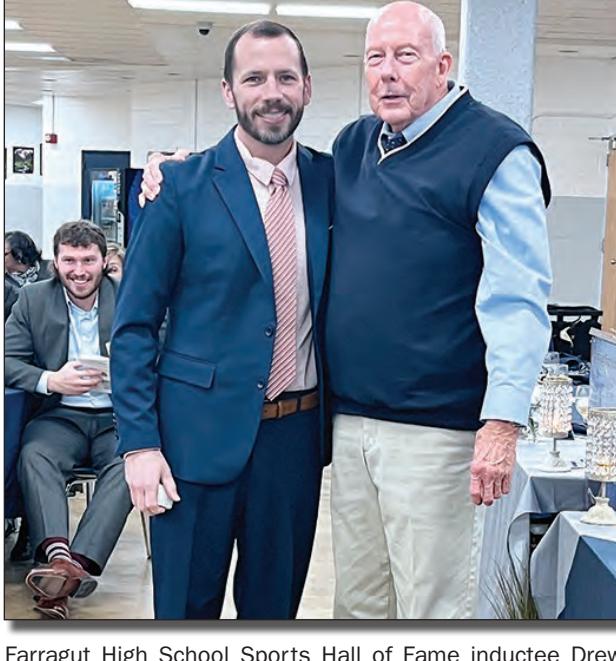
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Drew Burnette

soccer, football, basketball, 1999



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Drew Burnette, left, smiles alongside presenter Donald Dodgen during his induction.



As a starting forward his freshman soccer season, Drew Burnette earned All-State honors all four years as an Admiral and led his team in scoring his freshman, sophomore and junior seasons. What was also special during his freshman season? He got to play alongside his fellow All-State honoree, his then senior defender brother, David Burnette. "That was special," Drew said.

After earning All-Region honors as kicker/punter with the football Admirals (still holding the longest punt in school history at more than 70 yards), Drew ended up on full scholarship at Carson-Newman University in 2000.

On a missionary journey to Africa in the summer of 2000, Drew happened to run in to fellow missionary Alan Duncan (a former Tennessee Vols kicker) who discovered Drew's kicking talents and recommended Drew to then C-N Football head coach Ken Sparks. Drew enjoyed success as a kicker and punter in seasons 2000, 2001 and 2003 (injured during 2002 season; punted only in 2003).

Eddie Courtney

head coach varsity football from 1996-2023, 28 seasons; assistant coach/defensive coordinator, 18 seasons, 16 at FHS



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Eddie Courtney, middle, smiles alongside presenters Donald Dodgen and Ben Lyle during his induction.



With 204 victories as head coach of the Admirals, Eddie Courtney has earned having the football/track & field stadium named in his honor; having the drive to the school from the North Campbell Road entrance/exit also named in honor; having been named to the Tennessee Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2021; and also named to the Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame in 2017. Notably, he will also be named to the TSSAA Hall of Fame at a ceremony in April in Murfreesboro.

At FHS, Courtney led his 2016 team to a Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Division I-5A State Championship.

He was honored as Region Coach of the Year four times — in a tough region.

"It's always impressed me how every single person he comes into contact with, he has the their best interest at heart," said former FHS defensive end/fullback/tight end Eli Purcell, who went on to play with the Tennessee Vols.

Harrison Eldridge

baseball, 2004



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Harrison Eldridge, left, smiles alongside presenter Susan Davidson during his induction.



Harrison Eldridge held the highly successful lead-off stick as a two-time All-state centerfielder for back-to-back Division I-AAA Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association state champions, who both times finished ranked among the top-five high school baseball teams in the country, in 2003 and 2004. The latter lost just one game the entire season, finishing 48-1 and ranked No. 2 nationwide.

"Coach (Tommy) Pharr always, as a leader, commanded the best out of anybody and knew the way to get individual things out of each of his players," Eldridge said about his head coach, a fellow FHS Hall of Famer.

Eldridge finished his career at FHS with 181 hits and a .446 average his senior year and .443 his junior year.

A four-year starter in the East Carolina outfield in college, Eldridge was All-Conference both his junior and senior seasons and finished his college career with a .325 career batting average.



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James Thomas
track & field/football, 2002



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee James Thomas, left, smiles alongside presenter Bill Parker during his induction.

Katie Green Pinkston
soccer, track & field, 2005



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Katie Green Pinkston, left, smiles alongside presenter Kellie Ivens during her induction.

Sara Yeager Stokes
track & field, cross-country, 1993



Farragut High School Sports Hall of Fame inductee Sara Yeager Stokes, left, smiles alongside presenter Bill Parker during her induction.



James Thomas discovered the throwing sports of track and field his sophomore year at FHS in 2001, having been a standout fullback/nose guard on the football team.

"One of my life-long friends, Willie Parker, I saw him throwing the discus," Thomas said. "I was like 'That's pretty interesting.' I really loved it."

Thomas went on to qualify for the state meet in both discus and shot put as a junior (third place in state in discus and seventh place in shot put) and as a senior (third-place in the shot put).

"I know at one point I held the school record in discus and shot put," Thomas said.

Earning a scholarship to Middle Tennessee State University, Thomas was named the Sun Belt Field Athlete of the Year in 2006 and still holds the MTSU records for longest hammer and weigh throw.

An aerospace engineer living in Crossroads, Alabama, Thomas is throwing coach with Randolph School, the high school team that recently won the Alabama 4A state track & field title.



Known as "Mustard Squirter" and "White Lightning" by then head coach Dennis Lindsey, Katie Green Pinkston was a scoring machine among FHS forwards.

No wonder she was a four-time All-State honoree.

About having one of East Tennessee's top teams during this time, "I think one thing that set us apart was the conditioning Coach Lindsey put us through," Pinkston said. "Every practice we started off with a 3-mile run, running hills — I hated it."

Pinkston also was named Region Player of the Year in 2004.

She was good enough to play in the Southeastern Conference, landing in Gainesville, Florida, to play with the UF Gators.

She ended up leading the SEC in assists (tied at five) playing there one more season before transferring to East Tennessee State University for her junior and senior season, where she earned a place on the All-Atlantic Sun Conference team both seasons she was at ETSU as a midfielder/forward.



Sara Yeager Stokes contributed to three state champion track & field titles Farragut won under FHS Hall of Fame head coach Bill Parker.

Stokes finished fourth in pentathlon at state her senior year and third in 300-yard-hurdles and third in the 100-hurdles.

Stokes recalled getting a wake-up call from Parker concerning the 300-yard hurdles. "He switched me out of doing the 300 hurdles because I was not working hard enough to get better at that event," she said.

"I got the message and started working on it until I got my position back," Stokes added.

She recalled a funny story about going to regionals at Johnson City Science Hill High School one year.

"It was the same day as prom," she recalled. "And all of the ladies on the bus were doing the nails and were joking about being careful when handing off the baton (in relays) because we didn't want broken nails."



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