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Son says he was worried about mother, gets gun pulled on him

BY MICHAEL THOMASON
Correspondent

A gun was pulled during an alleged fight that ended in the parking lot of a bank on New Highway 68 in Madisonville Oct. 20. Madisonville Police Sgt. Kyle Day said he was sent to

the area of the Skyway Mart on a call of a man pulling a gun on another man and, when he arrived, he found Det. Jim Wall had stopped one of the men in the parking lot of People's Bank. Day identified the driver of the truck as Gary Russell and, when he asked Russell

what had happened, he said his stepson was following him and when he pulled into the Skyway Mart, his stepson blocked him in and tried to get into his vehicle. Russell said he felt threatened and pulled his gun, but kept it pointed at the ground.

Day said he then spoke to the stepson who said he was worried about his mother, who appeared to be fighting with Russell in the truck, so he followed them to the Skyway Mart. The stepson said that when they reached the store, Russell hit him with the truck, got out yell-

ing and pulled a gun and pointed it at him. Day said he spoke with two witnesses who told him the same thing the stepson had, then he watched security video and saw Russell hit his stepson with his truck, then get out and point a handgun at him and

try to start a fight. Russell, 56, Old Federal Road, Madisonville, was arrested and charged with assault by domestic violence and reckless endangerment.

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Life's a rollercoaster



Sixth-grade science students at Tellico Plains Junior High School recently created rollercoasters to study the transfer of potential to kinetic energy.

Harrill optimistic as county COVID cases fall

BY SHANE DUNCAN
Staff Writer

The number of active COVID-19 cases has begun to decline in Monroe County after the last surge brought about from the Delta variant of the virus. According to Monroe County Health Department Director Teresa Harrill, the department is excited to see the numbers being "100% better" than what they have been.

"The last numbers I have, for Friday, we are looking at 128 active cases in Monroe County and unfortunately we have had 122 deaths," she noted. "We have seen a few more deaths in the last few weeks, however I can't say that they were all COVID."

The total number of cases the county has accumulated since March of last year has been 9,664.

"In addition we have administered 36,746 negative tests," she said.

"Our numbers within the schools are looking excellent now. In the last 14 days we only had 26 active cases among students 5-18, so that is much better than it was in September."

When compared to the nearest 15 counties, only three counties are lower than Monroe.

"Our numbers of vaccinated are almost at 40%, so that is helpful," she said. "We don't totally have herd immunity yet but it is helpful. A lot of people have already had it as well which helps their immune systems fight it but it doesn't mean they won't or can't catch it again."

Harrill noted it is too early to relax with the virus due to it having shown a tremendous drop before.

"The thing about the last spike is that it was the Delta variant, which was more contagious than the Alpha

SEE COVID, A5

Rural Tourism Conference deemed success by officials

BY SHANE DUNCAN
Staff Writer

Monroe County held a successful rural tourism conference last week with the center of the action taking place in Sweetwater.

According to Monroe County Tourism Director Blaina Best, the conference went "phenomenally well."

"We hosted over 200 tourism professional at the conference, which was the largest number of attendees to date for this particular conference, so that was wonderful," Best expressed. "The City of Sweetwater's City Recorder Jessica Morgan came up with a great idea to do Main Street Bucks, which were valued at \$5, and she made sure that each attendee received two of them so they could use them to shop in downtown Sweetwater."

The attendees were able to use them within the businesses in downtown Sweetwater.

"This encouraged our attendees to go downtown in the Main Street area and really shop downtown," Best said. "All of the Main Street businesses kept up with the amount of money the conference attendees spent in their stores by request of the city, so probably by the end of next week we will see how much of an impact that had on the city."

She noted Morgan and others in Sweetwater city government has received good feedback from the businesses downtown.

"As for the county as a whole, we were able to take them to Lost Sea which is America's largest underground lake right here in Monroe County, we were able to take them to Tsali Notch Vineyard and in addition to them having a great experience you could hear them talk that they want to come back with their families which will have a huge impact on

SEE SUCCESS, A5



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