



# May 23 2018 THE ASHLEY News Observer

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## HUDSON ELECTED TO SECOND TERM

### Sims re-elected to Quorum Court; Ross on track for circuit bench

BY VERSHAL HOGAN  
MANAGING EDITOR

Ashley County Judge Jim Hudson successfully executed his election bid for a second term Tuesday.

Hudson — who faced a challenge from the man he defeated in 2016, Dennis F. Holland — garnered 1,153 ballots, or approximately 66 percent of the total vote in the Republican preferential primary. Holland trailed behind him with 604 votes in the unofficial results Tuesday evening.

## ELECTION 2018



Because both candidates qualified as Republicans, the election was decided Tuesday instead of in November.

"I appreciate the people of Ashley County for giving me another chance," Hudson said late Tuesday.

In other Ashley County races — which were on the Democratic ballot — incumbent Ricky Sims defeated Robert Cornelius Jr. for the Justice of the Peace District 8 seat and Egypt Township Constable Frankie L. Tanksley fended off an election challenge from Robert Steven

Hampton.

In the Justice of the Peace Race, Sims took 45 votes, or approximately 63 percent, while Cornelius mustered a total of 27 ballots.

When casting ballots for constable, voters gave Tanksley 246, or approximately 70 percent, while they gave Hampton 103 votes.

The Democratic races likewise decided the election Tuesday instead of in November.

With 57 of 60 precincts involved in the District 10, Division 4 judicial race reporting late Tuesday, Quincy Ross appeared poised to beat out Crossett City Attorney James Hamilton in the race for the  
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VERSHAL HOGAN/News Observer

Voters in Crossett cast their ballots in Monday's election. This was the first time Ashley County's electors used the new Express Vote machines that were ordered after the county's previous voting machine vendor stopped supporting its software.

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

### Area schools mark end of an era for seniors with commencement exercises



VAL GAUGHT and DELORES PHOTOGRAPHY/News Observer

The graduating seniors of Crossett and Hamburg High Schools gathered together at their respective schools one last time to remember their years together, take a few selfies, move their tassels and collect their diplomas before moving on to the worlds of work or further education.



### SERVICES

## Hamburg considers ambulance sales tax

STAFF REPORTS

Hamburg's city council voted Monday to draft an ordinance to create a one-cent sales tax to fund an ambulance service.

The vote came after the city hosted a public hearing and a special city council meeting during which Mayor Dane Weindorf shared his proposed plan to provide an emergency medical service to the citizens of Hamburg and the surrounding areas.



Weindorf

FAST Ambulance Service, which is based in Hamburg, is set to close in June after Ashley County Medical Center's announcement that it would end its service agreement with FAST May 31.

Weindorf said he has been working for months to gather information and speak with relevant sources.  
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### SERVICES

## Crossett council discusses code enforcement clean-up effort

BY VAL GAUGHT  
REPORTER

The Crossett City Council discussed Monday the code enforcement officer's plans to clean up the city.

The discussion followed council member Valerie Martin's request for an update from Code Enforcement Officer Tony Jones, who is tasked with policing blight in the city.

"What can we do about these businesses with low hanging vines or trees covering up their signs?" Martin asked.

Jones explained the avenue he was taking to contact business owners, but told the council that most of the business owners in violation were not local and he was having a tough time reaching them.  
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## FNBC plans merger with Louisiana-based Bank of Ruston

STAFF REPORTS

First National Bank of Crossett will merge with the Bank of Ruston, a Louisiana-based financial institution.

Century Next Financial Corporation and Ashley Bancstock Company, the holding companies for the banks, announced the plans for the merger this week. The merger will result in a community bank with \$450 million in assets and seven offices.

Under the agreement, Ashley Bancstocks' shareholders will receive 1.0952 shares of Century Next common stock after FNBC is merged into the Bank of Ruston and the holding companies likewise merge.

"We are very excited about our partnership with Bank of Ruston. This is a winning combination for our customers and the community we serve as they will benefit from our enhanced

banking services," said Herb Hutchison, chairman of Ashley Bancstock. "Our shareholders will also benefit from owning shares in a high-performing, financially strong community bank whose stock is quoted on the OTC Markets. Together, we will continue to provide the same level of excellent customer service that our customers expect through a well-capitalized community institution with an enhanced platform for serving our local market area."

The announcement said the companies expect the transaction — which is subject to approval from regulators and shareholders — will close in 2018's fourth quarter.

The announcement said that, "the merger consideration has a value of \$54.16 per share to the holders of Ashley Bancstock common stock, or \$12.8 million in the aggregate," and



VERSHAL HOGAN/News Observer

When First National Bank of Crossett merges with the Bank of Ruston, it will create a new bank with seven locations in two states.

that once the merger closes, Century Next plans to declare a 10 percent stock dividend.

Bank of Ruston is a full-service bank that established in 1955 and is headquartered in Ruston, La., with two banking offices in Ruston and one

banking office in Monroe. FNBC was founded in 1913 and headquartered in Crossett. It is a full-service bank with two banking offices in Crossett, one banking office in Hamburg and one drive-up banking office in Fountain Hill.