

Woman charged in DUI crash appears in court

Community shows support for deputy injured in crash

By Mark Randall

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A Memphis woman who allegedly struck and critically injured a DeSoto County Sheriff's Department deputy on I-269 over the weekend made her first court appearance on Monday.

Katherine Harris, 37, of Memphis, was charged with a DUI involving death or bodily injury and is being held in the DeSoto County Adult Detention Facility on a \$500,000 bond.

Harris was supposed to have her preliminary hearing on Tuesday to determine whether the case will be bound over to a grand jury, but the case was continued until next Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 10 a.m.

"This is a very serious situation we are facing here," District Attorney John Champion said at a weekend press conference. "We catch the back end of these cases and have to see the carnage that these things cause. And it was, quite frankly, carnage. There is no other way to describe it."

DeSoto County Sheriff's Depart-

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Historic cabin gets a facelift

By Mark Randall

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John Watkins loves restoring historic log homes. He would rather work on an old log house anytime than on newer ones.

There is something about bringing old logs back to life that has fascinated him ever since he was a child.

"My grandfather lived in a log home," Watkins said. "My parents used to ask me, 'why do you like to go and stay with your grandpa? I said, 'oh, I just like his house.'"

His grandfather was a sharecropper and a grandson of slaves who lived in the family's cabin, which dated back to the 1840s.

It was his grandfather who taught him the art of "chinking."

Chinking is the mud that goes between the gaps in the wood in log cabin homes that is used to seal the structure from the elements, similar to today's caulking used to seal joints and seams against leaking.

Watkins, owner of XTreme Chinking in Celina, Tennessee, was hired to re-chink the historic Crumpler-Ferguson log cabin, which is located on the grounds of the DeSoto County Museum on East Commerce Road in Hernando.

The 1849 dog trot style log cabin is one of the oldest original structures in DeSoto County. The cabin was built by the Crumpler family and sat along the old Hernando Plank Road, which at one time was the main road between DeSoto County and Memphis before the railroad, and



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JJ Baer and John Watkins have over 70 years of combined experience restoring log homes. Watkins restored the chinking on the cabin for the museum 25 years ago and came back last week for a second time to patch some new spots for the DeSoto County Museum.

later became U.S. Highway 51.

The cabin could comfortably sleep 20 people and, at one time, hid more than 70 Confederate guerillas during the Civil War in a secret compartment.

The Ferguson family later married into the Crumplers, and their descendants continued to live in the cabin — with a few modifications — until 1986. The structure was moved to Eudora in

1986 and donated to the DeSoto County Museum in 2002.

This is actually the second time Watkins has restored the home. He has restored several historic properties, including the Cordell Hull birthplace.

"I did it originally about 25 years ago," Watkins said. "I worked on two houses across the interstate and they saw me working."

Watkins said the chinking has actually held up well from the last time he was here, except the areas under the eaves and the exposed outside walls.

"The logs where it didn't have the soffit, the rain and the weather has rotted the old logs out," Watkins said. "But the chinking under the porch has lasted well for 25 years. I knew it would."

JJ. Baer, who has been chinking homes for 39 years and assisted Watkins on the project, said the process hasn't changed much — other than what's in the mud compound today.

They use a product called Perma-Chink, which looks like traditional mortar, but provides a flexible, impenetrable seal that adheres as the logs move and shrink. They also custom cut pieces of styrofoam board to put in between the gaps which they then cover over.

Baer said if somebody from the 1840s were standing there today watching them, they would be envious of the modern chink. The early settlers who first built this home would have used a mixture

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Kyle to leave Southaven Chamber of Commerce

By Mark Randall

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When Carmen Kyle first took over the reins of the Southaven Chamber of Commerce seven years ago, she admits that she was a bit overwhelmed.

Although the Chamber had a healthy membership with 423 businesses, Kyle said her top priority was to do a better job of figuring out how the Chamber impacts what local businesses do every day and how the Chamber could make connections to help them prosper.

"So many people don't know what chambers do," Kyle said. "That was one of our goals, to really understand and educate and make sure our community knew we were a true business organization. And I think I've done that."

With a booming economy that

has shown tremendous business growth, Southaven Chamber of Commerce is now the second largest chamber membership in the area behind Memphis Regional Chamber with 704 members.

Kyle announced this week that she will be stepping down in her role as executive director on Feb. 17 to take a new position as the DeSoto County Market President for the new Bank3 branch in Silo Square, which will open this spring.

"I am sad," Kyle said. "But at some point you recognize there are opportunities where you can take your talents to another level. I'm looking forward to leading the banking team in this new location on the Getwell Corridor. I will get to hire a new team and we will work to see how we can help small businesses."

Kyle took over leadership of the chamber in 2013 after 12 years

in real estate and as a Special Projects Liaison with the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office.

She oversaw a number of changes at the Chamber during her tenure. In 2016, the Chamber moved from its office in City Hall into a historic bank building on Main Street just off I-55. She also revamped their website and changed its mission statement to make the Chamber more relevant to the business community.

"We have changed everything about how we look at our role and how we can help make our busi-

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Kyle

Vaccines available at Walmart

By Mark Randall

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Residents of DeSoto County looking to get vaccinated for COVID-19 will soon be able to book appointments for the shot at three area Walmart stores.

Walmart in Southaven (6811 Southcrest Parkway), Olive Branch (7950 Craft Goodman Frontage Road), and Horn Lake (4150 Goodman Road West) will begin offering the shot starting Friday.

Mississippi health officials said about 200 doses of the vaccine will be made available to 31 Walmart stores across the state, but will not take away doses allocated to the states.

The doses are part of the U.S. Federal Retail Program which will make one million vaccine doses available to about 6,500 retail phar-

macies on Feb. 11, and eventually to about 40,000 drug and grocery stores.

The stores were chosen with an emphasis on reaching underserved areas with limited access to health care.

DeSoto County EMS Director Mark Davis said the extra vaccine doses being made available to Walmart will be a big help.

"Everyone goes to Walmart," Davis said. "So that will give us more options for appointments. That's been one of the biggest problems we have had now is the availability of the vaccine."

Davis said the Mississippi National Guard has been doing an excellent job administering the shots to residents at the Landers Center.

"We started at 400 (doses), then

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