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Providence, Kentucky

10 pages, inserts

Fiscal Court approves annual budget

Judge-executive voices frustration about state court requirements for reopening judicial center

BY MATT HUGHES
EDITOR

Webster County magistrates approved the second reading of the annual county budget on Monday in the amount of \$9,682,936.

That is a reduction of \$471,212 from the 2019-20 budget of \$10,154,148.

In other business, the court approved a resolution that will allow Judge Executive Steve Henry to apply for COVID-19 relief money made available through the CARES (The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act.

The county can apply for funds through the Department of Local Government (DLG) with a maximum of \$440,000. Those funds can be used to recover unbudgeted expenses that were created due to the Coronavirus.

"We've had quite a bit of expenses," said Henry. "We're still working through exactly what qualifies."

He explained that money for the salaries of first responders such as the sheriff and his deputies would qualify for reimbursement, but the salaries of staff at the sheriff's office would not.

Judge Executive Steve Henry said one of the largest expenses the county is facing, however, comes from the reopening of the Webster County Judicial Center.

Money for equipment necessary to deal with the virus could potentially be reimbursable, as long as funds for that equipment weren't budgeted prior to the virus.

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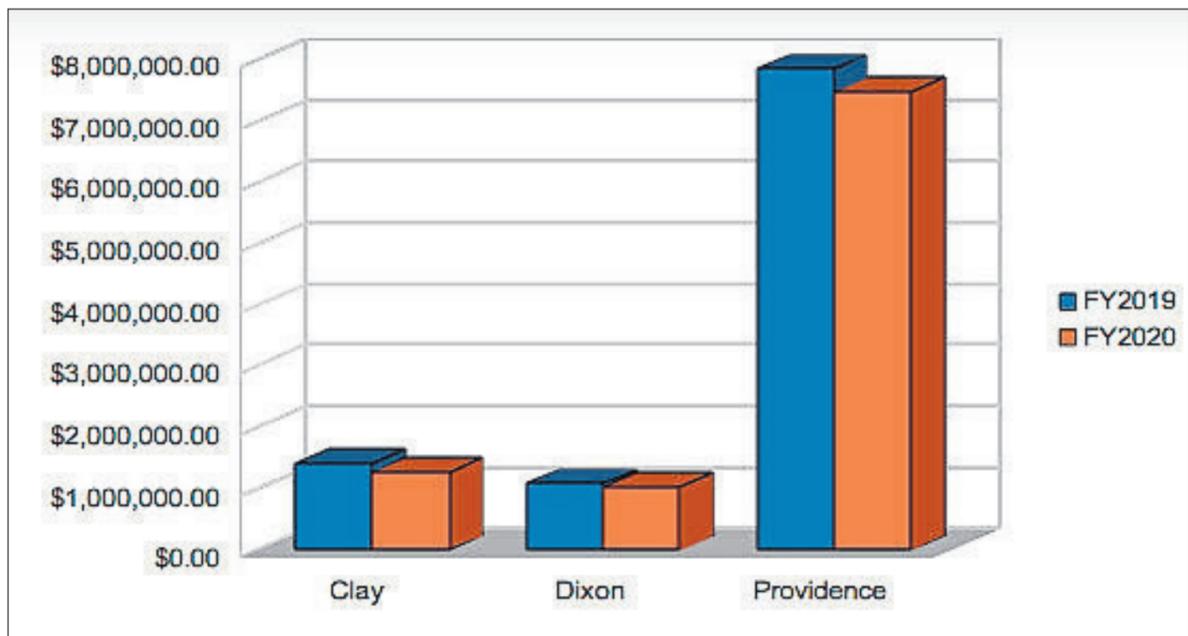
"One of the real problems is that we continue to receive mandates from the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on what we have to do as far as the Annex goes," he explained. "They've told us to use our CARES money rather than use our own funds."

The county has been forced to meet requirements such as installing protective plexiglas partition a the judicial center, all at their own expense. AOC rents space in the judicial center and on the third floor of the old courthouse for Webster County Circuit and District Courts, as well as the Circuit Court Clerk and the Commonwealth's Attorney.

"They say it is our responsibility because we own the buildings," said Henry. "Our renter is telling us what we have to do, and that doesn't set well with me."

He added that his frustration is no reflection on the local judges or the circuit court clerk as these mandates have all come directly from Frankfort.

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CHARTS BY MATT HUGHES

City budgets down heading into the new fiscal year

BY MATT HUGHES
EDITOR

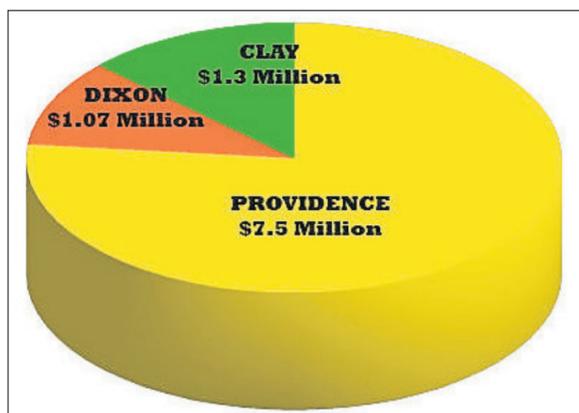
Even as the COVID-19 crisis continues, communities around the county are working to finalize their city budgets for the 2020-21 fiscal year, which begins on July 1. In a surprising twist, the proposed city budgets for next year have all come in lower than the amounts approved a year ago, with only one exception.

Under state law, each municipality, or city, is required to operate and expend funds under an annual

budget that must be adopted by ordinance on or before the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1). The chief executive of the city, either the mayor or city planner depending on the type of government, is responsible for preparing and submitted the budget proposal to the legislative body or council.

The council can then make any changes to the budget that it deems necessary. The budget then goes back to the chief executive who can sign

SEE BUDGETS/PAGE A8



Phelps brings experience, passion to new role as regional ad director

BY BRANDON BUCHANAN
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A woman with a passion for the newspaper business has been named the new regional advertising director for The Journal-Enterprise and three other Paxton Media-owned publications in western Kentucky.

In addition to The Journal-Enterprise, Kristie Phelps will oversee the advertising departments for The Dawson Springs Progress, The Messenger in Madisonville and the Franklin Favorite in Franklin.

Phelps said she has seen firsthand what print advertising can do to help a business succeed and looks forward to

working with the local business community. Having worked for Paxton for two years, she has most recently served as the advertising account executive for the Favorite since January.

Phelps looks forward to working with her advertising executives in developing plans and strategies to communicate advertiser goals.

"Newspapers are still the number one read medium. Even though we have the online text, there are still numerous people that want to hold that paper in their hands," she said. "Papers reach a large audience, especially, considering Madi-

sonville, Providence and Dawson are so close. We can group all of those papers together, and you get a much bigger audience than just one or the other."

Phelps holds a bachelor's degree in advertising from Western Kentucky University and a Masters of Business Administration with a marketing emphasis from the University of Phoenix.

J-E sales rep Derek Sorrells will maintain his position in Providence, but will also begin working with the Dawson Progress to help rebuild their advertising base in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.



Kristie Phelps

Providence fireworks to be held on Saturday

BY MATT HUGHES
EDITOR

While most communities in the surrounding area have chosen not to celebrate Independence Day with their traditional fireworks display this year, due to fears of COVID-19, Providence mayor Doug Hammers decided to let the citizens have a say.

Hammers posted an online poll last month that asked whether people would rather have fireworks with no other events on July 4th, or if they'd rather wait and have a larger celebration that included fireworks later in the year.

The results of that poll were clear. Area residents wanted

the fireworks display to go on as originally planned.

Normally the Providence fireworks display is held as part of a larger celebration, paid for by the Providence Tourism Commission. That event usually includes live music, food vendors and games.

The commission, however, has said that guidance from their legal counsel and other tourism officials told them that hosting any such large gathering at the moment put them at risk of being sued if there was an outbreak of the virus.

Originally the tourism commission had planned to host a

SEE FIREWORKS/PAGE A8

40th Annual Sebree Firecracker Run to be held on Saturday

BY MATT HUGHES
EDITOR

The 40th Annual Sebree Firecracker Run will go off as scheduled this Saturday at Sebree Springs Park.

Sign-in will begin at 7 a.m. The annual 10K race will start at 7:30 a.m., followed by the 5K immediately after the final runner crosses the finish line. A one mile fun run/walk will follow.

Awards will be given out at the end of the day's festivities.

Last year's 10K race was won by Allison Sukolsky of Hawaii with a time of 39:36. She finished three minutes ahead of her father, James Nolan, who claimed second place with a time of 42:26. Nolan won the 10K race in 1995.

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