

# The Hartsville Vidette

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Started by Civil War General John Hunt Morgan, bringing Trousdale County's news for more than 150 years and counting

## Little League says 'Play ball!'

**BY CHRIS GREGORY**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Baseball season is returning to Hartsville — just a little later than originally planned.

The Hartsville Little League announced last week that it would begin practices on June 1 with the season expected to begin June 15.

Gov. Bill Lee's Economic Recovery Group issued guidance last week for youth sporting events and Executive Order 38 clarified some of that guidance.

Teams took the field Monday evening and players seemed excited to be able to play ball.

"We're glad to be able to have some sort of season, even if it's a shortened one," said Joe Cornwell, president of the Hartsville Little League.

Coaches held a meeting with league officials last week to go over the guidelines and procedures for resuming play. Those guidelines were also posted on the league's Facebook page and include:

During team practices, kids must spread out along the fences to hang their bags instead of storing in the dugout.

No sharing of equipment between players. The league has purchased extra catchers' gear

for two players per team.

There will not be an umpire behind home plate. Instead umpires' on-field positions will be worked out between the umpire coordinator and umpires.

No handshakes will be allowed after games.

Team coolers will not be allowed.

Bathrooms and concessions will be open but people are asked to maintain social distancing.

"We do realize these things can be a burden from what we are used to doing," the league

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Chris Gregory / Hartsville Vidette

Softball players practice their throws Monday evening at the Little League fields in Hartsville. The league got the go-ahead to resume activities this week and hopes to begin play on June 15.

## Bellar seeking judge seat

Will seek position running as a non-partisan

**BY CHRIS GREGORY**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Brandon Bellar has announced his intention to run as a non-partisan candidate for Circuit Court Judge for the 15th Judicial District.

In addition to his law practice in Carthage, Bellar currently serves as the county attorney for both Trousdale and Smith counties and as the city attorney for Red Boiling Springs.

Bellar told *The Vidette* he felt running as an independent showed the importance of a judge interpreting and following the laws without the outside influence of a party label.

"I'm not affiliated with a political party... They serve their purpose with it comes to legislative enactments and the executive branch policy," Bellar said. "I do not feel that someone running under a political party

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Chris Gregory / Hartsville Vidette

Only 10 people are being allowed at a time into courtrooms at Hartsville's Justice Center.

## Wheels of justice starting to turn after weeks of delay

Courts deal with aftermath of COVID closure

**BY CHRIS GREGORY**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Trousdale County's court system is back in business after weeks of postponed cases and delayed court dates in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It has not been business as usual though, as guidelines from the state have limited the number of participants at any one time.

On March 13, the Tennessee

Supreme Court issued an order suspending in-person judicial proceedings in all but a few instances.

"For a month, we basically had no cases heard in the criminal session," said Assistant District Attorney Ian Bratton. "We were pretty much seeing only arraignments or if there was hearing on a jailed inmate."

The Court issued an April 24 order that allowed judicial districts to expand in-person proceedings if the judicial district submitted and received approval for a plan addressing such issues as social distancing, limiting access to the courtroom and other strategies designed to limit the spread of

COVID-19.

Criminal Court Judge Brody Kane of the 15th Judicial District, which covers Trousdale County in addition to Macon, Smith, Jackson and Wilson counties, submitted such a plan on April 30 and received the Supreme Court's approval.

"(I) had to prepare a plan for all the courts in the five counties in the district," Kane said. "That's traffic courts, general sessions, juvenile, chancery and circuit — everything."

Kane said he met with all the judges in the district, who offered their input on how the plan should look.

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## Trousdale sales tax revenues struggle in April

**BY CHRIS GREGORY**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Trousdale County's sales tax collections saw a slight increase in April despite the state-ordered shutdown of many businesses because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The monthly collection report by the state's Department of Finance showed Trousdale County collecting \$319,031.36 in state sales tax and \$123,307.83 in local option sales tax during April. Both were up respectively from \$317,868.10 and \$106,792.90 in April 2019.

Trousdale County also took in \$25,577 in income tax, \$26,195.82 in motor vehicle tax, \$27,025.77 in realty transfer & mortgage tax and \$17,545.22 in business tax during April.

Sumner and Wilson counties each saw drops in their overall sales tax collections as compared to the previous April. Sumner County's state sales tax collections were down nearly \$550,000, but local option collections were up by almost \$400,000. In Wilson County, state sales tax was down over \$1 million in April, while local sales tax was up almost \$160,000.

Statewide, sales tax

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## Local jobless rate hits 12.2% in April as businesses close

**BY STAFF REPORTS**

Statistics released last week by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development show a staggering increase in unemployment for each of Tennessee's 95 counties in April as many businesses closed to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

The unprecedented and historic spike

in unemployment impacted some counties more drastically than others, but no area of Tennessee escaped the pandemic's effect on the state's workforce.

Trousdale County reported a jobless rate of 12.2%, a 9.3% increase from the 2.9% March rate.

Among neighboring counties, Macon was at 13.9%, Wilson was at 14%, Smith 14.3%

and Sumner at 14.8%.

Fayette County had Tennessee's lowest unemployment rate in April. At 9.4%, the county's rate increased by 6.1 percentage points when compared to its revised March rate of 3.3%.

Weakley County had the second-lowest

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

The Hartsville Vidette office will be closed from June 13-19 for editor's vacation. All ads, notices, articles for the June 18 edition of *The Vidette* must be turned in by noon on Friday, June 12. Call 615-374-3556 or email cgregory@hartsvillevidette.com with any questions.

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### THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA

The Planning Commission will meet in regular session on Monday, June 8 at 7 p.m. in the downstairs courtroom of the courthouse.

The Steering Committee will meet in regular session on Tuesday, June 9 at 6 p.m. in the upstairs courtroom of the courthouse.

### MORE INSIDE

Gov. Lee announces \$200 million program to aid small businesses.

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