

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

**Lady Panthers champs**

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# Midweek Review

The Rogersville

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## Arson suspected in multiple-vehicle fire



PHOTO BY LINDA THURSTON

The state fire marshal is still investigating a fire near Surgoinsville.

BY LINDA THURSTON  
EDITOR

An unknown caller notified law enforcement of a blazing fire Thursday night and the quick response by fire departments contained the damage.

The Hawkins County Sheriff's Department received the call at almost 11 p.m., and when Dep. D. Winter arrived he found three car haulers on fire, along with the vehicles

they were hauling, and multiple fire departments already on the scene.

The scene, at 5106 Highway 11W, involved three large tow trucks with loaded vehicles, all of which were fully engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived.

Stanley Valley and Strigerville volunteer firefighters battled the blaze while Persia

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Students and April Stoval working with Dash and Dot robots

## Hawkins County School librarian puts TVA-BVI Stem classroom grant to good use

COURTESY OF DEBBI PRESSNELL

Librarian April Stovall was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant made possible by the TVA-BMI STEM Classroom Grant. Stovall's project was selected from among 600 applicants and has already put it to use in her classes. Director of Schools Matt

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## COOL DAYS AHEAD



PHOTOS BY ALLISON F. GOLEY

Mayor Dennis Deal cuts the ribbon in front of the A.S. Derrick Park splash pad

## Church Hill opens new splash pad at Derrick Park

BY ALLISON F. GOLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Hawkins County children found a way to beat the heat this weekend, as the town hosted the A.S. Derrick Park splash pad grand opening on April 30.

Once Mayor Dennis Deal officially cut the ribbon in front of the new water feature, several kids began to try it out.

"When I woke up this morning, I got to thinking about the city of Church Hill," Deal told crowd gathered to watch the ceremony. "Our forefathers named this city pertaining to a church on the hill. The city has really been blessed. The good Lord has blessed us beyond means...Our past boards and our current board has allowed us to be where we are today financially."

After construction delays due caused by COVID-19 shutdowns, the splash pad was completed in July of last year, and an official grand opening was set for



Alderman Michael Walker turns on the splash pad as several other current and past Aldermen look on

August. As COVID-19 cases continued to rise, the town eventually cancelled the grand opening.

The afternoon of April 30 this year was the first time the water feature has been open to the public.

"We never dreamed this time last year that we would be shut down," Deal told the crowd. "We had no recreation, and we had to shut our fitness center down and our senior citizens center."

The structure, which was

designed and installed by Vortex Aquatic Structures International, is 1,963 square feet and includes in ground and above ground features that users can enjoy. The structure is also ADA (Americans with Disabilities) compliant.

The splash pad will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily in the summer months for public use.

The splash pad is one of several new upgrades coming to A.S. Derrick Park.



A stage, playground sets for ages 2-5 and 5-12, and a wheelchair accessible swing set have also been installed. Two new picnic shelters will also be installed soon.

In September, the town also purchased the nearly three-acre piece of property behind Church Hill's VFW Post 9754. This property is located at 261 Silver Lake Road and will be used to expand Derrick Park, which is located just next door to

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## Take precautions now in case of wildfires

The Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office joined the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry to raise awareness among home and property owners regarding the importance of Wildfire Community Preparedness Day last Saturday.

The threat of wildfires is becoming increasingly prevalent and dangerous, posing greater risks to people and property as a growing number of people are living where wildfires are a real risk. Every year during the spring and fall seasons, wildfires occur across Tennessee. In Tennessee in 2019, there were 529 wildfires that burned over 5,300 acres.

On Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, fire departments, homeowners and communities can take action together to protect personal property from the risk of wildfires. Created by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day campaign encourages people and organizations everywhere to come together on a single day to take action to raise awareness and reduce the risks of wildfire.

"From Tennessee's rural farming communities to our more urban areas, the threat of wildfires pose a risk to thousands of Tennesseans," said Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance Assistant Commissioner for Fire Prevention Gary Farley. "I encourage all home and property owners to take time today to evaluate their risks of wildfires and take steps to help prevent a fire that could lead to tragic consequences."

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry is a proponent of wildfire hazard reduction programs. The Division

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