

The PRESTON COUNTY News

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INSIDE

PRESTON PRIDE



Home decorators go above and beyond for Christmas.

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SPORTS



Preston's wrestling team hopes to improve on its season-opening effort.

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ON THE WEB

ONLINE POLL

Should Will Grier have decided to play in the Camping World Bowl instead of bypassing it to prepare for the NFL Draft?

- a) Yes. He has been a scholarship player for 3 years and owes it to the school and fans.
- b) Yes. He is letting his teammates and fans down.
- c) No. He has given WVU great performance and leadership. He should now do what's best for his family.
- d) No. The bowls have become meaningless so why risk injury?

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Homeowner given extension on vacant building

Structure has all utilities on except for water

by Theresa Marthey STAFF WRITER

KINGWOOD — Mayor Jean Manuel Guillot gave a resident on Oak Street a 90-day extension for a house on the city's vacant building list.

Sandra Shrout came to Tuesday's City Council meeting to ask what she needed to do in order for the house to be removed from the list.

"The building has heat and electric. It does not have water because we have leaks and want to address those before turning it back on," Shrout said. "I pay taxes and insurance on the house."

Shrout said her family uses the house on a daily basis because it has a freezer there.

"We are also slowly working on remodeling it so my son can live in it and occupy the home," Shrout said.

Recorder Bill Robertson said he believes there are windows on the porch, and it looks as if the Shrouts are maintaining the property with housework, mowing, etc.

"We would like to see these properties occupied, if possible," Robertson said.

Councilman Mike Lipscomb said residents had a year to address issues with their properties before having to pay fines.

"Is this appreciably different from the last one?" Lipscomb asked, referring to a house on Spring Hill Drive addressed at the previous meeting. "At some point, people need to take the responsibility to research these things. There was a year's time."

But Lipscomb also reminded Guillot that he could grant the 90-day extension, which the mayor did.

Also Tuesday, Kingwood City Council spoke about the condition of an apartment building property on Morgan Street about which com-



Staff photo by Theresa Marthey

From left, Kingwood Recorder Bill Robertson, Mayor Jean Manuel Guillot and Councilman Mike Lipscomb attend Tuesday's City Council meeting.

plaints have been received.

Kingwood Police Officer J.T. Knotts he had chased off a man who was sleeping in one of the apartments during the Buckwheat Festival.

The building has no water or power, and there is believed to be a tenant living there.

Knotts said he has been in the building, and the second floor is uninhabitable.

"It was destroyed during the Buckwheat Festival, with holes in the ceiling," Knotts said.

See EXTENSION, A3

Contractor for Rowlesburg water tank requests additional \$39,000

by Theresa Marthey STAFF WRITER

ROWLESBURG — Rowlesburg Town Council is reviewing a change-order request from Mid-Atlantic Storage Systems in the amount of \$39,814 for the construction of a water tank and site preparation.

"The change order is for additional rock excavation and disposal at the site," Thrasher Engineering representative Ashley Reed said.

Rowlesburg Councilman Eric Baumgardner said he doesn't believe that council agrees with the request for additional funds.

"What about them not meeting the deadlines?" Baumgardner asked.

"We had a really hard time bringing this to you because we don't necessarily agree with this," Reed said. "They are saying they hit a lot more rock than anticipated that



Staff photo by Theresa Marthey

Rowlesburg Councilman Eric Baumgardner speaks Monday about Mid-Atlantic Storage Systems' request for additional funding for a water tank project that was completed behind schedule.

needed dug out and removed from the site."

Reed said that if the contractor hit rock, that was part of the contract — and the town should not pay for that work. But Reed said the stone backfill for which Mid-Atlantic

Storage Systems is requesting reimbursement is justified.

"You can negotiate the rock excavation," Reed said. "If you don't agree with that, you don't have to."

See REQUEST, A3

Preston school board receives requested extension on facilities plan deadline

by Joseph Hauger EDITOR

KINGWOOD — The short path to a Feb. 2 school levy vote remains clear, with the West Virginia Board of Education granting a key delay.

At Wednesday's meeting in Charleston, the state school board voted to approve Preston County Schools' request to extend the Dec. 31 deadline for submitting the annual facilities plan, which would include any proposed school closings.

"We will go through with the levy vote as planned," Preston Superintendent Steve Wotring said Thursday. "We should be able to move full steam ahead."

See DEADLINE, A3



Staff photo by Joseph Hauger

From left, Preston County Board of Education student member Drue Schneider and members Bob Ridenour and Pam Feathers attend Monday's meeting at Preston High School.



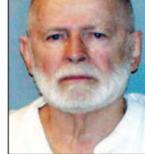
Submitted photo

Hazelton Special Investigative Section staff talked about contraband and illegal drugs at a community meeting Wednesday.

Hazelton officials remain mum about Bulger death

by Theresa Marthey STAFF WRITER

HAZELTON — Holding the first community relations board meeting since the death of nationally known mobster James "Whitey" Bulger, Hazelton federal prison officials declined to discuss the incident.



Bulger

The quarterly meetings are held so representatives of the community can hear from prison officials about various issues. Past meetings have addressed staffing levels, transportation of inmates to and from medical facilities, and public safety.

At Wednesday's meeting, questions regarding Bulger's murder were referred to the Department of Justice.

Bulger, 89, was beaten to death in his wheelchair within hours of his arrival at the Hazelton complex. He had been serving life sentences after being implicated in 11 murder and convicted in 2013. It has been reported that inmates were responsible for Bulger's death, but no charges have been filed.

Over the weekend, the

lawyer representing Bulger's estate said he planned to file a wrongful death lawsuit against the federal government in order to find answers as to why Bulger had been transferred from Florida to West Virginia.

At the end of Wednesday's meeting, Warden Joe Coakley said the prison wants to be as transparent as possible.

"I think we have a lot to offer the community," Coakley said. "We value our relationship with our community members."

Wednesday's meeting instead focused on stemming the inflow of contraband into the federal facility.

The Special Investigative Section staff of FCI Hazelton gave a presentation on the inventive ways that prisoners and their outside contacts get illegal items into the system.

"Synthetic drugs are a problem we are dealing with right now," said an SIS officer who declined to be identified. "Those drugs include meth, ecstasy, and LSD."

The officer said the drugs are sprayed onto letters sent to inmates. The paper is then cut into small pieces for sale or ingestion. Or inmates lick a piece of paper, such as a magazine page upon which the narcotic has been sprayed.

See BULGER, A3

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