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Some Fort Scott streets will be closed for the city's cape seal program. Details are on page 2. A street at Lake Fort Scott will also be closed for work. See page 4.

INSIDE:

What do you talk about at the dinner table? Suzanne Griffin shares her family's topics on page 4.

SPORTS:

The Fort Scott Tiger football team's opened its season at home Friday. See page 10.

Celebrating 106 years – but who's counting?

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

Friends and family of former longtime Mapleton resident Hattie Faye Brillhart Cowan got together Aug. 31 to celebrate Cowan's 106th birthday a little early.

Cowan, a resident of Guest Home Estates since 2021, turned 106 on Tuesday. The Aug. 31 gathering at the residential care facility was complete with birthday cake, cards and reminiscing. Cowan also had her hair styled for the occasion.

"Considering my age, I'm feeling pretty good," Cowan told the Tribune.

When asked if she was having fun Saturday, Cowan said, "Absolutely."

Cowan and some of her family members shared some memories with the Tribune. Marie Hawley (Brillhart) who was visiting from Iowa, is one of Faye's nieces.

Hawley said Faye recalled birthday cards she received from three women who went to school with Hawley in Mapleton.

"She remembered the birthday cards she got from my class," Hawley said. "They lived in Mapleton when they were my age."

Hawley said many people who live or have lived in

Mapleton are directly related to Faye or her late husband, Floyd. Cowan, who was born Sept. 3, 1918, said she grew up on a farm in Mapleton and later attended a rural school located between Mapleton and Xenia.

Cowan said the area is in her family, as her grandparents homesteaded on the Osage River. Her dad was a farmer, and she attended a country school called Baker School.

Hawley said Faye worked hard her entire life, doing farm work and helping in the community as much as she could.

"Faye would perm my hair," Hawley said, adding there were also occasions when Faye would pick her up after the bus ride from school.

Hawley said Faye would help milk cows, work in the garden and also drove a tractor while Floyd baled hay. Faye and her husband would also ride horses together.

"She was a hard working lady," Hawley said.

When Faye was younger, she would pick gooseberries, can and sell them for 50 cents a jar, "and she thought she was making money," Hawley said with a laugh.

Cowan also loved to spend time in the kitchen

baking cakes and pies, and she would sometimes sell her cakes for \$1 each. Her baked goods were very popular.

"Everybody ate her cakes or pies," Hawley said.

After Cowan finished school, she worked different jobs before marrying Floyd at the age of 23 in 1941. Carol Farrow, Cowan's niece, said Floyd was called "Buck" by his friends and family.

The couple were married more than 60 years and maintained a farm. Farrow said Cowan canned foods herself and the couple grew vegetables and raised their own pork and beef.

Farrow, who was born in Fort Scott, said she and her family, who live in Arizona, spend a month with Faye every summer. She said Cowan is one of 10 children.

Staff at Guest Home Estates also have fond memories of Cowan's stay at the facility.

Michelle Stockstill, manager, said Cowan likes to read the newspaper, "loves sweets" and bread and butter. She continues to be active at the facility.

"Some days she sleeps, but she's also up and going," Stockstill said. "She's spry and chatty."

Cowan once worked as a telephone operator, Stock-



Faye Cowan, right, and her niece, Marie Hawley visit during a celebration of Cowan's 106th birthday.

Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

still said.

"She remembers all the original phone numbers with the letters," she said.

During meal time at the facility, Faye "wants to pay for all her meals," Stockstill said.

Faye also enjoys having her nails done and getting her hair permed on the weekends.

Stacey Atkins, RN, said Cowan is "cooperative and willing to go along with

anything."

"I said we're happy to have you here as long as you want to stay here," Atkins said.

During an interview for her 105th birthday in 2023, Cowan told the Tribune she has stayed healthy over the years, which has helped her live a long life.

Cowan also worked for several years on the election board for Bourbon County, and attended a Methodist

Church in Mapleton for several years. She taught Sunday School at the church for at least 30 years.

When asked if she enjoys living at the facility, Cowan commended the staff and said she enjoys her life there.

"It's not bad at all," she said. "Nobody is mean or ornery to me. There's good food and I don't have to clean up."

Police looking for man accused in church arson

BY TAMMY HELM

Tribune Managing Editor

The Nevada Police Department is seeking information about the location of a man charged in the Aug. 17 fire that destroyed much of the First Christian Church at the corner of Austin Boulevard and Washington Street in Nevada, Mo.

Keith E. Caylor, 58, at about 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17, was transported by air ambulance to a Kansas City Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the fire.

On Friday, NPD Captain Joshua Westerhold told the Nevada Daily Mail, hospital staff, including security, were notified there was a warrant for Caylor's arrest and he was to be released to law enforcement. Westerhold said when the NPD called to check on Caylor's status days after Caylor was admitted to the hospital, the NPD officer learned the doctor had released Caylor.

Westerhold told the Daily Mail due to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act



Caylor

(HIPPA) restrictions, the hospital is providing no details, including the date Caylor was released.

Westerhold said Caylor does not have a permanent address but has a history of being in several cities and towns in different states. He said the department is following up on leads with other agencies in an attempt to locate Caylor.

Anyone with information on Caylor's whereabouts is encouraged to contact the Nevada Police Department at 417-448-2710 or their local law enforcement.

At approximately 2:23 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 17, Nevada Police responded to the 100 block of East Austin Boulevard for a report of

a disturbance in progress. Upon arrival, responding officers discovered the First Christian Church at 204 S. Washington Street on fire, according to a Nevada Police Department press release.

Officers on scene located the suspect involved in the disturbance call and determined the suspect, later identified as Caylor, had unlawfully entered the church and was involved in the fire.

According to online court records, Caylor had called 911 to report someone was trying to kill him. He later told an officer "under Miranda" he broke into the church to use the phone, according to a probable cause statement filed in Circuit Court 28 in Vernon County.

The fire scene was investigated by the Missouri State Fire Marshal's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, with assistance from the Nevada Police Department. State and federal officials determined the cause of the fire to be incendiary.

On Aug. 18, the following charges were filed against Caylor, 58, of Nevada, through the Vernon County Associate Court:

One (1) Count of Arson 1st Degree – Class B Felony

One (1) Count of Burglary 2nd Degree – Class D Felony

One (1) Count of Property Damage 1st Degree - Class E Felony

According to a Nevada Fire Department press release, firefighters responded to the church fire at 2:23 a.m. When the first crew arrived, they encountered heavy smoke and fire.

By the time the fire was under control at 6:30 a.m., the department had received assistance from more than 60 firefighters from Fort Scott, El Dorado Springs, Lamar, Milo, Deerfield, Compton Junction, Walker, Bronaugh and Sheldon. Twenty fire apparatus were used.

The Vernon County Ambulance provided smoke rehab and the Nevada Police provided scene security.

The press release describes the damage as "significant."

City budget approved

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

The decisions were not unanimous, but Fort Scott City Commissioners Tuesday approved a resolution to exceed the revenue neutral rate and a separate motion to adopt the 2025 budget, both by 3-2 votes.

There were no comments from the public during separate hearings on a resolution to exceed the revenue neutral rate and to adopt the budget.

The commission approved by a 3-2 vote a motion by Commissioner Tim VanHoecke to exceed the revenue neutral rate with a mill rate of 44.208 mills, which is the same as 2024.

Wells and Commissioner Dyllon Olson voted no, while Commissioners Kathryn Salsbury, VanHoecke and Mayor Tracy Dancer voted in favor.

The city's budget document shows the proposed mill rate will draw \$2,442,439 in ad valorem tax for the 2025 budget. Total assessed valuation increased from \$51,633,490

in 2024 to \$55,212,102 for 2025.

According to Ben Hart with BakerTilly, who provided budget information to commissioners, the mill rate to be revenue neutral is 41.362. The RNR is defined as the mill levy rate that would generate the same amount of tax dollars as the prior year.

Wells explained the reason for his vote, stating he would like to see the mill levy reduced. He said the city has a budget surplus of about \$61,000, but there was discussion later on whether that figure was accurate.

"The message that we send to citizens is purely that because of the increased valuations in property tax, there will be an increase of revenues this year anyway," Wells said. "I feel that we could be effective as the city, still complete the task laid before us and come down off that mill levy to show the citizens we are doing everything we can on our part to try to shave, so at the mill levy of 44.208, I am

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WEATHER

Sunny, with a high near 75. Northeast wind 6 to 10 mph.



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