



The Choctaw Sun
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News/Events

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March 12th hearing set for wine license

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — All of the requirements have apparently been met for the issuance of a license for the retail, off-premises sale of fine wines at a Cullomburg business, but in the interest of allowing citizens who support or oppose the license to speak before a decision is made, the County Commission will hold another hearing on March 12th.

The application, by Bessie Lassiter for J&E Changing Times, located at 973 Cullomburg Road, just off Ala. 17, had been advertised by the Commission in another local newspaper, but when several members of the community showed up for the Jan. 8th public hearing, officials had apparently forgotten about it because it was not on the agenda for the Commission's

meeting of that date.

The citizens, who said they were members of Cullomburg Baptist Church — which is located just next door to the establishment — said they would rather not have another store in their community selling any type of alcoholic beverages.

"Mrs. Lassiter called me and said that because some people were against it, she wanted to discontinue the request, but she later called back and said that after talking to some people in church, she wanted to proceed with it," Commissioner Clyde Dixon said.

The wine would mostly be special-order type spirits that are generally used in cooking gourmet dishes, he said.

"I recall that Don Griffin was here and the chairman (former Probate Judge Michael Armistead) told him that it had not been put on the

agenda, even though it was advertised in the Advocate that comments would be made on Jan. 8th," Commissioner Henry Lovette said.

Commissioner Dixon was not at that meeting because of sickness, and it was decided to table the approval of the license until a later date.

"I think a notice needs to be republished to give all sides an opportunity to be heard," Probate Judge D'Wayne May said. "I would advise re-advertising it and set a time and place for a meeting in March. That's the purpose of a hearing, to let the public address the Commission. Obviously there are some concerned citizens and we need to listen to their concerns."

The motion to set the matter for a March 12th hearing was made by Commissioners Ruffin and Lovette and passed unanimously.

Pay of jailer, deputy adjusted at request of Sheriff Lovette

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — In an effort to abide by the law and to avoid any appearance of impropriety, the Choctaw Co. Commission will seek an Attorney General's opinion clarifying what issues County Commissioner Henry Lovette can vote on that involve the Sheriff's Department and his brother, Sheriff James Lovette.

County attorney Lee McPhearson said that the county earlier requested and received an advisory opinion from the State Ethics Commission, stating that as long as the issue at hand does not involve the sheriff directly, or does not involve any type of compensation or payment to the sheriff, then the commissioner can lawfully vote on those issues.

"That is the opinion of the Ethics Commission," McPhearson said. "I have reviewed it and it appears to be fine. But just in case there is some statute sitting out there that I cannot find, I thought it wise to contact the Attorney General's office concerning issues relating to the Sheriff's Department. I am satisfied that he is fine,

but out of an abundance of caution, I thought it would be prudent to ask for this opinion."

The motion to request a formal AG's opinion was made by Commissioners C.D. "Budd" Ruffin and Dandy Brown and passed 3-1, with Lovette abstaining.

In other matters relating to the Sheriff's Department, Sheriff Lovette asked that the pay of a man who was hired as a process server but who has been working as a full-fledged deputy be raised to that of what a deputy makes.

Lovette said that Tony Gates, who was hired in August, has been to the Police Academy and deserves the raise.

"In my view, if he works as a deputy he should be paid as a deputy," Lovette said.

The motion by Commissioners Lovette and Ruffin to raise Gates pay, retroactive to the time Lovette took office, was approved.

The sheriff said he currently has two deputies away attending the police academy, and one who is still on sick leave.

"Because of that, I would like to re-hire Harrell Lafferty as a part-time process server and fill-in jailer at a rate of \$8.25 per hour with no

benefits," the sheriff said.

That request was approved on a motion by Ruffin and Dixon.

In two final actions regarding the Sheriff's Department, the board approved, retroactively to Jan. 16th, the employment of Dale Sturdivant as a jailer, at a rate of pay of \$8.74 per hour; and also to raise the pay of Tim Dykes, who is now the chief jailer, to \$8.74.

Lovette said he hired Sturdivant because he was having to pay a deputy overtime pay to handle the shifts left vacant by the death of Jerome Carlisle.

Judge May asked that, in the future, Lovette and all department heads come before the Commission with their request to hire someone before taking such action.

Lovette said that former Sheriff Lolley came before the board with the request but that it was tabled. At the time, he said, he understood that there would be no problem with the hire and had already told Sturdivant to go ahead and turn in his notice to a former employer.

"It won't happen again with me," the sheriff said. "I just felt like we were not giving the people the most for their tax money by paying a deputy overtime."

Judge concerned about lack of traffic striping on county roads

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — In the absence of a county engineer, Larry Singley sat in at the Monday meeting of the Choctaw Co. Commission and answered questions regarding the road and bridge program.

Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin told Singley that he would like for him to get measurements on runners for the replacement of deteriorated bridges on the Hank Doherty Road and Marstown Road in District Two.

Probate Judge D'Wayne May asked about state laws or regulations regarding traffic striping, signage, and speed limits on county roads.

Commissioner Clyde Dixon commented that it may not be a law that the roads have to be painted with stripes, but that each year the county is penalized during its annual road and bridge inspection conducted by members of the Ala. Dept. of Transportation.

Roads "fail" inspection if they earn a score of 70 or less, and often, one or two points more could make the difference on whether a road "passes" or "fails", Dixon said.

"We always get marks off because we don't have stripes,"

Dixon said. While striping can cost as much as \$6,000 per mile, Dixon said the county may have to start looking at it as a way of getting the roads to pass inspection.

When a county road "fails" inspection, the county has a certain length of time to bring the road up to a "passing" grade before the state cuts off the county's share of Federal Aid System funding for that particular road.

May asked if the commission and engineer could work together to do the striping "in house."

"We had thought about it and we were actually looking into the cost of buying a striping machine when Jason left," Dixon said, referring to former engineer Jason Sturdivant.

"We have a lot of roads that fail, and some of them failed by just a point or two, when we could have picked them up that much just by having striping," Dixon said.

The county also gets points subtracted for missing or faded out signs, he added.

Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin said he has replaced several signs lately that have been deliberately torn down by people in four-wheel drive trucks.

"It's a constant problem with people stealing signs," he said. "We

need to start ordering them with markings showing they are the property of the Choctaw County Commission so that if anyone is caught with the signs in their possession they can be arrested."

May said that he has already heard a lot of complaints about missing road signs and the lack of striping.

"I think its something we should look into in future," he said.

After more discussion, the board agreed to get specifications and prices on a striping machine and discuss it in greater detail at the next meeting.

It was also decided to try and get a representative of ALDOT to come to Choctaw County to meet with officials regarding what is and is not required as far as signs, traffic striping, and other issues.

Treasurer Alice Carol Smith warned that the board's equipment fund is down to about \$75,000.

"There will be no funds spent on a striping machine if funds are not available and it requires borrowing," May said. "We're just looking at prices right now. There are many dangerous road conditions in this county, and more than just potholes. We need to do what we can to protect our citizens."

Violation notices issued for illegal garbage dump on Maryland Drive

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Three violation notices were mailed week before last to a local residents after a large, unlawful trash dump was reported on Maryland Drive.

Bart Robinson, the county's Solid Waste Enforcement officer, told the County Commission on Monday that if the person does not respond or clean up the dump within 15 days they can be arrested and taken to District Court.

See GARBAGE, page 3A

Sun Country Calendar

There is no charge to list an upcoming non-profit or charitable event for your church, school, civic group, fire department, etc. Meetings of governmental entities may also be included. Send your announcement as far in advance as possible. Calendar items may be mailed, faxed, sent by U.S. Mail, delivered in person, or left in our drop box at The Country Corner in Butler.

Through Wed., Feb. 7th
REVIVAL, Mosley Bridge Congregational Methodist Church. Services at 7 p.m. through Wednesday. Evening meals will be served in the fellowship hall each night at 6 p.m. Guest speaker: Bro. Hal Dagg.

Tuesday, Feb. 6th
MEETING FOR THE 4th ANNUAL BUTLER FEST, 6 p.m. Thereafter the first Monday of every month at Butler Town Hall, 6 p.m.

Wed., February 7th – Fri., Feb. 9th
REVIVAL, Evangel Tabernacle Worship Center Hwy. 69 North in Coffeeville; nightly at 7:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Min. Mary Pugh Marshall of Grove Hill. Bishop Lesley Powe is the pastor.

Fri., Feb. 9th – Sun., Feb. 11th
SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN will be presented by the Ballet and Theatre Arts Performing Companies; 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$10 and on sale now at local banks and businesses. You may also call 251-843-5138 for reservations.

Saturday, Feb. 10th
U.S. SEN. RICHARD SHELBY will host a county visit at 7:30 a.m. at the Senior Citizens Center on Tom Orr Drive in Butler. The public is invited to attend.

NEW HOPE VFD will be having a Boston Butt sale at the New Hope VFD from 10 a.m. – until. The roasts are \$20 each.

BUTLER DIXIE YOUTH SOFTBALL/BASEBALL SIGNUPS, Civic Center, 8 a.m.-noon. Boys ages 5-12 (as of 5/1/07), Girls ages 4-15 (as of 5/1/07). Bring copy of birth certificate (boys must also have proof of insurance). \$40 signup fee. For more information on girls signup, call 205-459-4039 or 459-3348; for boys, call (205) 654-2651.

CHOCTAW-WASHINGTON LITTLE LEAGUE SIGNUPS, Gilbertown Sports Complex on the Paragon Road, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. All players MUST attend tryouts which will begin at 1 p.m. A player may register at any time before Feb. 10th by going by Sammie Bonner Construction Co., in Toxey, or NAPA Auto Parts in Gilbertown. All players must bring copy of their birth certificate and a \$40 registration fee. For more information, call Mike Nelson at (251) 843-5269 or Pam Chapman at (251) 843-4623.

Sunday, Feb. 11th
FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY, Little Hope Baptist Church, Lisman, 2 p.m. Rev. Robert Webb, Pastor of the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Yantley will be guest speaker. Dinner will be served. All churches are invited to attend. Rev. James E. Sheffield, Pastor.

THE SULLIVAN FAMILY, world-famous bluegrass-gospel group, will sing at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church at Melvin, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. For more information call Pastor Pike Smith at 601-776-0308.

SPIRITUAL HEART DAY PROGRAM – St. Mark CME Church, Ala. Hwy 10, Lisman, 2 p.m. Marjorie Bonds, Pastor. Panel topics, "A Heart that Needs to be Fixed," "A Heart that Was Fixed," and "The Heart Fixer."

INDIAN ARTIFACTS SHOW, sponsored by Rebel State Archeological Society. Arrowheads, Pottery, Tools, etc., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jackson Community House in Jackson. For more information call Bimbo Kohen 251-542-9456 or email bimbo@millry.net.

THE GOLDEN BELLS and THE GOSPEL SONG BIRDS will be singing at Salem Baptist Church, 7 p.m. Rev. Samuel Duff Sr. Pastor.

Tuesday, Feb. 13th
CHOCTAW CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION meeting, 5:30 p.m., Choctaw Co. Elementary School.
CHOCTAW CO. SADDLE CLUB ANNUAL MEETING at Old Buddies Restaurant. Dutch-treat meal at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Dues will be payable (\$25 per year per family) and officers will be elected. For more information call Emelie or Dale Allen at (205) 459-3245.

Wednesday, Feb. 14th
TOXEY REUNION COMMITTEE will meet at Toxey Town Hall, 9 a.m., to begin planning the 9th annual reunion. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Saturday, Feb. 17th
BUTLER DIXIE YOUTH SOFTBALL/BASEBALL SIGNUPS, Civic Center, 8 a.m.-noon. Boys ages 5-12 (as of 5/1/07), Girls ages 4-15 (as of 5/1/07). Bring copy of birth certificate (boys must also have proof of insurance). \$40 signup fee. For more information on girls signup, call 205-459-4039 or 459-3348; for boys, call (205) 654-2651.

SINGLES' VALENTINE BANQUET – Living Word Church, 500 North Jackson Avenue, Quitman, 6:30 p.m. All singles are invited. There is no charge, but you must make a reservation, by Mon., Feb. 12. Call Veronica at 601-776-3328, Peggy at 601-776-3150, or Gwen at 601-776-3062.

BRUNSWICK STEW SALE, sponsored by the Nanafalia Community Association and South Marengo Rescue Squad, at Old Nanafalia School. Sold by the gallon for \$25 or by the quart for \$6.25. To order, call 334-736-4361 or 334-736-4243. Pickup will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds will go to the SMRS.

WILD GAME SUPPER, featuring guest speaker Rich Wingo, former linebacker with the Green Bay Packers, 6 p.m., Gilbertown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. No admission fee but you must have a ticket so that the proper number of meals can be prepared. Contact Richie Abston at 251-843-2575.

GOSPEL CONSOLATORS' 8th ANNIVERSARY, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Butler, 6:30 p.m. All choirs, groups and soloists are invited. Rev. Cleo McGrew, Sr. is the Pastor.

Sunday, Feb. 18th
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of Pastor and First Lady, Rev. Robert L. and Sis. Bobbie Jackson, Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church, 3 p.m. Rev. Jessie Lowe of New Hope Baptist Church in Wilmer, guest speaker. 322 Goodwill Circle, Silas.