



Washington County

NEWS

Successor newspaper to The Nashville News and The Okawville Times

Volume 91 No. 48

www.washingtonconews.com

Thursday, May 8, 2025

\$2.00 – Single Copy



NCHS Prom Held



Nashville Community High School's prom took place on Saturday, May 3. Prom attendees gather for a photo at Lighthouse Community Church due to rain. The dance was followed by an after-prom party.

Cooley Graduates From Drug Court

By Todd Marver

Jamie Cooley graduated from the Washington/Perry County Pathway to Recovery drug court program on May 1.

Cooley had many family members in attendance. Program coordinator Jessica Eldridge said it might have been the largest crowd they've ever had for a drug court graduation. Eldridge said Cooley has been through a lot of tough situations in drug court and a lot of situations that are meant to knock people down. She said Cooley is one of those people who is very strong and motivated in her recovery. She said Cooley has come into her office numerous times saying she's not going to let it knock her down and will keep fighting.

"I hope you never lose that spark. I'm so proud of the person you've become today. You look beautiful today. I'm so happy your family showed up. You have a great support system and I hope they continue to support you. I wish you the best of luck. Don't be a stranger. Always come back. We're always going to be here for you," she said.

All graduates of the program have to complete a giving back project. Cooley's project consisted of three aspects. She did a diaper project last year called Diapers for Love. She said her goal for this part of her project was to donate anywhere between \$200 to \$300 worth of diapers to the charity at Trinity-St. John Lutheran Church.

Diapers for Love is a charity that supplies struggling families around the county with diapers to impact the lives of their babies. Cooley said once a month a group of ladies meet up at Trinity-St. John Lutheran Church in Nashville, usually on the fourth Saturday of the month, and hand out diapers to families in need. She said she picked this charity, not only because it helps struggling families, but also because this charity also helped her many times without even having to ask for the help. She said she started helping with this charity in September 2024 and ended up achieving her goal plus more. She donated a total of \$352.68 of diapers which added up to 19 cases of diapers and three small bags of diapers. She said even though she has completed her giving back project, she will still continue to donate to this charity. She said the charity also helps her brother Josh and all three of his babies.

"Once I started helping this charity, I signed my brother up for the program three months ago. I loved this part of my project the most. Something so small can help a family more than people realize. Helping these families have helped me feel like I can make a small difference in somebody's life," she said.

Cooley said she also cleaned up the parks in the Washington County area. She said the first park she cleaned was Addieville Park; then Nashville Park and the golf course area; the third park was New Min-



Jamie Cooley, right, receives her certificate of completion for graduating from drug court on May 1 from Judge Dan Emge. Photo by Todd Marver

den Park; and the last and worst of all was Okawville Park. She said for this part of her project she went on four different days and spent an hour or two picking up trash and in some parks old nasty clothes, while her daughter followed her around taking pictures and bonding with her.

"This made this part of my project fun and enjoyable. It made me feel good cleaning up the environ-

ment and helping keep the park clean and safe for all the children to enjoy and play at," she said.

Cooley said she did a can collection and would save cans from home. She said she would also save cans that she picked up from the park, and ended up collecting five normal size trash bags of smashed cans and one large bag. She said after she had bags of smashed cans,

Cooley on Page 3A

Kolweier, Sheridan, Hargan Attend Final Nashville Council Meeting

By Todd Marver

Three longtime city officials attended their final Nashville City Council meeting on May 1.

Outgoing mayor Ray Kolweier said before he passed the gavel to the new mayor Terry Kozuszek, he wanted to take the opportunity to say "thank you" to everyone in attendance and anybody that has ever helped with anything in the city.

"Without your participation and your support, it would be harder to do and it makes this job a lot easier when you've got the cooperation of everybody out there. I want to thank everybody who's a part of that. Without the extra help, it wouldn't work. It is a great pleasure to be able to present to (Terry) this gavel and use it to the best of your honor and ability," Kolweier said.

Kozuszek said Kolweier has dedicated so many years and a long time to the city. He said with as much time as Kolweier has put into the city, the rest of them may not have that much time to go through what he has done for the city. But he said they can try to continue what

Kolweier has done as the mayor.

Retiring alderman Doug Hargan was on the council for 16 years.

"Many nights and days of meetings. Nashville appreciates every second of it," Kozuszek said.

Hargan said he had a good team and it was easy.

Retiring alderman Kelly Sheridan was on the council for eight years.

"We appreciate every bit of that time also and all the committees you ran," Kozuszek said.

Former alderman Gary Moeller served for 4.5 years on the council prior to moving out of the city on March 1.

"Due to moving out of the city, he is no longer staying with us. But every bit of his time was appreciated," Kozuszek said.

Kozuszek said it's not going to be easy to follow. He said there's a lot of knowledge they're losing, but he hopes that all of them can work together and keep everything together.

Kozuszek, Clerk Terrie Kur-

Council on Page 3A



Retiring alderman Doug Hargan, left, receives a plaque in recognition of his service from new mayor Terry Kozuszek. Photo by Todd Marver

Total of 167 Kids Participate in Fishing Derby

A total of 167 children from ages 5-14 participated in the Washington County Sportsman Club's 52nd Annual Bill Boyd Memorial Children's Fishing Derby on May 4. A trophy was awarded for the largest catfish and bluegill in each age group. There was a trophy and \$50 cash prize awarded for the biggest overall bluegill and catfish (grand champion). The grand champion winners from the fishing derby were Kinsley May with the largest bluegill and Carter Pedtke with the largest

catfish. The first place winners in the age groups were Aubrey Lietz, Ava Pedtke, Blayk Nehring, Olivin Morgan, Brycen Rakers, Mark Nehring, Castle Koepke, Ryder Renth, Bristol Pelczynski, Reagan May, Kynsle Wernowsky, Huxlie Reel, Remington Daniken, Mabel Wathen, Andrew Chwascinski, Cash Fark, Leann Waltrip, Steven Snyder, Addie Davies, Aubree Quillman, Aryanna Koch, Kentan Lundgreen, Lydia Waltrip, Aayden Gerstner, Landin Brewer and Jack Wathen.



Jamie Cooley's family members stand in a circle around her during the playing of the song Gone, Gone, Gone by Phillip Phillips. Photo by Todd Marver

VAUGHN'S CLASSIC CARS

21314 STATE RT 127
NASHVILLE, IL

618-336-5210
vaughnscars.com



1966 CHEVY IMPALA
3 speed automatic, convertible, black
\$44,900

FINANCING FOR GOOD CREDIT WITH ONLY 10% DOWN!

ARE YOU LOOKING TO SELL YOUR CLASSIC CAR OR TRUCK?

CHECK WITH US FOR CONSIGNMENT.

We offer competitive fees, Nationwide advertising, Classic Car Financing and Nationwide shipping to get your vehicle sold.



1952 CHEVY 3100
3 window pick-up, 3 speed automatic
\$25,990

Cooley from Page 1A

she donated them to Trinity-St. John Lutheran School, and the school uses the money they get from the cans to buy school supplies, help pay bills at the school and other things they need.

“All three of my projects may not seem like much, but to me, they made me feel good like I made a little bit of a difference in our community. They also helped me feel like I belong and am proud to be part of the community. What little I have done has helped many struggling families and has helped the community and the school. I will still continue to donate diapers and collect cans,” she said.

Cooley said public defender Dennis Hatch was the first person who put her in jail and they’ve known each other for little less than 20 years. Hatch was formerly a prosecutor and judge in the county.

“Jamie and I go back,” Hatch said.

Hatch said the biggest thing they like about the program is the participants are alive and their hearts are beating.

“That’s through not only to who we have here but to you (in the crowd).. Your support in trying to help her deal with this is unbelievable. That’s what the folks need and anyone else in that situation,” he said.

Hatch said one of things he always does is bring a song to play for the graduate. The song that was played for Cooley is Gone, Gone, Gone by Phillip Phillips. Cooley’s family members stood in a circle around Cooley while the song was played and Hatch played drums during part of the song.

“It’s always difficult to pick a song to try to give the graduate support. I would like to do something a little different today. Because of all the support she has had, I would like all of her family to come up here,” he said.

Cooley said she hated Brock Styninger, the arresting officer, for years. She said she thought he was out to get her and targeted her. But she said in the long run, he saved her life.

“Other than my daughter Jocelyn, my life is pretty perfect right now and you’re a big part of the reason why I’m standing here today,” she said.

Styninger said when he met Cooley when he was a brand new 21-year-old officer about 13 years ago, at the time, his interpretation of the job was locking people up when having a chance to do it. He said the older he got, things changed.

“I knew you had kids. The older I got, I realized that I have kids now. The day that I arrested you, I told you about that,” he said.

Styninger said he’s very passionate about getting drugs off the street in the community, not just to keep them away, but to help people like Cooley.

“You are the reason you’re sitting here today. You are examples for everybody else sitting there that this can be done. In a lot of ways for you, this is the beginning of it. I knew you hated me for a while. The intentions grew into trying to help you. There are interventions out there other than just being incarcerated. You’re living proof of that, so congratulations on everything,” he said.

Judge Dan Emge said he has done a lot of cases involving Cooley. He said throughout those cases previously, one thing comes to mind when he thinks of Cooley and it’s non-compliance, not showing up to court and not doing what she was supposed to do. He said when Cooley came into drug court, he thought this was going to be more of the same and she totally surprised him in a good way. He said he’s so happy that she came into drug court and has been very compliant through drug court.

“You’ve been a changed person from the time you came in. You show up for everything you’re supposed to show up for and you do everything you’re supposed to do. You’ve been a fabulous partic-

ipant. I’m so happy you came in again. The things you’ve learned in drug court, if you keep those up from now on and stay vigilant, you’re a candidate for long-term recovery. Make sure you keep doing those things,” he said.

State’s Attorney Crystal May said she doesn’t know if Cooley realized how long she actually has known her and doesn’t know if Cooley remembers some of the early interactions they had. She said right now Cooley is on the right path and her personality and motivation are completely different from the person she knew before.

“I want you to take some pride in that and want that to help carry you forward. I wish you the best of luck,” she said.

Chris Mathis, Cooley’s former counselor, said her current counselor Derek Mohr called him and said he would appreciate it if Mathis would come in because he worked with Cooley for the longest and really appreciates that on Mohr’s part. Mathis said he handed drug court participants off to a really good counselor and thinks it’s going to work out well.

Mathis said when Cooley came into the program about 2.5 years ago, she said that because of her track record, everybody in Washington County was expecting her to fail, but that she was going to prove them wrong. He said Cooley had a few hiccups along the way, but for the most part, she proved them wrong.

“I don’t know that she ever missed a court appearance that wasn’t excused for good reason. She never missed a counseling appearance without it being set up ahead of time. Even when there were emergencies, she always got a hold of me and let me know,” he said.

Mathis said Cooley has been a genuine pleasure to work with and she is a perfect example that if somebody really wants to put the work in and commit to it, she’s living proof you can live free of a substance use disorder. He said he can’t take any credit for any of that and she was the one that was willing to make the hard choices and sacrifices and do it.

“Regardless of what you do, if you stay in the drug life or come clean, you’re going to have to be willing to make hard choices and sacrifices. If you’re not willing to do that, you’re probably not going to succeed. She has shown me at every turn she has absolutely been willing to do that with the exception of a couple hiccups. She’s definitely one of my success stories. Keep doing the things you’re supposed to and be confident in your recovery and never cocky,” he said.

Heather Beninati, former probation officer, said she remembers when Cooley first came into drug court and she thought Cooley was outspoken and was going to let her have it. She said there were times Cooley had obstacles and setbacks and Cooley called her up and said she was going to quit and drop out. Beninati said they sat and talked and hashed it out and Cooley would call her back and say she wanted to stick it out. She said though she hasn’t been here for the last few months, towards the end Cooley has shown her that she is determined and is going to get through it.

“Those tiny setbacks that at the time you thought were huge setbacks and it took months to overcome, you said it pushed your sober date back and now you’d have to wait. It made you who you are today and you pushed through that. Look at what you accomplished while you were in drug court. You have a good job. You got your driver’s license. You did all those things and nobody here did it. We helped you. I’m proud of you,” she said.

Beth Cassidy, drug court coordinator, said she is so proud of Cooley and that she should be very proud of her project.

“I love what you did. You put a lot of work into it and it means a lot to you and your family. You’ve been through a lot and never let it knock you down. You’ve done amazing,” she said.



The boy grand champion winner from the fishing derby was Carter Pedtke with the largest catfish.



The girl grand champion winner from the fishing derby was Kinsley May with the largest bluegill.

Addieville Woman Injured in Single-Vehicle Accident

By Todd Marver

A 28-year-old Addieville woman was injured in a single-vehicle accident on County Highway 21 two miles south of South Grand Road in Nashville Township on April 10 at 8:10 p.m.

According to a crash report from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, the driver of a 2003 Chevrolet Silverado, Mak-

enzie J. Steinkamp was traveling south on County Highway 21 when a deer was reportedly observed in the roadway. Steinkamp reportedly stated that she swerved to avoid hitting the deer, resulting in Steinkamp driving off the road. Steinkamp reportedly stated that she struck the ditch and didn’t remember anything after that.

Evidence reportedly showed that Steinkamp was traveling

south on County Highway 21 and then she swerved off the road, as identified by tire marks in the road. Steinkamp reportedly struck the ditch, resulting in the vehicle spinning around in the ditch, and coming to a rest further down the ditch.

Evidence reportedly also showed that Steinkamp was ejected from the windshield of the vehicle and was found laying on the ground in front of the

truck. Upon arriving units, the vehicle was found to be on fire. Steinkamp was moved from the vehicle and placed in the bed of a nearby pickup truck. It was reportedly identified that Steinkamp had a head injury consistent with being ejected from the vehicle. Washington County Ambulance arrived on the scene and Steinkamp was transported to St. Louis University Hospital via helicopter.

Continued from Page 1A

wicki, Treasurer Ricki Hegemeier and aldermen Jennifer Szopinski and Christine Harre-Borgmann took the oath of office. Alderman Tom Polczynski was also elected in the April 1 election, but was not in attendance at the meeting.

The following appointments were approved: Mayor Pro-Tem Shawn Kabat, City Attorney Aaron Epplin, City Engineer Curry and Associates, Utility Superintendent Blaine Middleton, Street Department Superintendent and Zoning Administrator Logan Gill, City Collector Terrie Kurwicki, Water Plant Superintendent Jim Leonard and Police Chief Brian Fletcher.

Miken contract

The council approved a three-year contract renewal in the amount of \$1,733.89 with Miken Technologies for computers at the police station. Alderman Shawn Kabat said they’re currently at a two-year contract and are moving to a three-year contract. He said their two-year contract is in the amount of \$1,266.04, so the three-year

contract amount is up a little bit from that. However, he said the average on the three-year contract is less than the two-year contract.

Street department hires

The council approved two new hires for the street department, Austin Kirsch and Kaden Linkey. Gill said they had some recent turnover in the past month and did some interviews. He said both of them have passed a drug test, physical and background screening. Kirsch started May 5 and Linkey will start May 13.

Sewer lift station payment

The council approved pay request #2 for sanitary sewer lift station improvements for Korte and Luitjohan Contractors in the amount of \$481,800. Middleton said right now all three wetwells for pump stations have been installed. He said it was one of the more difficult parts of the rebuild.

Summer reading program

Szopinski reported the library started registration for their summer reading program last Thursday. She said the program

will start June 5 and it’s a great program. She said it keeps the kids busy and they are doing it at the park again this year.

“If you’ve got little ones or know little ones, get them registered,” she said.

Executive session

The council did not go into executive session. Kozuszek said they agreed on a contract and the union has to vote on it yet, so they’re going to wait until the next meeting.



Outgoing mayor Ray Kolweier, left, receives a plaque in recognition of his service from new mayor Terry Kozuszek. Photo by Todd Marver



New mayor Terry Kozuszek, left, is sworn into his position by City Attorney Aaron Epplin. Photo by Todd Marver



City clerk Terrie Kurwicki, left, is sworn into her position by City Attorney Aaron Epplin. Photo by Todd Marver

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR

DIRT DASH

MAY SHOOTOUT

MAY 10TH

2025

SMALL CAR SHOOTOUT

START TIME 7:00

PITS OPEN AT 5:00

Drivers Register Here:

WashFair@Yahoo.com

GLOBingo

Not Your Grandma's Bingo!

DL-53132

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR

Friday, May 9, 2025

Doors @ 6pm Bingo @ 7pm

Washington County Fairgrounds

810 E Holzhauer Dr, Nashville, IL

OVER \$1000 IN CASH PRIZES!

TICKETS AVAILABLE:

GLO-BINGO.COM/EVENTS

(\$2/TICKET NON-REFUNDABLE FEE)

OR RHONDA 618-314-2996

\$25 In Advance/\$30 At The Door

MUST BE 18 OR OLDER TO ATTEND

Includes 6 bingo cards for 10 games

Also includes Glow hat & Dauber

(\$5 per additional 6 cards)

CASH BAR - FOOD FOR PURCHASE

50/50 - RAFFLES - HEADS/TAILS

VETERAN

OWNED - OPERATED

5% DISCOUNT TO OUR REAL HEROES

**On products installed by Superior*

Seniors 65+ • Military • Police • Firefighters

EMT/Ambulance • First Responders • Nurses

SIDING SALE GOING ON NOW!

1/2 OFF

LowE / Argon gas filled Hi-Performance Glass

with the purchase of at least 6 windows.

**See sales representative for details*

Year-Round Installation

Minimum 6 Windows

ACCREDITED BUSINESS

BBB

VISA

DISCOVER

MasterCard

PHONE TODAY!

618-533-6349 or 800-624-7691

1420 N. Elm • Centralia

Credit & payment schedule must be approved prior to order

SUPERIOR WINDOW COMPANY

WINDOWS and SIDING

www.superiorwindowsandsiding.com