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The Kentucky Standard

Sunday, June 13, 2021

Bullitt County educator accused of sending nude pics to student

Accused's time with Bardstown schools under review

STAFF REPORT

news@kystandard.com

A Bardstown man who worked as an assistant principal in Bullitt County has been arrested on a sex-related charge involving a student there, and offi-

cials are taking a deeper look at his time with other schools.

Jeffrey Earle Morning, 35, is scheduled for arraignment in Bullitt County court Wednesday. According to a press release from the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office, the offense involved Morning sending inappropriate photos to a minor.

Morning resigned in mid-May from his position at Riverview Opportunity Center in Bullitt County after he was questioned by police at the facility, accord-

ing to Louisville media reports. The incident was reported to the sheriff's office on May 6, when the student told law enforcement they received a photo through the Snapchat app from Morning that shows him "partially nude with exposed genitals."

According to the release, the



Jeffrey Morning

photo appeared to have been taken on school grounds. On the day police spoke with Morning at the school, he was reportedly wearing the same clothes seen in the photograph.

Morning had been communicating with the student for about a month and is accused of sending other photographs of himself both clothed and nude. He also is accused of requesting and receiving photos of the juvenile both clothed and nude.

Morning was arrested by

Bardstown Police on June 4 and his bail was set at \$5,000.

Bardstown Schools issues statement regarding former employment

In an interview with Louisville media, Bullitt County Sheriff Walt Sholar said his agency

See **MORNING**, page A17



KACIE GOODE/The Kentucky Standard

Bardstown Bourbon Company hosted a ribbon cutting and tours Wednesday of its new bottling facility on Parkway Drive.

BBCo opens new bottling facility

KACIE GOODE

kgoode@kystandard.com

Bardstown's bourbon industry is growing rapidly and one of its newest distilleries has come a long way since opening its doors a few years ago. Bardstown Bourbon Company on Wednesday held a ribbon cutting for its new bottling facility, which broke ground last year.

"We are very proud of this state-of-the-art bottling facility," Bardstown Bourbon Company CEO Mark Erwin said during Wednesday's gathering.

"It was something we knew we needed to do, we knew we wanted to do," he said, adding the project was a major investment, but a necessary one.

The 55,000-square-foot facility sits adjacent to the distillery and will allow BBCo to bottle its own brands and products of its collaborative partners on site. Chief Operating Officer John Hargrove said the facility has two "very flexible lines" with the capacity to bottle more than 800,000 cases (4.5-liter six packs) annually. The facility also strives to meet customer speci-



KACIE GOODE/The Kentucky Standard

Bardstown Bourbon Company CEO Mark Erwin speaks at the grand opening of Bardstown Bourbon Company's new bottling facility.

fications and exceed quality and safety control.

Hargrove thanked the facility team for their work in getting the operation going.

"In under a year, we went from breaking ground to 85% capacity on our bottling line," he

said. "If anybody knows manufacturing, that's a testament" to the team.

Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency, praised the distillery for its growth and innovation.

"When we stood with the governor in 2014 and announced this project, even in my wildest dreams, I could not imagine what these 100 acres could turn into," Huston said of BBCo's creation. "It was going to be a distillery. Then came not one, but two stills, warehouses, a kitchen and a bar, production expansion, visitor experience, more warehouses and now this state-of-the art bottling facility."

She is thankful for the role BBCo plays in growing Bardstown's — and the state's — bourbon and tourism industry and reputation.

"You have set the bar very, very high, not only here but in Kentucky," Huston told BBCo leaders. "You've changed the game of making bourbon by combining modern technology

See **BBCo**, page A17

Bourbon Capital BBQ Challenge coming in 2022

Bourbon Capital Guild and Academy, special bottle release also announced at Friday's National Bourbon Day event

DENIS HOUSE

dhouse@kystandard.com

In what is becoming an annual tradition, the National Bourbon Day celebration in Bardstown included some big announcements.

The Kentucky Bourbon Festival announced Friday it will expand with the Bourbon Capital BBQ Challenge and Distillery Invitational in June next year. The event is in partnership with the Kansas City Barbeque Society.

"We're looking forward to being able to welcome even

more visitors to Bardstown with this event — and better accommodate the Bardstown and Nelson County residents," said Randy Prasse, president and COO of the festival.

Prasse said that bourbon and BBQ pairs well and there are "some great pitmasters in our area and across the U.S., and we're looking forward to seeing their competitive 'spirit' at this competition."

Distilleries will be invited to send their best to compete in a special division, too.

See **BOURBON**, page A8

Restaurants struggling with worker shortage woes

DENIS HOUSE

dhouse@kystandard.com

For a couple of days recently, Pat's Place has had a sign on its door saying they were closed.

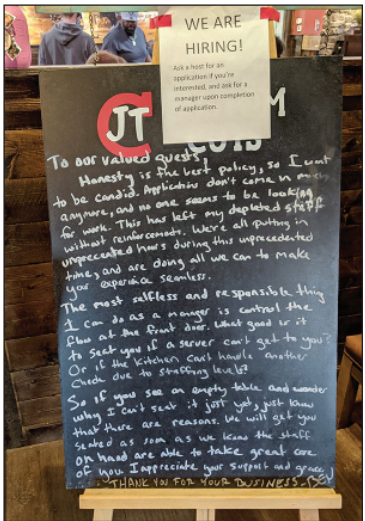
It wasn't because of a lack of business; it was because of a lack of employees.

"It takes eight of us to get things going," owner Pat Adams said. "Some days I only had four. So you either close or do the best you can."

It's not just small restaurants that are feeling the pinch.

Ben Ashlock, general manager of Colton's Steak House & Grill, has a sign as you walk in the door explaining the worker shortage and what his establishment is doing to make sure diners have an exceptional experience.

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DENIS HOUSE/The Kentucky Standard

A sign greets diners at Colton's Steak House & Grill, informing them of the worker shortage and what the establishment is doing to make sure they have an enjoyable dining experience.

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KACIE GOODE/The Kentucky Standard

Guests tour Bardstown Bourbon Company's new bottling facility Wednesday following a ribbon cutting.

»BBCo

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and some of the most experienced minds in the bourbon industry.”

Following Wednesday’s

»Morning

From Page A1

cy and Bardstown law enforcement are looking into Morning’s time with other area schools, including Bardstown City Schools.

“We’ve had folks from the Bardstown area where Mr. Morning used to teach come forward with concerns and information that we’re finding disturbing and we are going to follow that through,” Sholar told WLKY News.

Bardstown district officials issued a statement last week.

“Dr. Morning was employed with Bardstown City Schools from 2009 to 2018 and the district did not receive any reports of sexual misconduct with students during his time of employment,” the statement reads in part. “The Bullitt County Sheriff’s Office has requested the Bardstown Police Department to investigate any

ribbon cutting and a luncheon, guests were invited to tour the bottling center. The event was one of several distillery-related celebrations and announcements last week leading up to National Bourbon Day, which is Monday.

potential past incidents of such conduct while Mr. Morning was an employee at Bardstown City Schools. It is not clear how long those investigations will take to conclude. We are deeply committed to our past and present students’ health, safety and well-being, and we take any allegations against this former employee seriously.”

Sholar said they are also investigating Morning’s time as a middle school guidance counselor in Hardin County.

Morning is currently charged with “unlawful use of electronic means originating or received within the Commonwealth to induce a minor to engage in sexual or other prohibited activities.”

The Bullitt County Sheriff’s Office Criminal Interdiction Unit is still investigating the case. Anyone with information related to the case can contact BCSO at (502) 543-2414 or the Crime Tip Line at (502) 543-1262.

»Workers

From Page A1

“I’ve been in the restaurant business for 24 years and this has been a hard season,” Ashlock said. “Last year was hard. We’d hire one and have two quit.” Ashlock said he is having trouble keeping cooks and servers and one recent night had only two servers working the entire restaurant. He added that he has managed to stay open his regular hours, “though there were times I probably should have closed early.” He noted that certain days and shifts he was not 100% fully staffed, and he himself has put in 17- and 18-hour days.

All over Bardstown there are signs at restaurants stating they are now hiring. Restaurants have posted job openings on sites such as Facebook’s Nelson County Overwatch. On Colton’s Facebook page they posted they were looking for two more cooks.

It’s not just Bardstown. This is happening all across the country.

The pandemic leveled the hospitality sector, and according to the National Restaurant Association, the restaurant sector lost 2.5 million jobs. As of March, federal labor data shows food-service unemployment rates remain nearly double that of the national average.

“Currently everyone/ every business has ‘Now Hiring’ signs up,” said Jeff Crowe, president of the Bardstown Nelson County Hospitality Association who is also in charge of Heaven Hill’s newly expanded visitor center that will feature a full-service restaurant. “We are all competing against each other to recruit team mem-



DENIS HOUSE/The Kentucky Standard

Ben Ashlock, general manager of Colton's Steak House & Grill, turns a steak on the grill. Like many restaurants, Colton's finds itself understaffed and having a hard time finding employees who want to work.

bers.”

Crowe said that many companies have created incentives to attract new hires such as sign-on bonuses, 90-day work bonuses, extra per-hour pay, etc.

“I am not seeing any advantage of extra offerings to gain new hires.” Crowe is also the director, of Kentucky Experiences at Heaven Hill Distillery, and he said they are having the same troubles as others in the hospitality business with interviews that never show and new hires that decide at the last minute to stay home.

Adams believes the \$300 unemployment supplement is keeping people looking for jobs from working.

“It’s definitely because of the unemployment,” Adams said. “They need to quit all that. For a small business, it leaves you between a rock and a hard place.”

Ashlock said the unemployment stimulus is a factor, but not the only thing keeping people from working, though he has

had people tell him “they could make more money sitting home,” especially when the stimulus was \$600.

The unemployment issue has experts torn, with many arguing it’s needed while several say it’s time to let it go. Many states have already cut back on their enhanced pandemic unemployment benefits, which are set to expire in September. And while jobless claims nationwide are at a covid-era low as people are increasingly looking for work, some experts say the connection between jobless claims and the unemployment benefits isn’t as straightforward as it might seem.

“I think the unemployment insurance and the \$300 that people are getting right now is allowing the opportunity to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head as their jobs come back, as their industries open up,” Labor Secretary Marty Walsh told CNN.

“Unfortunately, covid has impacted our businesses even outside the

pandemic,” Crowe said. “Many people have been able to receive stimulus pay, which has allowed them to remain at home with their children and families.”

Ashlock said he’s grateful for the employees who want to work and the customers who help keep his doors open. He calls it a “morale victory” to have been able to stay open during something that at first was only supposed to last 14 days and turned into an entire year.

“I’m hopeful for the future,” Ashlock said. “We want to work as hard as we can here to show our gratitude to the people who helped us stay in business.”

Adams said she even made calls to local school systems to see if there were any students interested in a job.

“Hopefully our customers understand that we are short-staffed,” Adams said, adding that she recently hired four new workers. “That’s a plus, but not enough.”

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