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50 cents • 16 pages • Vol. 121, No. 39 • www.kystandard.com

The Kentucky Standard

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Bloomfield Middle principal resigns

Adams cites grievance filed against superintendent, plans to finish out school year

KACIE GOODE
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As Nelson County Schools become engulfed in a heated controversy surrounding a potential merging of middle and high school campuses, Bloomfield Middle School will find itself under new administration once again.

BMS Principal Randy Adams announced his resignation from the position in a letter to the district's Human Resource department dated May 11. Adams said he would finish his contract through June 30, but would not return for the 2021-2022 school year.

In his letter, Adams cites a grievance he filed with the district on April 30 regarding an incident in which he believed Nelson County Schools Superintendent Wes Bradley "acted unprofessionally and unethically."

Adams did not provide additional details regarding the nature of the grievance but said he expected the issue to be investigated by the Board of Education.

"I expect the grievance process to be carried out even though I am choosing to resign from my position," Adams wrote in the letter. "There should be a clear process

See **ADAMS**, page A15



Randy Adams

'Yake!'



FORREST BERKSHIRE/The Kentucky Standard

Wally Dant, founder of Dant Crossing and Log Still Distillery, speaks at the tasting room ribbon-cutting Tuesday afternoon.

Log Still opens tasting room

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Log Still Distillery celebrated the opening of its tasting room Tuesday that included an unveiling of the facility and Gov. Andy Beshear arriving by train from The Kentucky Railway Museum.

The event marked the most recent milestone on the extensive Dant's Crossing campus near New Hope that will add a tourist destination and distillery in the southern end of Nelson County.

"For us to be able to sit up here and say, 'Yake,' today to every one of you for being here is something special and that we're very proud of here and in the county," the project's founder, Wally Dant, told the assembled crowd, using the expression associated with the area.

Dant's Crossing is being de-



FORREST BERKSHIRE/The Kentucky Standard

Wally Dant, founder of Log Still Distillery, right, and Gov. Andy Beshear, left, raise a toast at Tuesday's ribbon cutting for the tasting room at Dant's Crossing.

veloped as a bourbon tourism destination as well as a working distillery, and Tuesday's event marked its most direct connection thus far to bourbon with the opening of its tasting room that also features a small

working still and bar that incorporates materials from an old distillery that was once owned by the Dant family.

Wally Dant is a successful

See **DANT**, page A15

City looks at raising firefighter pay

Bardstown also considering across-the-board raises for city employees

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Employees of the City of Bardstown could expect to see an increase in their pay come the new fiscal year.

"Across the board we have a 2.5% increase in salaries that's going to take effect in fiscal year 2022," Chief Financial Officer Aaron Boles told the Bardstown City Council at Tuesday night's meeting. "That's on par with exactly what we did last year and a little bit more than what the Department of Local Government calculated as a cost-of-living raise."

The General Fund of the upcoming budget was the main topic of interest and took up most of the meeting. Boles was updating the city council on the budget process, but it has yet to be formally presented.

"It's a relatively conservative budget," Boles told the council. "I wanted to keep it conservative to cover any issues that may come up that may affect our revenues."

The budget would also include a one-time increase in overall firefighter pay. The firefighter's salary budget increase includes an overall increase of \$88,000 for salaries to take effect July 1, 2021.

"We've had a problem the last

See **RAISES**, page A12

"It's a relatively conservative budget."

AARON BOLES | CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, CITY OF BARDSTOWN

Merger talks wrap up with high school sessions

Board meeting May 18

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Initial community discussions on the potential consolidation of Nelson County middle and high school campuses wrapped up last week with forums at local high schools. The process still has a ways to go, Superintendent Wes Bradley said.

"We will continue to narrow down our focus with small groups and talking to families

and community partners in June and July," he said.

The vision announced in April would combine the district's four middle schools into two and co-locate them on the two high school campuses, creating two campuses serving students in sixth through 12th grade.

Forums held at Nelson County High School on Monday and Thomas Nelson High School on Wednesday operated differently than discussions held at elementary schools earlier in the month. There was no open mic opportunity last week for com-

munity members to voice their concerns and comments to the room at large. Instead, Bradley focused on offering small-group discussions to touch on certain topics such as middle school academics.

Officials with other districts whose campuses serve multiple grade levels were also invited to share comments by teleconference.

The forums have been attended by many of the same parents and community members

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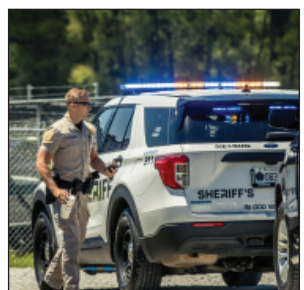
KACIE GOODE/The Kentucky Standard

A community discussion at Nelson County High School Monday night discussed the potential merger of Nelson middle and high schools to create two 6-12 campuses. The high school forum did not include an open mic, but rather a presentation from Superintendent Wes Bradley, comments from administrators with other Kentucky school districts that have cross-grade campuses and small group sessions.

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High-speed chase ends with crash at Heaven Hill fence

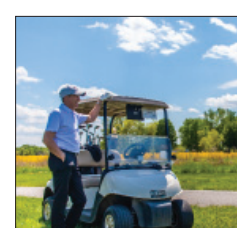
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FORREST BERKSHIRE/The Kentucky Standard

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear steps off a train car as he arrives at Dant Crossing for a ribbon-cutting of the Log Still Distillery tasting room. The governor and other officials caught a ride from the Kentucky Railway Museum in nearby New Haven, and future plans for the destination include a train stop and partnership with KRM.

>>Dant

From Page A1

entrepreneur who resides in Nashville but whose family hails from the southern Nelson County area and is a descendant of J.W. Dant, a famous 19th-century distiller. Dant said Tuesday the project is two-fold, it re-establishes his family in the bourbon industry and it brings jobs and opportunity to the area.

“We stand on the shoulders of giants with the opening of Log Still, seven generations of Dants that played a role in this industry,” Dant said. “My family has been distilling bourbon on this place, this DSP 47, Distilled Spirits Plant 47, for a long time, and for us to be able to sit up here and talk about we have our old number back is something special and unique not only to this part of Nelson County, but to our family.” During his remarks, Beshear praised the project for expanding on bourbon tourism to include a whole-family experience, as well as the economic development in the way of jobs both in the hospitality industry and in bourbon production.

“This vision, this dream is going to create 126 full-time jobs right here in Nelson County,” Beshear said. “Those 126 jobs are 126 families right here in Nelson County, that your facility, your business, is going to help put food on the table, is going to help secure opportunities for them and their kids. So we couldn’t be happier with your commitment, and what it’s going to mean to so many of our people.”

Last Tuesday marked the official ribbon-cutting, but the tasting room opens to the public one week later, this coming Tuesday.

A bed-and-breakfast and cottages opened earlier this year on the 300-acre campus that includes a 12-acre fishing lake and nature trails. A full-service



FORREST BERKSHIRE/The Kentucky Standard

ABOVE — Lynn Dant, master distiller at Log Still Distillery, stands beside the operational still that adjoins the tasting room. BELOW — Guests tour the tasting room.



restaurant, amphitheater, train stop with the KRM, and convention- and wedding-hosting facility are all planned to open in the near future to accompany a distillery that will produce two labels of whiskey as well as other liquor.

It’s a vision unique in the evolving bourbon industry that marries experience with production.

“What we’re trying to do is not only create an experience for people that want to taste bourbon, but experience for families to enjoy here on campus, to really enjoy the ability to go catch a fish if they want to catch a fish, get entertained at our amphitheater that’s behind us. Take a

train ride just like we did today,” Dant said. “We’re really trying to make this a destination place for everyone to enjoy here in Kentucky.”

Keith Metcalfe, who represents the area on Nelson County Fiscal Court, said the project will add a new aspect to life in the New Haven and New Hope areas while also preserving part of its history and heritage.

“I think it’s a great thing for southern Nelson County. We’ve needed a little boost for a long time,” Metcalfe said. “Most everything goes to the city, and I feel really good about this because it is out in the country.”

>>Adams

From Page A1

in place that is followed without partiality or bias.” Board Attorney Chip McKay said Wednesday Adams’ resignation would not impact the investigation of the grievance and that the Board of Education has retained an independent party to conduct an investigation. “The Board is committed to an independent investigation, and after being apprised of the investigator’s findings, will make a decision whether to take action on the grievance,” McKay said in an email to The Standard.

Adams’ resignation comes at a time of turmoil in the district, particularly involving the Bloomfield community. In April, Bradley presented a vision for the district’s future that, if approved, would combine the district’s four middle schools into two and co-locate them on the two high school campuses, creating

two campuses serving students in sixth through 12th grade. This would mean all middle school students in the county district, including those who live in Cox’s Creek, Bloomfield, Boston and New Haven areas would travel to Bardstown to attend school.

Numerous concerns have surfaced regarding the potential merger and have been shared at a series of community forums held throughout the last month, the most recent of which was held last Wednesday at Thomas Nelson High School. The impact on the Bloomfield community, specifically, has led to a vocal opposition.

Adams was hired as the principal in 2019, one of four new administrators announced for the County Schools district at the time.

A Nelson County native, Adams graduated from the district.

“As I stated when I was hired, I owe a lot to Nelson County schools and the teachers who helped me when I was a kid,” Adams wrote, referencing the sup-

port he received in school. “I can never repay them for supporting me and ensuring I had a better future. It takes courage for educators to commit to a cause and not give up, especially when it is as important as giving children the competencies they need into adulthood. Doing the right thing is never easy, but it is worth it.”

He encouraged the next principal to ensure teachers have a research-based curriculum that is transparent with families, to work together as a team and to ensure kids are safe online.

Adams went on to praise the Bloomfield Middle School team and the communities of Bloomfield, Chaplin and Cox’s Creek whose children are served by the school.

“They want the best for their children, and, although I am leaving, so do I,” he said. “I want to thank them for the small-town hospitality that was shown to me. They certainly made me feel welcome and appreciated.”



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