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# Wesson News

## SPOTLIGHT

**Outlook  
For Local  
Economies**  
Pages 2 & 7

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Volume 5, Number 3

*“Good News You Can Use”*

March 14, 2017

## New Copiah medical center opens doors

Wesson News

The new \$20 million Copiah County Medical Center (CCMC) opened its doors and started accepting patients last month.

More than 700 persons celebrated the occasion at a special ribbon cutting ceremony that featured remarks by business, government and hospital dignitaries, including Ben Lott, CCMC CEO, Carroll Hood, CCMC board of trustees president; Tim Moore, Mississippi Hospital Association president; Will Simpson, the senior health policy advisor to Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant; Tim Gettie from Dean & Dean Architects; and Matt Farrell and Will Shurtleff, Trustmark Bank officials.

Lott called attention to the new hospital’s “advanced design” and “state-

of-the-art technology” that will provide a setting for “exceptional care” for the community even as the facility makes an important economic impact through 371 total direct and indirect jobs and some \$24.8 million in annual spending. Moore observed that “while many hospitals have been forced to close their doors, that is not happening here,” and the Trustmark officials said “job-creation, institutional viability and community enrichment” helped sell their bank on its financing role in creating the new facility.

CCMC replaces the 67-year old Hardy Wilson Memorial Hospital and will utilize all new equipment, beds and devices. Bids will be accepted on what is left at the former facility. The Hardy Wilson building will be turned over to the Copiah County Board of Supervisors, which will either sell it or

convert it for another community use.

Located on Highway 28 near the Hazlehurst North Interstate 55 interchange, CCMC, like Hardy Wilson, will be a critical care hospital with a twenty-five bed patient wing. The facility will also house an intensive outpatient program and an on-site specialty clinic, infusion services, swing bed rehabilitation, outpatient procedures and surgical services, a radiological unit, laboratory, cardiopulmonary services and a 24-hour emergency care operation.

For patient therapy, CCMC will offer a spacious gym with 12-foot wrap-around windows, a private treatment room, and up-to-date equipment. A unique occupational therapy kitchen ensures that upon discharge, patients are prepared to perform any activity safely. It includes a dishwasher, coffee maker, refrigerator

and upper and lower cabinetry.

The Radiology Department of CCMC has installed all new General Electric equipment: the first GE Optima Xray machine in the state, which shows images within 10 seconds; GE Essential Digital Mammography, the premier GE Logic Ultrasound and the Revolution EVO 64 Slice CT Scanner -- the second state-of-the-art CT scanner in Mississippi. Onsite three days per week at CCMC will be an MRI machine.

Officials said the ambulance service operated by ASAP will remain in the county-owned building adjacent to the old Hardy Wilson structure, and there are no plans to relocate it.

For information about CCMC, telephone 601-574-7000 or visit myccmc.org on the internet.

## Black history feted

By Bob Arnold

“Black History Month is about all of us making a difference by loving each other,” an Air Force sergeant told Wesson High School (WHS) students at a February celebration of the month-long recognition of the achievements of African Americans.

Wesson native First Sergeant Ricky Peyton from the 172nd Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron framed the theme of the annual Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) Black History Month multi-media extravaganza -- “When All the Pieces Come Together, We Are Unified Through Diversity” -- with singing by the WHS Gospel Ensemble, dance performances by the school’s Cobra Steppers and Brookhaven-based God’s Movement, students who offered dramatic readings, and other speakers with special messages.

“When I went to school, we weren’t taught about black contributions to American history, and my father faced racial bias,” Peyton said. “Racial relations still has a long way to go. So Black History Month is important in



Wesson News

Wesson High School Principal Ron Greer (right) and librarian Kendra Armistad present certificate of appreciation to First Sergeant Ricky Peyton (left), Black History Month celebration’s featured speaker, at Wesson Attendance Center assembly.

helping all people appreciate African American heritage. But it’s most important in providing an opportunity to learn about each other and respect differences. Jesus said we should love each other as he loved us. That’s what it’s all about.”

In other remarks to students, former Wesson High School student Jacey Maher, who now serves in the military, recalled the service of the “Harlem Hell Fighters,” a New York regiment that fought in the French infantry during World War I because the U.S. military was unwilling to put black persons in fighting roles. “They never lost a battle,

cont. on page 5

## New store coming



Wesson News

Family Dollar, a part of the Dollar Tree retail organization based in Chesapeake, Virginia, is locating a new store in Wesson. The Wesson Board of Aldermen approved a building permit for the retailer that included variances related to frontage space and signage for an 8,000-square-foot structure, landscaping and lighting. Officials of the company said it is ready to start construction on Highway 51 next to the police station and across from the post office on property it acquired from Brad Turner. The combined Dollar Tree-Family Dollar organization is a leading North American discount retailer with more than \$19 billion in annual sales through 13,000 stores in the 48 continental U.S. states and five Canadian provinces. Family Dollar offers an assortment of merchandise for the whole family, ranging from household cleaners to name brand foods, from health and beauty aids to toys, from apparel for every age to home fashions at prices mostly below \$10.

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# Reasons for economic optimism in Copiah County

By Bob Arnold

Work on a mixed residential and commercial development, completion of the Copiah County Medical Center and rising employment at the new McNeely Plastics manufacturing facility in Copiah County Industrial Park (CCIP) are feeding the optimism of Copiah County Economic Development District (CCEDD) Executive Director Arthur Lee Evans, Jr., on the economic outlook for 2017.

“Copiah County needs more roof tops to attract businesses -- particularly the smaller box stores in retail -- and we’re getting it in a new development underway near the Advanced Auto Distribution Center in the industrial park,” Evans reports.

Contractor Buddy Brock and his son Jimbob are moving dirt for the project that is expected to produce 140 single-family and multi-family homes along with a restaurant, convenience store and an arts and crafts shop, according to Evans.

“Along with being an attraction for new businesses when complete, the project is providing part-time construction work, and the commercial development that is part of it will create jobs,” says Evans.

With completion of Copiah County

Medical Center, which replaces Hardy Wilson Memorial Hospital, on Highway 28 in Hazlehurst, Evans is looking at how to capitalize on it to move forward with an economic development and planning strategy to attract other healthcare employers to the area. The Mississippi Healthcare Industry Zone Act (MHIZA) signed into law by Governor Bryant in May, 2012, sparked the “Healthcare Industry Zone Plan” created by Broadus Planning and Pegasus Planning & Development (BPPPD) of Austin, Texas. BPPPD projected its recommendations could enable the region to add 697 new healthcare-related jobs by 2020 that require 218,000 square feet of industrial and medical office building space with an overall economic impact of \$98.6 million, 908 total direct and indirect jobs, \$38.5 million in labor income and \$3.8 million in State income tax revenue.

Another harbinger for the year ahead, Evans says, is the continuing workforce growth at McNeely Plastics, a firm based in Clinton, Mississippi, which expanded into Copiah County last year. Originally moving into the county with the expectation of creating twenty to twenty-five jobs, it currently has thirty-six employees. The

National Association of Development Organizations last month presented its Innovative Award for industrial development to CCEDD, the Copiah County Board of Supervisors and the Central Mississippi Planning District for their work in facilitating McNeely’s expansion.

As reasons for optimism about the economic outlook, Evans also cites:

- Renewal of Gulf Coast Renewable Energy’s (GCRE) rental of the former Universal building in CCIP in hopes of getting its business back on track. GCRE did not obtain financing for construction of a \$78 million manufacturing facility it expected to start production of wood pellets during the third quarter of 2016.

- A new Auto Zone parts store in Hazlehurst that not only has created a few jobs, but will offer new service options for mechanics.

- Opening of a Guy’s compounding pharmacy at Crystal Springs.

Evans says he regularly receives calls from potential employers inquiring about locations in Copiah County. He adds that more than 200 acres are available for development in CCIP, with the largest tract 50.2 acres. Along with the industrial park, he

says Copiah County’s sales points for inquiring businesses are:

- Convenient transportation via rail and the interstate highway system;
- Potential customers in the presence of other businesses located in the area;
- Skilled workers and workforce training provided by Co-Lin;
- Pro-business county supervisors and others in the area willing to work together to gain new employers by addressing their needs through incentives, tax advantages and financial assistance.

Evans says CCEDD is constantly revising and updating marketing efforts to carry its messages to prospective employers through newspapers, magazines, radio, television and a web site. This year, Evans is also planning to engage with the Southwest Partnership, which includes other economic development organizations from Lincoln, Franklin, Pike and Wilkerson Counties, to support his efforts in Copiah County.

“I am hoping for a great year, while recognizing that economic development is a process that requires ongoing hard work and patience,” he concludes.

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# Spring is season of the arts

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

With spring comes a renaissance of color and activity that celebrates the end of hibernation. Music, art, drama and literature all seem to flourish.

I suggest local music and arts connoisseurs start at Trinity Park next month. Every Thursday at noon during April, folks can gather with chairs or blankets, bring a picnic meal and enjoy painters, quilters and a musician playing next to the fountain at the park's center. Children swing or run around and play. It is a very informal way to spend lunch hour. This year, two returning crowd favorites -- Andi Cotten and Co-Lin music major Betsy Berryhill -- and two new entertainers -- Mike McCall and Julie St. Ripling -- will bring their musical repertoire.

St. Ripling leads off. She has been entertaining audiences in her native New Orleans since high school, when her guitar teacher encouraged her to play at a local coffee house. She was hooked and played there weekends for the next twenty years, until Hurricane Katrina forced her from her home. She moved briefly to Lincoln county and then to Natchez, where she once again garnered a long-term gig playing Under the Hill, first as a soloist and then with a drummer and bassist until, as bands do, each went their separate ways and she moved back to Lincoln County. She took her beloved



Ovation guitar out of the closet when she discovered Open Mic Night at Magnolia Blues BBQ and became an instant hit with the Wednesday night crowd. Let's just say her style is fun and rocking, and she knows how to fire up an audience! Now, about her name. Her legal name is Julie Stripling. When a New Orleans newspaper that promoted the arts scene advertised her as St. Ripling, the new stage name stuck.

St. Ripling plays on April 6 at noon followed on subsequent Thursdays by Cotten, Berryhill and McCall. Another one of the area's favorite musicians, Tony Norton, will be featured April 1 at the Brookhaven Animal Rescue League's BarkFest at Exchange Club Park.

Make Brookhaven Little Theatre (BLT) your next spring stop. BLT is in the midst of rehearsals for *Mary Poppins*. This classic Broadway and movie story has delighted audiences for years. It has a cast of fifty or so. The show plays April 21-23 and 28-30. Also, there will be special showings just for school classes. If you are a teacher, call BLT at (601) 990-2243.

If the visual arts are to your liking, the Mutton Gallery on the Wesson Co-Lin campus and MSA have regular exhibits. Mutton just featured watercolors of former Co-Lin art instructor Tom Ross. The art work of Dr. Kim Sessums is on display at Enochs Hall on the campus of Mississippi School of the Arts. The exhibition is a retrospective of his forty years of producing paintings and sculptures. During this school year, junior art students have trekked to Dr. Sessums' studio where, for two hours he demonstrates techniques and shares his experience. In this way, Sessums offers an invaluable service. Passing down

traditions from one generation to another is what artists do. Sessums' exhibit can be viewed on Wednesdays, but call the MSA office at (601) 823-1300 and make an appointment.

Incidentally, MSA also has a number of musical recitals and concerts as well as visual arts showings this spring. Check it out.

For readers, the much anticipated third installment of Natchez author Greg Iles' *Natchez Burning* trilogy is set to be released this spring. If you are not familiar with Iles, immediately begin downloading any of his novels from the internet. The trilogy, including *Natchez Burning*, *The Bone Tree* and now *Mississippi Blood*, follows Natchez Mayor Penn Cage as he digs through current crimes that are related to historic civil rights related atrocities from decades earlier. No one blends history and fiction better than Iles. I have started rereading the first two books of his trilogy in eager anticipation of *Mississippi Blood*.

Down the road a bit, the seventeenth annual Brookstock weekend is coming up with its grand finale rock concert at the FEMA building on July 15. Leading up to the big show will be the acoustic version of the Brookstock Singer/Songwriter show on July 13 at Brookhaven's Recess 101 and Brookstock Too on July 14 at the Haven Theater. More to come on all this.

Look for other events that I haven't mentioned. Things are popping in our little corner of the world.

Until next time, support the arts.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: R. Shaw Furlow is a local composer, musician and arts promoter. He produces an internet-based video show -- "From the Shadyside" -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region for Brookhaven Music and Sound.*

## Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During February, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

**Response to:**

- One auto burglary
- One residential burglary
- Two traffic accidents
- One suspicious person

**Citations & arrests:**

- Two contempt of court violations
- Eighteen speeding
- Four possession of drug paraphernalia
- Four possession of controlled substances
- Four simple assaults
- One cyber stalking
- One leaving the scene of an accident
- Six open container violations
- One failure to signal
- Four driving with suspended driver's license
- Two driving without a license
- Two driving without insurance
- One driving without a tag
- One driving with improper equipment
- Two disregarding a traffic device

On school days, the Wesson Police Department facilitates traffic flow at Wesson Attendance Center with officers on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

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# Diabetes wake-up call is this month

By Guest Columnist  
Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Later this month -- on Tuesday, March 28, the American Diabetes Association is emphasizing the seriousness of diabetes, particularly when it is undiagnosed and untreated, in a one-day wake-up call. With diabetes affecting more than twenty-nine million Americans, or nine per cent of the U.S. population, every day should be a wake-up call, since one in four don't know it.



Diabetes causes body blood glucose (sugar) levels to rise to higher than normal, a disorder known as hyperglycemia. People with a family history of diabetes have a greater chance of type two diabetes affecting them at some point in their lives. That is, if you have a mother, father, brother, or sister with type two diabetes, you have a greater chance of being affected by the disease. Men, older persons and people who are inactive, have blood pressure and carry excess weight are also at higher risk.

Here is a simplistic explanation of glucose metabolism provided by the National Institute of Health:

1. Food digests in the stomach and is turned into blood glucose, which is also known as blood sugar. The body uses glucose for energy needed for daily life.
2. The blood takes the glucose to the cells, where it is converted to energy. However, glucose cannot enter the cells alone without help from insulin -- a hormone made in the pancreas.
3. If the body does not produce enough insulin, or if the cells cannot use the insulin well, then glucose cannot enter the cells and builds up in the blood.
4. People who have high levels of glucose in their blood have pre-diabetes or diabetes.

Type two diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, accounting for ninety-five per cent of all cases. Type two diabetics do not make enough insulin or are insulin-resistant, unable to use it

properly. At first, the pancreas makes extra insulin if a person is insulin-resistant, but it is not able to keep up, over time, to keep blood glucose at normal levels.

Diabetes is a sobering diagnosis. High blood sugar levels, over time, can harm your organs and raise the risk of developing heart disease and other problems. However, people with diabetes have more power to control their condition than ever before. Healthy lifestyle choices can delay or prevent onset of diabetes. For diabetics, there are many management strategies to assure a long, healthy life and minimize chances of developing complications. The ABCs of diabetes control that will lower risk of heart attack and stroke are:

**A: A1C test.** This test shows blood glucose levels over three months. The goal is to aim for seven or below.

**B: Blood pressure.** The higher blood pressure, the harder the heart has to work. Normal blood pressure is 120/80 or lower.

**C: Cholesterol.** Normal cholesterol levels are under 200 mg/dl. HDL ("good" cholesterol) should be 40 mg/dl or higher, triglycerides should be 150 mg/dl or lower, and LDL ("bad" cholesterol) should be below 100 mg/dl or lower.

To prevent and control diabetes:

- **Be physically active.** A moderate level of physical activity is two hours and thirty minutes each week.
- **Reduce consumption of sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sugar.**
- **Eat more fiber.** Focus on consuming natural fiber through whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and beans.
- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Lose weight if you are overweight.
- **If you smoke, stop!!**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Assistant Dean of Academic Instruction and the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Division Chair at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.*

# Bicentennial events, classes, job changes and doctors

Special to Wesson News

**Bicentennial website.** A new website, VisitMississippi.org/200, is now online to guide visitors and media through the state's year-long Bicentennial celebration through 2017. There will be three marquee celebrations in the south, north and central regions of the state and large and small events in various communities, which the website will track with regularly updated information. The Bicentennial Celebration South starts March 31 at Centennial Plaza in Gulfport and includes the Governor's Concert on April 1 with The Band Perry as the headliner. Events are also planned for Oxford on June 24 and Jackson on December 9, with the grand opening of the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum.

**Classes & job changes.** At the Wesson Police Department, Officers Tim Stevens and Chad Harveston completed a Regional Counter-Drug Training Academy interview and interrogation course at Morgan City, Louisiana. Stevens is also moving from part-time to full-time employment at WPD, while Troy Floyd will change from full-time status to part-time.

**KDMC Foundation director.** Jeff Richardson is new director of the King's Daughter Medical Center Foundation in Brookhaven. The lifelong Lincoln County resident served C-Spire for more than twenty years in customer relations positions, has worked in volunteer jobs and helped promote the community in varied capacities. He and his family are members of Brookhaven First Baptist Church. Richardson will seek to build a high level of awareness about the Foundation and its work in the community.

**Encouraging future doctors.** Mississippi State University is offering an intense summer program for high school juniors who are considering medical careers in the state, which has the lowest number of physicians per capita in the U.S. and decreasing numbers of rural physicians. MSU Extension and the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care at the Mississippi Department of Health fund the five-week Rural Medical Scholars summer program at MSU

from May 28 to June 29, which seeks to identify the state's future primary care physicians and will help them become members of the medical school class of 2026. Selected students between their junior and senior years, who earned ACT composite scores of at least 24, will take two premedical courses on the Starkville campus -- biology and sociology -- and observe doctors in practice one afternoon each week. Applications, which are available online at [www.extension.msstate.edu/rms](http://www.extension.msstate.edu/rms), must be submitted by March 20. A \$100 registration fee is required after acceptance. Tuition, housing and textbooks are paid, but students will be responsible for their food expenses. For more information, contact Rocheryl Ware, MSU Extension Agent at the Mississippi State University Extension office in Hinds County, at 601-857-3242.

**Reed's recognized.** The Brookhaven/Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce recognized Reed's Metals as its February "Business of the Month" for "putting Brookhaven on the map" and "bringing business and growth to the area." Bernie Reed, president of the metal roofing manufacturer discussed his company's current multi-million dollar expansion, which he says will take the company's products to 48 states.

**Co-Lin courses.** Co-Lin students this spring are taking more than fourteen intensive classes and thirty short-term and mini-term on-line courses. The intensive classes encompass Art Appreciation, Business Ethics, Computer Concepts, English Composition II, World Civilization II, Personal & Community Health, Introduction to Kinesiology/HPR, College Study Skills, College Algebra, Spanish I, General Psychology, Human Growth & Development and Introduction to Sociology. Courses offered in the four-week mini-term session are Music Appreciation, Introduction to Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Adjustment. The complete listing of short-term on-line courses are listed on:

[www.colin.edu/class-schedule](http://www.colin.edu/class-schedule).

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# Easy does it when pruning crape myrtles

By Guest Columnist Rebecca Bates

Crape Myrtles are fabulous plants for the Southern landscape valued for their summer blooms, exfoliating bark, fall color and the grace of their natural form. They are as tough as they are beautiful.

Light pruning is a key to successfully nurturing them. The practice of chopping off the tops has become commonplace because many people believe it is required to promote flowering. Some prune because the plant is too large for the space. Others see their neighbors doing it and feel the need to follow suit. Crape flowers, however, are produced on new growth. Crape Myrtle will produce flowers without any pruning, although it will produce larger flowers and bloom more profusely if at least lightly pruned. Pruning in late winter or early spring will stimulate vigorous new growth. Encourage a second bloom in summer by pruning

not resistant to powdery mildew.

To develop a tree shape, remove all limbs growing from ground level except the three to five strongest limbs. As the tree matures, remove lower lateral branches ("limbing up") one-third to halfway up the height of the plant. Remove branches that are crossing or rubbing against each other and shoots growing into the center of the canopy. Make your cuts to a side branch or close to the trunk. As it grows taller, remove lower branches as needed.

Consider all your options when confronted with a large, old crape myrtle in a space meant for a smaller plant. To create clearance under the canopy, limb up old trees that have spread their lower limbs where they interfere with people or cars. Limb up above the roofline of a single story home to clear obstruction of a window or door. Eliminate one of the major trunks if it is leaning too close to a building.

## TENDING YOUR GARDEN



flowers immediately after they fade.

Crape Myrtle can be a low-maintenance plant, particularly if you choose the cultivar that best suits your landscape needs. There are many new cultivars in different sizes and colors. The dwarf (three to six feet) and semi-dwarf (seven to fifteen feet) selections now available make it easy to choose the right size plant for your space. Crape Myrtles that mature between five and fifteen feet include "Acoma" (white flowers), "Hopi" (light pink), "Comanche" (dark pink), "Zuni" (lavender) and "Tonto" (Red). These are also resistant to powdery mildew, a fungus that attacks and distorts the foliage. Compact crape myrtles between three and six feet include "Hope" (white), "Ozark Spring" (lavender) and "Victor" (red). Unfortunately, they are

Only as a last resort should you top a beautiful old specimen to squeeze it into a confined space.

To keep a crape myrtle at a manageable height, prune moderately by removing all twiggy growth back to lower growing side branches. This will give the plant a more uniform appearance. Practice corrective pruning to remove defective or dead branches. This should be done at the time the problem is detected. Otherwise, prune to remove lateral branches, small twigs or branches in the center to create more open space for sun and air movement.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Rebecca Bates is the Mississippi State University Agricultural Extension Agent based in Brookhaven at the Lincoln County Court House.*

cont. from page 1

# Black history feted

had no captives taken and demonstrated 'we all bleed the same' and that 'shared pain is a bond,'" Maher related.

The WHS Gospel Ensemble interspersed inspirational pieces throughout the program -- "How Much We Can Bear" by Hezekiah Walker and Rev. Timothy Wright's "Yes, I'm a Believer" and "You Brought Me Through This." The Cobra Steppers performed "911, Emergency-Reconnecting the Community," a routine incorporating stepping, clapping and words that recaptured the African tradition of foot music, created when drums were banned. Brookhaven-based God's Movement performed Jakalyn Carr's "Greater." Dakota Harris and a team including Samaiyah McCullough and Dontrel Brown offered two poetic recitations -- Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Woman" and Vernell Hewlett's "Unified Black American Unity." A special treat was the singing of the "National Anthem" by WHS secretary Gwen Shannon.

A display of more than 700 posters on the walls of the WAC old gym surrounded the speakers, readers, singers and dancers during the program and told a visual story of African American history. The posters, an annual tradition at the fourteen-year-old event, are a product of students in the English and theater classes taught by Albert Brown, who has coordinated the Black History Month celebration program since its inception.

"I ask my students to select and research a person or event important in the history of African Americans," says Brown. "They report on the research orally in their classes and through posters with visuals and a narrative. I archive the posters and display them at the Black History event every year."

Brown produced this year's celebration with WHS librarian Kendra Armistad. His theater classes in grades nine through twelve did the stage and production work.

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# Spec building & new events spur economy

By Bob Arnold

A 54,000 square foot speculative building that can accommodate expansion-minded companies seeking flexible light industrial space, a new Brookhaven-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce (BLCC) committee geared to developing special events to draw people to the area for entertainment, shopping and dining; and business spending are fueling BLCC Executive Director Garrick Combs' high hopes for the local economy during 2017.

**Spec industrial building.** "The hard work is starting now to bring a new employer to the Brookhaven area following completion of the first building in Linbrook Business Park," Coombs said. The hope, he explained, is that the empty building, which now looks like a large gray airplane hangar, will attract an employer that wants to deploy workers and machinery to get its product to market as quickly as possible without a long wait for construction of manufacturing facilities.

Last year, the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors and Brookhaven Board of Aldermen approved the plan presented by BLCC-led Brookhaven-Lincoln Economic Development Alliance, which oversees the business park, to erect the \$2 million spec building to sell or lease to an employer that will bring light industrial jobs to the area. Agracel, Inc., an Illinois-based industrial development company with offices in Madison,



Wesson News

During Brookhaven's first Mardi Gras celebration, hundreds of persons came into the downtown area to enjoy music, dance, and participate in a second line parade (above) in which a New Orleans jazz band led marchers, who came from the streets to join in its progression along Cherokee Street. A new Brookhaven-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce Creative Economy Committee is developing events to bring tourists and visitors to downtown Brookhaven.

Mississippi, constructed the building. In late January, elected officials and representatives of the building's development partners, including BLCC, the Alliance, Agracel and Southwest Mississippi Electric Power dedicated the would-be manufacturing facility, which is readily expandable to 100,000 square feet and can offer a maximum of 216,000 square feet for operations on twelve acres. The development partners will work with the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) in seeking an occupant of the building.

Coombs said the new economic development efforts around the building advance the vision of Linbrook Business Park. Brookhaven and Lincoln County each invested \$2.2 million, BLCC

contributed \$500,000, and MDA provided a \$1.1 grant to create the 400-acre industrial area beyond existing development property nearing capacity in the Industrial Park Road area of Brookhaven.

**Attracting tourists.** In looking at the year ahead, Coombs also commended the work of BLCC's new Creative Economy Committee (CEC), which is partnering with the Brookhaven Tourism Council -- a group funded by the local hotel tax, to shape special events in Lincoln County and Brookhaven that encourage spending by tourists and other visitors in the area. Its inaugural event sought to establish a family-friendly Mardi Gras tradition in downtown Brookhaven, "Downtown Jazzed Up" last month,

which featured a walk-in second-line parade led by a New Orleans brass band, a Co-Lin Jazz Band concert, free music with a street dance, tours of public and private spaces, restaurant specials and parties and extended shopping hours. Some 200 families from across the state in Brookhaven for the Mississippi School of the Arts student auditions were on hand for the Mardi Gras celebration.

The new committee, guided by BLCC's Katie Nations, will seek to initiate a new special event every year that could become a continuing tourist attraction. From tickets sold for the special private Mardi Gras event tours, the committee is seeking funds to purchase a large outdoor projection screen that local civic organizations can use to enhance their events.

Members of the CEC include Quinn Jordan, Suzanne Hirsch, Tammie Brewer, Ryan Holmes, Jason Snider, Karen Sullivan and Tyler Bridge.

**Business spending.** Coombs also noted business spending in Brookhaven and Lincoln County as reason for economic optimism. "Car dealerships are renovating their facilities -- among them, Jeff Wilson, Moatley and Brookhaven Toyota," he pointed out. "A four to five year renaissance is continuing in downtown Brookhaven, with building and renovation by First Bank, Hospice Compassion and Georgia Blues bakery."

"In all, it looks like a good year ahead," summarizes Coombs.

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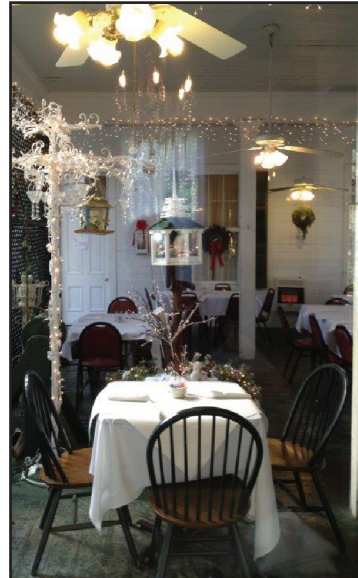
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Soccer suspended & coach notches 900

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin has suspended its men and women soccer programs indefinitely based on financial support for the program compared to other colleges, the academic success of student-athletes, and the overall competitiveness of the program. Recruiting athletes for a competitive program has been difficult, with other members of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) investing more money in their programs, officials said. Depending on whether or not current players want to remain at Co-Lin or go elsewhere, the athletic department is assisting them in contacting other MACJC colleges to continue playing or idenfying other scholarship opportunities for them at the college.

**Coach notches 900th.** In his fortieth year at the helm of Lady Wolves Co-Lin basketball, head coach Gwyn Young has reached the 900 career-wins milestone. After

achieving the mark in a Lady Wolves victory over Meridian Community College, Young said: “This game wasn’t more important than the first win or the ninety-ninth win. We want to win every time we go out. Still, I am very proud of what we have done as a program here.

There are so many people that support us and have come together over the years to get us here.” Young has had multiple achievements over his career

-- seven Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) State Championships, seven Region XXIII Titles, and seven NJCAA National Tournament appearances, including a fourth place finish. He has been honored as MACJC Coach of the Year on numerous occasions and Region XXIII Coach of the Year seven times. Young is a member of the Co-Lin Sports Hall of Fame, MACJC Sports Hall of Fame, and the NJCAA Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame.



SCOREBOARD

Febuary 14-March 14

Wesson High School Cobras

Basketball (Varsity)

Boy’s Record: 10-11. Recent Losses: Hazlehurst. 64-54 (District Tournament).

Girl’s Record: 4-15.

Baseball (Varsity)

Record: 3-5. Recent Wins: Vicksburg. 11-2. Brookhaven. 6-5. Crystal Springs. 3-0. Recent Losses: Germantown. 10-0. Loyd Star. 4-0. Lawrence County. 4-0. George County. 4-2. Hattiesburg. 9-0.

Softball (Varsity)

Record: 5-2. Recent Wins: Mize. 7-6. Columbia. 14-2. Salem. 12-0. Bogue Chitto. 7-0. Puckett. 2-1. Recent Losses: Warren Central. 3-2. Loyd Star. 3-2

Co-Lin Wolves

Basketball:

Men’s Record: 10-13. Recent Wins: Hinds. 76-69. Recent Losses: Gulf Coast. 74-63. East Central. 93-84. Southwest. 80-69. Meridian. 84-74. Pearl River. 82-67.

Women’s Record: 19-4. Recent Wins: Gulf Coast. 73-63. East Central. 87-71. Southwest. 57-52. Meridian. 80-65. Pearl River. 70-54. East Mississippi. 60-59 (MACJC Tournament). Recent Losses: Hinds. 78-61. Southwest. 53-50. (MACJC Tournament). Itawamba. 76-61. (Region XXIII Tournament).

Baseball:

Record: 3-8. Recent Wins: Mineral Area. 12-7. Bishop State. 16-6, 12-8. Recent Losses: Mineral State. 11-10. Panola College. 13-0, 9-0. Delgado. 9-0. 10-7. Baton Rouge. 3-0, 11-6. Southwest. 7-3.

Softball:

Record: 5-9. Recent Wins: Hinds. 8-3, 15-7. Spoon River. 12-4. Mississippi Delta. 5-1, 3-2. Recent Losses: Lakeland. 10-2. LSU Eunice. 8-6. Chattanooga State. 7-4. Snead State. 13-1. Shelton State. 8-4. LSU Eunice. 13-1. Marion Military Institute. 11-4. Southwest. 10-9, 6-5.

Tennis:

Men’s Record: 3-3. Recent Wins: Oxford College Emory. 7-2. Northeast. 9-0. Itawamba. 5-4. Recent Losses: East Central. 5-4. Gulf Coast. 8-1. Jones. 6-3. Women’s Record: 3-2. Recent Wins: East Central. 7-2. Northeast. 7-2. Itawamba. 7-2. Recent Losses: Gulf Coast 9-0. Jones. 8-1.

Upcoming Sporting Events

March 16

Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play Brookhaven at Lawrence County. 2:30 p.m.  
Wesson High School varisty baseball Cobras play Magee at Lawrence County. 7 p.m.

March 17

Co-Lin softball wolves play East Mississippi. 1 p.m.  
Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play at Salem. 2:30 p.m.

March 18

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Meridian. 2 p.m.

March 19

Co-Lin softball wolves play at Mississippi Delta. 1 p.m.

March 21

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play at Tylertown. 5:15 p.m. & 4 p.m.  
Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play at Port Gibson. 7 p.m.

March 22

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Mississippi Gulf Coast. 3 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play Jones. 3 p.m.

March 24

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Hinds. 2 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play West Lincoln. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play Port Gibson. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

March 25

Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play West Lincoln. 11 a.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play Northwest. 1 p.m.  
Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at East Mississippi. 2 p.m.  
Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play Brookhaven. 4 p.m.

March 27

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Meridian. 2 p.m.

March 28

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Southwest. 3 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play at East Central. 3 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play Port Gibson. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play Hazlehurst. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

March 29

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Jones. 2 p.m.

March 30

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Gulf Coast. 1 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play at Baton Rouge. 3 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play at Franklin County. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

March 31

Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play at Hazlehurst. 4 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play Salem. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

April 1

Wesson High School junior varsity baseball Cobras play Loyd Star at Brookhaven. 11 a.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play Holmes. 12 noon.  
Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play at Loyd Star. 1 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play Natchez. 12 noon & 1 p.m.  
Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Northwest. 2 p.m.

April 3

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Hinds. 2 p.m.

April 4

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Meridian. 2 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play Tylertown. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.  
Wesson High School varsity baseball Cobras play at Jefferson County. TBA

April 5

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at East Central. 2 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play Hinds. 3 p.m.

April 6

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play at Port Gibson. TBA

April 7

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play Jefferson County. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

April 8

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play Pisgah. 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play at Coahoma. 1 p.m.  
Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Northeast. 2 p.m.

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play in Loyd Start Tournament. TBA

April 10

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play at Florence. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play Franklin County. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

April 11

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play at Holmes. 2 p.m.  
Co-Lin baseball Wolves play at Jones. 3 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play at Pearl River. 3 p.m.  
Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity softball Cobras play Franklin County. 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

April 12

Wesson High School junior varsity & varsity baseball Cobras play at Franklin County. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

April 13

Co-Lin men & women tennis teams play Meridian. 2 p.m.  
Co-Lin softball wolves play Northeast. 2 p.m.

April 14

Co-Lin baseball Wolves play Coahoma. 1 p.m.



# Community Calendar

**March weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 56 degrees F (average) and precipitation of four inches (two inches below average). February 12-14: sunny, warm; March 15-17: T-storms, then sunny, cool; March 18-22: rainy, cool; March 23-27: sunny, cool; March 28-31: T-storms, then sunny, cool.**

## MARCH 14

Diabetes support group. Meets weekly on Tuesdays. Education Annex at King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven. 1:30 p.m. For information, call Natalie Ybarra at 601-835-9489.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary Post 2618 meet. \$5for meal. VFW Hall on Industrial Park Road, Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

## MARCH 16

Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild meets. Gretchen Brown will demonstrate chalk writing. Lincoln County Public Library. 5:30 p.m.

## MARCH 17

St. Patrick's Day

## MARCH 20

Beginner clogging classes for persons of all ages beyond five-years-old are held every Monday night. A small fee is charged each month. Brookhaven Recreation Department on Highway 51. Call 601-833-3791.

Classes resume at Wesson Attendance Center & Co-Lin following March 13-17 spring break.

First Day of Spring

## MARCH 21

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. Testing at Co-Lin Thames Center from 4:45 a.m.-9 p.m. Participants must register in advance with Kristina Stephens (601-643-8707). Also March 22 (8:45 a.m.-12 noon), April 4 (4:45 p.m.-9 p.m.) & April 12 (8:45 a.m.-12 noon).

Copiah County Master Gardeners monthly meeting. Mississippi State University Extension Office at Gallman. 6 p.m.

American Legion Post #79 meets. American Legion Lodge on Main Street, Wesson. 6:30 p.m. For information, call 601-563-5438.

## MARCH 23

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce Meet & Greet is a venue for Wesson friends and neighbors to socialize and enjoy complimentary dishes of the town's eateries. Free to public. Old School Community Center. 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

## MARCH 27

Blood drive every second and fourth Monday. King's Daughters Medical Center Hospital Annex. 1 p.m.-6 p.m. Call 800-817-7449 for information.

## MARCH 28

Co-Lin Workforce Education program's annual Pathways Job Fair matches potential workers with employers. Thames Center on Co-Lin campus. From 9 a.m.-11 a.m., companies in transportation, engineering and industrial areas meet potential employees. From 1 p.m.-3 p.m., companies requiring computer, office professional, service and healthcare personnel meet potential workers.

## MARCH 29

Arts Day at the Capitol, hosted by the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC), highlights significant contributions made by the arts in Mississippi and provides important opportunities for artists and arts organizations to share with Mississippi lawmakers the impact that the arts have made in their lives. First Floor Rotunda of the Mississippi State Capitol. 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Contact Andrea Coleman for more information at 601.359.6040 or acoleman@arts.ms.gov.

## MARCH 30

Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) presents two workshops. Glass Blowing led by Roger Smith from Monticello, who will demonstrate the art and discuss samples of his work. First Ladies of the Civil War led by varied ILR members, who will share stories about Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln; Lucretia Rudolph, who married General James A. Garfield; Eliza Johnson, wife of Andrew Johnson; and other exceptional women in history. Thames Center on Co-Lin campus. 12:30 p.m.

Wesson Lions Club meets. Student cafeteria conference room at Co-Lin. 6:30 p.m.

## MARCH 31

Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration events begin in Gulfport at Centennial Plaza (200 E. Beach Boulevard). Major celebrations will follow later in the year in the north and central regions of the state -- Oxford on June 24 and Jackson on December 9 during the grand opening of the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Among events at Gulfport are ongoing live regional entertainment, a "Salute to Mississippi and the Military" exhibition and the "Taste of Mississippi" with coastal and international cuisine and local craft beers. The United States Postal Service will also unveil the new Mississippi Commemorative Stamp. The Band Perry will headline the Governor's Concert on April 1. The concert will begin with "We Are Mississippi," an orchestral salute to the state's musical heritage conducted by Dr. Jay Dean, Executive Director of the Arts Institute of Mississippi. Also featured will be Roots Gospel Voices of Mississippi, 2015 Ultimate Elvis Tribute Contest winner David Lee, the Mississippi Bicentennial Symphony Orchestra, the Mississippi Bicentennial Singers and the 200-voice Mississippi Bicentennial Chorus. Events are free, but attendees must reserve tickets online at [www.visitmississippi.org/200](http://www.visitmississippi.org/200) for days they plan to attend. See more information at [www.ms200south.org](http://www.ms200south.org).

## APRIL 3

Certified Volunteer Fire Fighter 1 classes begin. Classes continue to meet on the following dates: April 4, 6, 13, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 27; May 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 30; June 1, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 22. Written test is on June 22. Fifteen people must register for the class. Copiah County Fairgrounds Multipurpose Building (2040 West Gallman Road, Hazlehurst). 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

## APRIL 4

Wesson Board of Aldermen meet. City Hall. 6 p.m.

## APRIL 6

First Aid & CPR for Children & Infants. Two session-class starts for parents, grandparents and others who care for babies and young children. Randy Castilaw instructor. \$20 fee. Registration deadline is March 23. Co-Lin Wesson campus. 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Contact Toni Dobbins at 601-643-8716.

## APRIL 8

Wesson Lions Club pancake breakfast. \$5 donation (purchase tickets through Lions Club members or at door). Wesson Baptist Church. 6 a.m.-11 a.m.

## APRIL 11

Certified Nursing Assistant Training. Eight-week course begins, continuing on Mondays & Tuesdays from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Bronze level on ACT WorkKeys is required. \$710 fee. April 4 is registration deadline. Co-Lin Wesson campus. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Contact Kristina Stephens at 601-643-8707.

## APRIL 12

Institute for Learning in Retirement workshop. Expressions & What They Mean. Participants will discuss favorite expressions, their origins and meanings. Following the workshop, the film, *Power of the Mississippi River*, will be presented -- a three-part series that explores the life and culture on the banks of the Mississippi River from its source, south to the mouth. Thames Center on the Co-Lin campus. 10 a.m.

## APRIL 13

The Widows Support Group meets on the second Thursday and encourages widows in their walk through the grief process and offers programs on pertinent issues related to their situation.. 5:00 p.m. For information, contact facilitator Betty Vaughn- Furlow at [Bvaughnfurlow@gmail.com](mailto:Bvaughnfurlow@gmail.com) or 601-540-4308.

## APRIL 18

Beginner Excel 2016 & Intermediate Excel 2016. \$10 fee. Registration deadline is April 11. Thames Center at Co-Lin. Beginner class is from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. & intermediate class is from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Contact Toni Dobbins at 601-643-8716.

## CONTINUING

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at convenient times seven days of every week. First United Methodist Church, 215 West Cherokee Street, Brookhaven. Open meetings are Mondays at noon and Tuesdays (Big Book Study), Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Closed meetings are Wednesdays and Fridays (Big Book Study) at noon and Thursdays and Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild members work on projects every Thursday of the month from 9 a.m.-12 noon at the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Public Library in the Vernon Room when it is available.

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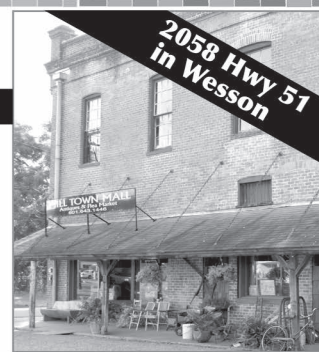
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# Dalton Bland shaped daughter's memories

By Guest Columnist Meghan Bland

Growing up in Wesson, I have developed a love for this town – its beauty, its hospitality, its quaint churches and intimidating pines. However, this love was only realized because of the lens with which my father, also a native Wessonian, provided me as I grew up.

My father is Dalton Bland. He is a small business owner, an outdoorsman, and a dedicated father.

His memories at Wesson High School, when it was still located on Co-Lin's campus, shaped mine at Wesson Attendance Center and later at Co-Lin. His comedic nature and quick wit molded his memories into tales I would share with my friends -- tales of friendship, community, and working hard. I, and those friends, have come to realize that my father is not just a neighbor you should meet, but also a charismatic character whom everyone should be so lucky to know.

It is likely that someone in my family has served your family in some capacity in recent history. My father has probably serviced your chainsaw or lawnmower at The Little Engun on Hwy 51. My grandmother, Jerrie Bland, may have trimmed your hair at her salon near Ashley's 51 Stop. My late grandfather may have even prepared your house plot or dug your grandfather's fishing pond while he was still operating Bull Doziers. My family has long served the community of Wesson, and my father is no different.

Dalton Bland has served the Copiah County area's lawn and garden needs for over 25 years. It could easily be argued that he is a staple member of the "hard-working" community here in Wesson -- those men and women who get their hands dirty, clothes sweaty, and are endlessly dedicated to their families. He has remained

## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



Special to Wesson News

a source of laughter, support, and friendship for those men and women who frequent his shop, The Little Engun. My father recently shared his thoughts with me on Wesson.

### What is your favorite memory of growing up in Wesson?

I've always enjoyed the "Maybury-ness" of this town. In high school, I remember meeting up right in the middle of town, near the old barber

shop, to hang out. Wesson only had one police officer at the time, and it seemed he appreciated having all of the youngsters in a central location rather than spread across the county. While I think that community is still a huge part of Wesson's charm, I think that it was much more concentrated back then.

### What is your favorite place to be in Wesson?

I've always said that Wesson is God's country. There aren't a whole lot of people here, and even less are coming. It is hard for me to pick one favorite place, but the common factor among them all is green grass, water, and big pines. Whether it is fishing, horseback riding, or hunting, it is in my favorite place as long as it is outdoors.

### How do you expect Wesson to change in the future?

That is a difficult question. In all honesty, I hope it doesn't change too much. I hope the younger generation can recognize the uniqueness of this town. I hope they are able to preserve and amplify the "Maybury-ness" that I mentioned before. I hope that while Wesson continues to grow, it doesn't outgrow its charm.

### Would you ever move away from Wesson?

You know, I am old enough to know to never say never, but I really hope I am able to remain in Wesson. I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to travel. I've seen some amazing things, met interesting people, and had a really great time doing it. However, Wesson is where I truly love to spend my time.

### Why did you decide to move your business back to Wesson?

I wanted to find a safer location for my business that was still convenient to a majority of my customers. The community of Wesson has long supported my business, and has long made up my core customer base. So, of course, it made sense to move the business to Wesson -- where my customers live. I'm really glad I made that decision.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Meghan Bland writes about her father. Suggest neighbors you want to read about via email to [bobarnold@wessonnews.com](mailto:bobarnold@wessonnews.com). Or write a story about your neighbor.*

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