

Legislature fails to pass Hunger-Free Students Act

BY CRYSTAL HUSKEY
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A bill was presented to the Tennessee Legislature K-12 education subcommittee on March 6 that would prevent students from being penalized for having unresolved school lunch accounts, including having their meals thrown in the trash after being served. The bill was voted down.

Sponsored by District 55 State Rep. John Ray Clemmons (D-Nashville), the bill was written in response to national stories of kids being stigmatized publicly in the cafeteria for having a negative balance.

The bill, dubbed the Tennessee Hunger-Free Students Act, would have mandated that school administration make every possible effort to get the child enrolled in the free/

reduced lunch program if they qualify.

The bill also prohibits a school from publicly calling a student out or stigmatizing them because of not being able to pay for a meal, or requiring the student to do chores or other work to pay for the meals.

A meal debt couldn't keep them from graduating or penalizing them in other ways. The child would not have been

allowed to be held personally responsible for their parent or guardian's inability to pay.

The school also wouldn't be able to send collections agencies out for meal debts.

State Rep. John Ragan, who represents parts of Oak Ridge and Anderson County, is the chair of the subcommittee and was one of four who voted no. Two members of the committee voted yes.

Why vote no?

According to Ragan, his vote would not have changed the outcome.

Although he said he was in favor of the bill, and that Clemmons did a good job presenting it, he didn't want to split the vote as chairperson.

"Among committee members, there was concern about how

SEE FAILS, PAGE 2A

A neighbor who just happens to sell insurance

Bob Hamby to be honored for 50 years of service

BY KEN LEINART
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If you sit with State Farm Insurance agent Bob Hamby and try to get him to sum up a 50-year career — a legacy, if you will — in the insurance business, don't bother bringing multiple notebooks and writing utensils.

You won't need them. "I love the people," he said last week.

And it really is that simple for Hamby.

He's the same gentleman today as he was 50 years ago when he traded in his banking job to become an insurance agent.

"It was the same when I was in banking," he said. "I just enjoyed talking with people."

Hamby will be honored at a reception from 1-4 p.m. Friday, March 15, at his office at 1115 Charles Seivers Boulevard — just one day (March 16) of

SEE NEIGHBOR, PAGE 3A

New park is close to reality



KEN LEINART | COURIER NEWS
Joe Hollingsworth Jr. stands on part of the South Clinton property the Hollingsworth Foundation will convert into park.

'Community Engagement Day' to showcase features

BY CRYSTAL HUSKEY
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If you drive out of town up Highway 25 and look to your left as you pass Summers and Son Monument Co., you'll see the future site of a 450 acre park that will drastically change the landscape of South Clinton.

On March 23, with a rain date of March 30, the public is invited to check out the proposed plans and walk around the site from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. There will be free food trucks, activities for kids and people on site to answer questions from the public.

"It doesn't look like much now, but it will," said Hollingsworth Foundation Executive Director Mike Wallace as he pointed out the site on Monday. "It's going to be something great."

It's long been a dream of the Hollingsworth family to contribute to a park that would improve the quality of life in Clinton, according to Joe Hollingsworth.

"We wanted this to be a component to the recent Clinton Vision and a true experience that would repeatedly attract local appreciation and some

national recognition," he said. "Additionally, we wanted it to highlight some of the local historic stories to give a texture of the community to those who enjoy the park."

The proposed park goes from the driving range on Yarnell Road all the way down to the river, then up the hill. Around 170 acres are privately owned by the Hollingsworth Foundation, and the remaining land Wallace and Joe Hollingsworth want incorporated into the park belongs to the Tennessee Valley Authority. That land is already used as public land. The islands, too, are owned by TVA.

Wallace is in negotiations with TVA on the use of that land, but it's a tedious process.

"There are no immediate answers with TVA," said Wallace.

It can be a long and drawn out process, which is why Wallace knows they will celebrate a groundbreaking this year, but the exact date is undetermined.

"Not today and not Dec. 31, I can tell you that," he laughed. "But there's no set date yet."

SEE REALITY, PAGE 3A

Chamber's Rick Meredith is 2019 'Ally of the Year'

STAFF REPORTS
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People in Anderson County continue to show their commitment to preventing misuse of drugs and alcohol among our youth and across our community. Last Friday, March 1st, ASAP of Anderson held their yearly banquet to thank community partners and volunteers across the county for their dedication to fighting the opioid crisis and other substance misuse. At the banquet, ASAP crowned Rick Meredith Ally of the Year. Competition was the

fiercest it has ever been this year leading to over \$9,000 raised during the February campaign leading up to the banquet. This year, the campaign surpassed ASAP's highest ever total by over \$2,000. Rick Meredith prevailed over five other candidates with the support of his business and personal ties in the community.

The Ally of the Year campaign is a yearly competition where citizens can "vote" for the candidate or candidates of their choice.

Each person is nominated for their role as an important pillar in

our community who has worked to create a healthy and safe Anderson County. Every \$1 (or vote) counts toward the race for Ally of the Year - the candidate with the most votes, of course, wins.

Each candidate conducted their own campaign, but all of the candidates were united by one goal: to use their leadership, influence, and passion to raise awareness and funds to help prevent and reduce substance misuse in Anderson County. Rick Meredith of the Anderson County



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ASAP of Anderson 2019 Ally of the Year Rick Meredith with Stephanie Strutner.

SEE MEREDITH, PAGE 2A



OBITUARIES

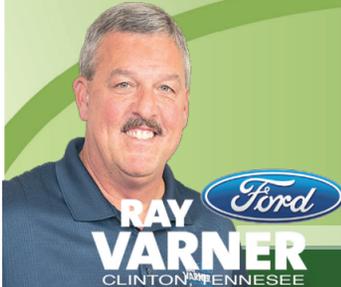
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REALITY
FROM PAGE 1A

Wallace and others spoke to Clinton City Council last month about the proposed park, which would feature bike and hiking trails, lots of green space and an event center. The entire council was enthusiastic about the potential project.

“During our discovery

“It doesn't look like much now, but it will. It's going to be something great.”

Mike Wallace
Hollingsworth Foundation
Executive Director

process we visited over 50 parks across the nation comparing the best and most creative ideas,” Hollingsworth explained on Tuesday in an email to The Courier News. “Then, we followed up with a national design competition with Port Urbanism from Chicago/Philadelphia being the winner with their innovative ideas. Now, as we add other creative partners with this group, we hope to create an inspirational recreational experience, not simply a park.”

The ideas are big and bold, and while the specifics aren't written in stone yet, Hollingsworth has a track record of making things happen. He was involved in building the Clinton High School sports complex and was the top donor for that, as well as for the Clinton Middle School gym renovations. He also led the campaign to build and run the Junior

Achievement Biztown in Clinton.

The park has been a dream of Hollingsworth's for at least 10 years, and now that he's ready to move on it, Wallace believes it can be done quickly and with excellence.

As previously reported in The Courier News, a meadow area between the road and the river has been used over the years by the TVA to store fly ash, also known as coal ash. That area is around 40 acres and met EPA standards when it was first used as a disposal site, and continued to meet standards as it went through testing over the years, according to Wallace.

The topic came up during January and February's Clinton City Council meetings, with councilmembers asking Hollingsworth what type of tests have been and will be performed to ensure the safety of not just the site, but the groundwater as well.

With safety concerns over fly ash in the news more frequently lately as well, Wallace said that they are talking internally about a brownfield program that the Tennessee Department of Conservation discussed at last month's council meeting. “A brownfield program would meet the standards,” he said, “and we want to exceed those standards.”

While they haven't decided whether they will do tests through the TDEC brownfield program or through an independent study, Wallace said testing will be done.

The Courier News will keep the community informed on the status of



The bottom left of the park, highlighted in yellow, is the meadow area that was used as a fill site for fly ash. The green includes lawn space and forests. Plans include different zones for potential river access and road access sites. A larger version of this will be at the community engagement day planned by the Hollingsworth Foundation for March 23.

those tests.

The park will be free to enter and will have

full-time employees on the grounds. The cost to maintain and build

the park is 100-percent privately funded, involving no taxpayer dollars, according to Hollingsworth.

A study is also being done on how this will affect South Clinton and the entire city financially. Wallace believes it will lead to a boom in business development.

“Being in the heart of

town, it will be a catalyst for other things to be built around it and expand on the Clinton vision,” Hollingsworth said.

To find the park for the foundation's Community Engagement Day, put 350 Clinch Avenue into your GPS. Take East Siding Road, just before Yarnell Road, to park.



An artist's rendition of the Hollingsworth Foundation's proposed park in South Clinton. The ideas for the park are bold and creative. Hollingsworth has said he wants the park to be “aspirational” in design and an asset for the entire region.

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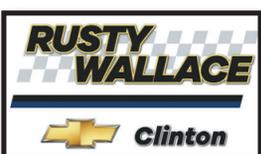
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