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NEW VERSAILLES POLICE CHIEF James Fugate, right, speaks with Lt. Michael Fortney outside the Versailles Police Department headquarters. (Photo by John McGary)

New chief not new to Versailles

BY JOHN MCGARY
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

The man in charge of 43 officers and nine dispatchers has been the police chief of Versailles for less than two weeks, but James Fugate has been on the force for nearly 17 years, the last four-and-a-half as assistant chief.

He describes his “chief” goal very simply. “First and foremost, our primary purpose here is to serve the citizens of Versailles, Midway and Woodford County,” Fugate said.

Fugate said the department has 13 body cameras purchased with asset forfeiture funds. (Asset forfeiture programs allow the state to confiscate alleged proceeds or instruments of crime and sell the latter.) He said he intends to continue buying them until every officer is equipped with one – and that there are two good reasons for doing so.

“The first is that it protects the officer and the department from frivolous complaints. Secondly, I want to ensure that our officers are performing our duties to the highest standards,” Fugate said.

Among his other goals are increasing the depart-

ment’s community outreach efforts, from the Cops For Kids program to various school programs.

“That’s always been important to us, and I want to not only continue it, but expand on it as well,” Fugate said.

The son of a soldier, Fugate grew up on Army posts in Germany, Colorado, South Carolina and Ft. Knox. He spent two years with the Nicholasville Police Department before becoming a patrol officer with the Versailles force in January of 1999. He and his wife, Tracy, have two daughters, Sydney, 17, and Taylor, 14, (she’ll be 15 on Nov. 21, Fugate pointed out).

He was a patrolman until 2003, when he was promoted to detective. In May of 2011, then-chief Johnny Wilhoit picked Fugate as assistant chief.

Asked why he enjoyed being a police officer, Fugate, 43, said, “I like helping people, serving the community.”

He is a soft-spoken, polite man, and said he used the same approach as a patrolman and detective – whether dealing with speeding motorists or alleged

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Preventing heroin addiction ‘very personal’ to Tankersley

BY BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Versailles resident Sharon Tankersley became very familiar with Central Kentucky’s heroin problem and the urgent need to educate people about this emerging drug epidemic as a prevention specialist working with the Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (ASAP) board in Fayette County.

Because people are dying of heroin overdoses, the Bluegrass Prevention Center and its prevention specialists are becoming more involved with helping families find resources – intervention and treatment options – for loved ones with a heroin addiction, Tankersley said.

“With heroin and opiate addiction,” explained Tankersley, “we really are focusing on a few key things in terms of prevention education. One of those is overdose prevention.

“... Once (a person is) dead, we can’t get them into treatment. And so we’re trying to get the information out there and the resources out there to prevent people from dying so we can help them...”

Heroin scourge in Woodford County

This is the next installment in a series exploring how heroin addiction has destroyed families, led to an increased number of overdose deaths and increased crime in Woodford County.

While Tankersley has only been working with Woodford County’s ASAP board as a prevention specialist for one year, she said living in the community makes local efforts to prevent heroin abuse “very personal to me.”

In her role as a prevention specialist, Tankersley helps guide the Woodford County ASAP board with its efforts to educate and inform people living here about substance abuse.

“People do not realize the extent to which

See PERSONAL, p. 2

Election shows Ky. becoming red state

BY BOB VLACH
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

As one of six members on the Kentucky Board of Elections, former U. S. Congressman Ben Chandler spent election day in Frankfort waiting for results to come in. He was pretty certain Republican Matt Bevin would be elected Kentucky’s next governor after absentee results came in from Jefferson County before the polls closed.

When Attorney General Jack Conway, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, was not able to win by sizable margins in Fayette and Jefferson counties, Woodford County High School political science teacher Kyle Fannin said he was not surprised that Bevin was elected by a wide margin.

“Instead of it being a close race, which Bevin won,” said Fannin. “It was – by today’s standards – a landslide.”

He said, “Everybody who follows politics in the state was waiting for this to happen (in a governor’s race) because Kentucky’s been voting Republican at the federal level for 20 years or more.”

“I think we’re close to becoming pretty solidly Republican,” said University of Kentucky political science professor Donald Gross.

The Woodford County resident said Republicans are on a roll, but he’s not sure the recent election offers a true measure of their dominance given the strong anti-Obama hostility in Kentucky, which he described as “fairly toxic.”

“An enormous amount of money has been spent in political campaigns to attack Obama, to demonize Obama. And no money has been spent to defend him,” explained Chandler.

He said Obama supporters didn’t spend any money in Kentucky before two Presidential elections because they didn’t think he could win Kentucky. “And consequently,” he continued, “all of the messages that people get about Obama are negative messages.”

With no voice for political moderates on today’s 24-hour cable news channels, voters in all parts of the country are receiving the same message: Republicans are social conservatives and Democrats are liberals, “particularly on social issues,” Chandler said.

Kentucky’s election results continue a trend: “Urban America is Democratic and rural America is Republican,” said Chandler.

What Bevin does as governor over the next four years will help determine whether or not Republicans continue to win elections for the state’s highest

See RED, p. 8

Court to repay KACo loan early

BY JOHN MCGARY
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Woodford Fiscal Court voted unanimously Tuesday to repay a \$525,000 short-term loan from the Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo) months before it was due.

In a special meeting Friday, Oct. 16, the court voted to request the loan to deal with officials called shorter-term cash-flow problems. (After that meeting, county treasurer Becky Wilson said the interest payments on

the 3.25 percent loan amounted to \$47.39 a day.)

Tuesday, Wilson reminded the court that the county will have three payrolls in December, but didn’t object to the early repayment, saying the county now has a “much improved financial report...”

Other financial news

Earlier Tuesday, the county’s finance committee, formed last month to come up with a list of money-saving measures, met. During the court

See COURT, p. 10

Christmas Open House set for this weekend

BY JOHN MCGARY
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Food, drinks, Santa Claus and carriage rides are among the attractions at this weekend’s 29th annual Versailles Christmas Open House.

The event is sponsored by the Versailles Merchants Association (VMA), and takes place downtown on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Some of the downtown churches will take part on Saturday.

“We open our doors, we have specials, refreshments – it’s a great way to kick off the Christmas shopping season,” said Maria Bohanan, co-owner of Pretty in Pink and a member of the VMA.

Among the highlights are an art village inside the Thoroughbred Center and free carriage rides Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. that will begin at Pretty in Pink.

“One of the things that we’ve done for the past couple of years is rent out the empty Thoroughbred Center space ... that allows the

farmers’ market to come in, it also allows some of our adjacent members that aren’t immediately downtown to come, such as Wildside Winery and Boyd Orchards ...” Bohanan said. “And they’re going to have an enchanted Christmas land, which will have children’s crafts. They’re also sponsoring a ‘stuff your stocking’ event that’s going to take place at Addie’s,” Bohanan said.

Photos with Santa will also take place at Addie’s from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. People who buy at least \$5 worth of items at five participating shops over the weekend will be eligible to win a gift basket with items ranging from a bottle of wine to restaurant gift certificates.

“It’s a good time. Everyone looks forward to it. I mean, we’ve gotten calls (about it) probably for the past month at the shop ...” Bohanan said. “We have a lot of diverse, wonderful places to shop for the holidays. There is more here than people realize, and I think you can make a whole day of it.”

For more information, visit VMA’s Facebook page.

Hearing set for man facing manslaughter charge

WOODFORD SUN STAFF REPORT

A 20-year-old Frankfort man facing several criminal charges for his role in a deadly Woodford County car crash that claimed the life of an 11-year-old Georgetown boy will return to Woodford Circuit Court for a hearing on Nov. 13.

Woodford Circuit Judge Rob Johnson scheduled the hearing before he makes a ruling on a motion to change conditions of William Cody Mefford’s bond.

“We’re opposed to any further amending or altering of his release,” Commonwealth’s Attorney Gordie Shaw told Judge Johnson during Woodford Circuit Court rule day on Nov. 4.

Defense attorney Luke Morgan asked Johnson to allow Mefford to participate in Teen Challenge, a Christ-based program in Samford, Fla. He said the structured program would help Mefford deal with his life after the deadly automobile crash on July 12, 2015.

“Cody’s heart breaks for what happened that day,” Mor-

gan told Johnson. “He’s trying to make sense of this. He’s trying to put his life together too.”

In arguing against the motion to change the conditions of Mefford’s bond, Shaw cited the serious nature of the case. He said it was not appropriate to allow Mefford to participate in a program in Florida – a long way from authorities here.

During his arraignment on Oct. 7, Cody Mefford pleaded not guilty to second-degree manslaughter, three counts of first-degree wanton endangerment, leaving the scene of an accident/failure to render aid, possession of drug paraphernalia (misdemeanor), possession of marijuana (misdemeanor) and disregarding a traffic control device/traffic light (violation).

According to an indictment, Mefford disregarded a red traffic light at the intersection of Frankfort Road (U. S. 60) and Midway Road (U. S. 62) resulting in a crash that caused fatal injuries to 11-year-old Ryan Moore. His parents and

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GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

P&Z — 6:30 p.m. today, Thursday, Nov. 12, courthouse.
Midway council — 5:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 16, City Hall.
Versailles council — 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17, municipal building.

