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RUSSELL SPRINGS, KENTUCKY

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Local baseball team moves on to state tourney
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Miss Universe?

Miss USA Tara Conner competes for title on NBC July 23 / A8

Editorial: Russell Springs city boundaries need confirmation
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Walters moves on

Russell Springs mayor resigns, cites expansion of business

BY GREG WELLS
TIMES JOURNAL MANAGING EDITOR

RUSSELL SPRINGS - The city's embattled mayor, Brian Walters, resigned his position at a special called meeting Monday night. Saying that he needed to devote more time to his business since winning two large state contracts, Walters told the crowd that he did not make the decision lightly and he hoped the commission would carry on the work of building the See MAYOR, page A10



Mayor Walters read his statement of resignation during a special meeting Monday.

Drug testing company experiencing rapid growth

RUSSELL SPRINGS - In just two weeks Premier Drug Testing has transformed from a drug testing company located only in Russell County and employing about 20 people, to a company with 125 employees and additional offices in Hazard and Owensboro and test collection facilities in every courthouse in Kentucky.

Brian Walters, CEO and President announced this week that Premier had received two state- See EXPAND, page A9

Church & State

RCHS graduation prayer issue has had wide-ranging effects

Megan Chapman spoke about her faith at ceremony.



Derrick Ping has been accosted since the lawsuit.



BY ADAM GIBSON
TIMES JOURNAL REPORTER

RUSSELL SPRINGS - For a short time in May, because of two very different teenagers, this community was turned into a microcosm for the debate on the separation of church and state when a federal judge ruled to block prayer at the 2006 Russell County High School graduation.

The controversy attracted the attention of the nation, the American Civil Liberties Union and Rev. Jerry Falwell, to name a few.

Megan Chapman, who gave a speech outlining her faith in God during the graduation ceremony, has been personally awarded a full scholarship to Liberty University by Falwell because of her bold affirmation of faith.

Chapman's sister Mandy was also awarded a full scholarship by Falwell.

Derrick Ping, the student who contacted the ACLU seeking to have the graduation prayer blocked by a federal judge, has since undergone what he describes as verbal and physical harassment since the graduation prayer controversy began.

On May 16, 2006 the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of

19-year-old Ping, seeking to halt prayer before the RCHS graduation. Ping had asked the school earlier to nix the graduation prayer because he felt it would violate his civil rights, a request they refused.

The ACLU argued in its court papers that "school-sponsored prayer constitutes a symbolic and tangible 'preference... given by law' to a religious sect by exalting it over contrary religious beliefs deemed less worthy of government endorsement."

The ACLU spokesperson said the suit was brought under the Constitutional provision banning government-sponsored religion. That amendment, the first in the Bill of Rights, has been a source of conflict between the ACLU and many religious groups across the nation. The Russell County graduating class of 2006 made headlines by becoming one of those groups.

On the day of the graduation, U.S. District Judge Joseph McKinley granted an un-named complainant, later found to be Ping, and the ACLU the temporary restraining order they sought. That decision blocked the school, a state-funded institution, from allowing clergy-led prayer during the graduation ceremony.

See PRAYER, page A10

Charges against lawyers dropped

Bertram cleared of most charges

BY GREG WELLS
TIMES JOURNAL MANAGING EDITOR

FRANKFORT, Ky. - All but one criminal charge against former Russell Springs City Attorney Robert Bertram have been dismissed by entered agree-

ment with the state's prosecutor. "We've reached agreements in three of the four cases pending," said Commonwealth's Attorney Larry Cleveland, referring to the charges against local attorney See BERTRAM, page A10

Allegations against Rogers voided

BY GREG WELLS
TIMES JOURNAL MANAGING EDITOR

Civil charges made by the previous operator of the State Dock against the local Commonwealth's Attorney have been dismissed. In papers filed recently in

US District Court, the plaintiff Thomas Moore's allegations against Larry Rogers were voided by the court.

"I am pleased by the Federal Judge's dismissal of this ill See ROGERS, page A9

RECOVERING

Hale brothers continue to improve

BY DEREK AARON
TIMES JOURNAL REPORTER

HALE'S HIGHWAY - It's been nearly nine months since that horrific Sunday afternoon. An afternoon Ethan, 15, and Austin Hale, 10, will never forget.

That is when the brothers were involved in a gruesome all-terrain vehicle accident that nearly killed them.

Their lives have since moved on but they still have the scars, mentally and physically, to show and tell what they've experienced in such a short time.

Ethan has given up football, citing it as too big a risk to his reconstructed face, but can be found farming, milking cows, bush hogging and rolling hay.

"He still has a messy room, though," his mother, Rhonda Hale joked.

Austin, on the other hand, is like any 10-year-old. He loves to play basketball and even wanted some "action shots" taken of him shooting hoops.

Austin called his big "bubby" a miracle, but in reality, both are.

In the mean time, the brothers are getting ready for another school year, and Ethan is just a month away from getting his driver's permit.

Despite missing six months of



Times Journal photo by Derek Aaron

Brothers Austin, 10, and Ethan, 15, continue to recover from their near-death experience when they crashed into each other while riding ATVs last November 20. Though both were wearing helmets that saved their lives, their experience was considered instrumental in the passage of a new state law.

school, neither of the boys had to be held back, which is a testament to how hard their teachers worked with them during the spring semester.

In the upcoming school year Ethan will be a sophomore and Austin a fifth grader.

"The teacher's were very lenient

and understanding of our situation," Ethan said.

Along with their teachers, the Hale boys said that many other people had showed their support for them.

"People stopped us at the fair and told us how they had prayed for us, some people I had never

seen in my life and people from different counties that had heard about us," Ethan said.

While both boys were wearing helmets, this incident helped a Kentucky law get passed — which goes into effect July 12 — that requires children under 16 years of

See AFTERMATH, page A9

Donations factor in primary races

BY ADAM GIBSON
TIMES JOURNAL REPORTER

JAMESTOWN - An analysis of campaign contributions reported by candidates for the recent May primary elections shows that a good predictor of victory in the major races was the amount of money spent by the candidates.

There were two exceptions to that rule; Sheriff Larry Bennet's victory over Larry Gosser, in which Bennet spent \$1,611 less than Gosser and Mark L. McGaha's victory over H.K. Cooper for County Attorney, in which McGaha spent \$491 less than Cooper.

These figures were obtained

from the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance website, and the Russell County Clerks Office.

According to the clerk's office there were 9,259 Republicans and 3,042 Democrats eligible to vote in this year's primary elections, which is a total voting population of 12,581 in this county. Of those figures less than 5,400 Republicans turned out to vote while the Democratic turnout was less than 800. Total voter turnout was slightly more than 50 percent.

Tony Kerr retained his position as Circuit Court Clerk, defeating challenger Jean Waddell by 1,948 votes. Kerr spent \$3,102 on his

See PRIMARY, page A9

LAKE CUMBERLAND / WATER TEMP: 79°F surface, 65° at 30 feet / FISHING: Striper catches good using shad on main lake, walleye off banks, trout below dam / For the latest lake fishing and recreation information, plus lake news from around the region, weather & more, visit lakecumberland.com

83° THUR / 13 69° Scattered t-storms	83° FRI / 14 68° Scattered t-storms	82° SAT / 15 68° Scattered t-storms	87° SUN / 16 67° Scattered t-storms	87° MON / 17 65° Isolated t-storms	84° TUE / 18 64° Scattered t-storms	85° WED / 19 63° Scattered t-storms
Sunrise- 5:31 Record High / Low Sunset - 8:01 96° (1966) / 54° (1974)	Sunrise- 5:32 Record High / Low Sunset - 8:00 98° (1966) / 55° (2001)	Sunrise- 5:33 Record High / Low Sunset - 8:00 97° (1980) / 49° (1967)	Sunrise- 5:33 Record High / Low Sunset - 7:59 100° (1980) / 51° (1967)	Sunrise- 5:34 Record High / Low Sunset - 7:59 99° (1980) / 52° (1970)	Sunrise- 5:35 Record High / Low Sunset - 7:58 95° (1986) / 53° (1976)	Sunrise- 5:36 Record High / Low Sunset - 7:58 98° (1980) / 54° (1976)