

Todd County Standard

POVERTY IN TODD

Part of a year-long series examining the growing number of poor in our county



40 percent of babies born to mothers without high school diplomas

BY TONYA S. GRACE
TODD COUNTY STANDARD

With 39.6 percent of its babies in 2007 to 2009 born to mothers without a high school diploma, Todd County did indeed trail only Hart County in south central Kentucky in a list of high school drop-out moms included in the just-released 2012 Kentucky Kids Count County Data Book.

There's more to the story, however. In individual lists for those same

three years, the local community topped the lists for 2008 and 2009, with 42 percent and 40 percent of the babies born during those years being born to mothers who did not have either a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma, familiarly known as a GED.

In 2007, the county had a lower percentage of babies born to drop-out moms, with only 37 percent.

The study also revealed that high percentages like those in

Todd County are scattered throughout the commonwealth, encompassing counties, not only in the west, but in northern and south central portions of the state and a "significant number" in eastern Kentucky, according to Amy Swann of the Kentucky Youth Advocates organization that compiles the data.

Swann said the percentage for Todd County is high, even considering that part of the local population includes Amish and Mennonite residents whose educa-

tion continues only through eighth grade.

"Having well over one in three babies born to Todd County mothers with no high school degree is quite high," Swann said of the 39.6 percent average, or 218 live births, for the years from 2007 to 2009.

She said those numbers should serve as a call to action spurring the community to make improvements, considering, for example, what more the Todd County

SEE BIRTHS, PAGE 5

61 percent of Todd County students get free school meals

BY MELONY SHEMBERGER, ED.D.
TODD COUNTY STANDARD

In the last five years, the number of children receiving lunch at reduced prices in Todd County Schools has dropped, from 269 students during the 2007-08 school year to the current 159.

Sounds like promising news, especially when families in the county – along with the rest of the nation – faced financial pressures from job losses and increased living expenses.

The little hint of good news disappears, however, when the reason for the decline is observed.

The number of reduced-price meal recipients dropped because more of these students qualified for free meals in the last five years. During the 2007-08 school year, 1,046 students did not have to pay for their meals. This school year, the number is 1,208 – more than half of the school district's pupil enrollment.

"It could be that those on reduced are now making less and qualify for free now instead of reduced," said Melissa Weathers, director of food services for Todd County Schools.

The figures come from the school system's annual report cards found online and current data obtained from an open records request.

The numbers also help to support statistics published last week in the 2012 Kids Count Data Book, an annual publication that provides state and county data to measure and improve child well-being. The Kentucky Youth Advocates partners with the Kentucky State Data Center at the University

SEE FREE, PAGE 2



School system reduced meals down, but free meals are up

	Free Meals	Reduced Meals	Paid Meals
2007-08:	1,046	269	885
2008-09:	1,100	230	868
2009-10:	1,164	216	912
2010-11:	1,228	137	859
2012-13:	1,208	159	838

Source: District annual report card and current central office data

A big bite:

School district wants to end laptop lease with Apple

BY MELONY SHEMBERGER, ED.D.
TODD COUNTY STANDARD

On a Saturday in January 2009, nearly 600 students at Todd County Central High School received new MacBook laptop computers as part of a rather unprecedented effort through the popular Apple computer company.

Four years later, school officials have found that the laptop initiative for schools, called Apple 1-to-1, was not exactly the answer they had hoped for in increasing student achievement.

"I don't think we had staff who was prepared for the technology," Todd County Board of Education Chairman Matt Perry said.

During the school board's monthly work session Monday night, Superintendent Wayne Benningfield introduced a plan that would allow the school system to pay off its \$1.2 million lease with Apple, trade in some of the computers, and purchase outright new iPad tablets and other equipment for the schools in time for the 2013-14 school year.

SEE APPLE, PAGE 2



LTRWC raises water rate; Todd district to pass on to customers

BY TONYA S. GRACE
TODD COUNTY STANDARD

The Logan Todd Regional Water Commission is raising the rates for its 12 member entities beginning in March, yet all but one of the Todd County entities affected by the rate increase do not plan to pass that increase along to their customers.

District Superintendent John Haley of the Todd County Water District said his agency has already decided to raise its rates and is in the process of submitting its rate increase to the Kentucky Public Service Commission, the agency that regulates the rates for the water district.

He said the district's increase will be published in the newspaper once it is set.

"If we did not increase our rates, the water district could not ever regain the cost of water (for that particular increase) ever again," he said, explaining the reason for the decision. "Most water districts in my situation, they go ahead and pass that increase along. If they don't recoup that loss now, they don't ever get it back."

Officials with both the City of Elkton and the City of Trenton said they don't plan to pass the rate increase along, and neither is the City of Guthrie.

SEE WATER, PAGE 2

30 YEARS AGO

From January 1983 issues of the Standard:

Bobby Griffey is pictured with the 10-point, 145 lb. (field-dressed) buck he killed recently.

Jack Moore has taken over as manager of Planter's Bank of Todd County, replacing Rick Dye who recently moved to First Federal in Russellville.

Kermit Driskill, who represents Woodmen of the World, is pictured presenting a check to Nick Mejia for the Todd County Rescue Squad.

The engagement of Sarah Jane Fox of Elkton to Leland Price Evans of Trenton is announced; a February 12 wedding is planned.

The English Department will soon have its first literary magazine ready for publication. "Crimson and Gray," supervised by English teachers Carolyn Wells and Barbara Powell, will have a collection of students' works. Members of the students' editorial staff include Jay Mallory, Beth Tribble, Jennifer Delk and Jeff Bland.

The wedding of Marsha Gail Porter of Guthrie to Durell Smith Jr. of Allensville is announced.

Terry Teague of Elkton is pictured in a Hawkins-Corlew Chevrolet of Clarksville ad, inviting Todd Countians to visit him there for their next car purchase.

Todd's Vince Shanklin and a Franklin-Simpson basketball player battle for position during the Rebel's 64-51 victory recently. Shanklin scored 18 points for the Rebels.

Ann West and Sarah Seay talk with gubernatorial candidate Grady Stumbo and wife, Jan, during a campaign visit to Todd County.

The wedding of Libby Rager and Larry Ross is announced.

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OUR OPINION

Poverty is not a plague

With some poverty rankings that rival counties in the deepest part of Appalachia, Todd County has seen its number of the poor, the working poor and the underemployed rise dramatically in the past decade.

Now, information released through studies such as the Kentucky Youth Advocates and from the most recent census paint a better picture of just how dire the situation is for nearly half the families in Todd County.

A lot of the information, especially regarding children who qualify for free or reduced lunches, reflects what many officials had feared since the 2008 recession began — poverty is as bad here as anywhere in the state. While our prospects for being able to attract manufacturers and the regional concept that has brought water, economic development and perhaps a regional job training center offer Todd County several ways to

overcome poverty, the sad reality now is that we are in a state of crisis and we need to admit it.

Things for a lot of families were already very bad in this county from the time Ardco closed in the late 1990s to the time the last Flynn Enterprise garment facility pulled out in 2006.

Then came the Great Recession.

Times are tough and for every person that complains about entitlements, there are Todd Countians with jobs — albeit lower paying jobs — that need government assistance just to feed their families and the care of places like the Helping Hands Clinic in Elkton to meet their medical needs.

With one of the highest rates of uninsured people in the state; with children in poverty on the rise; with one in three families on some sort of government assistance; with 40 percent of children born between 2007 to 2009 to

mothers who do not have high school diplomas; with 61 percent of school-age children on free or reduced lunches there is more than enough information to make us concerned.

We are a place of rural poverty, and for the first time in the history of this county — except for the extremely hard times surrounding the Great Depression — we have a more impoverished population with each generation.

That's why the Todd County Standard, as a special project this year, will be studying our county's poverty, informing the public and asking how we can best improve our situation.

As we said earlier, there are several upcoming opportunities that could help this county and its people. Still, we call upon the civic groups, churches and charitable organizations to continue to do all they can as well as the school system.

Finally, we call upon Judge-

Executive Daryl Greenfield and the mayors of the cities to form a panel to deal with poverty in Todd County. A group of experts, officials and concerned citizens who will make recommendations and offer solutions that can make a difference.

The panel wouldn't have any real power but perhaps it could be a voice for the poor, the working poor, and the underemployed who so desperately need to know that there are people who want all to succeed.

Poverty is not a plague. It is curable. It has been cured in other places, but the only way it can be cured is for people to become aware of its severity and then to care about poverty's demise.

It will be hard work, but we refuse to believe that there aren't a whole lot of Todd Countians out there that know about hard work and finishing the job the right way.

Let's get started.

When a dollar just isn't a dollar ...

When we are considering our national debt, you might think that it would always be simply the number of dollars that we owe, but that would not give a true picture because the value of a dollar changes constantly. You see, the dime of my childhood would buy you more than a dollar will these days. Nevertheless, I believe that the actual number of dollars we owe might still be a fair starting point for the consideration of the problem of debt.

Gross Domestic Product is a big factor in the debt equation, but I sort of look for the difference between what we took in and what we spent because it is a little easier for me to understand. When we spend more than we take in, that is going into debt no matter how you spin it. From what I could find out, we have



TOBY
HIGHTOWER

—
Looking Back

spent more than we have taken in with very rare exceptions for the last number of years.

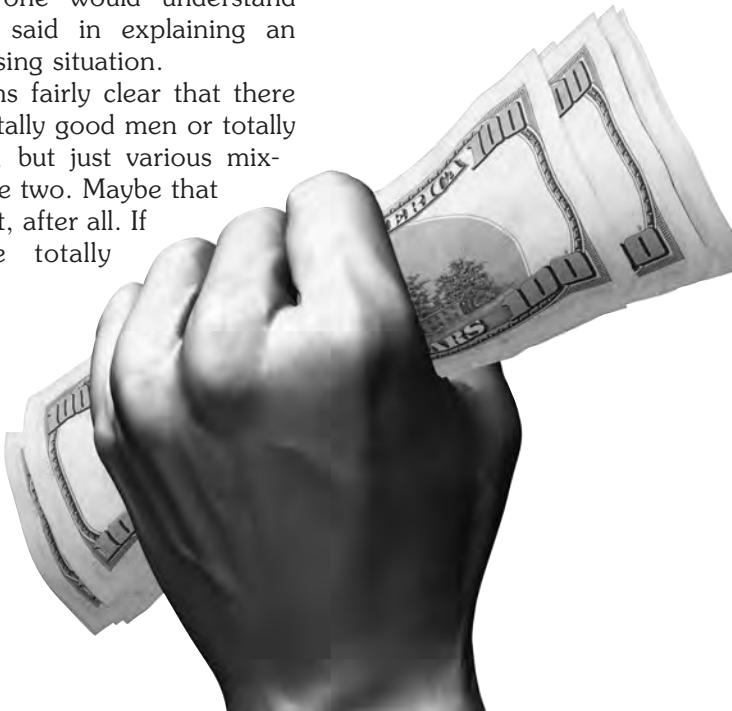
When I consider the debt crisis, I always hark back to the old saying of what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive. If we go from an annual deficit of 15 percent to a deficit of 14 percent, it can be said to be a decrease in the increase of our national debt. This is double speak at its worst and it is very common.

Eisenhower (one of my all-time

favorite historical figures) was a master of double speak. He once assured nervous party members that no one would understand what he said in explaining an embarrassing situation.

It seems fairly clear that there are no totally good men or totally bad men, but just various mixture of the two. Maybe that is the best, after all. If we were totally

good or totally bad, life might be even more complicated than it is now.



Can Kentucky get political disaster relief?

FROM THE LEXINGTON
HERALD-LEADER

Kentucky's freshmen in Congress wasted no time establishing themselves on the fringe of their party.

Reps. Andy Barr of Lexington and Thomas Massie of Vanceburg were among the 67 Republicans in the House who last week voted against \$9.7 billion to pay Superstorm Sandy flood insurance claims.

Massie also introduced his first bill: repeal of gun-free school zones.

The federal flood insurance program was almost broke, having been drained by Hurricane Katrina

and other disasters, especially those in the Southeast. The measure makes good on insurance policies for which victims had paid. It was approved 354-67.

Barr issued a statement saying he supported hurricane relief but that the flood insurance payments should have been offset by cuts elsewhere in the federal budget.

Massie did not explain his vote. The conservative Club for Growth had warned lawmakers to oppose the measure, insisting government should not be in the flood insurance business.

Thousands of Kentuckians have been among the Americans who relied on federal payments in the wake of recent weather disasters.

This country prides itself on sticking together in times of catastrophe. Barr and Massie should imagine their hometowns in ruins before insisting that victims wait on Congress to debate budget priorities before they can get relief.

Massie's proposal to allow guns on school grounds was roundly panned by Kentucky educators and police.

Massie argued that allowing guns in schools would make students safer from assaults such as the one in Connecticut.

In what must be one of the most insensitively worded statements ever to come out of a congressional office, Massie referred to schools as "target-rich" environments.

Newport Police Chief Tom Collins told Cincinnati.com "there's a million reasons why you don't want" to allow untrained people to carry guns in and around schools, including the possibility that the person will be overpowered and the gun taken away and used.

Schools rely on the law for enforcing rules against students bringing firearms to school. We should do nothing to undermine the clear message that it's wrong for anyone armed with a gun to approach or enter a school.

We wait with interest to see what, if anything, will penetrate the Tea Party dogma that's driving this Kentucky freshman class.

Criticisms of McConnell are unwarranted

FROM THE DAILY NEWS,
BOWLING GREEN

Filibusters were created so the party in the minority in the U.S. Senate could have a voice and not be run roughshod over by the majority party.

Since filibusters were created, both political parties have used them.

We believe they serve a valuable purpose and those who use them shouldn't be labeled as obstructionists.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, Kentucky AFL-CIO President Bill Londrigan sees it differently.

The union boss and some of his cronies gathered recently outside the

federal courthouse in Lexington to blame U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., for what Londrigan calls a surge in filibusters since Republicans lost power in the Senate.

Apparently, Londrigan thinks only Republicans use the filibuster. He would be wise to look at his history books and see the countless number of times Democrats used the same technique when they were in the minority.

Where was the criticism from Londrigan then?

Nowhere to be found.

The AFL-CIO has an agenda. It is not a fan of McConnell, and surely the feeling is mutual.

Maybe Londrigan would like to see the filibuster disappear so he

could work with his union supporters in Congress to try to get the Employee Free Choice Act passed to eliminate secret ballots for union representation elections. Perhaps he would like to eliminate section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, which protects workers from paying union dues as a condition of employment in the 24 states that have enacted right-to-work laws.

Londrigan is making this a partisan issue, but he would be wise to look at the man he is criticizing.

McConnell worked across the aisle with longtime Senate colleague Vice President Joe Biden to craft an 11th-hour deal that averted the "fiscal cliff."

McConnell should be praised for his tireless efforts, not criticized, but one also has to consider the source.

If McConnell sees legislation in the future that he and the Republican Party disagree with, they should use their filibuster power. He and his party have that right, just as Democrats do when they are in the minority.

If Majority Leader Harry Reid allowed the minority party more occasions to offer amendments to help shape pending legislation, we suspect the number of filibusters would drop sharply.

Londrigan and his buddies are simply out of touch and are practicing a double standard with the media circus they staged in Lexington.

Guthrie Auto Parts now open for business

BY CATHERINE DARNELL
TODD COUNTY STANDARD

Guthrie Auto Parts opened Dec. 17 and the traffic in the store has been almost bumper to bumper ever since.

It all began when farmer and entrepreneur Donnie Edwards decided to do something with an empty building he owned on State Street, near Strader's Market. He invited Eric Campbell (the one who is not the football player) to come into the business with him and manage the place. With a background in farming and automotive, Campbell was the perfect choice.

Campbell says there have been a lot of customers in the NAPA store, people who work on cars and machine shop mechanics. He has written up 300 tickets in two weeks. His customers are "people from Guthrie, because of the gas situation," he says. "Eventually we're going to start delivering parts."

Elizabeth Dwyer, former clerk for the Elkton City Hall, is the office manager. Her husband, Sherriff Keith, might as well be, as much as he is in the place fiddling around with the merchandise.

Guthrie Auto Parts is open from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 7 a.m.-noon on Saturday.



Births

Continued from Page 1

school district could do to educate its students' parents.

Other statistics included in the data book released this past December reveal that 31.7 percent of the county's children lived in poverty during the years from 2006 to 2010, an increase from 22.2 percent in 2000. Additionally, 61 percent of local public schoolchildren were eligible for free and reduced-price meals during both the 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 school years.

Todd County Schools Superintendent Wayne Benningfield said the high numbers of youth eligible for free and reduced meals is indicative of the children who

are in need, not only for food, but for health services, clothing and the like, and struggling to meet that need does make an impact on the district.

"You've got to make sure the kids don't fall through the cracks," Benningfield said as he pointed to efforts to make sure the youngsters have the things they need.

Family resource and youth service centers fill the gap, as does the Todd County Health Department with its aid of health services. School supplies are provided in the summer with a back-to-school themed event in the community, and free and reduced meals at school ensure that students are ready to learn.

Well-fed students learn better, behave better and enjoy better health as they grow up, Benningfield said. The superintendent said education will help break the cycle of poverty via attainment of a GED or high school diploma and adequate training, and as he observed the importance of having a diploma, he noted that children whose mothers don't have one are at-risk students and high poverty.

He said he was aware some students' mothers don't have diplomas, and as he considered the related statistics from the Kids Count data book, Benningfield said the numbers still seem high in comparison to statistics in surrounding areas, even given the circumstance of Amish/Mennonite residents.

The superintendent said he has heard that there are probably somewhere around 225

Amish schoolchildren in the local community right now; Todd County Health Department Director Jen Harris cited information identifying about one-fourth of the county's population as Amish/Mennonite.

"That is the reason I think it's so high," Harris said of the almost 40 percent of babies born in the local community in 2007-2009 whose mothers don't have high school diplomas.

She said she would be interested to see what the statistics looked like with the Amish and Mennonite populations removed from the equation; however, Swann noted that those populations might be different now than they were even a few years ago.

If those children are of school age now, they would not have been included in the 2009 figures, she said.

Similarly, there could have been a migration of Amish out of the county in 2009.

One internet source, amishamerica.com, says the state has about 8,000 Amish residents, including both New Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites in Todd County.

Other sources say there are fewer numbers of Amish in the state.

Swann noted that the statistics about mothers without high school diplomas could also have implications for children's educational achievement. Parents can't help with homework, she said, and if they can't read then they can't teach their children to read.

Additionally, jobs available today that require only a high school diploma or none at all don't provide adequate wages to sustain a family's economic security, she said.

Of the statistics about children living in poverty, Swann noted that the high percentage of Todd County children living in poverty is definitely a reason for "some really hard community conversation" to determine a cause for those figures, and she said the data book itself should spur questions.

"Data is a snapshot, but it doesn't give you the answers," Swann says. "Many times data raises more questions than it solves."

The annual Kids Count publication is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which supports a group in every state to create the data book. Swann's organization compiles it in Kentucky, she said.

Data in the book focuses on a different aspect each year, and this year's focus is education.

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RELIGION

Apple

Continued from Page 1

“The problem is that when they got the computers, they had no curriculum to go with it,” Benningfield told the board.

The proposal

The proposal will be discussed Monday at the board’s first regular meeting of 2013, with action on it likely to occur.

Benningfield, who said he has been working on the pay-off amount with the California-based Apple for approximately two months, outlined the specific cost details:

- The payoff amount would be \$305,000 due July 31.
- The school system would trade in 600 laptops at \$225 a unit to a third party, the district receiving \$135,000.
- The district would purchase 120 MacBook Airls at \$942 each for \$113,040; 600 new iPad 3 tablets, each at \$479 for \$287,400; 60 iMac desktops computers at \$999 each for \$59,940; and 25 new MacBook Pro laptops at \$1,099 each for \$27,475. All of this totals to \$487,855.
- The total purchase plus the payoff less the trade-in value would equal to a grand total of \$657,855 that the dis-

trict would pay over a three-year period. That would be \$219,285 a year.

• The district was paying \$370,000 a year for four years and had another year left on the lease with Apple. This proposal, if approved by the board, would reduce next year’s budget by \$85,715. “At the end of three years, we are free, and we have the choice to keep the iPads or sell them and purchase new ones,” Benningfield said.

Perry — who has had concerns since discussions about Apple 1-to-1 began a few years ago — agreed that the plan would be “the most cost-effective way to continue on” but voiced another worry.

“My concern for the last two years especially was that

the computers were being used for nothing more than monkey business,” he said. “My concern now is that not everyone has Internet.”

The iPad tablets have 3G Internet capability, with a data plan option available for purchase. The problem is that the 3G signal, although improving, remains scarce in the county and weak in areas where it can be accessed.

Benningfield said access issues created by a student’s inability to pay would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. A technology fund would be established to help low-income students with such issues, he said.

Expectations will be greater than ever

The iPads have functions

similar to a Kindle Fire tablet for books, videos, music, apps and other technology. This means that the district can purchase e-textbooks and have students access them via a secured portal on the district website — something Benningfield said he hopes can be achieved in three years.

All of the other equipment to be purchased under the proposal, such as the iMacs, MacBook Airls and MacBook Pros, would be reserved for in-school use. Benningfield said he wants a computer lab established so that students without computer access at home can do their assignments after school.

Todd County is the first school district in Kentucky to

participate in the Apple program. Other school districts across the U.S. also signed on with Apple’s 1-to-1 effort but now are looking for ways to escape the costly lease program.

“Other school districts are in similar predicaments,” Benningfield said. “I had one superintendent in Alabama call me to ask how he can get out of this.”

However, the schools chief said with the new iPads and other technology upgrades, he will raise the bar on how teachers and students use the iPads.

“I am going to make sure they are used, and I am going to make sure they demonstrate to you and the community that they are used,” Benningfield said.

Water

Continued from Page 1

The Guthrie City Council considered a rate increase at its meeting Tuesday night but decided to absorb the increase since the city plans on implementing an increase of two percent on July 1 of this year.

Sandra Walton, the administrative assistant for the Logan Todd Regional Water Commission, said water rates for the commission will be raised by 2 percent of the current rate, essentially eight cents for every thousand gallons of water used.

The average homeowner probably uses 4,000 gallons a month, she said.

Walton noted that the increase is really not that much for the commission,

which makes it a practice to hold the rates down “absolutely as tight as we can,” she said.

“We have in the past usually figured our budget on 4 million gallons a day being bought by our 12 entities,” explained Walton, who also serves as the secretary-treasurer of the Logan Todd Regional Water Commission’s board.

“(They bought) 3.8 this past year,” she continued. “So there was less usage so therefore we have to raise our price enough to fulfill our obligations.”

Among those obligations is a debt service that is about \$3 million each year, with the commission’s largest creditor

“Some entities might choose to just have a growth rate built in. But we have tried not to have constant increases if we could.”

Sandra Walton

being USDA Rural Development.

Several years ago that agency forced the commission to raise its rates, although Walton told a neighboring newspaper, the News-Democrat Leader in Russellville, that she doesn’t expect that to happen this time since the commission has already addressed the matter.

She noted that the commission sends Rural Development a budget and audit each year so that agency is able to tell whether the commission is fiscally sound.

“If they felt in any way that our expenses were going to

warrant more revenue in order to operate properly or if they felt our revenue was inadequate to meet our debt service, they have a right to recommend that we have a rate increase,” Walton said. “If they hold that much of our debt, a recommendation would be something we would heed.”

In addition to its debt service, she noted that the commission’s operating expenses have also increased, to \$1.8 million each year.

Walton said her agency’s 12 entities can choose to up their own rates, absorb the commission’s increase or

change the 8-cent increase to something else.

The commission serves all of Todd and Logan counties and the City of Oak Grove in Christian County and has increased its rates three times since opening in 2003.

“Every year the board considers all categories of our expenses,” Walton observed. “We’re trying to provide the best water we can at the best cost.”

“Some entities might choose to just have a growth rate built in,” she added. “But we have tried not to have constant increases if we could.”

Elkton Mayor Nancy Camp said she knows “the folks in administration” at the Logan Todd Regional Water Commission, and she said she knows they consider every avenue before asking for a rate increase.

“This is just something that

was needed to keep the system going,” the mayor said. “I think we all appreciate our ample supply of water.”

Camp added that the City of Elkton, which is not increasing its rates, has worked very hard in the past six years to keep costs down, and she noted that the members of the Elkton City Council understand their duty to research all options before passing a rate increase of any kind.

“We all work together to protect our citizens from added costs as much as possible,” she said.

Trenton Mayor Joann Holder said officials in her community considered a rate increase at the Trenton City Commission’s December meeting and decided to absorb it.

“We talked about it, and we’re not going to add on to our customer rates,” she said.

Free

Continued from Page 1

of Louisville to publish the book. According to the Kids Count data, 61 percent of school-age children in Todd County were eligible for free and reduced meals during the 2009-10 and 2011-12 school years.

In addition, there were significantly more children living in poverty in Todd County in 2006-10 than in 2000, with 1,048 (31.7 percent) children living in poverty in the later years compared with 702 students, or 22.2 percent, in 2000. It would seem that children who qualify for subsidized school meals would eat both breakfast and lunch at school, but that hasn’t been the case. Weathers said these students generally eat lunch only.

“The percentage for breakfast is a lot lower than lunch,” she said.

Poverty has been a persistent challenge for much of Kentucky’s history, but these numbers point to more than a hunger problem. Students living in low-income households are more likely to be absent chronically from school, the Kids Count study reported.

These problems indicate more resources are needed in the schools — but funding and other support is not available. That leaves parents to find assistance on their own.

“I would say more people are realizing there is help out there, and they are utilizing all resources,” Weathers said.

Planned federal spending cuts worry Kentucky school officials

BY BETH MUSGRAVE
LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

The federal fiscal cliff was averted, but an agreement that delayed decisions about major spending cuts until late February has Kentucky school officials worried about potential layoffs and lost services for needy students.

Tim Bobrowski, the new Owsley County superintendent, is bracing for the worst.

“It’s going to have an impact on our staff,” Bobrowski said of the looming federal cuts. “And if it impacts our staff, it will impact our students.”

If Congress doesn’t reach a compromise on the scheduled spending cuts, Kentucky’s 174 school districts will lose \$61 million a year in federal support during the next decade, according to numbers generated by the Congressional Budget Office and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The state now gets \$481 million a

year from the federal government for education programs.

Many of Kentucky’s gains in K-12 education during the past 20 years could be erased, said Stu Silberman, director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, a Lexington-based non-profit.

“A big bulk of those federal dollars go to support those in poverty,” Silberman said. “A cut on top of what we are already dealing with will create a major setback for this state. This is not even three steps forward, one step back, it’s all backwards.”

The vast majority of planned spending cuts probably would not take effect until July, said Nancy Rodriguez, a spokeswoman for the Kentucky Department of Education, or KDE.

“Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and KDE staff have been discussing the automatic spending reduction with superin-

tendents since this past summer,” Rodriguez said.

The majority of the federal education money the state gets is for targeted populations, such as poor children and those with special needs. Also included is Head Start, a federal preschool program for the state’s poorest children. One estimate puts the planned cut to Head Start in Kentucky at \$10 million next year. Spending less on preschool will have long-term consequences that ultimately cost taxpayers more, Silberman said.

“There are studies that show for every dollar that you put into early childhood education you get \$5 to \$20 back on that investment,” he said.

Children who attend quality early childhood development programs are more likely to do better in school, less likely to be incarcerated and less likely to be dependent on social services as adults, multiple studies have shown.

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Bell Clinic

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270-265-2574
Monday through Friday
8:00 to 6:00
Saturday
8:00 to 3:00

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Be heart healthy when you shovel.

Shoveling snow can cause aches and pains, but can also trigger heart attacks because of the unique circumstances. If you must shovel, go slow and use a small shovel. Don't shovel first thing in the morning and do take frequent breaks. It's a good idea to talk to a doctor before you start, and call 911 immediately if you have any warning signs of a heart attack (lightheadedness, dizziness, being short of breath or if you have tightness or burning in chest, neck, arms or back).

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Coal Miner's Respiratory Clinic

will hold an outreach event in Elkton, KY at the Todd County Senior Center on Wednesday, January 23 from 8:30-11 a.m.

FREE Black Lung screenings will be offered to active and retired coal miners and coal industry workers.

The Coal Miner's Respiratory Clinic serves the western half of Kentucky and is one of 15 federally-funded Black Lung clinics in the United States. They offer screening and surveillance services specific to the mining industry employers, employees and retirees for the prevention, detection, staging and treatment of coal worker's pneumonconiosis (Black Lung).

FREE benefit counseling will also be provided.

All miners or coal industry workers, active or retired, are invited to attend this free outreach event.
For more information, feel free to call (270) 338-8300.