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Pictured above is the Commercial Bank construction site on Main Street. Bank officials say the building is approximately 66 percent finished and estimate that construction could be complete in December. (Photo by Jim Gazay)

Commercial Bank construction on track to finish in December

Bldg. is 66% complete; Allen hopes return will restore "normalcy"

By Miranda M. Cantrell
Progress continues at the Commercial Bank construction site on Main Street, where employees of Standafer Builders have completed approximately 66 percent of the new main branch building. Construction Manager Jim Gazay told the Courier last week that while no specific date has been set, bank officials estimate that the 33,000 sq. ft. facility – which replaces the previous tornado-damaged building – will likely be finished in December. "We will be moving into the finishing stages soon," Gazay said. "The structural phase is complete with 90 percent of the drywall and 80 percent of

the sprinkler system already finished. But we don't want to rush the contractors, as quality work is more important than fast work." Gazay noted that the facility will be an enduring fixture of the community upon completion. "The lifespan of a building is usually measured in decades," Gazay said. "The duration of the new Commercial Bank will be measured in centuries." The new facility will look as pictured in photographs placed on the Main Street lot, and will utilize "green" geothermal energy wells that were installed earlier this year. In addition, the building will include a three-lane drive-thru; employee training rooms, a community area and a kitchen in the basement; and two business incubator spaces to promote local economic de-

velopment. Commercial Bank CEO Hank Allen said bank officials plan to meet with representatives of private and public institutions to seek additional resources for the incubator initiative. "The idea is to provide business support resources to a new company to help accelerate its growth and success," Allen said. "The creation of the business incubator demonstrates Commercial Bank's long-term commitment to the community by helping people achieve their business goals." In addition, the facility's exterior will include a 41-space parking lot with four handicap spots. Bank officials noted that the institution's mobile unit on Prestonsburg Street will remain in operation until the new bank is completed, while

the Index facility located in the former Dairy Cheer building will stay open as a permanent full-service branch. Since the 2012 tornado, bank employees remain scattered at the Index branch, the second floor of the enterprise center/public library building and the downtown mobile unit. (Commercial Bank will va-

See BANK, Page 3

Rebuilding W.L. effort will be featured Friday on PBS (KET2) pgm.

Local projects will be featured on "Ecosense for Living" show

PRESS RELEASE—On Friday, August 28, at 6:30 p.m. on KET2, the Rebuilding West Liberty, Kentucky, effort will be featured on PBS show Ecosense for Living. Ted Turner's daughter Jennie Garlington is host of the show (Garlington and her husband own a horse farm in Paris, Ky.). Rebuilding West Liberty, Kentucky, is a multi-faceted approach to redevelop a small town in Appalachia as a national model for sustainability and is a Clinton Global Initiative America Commitment to Action. The project, which was developed through a comprehensive strategic planning process involving community leaders and prominent state non-profits, is being managed by the Fahe. The show is also available online at <http://www.ecosenseforliving.com/info/episode9.html>. In March 2012, West Liberty, Kentucky, was nearly destroyed by a monstrous tornado. Seven lives were lost, 400 homes demolished, \$50 million of damage incurred, and most of the downtown devastated. Rather than view this crisis as a hopeless trag-

edy, the 3,400 residents instead saw an opportunity to rebuild their town as a 21st Century, sustainable community, and to develop a path to create a more competitive, entrepreneurial economy. From the foothills of Appalachian Eastern Kentucky, West Liberty could provide a *See PBS, Page 3*

KY 882 in Morgan Co. will be closed this Sat. for repair

JACKSON, Ky. – To allow for replacement of a drainage structure, KY 882 in Morgan County will be closed on Saturday, Aug. 29. The road will be closed at milepoint 4.0, approximately 0.5 miles south of the U.S. 460 intersection. The project will begin around 7:30 a.m. and will last until approximately 4 p.m. During this time, the road will be closed to all through traffic. No marked detour will be posted, but motorists can use U.S. 460 and KY 1010 as an alternate route. Drivers should plan their trips accordingly. In case of inclement weather, the work will be postponed until another suitable day. Approximately 150 vehicles per day use this section of KY 882.

City officials to apply for job development grant

Council sets property tax rates and date for Trick-or-Treat

By Miranda M. Cantrell
The West Liberty City Council during its regular Aug. 24 meeting heard a presentation regarding the implementation of a program to create jobs in Morgan and surrounding counties through a "non-traditional" economic development grant. Project Manager Bobby Clark, of Midwest Clean Energy Enterprise LLC, said that the City of West Liberty would serve as the applicant for a \$250,000 federal Community Development Block Grant for a Digital Entrepreneur and Worker Development (DEWD) program. The grant would help pro-

vide entrepreneur training and online customer service job training for the establishment of a Teleworks Hub to bring technology-based jobs to the local community. The program will utilize the small business incubator that will be located in the new Commercial Bank building after its projected completion sometime this December. Commercial Bank and the Kentucky Innovation Center in Morehead will provide ongoing support and assistance for the project, for which grant funds are expected to help launch 10-15 new home-based businesses in Morgan County. Clark noted that 50 jobs paying \$9-\$10 per hour were recently created in Jackson

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Fiscal Court to transfer money to pay vendor claims

By Miranda M. Cantrell

The Morgan County Fiscal Court during a special Aug. 21 meeting approved vendor claim payments related to the construction of the new wellness center facility located on Route 7. Deputy Judge Executive Jody Franklin told the court that outstanding vendor claims from wellness center contractors total approximately \$870,000, which New Market Tax Credit investors have requested that the court pay in September. Franklin said that a plan has been devised to transfer a total of approximately \$618,000 for the payment from the Rebuild Morgan County fund and the first of the county's two Real Properties boards.

See COURT, Page 2



The 2015 Morgan County Cougars and cheerleaders.

Donnie McKenzie Kickoff Classic

Cougars open season Friday vs. Betsy Layne at Herdman Field

By David Patrick
The countdown to kickoff is now just hours away as the Cougars tee it up with Betsy Layne, this Friday (August 28) at 7:30 p.m. It's the regular season football opener for Morgan County after only one preseason scrimmage. Coach Brian Turner's squad was impressive nearly

two weeks ago in Grid-O-Rama at Boyd County, moving the ball well against multiple teams in the controlled exhibition. "Looking at our performance in the scrimmage, I believe we made a great decision not to play a second preseason game," Turner said earlier this week. "Instead, we chose to practice and troubleshoot the areas that

needed improvement. By doing that, we've helped ourselves tremendously heading into this week's game." The Bobcats head to West Liberty after losing their first contest at South Floyd, 38 - 20. Coach Jonathan Parson's program has been impressive in recent years, putting together

See COUGARS, Page 5-B

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Council ...

(Continued From Page One)

County through a similar program.

"We want to create a model for post-disaster recovery," Clark said. "This is the foundation of a community effort to build a new skill set. It is also an excellent opportunity for rural America."

Council members adopted a resolution for Mayor Mark Walter to move forward with the grant application process for the program.

The council also heard a proposal from a state agency to participate in a long-term energy savings initiative that would enable local governments to make extensive cost-efficient improvements.

In attendance was returning visitor Greg Copley, of the University of Kentucky Center for Applied Energy Research, who is currently working with the Kentucky Department of Local Government to promote a statewide Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) program.

The promotion would offer the following assistance to local governments:

- Identify and evaluate energy saving opportunities.
- Provide engineering services from design to equipment specs.
- Order and install equipment.
- Manage construction of a wide variety of projects.
- Provide long-term energy maintenance services.
- Guarantee performance and savings.
- Arrange financing if needed.

Copley noted that preliminary energy audits are free to governments until a contract is signed upon the initiation of projects, which could include the following:



City officials broke ground last Friday on a new parking area located between Trimble Street and Riverside Drive. Mayor Mark Walter said at last week's Chamber of Commerce meeting that the two-tier parking will include 12-14 spaces off Trimble Street and 54 spaces off Riverside Drive. Pictured above left to right are city council members Tristan Daniel and Carter Bolin, Gail Wright of Gateway Area Development District, Mayor Mark Walter, city council member Phyllis Keeton, John Standafer (contractor) and son Riley, city council member Dwayne Nickell and Mark Collier of Gateway Area Development District.

- Heating – Replacement of aging boilers, steam traps and pumps.
- Cooling – Replacement of aging chillers, cooling towers or pumps.
- Controls – Installation of a new energy management control system or improvement of operational strategies.
- Lighting – Replacement of lamps and ballasts or entire fixtures, both indoors and out.
- Water and wastewater systems – Installation of variable speed devices.

The resulting energy savings are expected pay for the improvements over a 15-20 year period, though the program's energy auditor would pay the difference if the savings are inadequate.

Copley said the initiative is a way for governments to make necessary improvements at a time when grant monies are not always readily available.

The council moved to advertise for potential vendors to perform the energy savings assessment.

In other business the council discussed the following agenda items:

- Trick-or-Treat was scheduled for 5-7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 31.
- No potential buyers bid on the city's gas line in Wolfe County. Council members voted to extend the bidding period another two weeks.
- Two bids to install a gas line on Old Hwy. 172 were rejected so city officials can re-

advertise the job with improved specifications.

• A franchise agreement with Kentucky Power was approved.

• The first reading of the city's nuisance code ordinance was approved.

• Property tax rates for 2015-2016 were set at 19.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value for real property and 18.98 cents per \$100 of assessed value for tangible property. (This rates are lower than year's of 20 cents for real property and 21.5 cents for tangible property due to increased property assessments over the past year.)

The West Liberty City Council meets 5 p.m. the fourth Monday of each month in the upstairs council room at City Hall.

PBS ...

(Continued From Page One)

replicable, energy-diversified model for post-disaster recovery communities across the globe, and – perhaps more significantly – an example for other distressed areas of rural America.

The first phase of Rebuilding

West Liberty will involve the construction of state-of-the-art, energy efficient homes that utilize renewable technologies, and the educational promotion of its innovations to school children and similarly-situated rural communities across the country. At its heart is a \$7.9 million plan to construct 52 new Energy Star certified housing units that will serve hundreds of community residents who

have been displaced by the storm. A 48 unit multi-family, energy-efficient development by Winterwood, Inc. opened this spring to replace similar housing that was destroyed in the tornado. The focus is now on four single-family homes that will provide a test case for innovative new designs and technologies to be utilized as the project expands. These site-built homes will include solar that will be designed eliminate all utility costs for these homeowners and provide a replicable model for an energy-efficient future.

The project also includes the installation of a web-enabled Energy Efficiency Education Dashboard that will provide a global audience real-time monitoring of the energy improvements, video tours of the facilities, and a curriculum for public schools in Kentucky, and perhaps the United States.

This project is a collaboration among city leaders, leading Kentucky non-profits including the Fahe, Next Step and Frontier Housing, as well as the University of Kentucky Center for Applied Energy Research, KY Innovation Network office at Morehead State University and the Regional Technology & Innovation Center.

"Our first priority, of course, is to rebuild our town, we are also very excited to serve as a model for the whole country," shared West Liberty Mayor Mark Walter. "We're so thankful to all of our partners and to the Clinton Global Initiative in helping establish our com-

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Bank ...

(Continued From Page One)

cate the library building once the new facility is completed.)

Hank Allen said that he hopes the bank's return to downtown West Liberty will restore a sense of post-tornado

normalcy to the county as a whole.

"We are looking forward to being back in the middle of town where Commercial Bank had been for a hundred years," Allen said. "I am excited about the new bank becoming a gathering place like the old building

was. I believe reviving that tradition will be a significant step forward in the community's healing process."

For additional information regarding Commercial Bank's services, call 743-3195 or visit employees at the Index branch or the downtown mobile unit.

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