

Ky. River Water Trail Alliance meets locally

by Delores Rowland
The Estill County Tribune
 Estill County hosted its first conference of the Kentucky River Water Trail Alliance on Thursday.

About half of the nearly 100 people present were local folks. Others came from Hazard, near the mouth of the Kentucky River, and Carrollton, where the river flows into the Ohio, and all cities in between.

The Kentucky River Water Trail Alliance was created to bring many groups together who are interested in water quality and recreation.

"You don't have to build a water trail. It's already there," said Pat Banks, Kentucky Riverkeeper.

She added that no organization has to acquire land

for a water trail. An exception would be land acquisition for ramps to access the Kentucky River.

Banks stated a canoe/kayak ramp which was built on the river in August at the Estill County Park. All the work was done by volunteers.

Elaine Wilson of Ky. Adventure Tourism explained a Trail Town.

She said that Kentucky has 12,000 miles of trails.

"(Tourists) never stop in our communities," she stated. "They never have reason to."

Wilson said an overnight tourist spends an average of \$240 a visit.

The Red River Gorge is best known tourist destination in Kentucky.

Wilson told about Da-

mascus, Virginia, a Trail Town with a population of 1,000.

She said that every store front is full.

Livingston, Ky. has become a certified Trail Town. After it applied, several businesses, including a bike shop, were added to the tiny city in Rockcastle County.

Rob Rumpke of Bluegrass Tomorrow suggested scheduling all-river events, such as fireworks on the river.

Jerry Graves, director of the Kentucky River Authority reported on progress on the locks and dams.

Graves said that KRA employees four lockmasters, including Greg Henry from Estill County.



Barbara Napier, owner of Snug Hollow Bed & Breakfast, and Kenny Cole, environmentalist at the Estill County Health Dept. looked over displays before the KY River Water Trail conference began Thursday at Rice Station Christian Church.



Jerry Graves, director of Kentucky River Authority, presented Ravenna Mayor Estine Tipton with a gift Thursday. At right is Pat Banks, a Kentucky Riverkeeper and member of the Kentucky River Authority. Many others also received gifts and/or door prizes.



Two lock houses remain standing at Lock 12 but are in a bad shape of disrepair. Local leaders once wanted to make a museum of one of the lock houses. Thursday's conference has renewed local interest into restoring the beaches at Lock 12 and making the area into a park.

Estill Fiscal Court

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The judge explained the county receives approximately \$3,800 for each mile of road. He said this money is spent on employees, equipment, and materials.

The fiscal court appointed David Baker and Ronnie Abney Jr. to accompany the road foreman when looking at roads to be adopted in the county road system.

County attorney Rodney Davis said that all 15 people enrolled in a West Care program are in compliance. He told the fiscal court if those 15 were not in that program, they would be in the county jail.

Davis briefly addressed the future of alcohol sales. He said he has drafted an ordinance and is awaiting approval from the Alcohol Beverage Commission (ABC).

Davis said the legislature passed laws on alcohol sales in 2013, which do not match up with the existing laws. He added that Irvine is quite a ways from its first liquor license.

The fiscal court approved a lease agreement with GE Capital Credit to purchase a truck for the road department. They also accepted \$159,221 from the Rural Secondary Road Department.

The court will advertise for a generator, relocation of a building and a generator at the Race Track tower site. This will be paid for out of CSEPP funds.

Approval was given for three employees of Estill Emergency Management to attend the Governor's workshop.

VA Oversight

VETERANS POST
by Freddy Groves

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held hearings recently about conference planning spending by officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Planning trips to Nashville, Dallas and Orlando, meant to scope out locations for training conferences, turned into lovely, overpriced vacations for some.

Here are some of the highlights of testimony given to the committee:

- Multiple employees accepted gifts: A big no-no, especially as the gifts appeared to be given in exchange for hotel bookings for conferences. Among the gifts accepted were: complimentary lodging and upgraded rooms, gift baskets, entertainment tickets, spa treatments and a helicopter ride. Employees didn't deduct the value of the free meals they received, as required. One planner apparently solicited goodies for his family, which he brought to the conference.
- Approximately \$762,000 was labeled as unnecessary and/or wasteful spending as the amount

The Ravenna Council discusses proposed merged governments

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In the past employees have been given \$200.00, but the concern with council members this year was the fact that the city has been struggling to meet their bills each month.

"We are up to date on everything. Terry Barnes is caught up, so right now we can do it," stated city clerk Susan Lay.

The council agreed to give the employees the \$200 bonus as long as the city can afford it.

They also discussed a meeting that will be held on the 19th of November at the courthouse regarding the merging of the three governments in Estill County.

William VanCleve said that if it comes down to it, he would rather Ravenna merge with the county. He said that it would benefit the citizens of Ravenna to merge with the county because they would only have to pay one property tax bill, whereas now they pay two and would if they joined with Irvine as well.

Mayor Tipton said that it would be a very lengthy process because of tax rates and garbage rates, and things of that nature would have to be refigured. She added that the meeting on the 19th will just be a discussion about the different options that the three governments have at this time.

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