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Superintendent comments on vacancy of School Resource Officer position

A few hours before another school threat was called in Monday, Supt. Jeff Saylor addressed the vacancy of a School Resource Officer (SRO).

"Having an SRO is a very important part of school safety," stated Saylor.

Saylor said that the SRO, James Michael Gross, had given the school system a two-week notice before resigning.

Gross accepted a position at Blue Grass Army Depot.

Gross was an employee of the City of Ravenna.

Saylor stated that Ravenna has been released from the SRO contract with the

school board.

Since Gross' resignation, Saylor said he has spoken to both the Ravenna and Irvine mayors.

He indicated that both cities may be financially unable to support an SRO.

Gross and Chief Ken White were the only two policemen in Ravenna. The city budgeted money for Gross during the current fiscal year which ends on June 30.

To replace Gross, the city would most likely have to hire an untrained officer and send him to a 16 weeks training course at the Criminal Justice Academy. There is also a waiting period before

an officer can get into the training academy.

Ravenna would have to pay the officer's salary after he was hired and while being trained at the academy.

Before an applicant can be hired as a police officer, he must also pass tests given by the academy.

If Ravenna chose to go this route, a police officer would not be able to work as an SRO until the next school year.

The superintendent stated that he is also looking at the SLEO program, which is presently used by Montgomery County Schools. SLEO is an acronym for Special

Law Enforcement Officer.

With the SLEO program, the school system hires its own police force. Those officers would only have jurisdiction on school property and during school hours and events.

"We appreciate Michael for his time here and wish him nothing but good luck with his new endeavor," Saylor stated.

Schools went on lock down Monday after the threat was called in. Officials said it was made from the same phone number as the threat was on Sept. 19.

No arrests have yet been made.



The Estill County Library opened the Kroger building on Sunday afternoon to the public. Patrons could pick out free books and were given refreshments. They could also view the architect's plans to renovate the building into a library.



Customers looked over crafts and other merchandise during Main Street Market held Saturday at the Estill County Fair Barn.

Students improve on achievement scores

Test scores were released last Wednesday, with some positives for Estill County Schools.

Lisa Reece, District Assessment Coordinator, shared the numbers of students in the novice and proficient/distinguished categories with media on Monday.

"We're proud of our results," said Supt. Jeff Saylor. "I give full credit to our teachers and principals."

The number of proficient/distinguished students at Estill County Middle School increased in all areas.

Elementary students scoring proficient/distinguished was up in all areas except math.

The KPREP tests were not given to Estill Springs students, but it is considered a feeder school for West Irvine Elementary.

More high school students scored proficient/distinguished in math than the previous year. However, there were fewer students scoring novice in reading, math, and writing, which means there

were more students scoring at the apprentice level.

Reece pointed out that all new KPREP tests were given last year. High school scores were based for the first time on ACT scores given to juniors.

All Estill Schools, except South Irvine Preschool, received TSI ratings by the state. TSI stands for Targeted Support Instruction.

The TCI rating does not apply to all students' scores. It applies only to Estill students with disabilities.

Reece said only schools which have ten or more students with disabilities are given the TCI rating. If a school has fewer than ten students, it is not affected.

The TCI rating was given because students with disabilities did not reach their targeted goals.

Supt. Saylor said the district will put a plan in place by November 1 to help reduce the number of students with disabilities who are scoring novice.

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Council and mayor candidates participate in the first forum

Although Monday's election forum was poorly attended, Librarian Kathy Watson said the event was live-streamed and available online by the Estill Action Group.

Not only was the audience small, but only four candidates for Irvine and Ravenna Councils participated, along with Ravenna's two candidates for mayor.

The candidates were given 10 minutes each to address economic development, zoning, tourism, abandoned properties, and the opioid crisis.

Valerie Henderson Flinchum, a retired teacher and former restaurant owner, was the only candidate of 12 running for Ravenna Council,

who participated in the forum.

Flinchum stated her concern was balancing the budget and spending tax dollars wisely and efficiently.

Ernest Lee Farmer commuted from Irvine until he retired from IBM and Lexmark. He served two years on the Irvine Council and eight years as mayor.

He is now running as a candidate for Irvine City Council.

"We've got to learn to live within our means," he stated.

Derrick Muncie, Estill County's Fire Chief for over 18 years, is also a candidate for Irvine Council.

Muncie stated he wanted to see more businesses in

the city and new businesses encouraged, even if it meant giving them tax breaks the first two years.

He wanted to see the city's storm drains, sidewalks and curbs improved.

Muncie said he plans to use his successes in grant writing if elected.

Estine Tipton, a life-long resident of Ravenna and retired from Carhartt, is seeking re-election as Mayor Ravenna.

"Our city needs a lot of infrastructure," Tipton stated.

She said she was real excited about the steam engine project.

Sharon Snowden, who is presently serving on the council, is also running for

mayor.

She is a businesswoman.

Snowden addressed Ravenna's financial deficit of \$25,000. She said Ravenna has three options to balance their budget: bring in more revenue, pay out less, or a combination of the too.

There was no solution given to get Estill County out of the opioid crisis. Candidates mentioned that it was not just a local problem.

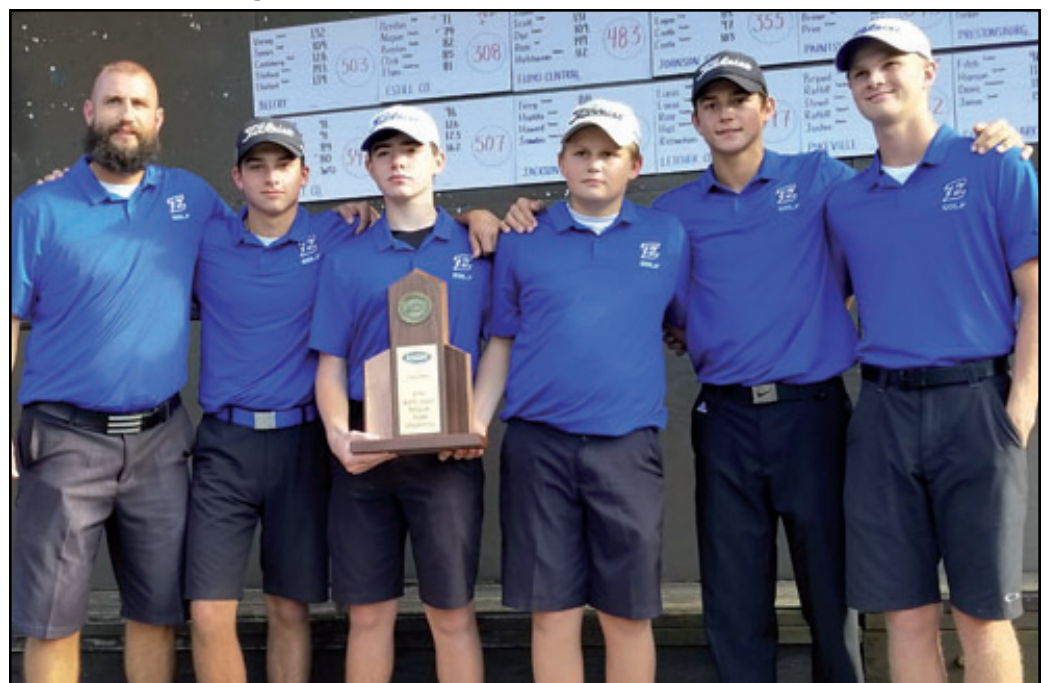
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Sharon Snowden, candidate for Ravenna mayor, spoke at the forum.



Estine Tipton is running for re-election as mayor of Ravenna.



Congratulations to Ricky Joe Benton and the Estill County Engineers boys golf team on capturing the 11th region golf championship for the 2nd consecutive year! This is the 5th time in 7 years the boys Engineer golf team has captured the 11th region golf title under the guidance of Coach Benton. Left to right, Coach Benton, Isaac Napier, Andrew Elam, Kade Benton, Joe Benton and Cobbe Click.

Obituaries

- Mary Durham, 80
- Anna Hall, 81
- Arthur McIntosh, 81
- James Stepp, 58
- A.J. Winkler, 93
- Shirley Wright, 89

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