

**Peacemakers
Donate Toys
And Food
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**Ladies
win over
Bath Co.
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The Estill County Tribune

EstillTribune.Com

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 25 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2019 IRVINE & RAVENNA, KENTUCKY 40336 14 PAGES

Former firefighter faces new charge of theft of \$2,500

A former Irvine firefighter now faces additional felony charges.

Christopher Chad Neal, 28, was arrested December 17, 2019, by Irvine Officer Jason Conrad on a warrant obtained by Capt. John Sturniolo.

The warrant charges Neal with theft by deception over \$500 and theft by unlawful taking or disposition over \$500 between November 29, 2018 and November 25, 2019.

The warrant states that on November 25, 2019, the City of Irvine received a certified letter from Pelham Valley Fire Department in Tennessee requesting the return of \$2,500 given for the purchase of a fire engine.

Captain Sturniolo conducted an investigation. He was told that Neal negotiated the sale of a fire engine and equipment to Pelham Valley Fire Department for \$25,000. The Tennessee fire department was willing to make a \$2,500 deposit and make payments of \$5,000 annually until paid.

The Pelham Valley Fire Department was later told that the Irvine Mayor and Council were opposed to the payment plan.

Pelham Valley had made out the check for

\$2,500 to Irvine Fire Department's Fireman's Fund, which was deposited on November 29, 2018 at Citizen's Guaranty Bank into the Volunteer and Junior Firefighters Training Fund account. Neal is listed as the signatory of that account.

The warrant states that account has less than \$20 remaining, and that all withdrawals and payments into that account were made by Neal.

Captain Sturniolo said he was unable to locate any order from the Irvine City Council or mayor authorizing the sale of the fire engine and equipment, placing it into surplus property, transferring it to another entity or authorizing Neal to do the same.



Christopher Chad Neal
Three Forks Regional Jail Photo

A letter was written by Pelham Valley Fire Department's Chief Travis Richardson on Dec. 15 clarifying the certified letter sent to Irvine.

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Twinning!
Five year olds Riley and Raelynn Watson wore identical outfits to the Toys for Estill County Children Christmas party on Saturday. The twins were waiting in line to see Santa.

Irvine transfers funds to avoid \$350 late fee on fire equipment loan

by CATHY DAWES
Tribune Staffwriter

An special called meeting of the Irvine council was held at noon on Thursday, December 19th to discuss a loan that was to be paid in full to Citizen's Guaranty Bank in the amount of \$7,000.

The loan was originally approved by the council for a fire truck with a payoff date of December 17th. Each year the city receives \$11,000 in state aid money but must provide proof of purchase to the state by July in order to receive their money in October of the same year.

Fire chief Tony Murphy said for reasons unknown the paperwork was not submitted in July like it should have been, and the

city has never received their money.

Mayor James Gross informed the council that if the loan was not paid in full the city would receive a \$350 late fee, and he did not want to pay the extra money. He said that he had spoken with Candace Price from the fire commission, and she told him that once she received the paperwork from Chief Murphy the city would have their money no later than March.

Murphy said that he had also spoken with Price and was told that they would have their money by early January, and that she had received the documentation that was needed to process the funds.

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A large crowd attended Saturday's event called Toys for Estill County Kids. Those attending were fed a meal. Because the crowd was so large, tables and chairs were filled up quickly. Some children sat in the floor to eat their food. This is the third year for the event, and it has grown quickly. Organizer Kimberly Stone Richardson said they do not ask proof of income, just proof that the children reside in Estill County.



Christmas Day
WED • DEC 25

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Obituaries

Rev. Cova Duvall, 95
Deborah Johnson, 67
Billie Luster, 75
Garey White, 93
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New Obits at
EstillTribune.com



Children's librarian Shannon Horn holds the youngest attendee at last Wednesday's Storytime session at the public library. The baby was there with an older sister. Most of the younger kids at-

tended Friday's session. Santa Claus visited both groups, and the children exchanged gifts. Storytime will resume in 2020 and it's free for all children not in school.