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WEEKEND

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County awaits state to OK new Expo Center

Proposed plans for fair site expand size, capabilities for trade shows, conventions

By Mary Hinds
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Wilson County officials back an ambitious plan to build a new, state-of-the-art Expo Center on the grounds of the Ward Agricultural Center. "What we're trying to do at the Ag Center is increase the ability to get more folks to use it," said Commissioner Jeff Joines, an advocate of the project. "Now there is not enough climate-controlled space for conventions there."

Joines said the proposed center would be around 80,000 square feet and large enough to handle trade shows and conventions. The building, which would be placed front and center near the main entrance to the Ag Center, would include office space, a stage and a commercial-grade kitchen. He said

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Inside Today



Gas Gauge

Get the latest gas prices from stations around Lebanon.

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As Fate Would Have It...

Lebanon's Lori Ward never dreamed when she was born in that tiny town of L'Anse, in the upper peninsula of Michigan that she would end up in Lebanon serving as a vice president of communications and community relations for Nashville's Tennessee Performing Arts Center. But, that's exactly where fate and circumstances brought her.

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Council holds last flooding meeting

City staff seeks public input for planned fixes

By Mary Hinds
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Residents of Lebanon's Wards 5 and 6 came to City Hall on Thursday evening to discuss the problems with flooding and runoff whenever the city is struck by rain.

The meeting, the last of three, was planned to allow the city to identify the problem areas and come up with the

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City seeks public input on Square

Mayor asks for at least 1,000 surveys

By Jared Felkins
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Lebanon Mayor Philip Craighead asks for residents' help in garnering feedback on a proposed plan to update the Lebanon Town Square.

In October, Craighead and Tennessee Department of Transportation officials unveiled plans for the new look and configuration of the Square in a public meeting at the Lebanon-Wilson County Chamber of Commerce.

On Friday, Craighead said he wants

SEE SQUARE ON PAGE A2

County to review SRO funding

Board considers costs for an officer in each school

By Mary Hinds
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The Wilson County Commission will meet Monday, and one topic sure to generate interest is funding school resource officers in every school in Wilson County.

Earlier this month, Sheriff Robert Bryan told the county budget committee he sought funds from the commission to fund eight more SROs to make sure every school in the county has one.

He asked the committee to approve

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Lebanon's Coco Jones rises the celebrity ranks

Teen singer, actress tops charts, TV, movie roles

By Sara McManamy-Johnson
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Lebanon's Courtney "Coco" Jones is living a dream.

At barely 15 years old, Jones can boast chart-topping singles, recurring television roles and the lead role in the top television movie of 2012.

But when she comes home to Lebanon, Coco Jones is just Courtney.

Although Jones was born in Columbia, S.C., she has lived in Lebanon for most of her life, attending Cedars Preparatory School and Friendship Christian School before home schooling.

"I have neighbors I can walk up to their house and watch a movie with them," said Jones.

The ride really began for Jones when, as a 9-year-old, she sang the National Anthem at an L.A. Rams football game.

Jones's father, Mike Jones is a former NFL player, and her mother, Javonda Jones, is a session vocalist.

"My dad had played professional football for nine years, so he knew a lot of people who were over National Anthems and over production for football games, so I sent in some of my songs to them," said Jones.

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Tax season brings increased risk of scammers phishing

IRS warns taxpayers to beware of emails, texts seeking info

By Sara McManamy-Johnson
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The Internal Revenue Service will begin accepting e-filed tax returns Tuesday, kicking off tax season. But with tax season comes an increased risk of falling victim to scammers, according to the IRS.

"There continues to be scammers out there who

try to use the name of the IRS to entice people or intimidate them into giving out personal info," said Dan Boone, IRS spokesperson.

The IRS receives thousands of reports each year from taxpayers who receive suspicious e-mails,

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Chili Day takes chill off cold weather

County tradition celebrates snow day

By Mary Hinds
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Mary Hinds • Lebanon Democrat

Even the injured were assisted to get their fair share of Carol Knight's award-winning chili. "We're a full service office," said Wilson County Mayor Randall Hutto.

People crept into the Wilson County Courthouse on Friday afternoon casting intriguing glances around as their noses quivered trying to acquire a scent.

One by one, they made their way to Mayor Randall Hutto's office to take part in a secret meeting. Hutto, Lebanon Mayor Philip Craighead and Watertown Mayor Mike Jennings were among the stealthy participants in one of the most anticipated events of the year - Snow Day Chili Day.

Carol Knight is not just one of the go-to women at Hutto's office, she is also a world-class chili

SEE CHILI ON PAGE A3

Obituaries

Peggy Granstaff McClanahan
Connie Neal
Cynthia Stypula

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Sports



Lebanon girls survive Wilson Central with one-point lead

GLADEVILLE — Lebanon's girls could breathe a collective sigh of relief after they survived a trip to Wilson Central with a 33-32 victory Friday night.

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News at a Glance

District attorneys announce upcoming legislative agenda

The Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference will push an aggressive legislative agenda during the upcoming session, including proposed law changes that would facilitate prosecution of serial child sexual abusers and increase sentences for aggravated child neglect and the most serious attempted first-degree murder cases.

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OUR VIEWS

Find out The Democrat's take on local issues inside today's edition. Get local commentary, find out what Wilson County folks are saying on Facebook, read director of content Jared Felkins' column and more.

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