



THE COUNTY CONNECTION

A Monthly Newsletter from Mayor Randall Hutto
Mt. Juliet | Lebanon | Watertown



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Glenn Denton, District 20**
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A Word from Mayor Hutto...

It's difficult to believe that another year has come and gone. As we stand at the threshold of 2025, let us reflect on the past year and all its lessons learned. For many, the new year brings with it hope. Hope for new goals, hope for new possibilities, and hope for the future. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." No matter what we face, let us be hopeful for what the new year brings. Happy New Year, Wilson County!

Commissioner Spotlight: Glenn Denton District 20



Contact INFORMATION

Phone: 615-202-1134

Wilson County LANDFILL

MONDAYS - FRIDAYS
7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

ALL LOADS MUST BE
CHECKED INTO THE SCALE
HOUSE BY 2:30 P.M.

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE
CALL 615.449.6684

LEBANON DRIVER SERVICES CENTER NOW REOPEN

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security's Lebanon Driver Services Center, 204 Maddux Simpson Parkway, which closed for a planned remodel on July 15th reopened to the public on Wednesday, Dec. 18th.

The center has immediately resumed regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central. The last day of operation for the Driver Services mobile unit inside the City of Lebanon Public...continued on page 08.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wilson County Government Offices,
Convenience Centers, and the Landfill
will be CLOSED on the following days
in observance of the new year:

- Tuesday, December 31 (New Year's Eve)
- Wednesday, January 1 (New Year's Day)

*We will return to our regular
schedules on Thursday, January 2nd.*

We wish you all a Happy New Year!

2025

TENNESSEE CENTURY FARMS PROGRAM ANNOUNCES NEWEST INDUCTEE IN WILSON COUNTY

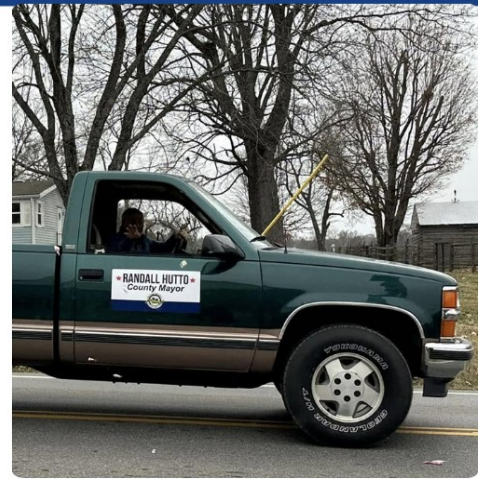
The Tennessee Century Farms Program recently announced Wilson County's latest Century Farm inducted into the program! (See the full story on their Facebook page!)

Brothers William Everett (W.E.) and Alfred T. (A.T.) Ricketts acquired land in the Sherrilltown community of Wilson County in 1913, and after two years W.E. owned the farm on his own. He and his wife, Flora Vantrease Ricketts, had two boys. The family grew tobacco, corn, hay, and vegetables and also raised cattle. The Tennessee Maneuvers took place on the farm during World War II.

In 1972, a grandson of W.E. and Flora Ricketts, William Donald Ricketts, obtained the farm. He grew hay and vegetables. He and his wife, Bille Dean Ricketts, had two sons. During the 1990s, the county turned the formerly private road to the gate of the farm into a county road and named it after the Ricketts family.

*Today, Billie Dean Ricketts is the owner of the Ricketts Farm and grows hay and vegetables. Located on the farm is a hog house built before 1960 that is now used for storage. Barry Ricketts (a cousin of the owner) and Cale Ricketts (a grandson of the owner) work the farm; however, Billie manages the farm and is engaged in everyday operations. **Congratulations to the Ricketts family on this wonderful achievement!***





*Mayor Hutto
Out and About*



LIVE CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR



Merry Mulching
Live Christmas Tree
Recycling

Dec. 25th - Jan. 10th
Bin accessible 24/7

 **ROCKWOOD**
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

510 Hartman Drive
Lebanon, TN 37087

For more information, visit
rockwoodrecycling.com

Rockwood Sustainable Solutions is pleased to announce the “Merry Mulching” initiative is back again for the 7th consecutive year providing Wilson County residents a convenient way to recycle, for free, live Christmas trees. Residents are invited to participate in “Merry Mulching” by dropping off their live Christmas trees in the designated recycling bin placed at the entrance of the Rockwood property. All decorations, including lights, ornaments and tinsel must be removed from the tree prior to being placed in the recycling bin. The bin is accessible 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. All lights must be removed but a separate bin will be onsite for the collection and recycling of Christmas lights.

Once processed by Rockwood, the recycled live trees will become landscaping mulch used to beautify, and enrich the soil at, commercial and residential properties across Wilson County. Wilson Farmer’s Coop is the local retailer of Rockwood’s range of mulch offerings. In addition to the environmental benefits of recycling live Christmas trees, doing so is much safer than breaking down and burning a live tree at a residence. Rockwood will also make a monetary donation to the Wilson County FCA for each tree recycled during the “Merry Mulching” initiative.

Rockwood Sustainable Solutions: Rockwood Sustainable Solutions is a progressive leader in preserving valuable resources through a responsible holistic approach to sustainable material management. Founded in 2014, the company is headquartered in Lebanon, Tenn., specializing in construction and wood recycling and serving businesses, manufacturers, distribution centers and municipalities across Middle Tennessee. To learn more visit rockwoodrecycling.com.

“We are honored to partner with Mayor Hutto and Wilson County to provide our neighbors free live Christmas tree recycling” said Lincoln Young, CEO of Rockwood Sustainable Solutions. “This is our seventh consecutive year to offer this service, and we are amplifying our efforts this year with the continuation of the ‘Merry Mulching’ initiative, encouraging every live tree owner in Wilson County to recycle.”



Happy
2025
NEW YEAR



County Mayor
Randall Hutto



COLEMAN & CO.
TALKSHOW

TUNE IN JAN 21ST
AROUND 7:45AM!

GUEST, MAYOR RANDALL HUTTO

WANT 98.9 FM / WCOR AM 1490
DEC. 16TH | WITH COLEMAN WALKER

Wilson County Government Offices, Convenience
Centers and Landfill will be **closed on Monday,**
January 20th in observance of

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

and will return to their regular business hours on
Tuesday, January 21st.

REHAB 23 SERVES LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS

Wilson County is a truly blessed community. Especially when it comes to people who want to give back to the community or recognize others for their service. Rehab 23 is an organization that does just that for our first responders. Over 1,000 first responders work within our county. Many times, their service on an incident scene can last for multiple hours. That's where Rehab 23 comes in. Also known as the Wilson County Emergency Services Rehab Association, this 501c3's sole mission is to provide support to our many on-call first responders on a 24/7/365 basis. Their mobile unit is stocked with equipment and supplies to serve as a public safety refuge for the firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical service personnel who are working a scene. Rehab 23 supplies them with shelter, rehydration, snacks, and meals. This organization has been in existence since 2013, and like many non-profit organizations, it would not be possible without an incredibly dedicated team. To learn more about this organization, visit them on Facebook, or call Mr. Linn Yeager, Rehab 23 President, at 615-964-7501.



LEBANON DRIVER SERVICES CENTER NOW REOPEN

Continued from page 02... Works Building, 406 Tennessee Blvd., was Tuesday, Dec. 17th. Appointments made for the mobile unit will be honored at the Lebanon Driver Services Center.

In the renovated Lebanon Driver Services Center, visitors will see new furniture, fresh paint, updated flooring, new credentialing equipment and new self-service kiosks. The new self-service kiosks can be used to complete many Driver Services transactions including renewing or replacing a duplicate Driver License or ID Card, changing an address, updating emergency contact information, advancing a Teen/Graduated Driver License, paying reinstatement fees, and requesting a license reissue after reinstatement requirements are met. The new kiosks can take photos and process payments with Apple Pay, Google Pay, or a credit or debit card.

For more information on Tennessee Driver Services including the new self-service kiosks visit tn.gov/safety/driver-services.html.



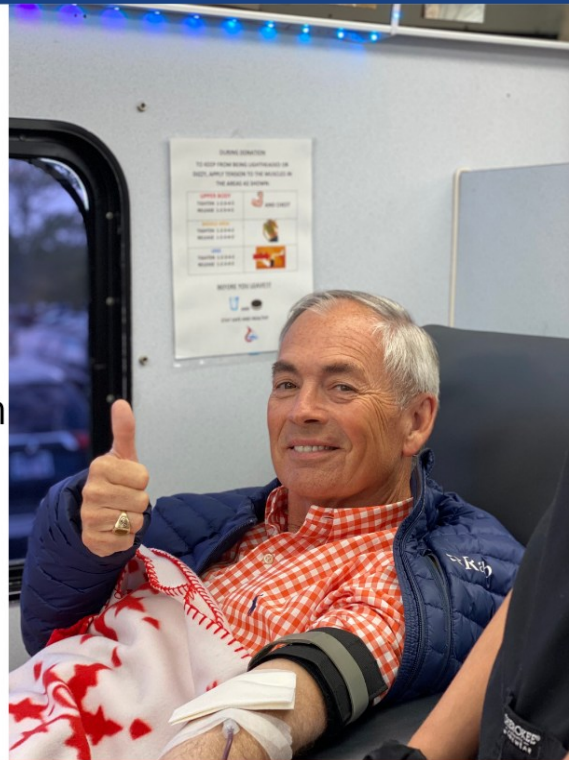
WILSON COUNTY KIND SPOTLIGHT *Submitted by Susan Shaw*

Fourth graders at Lakeview Elementary made blankets for seniors as a holiday service project. Making the colorful blankets together taught the students how nice it is to do something for others while they learned to use a yardstick, tie knots, and work as a team. Each classroom made 8-10 blankets for a total of over 40 blankets. Teacher Stephanie Blankenship led the project and chose this because all students could do this and develop skills. At the end, the students asked if they could make more blankets! Blankets were delivered to residents at the Pavilion and Sunnyside among other residences. This project supports our age-experienced residents and is #WilsonCountyKind, engaging students and seniors in a very giving and thoughtful way.



IT'S NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH!

January is annually recognized as National Blood Donor Month. This month, help save lives by making a donation. Just one donation can save up to three lives! Schedule your appointment today through the Red Cross website or keep an eye out on Mayor Hutto's social media for updates about local blood drives.



A Poem for the New Year

Anonymous

A resolution I've set for the year,
To chase happiness, hold it near.
With shadows I part,
I'll brighten my heart,
And fill each day with good cheer!



Wilson County
KIND

Save A Life

*Donate
Blood*

**January is National
Blood Donor Month**



**Schedule an appointment to
donate blood by visiting
rcblood.org/donate**

DRUGFREE WILCO HONORS FIRST RESPONDERS

Thirteen Mt. Juliet officers were recognized for saving lives by administering naloxone, a generic form of Narcan, which is administered to reverse a drug overdose. The officers received an award sponsored by Drugfree WilCo, a coalition that works to reduce drug misuse in our community. DrugFree WilCo works throughout our community and with youth in schools to educate them on the harmful effects drugs such as opioids and fentanyl.

Tammy Grow, the Executive Director of DrugFree WilCo, said that law enforcement and first responders often find themselves in situations where they are called to reverse a drug overdose. Grow encourages others to consider naloxone training as well. If you are interested in naloxone training and getting free kits, visit DrugFree WilCo's website at drugfreewilco.org.

If you or someone you know needs help with addiction, call or text the TN REDLINE, a confidential resource for substance misuse treatment referrals at 1-800-889-9789.





Ugly Christmas Sweater Day 2024

Thanks to everyone for participating HR's Holiday Spirit Week and our Ugly Christmas Sweater Day! Here's some photos from years past.



WILSON COUNTY – TENNESSEE STATE FAIR RECEIVES IAFE AWARDS

After witnessing the largest attendance in the history of the fair, the 2024 Wilson County – Tennessee State Fair shared their documented success and competed for honors against Fairs from around the world in the Annual IAFE Awards. The fair has spent months assembling entries that document every aspect of the fair from its theme to sponsors, events, activities, educational programs, innovative competitions and exhibits along with activities that take place on the grounds outside of the actual fair dates.

IAFE winning entries were chosen from the 2,045 entries from member fairs of all sizes across the U.S., Canada, England and Australia. Entries were judged by Fair industry professionals and awards were presented during the 2024 Virtual Award Show. The Wilson County – Tennessee State Fair received a total of 32 awards in five different categories including 7 first place winners and one Best of Division Award. Here’s just a few of the many awards received by the fair:

Agriculture Awards:

- 1st Place—Evolved program/exhibit at fair which promotes agriculture to the fair-going public: The Farm to Table Dinner fundraiser for Blue Ribbon Youth Development

Non-Fair Facility Usage Awards:

- 1st Place—Printed Promotional Material Specific to Non-Fair Facility Usage or Rentals Division: Fiddlers Grove Historic Village 2024 Events Brochure.

Communication Awards:

- 1st Place— Social Media: “Fair Food Fantasy” social media campaign.

2024 Overall Award Winners:

- Best of Division Four – Sponsorship

View the full list of awards at www.wilsoncountytntstatefair.com. Congratulations to the Wilson County – Tennessee State Fair on this wonderful recognition!

The IAFE is a voluntary, nonprofit corporation serving state, provincial, regional, and county agricultural fairs, shows, exhibitions, and expositions and began in 1885 with a half-dozen fairs. Today, the IAFE represents more than 1,100 fairs worldwide and more than 900 members from allied fields! **The 2025 Wilson County-Tennessee State Fair will take place in Lebanon, TN, from August 14-23, 2025. We'll see YOU at the Fair!**



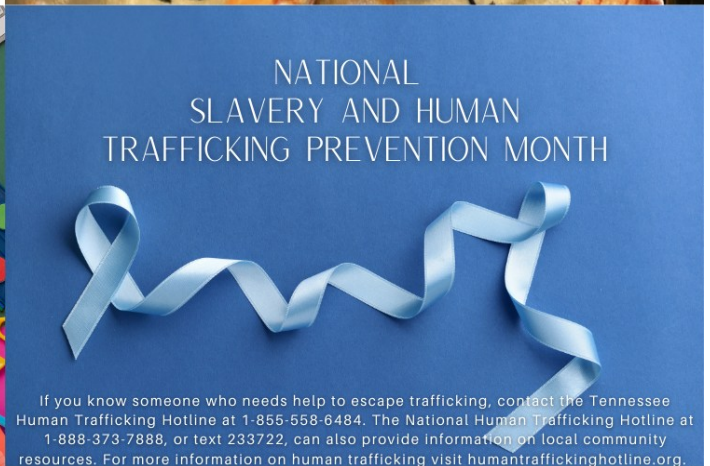
The Wilson County-Tennessee State Fair team (left to right) David Hale, Lanah Hale, Shari Bazydola, Terry McPeak, Helen McPeak, Anna Cate Kulas, Phyllis Webb and Johnnie Webb showcased the 1st place and Best of Division awards the Fair received at the IAFE Convention in Phoenix, AZ, during December 1-4, 2025.

WATERTOWN RESIDENT CELEBRATES HER 95TH BIRTHDAY

We're sending a shout-out to Mrs. Marian Driver of Watertown, who recently turned 95! Mrs. Driver is currently in the Pavilion in Lebanon recovering from a slight knee fracture. She is expected to return home sometime around the new year.

Mrs. Driver (then Marian Watson) graduated from Gordonsville High School in 1948. She attended Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville for nearly three years before beginning her teaching career in Smith County, Tennessee. Over the years, she taught at the following schools: Club Springs, Smith County; Bowling's Branch, Smith County; Shop Springs, Wilson County; and Watertown, Wilson County. Mrs. Driver has been a proud member of the Watertown Baptist Church for many years.

Mayor Hutto signed a proclamation declaring December 23, 2024 as "Mrs. Marian Driver Day" in celebration of this milestone. Please join us in wishing Mrs. Driver a Happy (belated) 95th Birthday!



WILSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM AWARDED \$100,000 THROUGH TN BRC NON-COMPETITIVE GRANT

Wilson County Government has been awarded a \$100,000 grant for the Wilson County Public Library System. These funds are part of the Broadband Ready Communities (BRC) Program, which works to foster county engagement in securing broadband infrastructure and access to their communities.

Internet access is vital for the education of our youth and for adults seeking employment. Through the enhancement of broadband access in our county, students and their families can visit the public libraries to do schoolwork, fill out job applications, and attend telehealth appointments with their healthcare providers. As part of the program, citizens can also check out hot spots from the libraries to use Wi-Fi while at home.

The grant funds will invest in high-speed internet access, educational programs, and inviting computer workstations for residents. The Wilson County Library System will purchase new equipment to be distributed across the Watertown, Mt. Juliet, and Lebanon libraries. The new equipment will include:

- 21 Desktops
- 10 Laptops
- Wi-Fi Access
- Multimedia Room Tables & Chairs
- 20 Hot Spots

Additionally, the Lebanon and Mt. Juliet libraries will receive new high-speed network cabling. The Watertown Public Library received high-speed network cabling in 2023.

All of these improvements will allow for increased opportunities for students and professionals in the community to complete work, research, and projects. The libraries offer programs for senior adults that include learning basic computer skills, how to set up and use an email account, online banking, telehealth appointments, and more. By taking advantage of these educational programs, senior adults are more confident when it comes to using their smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

“We are so grateful to receive funds for new computers and equipment to provide internet access and computer training for our community,” said Alesia Burnley, Wilson County Library System Director.

Continued on next page...

WILSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM AWARDED \$100,000 THROUGH TN BRC NON-COMPETITIVE GRANT

Continued from last page. The library will also continue teaching their computer literacy courses to the public. These courses include: Basic PC Skills (mouse and keyboard); Internet Skills I (email and searching); Internet Skills II (maps, shopping, social media); Intro To Word Processing (MS Word, Google Drive); Intro To Spreadsheets (MS Excel, Google Drive); and Intro to Presentations (MS PowerPoint, Google Drive).

As part of the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act of 2017, the State of Tennessee established the Broadband Ready Communities Program to foster county engagement in securing broadband infrastructure and access to their communities. This program is also made possible through the TN Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD). The Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) is assisting in the administration of the grant for multiple Tennessee counties, including Wilson County.

“My hat is off to the employees of the Library System and the tremendous job they do for our citizens,” said Mayor Randall Hutto. “This program will greatly benefit our community. We sincerely thank TNECD and GNRC for making this grant available to Tennessee counties such as ours.”

The grant has been awarded, and new equipment is expected to arrive in January 2025. Keep an eye out on the Library and Wilson County Government websites for updates. BRC Grantees are expected to complete their projects by December 31, 2026.

