

# Independent Herald

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2 Sections, 16 Pages

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**FORGOTTEN TIMES:** The River People of White Pine. **B8**



## County seeks change in state ATV law

### Commission petitions state lawmakers to allow ATVs on roads

HUNTSVILLE — County Commission has petitioned the Tennessee General Assembly to amend state law to allow the operation of All Terrain Vehicles on public roads under the jurisdiction of local governments.

That action came in the form of a resolution adopted Monday night by an 11-2 vote during the Commission's regular monthly meeting.

Casting no votes on the resolution were second district Commissioner Leonard Bertram and sixth district Commissioner Ron Blevins, who said he could not support such a measure until ATVs met on-road specifications and were licensed. Fourth district Commissioner Alan Reed was absent from the meeting.

The resolution contains an alternative request in the event that the General Assembly fails to consider changing the state law, and that is a request that a private act specific to Scott County be adopted giving the local governing bodies such authority.

The Commission did not take action on a recommendation of its Community Development Committee to adopt provisions of a Town of Huntsville ordinance

[See COUNTY, page A7]

## Williams gets 20 years on 'sex ring' charges

### ■ Faces additional charges in case in Morgan County

HUNTSVILLE — The man described by authorities as the primary suspect in a "sex ring" that preyed on children has been sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Roger Dwight Williams, 38, of Helenwood, was sentenced to an effective 20-year sentence by Judge Shayne Sexton after entering a "best interests" plea in Criminal Court Monday afternoon.

Williams was one of four persons charged in what former Scott County Sheriff's Department Detective Melissa Dunning, now an FBI agent, described as a "sex ring" that victimized several children in multiple counties.

Williams was the first of the suspects to be indicted — a Scott County grand jury on 20 counts in February 2008 — and the last to enter a plea on the charges.

Previously, pleas had been entered by Jean McKeehan, 33, Willard Junior Foster, 47, and Anthony Scott McKeehan, 32.

During proceedings Monday, Williams entered the "best interests" plea on six charges, including

[See PLEA, page A6]



WILLIAMS

**INSIDE:** Feb. 16 murder trial set for Whisnant. **A8**



Photo — Paul Roy

### Enterprise grant awarded

USDA Rural Development Area Director Jerry Amonett (center) presents a \$10,000 check to Scott County Mayor Rick Keeton and fourth district County Commissioner Dennis Sexton at a site on Airport Road Monday morning. The enterprise grant provide funds will be matched with \$2,500 in local funds for site development for a new industrial building in the Airport Industrial Park. Pictured from left are Chuck Morris, Rural Development; David Leaverton, field director for Sen. Bob Coker; Commissioner Sexton; Amonett; Mayor Keeton; John Robbins, field representative for U.S. Rep. Lincoln Davis; and Larry Morgan, Rural Development.

### TOWN OF ONEIDA

## No tax hike for 2009-2010 budget

In a surprise move, Oneida's Board of Mayor and Aldermen did an about-face and set the property tax rate at the same rate as last year (85¢ per \$100 assessed value), a month after adopting a proposed budget based on a \$1.00 tax rate.

That action came during Thursday night's regular monthly meeting, after Aldermen Jeff Tibbals read a statement about his review of the budget figures.

Tibbals said that the town

had collected only \$597,000 of last year's \$693,000 projected property tax revenues, which represented 16.5% in unpaid taxes. Raising taxes in tough economic times like this would only complicate the problem, he added.

The proposed 15¢ hike in property taxes would only result in a 2.8% increase in revenue over last year's budget, Tibbals said, adding that "people can't afford to pay it... this is not the time to raise the

budget by increasing taxes."

Instead, Tibbals proposed rolling the tax rate back to the 85¢ per \$100 assessed value, step up tax collection efforts, and promote the town's golf course and recreation park as a means of increasing revenue. Other ideas discussed by the board included the possible sale of city-owned property.

Tibbals, fellow Alderman Lowe and Mayor Jack E. Lay were the only three (of five) board members present, and all

came to an agreement to set the tax rate at last year's rate.

Because of that vote, however, it has created a delay in the formal adoption of the proposed budget for fiscal year 2009-2010, as the budget which was expected to be voted on second and final reading Thursday night was based on a tax rate of \$1.00.

City Recorder-Treasurer Betty Matthews informed the board that a public hearing

[See TAX, page A6]

## Services held for long-time local banker

A memorial service was conducted Tuesday for former First Trust & Savings Bank President and CEO Charles Max Newport, who died at his home Sunday following a 10-month illness. He was 66.

Mr. Newport was a 40-year employee of Oneida-based FTSB. First serving as a board member at the bank, he served as president and CEO from 2004 until his retirement in April.

Also active in the Oneida Lion's Club and Scott County Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Newport was honored by the Chamber

earlier this year as the inaugural inductee into the organization's "hall of fame."

Mr. Newport is survived by his wife of 47 years, Jo. J. Newport. He is also survived by three sons, Charles Douglas Newport and wife Lisa of Seymour,



NEWPORT

and Philip Andrew Newport and wife Debbie and Paul Edward Newport and wife Shay, all of Oneida, and daughter Rebecca Newport Gasque and husband Mackie of Kingston.

A private family graveside service was to have been conducted yesterday (Wednesday) at Cooper Memorial Cemetery.

Pall bearers included Kris Acres, Don Billingsley, Ray Booher, Harold "Ned" Duncan, Jim "Bo" Smith and Bill Webb.

For a complete obituary, see page A5.



**INSIDE:** Rhonda Wright named new CPO at Boys & Girls Club. **A3**



**INSIDE:** Art on a bun, in this week's American Profile

### DEATHS

Sandy Slaven Byrge, 43  
Bertie Mae Claxton, 49  
Maxine Overton Lort, 55  
Charles Max Newport, 66  
Rev. Hubert Terry, 69  
Glenn Storey, 77

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