

2024

2024

Free

TOURIST AND VISITORS GUIDE

Free

Eastern Kentucky & The Country Music Highway

**Where is it?
The Hunt For
Swift's Fabled
Silver Mine**

**Carter County
Talent Abounds**

**Meadowgreen, A
Bluegrass Haven**

**Ricky Skaggs
To Mark 70
Years in July**

**Multi-million
Dollar Project
Underway in
Pike County**



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AN INSIDE
LOOK AT
THIS ISSUE...
Publisher



We profile up and coming artists from Carter County pg 33-35

36 Million Development is coming To Pike County pg 17

Meadowgreen Music Park in Clay City is a Bluegrass fan's delight pg 31

Swift's Silver Mine, a fascinating tale that hints at several likely locations in the Eastern Kentucky mountains pg 3



SWIFT SILVER MINE WHO KNOWS ITS HIDING PLACE?

NOBODY IN OVER TWO CENTURIES
"Don't stop looking for her boys, it's the richest thing I ever saw", said Jonathan Swift near his death.



Swift kept a journal and drew a map to the site's location. He said its near a "peculiar rock". One of four states may be hiding the exact site, if real at all.

The popular phrase, "the stuff legends are made of" fits the 17th century story behind the fabled Swift Silver mine.

A man named Jonathan Swift is believed to have established a major silver mining operation somewhere in the densely wooded area of Eastern Kentucky around in 1760-1768,

Some doubt this story is anything but legend and folklore. Swift is believed to have murdered at least six companions in an effort to keep all the riches for himself, yet after leaving the site of his hidden silver

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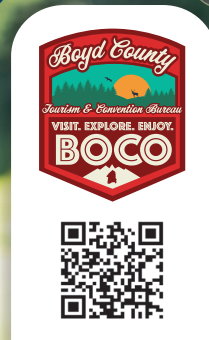



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The Stafford House is an 1840's Victorian era house and is perfect setting for a charming wedding or wedding shower. It also serves as a classic or vintage backdrop for stunning photos.

Photography by: Ashley Dawn Photography, Amy Wallen Photography, Gingersnaps Photography, Reggie Beechner Photography



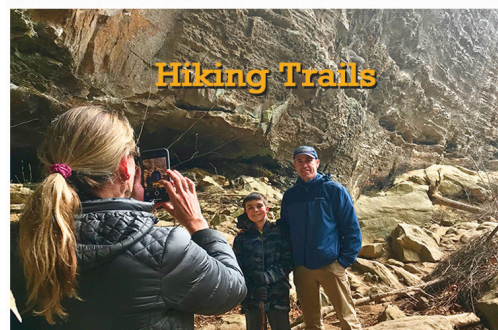
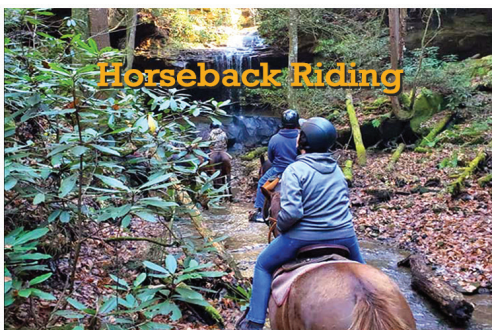
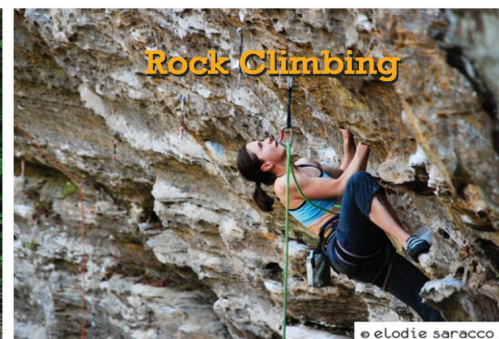
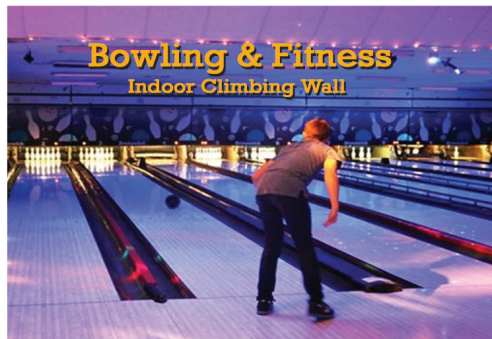
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There is no better place to explore the outdoors than *Jenny Wiley State Resort Park* and there is no better time than during Kentucky State Park's 100th year. Whether you take part in an elk tour, enjoy a hearty meal, explore trails by foot or bike, or just want to get away from it all, a cozy lodge, cottage, or campsite awaits your visit. Oh, and did we mention the views? Bring your camera. Memories will be made.



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Just 15 minutes up the road from Jenny Wiley you will find *Paintsville Lake State Park* with its sparkling waters inviting you to sit down and stay a while. When adventure calls, bring your canoe or kayaks to the universal launch that provides individuals with disabilities accessibility to explore the lake, or try some casting along the new fishing boardwalk. Developed and primitive campsites with playgrounds and nearby marina provide all the fun and necessities.



In the middle of these two parks, 10 minutes south of Paintsville Lake, lies the newest addition to Kentucky State Parks, the *Dawkins Line Rail Trail* stretching 36 miles from Hagerhill to Evanston. The paved path is open to hikers, bikers, and horseback riders.



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Patty Loveless

Hailing from Pikeville, KY, Patty Loveless carved her niche in country music with a blend of bluegrass and honky-tonk influences, crafting a contemporary sound.

With numerous chart-topping hits, including memorable tracks like "Blame It on Your Heart" and "Timber I'm Falling in Love," Loveless's music resonated widely with audiences. Her induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame cements her legacy and further proves her impact on Country Music. From humble beginnings as a coal miner's daughter to her world-acclaimed status, Loveless's inspirational journey inspires countless aspiring artists, demonstrating that with talent and determination, anything is possible.

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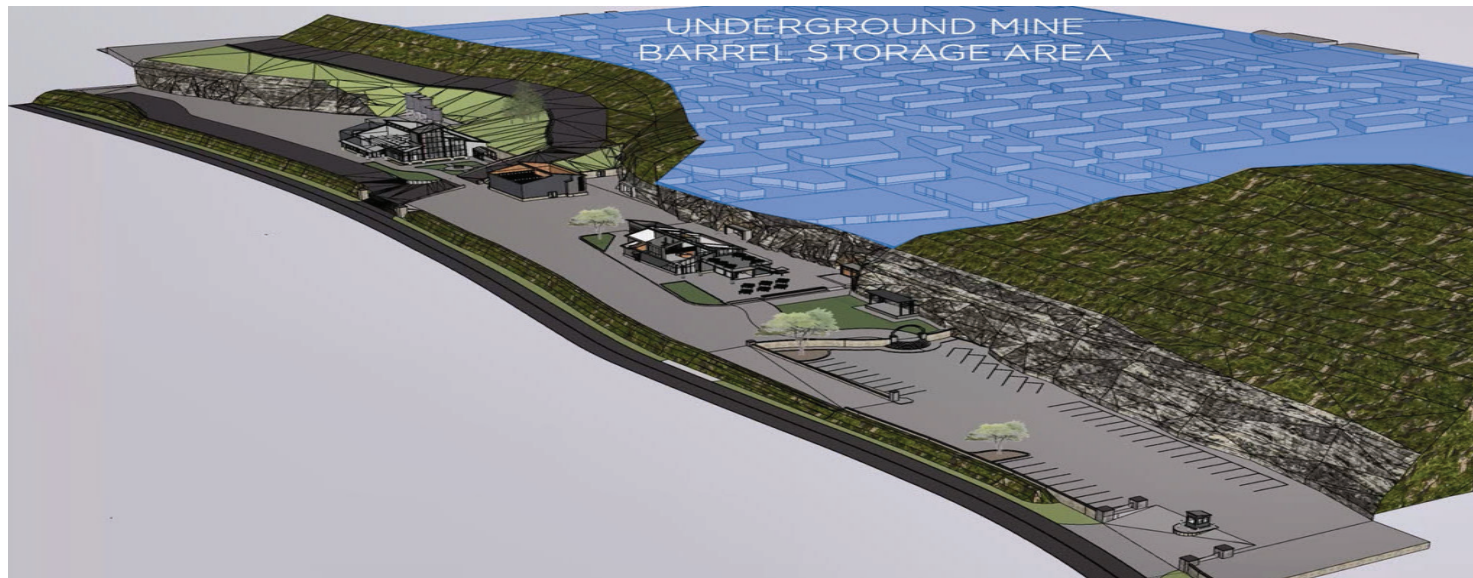


The Buckhorn Log Cathedral--For over 100 years, this majestic old church has been a fixture for Perry County. It can be found on the National Register of Historic Places. Inside this unique old church you can take a close look at a fascinating old pipe organ, that was one of the first to be brought and set up in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. Eperiene the rich history of this beautiful log cathedral



LEATHERWOOD OFF ROAD PARK





New Pike County Project Is Worth 36 Million, Seen As A Major Tourism Boost For The Region

Ambitious plans are in the works for Pike County as the Brothers Wright Distilling Company will incorporate a 1200 acre former coal mine and an underground bourbon storage and aging center.

The new 12,000 square foot distillery will sit on a 20-acre tract of land near the Tug Fork River in the community of Aflex beside the border between Kentucky and West Virginia. **MORE ON PG. 34**

SWIFT'S LOST SILVER MINE continued from page 3

fortune, he lost his eyesight. He couldn't ever locate his treasure thereafter.

Without a network of modern roads, GPS satellite imaging, or similar ways of preserving the exact location of this famous silver mine, and Mr. Swift's blindness onset, it has become a sport for treasure hunters. But, with nothing to show for all the searches.

An army of historians, treasure seekers, and folks who like to try their hand at solving lingering mysteries have narrowed down the supposed site of this legendary mine to eastern Kentucky, southern West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, and northeast Tennessee.

The legend of Swift's silver mine is based on accounts given in Englishman named Jonathan Swift's written records captured in his personal journal.

continued on Page 23

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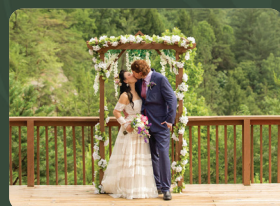


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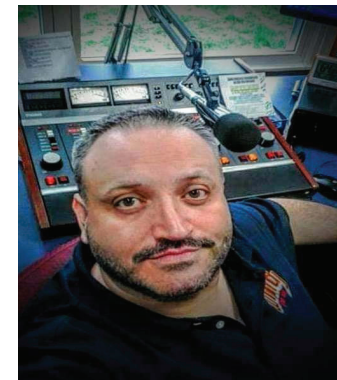
From Radio to Records

C. J. the D. J. Is A Talented Ambassador For Bluegrass and Country

Floyd County native Carl Jarrell has enjoyed success in his two favorite career choices, radio and records.

Jarrell, who is better known as CJ the DJ in the broadcasting and music industry, grew up in Slick Rock just a few miles south of Prestonsburg. His grandparents dwelled in Tram, a former mining village just off US 23.

Once he worked at the biggest radio station in Detroit, but came back to Eastern



In a familiar place, CJ the DJ in the studio

Kentucky to look after family members who had developed health issues.

Soon he connected with Melvin Goins, a legendary Bluegrass entertainer and began to work

with him on a weekly program distributed to various stations in Eastern Kentucky.

When Goins passed away at 82 while on tour in Canada, C. J. stepped in to continue his popular shows on area radio stations.

C. J. the D. J. was

a name given to Carl Jarrell by Loretta Lynn upon when he met her for the first time.

He has been actively recording and producing records and CD for more than a decade.

He is currently affiliated with 9 Lives Records, a division of Sony Music.

SWIFT SILVER MINEfrom page 19

fortune, he lost his eyesight. He couldn't ever locate his treasure thereafter.

Without a network of modern roads, GPS

satellite imaging, or similar ways of preserving the exact location of this famous silver mine, and Mr. Swift's

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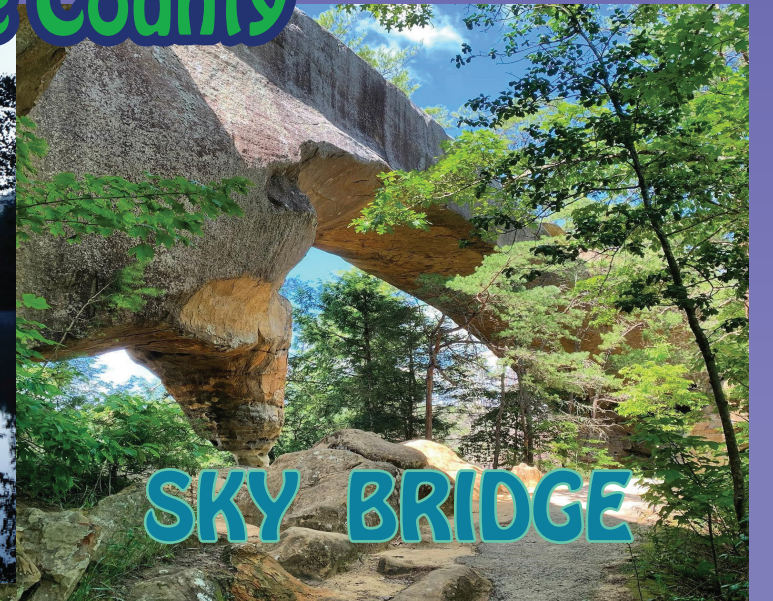
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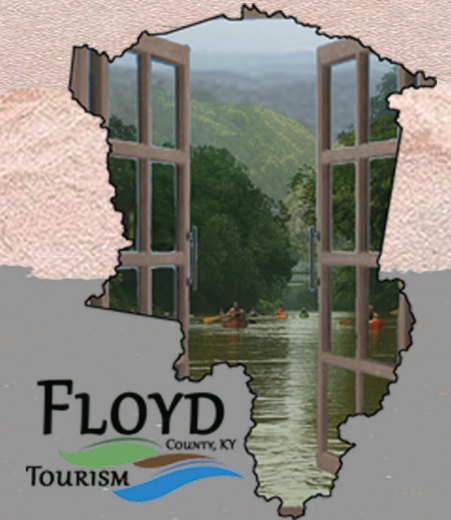


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MEN ON THE MOUNTAIN	JUNE 13-15
THUNDER ON THE MOUNTAIN	JULY 4-6
KDCC SOUTHEAST RIDE	AUG 24
LABOR DAY RIDE	AUG 29-31
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Clay City Venue is busy doing Bluegrass right, fans love it!



Major Bluegrass stars and groups have played in Clay City, Ky. at a venue called Meadowgreen Music Park. The connection between the venue and fans has been ongoing since 1974.

The Meadowgreen building is located off Exit 16 of the Mountain Parkway a distance of 1.5 miles. This music theatre seats 300 fans in a 4000 sq. ft. building.

It started with a couple that owned a 100-acre farm in Clay City. Forest and Betty Meadows started with outdoor shows during a special festival starting in 1974.

In 1984, Melvin Goins, a Bluegrass icon, first began to perform there. Things just gradually grew from there.

The present building was built in 1986.

Now, Ricky Wasson owns the property, and is planning to keep the growth and expansion underway.

Meadowgreen has

a board of directors made up from nine community members, and has built a Meadowgreen Appalachian Music Park Club that has over 90 members.

Their website is meadowgreenmusicpark.com.

A group known as Kentucky Friends of Bluegrass began constructing the building in 1986 for the sole purpose of doing Bluegrass shows. It has afforded a place for shows in the late fall, winter, and early spring that wasn't available before.

Ricky Wasson said a full schedule of leading acts have played there, and are coming back soon as the 2024 season unfolds.

So far Bill Mon- More on Pg 36

C J the DJ, A Singer Everyone Loves, in Country or Bluegrass



This is an artist everyone needs to discover. He has made many friends in the music industry. His radio name was given by Loretta Lynn. After 30 years in radio, he always applies his smooth, deep voice to many excellent songs. He is the host of the Melvin Goins Bluegrass Show on 100.1 WMDJ in Martin, Ky. 10-11 a.m. every Saturday. www.wmdjfm.com.



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We recognize below and on the following pages, 3 dedicated performers.

Following in the footsteps of a great Carter County Talent



Corey Hedge of Olive Hill was a 16-year-old student at West Carter High School when he was accepted onto the fabled American Idol 21st season television show. Now as a Senior at West Carter, he credits his Mom, Missy Hedges, with giving him the strong encouragement he needed to step forward and perform. To be on the show, you have to sign up online and do a zoom call. "So, Mom told me one morning that I had a zoom call that afternoon with American Idol," he recalled.

"They told me they would let us know if I was going to make it onto the show. Curiously, Hedge says that no one in his family plays music. "We rode horses a lot, and there was one man who brought a guitar and would play it around the campfire," Hedge explained. This was what ignited an interest in him for singing and music. He was scheduled for a second zoom call shortly after the first one, and that very next continued to Page 35



ince he was 15 years old, Shelby Lore, at left, has played in several bands, and current- focuses on what he calls "Appalachian Rock". Today his band features Shelby on guitar

\$36 Million Pike County Project

in addition to the distillery, the company will add a rickhouse (a 17th century term for a whiskey storage enclosure) , restaurant, museum, and welcome center. Shannon and Kendall Wright have a unique approach to their bourbon production. The distilled beverage will be stored under a large mountain in what was once a huge coal mine with a network of mine shafts lined with rock walls left over from the mining days. Kendall Wright observed, "We are respecting our

and lead vocals. There's another Carter County native in the band, and that is bass player Tyler Kiser. On drums, it is Luke Estep from the Elliott County community of Sandy Hook. Sandy Hook is the home of

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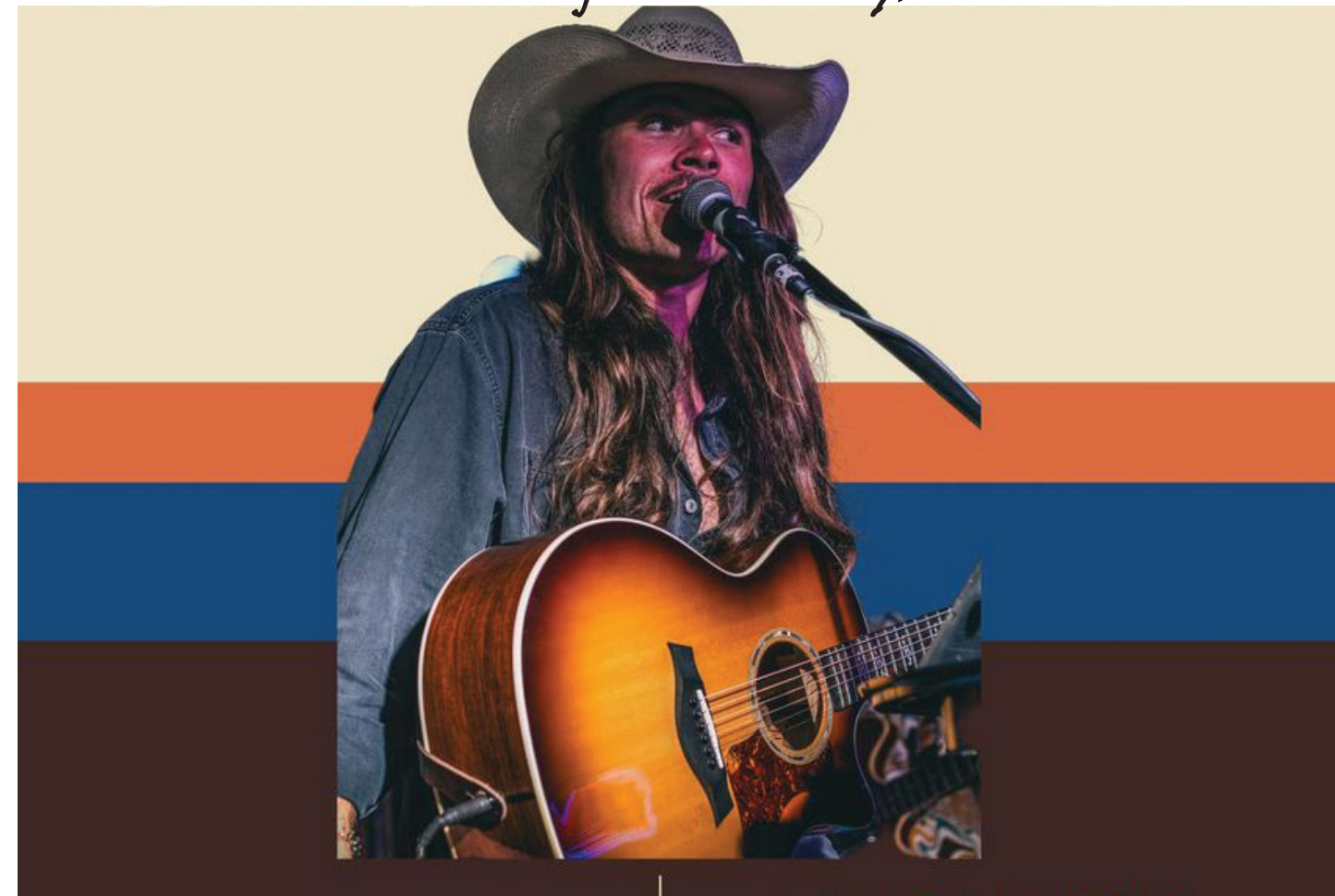
heritage. My family were all coal miners." The old coal mine operated 33 years until it was closed in 1946. The main distillery building has a design that will make it look like a coal tipple, which was the major transfer point of coal mined into rail cars or trucks. The Wright Distilling Company is turning out their whiskey with the help of barrels they have bought from other distillers. They are intent on building their brand in the bourbon industry,

more on page 38

right now is positive. "I see a lot of great things in store for 2024," he said "There's more coming out later this year. I know we'll keep working away and we just plan to just keep on trucking!"

Eastern Kentucky and US 23 Country Music Highway Tourist Guide

Dalton Kiser, a happy music man and entertainer out of Carter County,



26-year-old Dalton Kiser from Carter County who is happy to bring stories and tunes about his life's experiences from right here in Eastern Kentucky, that sums up Dalton Kiser and his band, The Downwind. Kiser and his passion for telling the story of his native Appalachian region, and strives to bring the real people and places to life for his listeners. Kiser says, "I come from a place where folks go to church on Sunday, and your area code is a real

Carter County High School Student Competed in American Idol's Season 21

week he got a call from the American Idol producers asking if he was "ready to go to Nashville." He continued on in the competition until he got cut during Hollywood Week. His time on the program was spent in Nashville playing for the judges.

part of your identity." He points out the most important day of the year where he comes from is the first day of Muzzleloader season. His songs remain true to his background and varied life's experiences. Dalton Kiser is an original, and he wants his work to be clear product of this region where people are hard working and live by the great traditions of Eastern Kentucky. He is playing in area clubs and bars, and says he has started writing songs, and has enough to put out an album. He is also working toward a career as a pipefitter at a Carter County vocational school. He is definitely covering all his bases.



Bluegrass Entertainment Among Friends at Meadowgreen

from page 31

roe, Ralph Stanley, the Osborne Brothers, Jimmy Martin, Keith Whitley, J. D. Crowe and other household names have appeared at Meadowgreen.

3rd Tyme Out, Larry Sparks, C. J. the DJ, Lost and Found, Doyle Lawson, Paul Williams, Larry Cordle and many others are planning on doing a show this year.

“I’ve had this for seven years now,” Wasson said. “When I was just 16 years old, I remember helping with the outdoor festivals, and often ran sound.”

Wasson played with J. D. Crowe and the New South from 1998 until Crowe’s death in 2022.

J. D. was familiar with Clay City be-

“J. D. was familiar with Clay City, because his grandparents lived here and he visited frequently as a boy and young man,” Wasson stated. “He was my hero and best friend. I miss him every day.”

Crowe was a legendary banjo player who is credited with boosting the musical career of Keith Whitley and Ricky Skaggs.

For every show, fans can dine on soup beans, cornbread, and fried potatoes.

This summer, the Crowe Fest in honor of J. D. Crowe will happen August 22, 23, and 24.

15 bands in all will perform, and there will be a reunion of New South, along with performances by Paul Williams and Doyle Lawson.



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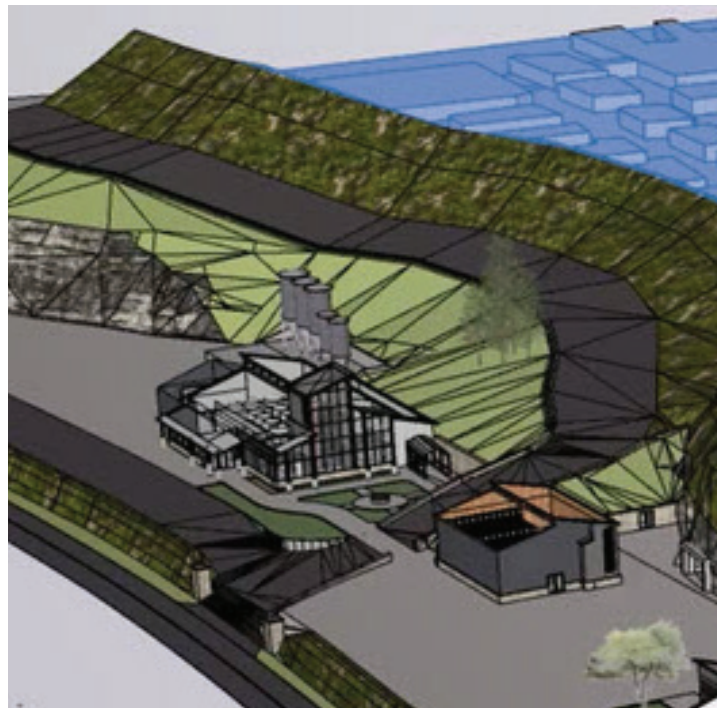
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Pike County Project.....

By storing bourbon in an old mine, the Wrights hope to take advantage of the stable temperature of around 60 degrees, unwavering humidity, and dependable air flow. Shannon Wright pointed to the company's concrete division that has worked in several mines around the globe. "We are taking what we have learned from the mining industry and combining it with our distillery experience," he said. Tony Tackett, Pike County Tourism director, says "We are thrilled to have this project underway. The plans are to incorporate this future attraction into the Pike County trail system and the Hatfield & McCoy Trail."

our website is:
www.countrymusichighway.com

The Durable Mystery of the Long Lost Swift Silver Mine

Swift claimed to have preceded Daniel Boone as an explorer of Kentucky.

Swift first arrived in the region in 1760, and according to an article in Harper's magazine in 1886. The article suggested he had secretly stashed a lot of silver treasure in at least six special locations in close proximity to the actual location of his fabled silver mine.

Some have concluded he was everything from a murderer, a government agent, a pirate, or just an unfortunate man whose onset of blindness ended all his plans to reclaim his riches.

In Swift's time, the Indians had mined silver, and smelted coin stock, which is what Swift and his partners were doing before they hid it away, planning to return and haul it all back east.

In today's tech-driven world and social media conversations, it has been acknowledged that the true north pole location on a compass has varied slightly since records were kept in 1866. This phenomenon has actually caused a variance of 10-15 miles for a location since Jonathan Swift's maps were drawn up around 1761.

Some have researched all of the buffalo traces, pioneer trails, and creek and river passages as they assemble data on where to search for this buried and hidden treasure.

Swift was believed to have converted his silver findings into coins worth a sizable fortune. There are thought to be five or six specific hiding places somewhere in the middle Appalachians.

Some of his deathbed words encouraged those closest to him to locate his lost fortune.

"Its near a peculiar rock. Boys don't ever stop looking for her. Its the richest thing I ever saw".

Each year in Wolfe County, Kentucky, there is a Swift Silver mine festival in the county seat of Campton, where locals believe the mine may be located. Some think the strongest clue might be how the area was named Swift Creek many years ago.

Folksre still looking today...in eastern Kentucky, and three other states.



for Ricky Skaggs, a 70th Birthday is coming July 18



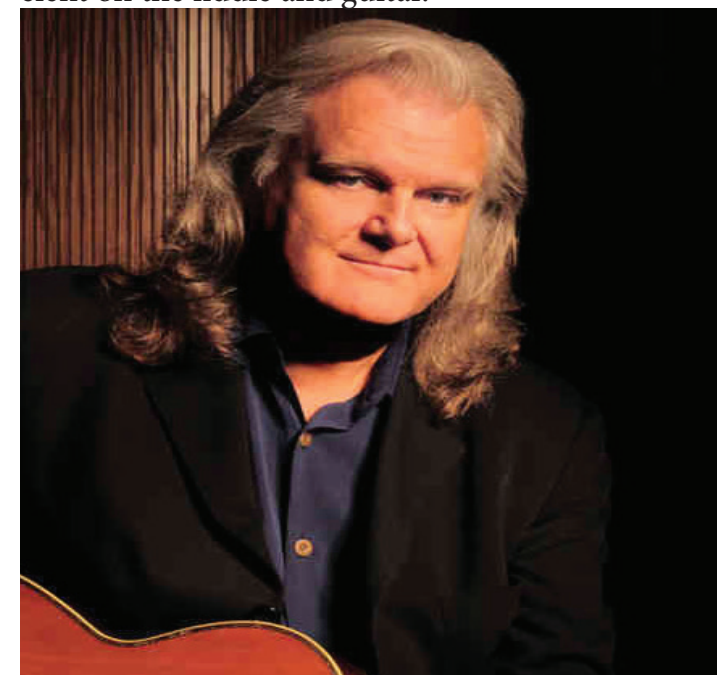
Ricky Skaggs is one of the original superstars from the Country Music Highway. This year, on July 18, he will celebrate his 70th birthday.

Skaggs began playing his mandolin by age 5, and by age 6 he was playing on stage with other accomplished musicians.

He grew up in the Lawrence County community of Cordell, just a short distance from Blaine.

After this child prodigy turned seven he had played onstage with Bluegrass legend Bill Monroe, on the Grand Ole Opry stage in Nashville, and on the very popular TV show hosted by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.

As a few more years passed, Skaggs became proficient on the fiddle and guitar.



As a teenager Skaggs became friends with another Country Music Highway future superstar, Elliot County's Keith Whitley.

It was 1970 when Skaggs and Whitley began a professional musical career, by joining the band of Ralph Stanley.

In 1973, he departed Stanley's band and was associated with major Bluegrass performers like J. D. Crowe and the New South, The Country Gentlemen, and Boone Creek, a band he personally formed.

By 1977 until around 1980, he became associated with Emmylou Harris and her Hot Band. This helped him get noticed by Epic Records, where he secured a contract in 1980.

This was followed by a rapid-fire string of number one country hits, and by 1982, Skaggs became an official member of the Grand Ole Opry. He soon accumulated eleven Grammy Awards and was the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year in 1985.

In the 90s, Skaggs continued to cling to his love of traditional Bluegrass music.

He is considered as a creative and versatile performer who can fit in to any genre, hence his two acclaimed collaborations with rock pianist and singer Bruce Hornsby. The first was released in 2007 and the second effort came out in 2013.

Skaggs organized his current band Kentucky Thunder, and they have been playing together ever since.

This solid Bluegrass sound earned Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder six Grammy Awards spanning 1998 thru 2008.

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