

GOOD MORNING Saturday December 10, 2016

Sold out Buc/Vol matchup a sellout/1B

Carter chill High-elevation snow cuts school day-short/6A

499 East edges Unicoi County to move Dyer near win threshold/1B

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BALLAD HEALTH MERGER PROPOSAL

Economist: MSHA, Wellmont used research 'inappropriately'

By ZACH VANCE Press Staff Writer

A Clemson economist says his research into health care cost implications from the proposed Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health Systems merger was misrepresented by the two systems.

MSHA vice president says local merger would 'absolutely' reduce health care pricing due to COPA

The Tennessee Department of Health dated Nov. 15 — rather than offer an opinion on whether the state agency should approve or deny the merger — Matthew S. Lewis said research cited by the health systems had been used 'inappropriately' in context to

merger would "absolutely" decrease health care pricing, due to negotiated contractual obligations and commitments with the state oversight agencies and health care payers.

"Because of the commitments we're making in the COPA (Certificate of Public Advantage), which is to immediately decrease

See RESEARCH, Page 2A



Becky Campbell/Johnson City Press

Family members of Daniel Henry listen during Friday's hearing.

Triple murder plea nets life term

Henry pleads guilty in deaths of parents, aunt

By BECKY CAMPBELL Press Senior Reporter

Daniel Henry had little to say except to answer a judge's questions Friday during a hearing in which he pleaded guilty to killing his parents and aunt last year as they slept.

Henry, 39, admitted he killed his father, Robert Henry, his mother, Melody Henry, and his aunt, Barbara Hammonds, then fled to New Orleans after he tossed the gun off a bridge into the Nolichucky River in October 2015. Henry was given an opportu-

See PLEA, Page 2A



A time to commence

Friday night marked endings and beginnings ... for Milligan College and its 104 fall graduates: the end of their college days, and the beginning of a new life; the end of Milligan's first 150 years, and the beginning of the next. Turn to Page 10A for the full story on Milligan's fall ceremony.

Zach Vance/Johnson City Press

Brandon Knorr, left, waits with fellow occupational therapy majors for Milligan College's fall graduation ceremony to begin Friday. Above, the scene in Seeger Chapel's Mary B. Martin Auditorium.

ETSU REMINDER ... Fall Graduation Ceremonies at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. today at the Mindome. Live video: www.etsu.edu/reg/graduation/default.aspx

Downtown board lays out goals for 2017

By NATHAN BAKER Assistant News Editor

Taking a moment to applaud recent gains in downtown Johnson City's vibrancy, members of the Johnson City Development Authority turned their focus to the future Friday, and outlined goals for the board in the upcoming year.

At the board's regular monthly meeting, Chairman Robert Williams explained the group's four core pillars — safety, parking, business

See GOALS, Page 10A

Judge could put city back in treatment center spotlight

Attorney calls for ruling on Tri-Cities Holdings' request

By GARY B. GRAY Press Staff Writer

An Atlanta attorney representing Tri-Cities Holdings LLC, a request from which to operate an opiate addiction treatment center in Johnson City was foiled three years ago, is asking a

federal judge to rule otherwise. U.S. District Court Judge Ronnie Greer is expected to decide in early January whether he will call for arguments. "I don't know why Johnson City has fought this so hard," said attorney James Dunlap,

who is representing the plaintiffs, including the company and several Johnson City residents. "After 1,000 people have died of overdoses, there is finally one treatment center now. But the need for opiate treatment centers is much greater than that."

A new clinic in Gray, offering methadone through a joint effort between Mountain State Health Alliance and East Tennessee State University, received its Certificate of Need from the state and zoning for the site was approved by the

See TREATMENT, Page 2A

WEATHER/2A, WWW, DEATHS/3A, 7A, INSIDE, WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'VE GOT TO BE GOOD ALL THE TIME?!! DON'T I GET WEEKENDS OFF?!!

36 YEARS OF SHARING 1980-2016 THE CHRISTMAS BOX. Christmas comes once a year but the need is all year long. A \$35 donation will provide a plentiful food box with enough contents for a traditional holiday dinner and several other nutritious meals.

GOALS

From Page 1A
development and programming — to new members and walked through a few dozen goals set by the body's Visioning Committee to address those areas.

"We developed these criteria, sort of focal points, and then came up with actions to help deal with them," Williams said to new members Kelly Grieb, Josh Mancuso and Trevor Tetzlaff. "We had all these in place, and we wanted to circle back and revisit these pillars."

In the coming year, the JCDA and its staff hopes to look at safety and parking concerns, which some members said may be more perception than reality.

"Some of the concerns we've heard on public surveys were dealing with the transient population downtown," he said. "To some, the appearance is that there is a homelessness problem, but they may be tenants of the John Sevier Center who are just walking outside. Some of the safety perceptions may not be true, but it's something we need to look at."

Williams said increasing lighting in the breezeway between the Downtown Center parking area off State of Franklin Road and nearby streets may make visitors feel safer.

"Sometimes it's a hangout, and it's poorly lit," he said. "We felt like that should be a focus for us, to make it appear to be safer. Lighting would help, but there could be some other areas to look at."

A trip to Knoxville to talk with city leaders there about how they address homelessness has been on the JCDA members' wish list for a while, but Williams said it may jump to the front in the coming year.

Ticking off another item on the Visioning Committee's list, Tetzlaff suggested area nonprofits be brought into the conversation about transience, to help find aid for those who need it.

For the second pillar, the organization hopes the city planning department will again perform a year-end study downtown to see if recent efforts have yielded more available space and more turnover in them.

Included in an upcoming wayfinding sign push led by the JCDA will be signs pointing to public parking.

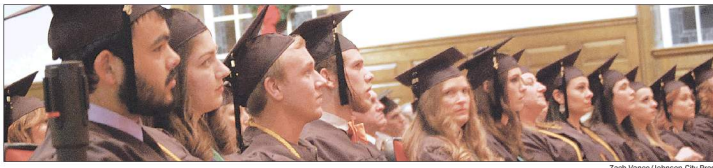
Williams also mentioned another initiative often discussed by the board, changing the traffic patterns on Main and Market streets back to two-way, which City Commissioner and JCDA member Ralph Van Brocklin said might face more than a few roadblocks.

Under the business development pillar, the board hopes to encourage building owners to eliminate blight by encouraging city staff to address codes issues.

For the programming pillar, Williams said Washington County Economic Development Council Downtown Development Manager Diana Carter, a liaison to the JCDA, has made tremendous progress by initiating concerts in Founders Park.

One goal for the coming year is to work with downtown merchants to reinstate the Main Street designation, which was allowed to lapse five years ago because the program didn't bring many concrete benefits.

Canter said Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam has since increased funding to the program, and now the designation brings financial benefits to communities.



Zach Vance/Johnson City Press

Milligan College graduates listen to one of the speakers at Friday's ceremony.

Milligan graduates 104 in fall ceremony

By ZACH VANCE
Press Staff Writer
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Milligan College graduate student Brandon Knorr just couldn't seem to sleep Thursday night.

And he likely wasn't the only one.

Knorr joined 103 other Milligan students who walked across the Mary B. Martin Auditorium stage Friday evening to shake Milligan College President William Greer's hand and celebrated another educational accomplishment.

"I didn't sleep (Thursday) night. It was part excitement and part nerves of just jumping into a job that really matters. But it just feels amazing," said Knorr, who earned his master of science in occupational therapy and plans to start a job in his hometown of Knoxville.

"I'm graduating with a class of just amazing, innovative individuals. Up until this point, I've been a professional student and I'm ready to start my career and get out there. I've learned so much here."

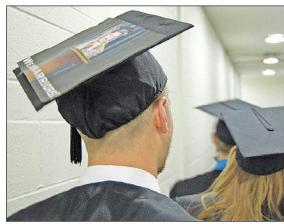
Knorr spoke gratefully, as did the hundred other students chatting among themselves while they lingered in Seeger Chapel's hallway before entering the auditorium for the prelude and invocation.

As Greer began the ceremony, he highlighted the significance of the 2016 fall graduating class: Friday was the final day of Milligan's yearlong sesquicentennial celebration.

"So tomorrow, Dec. 10, marks the first day of our next 150 years," Greer said.



Kelli R. Wills receives her degree during Milligan's graduation ceremony.



Celia Pless, above, and Garrett McDonald, below, were fall commencement speakers.



Of those were: nine bachelor of arts graduates, 27 bachelor of science graduates, seven bachelor of science in nursing graduates, 12 master of business administration graduates, eight master of education graduates, 10 master of science in counseling graduates and 31 master of science in occupational therapy graduates.

Of the bachelor's degree recipients, 24 are Adult Degree Completion Program students.

Friday also continued Milligan's recent tradition of including more student engagement in its commencement ceremonies through scripture readings and prayer.

Graduate Grace A. Moorhouse read scripture from Deuteronomy while Matthew T. Samples led the benediction.

Graduates Celia K. Pless and Garrett M. McDonald were chosen to speak on behalf of the fall graduating class.

"We are departing as different people than we were when we arrived," Pless said during her speech.

"I have to believe that while we have gained a great deal of knowledge, what changed us the most was the people we encountered. Those who helped us grow, those who imparted wisdom and those who shared their hearts with us."

Riley Pritchett and Erin Raines provided music during the ceremony.

Follow Zach Vance on Twitter @ZachVanceJCP. Like him on Facebook at facebook.com/zach.vance

"Commencement, as you know, isn't just the end of that portion of your education that has taken place at Milligan. It's also an end to

an enormously important time when you have formed new friendships, you've faced and overcome challenges you didn't think you

could overcome. Milligan's December graduates included 43 undergraduate students and 61 graduate students.

Supreme Court will hear Tennessee forfeiture case

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court will decide whether a Tennessee man convicted for his role selling iodine water purification filters to methamphetamine makers can be required to forfeit nearly \$70,000 in profits.

The justices said Friday they will hear an appeal from Terry Honeycutt, who helped sell more than 20,000

filters at his brother's Chattanooga hardware store. Prosecutors said police warned the brothers that the iodine was used by local meth cooks.

Honeycutt's brother pleaded guilty and agreed to forfeit \$200,000 of the \$270,000 in profits.

But Terry Honeycutt argued that he shouldn't have to forfeit the rest since he didn't personally see any

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Dec. 11 at 5 pm

Sweet snacks, warm beverages, children caroling and a performance from our orchestra and choir. Celebrate with us the coming of Christmas. No ticket required. Child care provided for ages 3 and under.

Christmas Eve Services
Dec. 23 at 6 pm
Dec. 24 at 3 pm, 4:30 pm, 6 pm

We all long for a true home to be welcomed and accepted, to be known and loved. You have a home with us in the presence of Jesus this Christmas Eve. Child care provided for ages 3 and under.

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Sunday, Dec. 25 • 10am
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(Beside Johnson City Power Board & Cracker Barrel)