



## THE SALINE COURIER

Let us prepare for your Tailgate Party, Game Day feast or any occasion!

**RIVERSIDE**  
Barbecue & Catering  
6am to 9pm, 7 days a week  
4444 Hwy 5 So. • Benton  
501-794-0828

"SALINE COUNTY'S NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1876"

www.SalineCourier.com

VOL. 147 NO. 211

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

8 PAGES FREE

### Bryant Animal Control makes changes to improve services

By Scarlett Castleberry  
news@bentoncourier.com

The Bryant Animal Control and Adoption Center has been undergoing changes in response to an increasing intake of animals and a decrease in adoptions while operating with limited resources.

"We're working with the local council to try to meet those economic needs," said Bryant Animal Control Director Tricia Power. Still, the shelter has made great strides within the department to improve its community outreach as well as

care for the animals that come through their doors.

As drop-offs at the shelter surge, adoptions are still lagging, leaving the shelter with the challenging task of addressing an overcrowded shelter among various issues.

In August, the shelter received some 90 animals and had to euthanize 43. In September, however, the shelter only had to euthanize seven animals, but took in 80.

One major contributing factor to this decrease in euthanasia was the increase in animal transfers. The shelter recently joined forces with Best Friends,

a nonprofit organization founded in the 1980s with a mission to halt the routine euthanasia of animals in shelters as a means of population control.

Through their partnership with Best Friends, the Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center secured a \$12,000 grant to provide free microchipping services to Bryant residents.

The details are still being worked out on this. \$7,000 is for microchipping and \$5,000 is up to the center's discretion.

Power has said much of the grant will go toward further training for staff.

These changes will certainly

help, but Power and her team are still dedicated to serving the animal life within their own community as well as the local residents.

"We're working very hard on intake diversion," said Power. "And what that means is that we're trying to find alternatives for intake. What can we do to keep this animal in your home?"

The shelter is constantly looking for ways to solve problems and find resources for people who are struggling to keep their pets. The goal, said Power, is always to keep an animal

SHELTER, page 4



Special to The Saline Courier  
Puppy Sula gets ready for Halloween treats at the Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center.

### Future of parks hangs on A&P tax vote

By Destin Davis  
ddavis@bentoncourier.com

The history of the Bryant Parks system is also the story of the city and its explosive growth over the past quarter century.

For a city with a population of 5,629 in 1990 and 20,663 as of 2020, keeping up with that growth has proven to be a challenge but a dedicated community is what has allowed the Bryant Parks system to keep up and thrive throughout the years.

That challenge continues, as this November, Bryant voters will vote on a bond issue and an A&P tax that would provide funding to the Bryant Parks Department.

According to Bryant Parks Director Chris Treat, funding is essential for the department to continue proper maintenance or accomplish its master plan, which includes new tennis and pickleball facilities in Bryant.

"We have made great strides in taking care of our parks and we are proud of the master plan, but we won't be able to continue proper maintenance or accomplish the plan without a funding mechanism," said Treat. "In November, the residents decide what they want in their parks system. It's their vote and their choice."

The story of the Bryant Parks systems development and the growth of the city have been tied together since 1946, the year when Bryant's first park, Ashley Park, opened. Ashley Park is named after Conway Ashley a former Mayor of Bryant. Initially, the park was used by the Bryant School District as the first Hornet football field, the first ever Bryant Hornet football game was played at Ashley Park. The city acquired the land from a railroad company in the 40s with help from the school district.

The second addition to the Bryant Parks system was Mills



Pickleball and tennis players enjoy playing on the Joyce Boswell Courts at Mills Park at all hours.

Park. It started with a conversation in 1971 between former Mayor Dean Boswell and the owner of Reynolds Company

about how the land that is now Mills Park, didn't have the potential for mining. An agreement was made, Reynolds

donated the land to the city in exchange for naming the city's busiest road after the company,

PARKS, page 4

### Bryant School Board hears annual Report to the Public

By Destin Davis  
ddavis@bentoncourier.com

Communications Director Devin Sherrill recently presented the Bryant School Board with the district's annual Report to the Public for the 2022-23 school year.

Each year, the annual report to the public updates patrons, students, and parents on the status of the school district from the previous school year and also highlights the achievements of students and staff.

Along with academic data,

the report includes information on district finances, student enrollment and demographics, teacher quality and testing scores.

The report includes that the district served a total of 9,607 students last year including 4,279 elementary students, 2,201 high school students, 1,634 junior high students, and 1,493 middle school students. The district also serves 159 pre-K students.

One notable highlight in the report is the district's finances.

REPORT, page 6

### AI changing high school classrooms

By Gabi Dawson  
Bryant High School Student Intern  
news@bentoncourier.com

As artificial intelligence continues to seep into various facets of our daily lives, high school education finds itself navigating uncharted territory as the world adapts to AI.

The utilization of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in classrooms, has raised questions about its potential impact on students' learning abilities.

ChatGPT was announced on Nov. 30, 2022, by OpenAI, an artificial intelligence research company. OpenAI was founded in 2015 by Sam Altman, Elon

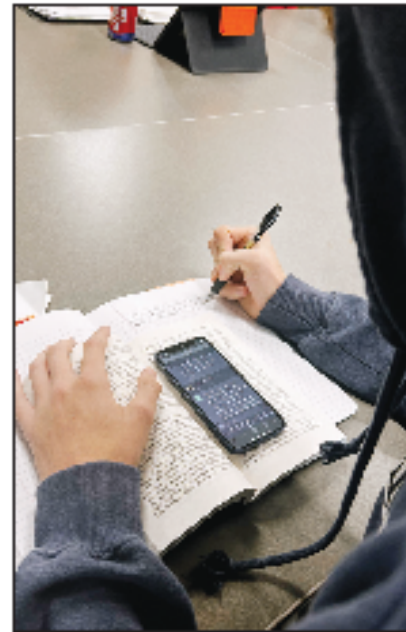
Musk, and other prominent computer industry figures including Peter Thiel, Ilya Sutskever, Jessica Livingston, Reid Hoffman, and John Schulman.

Through Tik Tok posts and Youtube videos, people began sharing what this chatbot could do, and high school students seemed to be the main target audience of the new technology.

"We've trained a model called ChatGPT which interacts in

TECH, page 6

The use of AI in high school classrooms is a growing trend.



**WEATHER**

Daily Forecast

TODAY 83° 67°

**CONTACT US**

DURING BUSINESS HOURS

Phone: (501) 315-8228  
Fax: (501) 315-1920  
Email: news@bentoncourier.com  
Write: P.O. Box 207, Benton, AR 72018

**SUBSCRIBE!**

Receive Saline County news five days a week and online 24/7/365 for \$38 per day. Call (501) 315-8228, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday or click **SUBSCRIBE** at [www.SalineCourier.com](http://www.SalineCourier.com)

**MISSED PAPERS?**

The newspaper is delivered by the U.S.P.S. postal carriers Tuesday-Saturday except on federal holidays. To renew a subscription, call (501) 315-8228, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**INDEX**

HORNETS LEGACY .....5  
2023 HOMECOMING .....5  
MAYORAL RACE.....6  
HALL OF HONOR.....5

**Amberwood HEALTH & REHABILITATION**

6420 Alcoa Road in Benton  
Please visit us for a personal tour or call 501-778-5401

Central Arkansas' Newest Skilled Nursing Facility for Short Term Rehabilitation & Long Term Care Services

Your Recovery is our Top Priority  
Private and Semi Private Rooms Available



*Ta Molly's*

If you don't have time to bring in the family, call in your order 501-653-2600 and use our Drive Thru for pickup.

[tamollys.com](http://tamollys.com)

# Ta Molly's

## Freshness Counts!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Our tomatoes come from Cantua Creek, California! You'll find them in our fresh salads, homemade salsa, and pico de gallo. We never add any preservatives because they're perfect just the way they are.

*Ta Molly's*  
MEXICAN KITCHEN

### DID YOU KNOW?

Avocados are a super food filled with antioxidants, fiber, and the good kind of fat that can help lower cholesterol. All the more reason to order some guacamole with lunch, right?!

*Ta Molly's*  
MEXICAN KITCHEN



# SALINE COUNTY

The CBRPM Group team offers the highest caliber of service to best meet the needs of our customers, clients and community. CBRPM Group expects our agents to be recognized for their character, commitment and dedication to selling Central Arkansas. Give us a call if you're looking to buy or sell a home!



501.316.0955 | cbrpm.com  
3507 Main St., Suite 1  
Bryant, AR 72022



- ONLINE REFILLS • TEXT ALERTS
- FREE DELIVERY WITHIN 7 MILES
  - BLISTER PACKING
  - IMMUNIZATIONS
- CONVENIENT DRIVE THRU
- UNIQUE GIFTS AND BOUTIQUE

3322 HWY 5 N  
501-847-2880



Thank you for voting us  
#1 pharmacy!

**We love your town  
like it's our own.**

**Because it is.**



You can now find us in  
Bryant AND Benton!

**gatewaybank.bank**

6110 AR-5 • Bryant, AR 72022  
501-847-3440

17328 Interstate 30 Unit #1 • Benton AR 72019  
501-575-0819



## ROLLER-ALCOA FUNERAL HOME

### Meet & Greet with Santa Pete

Thursday  
December  
21st  
11 AM - 1 PM



Bring your kids/grandkids to  
get their picture with Santa!

# 501-315-0700

6700 Alcoa Road

## Shelter

From page 1

mal in a home and not in the shelter.

Rather than allowing community members to run out of resources and feel as though they may have no choice but to drop their pet off at a shelter, Power and her team are looking to offer ways to help those people before they get to such a desperate point, including by helping current pet owners obtain the resources they need to keep their pet.

"We're trying to move away from the old-style form of animal sheltering, where pets are dropped off with no questions asked. Instead, we want to encourage people to seek our assistance before reaching that point."

The shelter is focusing on addressing the root causes of animals being surrendered and finding their way into the shelter. Three months ago, the department started participating in Fences for Fido, a nonprofit organization. Lowe's donated materials

to help with temporary fence repairs when stray animals are found.

"When they are out and they see a dog loose and the dog runs back into a fence, and they see the gate or fence is broken, they can fix that," explained Power.

After making the repair, the animal control officer will leave a note explaining the situation and informing the homeowner of the necessary fix.

Bryant Animal Control has also introduced the use of microchip scanners throughout the community, including at every fire station, to help reunite lost pets with their owners. For the complete list of locations with microchip readers, visit the shelter's website and click on their lost and found link.

"What we have found is that they are more than twice as likely to be reunited with their family if they stay within two miles of where they were found as opposed to them coming to the shelter where the chances of being reunited with their family drop to 18 per-

cent," said Power.

"If there's no microchip, if you can just keep it for 48 hours, post it on social media, NextDoor, your neighborhood group. Hopefully, the owner there or someone who knows the owner is on there will see it and facilitate that reunion," said Power.

The shelter is also emphasizing social programs that address both human and animal needs throughout the community they serve.

"Another animal control director told me 'Animal problems are human problems, and human problems are universal. If you can focus on helping the human side, not just the animal, then there's so much more that you can do,'" said Power.

Power and her team have consistently strived to reunite animals with their families, emphasizing the need for more foster homes.

Foster homes can also play a pivotal role in this effort, as they offer a temporary solution for pets in need. By fostering, community members

can take in an animal for a temporary period of time to allow the animal a break from the shelter or to help someone who is currently struggling to care for their own pet.

"If you foster for us, we provide everything. The food, all of the supplies, a dog crate, bedding, cat litter, bowls, medical care, whatever you need. If you run out of food, you just holler at us and come by and pick up whatever you need," said Power.

"We could always use more fosters because everybody's situation is different," said Power. That way, there's a larger pool to pull from when it comes to finding temporary homes and volunteers can even be pickier about which pets they take in.

"Even though you may not be able to foster today, it doesn't mean you can't foster next week or the week after. We work around schedules and do everything we can."

In the upcoming holiday season, the shelter is launching a "Home for the Holidays" program in November and



SCARLETT CASTLEBERRY / The Saline Courier  
Lavender, a puppy at Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center, enjoys a run.

December, connecting animals with foster volunteers for the weekend to give them a break from the shelter.

"Sometimes people adopt them, so that's always nice, but sometimes they don't and that's okay too, because that's not the intention. The intention is to get the animal out of the shelter for the long holiday week-

end," said Power.

To stay updated on the shelter's services and upcoming programs or to learn how to become a foster volunteer, visit the shelter's Facebook page or the City of Bryant's website under the Animal Control Department or check out the shelter's Facebook page at Bryant Animal Control and Adoption Center.

## Parks

From page 1

Reynolds Road.

The development of Bryant's parks continued with the addition of smaller parks like Springhill, Plumb, and pocket parks.

A significant milestone was the creation of the Alcoa 40 park in 1978. Ted Boswell, a local lawyer, convinced Alcoa that converting the property into a park would be the best use for the community.

As Bryant grew, so did its park system, turning it into an attractive destination for both residents and visitors. Softball even found its new home at Alcoa 40 in the 1990s.

Bryant Parks was never truly an organized department until the city hired Jeremy Lemons as its parks director. Lemons took the job for nearly minimum wage after graduating from Ouachita Baptist University because it was something he was passionate about and wanted to do.

"They needed help cleaning the restrooms at Mills and Ashley Park and help finding a pee-wee football field," said Lemons.

When Lemons started, he was the only employee in the department, by the time he left in 2011, there were 15 other employees, so to say Lemons was important to the expansion of the Bryant Parks system would not suffice.

When he took the position, pee wee football was still played behind Enterprise Liquor at the county line. They were able to move the football field to Alcoa 40 so that kids in Bryant would have a proper place to play pee wee football.

Lemons worked with several city organizations such as the Bryant Chamber of Commerce, the Bryant Athletic Association, and the Bryant Boys and Girls Club to propose a sales tax to the people of Bryant, to continue the expansion of the park.

This sales tax would lead to the creation of Bishop Park.

"We had weekly meetings to talk about it and then we got architects and engineers involved for the conceptual drawing, the problem though was we didn't have any land," said Lemons.

Over the years, Lemons had formed a friendship with Norma Bishop who owned the farmland that is now Bishop Park.

Lemons and Norma would have coffee together almost once a week and Norma shared with him that while several people and businesses had offered to buy the land, none of them had the same vision as she did for it.

She told Lemons that her husband Charles and herself had always envisioned the fields once filled with hay and cows to be filled with children playing.

She was preparing to move to Maumelle to be closer to her children and grandkids when she agreed to turn the land into a park.

The city was able to acquire the 100 acres in 2006 and the citizens of Bryant came together to overwhelmingly pass a half-cent sales tax for Bishop Park with 64 percent of the vote.

Bishop Park opened in 2007. Lemons served as Bryant Park's director until 2011. During his tenure, he also oversaw the addition of Midland Park which was built in developed in 2008 and won the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association Park of the Year award in 2008.

Now, Bryant Parks is under the direction of Chris Treat, a lifelong Bryant Resident. In between Lemons and Treat's time as director, Bryant Parks began to recede in its amount of progress.

"When I became Parks Director in 2016, the older parks started to suffer because of the amount of resources that needed to be used in maintaining Bishop Park, especially Ashley, Alcoa and Springhill," said Treat.

"It took time for our staff and funding to catch up with the expansion,



DESTIN DAVIS / The Saline Courier  
The Center at Bishop Park has been an important facility for the city of Bryant and it offers a wide variety of activities for young and old alike.

it goes with the story of Bryant. We are experiencing the struggles of growth and the pressure that is put on the entire city. It goes right along with the growth and the demands of the residents," said Treat. "I think since 2016, we have caught up. Between then and now, it has felt like we were playing catch up just trying to react to the growth and the stress that had been placed on the system."

Treat said the Parks department is finally in a place where it can start to look ahead instead of reacting to problems that consistently arise.

The parks director said that even with a bond and the sales tax used to help build Bishop, it wasn't enough to maintain the park.

Once Treat became director, the staff was restructured and money was reallocated to help get the department back on track. When Mayor Jill Dabbs was still in office, she came to Treat and said they were going to bring voters a bond issue to add two fire stations and an extra \$4 million for parks.

The issue passed and the department was able to use that money strategically by renovating The Center at Bishop, expanding the senior center, expanding the Boys and Girls Club in addition to renovating Mills Park to include an inclusive playground.

The bond also allowed the city to renovate Ashley Park for the first time in decades and build the city's first disc golf course.

"A lot of great things were done with that money," said Treat.

The City of Bryant had an A&P Commission for a short period after an ordinance was passed in 2017 but was dissolved 14 months after its inception.

In that 14 months, the A&P tax brought in nearly \$1 million to the department which was reused to build pavilions for Fall Fest, the Alcoa 40 pavilion, renovation of the bathrooms at Ashley Park along with the addition of a playground and they also added lights to Bishop Park with the help of the Central Arkansas Soccer Club.

"So from 2016 until now, we have used bond money, A&P funds, and city savings," said Treat.

That money, however, is now beginning to dry up as the city has dealt with budget issues throughout 2023.

This is why the City of Bryant is bringing a proposal to form a new A&P Commission and implement a new A&P tax of 3 percent on hotels and 2 percent on restaurants to the voters in November.

"Where we sit financially today, is where we were at when I took over, there is no more surplus, there is no A&P and there is no bond

money. So we are back to that point where things could potentially begin to decline unless something changes, and that's why the vote in November will be such a big decision for residents," said Treat.

The Bryant Parks Department released a master plan to the public this summer, the plan includes a tennis and pickleball complex that would serve as the home for the Bryant Hornet Tennis team similar to the Aquatics Center at Bishop Park. A bond issue is also on the ballot this November.

A premier feature of the Bryant Parks system is that it's a central hub of youth sports in the state, that brings in tourism as athletes travel to town for youth tournaments.

"Halfway through this summer we had crossed 50,000 visitors," said Treat. Treats refer to the popular baseball, softball, and soccer tournaments held in the city each year. With an A&P tax, the city could capitalize on the visitors coming into the city.

"Then you're also building a facility that's going to lean into more of what we already do well, sports tourism. We want to bring in tennis and pickleball tournaments and with that, you are growing revenue because you are bringing more people and also using that to serve the local community," Treat said.

"We are booked up

with tournament directors every year who want to bring events to our parks because we have so many hotels and are centrally located."

The A&P tax would apply to hotels and restaurants and 50 percent of those funds would go straight to the city's Parks Department with the other 50 percent being left to the will of the city council.

As for the future of the Bryant Parks system, Treat believes the boldest vision is regionalism.

He referenced Northwest Arkansas as an area that has focused on regionalism which has allowed its cities, schools, parks, businesses, and communities to flourish.

The Southwest Trail project, which is a joint project with Pulaski, Saline, and Garland counties is another example of what regionalism creates.

"If you look at what Benton's doing and the investments they are making in their park system and what we could eventually do, that would bring in millions of dollars into the parks system regionally," Treat said.

"The future is connectivity, trails, parks amenities. That's what people will continue to move here for and we are poised to do it together. Long term it needs to be a regional approach and we already work well with the Benton Parks system."

## Road to Greatness: From great to dynasty, Hornets vying for more glory

By Josh Briggs  
Special to The Saline Courier

**BRYANT** – The word “dynasty” in the world of sports defines an era where the same organization ruled for years at a time.

The 1990s Chicago Bulls or early 2000s Los Angeles Lakers, are good examples. Even the “Murderer’s Row” New York Yankees or Alabama football for the past two decades.

On a local level, the Bryant Hornets have built a dynasty in only six years.

Buck James arrived in Saline County ahead of the 2017 high school season. James agreed to one of the most wanted coaching contracts in the state at the time and replaced legend Paul Calley.

After a season of adjustments, James and the Hornets began to lay the foundation that has ruled the Natural State the past five-plus years.

Fast forward to present day and the Hornets are now the five-time defending 7A state champions with a new head coach. The one thing that has yet to change? Winning.

“The pressure is always there and the same because you always want to win,” said first-year Head Coach Quad Sanders.

“You dang sure don’t want to be the team that lets the guys before you down. The pressure is the pressure regardless. It has been the same for the last five years.”

Sanders served as the Hornets defensive coordinator the previous five seasons and was named head coach at Jonesboro in the offseason.

However, due to an unexpected departure by James to Conway only a few months later, Sanders’ phone started ringing.

“When I saw the number I said ‘this is unbelievable,’” Sanders said. “It was unbelievable. I had just sold my house four days before that call. When I heard the phone

ring I knew what it was going to be about.”

Though Sanders had just come off his fifth state championship, he was well into planting his seeds in Jonesboro with a new career jump.

With the emotions of leaving Saline County and always calling Bryant home no matter where his career took him, Sanders said he still had to think about everything before accepting the job as head Hornet.

“It was definitely a let-me-think-about-it moment,” Sanders said. “I had been there (Jonesboro) long enough to establish relationships with coaches and players. It was tough.

“It all boiled down to family. Not just my family, but the family I had here. This is my senior year. This senior class is the class I had when they were freshmen.”

The Hornets began their journey to the top in Week 10 of the 2018 season at home against Conway.

Coming off a brutal loss to North Little Rock, Bryant took care of business heading into the playoffs and never looked back. It would be more than three full seasons before the Hornets lost another football game.

Bryant would roll into more than one streak as well. Dating back to the loss at North Little Rock, the Hornets would win every in-state game until Week 3 of this season following that defeat.

While it may seem Bryant flipped a switch overnight in 2018, Sanders said it took time and development to get to this stage.

“The weightroom and the guys working hard,” Sanders said. “It is a mindset thing. In the past they had a mindset where they just did not want to lose. These guys now have to develop that mindset as well. We have a chance this year to keep developing that.”



Coach Quad Sanders speaks during the Salt Bowl Pep Rally on Aug. 22. Sanders is in his first year as head coach for Bryant High School, but he is no stranger to Hornets football.

With the arrival of James also came an old saying he had lived by his entire career – 212.

The three-digit number spread across Bryant on T-shirts, social media, bulletin boards and newspapers.

The meaning is simple – water’s boiling point.

“Coach James brought it with him and it was something I was always going to keep no matter where I went,” Sanders said. “But it’s about that mindset. That extra degree. How far are you willing to go. 212 creates that mentality. It’s always a good reference point where you can look at the guys and say ‘that’s not 212’ and they know what you are talking about.”

While Bryant is vying for a sixth-straight championship, it seems a program with such success would not have much more to prove. That is not the case for Sanders and company.

“There is another team out there somewhere with more than six,” Sanders said. “Maybe not six in a row, but they have more than six. There is always something to prove. When you do this you want to go down as one of the greatest. You want to do something and be great at it. These kids have to understand they have a chance to be a part of history. Something somebody will never forget.”

Looking years down the road, after the streaks have come to an end and the trophies are dusty, Sanders said he wants people to remember this era for Bryant football as more than the gridiron battle on Friday nights.

“I want people to say they did it the right way ... it wasn’t always about winning,” Sanders said. “Something other than football. Other than winning a game. I want them to look at our coaching staff and say without

those guys some of the kids wouldn’t be where they are. They helped them more than excelling on a football field. That is a huge goal of mine.”

The Hornets are currently in the toughest part of the regular season and one game tends to stand out more than the others – Buck James and Conway. Week 10. On the road.

“It is hard to look ahead as a coach and you try not to,” Sanders said. “It’s always the end of the season for us. The last several years this has been the conference championship game. Conway has always been on the brink and one day they are going to get over the hump, you just hope it’s not the night they play you.”

Still at stake in 2023 for the Hornets are milestones such as a five-year winning streak against the 7A Central; a fifth straight No. 1 seed in the playoffs; and a sixth straight championship.

## 2023 Bryant Athletic Hall of Honor inductees named

Special to The Saline Courier

The Bryant Athletic Hall of Honor will host a reception at 5 p.m. Saturday, December 16 in the Bryant Fine Arts

Center to honor the Class of 2023 Inductees

This will be the eighth class to be inducted.

Induction ceremonies will follow the reception, and a recognition

of the honorees will be held at the Saline County Shootout between the Benton vs. Bryant girls and boys basketball game in the Bryant High School Arena.

The 2023 inductees being honored for outstanding athletic performance and achievements include:

- Caroline Crawford (soccer)

- Evan Lee (baseball)
- Melinda Murdock (cross country, track)
- Daryl Patton (multi-sport)
- 1991-92 State Championship cross

- country teams
- 2010-13 State Championship softball teams
- 2013-15 State Championship cheer teams

## BRYANT HOMECOMING QUEEN



Mia Jordan (ABOVE, LEFT) shows her surprise at being named Homecoming Queen on Oct. 13 in Bryant. Jordan was crowned 2023 Homecoming Queen during Bryant’s Homecoming festivities. The Hornets went on to defeat Little Rock Southwest 59-33. Other members of the Homecoming court included Senior Maids Kennedy Davis, Blair Jane Gray, Zoe Wilson, Ainsley Warford; Junior Maids Nakayla Harris, Mary King, Ari Flores, Laylah Bonner Bay; and Sophomore Maids Trinity Middleton, Kendel Reid, Trinity Beasley and Eriel Carter.

## Treat announces candidacy for Bryant mayor's office

Special to The Saline Courier

Longtime Bryant resident and current parks director Chris Treat recently announced his candidacy for mayor of Bryant.

Treat's connection to Bryant goes back to 1978 when his father, Coach Joe Treat, and mother, Cathy Treat, were hired by the Bryant School District. Growing up in Bryant, Treat, along with his siblings Tim and Jeannie, spent their summers swimming at Mills Pool and playing ball at Ashley Park, instilling in him a profound appreciation for Bryant's parks and recreation, according to a press release issued by the candidate.

Treat played basketball for the University

of Central Arkansas. His wife, Jana, also attended UCA graduating with a degree in Occupational Therapy. The Treat family, now with four grown children, all of whom are Bryant High School graduates, has a strong commitment to the city's educational and community values, the release stated.

Under Treat's leadership, the Parks Department has flourished, with increased team morale and growing community appreciation, particularly after the release of the parks master plan in August.

As he embarks on his mayoral campaign, Treat said his core goal is to



Treat

foster a culture of open dialogue and collaboration within the community. He believes that Bryant faces significant challenges that can only be effectively addressed through unity and cooperation.

"Our community is facing some big challenges," said Treat. "The only way we are going to find solutions to those challenges is to work together. To build bridges, not walls. We need to have more residents of Bryant engaged in the conversation.

"It's our city, and it's all of our responsibility to bring about the change we need. I'll approach being mayor the same way I approach life — with a 'we over me' and 'team' mindset, imprinted on me from a young age by my father."

## Brown to seek mayor's office in special election

Special to The Saline Courier

Jason Brown, Bryant City Councilman and former president and CEO of the Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce, recently announced his candidacy for mayor of the city of Bryant.

"We are saying goodbye to a chapter and welcoming a new one, our city can not afford a continuation of once was. I have served in multiple different capacities: working with and for our youth, community, and the businesses. Our city is geared toward growth and my experience at the Greater Bryant Chamber of Commerce, will help us develop and plan for constructive growth," said Brown in a press release.



Brown

Brown was elected without opposition to the Bryant City Council in 2022. His focus while serving on the City Council has been to find ways to increase pay for police and fire departments, as well as create new opportunities for business to come to Bryant.

"During my time on the Bryant City Council, we have increased pay for our first responders and we have positioned our city to grow leaps and bounds. We must have someone that knows how to lead without always adding a tax burden on our citizens," Brown said.

In addition to public service, giving back to

the community through charitable work is an area in which Brown and his family has been heavily involved. Brown has served on the Bryant Boys and Girls Clubs board as well as the Bryant Senior Center board.

"After much prayer, thought, and guidance from leaders across our city, my wife Sheri and son Gabriel, I have made the decision to serve our residents in a different way and announce my candidacy for Bryant mayor. I humbly ask for your consideration to cast your vote for Jason Brown and I look forward to serving the citizens of our wonderful city," Brown said.

Bryant's mayoral election is set to take place on March 5.

## Report

From page 1

The average teacher salary in Bryant Public Schools stands at \$57,851, surpassing the state average of \$53,416. The district also maintains a lower expenditure per student, with \$9,665 compared to the state average of \$12,203.

The report also highlighted several of the district's students and staff's achievements over the past year. In the academic arena, Springhill Elementary received the esteemed title of 2022 National Blue Ribbon School. Seniors Deeya Rohant and Garrett Fuhrman were celebrated as 2023 National Merit finalists. The district also showcased

its philanthropic spirit, contributing \$2,126.91 to the Arkansas Children's Hospital through its GoGold campaign

In sports and extracurriculars, Bryant students earned several state championships and national recognitions. Senior Presley Givens won her second straight 6A state wrestling championship, while Devyn Steingisser earned his second 6A state championship in discus.

The Bryant High School football team won its fifth straight 7A state championship, a record-breaking number. Bryant Junior High Media received recognition with 69 awards at the Arkansas Scholastic Press Association.

BJHS Kaylee Anderson was named

a finalist for the JEA's Aspiring Young Journalist Award.

BHS Journalism and Broadcast teams brought home more than 32 awards and top honors at ASAP (Arkansas Scholastic Press Association), demonstrating their excellence in the field of journalism and media.

At the state level, the BHS Honeybees and Bella Voice choirs earned the title of Best in Class 7A, while Camerata joined the choirs in receiving the Sweepstakes Awards for Distinguished Academic Achievement.

HCES 5th grader Liam Elkins ranked 12th out of 282 elementary boys in the National Archery tournament. The team consisting of

Eliza Parker, Lilly James, Taegan Herrien, and Lauren Lain won the 4x800 relay at the Meet of Champs.

Six Hornet Media students participated in the SkillsUSA National Leadership competition, with Asher Bird and Sam Morgan achieving second place nationally in audio and radio production.

In addition to student achievements, several staff achievements were recognized. Amber Leaton, the 2021-22 Bryant Teacher of the Year, was recognized as one of the top four finalists for the 2023 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. Tanner Oglesby, BHS Director of Choirs, received the prestigious Arkansas Choral Directors Association

Region 3 Choral Director of the Year award.

Three Bryant team members, Tara Efrid, Alyssa Wildschuetz, and Jenny Watkins, were named ArSCA Southwest Regional Counselors of the Year in their respective categories, exemplifying their dedication to counseling excellence.

The Hornet Football coaching team was honored as the 2022 7A Arkansas Football Coaches Association Outstanding Football Staff of the Year.

Bryant's Gifted and Talented team received the Act 56 Honorable Mention Award for Outstanding Gifted Programs 2022-23. The ALE program at Bryant was commended for achieving Top Composite Scores in ELA, Math,

and Science.

Steve Oury, Head Boys Track/Cross Country Coach, earned a place in the 2023 Track & Field Hall of Fame.

BHS instructor Brenda Qualls was named one of the top five finalists for the Arkansas Computer Science Educator of the Year.

BHS Broadcast adviser Michael Westbrook received the prestigious distinction of ASPA Adviser of the Year.

Jacqueline Vergason, HCES principal, was recognized as the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media Administrator of the Year. Parkway Elementary School was honored as a RISE School Award Recipient for 2023.

## Tech

From page 1

a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests," according to the website, chatgpt.com.

The sudden release led to an abundance of site attraction and conversations surrounding what the future had in store for AI, the classroom being one of the few places that complained.

Students were realizing that they could now type any prompt or load of questions into the web-

site's chat feature, and it would do their homework for them almost instantly.

It quickly shifted from a web browser to an app available on every student's phone, and the once-familiar landscape of high school education began undergoing a major transformation.

"There's no actual learning being done and it will make students less likely to go out and do their own research because it's just easier to copy and paste," Koen Gildner said, senior at Bryant High School.

The line between a learning tool and a crutch is what AI forces students to tread carefully. Many students are questioning the impact that ChatGPT

is going to have on their futures, and how the effects of convenient technology will impact their ability to learn.

"I think AI can be a friend and a foe. I think we just need to learn to use it responsibly for its benefits, rather than letting it hinder our education. I just don't know what that's going to look like 10 years down the road," Daniel Cruz said, a student from BHS, who admittedly uses artificial learning to improve his work in school.

Although there are many concerns about the unknown impact of artificial intelligence, the platform does offer many benefits as it helps to improve one's under-

standing on specific subjects and it also aims to educate people in a more relatable way.

"It finds patterns so that it can cut out excess information, and with that it will make whatever they're using it for easier. It's a benefit, even in the school systems," said BHS student Kenzie McCullar.

Many teachers remain skeptical about whether tools like ChatGPT can benefit their students. However, some educators firmly believe in their ability to tell the difference between AI-generated content and authentic student work.

Hunter Smith, environmental teacher at Bryant High School, believes

that a robot's work can be easily set apart from a student's.

"I think it's bad for papers. Because what ChatGPT usually comes up with, it's very like elementary school basics compared to an average student's writing," Smith said.

The consequences for plagiarism in the classroom is in school suspension or "ISS" unless further action is required. Unless plagiarism is caught in an AP classroom, in which case the student will be removed from the course permanently. However, ChatGPT is not technically plagiarism because it generates original responses based on the

input it receives, making it difficult to trace.

This makes the line between ethical and unethical use of artificial intelligence blurred, but some people view the use of it as similar as the use of the internet.

"I think in general, it's a pretty decent tool for students that don't know how to make outlines. And it can help with that aspect. I see it being pretty similar to how the internet is for your generation, right? Because like my generation, we didn't have the internet," Smith said.

Gabi Dawson is a Bryant High School senior and intern at The Saline Courier.

**Bryant Automotive SERVICES**  
BRYANT ARKANSAS

Hrs: 7:30-5:00 M-F • 8:00-12:00 Sat  
Now Offering Transmission & Motor Rebuilds

**BRYANT AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES**  
205 Roya Lane • Bryant, AR 72022  
501-847-8838

THE SALINE COURIER  
"SALINE COUNTY'S NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1897"

Local • Local Local

Local news headlines delivered to your inbox daily – sign up here

SalineCourier.com/newsletters

**ONE-STOP-SHOP**

- Car Wash
- Interior Clean
- Oil Change

**3 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS IN SALINE COUNTY:**

1001 S. Highway 412, Saline, AR  
1001 S. Highway 412, Saline, AR  
1001 S. Highway 412, Saline, AR

cleancarfast.com

# Great Agents make a Great Company



**Baxley-Penfield-Moudy**  
REALTORS®

BENTON 315-5000  
BRYANT 847-5000  
BPMRealtors.com



## Your experience here matters!

- \*No automated phone systems will answer your calls during our normal business hours.*
- \*Professional Representative ready to answer your call.*



500 Hwy 5 N Bryant | 300 N Main Benton  
501.847.4141 | 501.443.6533  
**mfbanknet.com**

# Your Home For Caring



- Services Include:**
- SHORT TERM REHAB** - transitional care to help recover from a hospitalization and return home. Services include Physical, Speech and Occupational therapies
  - LONG TERM CARE** - homelike, comfortable living environment for those no longer able to live safely independently
  - MEMORY CARE** - specialized care provided in a calming, secure environment for those with memory related conditions

Our purpose is to provide the highest quality healthcare services and the greatest variety of healthcare options to the residents of central Arkansas and surrounding communities in Arkansas that we serve. We strive to create the highest quality of life possible for our patients. Our lifestyle provides a warm, comfortable, and rewarding experience, not only for the patients that choose us, but for their families, our associates, and everyone who helps make us a premier healthcare provider.



6907 Hwy. 5 N., Bryant  
Call **501.213.0547**  
or visit **evergreenhealthandrehab.com**  
for more info or to book a tour today!



*"Love, serve, care... everyday at Evergreen"*

*Growing*  
**DEEP ROOTS**  
*And even deeper*  
**RELATIONSHIPS**



First Security has a long history in Arkansas. It's where we started way back in 1932, and it's where we stayed - serving friends, neighbors, businesses and communities across the state. Today? Our friendly professionals are still committed to helping you and other Arkansans bank better, in the place we all call home.

 **First Security**  
**Bank Better.**

[fsbank.com](http://fsbank.com) | [onlyinark.com](http://onlyinark.com)