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A new vision for S&T development

By Andrew Sheeley
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The public was invited to take a preliminary look Friday at Missouri S&T's next proposed masterplan during an online forum hosted through Zoom. The presentation provided details on the upcoming realignment of University Drive. More broadly, it further shared a vision for potential developments in

several other areas, including a new research and development park north of Interstate 44, developing the old campus golf course into an athletic and recreation complex and adding new mixed-use developments along the North Pine Street corridor. "This is a plan that casts a vision, and we hope that vision is shared throughout the community," said Ted Ruth, Missouri S&T's Assistant Vice Chancellor of Facility Services. In introducing the forum, Ruth said

the master plan will help Missouri S&T achieve its strategic goals and also realize Chancellor Mo Deghani's call to increase enrollment by nearly 50 percent to 12,000 students. "The physical campus will play an important role in helping the university achieve this goal," Ruth said. "Improvements to the overall campus experience as well as new and improved physical spaces will be instrumental in addressing priority areas." Ruth added the master plan is still in

its preliminary phase and will go to the university's board of curators next year for formal approval. "It is a plan, it is not set in concrete," Ruth said. "There are things that are happening now that are included in the plan. There are things that will happen shortly that are included in the plan and there's things that will never happen that are included in the plan. One thing we know for sure, if we don't plan, we won't accomplish." See **Vision** Page 6A



Photos by Chloe Francis

Dave Declue, left, is one of three new members joining Cricket Alley. Declue was previously a member of Alderwood. Right, Rob Webster, Christina "Cricket" Webster and Braden Van Kirk during a recent band practice in preparation of Cricket Alley's return to the stage.

Cricket Alley

• One of the area's most popular bands returns from short retirement.

By Chloe Francis
Special to Phelps County Focus

If you enjoy live entertainment and showing support for local bands, get ready for the reunion of Cricket Alley. After almost a year of retirement, the popular variety cover band announced their reunion last month. The members realized they weren't ready to be done entertaining, so Cricket Alley is coming back with some new songs to perform and new bandmates to welcome onto the Tater Patch stage 8:30 p.m. Friday. Both new and familiar faces will make up the reunited Cricket Alley. The following members are returning to the band: Christina "Cricket" Webster, vocals; Rob Webster, guitar and vocals; Braden Van Kirk, guitar, keyboards, and vocals; Doc Walker, lights; Andy Bowling, sound. The following members are new to Cricket Alley: Jeff Goodbar, drums; Mark Hillse, bass; Dave Declue, guitar and vocals. Last year, Cricket Alley decided to retire after 18 years of entertaining together because a couple members were ready

to move on to new ventures. The rest of the band decided to step down from the stage. "I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue without those members," Cricket says. During their retirement, however, the bandmates quickly realized this wasn't what they wanted. "I got bored. Retirement is overrated," Cricket says. Doc Walker agreed saying, "It takes all the fun out of life." It was only a matter of time before they would get back to performing. Coincidentally, another local band was in a similar predicament. The group Alderwood recently had band members leave, but the others were not ready to stop playing. Mark Hillse brought up the idea to Rob Webster of joining the two bands together. At first, neither of them took the idea too seriously. After Mark mentioned it again to both Rob and Cricket, though, they began to consider the possibility of entertaining again. "I realized if we wanted to do it, this was the time," Rob says. The situation was more than ideal with musicians from two bands onboard. Most of the members have been good friends for many years, so the decision was not a difficult one to make. See **Cricket Alley** Page 12A

"I got bored. Retirement is overrated."
- Cricket Webster

Licking man accused of contractor scam across the Ozarks

By Andrew Sheeley
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All Paul Eaton wanted was a shop building on his Wayne County property so he could better store his vehicles. If he were still a younger man, Eaton says he would have taken on the work himself, but now in his 70s, disabled and still carrying combat wounds from Vietnam, he decided to find a contractor. Eaton hired a Licking man named Carlton Curtis, 46, for the job. On April 30, Eaton gave Curtis a \$6,000 deposit to ensure work could begin the following week. Now it's four months later, and no work has started. In fact, Eaton says he hasn't so much as even gotten a phone call from Curtis. What started this spring as a home improvement project now has Eaton involved in a Wayne County prosecution. Moreover, that case is one of six felonies filed against Curtis this year alone across Missouri. The parties concerned all have one common grievance: They say Curtis never followed through on his promises and never paid them back a refund. They have been speaking out to The Salem News – owned by Salem Publishing Company, also publisher of the Phelps County Focus – and The Licking News to raise awareness and warn other potential victims of similar scams. See **Scam** Page 4A



Photo courtesy Dent Co. Sheriff's Dept. Carlton Curtis

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