

The Mountain Press

Sevierville Pigeon Forge Gatlinburg Sevier County



SPORTS

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Shoplifting incident leads to high speed chase, multiple injuries

BY THAD MITCHELL

Staff Writer

SEVIORVILLE — A Cocke County man is facing numerous criminal charges after a Thursday afternoon high-speed chase with Sevierville Police resulted in multiple injuries.

The series of events started at Walmart Supercenter on Parkway when SPD officers responded to a reported shoplifting. On arrival, officers saw the suspect, 30-year-old Joseph Lewis Jr., of Bybee, get into a

“Based on his reckless and dangerous actions, officers pursued Lewis onto the Parkway northbound, where he struck another private vehicle near Park Road.”

Bob Stahlke

Sevierville

vehicle. Once Lewis noticed the presence of law enforcement, he proceeded to drive backwards, nearly striking pedestrians, including a child.

While driving in reverse, Lewis struck several vehicles before

coming to a brief stop, whereupon an adult female passenger exited the vehicle. Lewis then accelerated forward and struck a patrol vehicle and sped away.

“Based on his reckless and dangerous actions, officers pur-

sued Lewis onto the Parkway northbound, where he struck another private vehicle near Park Road,” Sevierville spokesman Bob Stahlke said. “He continued to drive recklessly and at high speeds.”

Officers attempted to stop the vehicle on Park Road, resulting in a crash with a patrol vehicle. Stahlke says the officer involved in the crash subsequently went to LeConte Medical Center for

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News

All Accounted for
Census workers sought,
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Adoptable pets

Bring home a friend,
Page A3

Weather art



Anthony Martenez
Sevierville Primary School

Featured events

Seymour chess club
SCPLS Seymour Branch
Library,
3-5 Monday, Dec. 30

Bingo for books
King Family Library, 4:30
to 5:30 p.m.,
Monday, Dec. 30

CALENDAR, PAGE A5

Obituaries

Brenda Whaley
Rev. Robert Crawford
Brewer Jr.
Elizabeth Hurst
Charlotte Atchley Cogdill
Virginia Davenport
Dan Conner
William (Bill) Jack Hill Jr.
Kenneth Schwartz Sr.
Dorothy Inez Smith
Bonnie May Barnes
Phyllis J. Franklin
Patty J. Wheeler

OBITUARIES, PAGE A4-5

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Juli Watson Neil/The Mountain Press

Apartments at Douglas Greene in Kodak are pictured on Dec. 20, which was move-in day for the new development's first 16 residents. The 80-unit complex offers two- and three-bedroom apartments classified by the Tennessee Housing Development Agency as affordable or workforce housing. Seven such complexes in Sevier County received funding from THDA, and Douglas Greene is the first to open.

Housing Development provides update on affordable housing

BY JULI WATSON NEIL

Staff Writer

SEVIORVILLE — Of the seven Sevier County affordable housing projects that recently received funding from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, one has opened and all now have a deadline of Dec. 31, 2021 for being available to renters.

Douglas Greene, which is located in Sevierville near Smokies Stadium, welcomed its first 16 tenants on Dec. 20. At that time, another 27 applicants had been approved for the two- and three-bedroom units. A total of 80 apartments will be available once final construction details have been completed.

Along with Watson Glades Place in Gatlinburg, Douglas Greene was the first to receive



Simons

had leasing deadlines of December 2020.

According to THDA spokesperson Wes Bunch, all seven Sevier County projects now have until Dec. 31, 2021 to begin leasing.

He shared the timeline and completion rates self-reported by the seven developers on Dec. 19 after a request from The Mountain Press on updates for the seven projects.

Representatives of Woda Cooper Companies, the firm

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits from THDA. Both were supposed to begin leasing by the end of this year.

The other five developments behind Douglas Greene, self-reported a 75% completion rate.

Watson Glades Place was listed in the report as having no data. David Hayes is the developer of the 80-unit project off Glades Road in the Great Smoky Arts and Crafts Community. It is the only complex of the seven that's slated for Gatlinburg; all of the others are planned for Sevierville and Kodak.

Forest Cove's developer, David Psimer, self-reported a completion rate of 35% for the 96-unit complex. Riverside Village's Jake Ramsey estimated a completion rate of 20% on that development's 32 units.

The other three projects –

Please see **HOUSING** | A3

'She warned me'

Sevier native shares story of housing search

BY JULI WATSON NEIL

Staff Writer

SEVIORVILLE — Pam Evans loves her Sevier County birthplace, yet she will tell some people to stay away if they ask.

“Don't come here looking for a place to rent,” Evans said in an interview earlier this week. “I would advise don't come here unless you have unlimited funds or someone you can stay with.”

The 64-year-old Sevierville native and Sevier County High School graduate has lived other places, but she returned in November 2018 to help her mother with health issues. It was that 83-year-old who cautioned Evans that things had changed in the rental housing market.

“She warned me before I came back,” Evans said. “I said, ‘Oh, I'll find something.’ She was right.”

Evans has been living with her mother for a little more than a year, and she says she's been on the Sevierville Housing Authority's waiting list since January.

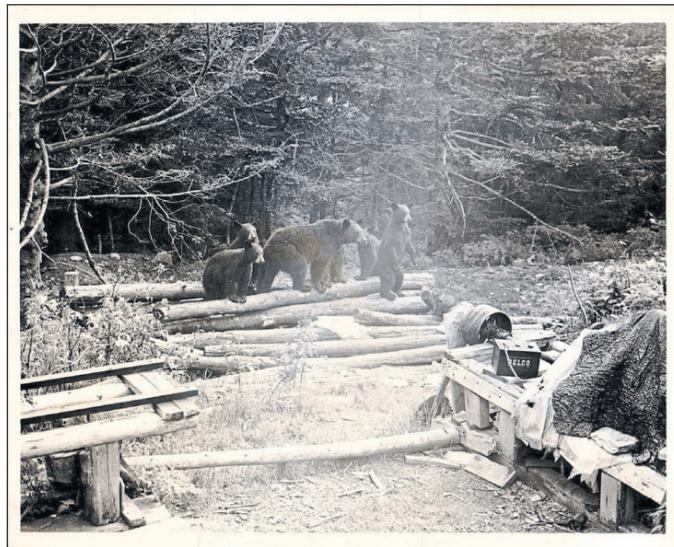
She agreed to speak with The Mountain Press about her experience and what she calls a complex issue driven by two key components.

“Public transportation is nonexistent here,” said Evans. “Public transportation and housing is something Sevier County will have to grapple with.”

She relies on the shuttle service provided by the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency, which requires advance notice of three busi-

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Bear with it



File Photo

A family of black bears explore an area around the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in this file photo. Today, Saturday, Dec. 28, is the 46th anniversary of former President Richard Nixon signing the Endangered Species Act, which did not include black bears to some people's dismay.

Glow Sky fading away?



Thad Mitchell/The Mountain Press

The signs are now missing from Glow Sky Lounge & Bar, 2004 Red Bank Road, Sevierville. Witnesses saw people removing the signage off the building that houses Glow Sky on Friday. The bar, which closed briefly after being issued a nuisance order in late October, had reopened in early December. There was no comment from representatives with Glow Sky by press time, but Sevierville officials said they were not aware of any recent problems at the bar.