

Mule



POPLAR BLUFF
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PRINTS



Early Childhood Center
Kindergarten Center
Eugene Field Elementary
Lake Road Elementary
Oak Grove Elementary
O'Neal Elementary
Middle School
Junior High School
Senior High School
Technical Career Center

A publication of the Poplar Bluff R-1
School District in partnership with
the Daily American Republic

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE THROUGH LEARNING ... EVERY CHILD, EVERY HOUR, EVERY DAY.

MEET YOUR SUPERINTENDENT

It is my genuine pleasure to welcome each of you to the 2016/17 school year. This academic year will be unique in the history of the Poplar Bluff R-I School District as we realize the conclusion of all the projects associated with the 2014 levy measure. Our students will be the beneficiaries of these projects for generations to come, but we have the singular honor of participating in the inaugural year of these amazing facilities.

It has been a busy, and productive, summer on campus. The custodial, maintenance and technology crews have been hard at work to ensure we will be ready for your return. Time and energy has been invested in every facility, throughout the district, in an effort to provide the best possible learning environment for our students.

The mission of the Poplar Bluff R-I School District is a simple one: Achieving excellence through learning... Every child - Every hour - Every day. Our students need what we have to offer them, every hour - every day. They are counting on us to be the light and hope in their lives, every hour - every day. We have it within our power to change their lives every hour - every single day.

As Superintendent of Schools for the Poplar Bluff R-I School District, I consider safeguarding the future of every child - every hour - every day to be my primary responsibility.

I entered in this, my chosen profession, in the summer of 1997 as a Library Media Specialist in the community of Macks Creek, Mo. I spent 10 wonderful years in

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Superintendent Scott Dill

that school, building relationships and helping students find success in both their academic careers and in their lives. In the summer of 2007, I relocated to Houston, Mo., to assume the responsibilities of Middle School Principal. I held that position for five, rewarding, years. In the summer of 2012, I changed offices and assumed the position of Superintendent of Schools in Houston. Now, I have been afforded this opportunity to live and work in Poplar Bluff, and I find I can barely contain my excitement and my enthusiasm for the days, and the work, ahead.

As I begin my tenure in Poplar Bluff, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the vision and the work of our previous Superintendent, Mr. Chris Hon. I am stepping into a job, and a school system, blossoming with potential for tremendous learning opportunities. It is upon this solid foundation that we will build the future of our school,

and our community. As we complete our current projects we'll be looking with a keen eye, and fresh perspective, to the needs of our students, which are still significant and numerous. The days ahead should be seen as the beginning of a new chapter in the storied history of both our school and our community. Our work is far from complete. It is, in fact, just beginning.

Our common goal is to meet the needs of our students, doing whatever it takes to help them find the success they each so richly deserve. We enter into this school year endowed with a clear sense of purpose, hearts laden with humility for the good work to be accomplished in the days to come. Working together we will continue onwards and upwards. Working together we will craft a bright future for all of our students. It is a great day to be a Poplar Bluff Mule!

~Scott P. Dill

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FRONT COVER:

Cover Caption: (Back row, left to right) Quinlan Grable of the Middle School, Emma Johnson of Junior High, Humza Siddiqui of Senior High, Superintendent Scott Dill, Tyler Reynolds of Senior High, Bryan Nguyen of Senior High and Sydney Sanders of Junior High; (front row, from left) Glori Mei Owings of Early Childhood Center, Miley Baker of Kindergarten Center, Ma'Kayla Osos-Arviso of Lake Road, Myles Johnson of Eugene Field and Samantha Painter of Oak Grove.

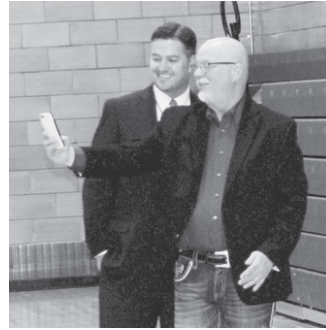
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Content: **Tim Krakowiak**, Communications/Marketing Director for Poplar Bluff Schools



From top left, Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce President Steve Halter (left) gives Superintendent Scott Dill a welcoming gift; The pastoral community hosts a prayer session at Northpoint Nazarene Church for Superintendent Scott Dill on his very first hour of the job; Superintendent Scott Dill takes a selfie with predecessor Chris Hon (right) during Tech Camp at Junior High; KFVS12 Reporter Jasmine Dell interviews Superintendent Scott Dill about the district's state-of-the-art facilities; Missouri Sen. Doug Libla (right) provides Superintendent Scott Dill a community history lesson; The team at River Radio get to know Superintendent Scott Dill (left); Three Rivers College President Dr. Wes Payne (right) and Superintendent Scott Dill talk about the partnership between the educational institutions; Superintendent Scott Dill and team hold a luncheon to honor the district's law enforcement partners.



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POPLAR BLUFF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Poplar Bluff Early Childhood Center has made great strides over the past year in further bridging the community's kindergarten readiness gap by adding a full-day preschool program.

Last summer, ECH was awarded start-up funding through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education—a five-year renewable grant—to serve up to 60 additional students, ages 3-5.

The paid all-day preschool program runs from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. year-round, enrolling students on a first come, first serve basis. The curriculum—taught by certified staff—is aligned with state standards and expectations that transfer seamlessly to the Kindergarten Center.

“It’s amazing at this age—they can do so much more than you think they can—when you just push and give those experiences,” said JoAnne Westbrook, ECH director. “Environment is a big thing, and them just learning to be social and get along with the group. It’s essential.”

The cost of preschool has been reduced recently to \$100 per week, which is highly competitive with other day cares in the area, with discounts available on a sliding scale based on income levels used under the National School Lunch Program.

The ECH additionally offers two half-day sessions with a multi-criterion enrollment process determined by the federal Title 1 and Early Childhood Special Education programs.

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Early Childhood Center Director JoAnne Westbrook visits with her preschool students over the summer.



Early Childhood Director JoAnne Westbrook (right) names her building Teacher of the Year, Mandi Webster.

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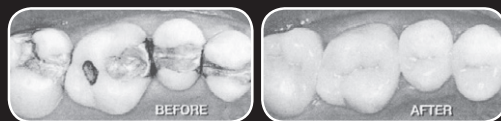


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POPLAR BLUFF KINDERGARTEN CENTER

The Poplar Bluff Kindergarten Center was among three schools in Southeast Missouri to be recognized by the state last year for exhibiting best practices under the Collaborative Works initiative.

The grant-funded program through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is designed to teach at risk students how to track their own academic and behavioral progress in the classroom.

“The key is when a student—not just the teacher—looks at a goal and asks, ‘How do I get to this stage?’” said Carol Brotman, kindergarten principal. “Talk about the different conversations going on with a student when that realization occurs! It’s amazing to see the growth.”

Teachers generally choose kindergar-

ten because they have a passion for early childhood education, agreed Brotman, who described it as hands on all day long, a pace that requires lots of energy. “It definitely takes a special person to teach kindergarten,” Brotman admitted.

But seeing a child go from not being able to spell their name to writing a short paragraph is most rewarding, Brotman commented. She believes in the saying, ‘Everything I learned, I learned in kindergarten.’

“It is true,” Brotman said. “This is their first experience dealing with a friend, losing a tooth, leaving mom, eating lunch in a cafeteria, opening milk, getting in line.

“The transformation in kindergarten—I don’t know if anything else compares.”

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Kindergarten Principal Carol Brotman enjoys lunch in the cafeteria with her students.

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EUGENE FIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Eugene Field Elementary students are all part of leadership teams that have specific missions to contribute to the school community. Individually, the students set and track their own academic, attendance and behavior goals.

“Our ultimate goal is for the students to take what they’re learning in leadership and apply it outside of the school setting,” explained Jennifer Taylor, Eugene Field principal. “We’re hoping that parents see it, recognize it and encourage it from their children, reinforcing those habits at home. That’s what we call a win-win.”

Eugene Field is on track this school year to achieve lighthouse status under The Leader in Me program, an initiative based on Dr. Stephen Covey’s best-selling book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” which provides

students the tools to become life-long leaders. Only a dozen schools in Missouri carry the prestigious distinction.

The elementary school piloted the program during the 2011/12 academic year, and ultimately received professional consultation through a grant awarded by Franklin Covey’s I Am a Leader Foundation valued at about \$75,000, due to the staff’s buy-in.

In December, a certification team will visit Eugene Field to observe the building-wide culture in action and determine if the elementary school will receive the golden seal of approval. During the third annual Leadership Day at the end of the 2015/16 school year, Leader in Me Senior Consultant Dr. Paul Pitchford expressed his confidence in the incredible progress that has been achieved.

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Eugene Field Principal Jennifer Taylor poses beside hallway art listing the seven habits that are taught to elementary students.



Parent Lori Amoss (left) surprises Eugene Field Principal Jennifer Taylor with the ‘leader of the year’ honor during Leadership Day.



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LAKE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

When Erica Weadon took the reins as principal at Lake Road Elementary during the 2010/11 school year, attendance hovered at 80.9 percent, according to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Average daily attendance is now tracking at just under 90 percent, and Weadon attributes the steady increase primarily to the 'Good Habits Store' instated four years ago through the Rotary Club of Poplar Bluff.

Showing up, maintaining good behavior and making the honor roll earns students points at the makeshift store to purchase toys, snacks and other more practical items supplied by the civic organization.

For the behavioral component, Lake

Road subscribes to DESE's Positive Behavior Interventions and Support system through which the school has achieved the silver award, succeeding in implementing conflict resolution techniques, and will work toward the final tier of gold this year.

"Teachers go above and beyond, and really look at the individual needs of kids," Weadon said. "If we have to

switch up midyear, we will do whatever it takes to get students where they need to be."

Twice a month, students get to participate in Play Day during which community leaders and high school students teach skills such as gymnastics, cooking, babysitting, gaming and even CPR.

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Lake Road Principal Erica Weadon (standing, right) celebrates improved attendance with her student "rockstars" and Good Habits Store volunteers.

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OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As the benefactor of strong community partnerships, Oak Grove Elementary recently came up with a way to give back to Poplar Bluff.

The school's Bright Futures site council launched the Little Red Bookshelf project last year collecting over 7,500 children's books.

The books are located at special designated bookshelves in several partnering businesses throughout the city, and are made available for reading in waiting rooms or to take home, depending on what the associated label states.

Almost half of the books were generated at the 11th annual Jingle Jog in 2015 during which students set goals to run or walk around campus, and had the choice of bringing in a donated item for each lap completed.

"We want to make every student feel safe and welcome by providing a positive learning environment that allows for maximum success," said Jenifer Richardson, Oak Grove principal. "We want

to focus on trying to get parents involved volunteering, and just continue to stay in touch with the community, building relationships."

Poplar Bluff Realty, which has sponsored the elementary school for four years, can be found greeting students in the mornings, and making guest appearances during events and classroom activities.

What was once known as the school in the woods back when Richardson was a student, the principal recalled, Oak Grove has had much infrastructure and

commercial development take shape around campus in recent years including a state-of-the-art hospital, high school and big box businesses with more slated to break ground in the growing part of the community.

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Right, Oak Grove Principal Jenifer Richardson prepares to welcome students back on the first day of school.

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O'NEAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Amy Dill, who has an administrative background in elementary education as well as special services, will be able to combine both of her passions as O'Neal Elementary principal this year.

Dill, the wife of new superintendent Scott, was hired to succeed Angie Rideout, who has transferred to the Middle School to join the expanded administrative team there.

Dill most recently served as the director of special education at the Exceptional Child Education Cooperative, which oversees 13 school districts in Missouri.

"It was a big job and it was great, but I missed the kids," Dill exclaimed. "I'm a kid person—I just am. I'll always be a teacher at heart."

She has previously served as a class-

room teacher, counselor, special services coordinator and principal at schools across the region, for the past decade in Houston, Mo.

Having earned her specialist and master's degree in educational administration from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Dill is scheduled to defend her dissertation to receive a Doctorate of Education in the near future.

Coming from a smaller school system, she says she is a fan of the support programs available to families directly on the elementary school campus such as latch-key and the Boys and Girls Club.

O'Neal also houses the district's special education programs for elementary students including SWIN, TRUST and FUN classrooms.

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Incoming second grader Ja-Briya Webb reviews her data notebook with O'Neal Principal Amy Dill during Leadership Day at Eugene Field Elementary.

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POPLAR BLUFF MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Poplar Bluff Middle School will have some features that are unique this year, not just to the district, but on a statewide scale.

With the addition of fourth grade into the configuration, freeing up space at the four lower elementaries, the Middle School is the largest upper elementary in Missouri with about 1,200 students, according to data compiled by Principal Dr. Brad Owings.

“My goal is to make Poplar Bluff Middle School a model that other schools seek out and visit,” Owings stated. “When another district calls me saying they want to learn about such and such, that’s when we know we’re doing something right.”

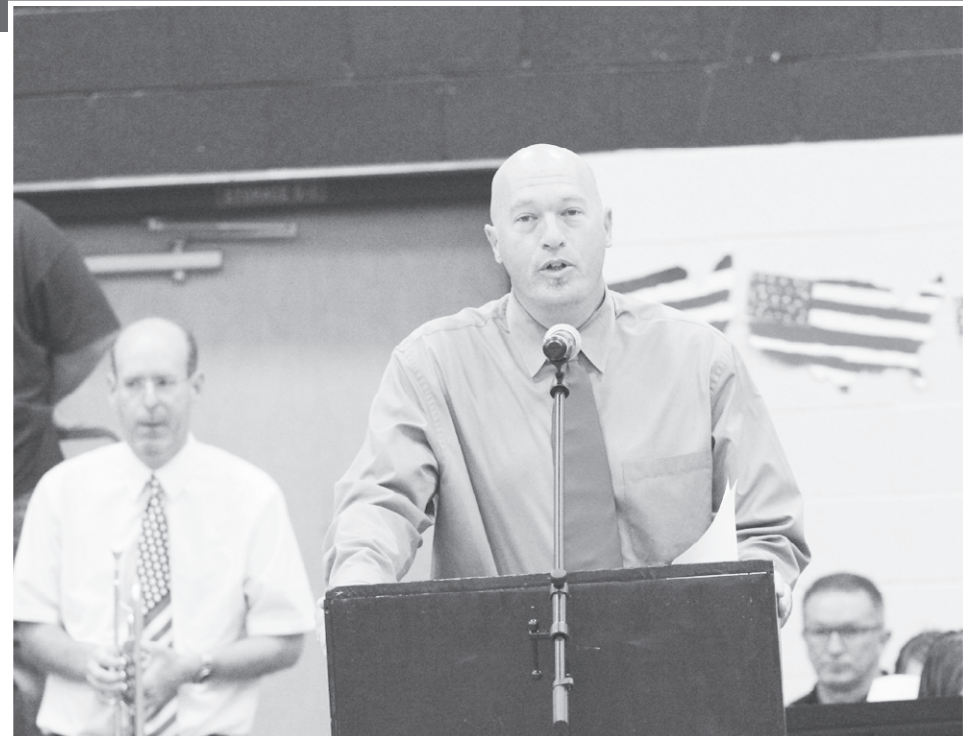
With the 40,000 square-foot addition to the facility, STEM classes (science, tech-

nology, engineering and math) have been added to the curriculum—featuring robotics, computer coding, 3-D printing and virtual reality activities. The new front door to the building will be a state-of-the-art media center. In place of what was formerly known as C-Building—the science wing—will sit a one-of-a-kind enclosed playground for purposes of enhanced safety and security.

The Middle School will go 2:1 under the district’s digital transformation, meaning a Google Chromebook laptop will be issued to every two students. The combination of technology and makerspaces will help drive the educational institution well into the 21st century, according to Owings, who noted that no innovations will ever replace a top-notch teaching staff.

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Principal Dr. Brad Owings thanks servicemen and women during the annual Veterans Day Assembly held at the Middle School.

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Middle School Principal Dr. Brad Owings listens to the Tech Camp keynote speaker give tips about using Google for education.

POPLAR BLUFF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Poplar Bluff Junior High was a pilot school for Capturing Kids' Hearts, now a district-wide directive, and the principles are reflective in everything the staff does, from shaking hands in the morning to including a positive launch during announcements at the end of the day.

Developed by The Flippen Group, Capturing Kids' Hearts is a professional development initiative that was first instated at Junior High during the 2013/14 school year, leading to the formation of a social contract between the teacher and the students about how they treat one another.

"One of the goals we have as 'process champions' is to become a spotlight school for Capturing Kids' Hearts this year," said Bob Case, Junior High principal. "It's not just about other schools coming to see us,

it's about how we impact kids more importantly. People generally caring about each other."

The Junior High has received a greater than 20,000 square-foot addition earlier this year, which includes a tornado safe room and a three-story classroom structure resulting from a federal grant and matching funds generated out of the tax levy measure voters approved in 2014. The school also received three new sets of restroom facilities and ADA accessibility throughout.

"I'm extremely excited about the safety structure these changes will bring this coming year and into the future," said Case, who is entering his 32nd year as an educator. "I get chills thinking about the educational opportunities the entire Poplar Bluff School District will be able to provide for the kids!"

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Former KFSV12 Reporter Kadee Brosseau interviews Junior High Principal Bob Case at the Black River Coliseum about a regional underwater robotics competition his gifted class won.

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POPLAR BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Poplar Bluff High School is either on track or on the 2020 target in End-Of-Course assessments, showing improvements in all subjects but one from 2015 to 2016, according to preliminary data presented to the Board of Education in recent months.

“To achieve that this year with everything going on – the undertone of construction – that is a testament to the professionalism of our staff and the resolve of our students. The resilience of Poplar Bluff,” said Mike Kiehne, Senior High principal.

Over 130,000 square feet of space has been added to the former 5th & 6th Grade Center to establish the new high school, consolidating all recreational activities on the 80-acre campus off Oak Grove Road on shared space with the Technical Career

Center. Kiehne says that will only maximize his teams’ abilities.

“The new facility, in my mind, is giving us the opportunity for our already high-performing staff to have the resources to match their drive,” Kiehne said.

The science department, which worked directly with architects to design their wing of the new portion of the building, will go from having a single laboratory to each of eight classrooms doubling as labs with shared storage space for each pair of instructors to use.

One of the keys to Senior High’s success over the past few years, according to Kiehne, has been implementing advisory during which students spend a class period with the same teacher daily to do homework and track attendance, discipline and grades.

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PBHS Principal Mike Kiehne shows his support for students during the Special Olympics Missouri games for the Southeast Area hosted annually at Junior High.

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PBHS Principal Mike Kiehne congratulates the largest number of students in recent memory to be inducted into the National Honor Society during the spring ceremony.

POPLAR BLUFF TECHNICAL CAREER CENTER

The 2016 graduation rate of students taking career technical education classes was 97.75 percent – 17 to 18 percent more likely to receive their diploma than a high schooler not enrolled at the Poplar Bluff Technical Career Center, according to Director Charles Kinsey.

“These people are skilled to find employment if they choose,” Kinsey noted. “A student may go on to become a doctor or a brain surgeon. That doesn’t mean he or she is not going to need to wire electrical in his or her house or put up sheet rock. Come and learn to be a carpenter. That’s an excellent skill that can put you through medical school.”

The TCC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this academic year, historical records state. And for the first time, the center

will share a site with the high school, giving local Poplar Bluff students a chance to take courses in the afternoon, if there are any vacancies, Kinsey speculated.

The TCC has also received \$160,000 worth of new equipment for this year, \$117,000 of which came from the annual Vocational Enhancement Grant program under the federal Perkins Act. Among other items, such as a CAD program for carpentry students to design houses, a 30-by-60-foot greenhouse will be constructed on campus.

Kinsey was an agriculture education instructor for several years before taking the helm of director. He is a product of career tech education. “This particular position for me is my dream job,” he said. “It’s what I’m here to do.”

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TCC Director Charles Kinsey greets returning students on the first day of school.

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POPLAR BLUFF R-I BOARD OF EDUCATION

The school board is composed of seven lay citizens elected for three-year terms. They are responsible for the fair and uniform application of all federal, state and local laws in the operation of the district schools. These schools operate for the educational benefit of all school-age children in the district. The board is a policy-making body that determines the direction for the school district. It exercises leadership primarily through the formulation and adoption of policies.

President John Scott is serving his first term. He is a lifelong resident of Poplar Bluff and graduated from PBHS in 1990. Scott furthered his education at the University of Missouri-Columbia where he earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree. He has maintained a law practice in Poplar Bluff since 1997 and is now a partner in Scott Law Group, LLC. Scott and his wife, Kendra, have two children: Jack and Kate. In his

spare time, Scott enjoys outdoor activities including distance running, floating various rivers in the area and coaching youth sports.

Vice President Ken Davis is serving his first term. He was born in Xenia, Ohio, and graduated from Westside High School in Memphis. Davis moved to Poplar Bluff in 1974 and attended Three Rivers College. He worked for Dow Automotive for 13 years and has been employed by Con-way Freight since 2002. A former member of the board for the Manufacturers Assistance Group, Davis has also coached and officiated for the Poplar Bluff Parks and Recreation Department. He is a member of the West Side Church of God. Since 1978, Davis can be seen working the chain gang at the Mules football games. He and his wife, Patricia, who is retired, have four children and eight grandchildren.

Member Cynthia Brown is serving her fifth term. Born in the Bronx, N.Y., Dr. Brown



(Back row from left) John Scott, Ken Davis, Steve Sells and Roger Hanner; (seated from left) Alana Robertson, Heather Tuggle and Dr. Cynthia Brown.

graduated from Fordham University, Columbia University School of Public Health and Mount Sinai School of Medicine, all in New York. Brown has completed residencies in obstetrics-gynecology and preventive medicine. She has resided in Poplar Bluff since 1991. Brown is a Fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine, a member of the Missouri State Medical Association and a member of the Wheatley Historic Preservation Association. Brown lives with her son, Rex, who graduated from PBHS in 2015.

Member Steve Sells is serving his third term. He was raised in St. Louis and Dexter, and has lived in Poplar Bluff for over 20 years. Sells is the owner/operator of McDonald's in Poplar Bluff, Doniphan and Van Buren. He is married to Krista, a district elementary teacher, and they have four children: Courtnee, Allison, Cory and Riley Jane. They are members of First Baptist Church. He enjoys spending time with his family and friends, as well as working outside and going to Current River in the summer.

Member Alana Robertson, a lifelong citizen of Poplar Bluff and 1973 graduate of PBHS, is serving her second term. She earned a bachelor's in education from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau and a Master of Education from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar. Robertson taught first grade at O'Neal Elementary for 31 years and retired in 2010. Robertson currently serves on the Poplar Bluff Public School Foundation Board of Directors and is a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, Women's Citizenship Club, But-

ler County Retired Teachers Association, Bright Futures Poplar Bluff Advisory Board and High School site council.

Member Heather Tuggle is an alumna and former athlete of Poplar Bluff Schools. She is a lifelong resident of Poplar Bluff. Tuggle continued her education, after graduating from PBHS, at Three Rivers College and graduated from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design and illustration. She is the manager of the Black River Coliseum Aquatic and Fitness Center and the aquatics supervisor for the Parks and Recreation Department. Tuggle married her high school sweetheart of 20 years. They have two daughters and a new little boy. She is very active in her daughters' schools, as a room mother and member of the PTO. She also coaches youth sports.

Member Roger Hanner is a lifetime resident of Poplar Bluff and graduated from PBHS in 1989. He and his wife, Julie, have four children, one son-in-law and a grandson. Two of Hanner's daughters, Shelby and Madison, are also graduates from PBHS. His son, Dawson, and his daughter, Savannah, still attend Poplar Bluff Schools. Hanner has been a member of the Palace of Praise Church for the past 16 years where he is active in the children's ministry. He has been coaching youth sports in the community for over 20 years. Hanner is the inventor of a safety product called the Stabilizer System. He has been working for Corporate America for the past decade and is currently employed as a commercial sales representative for a global company.

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From top left, Board Member Steve Sells (left) makes his entrance during the Junior High ribbon cutting; Board Vice President Ken Davis (right) volunteers to serve dinner during Chartwells Community Thanksgiving meal; Board Member Dr. Cynthia Brown gets sworn in for the fifth consecutive term, a record in recent memory; Board Member Alana Robertson (seated) visits with Dr. Amy Jackson during the high school groundbreaking ceremony; Board President John Scott speaks about the historic buildings plan during the Junior High FEMA building ribbon cutting ceremony; Board Member Heather Tuggle gets introduced during the graduation ceremony for the PBHS Class of 2016; Board Member Roger Hanner participates on a panel for a mock 'Shark Tank,' a cross-curricular Middle School activity for students.

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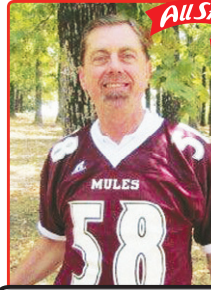


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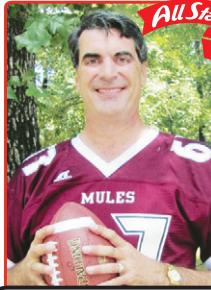
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