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Sheriff, mayor and commission condemn hate speech

By Mike Steely
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Knox County Sheriff Tom Spangler spoke last week before the Knox County Commission's Work Session and strongly condemned the remarks made by one of the department's officers against gay citizens. He took the podium as the first speaker and said the comments made by Detective Grayson Fritts "are not reflective of our people."

Spangler said that after he watched the video of a sermon

delivered by Fritts, who is also a preacher, he removed the deputy from answering calls because of the "hateful rhetoric."

"I certainly do not condone anyone calling for the execution of a person or group of people for any reason," Spangler said. "I want to reassure our citizens they have nothing to fear from our officers or the Knox County Sheriff's Office."

Following his remarks the sheriff was given a standing

ovation by the commission members and the audience.

Later in the meeting a resolution condemning such remarks, including Fritts' sermon calling for the arrest, trial and execution of gays by the government, was passed along to the commission's meeting today.

Mayor Glenn Jacobs read the end of the resolution before the commission and also condemned the words of the sermon.



Sheriff Tom Spangler denounced hate speech at the Knox County Commission's Work Session last week, saying the remarks of a department detective, who is also a preacher, "are not reflective of our people." His words drew a standing ovation. Photo by Mike Steely.

Tierisha Adkins assists students as they mold planets from clay for a scale model of the solar system at last week's Fountain City STEAM Camp at Central High School. Adkins is a teacher in the county's Gifted and Talented Program. Photo by Ken Lay.



Questions continue on cuts to indigent care funding

By Mike Steely
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A reduction in funds to the Knox County Health Department was tentatively approved in a work session of the Knox County Commission. The cut in funding may come back up today in the commission's regular monthly meeting.

Although Mayor Glenn Jacobs' proposal is larger than the current county budget, it cuts funding to the health department's indigent care program that is handled by Cherokee Health. Health Department Director Dr. Martha Buchanan has said that Jacobs wanted even larger cuts but that her health partners said they couldn't live with the bigger funding cuts. She went back to Mayor Jacobs who increased the funding somewhat in his budget.

The funding reduction passed during the work session after Commissioner Brad Anders asked if the policy of qualifying for indigent care has been expanded from the 30-day county-residential requirement. Dr. Buchanan answered that it has not because the commission, in making the request, gave her no specific recommendations.

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Students study outer space at Central Science Camp

By Ken Lay

In June, the halls at Central High School are normally quiet. No slamming of lockers and no rushing to class to beat the tardy bell.

And things were relatively calm Wednesday morning unless you made a visit to the school's science wing.

There, students were participating in

Fountain City's second annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture and Mathematics camp.

This year's theme was outer space as students spent the week studying the solar system in both theory and practice.

The five-day event culminated Friday with students displaying a scale model of the solar system at Dan Y. Boring

Stadium.

Some students made the planets out of clay. Others designed survival colonies for Mars and still others did experiments with weighted backpacks to simulate various gravitational forces on the different planets.

The summer of 2019 marked the

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Bearden's Everly Brothers Park dedicated

By Ronnie Collins

The City of Knoxville dedicated a new park last week to the Everly Brothers who once lived in Knoxville and attended West High School.

The Everly Brothers Park is located at the corner of Kingston Pike and Forest Park in the Bearden area.

"The Everly Brothers were not famous when they lived in a boardinghouse off Scenic Drive less than a mile from this park," according to City Councilman Andrew Roberto.

"They didn't have fans all over the world when they were students at

West High School. What they did have was a dream, a vision for where their determination and talents could take them," said Roberto.

The Knoxville park is the only park dedicated to the Everly Brothers in the United States and was not an overnight happening.

The idea for a pocket park and Christmas tree in the center of Bearden began in 2010 according to former Councilman Duane Grieve. Many meetings were held with TDOT and the City "to acquire the use of the land." The idea to dedicate the park

in honor of the Everly Brothers was introduced by Dennis Owens.

Two people that were very involved but could not attend were the Everly Brothers' mother, Mrs. Margaret Everly, and rock icon Graham Nash. Both sent notes of apology for missing the event. Attending was Phil Everly's widow, Patti Everly, and two of Doris's grandchildren.

The park has a performance area and Grieve promised, "Some new and exciting developments will be happening in the fall."



Councilman Andrew Roberto speaks at his district's newest park dedication last Monday. Photo by Ronnie Collins.

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