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COMMERCIAL-NEWS

‘Potterfest’ returns to Danville

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DANVILLE — Potterfest returns for the fifth time as a First Friday event, along with an extra day of fun on Saturday with local businesses. Potterfest will take place from 5-8 p.m. this Friday with activities for the entire family downtown. Rheanna Ollis with the city said, “There is no specific starting point. If one activity is really busy, move on and try something else, and come back to it. It is one of our biggest events of the year, so it’s quite busy, but still a good time.” This year’s Deathly Hallows-themed event is interactive with actors dressed up as characters re-enacting scenes, a scavenger hunt involving 18 local businesses downtown, and other activities. The Danville Public Library is taking part as well. “We will be set up outside again, because on Saturday we have a private donor event for our 30th anniversary happening,” said Brooke Truscelli with the library. “Outside

in a heated tent, we will be hosting the wedding of Bill and Fleur Weasley, which happens at the beginning of Deathly Hallows, so you know a bright moment in a dark story that comes.” She said the activity will immerse you in the story. “We will have the tent set up, music, a wedding cake, and key characters, and it will just be a nice party,” she said. Ollis added, “different scenes from the Deathly Hallows book will be throughout downtown. So people will be able to interact with some of the characters.” Ollis said they expect around 3,000 to 5,000 people to take part. “Downtown Danville businesses said this is one of the best profits for events, at least for them — this is a huge one,” she said. “And it really means a lot to get this many people down there. Not only for funds being spent, but exposure.” Come dressed as your favorite Harry Potter character for the costume contest. This takes place at the Temple Plaza from 5:30-6 p.m. on Friday with trophies given out at

6 p.m. There will also be Kahoot-style trivia in the plaza at 7 p.m. And enjoy Butterbeer at Fatman’s Warehouse, Hogsmeade Vendors, food trucks, and more activities. “On Friday, we have vendors at the Vermillion County Registration building on the first and second floors. We have a trackless train ride that is family-friendly, literally all sorts of things,” Ollis said. While you are downtown, if you want to take a look at the behind-the-scenes films of Harry Potter, head on into the Fischer Theatre. Ollis said to turn in your scavenger hunt papers there as well, and enjoy popcorn from their concessions. The wizard fun in the Muggle world will continue on Saturday, “SarahLee’s Healing Mountain Crystals is one of our downtown businesses, and she has offered to keep up on the second day,” Ollis said. “There won’t be activities, but there will be vendors to shop from and many of the downtown businesses will be open.”

See **POTTERFEST** on 3



Commercial-News file photo
Hagrid (played by Jerry Strain, a local thespian) poses for a photo with Edyn Jones in Temple Plaza at Potterfest in downtown Danville, on Nov. 1, 2024.

OLLIES



Ollie’s officially opened for business on Wednesday. Located at 20 N. Gilbert Street in Danville, the former Big Lots site, Ollie’s is an off-price retailer of brand name household products including closeout merchandise and excess inventory from other suppliers and manufacturers. Ollie’s Bargain Outlet Holdings Inc. has more than 600 stores in 34 states. The Danville store will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.

Chad Dare | Commercial-News

Danville increases pension funding

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DANVILLE — An independent actuarial analysis of pension funds presented by Lauterbach & Amen showed the council’s improvements in getting the police and fire pensions fully funded. “We appreciate all of your work, and I would just like to point out, I’m really proud of all the improvements we have made,” Danville Mayor Rickey Williams Jr. said. “In this last year, our fire pensions are almost 1 and half percent better funded and our police pensions are 1.4% better funded.” Williams said this is a major change since 2019, with an increase of over 10%. “But, you compare that to 2019, the fire pensions were only 15.65% funded. Now we are literally just shy of 30% funded.” Williams added, “Police in 2019 were only 27.84% funded; they are now almost 38% funded.” The mayor stressed the importance of this. “I do not want to saddle our future generations with the debt that

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HBCU Fair comes to Danville High School



Jelani Day

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DANVILLE — Those looking to go to college may want to check out the HBCU Fair today at Danville High School. The fair, hosted by the Jelani Day Foundation, is taking place from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

in the DHS Fieldhouse. Organizer D’Andre Day said the experience will connect students beyond fliers. “The fair isn’t just about collecting brochures. It’s about making real connections, asking questions and discovering the many pathways that HBCUs offer to success,” Day said. “Students will have the chance to meet admissions, counselors,

alumni, explore scholarship opportunities and even complete the Common Black College Application on site. “The energy will be uplifting, empowering and rooted in the spirit of legacy and possibility.” Day said prospective students attending should bring copies of their transcripts, list of extracurricular activities and com-

munity events they are involved with, along with a resumé if they have one. “Students should bring their curiosity, confidence and willingness to learn,” Day said. “Laptops will be placed in a designated area at the event so students have the ability to complete the Common Black

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