Stone County Anterprize

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\$35 IN-COUNTY SUBSCRIPTION

Former Road Dept. Worker **Pleaded Guilty to Embezzling**



from County

TYLER LOPER

BY DYLAN HODGE **NEWS REPORTER** LYNDY BERRYHILL **EDITOR**

former county employee must serve five years of probation and repay over \$4,500 in fines after he pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement in Stone County Circuit Court this month.

On July 24, 2025, the Mississippi State Auditor's Office reported Tyler Loper, former Stone County road department employee, guilty pleaded and reportedly admitted to selling scrap metal he picked up from the county-owned dump for personal profit.

• See EMBEZZLEMENT

Page 6

Public Upset, Confused Amid Over SES Leadership's Future

BY DYLAN HODGE **NEWS REPORTER**

It is unclear if Stone passion Elementary Principal children learn. Sandy Danzey academic year, which starts on Friday.

community and parents are upset at two weeks' notice with

educator with Danzey's accomplishments and for helping will Following а tense remain with the school special-called meeting district for the upcoming with the Stone County

School Board on July 24, 2025, Danzey told What is clear is that many a crowd of supporters members that she had put in her

the thought of losing an the school district.

The emotional moment left several in tears, clinging onto another for support and hugs.

"Thank y'all for coming, I love you," Danzey told the crowd gathered

> • See DANZEY Page 2

Stone County School District Preps for Back-to-Class this Friday



Enterprise photo by Dylan Hodge

BY DYLAN HODGE **NEWS REPORTER**

On Monday, July 28, the Stone County School District staff members dusted off their boots and cowboy hats to kickstart the new school year.

The school district office organized a country and western-themed event.

Superintendent Boyd West spoke to hundreds of staff members about climbing a metaphorical mountain of success, challenging and anchoring beliefs, masses.

"If you're a new teacher in the room, I don't expect you to climb to the top of El Capitan, but I do expect that to be your goal at

some point in your career," West said.

He added that, to start the

climb, they have to use every resource possible. "You're gonna need a good team... good clips to tie

into the mountain... good

• See BACK-TO-SCHOOL

'Vicious' **Dogs Put** Down 14 **Months** After Near-**Fatal Attack** on Child

LYNDY BERRYHILL **EDITOR**

Three dogs involved in the near-fatal attack of a Stone County child last vear were euthanized this month after their owner exhausted appeals through the court system.

The three dogs were originally deemed vicious by Westside Justice Court Judge Kevin Hines in June after multiple witnesses testified their owner, Tamatha Melom, allowed the dogs to roam freely, killing chickens and growling at neighbors before the dogs attacked 6-yearold Liam Martinez in his front yard on April 17, 2024.

The ruling included two more of Melom's dogs, not involved in the attack against the Martinez child, but referenced in other court testimony for being vicious in separate incidents

Before 2024, all but one of Melom's five dogs had been removed from her care for biting or attacking other people while she resided in Mobile County, Alabama. By her own admission in

> • See VICIOUS Page 10

OPINION.....3 OBITS.....4 DEVOTION.....5

ARRESTS.....6 **PUZZLES.....7** CLASSIFIEDS.....8 LEGALS.....9

Inside

OUTDOORS.....10 EVENTS.....11

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School Hosts Annual Budget Hearing for Next Fiscal Year

BY DYLAN HODGE **NEWS REPORTER**

Stone County The School Board held a hearing for the 2025-2026 proposed budget federal funding sources. on Monday, July 28.

school district's proposed budget is estimated to be \$32,071,092.

Of that total amount, 22 percent, or more than \$6 million, would be derived from local property taxes in addition to bond proceeds. This would be \$126,000

more than their budget last fiscal year, according district.

business manager, Cassie Hardy.

The rest of the proposed budget would largely come from state and percent Fifty-eight of this year's budget is projected to come through the Mississippi Department of Education's Mississippi Student Funding Formula. The MSFF distributes tax dollars public school districts based on the characteristics of the students within the

the final budget at the next regular meeting on August 4, 2025.

Parents had questions and concerns based on the budget. Amber Plumber, a parent of fourth and seventhgraders, said she wanted to see the district's clerical workers get a more substantial pay raise than the 50 cents allotted in the budget. She said numerous district workers were getting bigger pay raises this year.

"They're dealing with the [and] parents, kids,

to the school district's The board will vote on they are taking care of improvement in special everybody," Plumber said. "A lot of times, they don't get very well taken care of by the people from the public." president Board Mohamad Schuman said some of the staff members in the district were doing multiple jobs, and the hiring of another staff member was the reason there could be an increase.

Edna Bond, who is a retired teacher and grandchildren in school district, said she wants to see

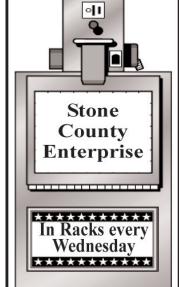
needs care at Stone Middle School.

Bond said her grandson suffers from dyslexia. She is afraid he will not receive the same care at SMS as he did while attending Stone Elementary School. said

Schuman the board has been actively working toward getting better help for students with special needs like dyslexia in the school district.

The board will approve the final budget at its next public meeting on Monday, August 4.

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