



Will Tigers stay on a roll at North Texas?

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State inmates costing taxpayers

Shelby County mayor says Tennessee owes \$127 million for housing expenses

Lucas Finton

Memphis Commercial Appeal
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Shelby County government has, for the last seven months, been suing the Tennessee Department of Corrections

and state over its refusal to pay for the nearly 1,000 state inmates being held at the Shelby County Division of Corrections — sometimes called the Penal Farm.

According to Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, housing those inmates has

forced the county to spend between \$20 million and \$30 million from the county's general fund to cover the expenses. Between fiscal years 2021 and 2025, he said housing inmates who are meant to be held in TDOC prisons has cost a total of \$127 million.

And, in this current fiscal year, Harris said it could cost even more to house those inmates.

"Our foot is on the gas with respect to this issue because it is so significant and

it affects taxpayers," Harris said during a Tuesday, Feb. 10, press conference. "If we can get a fair amount, the vast majority of our budget deficit that we have faced for years will be resolved. However, if we cannot get the state to pay the bill that it owes, that means we will be left with very few options and will be working very hard to avoid a significant tax increase."

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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS



Mayor Paul Young delivers the State of the City address Feb. 10 at First Baptist Church Broad Avenue in Memphis.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS DAY/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Memphis Mayor Paul Young looks to population increase

Lucas Finton

Memphis Commercial Appeal
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

In a night featuring a mixture of singing, dancing, applause, booing, and audible protesting, Memphis Mayor Paul Young delivered his second State of the City address Tuesday, Feb. 10. Between a constant barrage of heckling, he touted the city's declining crime rate, economic development and voiced concern about the city's population decline.

Attendees began gathering an hour before the speech, some seeking better seats and others standing with signs outside First Baptist Church-Broad on Broad Avenue protesting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Memphis Safe Task Force, and the Memphis Police Department's role with the federal operation.

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Demonstrators with Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope sing "The People Will Rise" from the audience as Mayor Paul Young delivers the State of the City address.

MSCS to decide on closing five schools

Brooke Muckerman

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Memphis-Shelby County Schools board will be making its final decisions on school consolidations on Feb. 24.

During a board work session meeting Feb. 10, MSCS board members discussed the potential to close and consolidate five of the district's schools. Michelle Stuart, facility services officer for MSCS, gave a presentation on the proposed closures.

The schools that could close for the upcoming school year are:

- Lucy Elementary – Transfer to Millington Municipal School District
- Frayser-Corning Elementary – Closure
- Georgian Hills Elementary – Closure
- Ida B. Wells Academy (Alternative) – Closure
- Chickasaw Middle – Closure

The closure and consolidation of Lucy Elementary should come as no shock to the community, due to a state law aimed at Shelby County and an agreement between MSCS and Millington in 2022.

Lucy Elementary is currently operated within Millington Municipal Schools district. In May 2022, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law that barred county school systems from operating schools within the geographic bounds of a municipal school district.

The law required school systems to come to an agreement for the transfer of impacted school buildings before January 2023. MSCS and Millington both signed agreements for the transfer of the school in December 2022.

Students within MSCS that attended Lucy would be zoned into Woodstock Middle School. The consolidation would create a K-8 grade structure within the school.

The other schools would all consolidate into neighboring MSCS schools. Students at Frayser-Corning would attend Westside and Whitney Elementary Schools. For Georgian Hills students, they will attend Whitney and Hawkins Mill Elementary schools. Students at Chickasaw Middle would attend Westside High School.

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