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The Daily Herald.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 | COLUMBIADAILYHERALD.COMPART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

State eyes full Imagination Library funding

Plan would cover 100% of program costs beginning in 2027

Peter Burditt
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Tennessee could soon pick up the full cost of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, a move lawmakers say would preserve her literacy legacy for future generations.

House Speaker Cameron Sexton, R-Crossville, and Senate Finance Chair Bo Watson, R-Hixson, announced the proposal Sept. 1, a week after Parton’s

death. If approved through the state budget process, Tennessee would begin covering costs currently paid by participating counties starting in 2027.

“Dolly Parton’s commitment to early childhood reading has inspired millions in Tennessee. We are honoring her legacy by preserving the Imagination Library,” Sexton wrote in a social media post.

“Today, Senator Bo Watson (TN-11) and I announced for the state to fund 100% of the Imagination library. This follows investing an additional \$4.5 billion in state dollars in k-12, and \$200 million in TN Accelerating Literacy and Learning Corps which has lead TN to be

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Books that are part of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program are displayed behind where Nashville Mayor Freddie O’Connell spoke during a media roundtable focusing on Parton’s legacy and her Imagination Library program at the Nashville Library, in Nashville on Aug. 28.

NICOLE HESTER/
THE TENNESSEAN

TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Dan Boone, Trevecca Nazarene University’s 11th president, will be retiring after this academic year, which also is the 125th anniversary of the college. JOHN AMIS/FOR THE TENNESSEAN

Campus leader Boone is ‘one of us’

He will leave legacy of connection and fun

Rachel Wegner
Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

“That’s my president!”

Trevecca Nazarene University students have likely heard this phrase shouted across the school cafeteria more than once over the last year or so. It happens whenever Trevecca President Dan Boone and student Kenna Tatum run into each other.

Except Boone is the one calling out proudly to Tatum, a senior now in her second year as student body president.

“It just puts such a huge smile on my face,” she said.

Tatum isn’t the only one heading into her final chapter at Trevecca. Boone, who has served as president since 2005, recently announced his plan to retire after the 2026-27 school year ends. The

See BOONE, Page 4A

Kenna Tatum of Pittsburgh, Pa., left, and Kavina Kaati of Grove City, Ohio, work on crafts in Jernigan Student Center during move-in day at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville on Aug. 26. The two roommates were helping out freshmen during move-in day at the school.

DENNY SIMMONS/THE TENNESSEAN

Columbia to hold festival as ‘Fruit Tea Capital of the World’

Jay Powell
Columbia Daily Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Columbia Main Street will host the Fruit Teaser, a community celebration recognizing fruit tea and the proclamation of Columbia as the “Fruit Tea Capital of the World.”

The event will take place from 3-8 p.m. Sept. 12 in the Maury County Parking Lot at 707 Woodland St., according to a recent news release.

Fruit Tea Tasting, competitions planned

The event will feature a \$5 Fruit Tea Tasting, where guests can sample more than a dozen different fruit teas prepared by restaurants, caterers and local businesses.

Attendees will vote for their favorite fruit tea, while a separate panel of judges will select its favorite. Tickets will be available for purchase at the event, and those who pre-purchase a ticket online at columbiainmainstreet.com will receive a 16-ounce fruit tea collectible cup.

The celebration will also include an adult Fruit Tea Chugging Competition, with the winner receiving \$100 and the title of Fruit Tea King or Queen. Additionally, a Youth Fruit Tea Poetry Competition will award cash prizes to the top three poems.

Live music, art featured

The Main Stage will showcase three local performances throughout the afternoon. Laci, winner of Columbia Parks & Recreation’s Battle of the Bands, will perform at 3:15 p.m., followed by the youth band Speed Trap at 4:30 p.m. and David Rondoni at 6:30 p.m.

Local artist Susan Jones will create a fruit tea-inspired painting live during the event, allowing guests to watch the artwork take shape throughout the afternoon.

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