



# UPDATE FROM THE MAGISTRATE

A Message from Sherry Sebastian, First District Magistrate

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Each year begins with hope for a better future; 2021 was no exception. Franklin County, and the world, had experienced an unprecedented global pandemic in 2020 and the anticipation of a return to our regular routines was high. As floods, COVID variants, and other challenges came our way, we adapted and continued to move forward, finding inventive ways to celebrate milestones, support charitable organizations, hear from and listen to our neighbors, and keep local businesses operating. As we springboard into 2022, we'll continue to face ever-changing obstacles that demand our creativity and our support for one another.

## Service above Self

Whether in Fiscal Court meetings or in the community, you don't have to look far to find me working every day for you, my constituents, and Franklin County.

A serious issue in our community is food insecurity, which is not only a lack of nutritious food, but also involves locating and preparing food in a healthful way. I help out at the Capital City Activities Center monthly, to ensure the reduction of food insecurity among our senior citizens.

I also work with the Helping Hands Food Pantry to organize and offer food donated by local restaurants and stores. These items are set out for Franklin Countians on Fridays to "shop" to create healthy meals, at no cost to them.

Packing pies from B's Bakery for Thanksgiving Food Boxes



Organizing nonperishable items at Thorn Hill Learning Center's inaugural Friendsgiving food collection event to benefit the Helping Hands Food Pantry





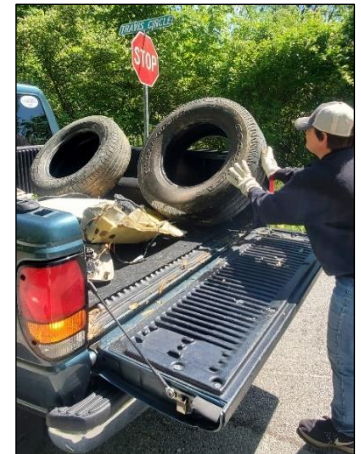
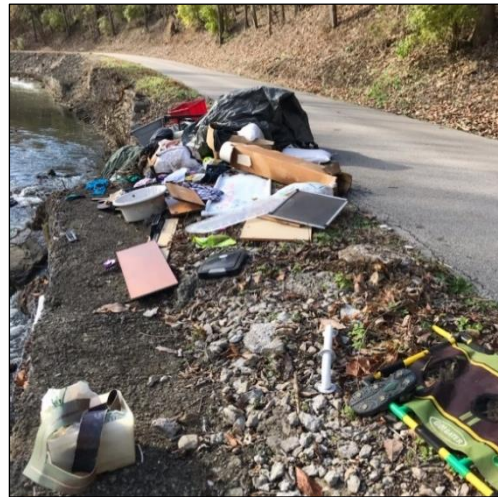


In December, I responded to the need for Salvation Army bell ringers several times, and the experience was even more festive when I was joined by members of the Salvation Army Band.

All blood centers have shortages, so Giving the Gift of Life has become even more critical.



Another concern is restoring the beauty of county neighborhoods that are being used as dumping grounds. It's a good thing I have a truck, because when I see messes like these, I have to stop and do something about them.



Opportunities for easy access to COVID-19 vaccines were lacking in South Frankfort. I worked with the Franklin County Health Department and Reverend Leslie Whitlock at the First Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church to bring the mobile vaccination clinic to this neighborhood.





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Students learning at Franklin County and Western Hills High Schools' greenhouses have been gaining skills and knowledge as they cultivate plants to beautify our Downtown Business District. I proposed that the schools take the lead in the beautification project; as a result, this school program began in 2020. I'm pleased it continues to benefit our community.



## Community Safety

Safety and security come in many forms – safe streets, bridges, increased fire protection, mobile vaccination clinics, improvements to police operations, and progress in replacing outdated sanitary sewer infrastructure.



I call the state road maintenance crew when I see dangerous issues on state roads. In spite of the small size of our Franklin County crew, they are highly responsive to calls concerning any of the 240 miles of state roads here.

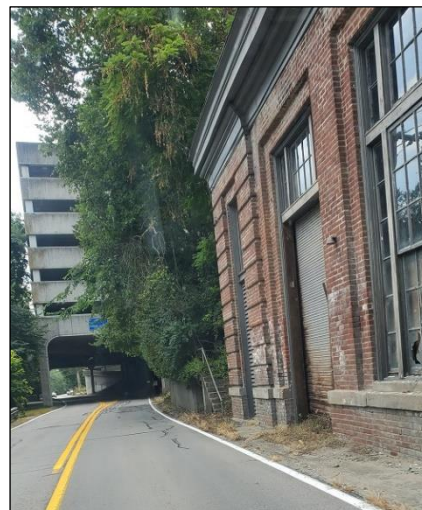


Road conditions can change in an instant, so it's good the county road and fire departments are just a call away.



Clearing kudzu from the old power plant removed this road hazard and increased visibility.

This Bentwood Subdivision storm drain structure (below) eroded and jeopardized the safe entrance into this neighborhood.



A much-needed Fire Hydrant was installed on Old Harrodsburg Road, adding fire protection to this neighborhood.

This deep pothole on Collins Lane was barely visible – until you hit it! I reported it to the City Manager, who promptly dispatched a team from the Public Works Department to fix it.



I reported evidence of a poor structural condition on the Interstate 64 bridge above Evergreen Road.





I want my neighbors to benefit from enhanced safety measures, such as reflective sign posts for better visibility. Another enhanced safety measure is the addition of a tractor sign to the winding-road caution sign, warning of slow-moving farm machinery.



New computers in cruisers allow deputies to facilitate telehealth encounters, letting them do mental health evaluations in a timely manner. Previously, officers had to transport to Eastern State in order to evaluate and determine treatment options.



The addition of new safer vehicles ensures the phasing out of older models.

Funding was secured to build new infrastructure to serve neighborhoods within the Farmdale Sanitation District.





Severe flooding occurred in March 2021. Household items and trash were everywhere; I made sure that dumpsters were brought into the affected neighborhoods to facilitate clean-up for the flood-stricken families.





## Community Assets

Members of the Franklin County Fiscal Court recognized the long untapped potential of Lakeview Park, which celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 1, 2021. Stakeholder groups and all Franklin Countians were invited to talk about the programs that would meet our community's recreational and accessibility needs. An aspect of the discussion included increasing the appeal of our programs to attract those seeking sports offerings and generating tourism revenue. The results of the community-driven master plan will be presented to the public by the Hitchcock Design Group.



This process works! The combined effort of the City Parks Department and the South Frankfort community were successful at revitalizing the Dolly Graham Park. It was completed and opened to the public in 2021.

For years, Lakeview Park had been an underutilized asset, but recent events for all ages have brought families out for fun and excitement, right here at home. Here I'm stuffing bags for the Easter Drive-Through!







We discovered that cruise-ins and drive-throughs are a perfect fit for Lakeview Park! Fun events featured Trunk or Treat with county officials and local car enthusiasts, the Halloween Thriller Dance Party, and the popular Drive-In Movie Night. The park is also a good venue to benefit community charitable events, like the Franklin County Fire Department's Toy Drive and the Cancer Relay for Life. Community organizations were able to donate a percentage of food sales toward charitable activities





## Doing the Work I Love

I was honored to be asked by the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association to represent my fellow magistrates in reporting on local government to the incoming County Extension Agents across the Commonwealth.

I wrote, presented, and published (in the *State Journal*) ideas on how to achieve smart growth and sustainable development, while not sacrificing our natural resources or what makes our community unique. You can download and review this document, *Conversation Starters for Progress in Franklin County*, by clicking [HERE](#).

My sleeves have been rolled up since May 2018 and I haven't stepped out of the trenches. As I close out each day, I begin looking forward to tomorrow because it gives me the next opportunity to serve you with honor and integrity.

Best regards,

*Sherry*

