



# The Paducah Sun

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## '1920 to 2020 and we're still going'

### Owen Cleaners celebrates 100 years

**BY KELLY FARRELL**  
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It can take a lot to keep a business going.

Loyal customers. Dedicated employees. The ability to adapt with changing times.

Paducah's Owen Cleaners appears to have that in spades since owners David and Carolyn Perry celebrated the family business' 100th anniversary Friday at its main plant on Kentucky Avenue.

"The year was 1920," David Perry said. "Woodrow Wilson was president. Babe Ruth had just been sold by the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees. He was yet to play his first game (for the Yankees). The League of Nations was being formed and women were getting the vote for the first time."

It was also when Horace and Tully Owen opened Owen Brothers Quality

Cleaners in Paducah.

"Here we are 100 years later," he added. "The League of Nations isn't around anymore. Woodrow Wilson is long gone. Babe's in the Hall of Fame. Two things are still around — Owen Cleaners and the women can still vote."

More than 30 friends, customers, employees and other visitors gathered for an informal ceremony, where the couple expressed thanks, recognized longtime employees, served cake and paid homage to the past. At one point, David Perry showed a recent copy of a News-Democrat advertisement from Jan. 11, 1920 — exactly 100 years ago — to those in attendance.

Richard Holland, who is a friend and customer, attended the festivities and ex-



**Owners Carolyn and David Perry** (first and second from left) address customers, employees and other visitors Friday morning during Owen Cleaners' 100th anniversary ceremony. Horace and Tully Owen began their Paducah business, Owen Brothers Quality Cleaners, in January 1920.

KELLY FARRELL | The Sun

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## Grant makes McCracken food distribution program possible

**BY DAVID B. SNOW**

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Paducah Cooperative Ministry was able to distribute about 250 bags of food Friday with the help of support from the Purchase Area Development District, Feeding America and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The food was delivered to the old American Legion building on Legion Drive, and volunteers put oranges, onions, carrots and apples in each bag and provided participants a bag of potatoes.

PCM administrative assistant Kathy Rowland was among several workers and volunteers helping to provide the food to McCracken Countians.

"This is something that the folks normally don't get here in McCracken County," she said. "This is a first venture for Paducah Cooperative Ministry, Anthem and the Purchase Area Development District in McCracken County."

"Anybody from McCracken County is eli-

Please see **GRANT** | 8A



DAVID B. SNOW | The Sun

**Rows and rows of bags** with oranges, apples, carrots and onions line the tables at the old American Legion building Friday to help feed McCracken County people in need as volunteers work to fill each bag. An estimated 250 bags of food was made available through Paducah Cooperative Ministry, which was aided by the Purchase Area Development District, Feeding America and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield.

## Lawmakers respond to Bevin's flurry of pardons with bills

**BY BRUCE SCHREINER**

Associated Press

**FRANKFORT** — Responding to former Gov. Matt Bevin's flurry of last-minute pardons, Kentucky lawmakers have introduced bills that would put checks on gubernatorial pardon powers and ensure victims are notified before their assailants are given clemency.

Bevin, a Republican, issued hundreds of pardons

between his electoral defeat in November and his final day in office on Dec. 9. Several stirred outrage from victims or their families, prosecutors and lawmakers, and Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron asked the FBI to investigate.

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee weighed in on the issue by proposing

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## Judge denies Ray motion to dismiss, trial to proceed

**BY DAVE THOMPSON**

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**MAYFIELD** — The trial for the former McCracken County jailer accused of perjury will go forward at the end of this month, a judge ruled Friday.

Ray, accused of lying during testimony regarding former deputy Ben Green, appeared in a teleconference with her attorney, Thomas Clay, before Graves Circuit Judge Tim Stark.



**Ray**

position.

Ray is accused of falsely

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## West KY Women in STEM group holds first meeting

**BY DEREK OPERLE**

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A new group intent on providing a space for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers held its first meeting Monday.

West KY Women in STEM started out as an internal venture at Paducah's Com-

puter Services Inc. (CSI) but blossomed into an open community group in the past few months.

"I think the turnout that we've had — between this and a Tech On Tap event that drew 30 in November — is encouraging," said Kim Skipworth,

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**Kim Skipworth** (right) leads a discussion during the first meeting of West KY Women in STEM Monday evening at Dry Ground Brewing Company. Skipworth, the director of software engineering for Paducah's Computer Services Inc., hopes this group will allow area women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields to connect with each other and share valuable resources.

DEREK OPERLE | The Sun

### NATION

#### TRUMP TEAM UPS IRAN ACCUSATIONS

Confronted by persistent questions about his military action in the Middle East, President Donald Trump and his top officials offered a string of fresh explanations Friday.

5A



### NATION

#### BOEING 737 MAX ISSUES SLID PAST FAA

Lawmakers lashed out at Boeing on Friday after the release of a batch of emails and text messages in which employees questioned the safety of the 737 Max, called the aircraft a "joke" and talked about how they concealed the problem from regulators.

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### Forecast

#### Today

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T-storms.

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100TH

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plained that his parents always went to Owen Cleaners too.

“If you had a job and you wanted to look decent, you had to get your shirts cleaned at Owen Cleaners,” he said. “You learned to always bring ‘em in and ask for extra starch and hangers. You could wear them two or three times, so if you had a fresh clean shirt from Owen’s, you know you are ready for the day.”

The business changed names and hands over the years, but it stayed in the family.

It’s personal for Carolyn Perry, who is granddaughter to Horace Owen and daughter of previous owner Gene Katterjohn. Horace Owen bought out the business from his brother and was later joined by his son-in-law Katterjohn in 1950. Their partnership expanded

the business and lasted until his death in 1977.

Katterjohn and his wife, Carolyn, ran the business until the early 1990s, when their daughter Carolyn Perry and David Perry bought it in 1992. They left corporate careers in Dallas and moved to Paducah to continue the work, becoming the third generation to own and operate it.

“1920 — Mr. Owen had a vision,” Carolyn Perry said. “He had a vision from Fulton, Kentucky. The road from Fulton to Paducah was not paved, but he had a vision to start this establishment in Paducah. He loved Paducah. And so, there it is — 1920 to 2020, and we’re still going. I think he would be really proud of all of us that have been involved in this business.”

She explained he wasn’t one to look back and say, “Should’ve done this differently.”



Archive photo

Paducah’s Owen Cleaners celebrated its 100th anniversary Friday with a ceremony at its main plant location, 1021 Kentucky Ave. The business began back in 1920 as Owen Brothers Quality Cleaners at a different location. This News-Democrat advertisement dated Jan. 11, 1920 — exactly 100 years ago — describes it as the “largest and most modern” dry cleaning and pressing plant in west Kentucky.

“Look forward,” she said. “Look forward to the future. What can we do? Mr. Owen and Mr. Katterjohn — and we’ve tried to follow their footsteps — were very innovative business-

men. Very innovative in every step of the way, and I think that’s what’s defined our business and we’re very proud of that.”

Owen Cleaners does dry cleaning and wet

cleaning, in addition to alteration services and some drapery and household fabrics work, according to David Perry. There are currently four Paducah locations at Kentucky Avenue,

Lone Oak Road, Clark Street and Reidland Road.

Over the decades, its services changed and diversified at times. In early years, it specialized in dry cleaning and laundry services, along with fur cleaning, alterations and fabric dyeing. The business expanded into coin-operated laundromats in the 1950s. It’s also offered drapery and rug cleaning and photo finishing.

David Perry thinks all three generations were good at “changing, adapting and evolving” to fit the times, something Carolyn Perry echoed.

“The secret is paying attention to every aspect of business,” she said. “Pay attention to your employees and how they’re doing. Pay attention to the customer needs ... and providing an excellent service. But as my husband has said ... you have to adapt.”

PARDONS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

that crime victims have the right to be notified and heard before their assailant gets any pardon or commutation. The language is included in a proposed ballot measure — known as “Marsy’s Law” — that would add multiple protections for crime victims to the state’s Constitution.

“The whole point of Marsy’s Law is to make sure victims have a meaningful role in the process,” Republican Sen. Whitney Westerfield said in an interview Friday.

“We want to make sure that future governors have to abide by that and we want to make sure that those victims are consulted, or at least an effort is made,” he added.

The measure is a reprise of a 2018 crime victims’ rights constitutional amendment that easily cleared the legislature and was approved by Kentucky voters. The amendment later was voided when the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled that the question posed to voters was too vague. The new proposal will remedy those concerns, Westerfield said.

The new provision stemming from Bevin’s actions seeks to ensure victims have the right to be heard and notified when a governor considers granting a pardon or sentence commutation to their assailants.

Senate Minority Floor Leader Morgan McGarvey has been among the lawmakers condemning some



Associated Press

Then-Gov. Matt Bevin looks out at the crowd during a campaign rally with President Donald Trump in Lexington on Nov. 4. Responding to Bevin’s flurry of last-minute pardons before leaving office, Kentucky lawmakers have introduced bills that would put checks on gubernatorial pardon powers and ensure victims are notified before their assailants are given clemency.

of Bevin’s pardons but said the legislature should resist making a “knee-jerk reaction.” He voiced support Friday for the notification language added to the Marsy’s Law measure.

“I do think that if a governor is going to pardon someone, that notice should at least be given beforehand to the victims, the prosecutors, the attorneys involved,” the Louisville Democrat said.

Kentucky is among 15 states that don’t provide some form of constitutional rights for crime victims, Westerfield said.

Kentucky’s version of Marsy’s Law would guarantee crime victims have several rights, including the right to timely notification of all court pro-

ceedings, the right to be present for those hearings and the right to be heard in any hearing involving a release, plea or sentencing.

Another lawmaker, Republican state Sen. Chris McDaniel, has proposed a constitutional amendment that would put limits on a governor’s power to grant pardons or commute sentences.

His measure would amend the state’s Constitution to strip a governor of pardon powers for the month leading up to an election and for the time between an election and the inauguration.

“If a governor wants to use the power to commute and pardon, he should be willing to stand in front of the voters and be held ac-

countable for those actions,” McDaniel said when he announced his proposal last month.

Both measures, if they clear the legislature, would have to be ratified by the state’s voters.

Among the Bevin pardons that sparked outrage involved Patrick Baker, who had served about two years of a 19-year sentence for reckless homicide and robbery in the slaying of a Knox County man in front of his family. Baker’s brother held a campaign fundraiser for Bevin in 2018.

Some have applauded the former governor’s actions as a show of compassion and righting injustices, including for hundreds of nonviolent drug offenders.

STEM

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facilitator of the first meeting and CSI’s director of software engineering. “The interest is there, and this just isn’t something we have in our community.

“Women are generally more reluctant to come to events like that, so if we all come together and support each other it makes it easier for us to show up and represent in the field.”

Around 25 women turned up to the meeting, which was co-hosted by Sprocket — a local nonprofit creative space committed to innovation in education and entrepreneurship — and Dry Ground Brewing Company.

“There’s just so few of us that we sometimes have a hard time finding those people to connect with. We have more power in numbers,” Skipworth told The Sun. “I’ve been at CSI for 20 years and I’ve never connected with anyone outside my company, so it’s fun to get together and learn about what people are doing in the field.”

Kristen Anderson, a software engineer at CSI, was “flabbergasted” by the turnout.

“I thought it would just be four or five people from the CSI but to walk in and see people from different professions and companies from all around the area was so impressive,” she said. “I was thrilled to see so many people

there.”

Nikki May, an independent artist and designer who attended the meeting, hopes to find common ground with the fellow attendees of the meetings in the coming months.

“Tech is a male-dominated field, and it’s just nice to connect with other people that are doing the same sorts of things,” May explained. “I work at home for myself so I don’t meet a lot of other people like me. It’s so great to connect on that level.”

Anderson believes that many women in the professional world would find the meetings rewarding regardless of how STEM-focused their careers are.

“I meet a lot of women who do tech work who don’t think of it as tech work, and I think having a group like this where you can network allows you to get resources you never would have had access to,” she added.

Skipworth plans to hold meetings on a rotating mix of topics on the first Monday of each month through May. Each meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the back room of Dry Ground Brewing Company, which adjoins the Sprocket offices. The group will likely take a summer hiatus, though continued meetings are a possibility past that.

Anyone interested in joining can get more information by emailing kim.skipworth@csiweb.com.

RAY

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testifying regarding jail procedures during proceedings in the official misconduct case against Green, who was accused of improperly reclassifying inmates.

The Kentucky State Police said Ray told a judge that the jail didn’t have a policy on reclassification and was operating under an old manual, but police said a later manual in use at the jail had such a policy, and emails showed Ray was familiar with that policy.

Green later pleaded guilty to multiple counts

of official misconduct.

Ray also faces a single charge of violating Kentucky’s whistleblower statute, regarding her alleged firing of current Jailer David Knight, who was later reinstated.

That case is unrelated to the perjury case, and will be taken up once the perjury case is concluded.

Ray’s perjury trial is set for Jan. 30 in McCracken County.

The trial had been set for last June, but was delayed after “unforeseen discovery issues” forced a continuance.

GRANT

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gible to take part in this. It doesn’t matter how old or how young, and there are no income limits. We ask that they sign a sheet so we can keep count of the participants for the grant and see how many families we serve.”

Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield provided grant funding to Feeding America, a national

nonprofit organization that helps to feed people in need, to provide food for Kentucky counties. That grant was enough to buy 12,050 pounds of food. The funding for McCracken County provides food for distributions in January and February.

“Anthem bought the food and got the food to us,” PADD food bank coordinator Geri Lamb said. “We (PADD) are

a partner agency with Feeding America.”

Rowland said the aim is for all of the prepared bags of food to be gone by the end of the day.

“The owners of (the old Legion) building were gracious to let us use this building for this food distribution,” she said. “We’re not new to this because PCM does provide food from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Monday

through Friday. We also do a senior program with the PADD office, a supplemental food program for those 60 and older in McCracken County.”

The next food distribution will be at 9 a.m. Feb. 14 at the old American Legion building at 425 Legion Drive. For more information about PCM programs, call 270-442-6795.