



You know you're getting old when it takes longer to rest than to get tired.

—Anon

# The NEWS

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Highway enthusiast/map maker/website designer Mike Conlin studies maps and documents pertaining to the Jefferson Highway as it passes through Butler, with Jefferson Highway Association members Melissa Phillips (right) and Peggy Buhr.—Staff photo.

## Highway is its fame, Jefferson is its name

By Melissa Phillips

It is a story that is filled with political intrigue, inter-state rivalries and national pride. It is American enterprise at its best tied to the romance of the open road. It is the "Avenue from the Bread Basket of the World to the Land of

Cotton". It is the Jefferson Highway - the first north-south transcontinental highway built in the United States.

The Jefferson Highway was a grand and bold dream that became a lasting reality. Dubbed the Palm to Pine route because it went from New Orleans to Winnepeg, it became U.S. Highway 71 and will soon become Interstate Highway 49.

As it makes the transition to an Interstate highway with limited access points, a retired mapmaker is making an historic journey along its original route. Mike Conlin, passed through Bates County last week on his way from Winnepeg to New Orleans. He stopped in Butler to visit with local members of the new Jefferson Highway Association, pick up local route maps and visit with the Bates County Commission at the Courthouse.

For Conlin, the trip has been two years in the mak-

ing. While he currently lives in Metairie, La., he is Canadian, from Prince George British Columbia, just about as far from Winnepeg as it is from New Orleans. Joined by schoolmate, Gary Augustine, he is driving and marking the sections of the Jefferson Highway that still exist today. Conlin has utilized Google maps, satellite photos, historic highway maps and interviews with locals in his preservation mapping efforts. He noted that in one location, a satellite photo showed the Highway running into a recently constructed lake, the road clearly visible under the bottom of the lake and emerged on the other side.

He noted that already, local groups have started up along the route and there is tremendous interest in going national. He hopes that his map will be the catalyst

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## Seek new leads in Cook mystery

The News Xpress

News coverage that has been focusing on the disappearance of Amsterdam, Mo., rancher David Cook is about to take a giant leap to the national stage.

Cook's sister, Judy Transue of Lenexa, Kan., who has spearheaded the determined effort to solve the mystery, said she has just received confirmation the case will be included in the Dec. 12 "America's Most Wanted" telecast.

"David's been gone a year now (Nov. 19, 2008) and we're hopeful America's Most Wanted will open up new leads," Transue said.

With the assistance of a Kansas City television crew, Transue in August began documenting the chain of events connected to the disappearance. The David Cook segment airing next month is of two minutes duration, she said.



Cook, 55, who was born and raised in the Ballard, Mo., community in north-eastern Bates County, was a 33-year employee of the Kansas City Power & Light generating plant at LaCygne, Kan., a few miles west of Amsterdam. Cook was also manager of the 10,000-acre Sterling Ranch two miles south of Amsterdam. In the process he became affiliated with

Mike Christie, head of Midland Land & Cattle Company of Lenexa partnership of the ranch which owns the big spread.

Christie and Cook became close friends, Christie referring to Cook as "my right hand man" in an interview with the News Xpress.

Christie, with other business associates, relatives and friends posted an original reward of \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons or persons responsible for Cook's disappearance. Over the succeeding months the reward has risen to \$100,000, a sum that is hoped will break the prolonged silence.

Christie commented, "Judy and I are not going to give up, even if it takes ten years or more. There's definitely a murderer out there. Progress is being made and we're going to keep the pressure on."



When authorities converged at David Cook's home south of Amsterdam shortly after his disappearance, they discovered his two pickup trucks parked in the driveway, but Cook was nowhere to be found.

### Sister's appeal for help in brother's disappearance

By Judy Transue

It was one year ago, Nov. 19 that my brother, David Cook, was last seen. It's been a long, tough year and we still don't have an explanation as to what happened to him. One thing we know for certain is that David had cattle stolen from his property near Virginia, Mo., between June and November 2008 when he went missing. We believe he had cattle stolen from other locations as well.

The last time I spoke with David was the morning of Nov. 16, 2008, three days before he was missing. He was at the hunting lodge on the Sterling Ranch near Amsterdam, Mo. He and some friends has just returned from hunting. In our phone conversation we made plans for David to

come to my home for Thanksgiving the next week. We talked for a little while as we always do. I remember him saying he was tired from the early morning hunting.

David worked his last shift at the KCP&L generating plant in LaCygne, Kan., on the evening of Nov. 18. He left work about 10:30 p.m. and returned home. We believe he awoke the next morning and began his day by meeting with an employee on the ranch. David was scheduled to meet with two business partners later that morning but he never showed up for that meeting.

Initially, the business partners assumed David was asleep in his home, getting

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## R-5 board proposes 60c increase in school levy

The News Xpress

In an election set for Feb. 2, 2010, the Butler R-5 board of education is asking voters to approve an increase in the district's operating tax levy of 60 cents per \$100 valuation—or \$4.65—the first increase in several years.

During the past few months the board has been studying the slumping financial outlook of the district and frequently advising a proposal would be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

Now, more details are being made public from action taken at last Thursday's board meeting: approximately 39% of the levy will be earmarked for school improvements; 38% for retaining and recruiting staff; and 23% for operations. Specifically the allotments would be targeted in four categories.

1. New flooring in the 1939 section of the elementary building to address asbestos issues.
2. A new roof for the ag building at the north end of the junior high/senior high campus.
3. Improvements to the south parking lot and front parking lot on the junior high/senior high campus.
- \*4. Construction of an all-weather surface track on district-owned property to the immediate west of the Deaton-Thomas football field on West Nursery Street.

It is figured the levy increase will help generate \$416,741.22 annually, minus col-

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## Butler City Council approves condemnation suit

The News Xpress

By unanimous vote, members of the Butler City Council adopted Ordinance 898 Tuesday night that is to be hoped will finally clear the way for construction of a long-awaited Walmart super center on south Fran Avenue.

To date, the hold-up has been a tract of land on the south side of Missouri Route 52 owned by Barry Clark and Karen Clark estate trust UTA dated Dec. 18, 2002.

Freeing up this parcel (via condemnation action against the Clark's) would provide additional rights-of-way that are required by MoDOT for the road improvements need-

ed on Route 52 in conjunction with the Fran Avenue intersection, thus facilitating the Walmart project.

The ordinance authorizes the city attorney and her designees to institute condemnation proceedings if such permanent right-of-way rights in the land cannot be acquired by purchase through good faith negotiations.

For the record, aye votes were cast by councilmen Brown, Phillips, Osburn, Simons, Malan, Fisher, Schnoebelen and Wix.

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The 7 p.m. meeting was opened by Mayor Jerry Cook

who called upon guest Diane Leis to relate background information on sewer line problems affecting her property at 706 North Main and six other properties on the line.

Leis said the purchase of her house three years ago was somewhat misrepresented in that she was unaware the sewer connection was on a private line until problems erupted about a year ago.

(It was brought out during the discussion that private

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## Xcerpts of interest

### Artsy weekend

37th annual Fine Arts and Craft Show Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 20-22. Bates County Museum on Elks Drive in Butler.

### Miami feast

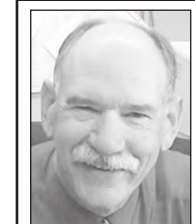
Second annual Miami class of 2013 hunter's feast Saturday, Nov. 21, 11 to 2 at Miami school cafeteria. Chili or potato soup, crackers, dessert, coffee or tea. Free-will donation.

### Thanksgiving at Rockville

The Rockville United Methodist Church at 109 Osage in Rockville, invites the community to its Thanksgiving worship service on Wednesday, Nov. 25 at 7 p.m.

### Nifty Ninety

The family of Louise Fisher will be honoring her with a celebration of her 90th birthday on Saturday, Nov. 28 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Ohio Street United Methodist Church in Butler. Friends are invited to attend the reception or may send a card to Louise at 700 Parkview, Butler, Mo. 64730. No gifts, please.



From the desk of the  
**Miami R-1  
Superintendent  
Leonard Tourtillott**

## Thanks to many

This week's article was written by our Athletic Director, Assistant Football and all around "Keeper of the Keys, Coach Brian Wood. This article is dedicated to all the wonderful helpers during our very successful football season. It is a great big "Thank You Card" going out to all the people working in the spotlight and those who work in the areas not so noticeable.

Here is Coach Wood's tribute to those who worked so hard and selflessly. WOW!!! That's about the best descriptor I can come up with to try and put into words the game, the atmosphere, and the crowd for the play-offs, especially the semi-final game. That had to have been the largest, most vocal crowd I've seen in my 10 years at Miami. The Community should be applauded for their support. The problem with doing a mass recap/thank you after the fact, is you run the risk of unintentionally leaving someone out. I will apologize in advance, as I will undoubtedly omit persons whom were instrumental in helping pull off two well coordinated play-off games.

First off, let me thank Coach Deah and Coach Bishop for providing us one of the most exciting football seasons in several years. Thanks to the players for conducting yourselves, all season long, in a manner that reflected positively on the school, the community, and your families. Thanks to the parents for providing all the meals for the players on Friday nights, and sometimes Thursday's too, especially Cathy Slattery, Trish and George Good, and Alanda Powell. I know everyone appreciated the untold dozens of cookies Becky Welch baked all season long.

As for the play-off games, the thanks begins at the top, with the administration. Mr. Tourtillott and Mrs. Richardson were quick to recognize we needed to pull everyone together to make these games a show piece for Miami. They arranged for the delivery of gravel to repair some holes in the parking lot and the entrance to the field. They helped procure more bleachers so that we might accommodate more people. Thanks to the people in Adrian for the use of the bleachers from their baseball fields. They stepped in at the last minute after another offer fell through. Mr. Tourtillott even went and picked them up with his trailer.

Administration provided the materials for the AG class to repair another set of bleachers that George Good and Jeff Johnston acquired. The teachers and staff at Miami R-1 Schools deserve a huge pat on the back. All of the elementary staff, Cathy Slattery, John Logue, Jerri James, Shirley West, Kathi Hall, Elaine Jones, and Angela Cook put up the posters and art work their kids produced over the past two weeks. Laura Larcom, the art teacher, provided all her supplies and assistance to all the staff. Carrie Wilson and Michelle Davenport did an outstanding job of decorating the hallway by the Math and English rooms.

Thanks also to Shawna Leister and the cheerleaders for decorating the High School hall way and the little gifts they provided the players. Thanks to Susan Johnston, for designing the tickets for both games. She also helped Shawna and the cheerleaders decorate and blow up balloons and make signs. To Becky Johnston for helping put the financial side of things dealt with-putting together the bags for the gate keepers. Also to all 3 of the secretaries- Shawna, Susan, and Becky for fielding the countless phone calls we received in the weeks leading up to the games.

Kudos to the gate/ticket people- Angela Cook, Jamie Reitz, Chancy Glynn, and Paulette Howard for the quarterfinals and Dea Erickson for the semifinals. The guys who directed traffic and helped park cars-Tracy Ewbank, Ed Gutshall, Dale Pippin, Terry Cameron, Shawn Taylor, Les Nieder, and Mike Jones. Keri Lemon and the Miami Eagles Band for their spirited play at both games and pep rallies!

Thanks to the parents from Project Prom for putting on two tail-gate dinners. I would love to mention everyone but I couldn't pretend to know everyone involved. I do know that both dinners were enjoyed by all who dined.

Special thanks to the concession stand workers-Kathi Hall, John Logue, Shirley West, Jake Johnston, and Miles Nieder. The guys who manned the chain gang, not just for the play-offs, but for the past four or more seasons-Richie Powell, Dennis Slattery, and Dickie Reinke The press box crew-Charlie Jenkins as the PA announcer and Brian Tenholder running the clock. The Maintenance and Custodial crew-Chuck Keough, Larry Cave, Jonathan Richardson, and Marion Cummings for all they did to make the school and the grounds presentable.

The Adlemans for all they did hauling the boys to all the games and treating them to dinner the night we went to scout DeKalb-St. Joe Christian. Thanks also goes to Sharon Knuth for helping with the technology issues that arose trying to accommodate 3 radio stations broadcasting the semifinal game. The Jr. High guys who acted as filmmakers, and water boys-Dylan Good at the camera and Trevor Ewbank and Casey Winter hauling water. Thanks to the Bates County Sheriff's Office for providing security at both games and Bates County Memorial Hospital for providing the ambulance and EMS personnel for both games.

As the game coordinator for both playoff games everyone I have tried to mention made my job very simple. It is gratifying to know I work at a place where people jump in and say "how can I help" instead of "why do I need to do that". These games couldn't have been pulled off without a team effort, both on and off the field and that is exactly what I got and I can't say Thank You enough.

Brian Wood  
Athletic Director/ Playoff game coordinator  
Miami R-1 Schools

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## Views from the past...



### What's new on the highway?

It was 1929 when this photo was taken at the corner of highways 52 and 71 (now the stoplight intersection) with the camera pointed west. Out front were (from left) Rome Alkire, J.K. Wirt, Bert Bradley and Marvin Cumpton at the Butler Petroleum Company.—From the collection of Eddie Herrman.

■ EDITOR'S NOTE: Feedback from our readers indicates the "Views From the Past" is one of the most popular features in the news-Xpress. Again let us emphasize that we solicit photos of events and places in the Bates County area from years gone by. If you have photos of this type from the Bates County area from years gone by that are in reasonably good quality for reproduction, please let us know. Thank you.

## •David Cook missing one year

•FROM FRONT PAGE

some much needed rest since both of his pick-ups were parked at his home. Later that afternoon David did not show up for work at KCP&L nor did he call in. David was not answering his cell phone. This was all concerning since it was very unusual for him.

The next morning when the business partners, employees, family and friends still couldn't find David, everyone knew something was seriously wrong. His home was searched and nothing was out of place. The only things



David Cook

missing were his glasses, cell phone and money clip. The out buildings and property around the home were searched and still there was no sign of David. It was at this point that authorities were notified.

Two days later a multi-county major task force was assembled to investigate. They spend about a week investigating, interviewing, following up on leads and searching with K9 units before they disbanded.

Four days after David was missing, a volunteer

search party of over 100 people on foot, ATV and horses took place on the Sterling Ranch, the adjoining Shiloh ranch and areas around these ranches. Still there was no sign of David. These ranches combined are approximately 10,000 acres and have 30-40 bodies of water including lakes and mining pits. The vast acreage, brush and water, added to the difficulty of searching.

About 12 days after David was missing, the Missouri State Highway Patrol's Division of Drug and Crime Control (DDCC) took over the case and they still continue to investigate. They have spent many hours and resources investigating and they have no plans to stop until this is resolved.

Several weeks after David disappeared and it seemed clear he wasn't going to be found, his herd of 900 head of cattle were sold and in January his equipment was sold as well.

A reward billboard was erected on the Sterling Ranch earlier this year. The reward is now \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for David's disappearance.

In May, America's Most Wanted posted a missing person's webpage for David on its website. You can view it at [www.amw.com/missing\\_persons/brief.cfm?id=65213](http://www.amw.com/missing_persons/brief.cfm?id=65213).

In August, I contacted Tim Mille, founder of Texas Equusearch (TES) and asked him to help look for David. TES is a non-profit organization who's mission is to find missing people. Tim Miller, a group of volunteers and a convoy of boats, ATV's and other high tech equipment arrived at the ranch from Texas. Tim Miller and experts in sonar technology spent several days utilizing underwater sonar equipment to check the numerous bodies of water on the ranch. TES also used a sidewinder underwater camera to check the many wells on the ranch. TES was not able to locate David but they eliminated many bodies of water on the ranch as being a factor in David's disappearance.

The most recent development is that David's story will air on the America's Most Wanted TV show Dec. 12. The show is on Saturday nights at 9 (eastern), 8 (central) on the FOX network. David's Missing Persons web page on the America's Most Wanted web site will be updated within the next couple of weeks with more current information.

### Here's a Little Bit About David

David was 55 when he disappeared and he lived alone on the Sterling Ranch near Amsterdam, Mo. He loved raising cattle, riding horses, hunting and the outdoors in general. David was a very likeable guy, easy going...he was a mile-mannered jokester.

David worked at the KCP&L plant for 33 years. With the help of ranch hands, David raised a large herd of mostly Black Angus cattle and he often attended auctions

and cattlemen's meetings. He managed and helped build the Sterling ranch by overseeing the building of roads, fences, cabins, and whatever else came with managing this ranch. There were often construction people working on the ranch. David liked to hunt and often accompanied visitors and business associates who came to the ranch to hunt and fish.

Several years ago David and a business partner built new homes in the Kansas City area, including Olathe, Kan., and Kansas City, Kan.

David lived his entire life in this area. We are certain David would never leave on his own and leave behind the people that cared about him most and the things he worked his entire life for. We believe someone harmed David and did away with him.

Luck will run out for those responsible for David's disappearance as this puzzle is completed, and you may hold the one piece still remaining. We need your help.

If you know anything about what might have happened to David, please call the Missouri State Highway Patrol at 816-622-0800. This isn't just about finding David, it is also about putting bad people behind bars and making this a safer world for everyone.

A lot of effort by many people has gone into trying to find resolution to this mystery. I sincerely appreciate the ongoing support we've received from friends, the community, the media and law enforcement. Thank you all!

## Rich Hill resident has photo in new Missouri 'Blue Book'

Jefferson City • Secretary of State Robin Carnahan announced that Mary Alms of Rich Hill won second place in the "On The Move" category of the 2009 Official Manual Photo Contest. This photo is featured in the 2009-2010 Official Manual of the State of Missouri (the "Blue Book").

"We received hundreds of great photos from people all across Missouri and this was one of the only 12 winners," Carnahan said. "I'm pleased to be able to make this photo a part of our state's history and publish it in the Blue Book."

The theme of this year's photo contest was "Missouri in Motion," which represents the many ways Missouri and its people move from place to place and time to time. Missourians could enter photographs in three categories: (1) On The Move—Photographs of transportation and travels in Missouri; (2) Forces of Nature—Photographs of the ever-changing Missouri weather and environment; and (3) Time To Play—Photographs of family and friends playing sports.

For the first time this year, Missourians chose 12 winners for publication in the Blue Book. More than 12,000 votes were cast online in the contest.

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