

## Arsons in Roan Mountain now being found in forests

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ROAN MOUNTAIN — Roan Mountain has had another outbreak of arsons over the Easter weekend, but this time the fires have been in the forests instead of vacant houses.

"There have been five fires along Railroad Grade Road," Guy Street, zone fire management officer for the Cherokee National Forest, said Monday afternoon. "They have ranged from a quarter of an acre up to 15 acres."

Street said the forest service had 12 firefighters on the fires and six firefighters from the Forestry Division of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. He said he did not know how many members of the Roan Mountain Volunteer Fire Department had

been fighting the fires, but he said "they have been helping us out quite a bit, especially with so many small fires."

"We have got the last one under control, we have fire lines around it and we are doing burnouts," Street said. "The wind has gotten up a little bit lately, though."

One thing that has helped the effort has been that the alleged arsonists set the fires in an area that another arsonist had burned several years ago, meaning there was not a lot of fuel for the new fires.

"The area was pretty sparse for fuel," Street said.

The Carter County Sheriff's Department continues to investigate the arsons at the vacant houses, but Street said Cherokee National Forest law enforcement officers will be investigating the forest fires.



Lee Talbert/Johnson City Press

Members of Citi and Blackburn, Childers & Steagall, CPA, break ground on a two-month Habitat for Humanity home-building project that will put a working Johnson City mother and her daughter in a home at 1401 E. Holston Ave.

## Join the club

■ Habitat for Humanity looks for help with latest project.

By **SUE GUINN LEGG**  
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The accounting firm of Blackburn, Childers and Steagall and CitiGroup of Gray broke ground on a new Habitat for Humanity home build site Monday and invited the entire community to join them in their charitable labor.

With excavation nearly complete at the home site at 1401 E. Holston Ave., Holston Habitat for Humanity Site Foreman Al Bentz expects the project will progress quickly.

With good luck and good weather, Bentz said volunteers will have the block work completed on the foundation by Friday, the sub floor in by Tuesday and be ready to begin building walls as early as next weekend. The target date for completion is

around July 4.

The future homeowner, Susie Arnold, and her 16-year-old daughter Lauren, who have already been working more than a year in preparation for their home's construction, could not be more excited.

Arnold, a dispatcher for the First Tennessee Human Resource Agency's NetTrans rural transportation service, choked back tears as she joined BCS and Citi volunteers in turning of the first spades of dirt.

"I want everyone to know how much we appreciate this. Thank you for everything you have done, for me and for my daughter," she said.

To wrap up the 500 hours of homeowner education and home building labor put in by all Habitat homeowners, Arnold said, "I'll be here every day after work and all day on Saturdays."

Bentz told the BCS and Citi volunteers they have already demonstrated what it takes to make a Habitat build successful, "extending a helping hand to a neighbor, building relationships with people and organizations in your community and drawing others in."

"So welcome to the good deed club," Bentz said. "There aren't any fees. There's no secret hand-

shake. Just come on out and we'll get you to work."

Tommy Greer with BCS said the Habitat build was initiated as part of the firm's 50th anniversary celebration. To mark the anniversary, Greer said BCS' nine partners and 90 employees plan to spend an entire year of giving back to their community.

In addition to CitiGroup and BCS, Greer said a number of other organizations have already chipped in significantly with in-kind gifts for the project and he welcomed others to join them.

"We're giving back and we need to give back more. For less government, the private sector needs to do more," he said.

Jeff Jones with Citi said the company's employees are working to top the 10,000 hours of community service they put in last year. Their goal for 2011 is 1,200 hours and they're excited to be involved in this Habitat project, Jones said.

Together the two companies

have also pledged to contribute about \$34,000 toward the initial cost of the construction.

Laura Swanson, executive director of Holston Habitat for Humanity, invited others who wish to help, either through a financial contribution or by volunteering, to call the local Habitat office in Kingsport for details at 239-7689.

"There are many different ways to volunteer. Anyone can help," Swanson said.

The house on East Holston will be the 20th Habitat for Humanity home built in Johnson City and the 210th built in the Tri-Cities region. Swanson welcomed anyone who wishes to apply for home ownership or to assist in a build to visit [www.holstonhabitat.org](http://www.holstonhabitat.org) or to call the local office for information.

Contributions to Holston Habitat for Humanity earmarked for the "BCS/Citi build" may be made by mail to P.O. Box 5265, Kingsport, TN 37663.

## Indictment info held back until Godbee gets out of hospital

By **JEFF BOBO**  
NET News Service

ROGERSVILLE — If former Hawkins County Assistant Attorney General Doug Godbee was indicted Monday related to sexual misconduct allegations, that information won't become public until Godbee is released from the hospital.

In February, special prosecutor Russell Johnson of Kingston stated publicly that he would be presenting evidence of sexual misconduct against Godbee to the Hawkins County grand jury April 25.

Last Wednesday, April 20, Godbee was hospitalized after an apparent overdose of sleeping pills.

Johnson said he did, in fact, make a grand jury presentment Monday in Rogersville regarding Godbee.

Johnson said he could not disclose details of that grand jury presentment.

In the case of such presentments, a grand jury has the option of returning a "true bill," which is an indictment, or a "no true bill," which means the grand jury did not find probable cause to move forward with the prosecution.

No true bills become public documents immediately upon their return, and the Hawkins County Court Clerk's Office said there weren't any no true bills returned by the grand jury Monday.

In the case of a true bill stemming from a presentment, that indictment remains sealed until the indictment warrant is served on the defendant.

According to official sources, Godbee, 57, 158 E. Hill St., Rogersville, remained hospitalized in Knoxville on Monday under observation.

If Godbee was indicted Monday, the warrant could not be served until he is released from the hospital.

At 9:43 a.m. Wednesday, the Hawkins County Sheriff's Office and Rogersville Police Department were dispatched to Godbee's apartment in reference to a possible overdose.

"The victim, Doug Godbee, had called attorney Herb Holcomb's office and advised that help was needed at his apartment in reference to pills," Deputy Chad Britton stated in his report. "Vicki Sweeny from Holcomb's office contacted Central Dispatch. Hawkins County EMS also responded and transported Godbee to Wellmont Hawkins County (Memorial Hospital) for an apparent overdose of sleeping pills."

Godbee served as a prosecutor in Rogersville for more than three decades prior to resigning in September amid allegations of seeking or trading sexual favors from female drug defendants, or mothers of female drug defendants, for leniency in the courtroom.

He had previously resigned in 2006 after a female victim in a crime he was prosecuting made claims of a sexual relationship with him. That case was investigated and didn't result in criminal charges, and Godbee was reinstated as an assistant attorney general in 2008.

Since January, Nashville attorney Robert Whitaker has filed at least nine civil complaints against Godbee with the Tennessee Claims Commission on behalf of women who allege Godbee abused his power by offering leniency in exchange for sex, or harsher punishment if they didn't comply.

## Lightning strike believed to be cause of Kingsport apartment complex fire

By **RAIN SMITH**  
NET News Service

KINGSPORT — A Monday afternoon lightning strike is suspected of sparking a fire at a Kingsport apartment complex, causing extensive damage to several units.

No one was injured in the blaze at Kingsview Apartments, 901 Larry Neil Way, although some residents are expected to be at least temporarily displaced.

One of those individuals, Ashley Vaughn, 22, surveyed the smoldering 909 building as Kingsport firefighters recoiled their hoses and packed up to leave. Every few minutes her cell phone chirped.

"Yeah, the fire was at my apartment," Vaughn informed her caller. "The whole roof is gone."

The single mother of two, with a third child on the way, attempted to put her situation in perspective. She said God takes away to give you better — her insurance is from God himself.

But her eyes inevitably mist up. She nervously tugged at her scrubs from the National College of Business and Technology, constantly shifting her weight from one foot to the other.

"I'm a single mom working, going to school and everything, and my whole life was in there," she reflected, briefly flinging up

a hand toward the charred apartment in exasperation.

"It hurts. Yeah, it hurts, but it's just material stuff (that was lost)."

The fire began at approximately 5 p.m. as a thunderstorm passed over the Model City. Kingsport Fire Chief Craig Dye said several neighbors called 911 to report the blaze, which would have caused more extensive damage had firewall barriers not been built into the structure.

Several residents of the Kingsview complex went door to door when the fire was spotted, ushering out neighbors prior to the firefighters' arrival. In the aftermath, some occupants wandered through the parking lot, stroking pets held to their chests, while others comforted shocked neighbors arriving home to find the damage.

A preliminary assessment by officials estimated three units were damaged by the fire, while possibly up to seven others sustained water damage. Dye said he expects all apartments to be habitable again with some work, and the Red Cross had been called to respond and assist the victims.

Dye added that while a lightning strike is suspected, and was cited by numerous witnesses, the fire's cause has yet to be officially determined. An investigation is continuing.

By **BRAD HICKS**  
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The Unicoi County Commission is not quite ready to vote on funding a wellness program, at least not until they get more information from the county's insurance broker.

At a planning session meeting held prior to Monday's meeting of the Unicoi County Commission, commissioners heard from Jon Manfull, the county's insurance broker, who gave a presentation on a potential wellness program for county employees.

As health insurance costs continue to rise, Manfull said employers with more than 50 employees are turning to wellness programs in an attempt to lower premium costs. Manfull said according to numbers from the Wellness Councils of America, around 81 percent of employers falling into this category are implementing wellness programs and studies have shown that the savings-to-cost ratio for such programs is around \$3.50 to \$1.

Manfull told commissioners wellness programs have other benefits aside from possibly lowering premiums, including decreased absenteeism, increased productivity and a decrease in workman's comp and disability claims.

## Dog shot multiple times likely to lose leg

By **KEVIN CASTLE**  
NET News Service

KINGSPORT — A dog with multiple gunshot wounds was found under a pedestrian bridge on Sunday and will likely lose one of its legs due to a bullet shattering the bone.

Kingsport Animal Control Officer Kelly Dean said the female husky mix had retreated under a bridge near Sullivan Street at Reedy Creek, where she was found by police officers around 11 a.m. Sunday.

Kingsport Animal Shelter manager Donna Davidson said the discovery was made after a Kingsport police officer heard gunshots near the bridge and was investigating when he heard the dog whimpering.

"The (three) bullets are still (lodged) in her body. I'm pretty sure that one of her hind legs is going to have to be amputated. (The bullet) just shattered everything," Davidson said.

Another bullet was located in another leg, and a bullet was found in the dog's abdomen, Davidson said.

Kingsport Fire Department personnel assisted police officers in the rescue by bringing in a ladder and going underneath the bridge to lift the dog out.

The dog was wearing a multi-colored collar but had no identification tags. Davidson noted that Tennessee state law requires that all canines have ID tags on their collars that show the dog has received its rabies vaccine.

Dean said that in the event of an arrest, the suspect could face charges of animal cruelty along with possible firearms charges.

The husky underwent exploratory surgery Monday afternoon. Dr. Sean Hobbs of Family Pet Vet in Blountville donated his services to help the dog.

Davidson said if the dog pulls through the next week, she will have a long road to recovery including having to be retrained to walk with just the use of three legs.

"This dog just has the sweetest disposition, very friendly. This is just a sad case," she said.

Donations to help with the husky's care can be sent to: Kingsport Animal Shelter, 2141 Idle Hour Road, Kingsport, TN 37660.



David Grace/NET News Service

Kingsport Animal Shelter manager Donna Davidson holds a dog found under the Sullivan Street bridge over Reedy Creek on Sunday with two bullet wounds to its back and leg.