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Livesay honored at Second Harvest 40th anniversary

STAFF REPORT
news@therogersvillereview.com

KINGSPORT — From a tiny space in an old school cafeteria in upper Carter's Valley to a modern spacious 130,000 sq ft facility at the old "Sam's" warehouse in Kingsport, Second Harvest Food Bank has been serving the upper eight counties with emergency food assistance for 40 years.

This past week in Kingsport, amidst donors, most of the elected state officials from our region, county and city mayors, commissioners, gubernatorial candidate Marsha Blackburn, and a delegation from Feeding America national, Second Harvest recapped their many successes during this time.

Second Harvest is one of 250 food banks across America within the Feeding America network. Each of the food banks is designated a territory of counties to serve. The SHNET serves the upper 8 counties of NE Tennessee. SHNET serves 112 partner agencies like Of One Accord Ministry here in Rogersville, 76 Mobile Distribution Sites, 116 Backpacks for Kids Ministries, 52 Summer Feeding Sites, and has 275 Senior Home Delivery Recipients.

Already in 2026, they have distributed 13.5 million pounds of food, with a staff of 45 and 27,048 volunteer hours. Just in the weeks ahead these volunteers expect to make up 6,000 Thanksgiving boxes along with a turkey that will be distributed throughout the network of their food pantries.

Denis McDonough, Feeding America's President offered accolades to SHNET and to its director Rhonda Chaflin. McDonough said each year one of the 250 food banks in their network selects the best CEO within the network and in April the selection to receive this most coveted recognition called the John Van Hengel Award went to Rhonda Chaflin. McDonough described Rhonda as

See **HARVEST, A3**



CONTRIBUTED

Rhonda Chaflin of SHNET, the East Tennessee network of Second Harvest, presented Of One Accord's Sheldon Livesay with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work as part of Second Harvest's network. It was only the second time in 40 years such an award had been made.

Mount Carmel to receive



grow and thrive. We have seen massive upgrades to our parks, so families have a place to gather and make memories.

"We've invested in our departments to better serve our residents. And as always, our employees continue to be amazing at what they do. We've been fortunate enough to bring on an outstanding town manager who has helped move Mount Carmel forward in so many ways."

She finished by thanking everyone who had supported her, said she loved the community, and that it was an honor and a privilege to serve.

In the business session of the meeting, every item was passed by a unanimous vote of all present; Alderman Darby Patrick was unable to attend.

A significant new ordinance passed its first reading. The town plans to amend its municipal code to allow Mount Carmel to secure reimbursement if an accident involving hazardous materials occurs in the town. The town has to respond to such accidents and help clean them up, but at present, it also has to foot the bill for any clean-up if the responsible party chooses not to reimburse the town on their own.



JOHN CATE

Mount Carmel Fire Chief Mitch Walker (center) was recognized for five years of service to the town by Mayor John Gibson and Town Manager Tyler Williams.

This is an important issue, as large amounts of hazardous material do come through town, although Williams said that most of the time, companies do own their mishaps. The amendment will make this a requirement, stating that the financial burden of responding to hazardous materials incidents is assigned to the owner of the materials involved rather than the town and its citizens. The amendment will become law if it passes a second reading in November.

Other business transacted by the board included:

- New street parking regulations that had been discussed last month became law as they passed their second and final reading.Three candidates seeking election to the BMA were recognized and allowed to introduce themselves prior to the start of business.
- At Williams' suggestion, the town re-upped with Mattern & Craig, Inc. of Kingsport for professional services. The company has provided Mount Carmel with miscellaneous engineering services on an as-needed basis since 2022 and will receive an extension on its deal through March 31, 2032.
- The board voted to accept a $2,480 grant from the Public Entity Partners (PEP) Property Conservation Matching Grant Program. These funds will be used to reimburse the town's expenses for security cameras at its recycling center.
- Some items were declared as surplus property. A fire hose and adapters will be donated to the Striggersville Fire Department, while a 21' Hudson Equipment Trailer, North Star 55 gallon skid sprayer, 32" backhoe bucket, and a 12" ditch style backhoe bucket will all be auctioned on GovDeals.
- The board voted to re-appoint Barbara Cogliano to a new three-year term on the Library Board.

Harvest

From A1

"embodying the award's spirit through innovation, compassion, and improving dignified access to food."

Of One Accord Ministry, which serves Hawkins and Hancock counties through its three food pantries was recognized as the oldest and largest agency within the network. In a surprise recognition, Chaflin at the end of the luncheon, announced that twice in 40 years have they given out a single "Lifetime Achievement Award" to one of their agency leaders and that recognition for 2026 went to Sheldon Livesay, founder/director for Of One Accord.

Donors are encouraged to continue to give. Food was a major priority during COVID but attention to food needs have declined along with food supplies over the last couple of years. Yet with continued local resources, SHNET will continue meeting its goal that no one will go to bed hungry in NE Tennessee.

Chaflin ended by stating that for 40 years, SHNET has worked with a generous community to meet hunger needs. "Together with our agency partners, volunteers, businesses, donors, and friends, we have built more than a food bank. We have built a powerful network of compassion, connection, and hope.

after they had knee replacements. We've had some people stay for a year. A lot of people into history stay here!"

There is a poem about a house that is loved. Priscilla gives a copy to each guest. She said "This house embraces people!" Some guests have sent gifts to Priscilla after staying at the Homeplace. The rooms are filled with wonderful family antique furnishings.

Priscilla added "I appreciate our customers and how they feel about the house and the love they felt here. The house has given me a continuing connection with people. I have been blessed!"

Call 423-921-8424 for more information or visit "Homeplace B&B" on Facebook.

BESS From A1

is excess and distributes it when needed.

BESS is quite different in operation from crypto-mining and data centers. Crypto-mining and data centers require vast amounts of energy and water on a 24/7 basis. As stated above, BESS draws energy (charges) when there is excess, in periods of low demand. BESS distributes energy (discharges) when there is a need, resulting in lower costs to local utilities and electric cooperatives that supply power to consumers.

Care NET has invited Tenaska to hold an informational meeting for the public on Monday, Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at Holston Electric Cooperative, located at 1200 West Main Street in Rogersville. Tenaska staff will present information about the Bobwhite project and battery energy storage systems. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity for questions.

Care NET is a local environmental group with members in four East Tennessee counties: Hawkins, Hancock, Greene, and Grainger.

The public is encouraged to attend. For more information, contact Care NET at carenetsc@gmail.com.

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