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JILL PICKETT/The News-Enterprise

Irvin Lyons Jr., state commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, speaks about his time in the U.S. Army and his mission to ask cities in Kentucky to declare themselves Purple Heart cities.

## Vietnam soldier wants cities to support Purple Hearts

Lyons says supportive culture for military overdue

By AMBER COULTER  
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Irvin Lyons Jr. remembers rocks being thrown at his car by civilians when he was stationed with the U.S. Army at Fort Hood, Texas.

Lyons, now a Vine Grove resident, was disheartened when he came home from serving in Vietnam with two Purple Heart medals for being injured and twice during that year was faced with crowds of people furious with him and other military members.

They were called baby killers and told to go back where they came from, he said. "It was bad. It was bad," he said. "You wanted to get back on the airplane and go back to Vietnam. You got treated better there than you did here."

The veteran still has shrapnel in his left arm, which he couldn't use for three months after a rocket shattered against a nearby tank.

He narrowly avoided death when a vehicle he was riding in hit a land mine. He was knocked unconscious after being ejected. Grenades kept in the vehicle were discovered to have the pins half dislodged and were on the brink of being set off, which would have killed him.

Still, he returned to the U.S. feeling no one but his immediate family wanted him back.

Lyons thinks a climate of support for the troops is overdue, and he wants to encourage it by asking cities throughout the state to declare themselves Purple Heart cities.

Lyons, state commander for the Military Order of the Purple Heart, began a mission Monday with a visit to Vine Grove City

Turn to VETERANS, A16

## Library branch to reopen

Ribbon-cutting is Monday

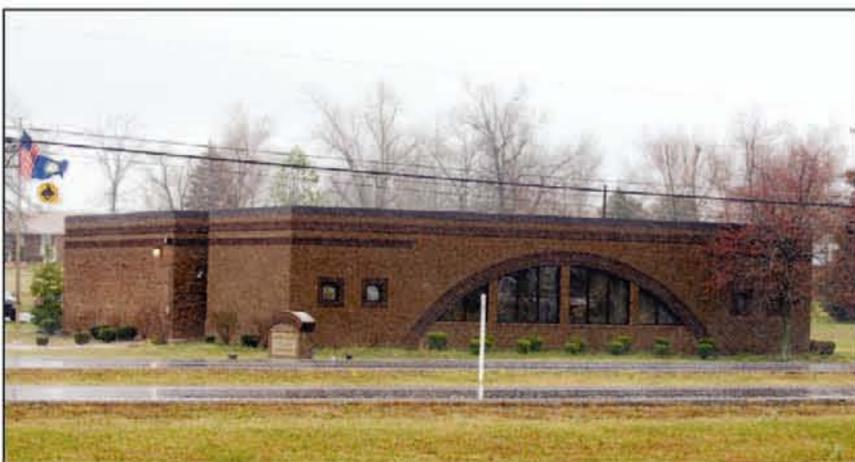
By MARTY FINLEY  
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Nearly five months out of commission, the north branch of the Hardin County Public Library is reopening its doors next week.

The Radcliff branch at 800 S. Logsdon Parkway reopens at 9 a.m. Monday and resumes regular hours, said Rene Hutcheson, county library director.

A grand reopening ceremony is scheduled for 3 p.m.

Turn to LIBRARY, A16



NEAL CARDIN/The News-Enterprise

The north branch of the Hardin County Public Library in Radcliff, seen here Thursday, reopens Monday after being closed for repairs.

## James T. Alton teacher captures ExCEL award



Photos by JILL PICKETT/The News-Enterprise

Roberts answers questions from seventh graders about a recent test.

Roberts embraces technology in the classroom

By SARAH BENNETT  
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The walls in seventh grade teacher Mark Roberts' classroom at James T. Alton Middle School are covered with University of Louisville and Pittsburgh Steelers sports memorabilia, which he says creates conversations between him and his students.

A language arts teacher, volleyball coach, assistant football coach and now ExCEL Award recipient for Hardin County Schools, Roberts describes his teaching philosophy as "whatever it takes" and is not afraid to use technology, even

Turn to EXCEL, A14

James T. Alton Middle School language arts teacher Mark Roberts answers a question about a recent test during a seventh-grade class Wednesday at the middle school in Vine Grove. Roberts was named the 2011-12 ExCEL award winner for Hardin County Schools.



## Middle school students head to state competition

Academic teams set to compete in Lexington

By KELLY CANTRALL  
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More than a dozen students

will represent Hardin County this weekend as they put their knowledge and recall skills to the test at a state competition.

Sixteen local middle school students will compete in the Governor's Cup State Finals, an academic competition in Lexington. Their challenge comes in the form of a written assessments — subject-specific tests such as

science and math. Participants advance to the state level by ranking in the top five in regional competition.

Hardin County is represented in each written assessment category. In addition, St. James Catholic Regional School and T.K. Stone Middle School will compete in a quick recall competition similar to TV show "Jeopardy!"

Most subjects feature several local students, but area competitors in the arts and humanities assessment swept the category. Placing first to fifth in regional competition, Grace Vowels of Bluegrass Middle School, Taylor Senay of T.K. Stone, Elizabeth Lemons of J.T. Alton, Sarah Erckenbrack of St. James and Gracie Hall of East Hardin will

compete at state in the category.

Hall has been an academic team member since she was a fourth-grader at Creekside Elementary School. She's been working toward a trip to state since she started.

"I'm a little nervous but I'm also excited because I've wanted to go to state since I was in the

Turn to STUDENTS, A15

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### SINCE YOU ASKED

Results of Thursday's *The News-Enterprise* online poll, as of 7 p.m.:

**QUESTION:** Should Kentucky encourage production of industrial hemp?  
Yes: 71 percent No: 29 percent

**TODAY'S QUESTION:** Do you prefer springing forward or falling back?

Find the poll question under the "opinion" menu at [www.thenewsenterprise.com](http://www.thenewsenterprise.com)

### TIME FOR A CHANGE



Don't forget, time springs forward Sunday



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