



# THE CANTON NEWS

Good News You Can Use • May 1, 2025 • Vol. 11, No. 5 • Canton, Mississippi

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Canton News  
P.O. Box 1163, Canton, MS 39046



Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

This May marks a significant milestone for Canton, Mississippi, as the beloved Canton Flea Market celebrates its 60th anniversary. What began in 1965 as a modest gathering of local artists has blossomed into one of the South's premier arts and crafts events, drawing thousands of visitors and vendors from across the nation.

#### A Humble Beginning

The inaugural Canton Flea Market was a simple affair. Local artists, primarily women, displayed their paintings on the iron fence surrounding the historic Madison County Courthouse. Their goal was to showcase their work and connect with the community. Little did they know, this modest art show would lay the foundation for a biannual tradition that would grow into a significant cultural and economic event for the region.

#### Growth and Recognition

Over the decades, the Canton Flea Market has expanded both in size and reputation. Held on the second Thursday of May and October, the event now attracts over 1,000 artisans and craftsmen who showcase their handmade creations, including pottery, jewelry, paintings, and unique crafts. The market's commitment to quality and authenticity has earned it numerous accolades, including being named one of the Top 20 Events in the Southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society and a Top 100 Event in North America by the American Bus Association.

#### Economic Impact

The Canton Flea Market is more than just an arts and crafts show; it's a significant economic driver for the region. The event draws up to 100,000 visitors annually,

infusing the local economy with millions of dollars in revenue from tourism, hospitality, and retail. Local businesses, restaurants, and hotels experience a surge in patronage, and vendors often report substantial sales, making the market a vital component of Canton's economic landscape.

#### A Community Affair

Beyond its economic impact, the Canton Flea Market is a cherished community event that fosters a sense of pride and unity. Families, friends, and visitors gather to enjoy the vibrant atmosphere, explore the diverse array of handmade goods, and partake in the rich cultural heritage of the region. The market's location on the picturesque Courthouse Square, with its historic architecture and tree-lined streets, provides a charming backdrop that enhances the over-

all experience.

#### Looking Ahead

As the Canton Flea Market celebrates its 60th anniversary, organizers and community leaders are already looking toward the future. Plans are underway to continue enhancing the event, ensuring it remains a premier destination for artisans and visitors alike. The commitment to preserving the market's legacy while embracing innovation promises to keep the Canton Flea Market a vital and beloved tradition for generations to come.

For those planning to attend, the next Canton Flea Market will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2025. Whether you're a longtime patron or a first-time visitor, the 60th-anniversary celebration promises to be a memorable experience filled with art, culture, and community spirit.



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# Goodloe Elementary hosts career fair featuring community partners



Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

Goodloe Elementary School recently held a career fair, giving students the opportunity to learn about a variety of career paths from professionals across multiple industries. The event was organized by school counselor Lindsey Durham.

The career fair featured representatives from several local and state organizations, including the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services,

Canton High NJROTC, Performance Therapy, State Farm, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Region 8 Mental Health Services.

Students were able to engage with presenters, ask questions and explore potential future careers through hands-on activities and informational displays.

School staff and organizers expressed appreciation for the support of the community partners who participated in the event.

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**Volume 11, Issue 5**

**Circulation 6,000**

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The Canton News is published on the first Thursday of each month in Canton, Mississippi.

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## Canton student Marleigh Stewart wins contest



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Marleigh Stewart, a student at Canton High School and member of South Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, has been named the winner of the James E. Todd Oratorical Contest, hosted by the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, Inc.

Stewart, who also recently earned the

title of Miss Canton High Runner-Up, competed in the high school seniors' division of the state-wide oratorical scholarship contest. As the contest winner, she will now go on to represent Mississippi at the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. in June.

Stewart is a member of South Liberty M.B. Church in Canton, where Rev. Dr. Antoine Barlow serves as pastor.

The James E. Todd Oratorical Contest provides high school seniors with the opportunity to develop and present speeches focused on issues of faith, leadership and community service, with winners advancing to compete on the national level.

Stewart's selection to represent the state places her among student leaders recognized for their public speaking and academic skills.

## FCCLA students volunteer at MadCAAP Easter event

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Members of Canton High School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter participated in a volunteer activity at MadCAAP (Madison Countians Allied Against Poverty) in Canton. The students organized and hosted an Easter-themed event for senior adults registered with the organization.

The event included egg decorating and a game of Bingo for attendees. After the activity, the students had lunch at Liberty Park, where they ate Chick-fil-A. The trip was organized by FCCLA advisors Mrs. Ruth and Mrs. Thomas.

MadCAAP is a nonprofit organization that serves individuals and families in Madison County living below the federally defined poverty line. Currently, the organization has approximately 2,800 client families. Services offered by MadCAAP include a food pantry, Helping Hands Garden, clothing closet, housing repair assistance, and educational programs such as "New Attitudes" classes and tutoring.

Additional programs include Project H.O.P.E., Vacation Bible School



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(VBS), STEM projects, and seasonal initiatives like the "Back to School" and "Holiday Adopt a Child" programs. MadCAAP also distributes Thanksgiving food boxes and frozen

turkeys to registered families.

The FCCLA students' visit was one of a number of community activities hosted at MadCAAP throughout the year.



## Nichols Middle School students visit Mississippi Museum of Natural Science



Special to The Canton News

By Courtney Warren

Goodloe Elementary School recently visited the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science as part of an educational field trip focused on science and environmental studies. During the visit, students explored a variety of exhibits, including displays on Mississippi's native wildlife, aquatic habitats and fossil records. The museum, located in LeFleur's Bluff State Park, offers hands-on learning experi-

ences and interactive exhibits designed to enhance science education. The trip provided students with an opportunity to connect classroom learning to real-world scientific concepts and explore topics such as biology, ecology and conservation. Teachers and staff accompanied the students, guiding them through educational activities and discussions related to the museum's collections. For more information about the museum and its programs, visit [www.mdwfp.com/museum](http://www.mdwfp.com/museum).

## Kylie Melons celebrates CAD with family spirit

By Courtney Warren

Kylie Melons, the family-owned produce market in Canton, recently hosted its annual Customer Appreciation Day, offering a heartfelt thank you to the community that has supported them over the years. The event highlighted the market's commitment to providing fresh, locally sourced produce and creating a welcoming environment for all visitors. Founded by Kylie Warren in 2011, Kylie Melons began as a humble roadside watermelon stand and has since evolved into a thriving market offering a variety of local products, including fruits, vegetables, dairy items and home-made goods. The Warren family's dedication to quality and service has been a cornerstone of the business's success. Kylie Melons is known for its Christian values and family-oriented atmosphere. The Warren family, including Kylie's parents, Eddie Jr. and Kathi,

his grandfather, Eddie Sr., and cousin, Warren Ellis, say they work together to ensure that every customer feels like part of the family. Their slogan, "Fresh produce with a smile," reflects their mission to provide not only quality products but also a positive shopping experience. During Customer Appreciation Day, patrons enjoyed special discounts, complimentary samples and the opportunity to meet the faces behind the market. The event served as a reminder of the importance of supporting local businesses and the impact they have on fostering a strong community spirit. Residents say Kylie Melons continues to be a beloved establishment in Canton, embodying the values of hard work, faith and family. As they look to the future, the Warren family says they remain committed to serving their community with the same dedication and warmth that has defined their business from the beginning.



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# Canton High band and dance team place at Delta State Battle of the Bands



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The Canton High School Baby Boom of the South and the Prancing Tigerettes secured second place in the Stand Battle Division I at the 2025 Delta State University Battle of the Bands, held earlier this year in Cleveland, Mississippi.

The event featured high school bands and dance teams from across the state,

offering participants a platform to demonstrate musical performance, choreography and coordination in a competitive environment. The Baby Boom of the South, alongside the Prancing Tigerettes, competed in the Division I category for both band and majorette routines.

According to event organizers, the Stand Battle competition focused on

showmanship, synchronization and overall performance quality. The Canton High School groups earned second place following multiple rounds of judged performances.

The Battle of the Bands was hosted by Delta State University and drew a large audience, as well as a variety of school programs from different regions. Performances were evaluated

by a panel of judges based on established criteria for musical and visual performance.

Photographic coverage of the event was provided by Chandler Rogers of Delta State University.

For more information on the Battle of the Bands or future participation, interested parties can visit the Delta State University events page.



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# Canton Tiger win 2025 State Personal Finance Championship

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The Canton High School Tiger Tycoons have been named the 2025 Mississippi Personal Finance State Champions in the High School Division II (Access Zone), marking their second consecutive state title.

The competition, hosted by the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE), brings together student teams from across the state to test their knowledge of personal finance principles. The Canton team advanced through the Division II category, which includes schools with similar access levels to economic education resources.

The 2025 Tiger Tycoons team includes Nelly Cardona-Rosales, Alexandria Luckett, Jalynn Dunigan and Henser Vicente. All four students participated in a series of assessments and competitive rounds focused on topics such as budgeting, saving, investing, credit management and financial decision-making.

The team was coached by Mrs. Teena Ruth, a faculty member at Canton High School, who provided guidance throughout the preparation and competition phases.

As state champions, the Tiger Tycoons have earned the opportunity



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to represent Mississippi at the national competition, which will be held in Atlanta in June 2025. The event brings together top teams from across the United States to compete in financial literacy chal-

lenges at the national level.

The Mississippi Council on Economic Education facilitates the state-level competition and promotes economic and financial literacy among students through

programs, resources and academic contests.

For more information about the competition or the upcoming national event, visit the MCEE website.

## Reviving a beacon of Canton's Past: Harreld Chevrolet Sign

*Special to The Canton News*

For over eight decades, Harreld Chevrolet stood as a beacon of small-town resilience and community pride in Canton, Mississippi. From its humble beginnings on West Peace Street in 1932, to the iconic neon glow of its Highway 51 location, the dealership built by W.E. Harreld, Sr. etched itself into the hearts of generations. Now, almost a decade after the Harreld family sold the business, the spirit of the dealership is set to shine again—literally.

On Friday, March 28, the Rose Garden Room at the Canton Welcome Center buzzed with excitement as master neon artisan Rene Pastor of Magic City Signs captivated the crowd with “All About Neon,” a vibrant presentation on the history and artistry of neon signage. The event marked more than just a nostalgic look back—it was the kickoff of a community-led effort to restore the legendary Harreld Chevrolet neon sign that has towered over Highway 51 since 1947.

“It was the largest neon sign in Mississippi at the time,” said Canton historian Jim Lacey, Jr., referencing the glowing landmark that once welcomed travelers from Chicago to New Orleans. “People would compare the big Harreld sign to the one atop the Peabody Hotel in Memphis.”

The fundraiser, hosted by Canton Tourism and spearheaded by the Canton-Madison County Historical So-



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ciety, seeks to return the sign to its former brilliance. If successful, Pastor and his team from Birmingham, Alabama will begin the restoration. Known for their work on HGTV's *Home Town*, Magic City Signs brings the experience and artistic vision

needed to honor the sign's legacy.

The Harreld Chevrolet story is a cornerstone of Canton's history. Founded during the Great Depression, the business weathered national crises including labor strikes, gas shortages, and even the 1979 Easter Flood. In 1947,

moving to a swampy plot just south of the town square seemed risky. But with a philosophy grounded in putting the customer first, the dealership flourished under three generations of Harreld leadership—W.E. Harreld, Sr., his son Bill Jr., and later, his grandson Jim.

Even as car dealerships grew larger and more corporate, Harreld Chevrolet retained its small-town charm. Loyal customers from Canton and the surrounding counties remained steadfast, drawn to the family's unwavering commitment to service and community.

Though the dealership was sold to Mac Haik in 2016, the legacy remains—in stories, in memories, and in the silent silhouette of its once-vibrant sign. Now, nearly 90 years after W.E. Harreld first opened his doors, Canton is rallying once again to preserve a piece of its identity.

“Neon is more than just light—it's history, it's emotion,” said Pastor during his presentation. Four grandchildren of the original sign's creator, Billy Will Harreld, were in attendance, their presence a living bridge between past and future.

As Canton eyes its 2036 Bicentennial, restoring the Harreld Chevrolet sign is more than a beautification project—it's a symbol of the city's enduring spirit. In the words of one attendee: “It's about lighting up our past to illuminate our future.”





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Preserving the past through hand tools



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Bill Macneill recently took time to clean and restore a collection of old hand tools once used by his grandfather, F.W. Macneill, his father, B.W. Macneill, and

family friend, Mr. Hammack. The tools, though simple in design, reflect the craftsmanship and utility of a past era and were valued for their effectiveness and durability.

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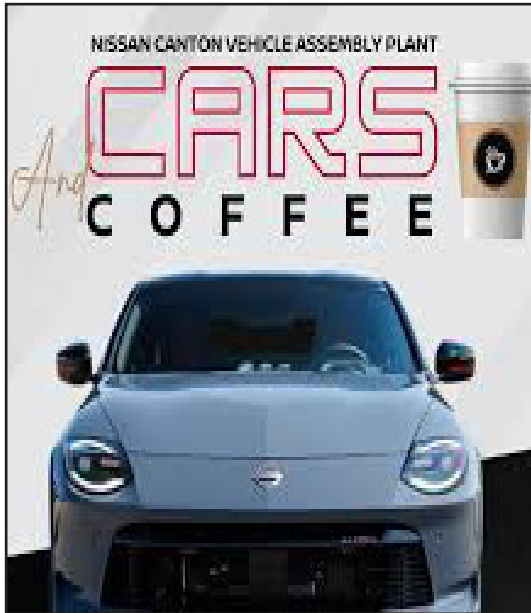


## Nissan Canton to host annual “Cars & Coffee” event on May 17, 2025

By Courtney Warren

Car enthusiasts and coffee lovers alike will have a reason to rev up their engines this spring as the Nissan Canton Vehicle Assembly Plant gears up to host its much-anticipated “Cars & Coffee” event on Saturday, May 17. This family-friendly gathering will take place from 8 a.m. to noon at 300 Nissan Drive at Gate 1, Training Center.

The event is free and open to the public, inviting guests from all walks of life to enjoy a morning surrounded by sleek vehicles, engaging conversation and the rich



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aroma of fresh coffee. Breakfast items and beverages will be available for purchase, creating the perfect morning outing for the local community.

“Cars & Coffee” is more than just a car show—it is an opportunity for community connection, automotive appreciation and relaxed Saturday fun. Whether an attendee is a die-hard car aficionado or just someone who enjoys a great cup of coffee, organizers say the event promises something for everyone, bringing together horsepower and hospitality in the heart of Mississippi.

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## Mr. and Miss Canton Academy Welch and Hughes

By Courtney Warren

Two outstanding seniors, Gates Welch and Ayden Hughes, were recently voted Mr. and Miss Canton Academy, a prestigious honor awarded to students who exemplify leadership, character, academic excellence, and school spirit.

Both Welch and Hughes have spent the majority of their school careers at Canton Academy and have become shining examples of what it means to be a Panther.

Welch, the daughter of Kevin and Margaret Welch and sister to Evan and Austin Welch, has attended Canton Academy since the fourth grade. A resident of Canton and an active member of First Baptist Church of Canton, she has excelled in both academics and extracurricular activities throughout her time at CA.

Throughout high school, Welch has consistently maintained high academic standards, earning a place on the Principal's List and being recognized as an Academic All-Star. She is a member of the National Honor Society, where she served as Parliamentarian during her junior year. Her leadership extends beyond the classroom, having been elected 10th Grade Class President and serving as Student Body Secretary during her junior and senior years. She also holds the role of Treasurer for the Fellowship of Christian High School Students for



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the 2023-2024 school year.

Welch's achievements go well beyond academics and leadership. She has been recognized in the school's annual “Who's Who,” voted a Top 5 Beauty, Class Favorite, Most Athletic, Best Personality, and was honored with the pres-

tigious CA Forever Award her senior year. This fall, she was crowned 2024 Homecoming Queen, an honor voted on by her peers.

An all-around athlete, Welch has participated in cheerleading, softball, track, and basketball. She served as JV Cheer

Co-Captain and Varsity Cheer Captain, earning All-American Cheerleader honors five times and receiving the “Pin It Forward” award three times. In softball, she was named Most Valuable Player and selected as an All-District player

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# On the shelf: Great books for summer

By Courtney Warren

The school year is almost over! Normally, I am not one to look forward to summer. I love being in school and in the classroom. However, I am excited for the new reading opportunities. With the recent concerns for our local libraries and indie bookstores, be sure to stop by and see what you can find! Grab your sunscreen, put on the swimsuit, and settle down with a new read.

## Picture Book:

*Don't Trust Fish* by Neil Sharpson and Dan Santat

*Don't Trust Fish* by Neil Sharpson, with illustrations by Dan Santat, is a delightfully fun and humorous picture book that challenges young readers to question everything they know about fish. With playful text and vibrant illustrations, this book introduces a world where things are not always as they seem, making it a perfect blend of humor and imagination. Kids will laugh out loud while learning important lessons about trust and curiosity in the most unexpected places. I absolutely love anything illustrated by Dan Santat. I had the opportunity to hear him speak shortly after he won the Caldecott Award, the highest award one can receive for picture books. He has become an "autobuy" author for me.

**Middle Grade:** *Kaya of the Ocean* by Suzanne Brown

How amazing is this cover? It reminds me of the Disney movie *Rip Girls*, which I was in love with as a child. According to the publisher, *Kaya of the Ocean* by Suzanne Brown is an exciting and heartwarming middle grade adventure. Kaya, a brave young girl with an extraordinary connection to the ocean,

embarks on a journey to uncover the mysteries hidden beneath the waves. With themes of friendship, courage and environmental awareness, this book will captivate young readers and inspire them to explore the world around them with curiosity



and empathy.

**Young Adult:** *All We Lost Was Everything* by Sloan Harlow

I was able to read the Advanced Reader's Copy of this book, and finished it so fast. I imagine it being the perfect beach read thriller. In *All We Lost Was Everything*, Sloan Harlow explores the intense and often painful journey of young love and self-discovery. Set against a backdrop of a close-knit community, the novel follows two teens trying to navigate their relationship in the face of family secrets and societal pressures. Harlow's emotional depth and vivid characters make this a must-read

for fans of young adult romance and coming-of-age stories.

**Adult Fiction:** *Great Big Beautiful Life* by Emily Henry

One of my most anticipated books for the summer! I love any and all Emily Henry books. Emily Henry's latest novel, *Great Big Beautiful Life*, follows two rival biographers competing to write about a

reclusive heiress. As they delve into her past, they uncover unexpected truths about themselves and their growing feelings for each other. Known for her engaging storytelling, Henry delivers another romantic tale filled with wit and emotion.

**Adult Nonfiction:** *Everything Is Tuberculosis* by John Green

Hear me out...sure, tuberculosis doesn't exactly scream "summer," but I'm trying to expand my nonfiction reading. I love John Green, and I'm always into learning new things, so I say we both give this one a shot...and also take a vitamin. According to the publisher, in this thought-provoking work, John Green examines the history and impact of tuberculosis, intertwining medical insights with personal narratives. *Everything Is Tuberculosis* offers a unique perspective on the disease and its societal implications, making it a compelling read for nonfiction enthusiasts.

Whether you're lounging by the pool or relaxing at home, these books offer a diverse range of stories to enrich your summer reading experience. Happy reading!

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Lions donate photo to The Old Jail Museum

By Courtney Warren

The Canton Lions Club has made a contribution to local history by donating a photograph of the 1950 Canton Lions to The Old Jail Museum in Canton. The photo was presented by Timmy Pickett, the club's 2025 Tail Twister, to Maureen Simpson, President of the Canton-Madison County Historical Preservation Society.

The Lions Club is part of Lions Clubs International, a global service organization focused on community service, vision care, youth engagement and disaster relief. The Canton Lions Club has been active for decades, supporting a variety of local initiatives and projects. The photo, featuring members of the 1950 club, will be preserved and



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displayed at The Old Jail Museum, which serves as a historical archive for the city and Madison County. The museum is operated by the Canton-Madison County Historical Preservation Society and is dedicated to preserving and sharing the region's cultural and civic heritage.

The donation highlights the Lions Club's ongoing commitment to community service and local history. The organization continues to support a range of causes in Canton, including vision screenings, scholarships and public service initiatives.

For more information about the Canton Lions Club or The Old Jail Museum, contact the Canton-Madison County Historical Preservation Society.

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# Brown named Canton High School STAR Student

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Canton High School has announced Kenyatta Brown as its 2025 STAR Student and Mrs. Aleatrice Liddell as its STAR Teacher. Both individuals are being recognized as part of the Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) Program, which is administered by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC).

The STAR Student program acknowledges Mississippi high school seniors who have demonstrated academic excellence and ACT test achievement. To be eligible, students must be regularly enrolled seniors or approved dually enrolled students in accredited public or private high schools or post-secondary institutions. Candidates must be completing their final year of high school, be eligible to graduate in the current academic year, and meet a minimum ACT composite score of 25. Additionally, they must have an overall academic average of 93 or above in selected core subjects—English, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language—taken in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and first semester of twelfth grade.

Selection of the STAR Student is based on the highest ACT score earned by December 31 of the year prior to the Education Celebration. If more than one student meets the minimum criteria and



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scores a composite ACT of 35 or higher, each is eligible to be designated as a STAR Student.

Upon designation, the STAR Student selects a STAR Teacher—an educator the student believes has made the most

significant contribution to their academic achievement. Brown selected Mrs. Aleatrice Liddell for this honor.

STAR Students and STAR Teachers must be U.S. Citizens or lawful permanent residents and Mississippi residents to be eligible for recognition and any scholarship opportunities associated with the program. While the STAR program itself does not directly award scholarships, eligible students may be considered for awards through external organizations such as the Kelly Gene Cook, Sr. Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Both honorees will be recognized at the Mississippi Economic Council's annual Education Celebration, where all STAR Students and STAR Teachers across the state receive certificates. The event highlights academic accomplishments and acknowledges the role educators play in student success.

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CPSD recognizes PREPS award winners



Special to The Canton News

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The Canton Public School District (CPSD), under the leadership of Superintendent Gary Hannah and the Board of Trustees, recognized the district's 2024 PREPS Award recipients for their performance on the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP).

The Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools (PREPS) awards highlight schools across Mississippi that demonstrate outstanding academic achievement. The awards are based on student performance data from the annual MAAP assessments.

Canton Elementary School received the Third Grade Math Achievement Award and the Fourth Grade English

Language Arts (ELA) Achievement Award.

Goodloe Elementary School received the Fifth Grade ELA Achievement Award.

Reuben B. Myers Canton School of Arts and Sciences received both the Fifth Grade ELA and Math Achievement Awards.

Huey Porter Middle School received the Seventh Grade Math Achievement Award.

District officials acknowledged the accomplishments of the recognized schools and noted the continued focus on academic progress and student success. The PREPS awards are part of an effort to identify and share best practices in education across the state.

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# Canton Academy announces winners of 2025 Most Beautiful Pageant



Sterling Belle Brock, Addison Cado, Anna Howell Nichols, Jordyn Claire Watkins, and Kennedy Callahan.

Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy recently held its annual Most Beautiful Pageant, recognizing students from both the high school and junior high divisions for their participation and achievements in the event.

Anna Howell, a junior, was named High School Most Beautiful. She is the daughter of Rob and Jill Nichols and participates in several school activities, including cheerleading, track and serving as a Diamond Girl for the baseball team. Howell is also active in her church, Broadmoor Baptist Church, and is involved in the youth group.

In addition to school and church activities, Howell volunteers through the Madison Junior Civinettes Club and the Jackson Symphony League

Sub Deb program, where she serves as an ambassador. Her volunteer work includes events such as TOPSoccer, the Masquerade Sneaker Ball, and assisting with resident activities at The Home Place dementia unit.

Howell plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi after graduation and pursue a nursing degree from the University of Mississippi School of Nursing. She stated that her parents' careers in healthcare have influenced her interest in the field.

**The Top 5 High School Beauties recognized at the pageant were:**  
- Sterling Belle Penn (10th grade)  
- Addison Cado (11th grade)  
- Anna Howell Nichols (11th grade)



All photos Special to The Canton News

Amery Cado, Layla Butler, Harper Lampkin, Addyson Reams, and Addison Penn

- Jordyn Claire Watkins (12th grade)  
- Kennedy Callahan (12th grade)

In the junior high division, Harper Lampkin, a ninth grader, was named Junior High Most Beautiful. She is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Will Lampkin of Canton and has attended Canton Academy since K4. Lampkin is involved in academics, athletics and extracurricular activities, including the National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the JV Cheerleading Squad, where she served as captain. She was named All-American Cheerleader at UCA camps in both eighth and ninth grades. Lampkin also participates in cross

country, track, basketball and serves as a Diamond Girl. She has been class president, class favorite and will serve as student body treasurer for the 2025–26 school year. Lampkin is a member of First Church of Canton and attends Pinelake Youth on Wednesdays.

**The Top 5 Junior High Beauties included:**  
- Amery Cado (7th grade)  
- Layla Butler (7th grade)  
- Harper Lampkin (9th grade)  
- Addyson Reams (8th grade)  
- Addison Penn (8th grade)

The event was held at Canton Academy and included participants from various grade levels in both divisions.

## CA hosts annual Spring Fling Drawdown with support from local sponsors



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy recently held its annual Spring Fling Drawdown, bringing together families, supporters and members of the community for an evening of fundraising, food and fun. The event featured a reverse raffle, prize giveaways and entertainment, with proceeds benefiting school programs and campus improvements. School officials say the success of the event was made possible through

the generous support of this year's gold-level sponsors. The event was supported by a number of generous sponsors, including Rinewalt Electric, Peppers Erosion Control, Madison County Co-Op, JD Chisolm Construction, and Don and Debbye McGraw. We're also grateful for the support of Arthur and Laurie Noble, Andy and Sarah Stewart, and Heath Jenkins with Regional Holdings Corporation. Additional thanks



All photos Special to The Canton News

go to Charlie and Mary Elizabeth McLean, Pink Possum Boutique, Quick Fill, Quality Cleaners, LH Harris Construction, I Defend, Graphx and More, Breeland Funeral Home, and Hopper Properties. Canton Academy Head of School Ryan Laster expressed appreciation to all those involved, stating, "Thank you to everyone who participated in the annual Spring Fling Drawdown. We're incredibly grateful for your involvement in this important

fundraiser. A special thank you to our board members for doing such a wonderful job organizing the event. Your support helps us continue to improve our campus and curriculum, providing even greater opportunities for our students." The Spring Fling Drawdown is a longstanding tradition at Canton Academy, helping to fund ongoing educational initiatives and foster community engagement within the school.



CA recognizes STAR Student Perry



Special to The Canton News

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Claiborne Perry has been named Canton Academy’s 2025 STAR Student, as part of the Mississippi Economic Council’s Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) Program. This marks Perry’s first year at Canton Academy. To be eligible for the STAR Student designation, students must be high school seniors who meet specific academic criteria, including a minimum ACT composite score of 25 and a cumulative grade average of 93 or higher in designated core subjects. Perry, a member of the varsity baseball team, maintains a GPA above 4.0 and has signed to continue his education and athletic career at Holmes Community College.

As part of the STAR Program, each STAR Student selects a STAR Teacher—an educator who has made a significant impact on their academic development. Perry chose Ms. Herring Moseley, citing her support and shared interest in agriculture as key factors in his selection. Perry and Moseley attended the Mississippi Economic Council’s annual STAR Student-Teacher Recognition Celebration held on April 10 at the Clyde Muse Center in Pearl. The event honors students and teachers from across the state who have met the STAR Program qualifications. For more information about the STAR Program, visit the Mississippi Economic Council’s official website.

CA biology students complete dissection lab



Special to The Canton News

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Seniors in Ms. Moseley’s advanced biology class at Canton Academy recently completed their dissection lab series focused on Kingdom Animalia. As part of the unit, students dissected perch, bullfrogs and fetal pigs to examine and identify both internal and external anatomical features. The lab work serves as the founda-

tion for a comparative analysis essay that students will now be required to write, using their observations and findings from the dissections. Senior Amelia Rose Cook is pictured participating in the lab. The dissection unit marks the culmination of the class’s study of animal biology and is a key hands-on component of the Advanced Biology curriculum.

cont. from page 9

Mr.

for MAIS 4A. Welch also excelled in track and field, winning multiple district and state championships in discus and shot put, and holds the school record in both events. Additionally, she was recognized as the Offensive MVP for varsity girls’ basketball her junior year. She also supported the Panther baseball team as a Diamond Girl. Outside of school, Welch is active in her community as a member of the Madison County Civinettes, participating in various charitable activities. In her free time, she enjoys shopping, spending time with family and friends, and cheering on the Mississippi State Bulldogs. After graduation, she plans to attend Mississippi State University to major in pre-nursing before continuing her education to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). Joining her as Mr. Canton Academy is Hughes, who has been part of the Canton Academy family for the past 14 years. He is the son of Jennifer and Will Hughes and the proud older brother of Ava and Waye Hughes. Like Welch, Hughes resides in Canton and attends First Baptist Church of Canton. Hughes has consistently demonstrated academic excellence, earning a place on the Headmaster’s List every year of high school. He is a member of the

National Honor Society and currently serves as its President. In addition to his academic achievements, he is a leader within the student body, holding the position of Senior Class Vice President and having served on Student Council throughout high school. A standout athlete, Hughes has competed in football, basketball, baseball, and track. He has been named All-District in both football and basketball during his junior and senior years and was recognized as an All-Conference basketball player his junior year. On the track, Hughes excelled as the school’s top long-distance runner in his sophomore and junior years. When not excelling on the field or in the classroom, Hughes enjoys spending his time hunting, fishing, working, and being with family and friends. After graduation, he plans to attend Holmes Community College, where he will major in electrical engineering. Both Welch and Hughes have made a lasting impact at Canton Academy through their commitment to academics, leadership, athletics, and community involvement. As they prepare to take their next steps, they leave behind a legacy of excellence, kindness, and dedication that will inspire future generations of CA students.

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# April garden tours bring May plant swaps



All photos Special to The Canton News

By Guest Columnist Jessica Stein

In early April, Canton Garden Club ventured to the big city to see the home and garden of esteemed author Eudora Welty. Welty's father, Christian, built the house in 1925 in the style of Tudor Revival. Welty and her mother Chestina transformed the landscape over more than three decades. As one Garden Club member reminisced: "Visiting the Eudora Welty

home was a step back into the past. The home is unchanged since the day she moved there with her parents as a sixteen-year-old girl. The occupants of the home now are the memories and the books she so loved." After the official tour, members roamed the grounds, appreciating the phlox, clematis, iris, roses and many other blooms crowding the garden. Of particular historical note were the

camellias and daylilies. We learn so much on our field trips and make new connections through shared joy. For club business, we traipsed across the street to an open room at Belhaven University and enjoyed refreshments provided by hostesses Mary Margaret Buchanan, Joy Foy and Wanda Baldwin. Canton Garden Club will complete more work towards finishing the pavilion space across from the Co-op,

with a spring volunteer planting day. Many members also made it out to the Great Canton Cleanup, which had fifty or more participants! Keep your eyes peeled for ongoing information for Upstairs Downtown, a great event in the late fall to celebrate Canton and the Garden Club. Next month, we close out our annual meetings with the traditional plant swap at Patina Farm.



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# Nissan Frontier named “Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi”

Special to The Canton News

The Nissan Frontier has been named the “Coolest Thing Made in Mississippi” for winning the 2025 Mississippi Makers’ Challenge hosted by the Mississippi Manufacturers Association. The award recognizes the Frontier for its craftsmanship and innovation. The vehicle is manufactured at Nissan’s Canton, Mississippi facility, and is powered by engines built at Nissan’s power-train plant in Decherd, Tennessee.

“The rugged appearance, strong V6 engine, and capability are what makes the Frontier super cool. However, it is Nissan employees’ dedication and passion that make our vehicles really stand out,” said David Johnson, senior vice president, Manufacturing, Supply Chain Management and Purchasing, Nissan Americas. “Their hard work has made the Frontier a great product, and we are proud to be part of Mississippi’s vibrant manufacturing community.”

This year’s competition received 70 nominations for Mississippi’s manufacturers, highlighting the diversity in the state’s manufacturing sector. The Frontier advanced through four competitive rounds of public voting to claim the top spot with more than 41 percent of the vote in the final round.

“The craftsmanship from Canton employees ensures that our vehicles perform at their very best - making it a

reliable, versatile, and capable truck,” said Victor Taylor, vice president, Manufacturing, Canton Vehicle Assembly Plant, Nissan U.S. “Our pride in what we do shines through in every Frontier that rolls off the assembly line, and this recognition celebrates our employees’ efforts and commitment.”

The award was presented during a ceremony at the Mississippi State Capitol on Thursday. The event honored the top four finalists and celebrated the state’s manufacturing industry.

For further details on the Nissan Canton Vehicle Assembly Plant, please visit [nissanmanufacturing.com](http://nissanmanufacturing.com).

About the Nissan Frontier

The 2025 Nissan Frontier features a refreshed design, higher towing capacities, and updated technology. All grades sport a new front fascia, grille, and bumper, along with a telescopic steering wheel for better driver accommodation. The long-wheelbase, six-foot-bed configuration is now available on more models, including PRO-4X and SL grades, with towing ratings increased to a maximum of 7,160 pounds.

Additional updates include a larger 12.3-inch touchscreen on SV grades and higher, a striking Afterburn Orange paint option (PRO-X/PRO-4X only), and a new 17-inch wheel design. Safety and driver assistance technologies such as Lane Departure Warning, Blind Spot



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Warning, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Rear Parking Sensors, High Beam Assist, and Intelligent Cruise Control are now standard.

The 2025 Frontier also comes with the Nissan Maintenance Care program, offering three pre-paid oil changes for up to two years or 24,000 miles.



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# Coach Ben Williams returns to lead Panther girls' basketball

By Courtney Warren



Ben Williams

Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy is welcoming the return of longtime educator and coach Ben Williams to the Panther basketball court for the 2025 season.

Coach Williams will resume his role as head coach for both junior high and varsity girls' basketball teams—roles he has held at various points over his nearly thirty-year coaching career.

The upcoming school year will mark Coach Williams' 16th year at Canton Academy. In addition to coaching, he will continue leading the school's track and cross country programs and teaching multiple science courses, where he is known for incorporating hands-on learning experiences.

Coach Williams holds multiple degrees from Delta State University and has completed the MAIS Leadership Institute's Administration Certification. Over the course of his career, he has served in several educational leadership roles, including principal, interim Head of School, athletic director and science teacher.

His coaching résumé includes experience across a wide range of sports, with eleven Mississippi Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) State Championships to his credit. He has also been named MAIS Coach of the Year eleven times.

Coach Williams' connection to Canton Academy is deeply rooted. His wife, Robin Williams, has taught in the school's preschool program for fifteen years. Their children, A.B. (Class of 2015) and Jenson (Class of 2019), are both Canton Academy alumni and have pursued careers in education and coaching.

School officials say Coach Williams' return adds continuity and experience to the school's athletics program as the Panthers prepare for the upcoming season.

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# Canton Academy student excels at MAIS State Reading Fair

By Courtney Warren

Virginia Dare Ford, a second-grade student at Canton Academy, earned top honors at the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) State Reading Fair, placing first overall and second in character portrayal in the fiction category for her grade level.

The MAIS State Reading Fair is an annual event that brings together students from across the state to celebrate reading and literary expression. Participants present their favorite books through creative storyboards or digital media displays. Students must first qualify through local and district-level competitions before advancing to the state fair.

Ford presented her project on the book Molly's Christmas Surprise, by Lauren Clauss, demonstrating a strong understanding of the story's themes, characters and plot. Judges say her overall first-place award and recognition in character portrayal highlight her reading comprehension, creativity and ability to engage with literary content at a high level.

The MAIS Reading Fair is designed to promote literacy and encourage a love for reading among students in Mississippi's independent schools. Through projects like Ford's, the event fosters critical thinking, communication skills and an appreciation for literature at an early age.

Canton Academy administrators



Special to The Canton News

and teachers commended Ford on her achievement, noting the dedication and enthusiasm she brought to the project.

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