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Morgan Shepherd, age 9, snowboarding at Engelberg in the heavy snow that fell Christmas night in Randolph County. More snow pictures beginning on page 10.

2012 will be remembered as the year of the drought

Blizzard warning on Christmas first for area

Dalton Sullivan
Star Herald Staff

If 2011 is remembered as the "Year of the Great Flood," then 2012 will be remembered as the "Year of the Drought."

Just 16 months after the Black River in Pocahontas set a record high crest of 28.48 in April 2011, it was in August of this year when Black River dropped to -0.21 on Aug. 10.

To give an idea of what a difference a year makes, according to the National Weather Service, in the first six months of 2011, Pocahontas received 46.10 inches of rain, while in 2012, over the same January 1-June 30 period of time, the city only received 15.28 inches of rain, and only 4.88 inches of that falling between March 22 and July 18.

Through Wednesday, Dec. 26, Pocahontas had received 34.83 inches of precipitation in 2012, less than half of the 76.22 inches that fell in 2011. This year's total is the lowest since just over 36 inches fell in 2005. Since 1995, there have only been three years, 2000, 2005 and 2012, where Pocahontas received less than 40 inches of precipitation.

September was the wettest month of the year, but that is relative, as only 5.30 inches fell that month. May was the

driest month of the year, when less than an inch, 0.93 inches fell. February 3 lays claim to the wettest day of the year, as 1.93 inches fell on that date.

Amazingly, the wettest stretch of the year was only three days, and that happened on five separate occasions during the year. The longest dry stretch was only 13 days, and occurred between May 16-29.

Snow fell three times in 2012, the first time being on February 13, and then the 10-inch Christmas snow of Dec. 25-26.

On Christmas Eve, the National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning for the area, saying anywhere from six to 12 inches of snow could fall. Then early Christmas morning, they cancelled the Winter Storm Warning and issued a Blizzard Warning for much of northeast Arkansas and parts of southeast Missouri due to the anticipated heavy snow and high winds. It was the first time the National Weather Service had ever issued a blizzard warning for this part of the country.

Randolph County residents woke Wednesday morning to 10 inches of snow covering the ground.

On Monday, July 30, the afternoon temperature in

Pocahontas topped out at 107 degrees, making it the hottest day in Pocahontas in over 26 years. In July 1986, there was one day when the mercury topped out at 110 degrees. Before that, the temperature also hit 110 degrees in the very hot summer of 1980. In all, the mercury topped 100 degrees eight times in 2012, and reached 90 or above on 72 different days, the most since 1980.

If you want to escape the heat, you might make plans to be out of town on Aug. 3. In 2010 and 2011, the hottest day of the year was on that date, as the mercury topped out at 103 degrees in 2011, and on the same date in 2010, the temperature hit 101. This year the mercury hit 102 on that date, making it the third hottest day of the year, and the third August 3rd in a row the temperature reached 100 degrees.

The coldest day of the year came on February 12 when the temperature dropped to 17 degrees. In case you are wondering, the temperature has not officially dropped below zero since Feb. 3, 1996, when it was one below.

The last day below freezing was February 21, while the first morning below freezing

Quorum Court has first meeting of the new year

Less than half an hour after the nine members of the Randolph Quorum Court were sworn in on New Year's Day, the Randolph County governing body had its first meeting of 2013.

Per state law, all quorum courts must meet within the first five days of the new year for an organizational meeting. With all justices present for Tuesday morning's swearing in ceremony, the court met for less than 10 minutes to conduct the state mandated business.

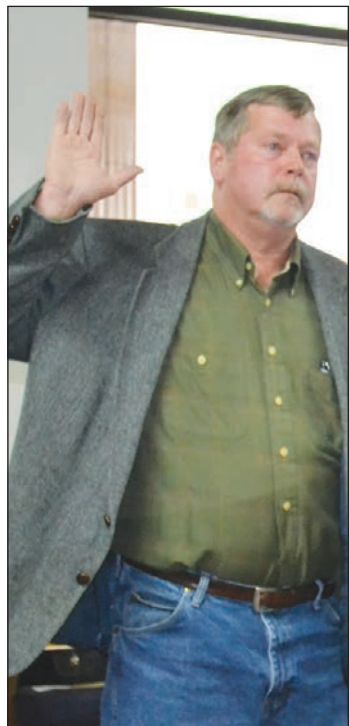
First, the Randolph County Quorum Court voted unanimously to continue having their regular monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month. Secondly, the court again voted unanimously to keep the format of each meeting's agenda the same as it has been

in years past.

There were several new faces around the table at the meeting, which took place less than 30 minutes after the swearing in ceremony. New County Clerk Bobbie Lane took part in her first meeting as the elected County Clerk, and three new Justices of the Peace, Steve Fermines, Wayne Gearhart and Bill Harper, took part in their first meetings.

The Randolph County Quorum Court will meet again in regular session on Thursday, Jan. 10.

The meeting in the Randolph County Courtroom came after Randolph County Circuit Judge Phil Smith swore in all of the elected officials from Randolph County and their deputies, as well as elected officials from the cities of Pocahontas, Biggers, Reyno, Maynard, O'Kean and Ravenden Springs.



Randolph County Judge David Jansen takes the oath of office Tuesday morning at the Randolph County Courthouse. Jansen is beginning his fifth term as the Randolph County Judge. (Star Herald photo by Dalton Sullivan)



Pocahontas Fire Chief-Designate Jimmy Shields (right) presents a plaque to outgoing Fire Chief Scott Baltz (left) in appreciation of his 31 years of service to the Pocahontas Fire Department Monday night. Baltz was elected to the State House of Representatives in November. The Pocahontas City Council still must approve Mayor Frank Bigger's appointment of Shields to the post. (Star Herald photo by Dalton Sullivan)

A look back at news printed in the Pocahontas Star Herald in 2012

- January**
10 - The Pocahontas City Council approves a \$1 million loan to finance the purchase of new equipment for Five Rivers Medical Center (FRMC).
12 - The Randolph County Quorum Court (RCQC) passes a resolution in support of rural polling sites.
12 - Manuel Melton Priest, 58, of Delaplaine is killed in a one-vehicle accident on Hwy. 304 near the Randolph-Greene County line.
13 - Randolph County Clerk Janis Mock announces her plan to retire at the end of the year.
Mid Jan. - Black River Technical College (BRTC) begins preparations for their 10-year accreditation visit.
16 - Martin Luther King

- Jr. March and Program at Pocahontas Community Center and Eddie Mae Heron Center (EMHC).
16 - The Pocahontas School Board votes to extend the contract of Superintendent Daryl Blaxton for one year, which will now run through June 30, 2015.
19 - Farmers from Arkansas, Missouri and Tennessee attend a peanut-growing summit at BRTC hosted by the Randolph County Extension Office.
19 - Maynard school officials host a public meeting regarding their proposed building expansion.
24 - Maynard seventh-grader James Hamilton wins the Randolph County Spelling Bee by correctly spelling A-D-O-

- B-E.
26 - Arkansas Supreme Court upholds the 2010 rape conviction of Charles "Chad" W. Green. He had been convicted on four counts.
27 - Hwy. 67 Coalition members from Arkansas and Missouri meet with Gov. Mike Beebe and Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) Director Scott Bennett to express their desire that AHTD not build Hwy. 67 to interstate standards north of Walnut Ridge.
30 - Pocahontas Lady Redskins win 4A-3 conference basketball title.
February
1 - Hwy. 67 at Reyno is closed for hours following an accident involving three trac-

- tor trailers. Incredibly, no one is killed.
2 - AHTD holds public meeting in Portia regarding new Black River Bridge at Black Rock.
6 - Randolph County Tax Assessor Randy Patterson announces he will retire and not seek re-election.
9 - Six Randolph County residents are arrested by the FBI on federal drug charges as part of an ongoing federal investigation. Three others are indicted later.
9 - The RCQC agrees to support the city of Pocahontas in their effort to establish an ambulance franchise.
11 - Former Pocahontas resident Karen Swift, is buried in Pocahontas, nearly two

- months after her body was found near Dyersburg, Tenn. She had been missing for about six weeks.
13 - Two inches of snow falls in Randolph County.
14 - The Pocahontas City Council donates 25 acres in the Pocahontas Industrial Park to Kyle and Jeremy Baltz for construction of a peanut drying and buying facility.
21 - The Randolph County Election Commission holds a public meeting regarding consolidation of polling places.
23 - The Lady Redskins qualify for the Class 4A state tournament with a win over Marianna in the regionals.
29 - Jason and Audrey Clark of Pocahontas win \$1 million from Publishers Clearing

- House.
March
1 - First "Stroll the Square" sponsored by the Randolph County Chamber of Commerce.
5 - Japanese businessmen are in Randolph County to tour peanut farms and peanut facilities.
6 - Pocahontas Schools hire former Highland Coach Harlan Davis to be the new girls' basketball coach to replace Marty Moore, who had been named Junior High Principal.
9 - Emergency officials from Randolph, Lawrence and Greene counties hold a hands-on tornado drill at Sloan-Hendrix High School.
12 - In pre-trial motions
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