

SEVIER VIEWS
ON NEWS

LOCAL

Tennessee Donor Services donates computers

Tennessee Donor Services (TDS) donated 50 computers, including 40 CPUs and 10 laptops, to Kingsport's "Hunger First". TDS is a donation company that serves over 6 million people in Tennessee and Vir-

ginia. These donations will help "Hunger First" assist low-income people find jobs and learn new skills. TDS and "Hunger First" plan to use a partnership to give back and educate the community.



"It should help them a lot so they could find who needs help and who doesn't."

Noah Smith,
6th Grade

STATE

New 3rd grade law causes controversy

Tennessee lawmakers have passed a law which states that 3rd graders will be held back if they don't pass the state reading test. Students who fail will be required to retake the test, take extensive tutoring, or go

to summer school in order to avoid the retention. Lawmakers have already proposed two bills to modify the law. One proposes to let the school districts decide if the student has shown enough growth to move on.



"Before we do that, we need to investigate why they're behind in reading."

Kristy Williamson-Jackson,
Teacher

NATION

Major tech companies lay off workers

Microsoft, as well as other major companies, plan to lay off thousands of employees due to inflation. The rise of inflation has weighed on consumer spending. Rising interest rates have also slowed down spend-

ing. The demand for digital services during the pandemic has also slowed as people return to their offline lives. Tech CEOs have blamed themselves for over-hiring early on in the pandemic.



"They need someone to fix a problem in case something goes wrong."

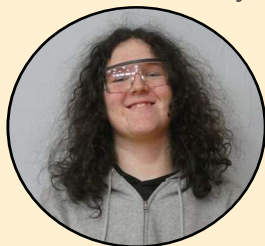
Gage Rosen,
8th Grade

WORLD

US plans to send tanks to Ukraine

After weeks of discussion, the Biden administration has decided to send Abrams tanks to Ukraine. The current plan includes a couple dozen Abrams tanks, but officials stressed that the decision is not yet set

in place. The Ukraine Security Assistance will pay for the tanks, which draws weapons and equipment from private industry rather than from the U.S. It will take many months before the high-tech vehicles arrive.



"It will help them fight off Russia better."

Kingston Kelly,
8th Grade

Pulling fire alarm comes with high cost



Scribe Photo/CALI GROENEWOLD

SMALL ACTION, MAJOR CONSEQUENCES. Pulling the fire alarm when there is no emergency has major costs to the fire department and can lead to legal consequences.

BY SYDNEY GENTRY

Fire safety is an essential part of school life. Every school has fire alarms to tell students when they should evacuate the building due to a fire emergency. Sometimes, however, students pull the fire alarm as a prank or to get out of class. What they may not realize is that this action has serious consequences.

Chris Vandagriff is the Fire Marshall for the City of Kingsport. He is directly involved in fire alarm response.

"Whenever a fire alarm is pulled or activated, the monitoring company will receive the alarm and will in turn contact 911 to request the fire department to respond," he said. "This process has to be done in a minimum of three minutes but typically happens within one to two minutes. Once the fire department has received the alarm, they are allowed one minute and fifteen seconds to dress in their gear and leave the station."

A typical response to a school requires five engines, one ladder truck, and a command vehicle to respond. It takes about six minutes from the time the fire truck leaves the station until they arrive on scene.

So, when a student pulls the alarm as a false report, it's a big deal.

According to Trinity Brown, a 6th grade student, students pull the fire alarm when there is no true danger for attention.

"I think students do it for attention and to waste class time," she said.

Lealah Robinson, another 6th grade student, agreed.

"They do it to probably get attention or to just be silly, or maybe even to get out of school," she said.

Shanna Smith is the assistant principal at Sevier. When the fire alarm goes off, she and her fellow administrators spring into action.

"When a student pulls the fire alarm, we immediately check the

system to see where in the building the alarm is at," she said. "The system will alert admin if the alarm has been pulled or if there is actually fire or smoke that has set off the sensors."

Once they make sure everyone is safe, they check the cameras to identify who pulled the alarm.

Although Sevier Middle has not had any unplanned evacuations this year, the fire department still has to deal with quite a few false reports.

"Over the past three years, the Kingsport Fire Department has responded to 1,508 false reports within the city," Vandagriff said. "Of those, the Kingsport Fire Department responded to 63 false alarms within that three year period."

Students who pull a fire alarm without a true emergency can face serious consequences.

"I think the consequence should be that they get OSS and they should pay the City of Kingsport and the Fire Department back how much it costs," 6th grade student Autumn Biorck said.

The actual consequences can be even more harsh.

"School consequences include seven days of OSS, referral to the superintendent, and a possible referral to Cora Cox Academy," Smith said. "There are also legal consequences."

Pulling a fire alarm can result in fines and having to appear in front of a judge.

"The State of Tennessee Code Title 39 deals with falsely reporting an emergency response and deems that pulling a fire alarm as a Class C Felony," Vandagriff said. "Along with the charge of Felony, the person falsely activating the alarm can face fines from the court system."

Although it does not seem like it would cost a lot for the fire department to respond to a false alarm, the costs do add up.

"Along with the manpower and the fuel, wear, and tear of the fire trucks, to respond to the 63 calls

in the three year period average to a grand total of \$52,899.84," Vandagriff said. "This calculates to \$839.68 every time the fire department responded to a school for a false alarm."

Beyond the cost, pulling the fire alarm is harmful.

"It puts everyone else's lives at risk and some people need the fire department more than us," Robinson said.

Smith agreed.

"It creates a disruption that negatively affects the entire school," she said. "Additionally, it wastes time and money provided by the emergency services that are assigned to protect our students. Also, it scares students and parents who might think that there is actually a fire that could cause harm."

Some schools have found a way to fight against students who pull the fire alarm. They have installed "tamper dye", a gel-like substance that coats the hands of the student in ink that later turns blue. When students try to wash the dye off with water, the dye activates and spreads along the arm.

Kingsport City Schools has not installed tamper dye so far.

"I think people should be more aware that this is extremely dangerous," Biorck said.

Brown believes pulling the fire alarm is a waste of time.

"It makes students and teachers believe that when there's a real fire, no one believes it's true," she said.

Vandagriff agreed.

"False fire alarms can be very dangerous to the community as a whole," he said. "The activated alarm requires a response from the fire department, which ties up engines from responding to other true emergencies. It also creates a sense of complacency for people who are in the building, which in turn creates a delayed response for a true emergency. Pulling a fire alarm is a big deal and should only be used for when true emergencies happen."