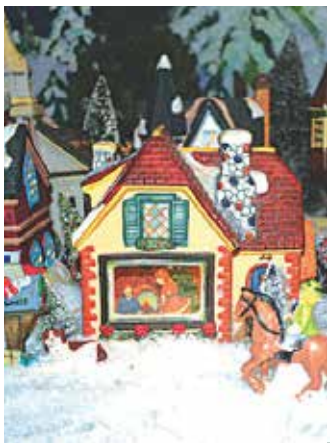


# Merry Christmas



**Lifestyles:** Miniature Christmas village is a sight to see, Page 5B



**125**  
YEARS

THE GREENWOOD  
**Commonwealth**



DECEMBER 24-26, 2021

CHRISTMAS WEEKEND

GREENWOOD, MISS. \$1.50

EXPRESS GRAIN TERMINALS

## Bank asks that suit be dismissed

*'Plaintiffs have sued the wrong party,' UMB says*

By **KEVIN EDWARDS**  
Staff Writer

Express Grain Terminals' largest creditor is asking that a class-action lawsuit filed against it by several farmers be dismissed, according to documents filed in court this week. The lawsuit against UMB Bank was filed in early November in the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Mississippi. Filing plaintiffs include Porter Planting Co. Partnership of Greenwood, Wyatt Farms Partner-

ship of Tchula and Island Farms LLC of Holly Bluff. UMB Bank is based in Kansas City, Missouri. The plaintiffs allege in their lawsuit, which is one side of a legal argument, that the bank knew in the early part of this year of Express Grain's precarious financial condition but postponed taking action until crops were harvested so as to

improve the bank's chances of recovering more of what it was owed. The lawsuit claims the bank "aided and abetted ... fraud perpetrated by Express Grain by remaining silent with full knowledge that Express Grain's customers would deliver their products without being paid for them, and propping up Express Grain" to ensure grain deliveries so the bank could seize the grain as collateral. UMB Bank has responded by stating simply, "Plaintiffs have sued the wrong party," alleging the farmers'

losses are not its fault.

The response states that because the farmers delivered their grain to Express Grain with the expectation that Express Grain would pay them, Express Grain must be held responsible for the lost money, not the bank. "Dismissal does not leave Plaintiffs without recourse," the response states.

If the farmers are concerned about claiming lost money from Express Grain, the bank refers them to the company's ongoing bankruptcy case and states they should "assert their rights as creditors."

The bank also filed a document

with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Mississippi regarding Express Grain's loan request of up to \$30 million.

The bank asserts it has been negotiating in good faith with Express Grain to provide financing and doesn't want to see the company endure "a crash landing."

It maintains that Express Grain owes more than \$70 million in outstanding principal and \$222,000 in interest. It also claims a security interest in Express Grain's "real and personal property including, without

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**ON THE WEB**  
gwcommonwealth.com  
■ PDF of motion to dismiss

## Holiday fish and fruit



Photos by Gerard Edic

Schlater residents got an early Christmas present of a free meal from Larry's Fish House as well as a fruit basket on Thursday thanks to a sponsorship held between the Schlater Riders, Leflore County District 3 Supervisor Anjuan Brown and Leflore County Justice Court Judge James Littleton. The food giveaway was held at Schlater's town hall. From left are Alicia Hudson-Davis, a Schlater Rider; Anthony Collins, president of the Schlater Riders; Rochelle Whitehead, vice president of the Schlater Riders; Brown; and Littleton. Right: Emma Littleton, left, and Tiffany Collins serve plates of catfish to Schlater residents.



## Niece worked hard on Hamer documentary

*Film to air on PBS in February*

By **GERARD EDIC**  
Staff Writer

When she was young, Monica Land was not aware of the significance of her aunt, Fannie Lou Hamer, one of the leading civil rights activists in the 1960s.



Land

Now, however, Land understands it well — and a documentary she helped make will air on PBS in February.

Born in Montgomery County, Hamer lived a sharecropper's life but was able to teach herself to read and write. She married Perry "Pap" Hamer, Land's uncle,



Hamer

and underwent a forced hysterectomy — a practice so common in the state that it was known as a "Mississippi appendectomy," according to the National Women's History Museum — so that she could

not have biological children. Known for her fiery speeches, Hamer challenged the status quo of the Jim Crow South by attempting to register herself and other African Americans to vote in Mississippi. She endured assaults, including a brutal jailhouse beating, and vitriolic racism as a result.

In 1964, at the Democratic National Convention, Hamer co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to challenge the established Democratic Party and detailed her hardships and those of other African Americans in their attempts to register to vote.

Hamer also founded an agricultural cooperative in Sunflower County, the Freedom Farm Cooperative, as a counter to the sharecropping system by providing economic wealth to Black landowners.

Hamer died from breast cancer in Mound Bayou in 1977, when Land was around 9 or 10.

Land, [redacted], was born and raised in Chicago. She and her family visited Hamer in Mississippi over the summers.

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## Thoughtful citizens saw need, organized holiday drives

By **GERARD EDIC**  
and **KEVIN EDWARDS**  
Staff Writers

Where there has been great need in Greenwood, it has been met with great generosity as Christmas Day approaches.

Some events this week — three toy drives and a coat drive — highlight different ways of accomplishing the same goal: helping others.

The Greenwood Community Center held its second

annual toy drive, "Toys for Joy," on Sunday after last year's toy drive was scrapped due to the pandemic.

"It went well," said Debra Adams, one of the co-founders of the Community Center. A total of 133 kids were able to receive toys thanks to donations from the community, which included last-minute contributions from Pillow Academy.

"The need was really huge this year, and some people weren't able to make the dead-

line for The Salvation Army as well as our deadline," she said.

The kids and parents were "grateful, grateful, grateful," Adams said. "The kids were just so excited. They just wanted to see what was in their bag."

The gifts given to families were wrapped, meaning that children will be able to wake up Christmas morning with something to open.

On Wednesday, the Christian Pastors Coalition for Change hosted a coat drive at

Sycamore Street Church of Christ.

Dr. Montrell Greene, the church's pastor and president of the coalition, said the drive was simply another way to help the community at a time of need.

"We asked ourselves what we could do to make a difference this season," he said. "Last year we were giving out food."

In addition to coats, checks of \$150 were issued to about 15 people, collected through

donations.

"It's winter time, and people need coats," Greene said. "With the money, we noticed we have a lot of grandparents raising children now. Sometimes it's a struggle."

"It was a blessing to me," said Mary Stevenson, 62, of Greenwood, who was selected to receive a check.

Greene said that the collaboration by multiple churches allows for greater response.

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### HOLIDAY NOTICE

**The Greenwood Commonwealth**

The Commonwealth will not publish a paper Saturday because of the Christmas postal holiday. The offices also will be closed Friday.

#### Government

Most Greenwood, Leflore County, state and federal offices will be closed Friday.

gwcommonwealth.com  
Online edition



### WEATHER

Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 75.

Page 4A

### NATIONAL NEWS

Minnesota police officer is convicted of manslaughter in fatal shooting.

Page 9A

Almost 390,000 total monthly readership



## Drives

Continued from Page 1A

"We try to use the collective power or resources of multiple churches instead of just one church trying to tackle things by itself," Greene said.

Well over 100 coats were distributed.

"We organize our coat drive during this time of the season to help those that's in need," said the Rev. Earnest Ware of Word of Faith Missionary Baptist Church. "From the bottom of our heart, the reason why we're doing it, is that it's a blessing to others. There's many out there, kids and others, that need coats."

He said, "We're just carrying out the mission we've been called to do. As long as we know we can help somebody along the way."

On Thursday, Zarlando Moody, a Greenwood entrepreneur and musician, hosted a toy drive at 103 Mississippi 7 South. Inspired by need created by the COVID-19 pandemic, he decided to start his own giveaway last year.

"I know a lot of people were shut in and sick, so we decided to go in and do a toy drive," he said.

He used proceeds from his own businesses to fund the endeavor.

Last year's drive was done on short notice, and he was able to give away about 100 toys. This year, he promoted



Mary Stevenson receives a check from Rev. Earnest Ware and Dr. Montrell Greene of the Christian Pastors Coalition for Change.

the effort more and was expecting to distribute nearly 400 toys.

For the community, he said toy drives are "most definitely an uplift."

"I was once one of those needy kids," he said, "so once I got able, I decided to give back to the community every chance."

The Browning Progressive Civic League will close out the week with a toy drive just in time for Christmas on Friday at 10 a.m. at 2315 Carrollton Ave. Toys will be available for children up to age 12.

The league distributed more than 200 last year and looks to increase that to 300 or 400 this year, said its president, Niqua Graham-Brooks.

"I do know we do have some

less fortunate people throughout our community," she said. "I just want to do more. Our league, we want to do more each upcoming year."

She said she wants those who receive toys to know that the community cares about them. "We're just hoping that this will give our families and our children a boost and something to look forward to," she said. "Regardless of your situation, there are people and organizations who actually care about your well-being and trying to help you have a better holiday and not to be worried."

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## Hamer

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"This was the latter years of her life," Land said. "At that time, I had no clue as to who she was, and I mean that professionally. I knew she was my Aunt Fannie Lou, but I didn't know who she was until a teenager."

As Land learned more about her aunt, she became sad to realize all Hamer had gone through. In addition, the relatives who could previously tell her about Hamer — aunts, uncles and grandparents — had died.

Years later, Land has been able to use her experience as an investigative reporter and interest in history to help make a film about her aunt, "Fannie Lou Hamer's America."

Set to air at 8 p.m. Feb. 22 on PBS as part of the 10th-season launch for the "America ReFramed" series, the documentary will then be available for streaming on the WORLD Channel.

In conjunction with the film is the website [www.fanniLouhamersamerica.com](http://www.fanniLouhamersamerica.com), which will serve as a go-to source of information regarding Hamer, as well as the Sunflower County Film Academy, a filmmakers workshop to teach Delta students how to document their families' stories.

The idea for the Hamer documentary began in 2005, according to Land, who served as a producer for the film.

Land reached out to her cousin, Sulla Hamer, a feature-film producer, who connected Land with Keith Beauchamp, a film producer

who has done work related to Emmett Till, the Chicago youth slain in 1955 after whistling at a white woman at Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market in Money.

Beauchamp then connected Land with Hamer historians, such as Davis Houck and Dr. Maegan Parker Brooks.

The first hour of the documentary is told through Hamer's appearances in archival footage, speeches, interviews and songs. Mixed in is B-roll footage of scenery across the Delta.

"I wanted this documentary, the focus, to be like nothing that had been seen before," Land said. "Because I knew Auntie Fannie Lou's power was her voice. When she spoke, she commanded attention; she captured the audience, the room."

The large amount of footage of Hamer — some of which had not been seen in more than 50 years, according to Land — meant that Hamer could detail her own life story.

Although the archival footage is important to the documentary, it was also the reason it took so long to produce it — and often why other historical documentaries never make the light of day, Land said.

Archival houses charge high fees for historical footage, and the costs soar higher for rarer footage, she explained.

Grants from various entities, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Delta State University and the Mississippi Humanities Council, as well as donors, helped pay for the archival footage.

The documentary's remaining 30 minutes consist of interviews with members of Hamer's family, who show family photographs and read personal letters that Hamer had written.

Despite Hamer's outward passion for the cause of civil rights, she dealt with various health problems and other difficulties, Land said.

"In these letters to her dear friend, she expressed that. She expressed a lot of sorrow, a lot of pain, anxiety."

One of those featured in the documentary is Jacqueline Hamer Flakes, the last living adopted child of Hamer's.

"My mom, she wholeheartedly gave her all when she came to speak in what she believed in and felt was right or wrong, what was happening in the Mississippi Delta," Flakes said.

"There was hunger going on. There were families who had no clothing for their children. Women who wanted to work but couldn't work. You had people living on the plantations who wanted to move but couldn't. They had no future, basically. All they knew was living on the plantations."

Flakes said she hopes that the film will impress on viewers the struggles her mother faced.

"I hope that they will remember how hard she worked, they will just see the things that she went through, the things that she fought for, remember the beating that she took. Remember that back in that time she was unable to have any children because she had a hysterectomy," she said.

Most of all, however, Flakes said that viewers will realize that they also have the power to stand up and fight for their rights and help move their communities forward, just like what her mother did: "That's what I'm hoping they will see."

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# 'Unabomber' is moved to prison medical facility

DENVER (AP) — The man known as the "Unabomber" has been transferred to a federal prison medical facility in North Carolina after spending the past two decades in a federal Supermax prison in Colorado for a series of bombings targeting scientists.

Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, 79, was moved to the U.S. Bureau of Prison's FMC Butner medical center in eastern North Carolina on Dec. 14, according to bureau spokesperson Donald Murphy. Murphy declined to disclose any details of Kaczynski's medical condition or the reason for his transfer.

Kaczynski is serving life without the possibility of parole following his 1996 arrest at the primitive cabin where he was living in western Montana. He pleaded guilty to setting 16 explosions that killed three people and

injured 23 others in various parts of the country between 1978 and 1995.

The Federal Medical Center Butner, in North Carolina's Granville County just north-east of Durham, offers medical services for prisoners including oncology, surgery, neurodiagnostics and dialysis, according to the Bureau of Prisons. It opened an advanced care unit and a hospice unit in 2010.

Butner has 771 inmates, according to the prison bureau, and has been home to notable offenders including John Hinckley Jr., who was evaluated there after shooting President Ronald Reagan, and Bernard Madoff, the architect of a Ponzi scheme who died at the North Carolina facility earlier this year.

In November, the former Oklahoma zookeeper known as "Tiger King" Joe Exotic was

transferred to the facility after a cancer diagnosis, his attorney said. Joe Exotic, whose real name is Joseph Maldonado-Passage, had been convicted for trying to hire someone to kill an animal rights activist and for violating federal wildlife laws.

The deadly homemade bombs that the vengeful Kaczynski sent by mail — including an altitude-triggered explosion that went off as planned on an American Airlines flight — changed the way Americans sent packages and boarded airplanes.

A 1995 threat to blow up a plane out of Los Angeles before the end of the July 4 weekend threw air travel and mail delivery into chaos. The Unabomber later claimed it was a "prank." The Harvard-trained mathematician had railed against the effects of advanced technology.



To continue offering you and your family the safest experience while in Greenwood Leflore Hospital, we have new hours and other guidelines in place for different areas of the facility, including our clinics.

### Emergency Room:

- One (1) visitor with the patient at any time
- An additional visitor will need physician's permission
- Pediatric patients may have two adult visitors with them at the same time

### ICU:

- One (1) visitor with the patient, with the only exception being end of life
- Hours for visits are:  
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

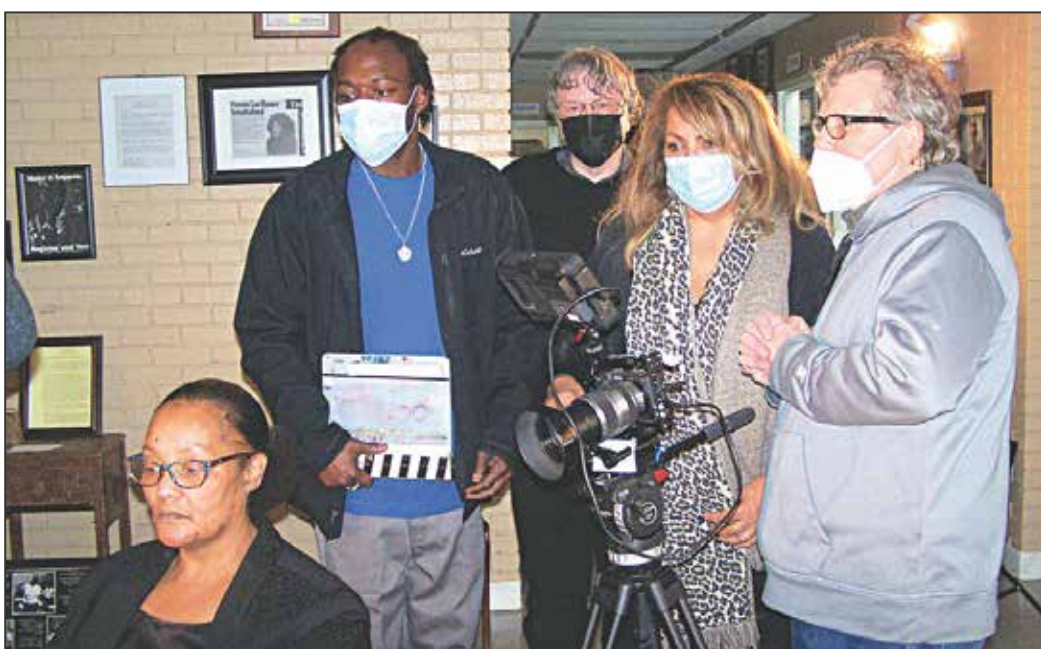
### Clinics:

- One (1) visitor with patient to go up to the clinic. It is the provider's preference as to whether the visitor may accompany the patient in the exam room.

### General Floor:

- Two (2) visitors with patient
- Visiting hours are 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- One (1) visitor is allowed to spend the night

All of us at Greenwood Leflore Hospital hope you will understand that these new policies are for everyone's benefit and wellbeing. We appreciate your choosing GLH for your and your family's healthcare needs.



Jacqueline Hamer Flakes, seated, Fannie Lou Hamer's last living child, is shown during a taping of the family segment for the documentary film "Fannie Lou Hamer's America." The segment was produced by Emmy award-winning filmmaker Stephanie Frederic, center. The film will air at 8 p.m. Feb. 22 on PBS.

## Express

Continued from Page 1A

limitation, inventory, accounts, and farm products."

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce filed an objection to Express Grain's loan request from UMB Bank this week, alleging that the company filed altered documents in pursuit of its renewal of licenses

to operate grain warehouses. A hearing to address the department's allegations with the court is scheduled for Jan. 6.

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