Sara B Photography cuts ribbon



HAWKINS TEAGUE / Ledger & Times

The Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting Thursday at its headquarters for Sara B Photography. Sara Arnett, pictured cutting the ribbon, said she started the business when she lived in Houston, Texas and continued it after moving to Murray about three years ago. She said she does photo shoots in her studio by appointment and photographs everything except for weddings and other events.

Chamber awarded at annual conference



Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce photo

The Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce recently received the 2026 KCCE Excellence in Public Policy Advocacy Award at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Conference in Hopkinsville. The Chamber was recognized alongside fellow western Kentucky chambers for their collaborative efforts in organizing West Kentucky Thank You Night at the Capitol. Pictured after accepting the award are, from left, Director of Membership Development Jessica Morris, President/CEO Michelle Bundren and Communications and Events Manager Gwendolyn Darnell.

Murray Pella celebrates Manufacturing Month

Special to the Ledger

MURRAY – Pella Corp.'s Murray plant is marking Manufacturing Month this October by highlighting its employee development programs and ongoing community outreach initiatives in Calloway County.

The plant, which manufactures custom windows and doors, is focusing its local efforts on workforce training, skill development and community sponsorships. Throughout October, Pella said it will bring its Manufacturing Month theme, "Powered by People: Connected to What's Next" to life through student shadow days, team member events and content highlighting team members and their work.

"Pella is focused on developing homegrown talent and creating long-term career paths for local team members – each of whom are encouraged to identify opportunities, test ideas and improve processes, turning firsthand experience into practical solutions," a news release said. "Through job shadowing, focused development pathways, standardized training and leadership practice, Murray team members can build new skills and advance."

The release also said Pella's Murray facility invests in the next generation of students and future manufacturing talent throughout the year.

"The facility makes annual donations to local schools' athletic programs, band programs and Project Graduation," the company said. "Each July, team members also host a Back-to-School drive, collecting school supplies for families in need."

The company said Murray team members give their time, donations and energy to the community throughout the year, including:

• Community drives: In September, team members hosted a pet food drive for the Murray-Calloway County Animal Shelter. Team members also host a cleaning supplies drive for Murray-Calloway County Need Line each March and participate in the community's Angel Tree program each December.

• October fundraising: Each October, the team hosts a chili cook-off to raise money for breast cancer research.

• Volunteering: Team members volunteer two to three times a year to pack food for Murray's Kids Care for Hunger.

• Annual support for local organizations: Pella's Murray facility makes annual donations to Calloway County Fire-Rescue, the WATCH Center, HOPE Calloway and Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center. It also helps sponsor a local youth baseball team, donates to the American Legion, Shop with a Cop, Murray-Calloway County Parks and Recreation, the Murray Pickleball Association, the Rotary Club of Murray's Summer Concert Series, events associated with Murray State University and Journey Bags.

"Our Murray team members are the reason we can deliver on our promise to customers every day, and investing in this community is just as important to us as what happens on our plant floor," said Greg Wyatt, plant manager at Pella's Murray facility. "Whether it's supporting local schools, packing food for neighbors or hosting a chili cook-off for a cause, our team shows up for this community, and that's the kind of community and the kind of workforce that will carry Murray's manufacturing future forward." ■



Pella photo

Murray's Pella facility is marking October as Manufacturing Month by highlighting all their employees do for the community with their volunteer efforts throughout the year.

Beshear designates October as Manufacturing Month in Kentucky

Staff Report

FRANKFORT – Gov. Andy Beshear designated October as Manufacturing Month in Kentucky earlier this week.

The Beshear administration said in a news release that the designation comes as industry continues to be a driving factor in the commonwealth's record economic growth and job creation, employing over 260,000 Kentuckians.

"Kentucky's historic economic success is fueled in part by our essential manufacturing industry and the hardworking people across our commonwealth who help these companies succeed," Beshear said. "From our diverse food and beverage sector to the automotive and aerospace markets that are reaching new heights every year, manufacturing is at the center of our success and that will continue to be true for decades to come. Thank you to every manufacturer creating good-paying, quality jobs for Kentuckians and distributing Kentucky-made products around the globe."

Beshear described the period between 2020 and 2025 as Kentucky's best six years on record for private-sector growth, which he said has largely thanks to the growth of the commonwealth's manufacturing presence. Beshear said the industry has spurred rising wages for families throughout the commonwealth, and also contributes $47.5 billion annually to the state's gross domestic product.

The news release said Kentucky has announced more than 970 private-sector manufacturing projects involving more than $46.2 billion in investment and more than 48,000 full-time jobs since the Beshear administration took office. Manufacturing accounted for $9.3 billion in announced investment and more than 7,500 full-time jobs in 2025, representing 89.8% of the state's announced corporate investment and nearly 79% of announced job creation, the release said.

The sector has continued to expand in 2026, with 35 manufacturing-related projects announced so far this year, totaling more than $7.8 billion in investment and nearly 2,000 full-time jobs. The average hourly wage for jobs receiving state incentives has exceeded $26 for four consecutive years, the release said.

Frank Jemley, president and CEO of the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers, showed appreciation for Kentuckians working in the manufacturing industry, stating, "Kentucky manufacturers produce a huge share of the commonwealth's GDP and work every day to strengthen their communities and support their team members, so we appreciate the opportunity during Manufacturing Month in October to celebrate the contributions they make year-round to Kentucky families and communities."

Manufacturers looking to locate a new facility or expand existing operations find that the commonwealth provides all the needed resources to accommodate long-term growth," the governor's news release said. "Kentucky's ideal central geographic location places the state within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population and income. Combined with state-of-the-art infrastructure, Kentucky's location allows manufacturers to quickly distribute products to key U.S. markets, while global air cargo hubs in Louisville and Northern Kentucky by UPS, DHL and Amazon provide fast and reliable distribution overnight anywhere in the world. Low business costs, including a rate among the lowest industrial electric costs in the country, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, ensure companies can continue to grow and create great jobs for Kentuckians." ■

