

The Courier

YOUR MESSENGER FOR THE ARKANSAS RIVER VALLEY

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Candidates tout tax cut support

By ARKANSAS ADVOCATE

The four Republicans running for a vacant Arkansas River Valley seat in the House are focused on tax cuts to address constituents' affordability concerns.

Early voting began Tuesday for the June 2 special election to represent House District 44, which includes portions of Pope and Van Buren counties. The seat became vacant when Dover Republican Rep. Stan Berry died in March at the age of 71.

Voters will receive one ballot with two elections on it, Pope County Clerk Pam Ennis said. One selection is for a candidate to serve the remainder of Berry's term. The second selection is for a candidate to run in November to serve a new two-year term.

No Democrats filed to run, so the Republican nominee will be unopposed in November. With Berry's seat vacant, Republicans hold a 79-20 majority in the state House.



Nikki Phillips (from left), Bill Teeter, Wes Freeman and Brent Boland are the four Republicans seeking to fill the Arkansas House District 44 vacancy following Rep. Stan Berry's death in March.

All four candidates describe themselves as conservative Republicans and tout their opposition to abortion and support of gun rights.

Nikki Phillips, a 35-year-old hair stylist who owns a salon and spa in

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KNOW YOUR LOCAL

Rashad Woods

By HANNAH BUTLER
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Rashad Woods has lived in the River Valley his whole life, and to him, "it's always been home."

"There's so much to love about Dardanelle, whether it's the community, the leadership, the mountains, or the schools," Woods said. "I'm proud to be a Sand Lizard. More than anything, though, I love the people. Our community is incredibly giving. When someone falls on hard times, you'll find countless hands ready to help lift them back up. Even when someone only has a dollar in their pocket, they'd give it to a neighbor before spending it on themselves. That's the heart of Dardanelle."



WOODS

As the coordinator of communication, outreach, and development for the non-profit ARVAC and a Dardanelle city council member, it's safe to say that Woods gives back to the community of Dardanelle.

"I live here because of my parents and the incredible legacy they've built in this community. I want to help continue that legacy," Woods said. "I also love the people here - every day you meet friendly faces, and strangers quickly become friends."

Woods is the youngest person and the first black male to be elected to the Dardanelle City Council.

Outside of his responsibilities, he enjoys shopping, gardening, canning, cooking and baking.

Woods said he is focused on gardening herbs and vegetables, and has enjoyed grilling and cooking whenever he can. He bakes his favorites: sweet treats like German chocolate cake, red velvet cake, and apple pie.

Traveling is also important to him. "I absolutely love to travel. When it comes to taking a trip, I'm always ready to go," he said.

MEMORIAL DAY

RIGHT: Participants attend a Memorial Day Ceremony in front of the "Field of Honor" at Center Valley Memorial Garden.

LEFT: A man and woman walk around the Center Valley Memorial area placing U.S. flags on the graves of fallen soldiers.

Submitted | The Courier



Pottsville launches community fitness program

By HANNAH BUTLER
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POTTSVILLE — The City of Pottsville is launching a free community fitness and fellowship program twice a week at the city park.

After the city passed an expenditure last year towards community outreach, Pottsville Mayor Dusty Gray said, "One of the biggest issues facing people today is loneliness. People are busy, families are stretched thin, and sometimes folks just need a place to show

up, move around, and be around other people."

The plan for the community outreach program so far is for participants to stretch for 10 minutes, do a light beginner-friendly workout, or walk, twice a week at the park. Modifications are encouraged.

"Everyone can move at their own pace," Gray said. "And the City will be investing in several things attached to this program."

This will take place at 298 Park Avenue.

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Weather

Mostly Cloudy



84°

Obituaries

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RSD addresses ADE concerns

By HANNAH BUTLER
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On Monday, May 11, the Arkansas Department of Education sent a letter to the Russellville School District concerning a potential conflict of interest involving salaries.

The ADE flagged information indicating salary increases for RSD Board of Directors members Jason Cunningham and Don Jacimore that could affect their spouses. The increases were approved during the Tuesday, April 14, board meet-

ing.

Cunningham's spouse is employed by the district as a nurse. Jacimore's spouse is employed as a clerk typist at Sequoyah Elementary.

The ADE wrote in a letter addressed to Superintendent Dr. Luke Lovins: "The Arkansas Department of Education ("ADE") has received information regarding recent actions by the Russellville School District Board of Directors that may require review by my office. ADE was informed by a constituent of your district that increases



for several salary schedules were approved, which may affect the salaries for several board members' spouses who are employed by the district, that a sitting board member has applied for an assistant principal position in the school district, and that other matters were voted on by board members

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