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TOMORROW'S WEATHER

SATURDAY:
Sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers. Highs in the mid 90s. Southwest winds around 5 mph. Heat index values up to 108.

SATURDAY NIGHT: Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 70s.



Griggs feels right at home in Arkansas

Country singer from north Louisiana to headline White County Fair Thursday night

By GREG GEARY
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Country singer Andy Griggs, next week's White County Fair headliner, has never played in Searcy, but he said he feels right at home in Arkansas.

"I actually water foul hunted not too terribly far from Searcy," said Griggs, who will play Thursday at 7:30 p.m. following Luke Williams of Beebe at the White County Fairgrounds, 802 Davis Drive. "I've got friends to your east and friends to the west. It's going to be an honor to play right there."

"One of my very first shows ever in my career was in good ol' Conway, Ark. I haven't been to Conway in a little while but I've got a lot of family from Little Rock, Hot Springs, so I'm no stranger to Arkansas. I'm from north Louisiana and the south Louisiana people call us Arkansas boys anyway; they don't really claim us," he said with a laugh. "They don't claim us as Cajun because we're not Cajun, so they would think I'm from Arkansas."

Wherever anyone thinks he's from, it didn't take long to establish himself in country music. He considers "You Won't Ever Be Lonely" his signature song "mainly because it was my very first single. I had no idea how quick

See GRIGGS, page A9

Senior center estimate \$6M

Rocking chairs bought, but funds needed to transform Carmichael

By GREG GEARY
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Cracker Barrel rocking chairs already have been purchased for the day the Carmichael Community Center becomes the new Searcy senior center, but that transformation depends on an estimated \$6 million in funding coming through.

A conceptional design to morph the community center into a replacement for the Lightle Senior Center was presented by Reese Rowland of Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects of Little Rock to the Searcy City Council last Thurs-

Mayor promotes interim to director

Johnson choice to lead parks and recreation

By GREG GEARY
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Interim Searcy Parks and Recreation Director Damon Johnson has been promoted to the full-time role by Mayor Mat Faulkner.

After an executive session last Thursday night, Faulkner announced the promotion of Damon Johnson, who was named interim director after Mike Parsons resigned July 11. Faulkner told the *Citizen* after the meeting that Johnson's salary is \$90,000.

Coming out of the executive session, Faulkner said it was a big decision. He mentioned the expanded programs and the outdoor water park that are being added by the city as part of its \$93 million #MySearcy plan.

"I'm excited and pleased to announce that we have selected Damon Johnson as our new parks and recreation director," he said. He told Johnson, "I know you have a strong team that works with you. I know through our discussions our goal is



JOHNSON

See **JOHNSON**, page A6

Rowland provided construction and soft cost figures. The construction total was estimated at \$4,574,175 and the soft cost was \$588,901 for a project budget of \$5,163,076. Not included was determined) and \$100,000 for minimal kitchen equipment for a loose fixture total of \$635,000. Signage and audio visual equipment would come in to play as well, he said.

David Morris said the current senior center is "cramped," and the seniors keep asking about a new facility. Deborah Dare, director of

See **CENTER**, page A6

HOLIDAY HARMONIES



Greg Geary / ggeary@whitecountycitizen.com

Allen Prior of Ward found an instrument to play during Labor Day at the destination playground at Berryhill Park.



'The People's Sheriff' dueling new chief deputy

Constable plans to be 'very vocal, visible and active'

By GREG GEARY
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Cadron Township Constable Dusty Betts believes the White County sheriff needs to be more involved with his deputies and with the community, and he plans to do that if he's elected to the position Nov. 3.

With early voting just over a month away, Dusty Betts and his opponent, White County Chief Deputy Clayton Edwards, were asked a couple of questions to kick off election coverage. They had previously participated in candidate forums before the Republican primary in March, which Edwards won in a runoff, to advance to face Betts, who is running as an independent.

The questions were about what they liked about how the sheriff's

office is operating under Sheriff Phillip Miller, who did not run for reelection, and what they want to change.

Betts, who is also a Judsonia police officer, said that he has "been watching how the current administration is being ran" for many years. "I am very involved with the sheriff's deputies while out working calls, so I see how things are handled. I am also very involved with the public with all the things I do."

Because of his involvement, Betts said that "there are several things that I will change as sheriff. The deputies don't have any leadership out working with them, especially at night. They do have a supervisor, or sergeant on duty, but I think a sheriff needs to be more involved



BETTS

See **BETTS**, page A6

White County sheriff

Candidates: Cadron Township Constable Dusty Betts (I) vs. White County Chief Deputy Clayton Edwards (R)

When: Election day Nov. 3 from 7:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. at polling sites around county

Early voting: Oct. 19-Nov. 2 in Searcy at Carmichael Community Center, 801 S. Elm St., and White County Cooperative Extension Service Auditorium, 2400 Old Searcy Landing Road (8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday, except Nov. 2 when it ends at 5 p.m., and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays), and Oct. 29-31 in Beebe at Beebe Church of Christ, 1906 W. Center St. (8 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday)

Former jail captain has 'few things' he's planning to change

By GREG GEARY
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White County Chief Deputy Clayton Edwards has "a few things" he believes he can change if he is elected sheriff in November.

Edwards is running in the Nov. 3 general election against Cadron Township Constable Dusty Betts after winning the Republican nomination in March. Edwards was the top vote-getter in the March 3 Republican primary, with 3,830 votes (43.88 percent) to 2,593 (29.71) for former sheriff's office corporal Jeff Williams and 2,593 (26.42 percent) for Searcy Police Department Lt. Todd Wells. Edwards then won the runoff with 55.5 percent of the votes (2,140) to 1,716 for Williams to advance to face Betts, who is running

as an independent.

For the general election, with early voting set to start Oct. 19, Edwards and Betts were asked what they like about the current operation of the sheriff's office and what they want to change if elected.

"I am fine with the operation of the sheriff's office under Sheriff [Phillip] Miller. After all, it is his department for now," Edwards said. "However, I do plan to change a few things, like I want to add detectives to the internet crimes targeting children and I also want to add two K-9s to our department, more for human tracking and article searches."

Edwards said he is trying to be realistic about what changes he could reasonably expect to make to the



EDWARDS

See **EDWARDS**, page A6





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