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Filing closes for March elections

DAVID SHOWERS
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

The last day of the seven-day filing period that closed at noon Wednesday saw eight candidates file for justice of the peace, including two incumbents.

District 3 JP Susan Jones filed for a second term representing the West Grand and Albert Pike corridors on the Garland County Quorum Court. She's one of 12 Republicans on the county's 13-seat legislative, appropriating and taxing authority.

Republican Dayton Myers, the two-term JP representing District 7 in southeast Garland County, filed Wednesday despite announcing in June that he wouldn't seek re-election. Myers said party leaders and constituents asked him to reconsider.

"Over the last few months, I have received many calls and have had many conversations with people asking me to run again," he said Wednesday. "Their message to me has been clear: The people of my district and the

people of Garland County deserve common sense, Republican leadership."

The county clerk's office said Bill Fleming, who filed last week for the party's March 3 primary, withdrew his District 7 candidacy. Myers' filing set up a rematch in March of the District 7 race he won in last November's general election. He defeated Libertarian Robert Louton by seven percentage points. Louton filed for the Republican nomination last week.

District 7 will be one of five contested JP races in the party's primary. Incumbents Dr. Brian Peters, District 9, Debbie McGrew, District 10, Ronald Hunter, District 11, and Jeremy Brown, District 12, also drew challengers. Former District 8 JP Jason Braziel filed as an Independent, setting up a rematch in next November's general election of the 2024 Republican primary he lost to current incumbent Alan Floyd.

Democrats filed for the six JP seats that overlap the in-

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Garland County Clerk Sarah Smith helps a candidate file paperwork for the March elections Nov. 3 at the Garland County Courthouse. She's running unopposed for a seventh term. (The Sentinel-Record/File photo)

Geans joins *The Sentinel-Record* as sports editor

BRANDON SMITH
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

For new sports editor at *The Sentinel-Record*, Patrick Geans, joining the newsroom this week feels like a return to his roots — both in Arkansas journalism and in storytelling.

Geans, a 1984 Stuttgart High School graduate who received his master's degree in digital media at the University of Central Arkansas, began his new role Tuesday. He says today's sports journalism is not just about scores and stats, but about connection and creativity across multiple platforms.

"Most people consume their news online now," Geans said. "And so with that also comes a lot of advantages that go with technology."

As for what readers can expect, he said he plans to blend traditional reporting with fresh, digital storytelling to capture the full scope of the Garland County sports scene.

"If you're writing for the Razorbacks or an NFL team, that coverage is everywhere. But nobody's covering these local teams and local sports things except the local newspaper — if you're blessed enough to have one," he said.

"I feel like if we can bring all those elements together in terms of, you know, most towns in Arkansas still have a population that very much supports their local sports programs, and there's a lot of passion around these programs, but we have to find a way to bring the coverage to them. And whether you do it online or through print, I say engage on all those levels."

The Sentinel-Record Editor Beth Reed said she is proud to have Geans on board.

"Sports and recreation are so important to Garland County, and the landscape of sports news is evolving.

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GEANS



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., heads from his office to the chamber for the final vote to bring the longest government shutdown in history to an end on Wednesday at the Capitol in Washington. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

House passes bill to end shutdown

KEVIN FREKING, JOEY CAPPELLETTI
AND MATT BROWN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The House passed a bill Wednesday to end the nation's longest government shutdown, sending the measure to President Donald Trump for his signature after a historic 43-day funding lapse that saw federal workers go without paychecks, travelers stranded at airports and people lining up at food banks to get a meal for their families.

House lawmakers made their long-awaited return to the nation's capital this week after nearly eight weeks away. Republicans used their slight majority to get the bill over the finish line with a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. The Senate has already passed the measure.

Democrats wanted to extend an enhanced tax credit expiring at the end of the year that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable

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A sign advertises vacant apartments outside a local property. (The Sentinel-Record/Thomas Buckman)

Hot Springs landlords cite rising costs, regulations for 'tight' rental market

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles discussing the rental market in Garland County.

GABRIEL BASS
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

Landlords in Hot Springs face difficulties buying and leasing housing, which further shrinks the supply of available rental units.

According to sources who spoke to *The Sentinel-Record*, rising interest rates and inflation make renting units at a rate that tenants can pay unfeasible.

Hilarie Dzianott, treasurer for the Hot Springs Landlords Association, said costs have nearly tripled since she began leasing properties, describing the market as "tight."

"Purchasing properties has gone up 250-300% since we first started in 2010," she said.

Dzianott said she and her husband purchased four houses on Fifth Street in 2010 for \$135,000, while a single property in the same neighborhood is now for sale at a price of \$145,000.

She cited rising interest rates and property valuations for the increase in cost.

"Prices have gone up, values have gone up, but the value is only good if you sell it," she said.

Members of the Hot Springs Landlords Association have found it difficult to turn a profit on properties at rates tenants are able to pay, she said.

In addition to higher market prices, interest rates have increased, leading to higher mortgage payments, Dzianott

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National Park College to launch outdoor rec degree in fall 2026

FROM STAFF REPORTS

National Park College has received state approval to launch a new degree in outdoor recreation beginning in fall 2026, positioning itself to meet growing workforce demand in Arkansas's expanding outdoor economy, a news release said.

The Arkansas Division of Higher Education approved NPC's new Associate of Applied Science in Outdoor Recreation, a 60-credit-hour program developed in partnership with local and regional

parks, tourism and recreation organizations.

The program is designed both for students seeking immediate employment and those planning to continue their studies toward a bachelor's degree, it said.

"Outdoor Recreation is a natural fit for National Park College considering Hot Springs is the historical center of Arkansas tourism and recreation," Chuck Argo, NPC vice president of academic affairs, said in the release.

"As the state seeks to double the growth of these industries over the next ten years, NPC will be well-positioned to provide a skilled workforce to our local, state and federal community partners," he said.

The new program includes an associate's degree, a technical certificate and seven proficiency certificates ranging from eight to 12 credit hours. Specialized credentials include Mountain Biking and Trail Maintenance, Outdoor

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From left, National Park College Vice President for Academic Affairs Chuck Argo, NPC Vice President for Workforce Bill Ritter, NPC President Wade Derden and Visit Hot Springs Trails Coordinator Traci Berry stand in front of a monitor outlining the college's new outdoor recreation degree. (Submitted photo)



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