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Head Start overhaul raises concerns for local children

BRANDON SMITH
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

A federal plan aimed at bringing Head Start to more children could also mean larger classrooms and fewer required health and family services for hundreds of Arkansas children, according to the director of a Hot Springs nonprofit.

Leslie Paschal Barnes, executive director and CEO of the Community Services Office, said the agency serves 540 children across seven Arkansas counties through its Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

While she acknowledged that proposed changes from the Trump administration would allow larger classrooms and reduce requirements for health and family support services, she said the changes would be a disservice to the children.

See **OVERHAUL**, Page 2A



The Garland County Pre-K building, which houses a Community Services Office Early Head Start program, is seen Sunday. The Trump administration has proposed changes to federal Head Start rules that could allow larger classrooms and reduce requirements for health and family support services. (The Sentinel-Record/James Leigh)

Road tax, library millage committees organized

JAMES LEIGH
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

Two taxes will be on the ballot in Garland County, and while the Garland County Library and the county are unable to campaign for them due to state law, two committees have been formed to promote them.

State law restricts the promotion for or against ballot measures by “a public servant or a governmental body.” It does allow for the creation of a “ballot question committee” to receive and spend funds for “expressly advocating the qualification, disqualification, passage, or defeat of any ballot question.”

For Our Roads Now, the campaign committee supporting the 0.625% sales

The logo for the Garland County Library millage campaign committee, Our Libraries, Our Future, is shown. (Submitted photo)

tax for road improvements, was established this summer to start promoting the tax, while the Our Libraries, Our Future committee was created in September to support

See **LIBRARY**, Page 2A



Little Rock Zoo General Curator Hannah Baker holds Lynn, a bald eagle who is one of the zoo's animal ambassadors, during a session at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival Saturday while zoo staffer Andrea McDaniel looks on. (The Sentinel-Record/James Leigh)

Film, birding festivals partner for two-part session

JAMES LEIGH
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

Cinema 2, located in Conference Room C of the Arlington Hotel Resort and Spa, was filled with people wanting to get a glimpse at a pair of raptors brought by the Little Rock Zoo on the second day of the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival.

The session, which was also part of the final day of the inaugural Birding Festival of the South, gave attendees the chance to learn about a great horned owl named Lincoln and a bald eagle named Lynn. Following the presentation, there was a short meet and greet with Lincoln before a work-in-progress screening and talk about “Jackie and Shadow,” an upcoming film about a pair of bald eagles who captured the hearts of the world.

According to Mickey Thompson, the zoo's education coordinator, Lincoln, who is approximately 15 years old, has an overly dilated eye, which they believe leaves him mostly blind in that eye.

“As an animal that relies heavily on vision, without part of your vision, he was deemed irreleasable into the wilds, which is why he lives at the Little Rock Zoo, serving as an ambassador for his species. ... Being able to see an animal in this context will hopefully inspire people to value them and hopefully conserve them.”

See **BIRDS**, Page 4A

Six senators call for Trump administration to ‘immediately reverse course’ on Russian diesel

KEVIN FREKING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of six senators on Sunday called for President Donald Trump's administration to “immediately reverse course” on a plan to purchase diesel from Russia as part of an effort to lower high fuel prices.

Trump shocked lawmakers when he announced on social media Friday that he struck a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call. He said Russia will immediately supply more than 300,000 tons of diesel to the American and global market, followed by an additional 500,000 tons in November and 1 million tons “immediately thereafter.” Russia will deliver an additional 3 million tons “within a short period of time” after that, he wrote.

Four Republican senators

and two Democratic senators signed onto the statement released Sunday in protesting the deal. They said the administration failed to consult with Congress or submit any explanation to justify its decision as required by statute.

“The United States should not provide Putin with a financial lifeline while Russia continues to kill Ukrainian civilians. The Administration must immediately reverse course,” they wrote.

The Republican senators who signed onto the statement are Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Thom Tillis of North Carolina and John Curtis of Utah. The Democratic senators are Sens. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut.

See **DIESEL**, Page 6A



Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., asks former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith questions at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Capitol Hill on Sept. 29 in Washington. (AP Photo/Allison Robbert)

Pumpkin Light Night brings schools and families together

BRANDON SMITH
THE SENTINEL-RECORD

After being canceled last year because of bad weather, the Hot Springs School District's Pumpkin Light Night will return Oct. 27 with student performances, pumpkin displays, games and free activities aimed at bringing local schools and families together.

The annual event will be held from 4-6 p.m. at Hot Springs World Class High School's Joe Reese Stadium. Admission is free, and families from across the community are invited to attend, regardless of whether their children attend district schools.

Stephanie Goodman, a Jobs for America's Graduates specialist at the high school who founded and coordinates the event, said Pumpkin Light Night is about more



Hot Springs World Class High School Jobs for America's Graduates specialist Stephanie Goodman discusses this year's Pumpkin Light Night on Thursday in her JAG classroom. Goodman founded the annual Hot Springs School District event, which brings together students, families and the community for an evening of performances and activities. (The Sentinel-Record/Brandon Smith)

than Halloween festivities. Its main purpose is to give families a firsthand look at the

programs and opportunities available to students throughout the district.



Decorated pumpkins, including a “Beetlejuice”-inspired display, line the field at Joe Reese Stadium during a previous Hot Springs School District Pumpkin Light Night. (Courtesy HSSD)

“The real thing that started all of this, since we're so spread out across Hot Springs, was to be able to

bring all of our schools in one location and really highlight the things your school has going on,” Goodman said.

“Because a lot of our parents, a lot of our community, they only hear hearsay or rumors. So we wanted them to see the positive things going on in Hot Springs School District.”

Schools, classrooms, clubs and student organizations are encouraged to set up booths around the football field, where families can learn about their programs while children play games and collect candy.

Goodman said organizers provide about \$2,000 worth of candy each year for the booths.

“The tables are something we really focus on,” she said. “We want all of our schools to be represented. We want all of our organizations because Hot Springs has so much to offer.”

See **PUMPKIN**, Page 4A



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