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TIMES RECORD

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AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY ARKANSAS GIRLS STATE

Counselors detail concerns after resignations of staff

George "Clay" Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

A group of former counselors from the American Legion Auxiliary Arkansas Girls State has publicly raised concerns about the program's leadership following the recent resignation of the organization's core staff.

According to a statement released by 74 of the program's 78 counselors from the 2026 session, the counselors support the resigning staff members and are calling for changes to the administration of the leadership program for young women.

The statement comes amid a public dispute over the program's leadership and direction.

In a statement posted on social media, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Arkansas disputed reports that the entire Girls State staff had resigned.

"The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Arkansas affirms that the entire Girls State staff did not resign,"

See **GIRLS STATE**, Page 2A

Lagoon may close for good in 2027

George "Clay" Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

Denali Water Solutions expects to remove the remaining material from its controversial Crawford County lagoon by early spring 2027 as part of a closure plan that could lead to the permanent shutdown of the site, attorneys representing residents affected by odors from the facility announced this week.

According to attorneys Joey McCutchen and Stephen Napurano, Denali has identified a good-faith window between Feb. 15 and March 1, 2027, for the removal of material remaining in the NEBO lagoon, located in the Arkansas River bottoms in Crawford County. The timeline is dependent on weather conditions, crop rotations, land-application opportunities and regulatory approvals.

The company is expected to file a formal closure plan with the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality as early as July or August. Once the remaining material is removed from the pond base, the site permit would be withdrawn or dissolved.

Denali has not delivered new material to the lagoon since Jan. 1, according to McCutchen and Napurano. During the closure process, the company plans to maintain the existing grease cap to help control odors while smaller amounts of material are removed. Denali has also stated it will avoid large-scale disturbance of the material during hot-weather months to reduce odor releases.

See **LAGOON**, Page 2A



Arkansas National Guardsmen will be on state roads on the way to or from annual training this month. Military trucks are made for combat, not comfort. The Arkansas National Guard asks for motorists to stay alert for convoys because they drive slowly for everyone's safety. PROVIDED BY JOHN OLDHAM/ARKANSAS NATIONAL GUARD

Expect more military convoys on AR roads through June

Arkansas National Guard asks drivers to stay alert

George "Clay" Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

Arkansas motorists can expect to see increased military traffic on highways and interstates across the state as members of the Arkansas National Guard travel to annual training exercises.

The increased traffic is expected to continue through mid-June as Guardsmen convoy from armories throughout the state to training locations, including Fort Chaffee Joint Maneuver Training Center in Barling, before returning home once training is complete.

National Guard officials are urging drivers to use caution and patience when encountering military convoys on the road.

Military vehicles typically travel at speeds below posted interstate speed

limits, which can create traffic slowdowns as passenger vehicles and commercial trucks attempt to pass. Drivers are encouraged to remain alert when approaching and overtaking convoys.

"Annual training is critical for us to maintain our warfighting skills and to stay razor sharp," said Col. Joel Lynch, the Arkansas National Guard's public affairs officer. "We urge the public to have some patience and use caution if they come up on a military convoy. We want our Guardsmen to be able to get to and from training safely, while safely sharing the roads with our fellow Arkansans."

Annual training is a key component of military readiness, allowing National Guard units to practice and maintain skills needed for both state and federal missions.

The Arkansas National Guard did not specify which routes would see the

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Col. Joel Lynch
Arkansas National Guard public affairs officer

greatest increase in military traffic but advised motorists statewide to be aware of military convoys traveling to and from training sites over the next several weeks.

Museum to open its expansion June 6-7

George "Clay" Mitchell
Fort Smith Southwest Times Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art will unveil a major expansion this weekend, adding 114,000 square feet of gallery, education and community space in what museum leaders describe as a significant new chapter for the Bentonville institution.

The expansion, designed by Safdie Architects, officially will open June 6-7 and is intended to broaden access to the museum's collection while creating new opportunities for learning,

See **MUSEUM**, Page 2A

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