

STADIUM: Kansas lawmakers grill lawyer for Chiefs. **4A**

BASKETBALL: TJ girls log win in Tony Dubray Classic. **1B**

Joplin council OKs tax question for April ballot

City wants to replace pension tax with public safety tax

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

The Joplin City Council at its meeting Tuesday night authorized placement of

a question on the April 7 ballot for a half-cent public safety sales tax. Proposing a change in the tax had been discussed at a recent meeting. If approved by voters, an existing half-cent tax, Proposition B, that was approved by voters in 2019 would continue to be used to close out the Police and Firemen's Pension Fund. City officials

believe the tax will have collected enough money by the second quarter of next year to cover all benefits that are owed or would be owed in the future. According to city documents, a state law was changed that allows the city to adapt the use of the Proposition B tax and continue to collect it after the pension fund reaches

a funded level of 120% of benefits owed. The city plans to convert the tax for use for equipment, salaries and benefits, and facilities for police and fire service purposes. It will replace an existing half-cent public safety sales tax approved by voters in 2006 to help pay for those needs. Joplin council members

and city officials began discussions last year on whether to try to renew the Proposition B sales tax, although at the time it was proposed, city officials said they would not seek renewal after the pension fund was fully funded. It was projected that stabilizing the pension fund could take up to 12 years, but the plan's actuary last

year reported to the pension board that the plan could be fully funded, or reach the agreed upon 120% level of benefits owed, in 2027. That would be five years earlier than the 12-year pension obligations when the tax was proposed. The actuarial report stated that

SEE **TAX**, 2A

Surge of visitors



Shane Smith, Ryder Parise and Chelsey Parise, all of Oronogo, use a cellphone to take pictures of the leucistic bald eagle near Stella through a spotting scope. **GLOBE | JOHN HACKER**

Leucistic bald eagle near Stella drawing people from all over

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

STELLA, Mo. — Eagles have long been a draw to Stella, a tiny community in southeastern Newton County. It was for a time the home of the annual Eagle Day festival that drew hundreds of people every January to see



Vehicles line a narrow dirt road near Stella as dozens of people stop to take pictures or just watch the rare white bald eagle that has been spotted in the area. **GLOBE | JOHN HACKER**

America's national bird in the wild. The eagle-viewing crowd was often much larger than the population — 158 people — of Stella, and the birds helped put the community on the map. In the last few weeks a

rare all-white bald eagle is drawing crowds of bird watchers and photographers back to Stella, creating traffic jams on some of the rural and county roads around the community. Carl Junction residents Betty and Ron Daniel

were the first to show pictures Jan. 5 of a rare bald eagle with leucism, a genetic condition that causes a partial loss of pigmentation, leaving the bird to have pale or white feathers sometimes with

SEE **EAGLE**, 2A

Joplin prepared to start treating streets ahead of winter storm

4 to 12 inches of snow forecast

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

A winter storm warning issued for the area had the Joplin Public Works Department ready Thursday to start treating streets with brine.

Chad Weller, assistant director of public works for operations, said at least 4 inches of snow are predicted, with areas of heavier snowfall up to 8 to 12 inches.

"That's what we're preparing for," Weller said. "Typically, we'll apply the brine to-night and will be on standby. All of our equipment is ready to go. We have plenty of material because we haven't had a storm yet" this winter. "We'll see how the storm develops. We'll go out and treat bridges with a combination of salt and brine because those always freeze first."

The anti-ice mixture is 90% brine and 10% beet juice that can be applied if rain does not occur before snow. With no rain forecast ahead of the snow, that allows the brine to

SEE **STREETS**, 2A

Snow and ice expected from Texas to Boston

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Bread was flying off the shelves, salt was being loaded into trucks and utility workers watched forecasts Thursday as a huge winter storm that could bring catastrophic damage, widespread power outages and bitterly cold weather barreled toward the eastern two-thirds of the U.S.

The massive storm system is expected to bring a crippling ice storm from Texas through parts of the South, potentially around a foot of snow from Oklahoma through Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, and then a final punch of bitterly cold air that could drop wind chills to minus 50 degrees in parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

SEE **STORM**, 2A

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