

TRUMP: President says Iran 'negotiating on fumes.' 2A

SOFTBALL: Associate coach making difference. 1B

Data center opponents to meet

Event scheduled at Gene Taylor Community Building in Sarcoxie

BY JOHN HACKER
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SARCOXIE, Mo. — Opponents to a planned data center park and as-

sociated 2,000-acre solar farm will hold a community meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Gene Taylor Community Building, 218 N. Fifth St. in Sarcoxie. The meeting is to inform the public, organizers said. Minnesota-based Geronimo Power announced in March plans to build what it calls a "hyperscale data center park," and a large

solar energy and battery park to help power the data centers in a rural area of eastern Jasper County near La Russell, north of Sarcoxie. Geronimo Power met with Lawrence County commissioners in Mount Vernon at the end of March and said the data center park would consist of more than one data

center and be built southwest of La Russell. The solar farm and battery storage would be built on 2,000 acres west and north of La Russell with 640 acres in Lawrence County and 1,360 acres in Jasper County and could generate 150 megawatts of power, which would provide only part of the power needed

for the data center. Rhys Hine, a rural Jasper County resident who owns land within half a mile of the data center park, is an organizer opposed to the data center and solar farm. He said Thursday's meeting is informational and will include people

SEE MEETING, 2A

Group launches campaign against amendment

Measure on November ballot would reinstate Missouri's ban on abortion

BY ANNA SPOERRE
Missouri Independent

The campaign opposing a November ballot measure that would reinstate Missouri's abortion ban formally launched Wednesday, arguing Republican lawmakers are trying to overturn the 2024 vote that ended the state's near-total ban through a "bait and switch" measure.

The coalition, called Stop the Ban Missouri, has already amassed nearly \$4 million, including a \$2 million donation from the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation on Wednesday. Its first ad leans heavily into the idea that voters are being asked to revisit a decision they made less than two years ago.

"In America and here in Missouri we believe our vote is sacred. That the people are the ones who decide. And in 2024, the people of Missouri decided to stop Missouri's abortion ban," a voiceover in the ad says. "But now, politicians are trying to overturn the will of the people and ban abortion again."

The proposed amendment, drafted and approved for the ballot by lawmakers in 2025, was a direct response to a resident-led amendment that narrowly passed in 2024. That vote made Missouri the first state to overturn a near-total abortion ban through a public vote.

The 2024 measure was listed as Amendment 3.

The new proposal will also appear on the ballot as Amendment 3. If approved in November, the amendment to the Missouri Constitution would ban nearly all abortions, with limited exceptions for medical emergencies and for survivors of rape or incest. It would also add a ban on gender-affirming care for minors to the constitution, something that is already barred under a 2023 state law.

"We know, in this ballot measure, politicians are playing tricky games and trying to confuse Missouri voters," said Tori Schafer, a spokesperson for Stop the Ban and an attorney with the ACLU of Missouri. "And we need to educate voters about the bottom line, and the bottom line here is clear: The new amendment 3 is an abortion ban that takes away a woman's right to make her own medical decisions and instead puts it in the hands of politicians and lawyers."

Supporters of the amendment argue it would restore abortion restrictions removed by the 2024 vote while preserving exceptions for medical emergencies, fetal anomalies and survivors of rape or incest.

SEE AMENDMENT, 2A

FESTIVAL NEARS



Naomi Haverland works on her art Tuesday at the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex in Joplin. The World Street Painting Festival will be held Wednesday through Saturday next week.

GLOBE | DEBBIE WOODIN

Art event in Joplin next week to celebrate Route 66 centennial

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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Two artists returned to Joplin recently to help set the stage for next week's 2026 World Street Painting Festival on Route 66.

Chris Carlson, from Denver, worked to touch up a mural he painted previously on a sidewalk at the Harry M. Cor-

nell Arts & Entertainment Complex. That painting depicts a motorcycle rider gliding down Route 66. He'll have a new piece for visitors to the street painting festival, which will be Wednesday through Saturday next week at 1717 W. Seventh St.

Carlson isn't a born artist. He studied business in college, but later was ... well ... drawn to art.

"I saw 3D chalk art on the internet after I graduated and got really interested in it and started practicing and figuring it out. It kind of happened organically," Carlson said. "I went to a street painting festival and participated as an amateur and just kept on practicing and getting better. Eventually, I got invited back as a professional and started getting paid."

His effort to draw and paint even involved developing his skills in his driveway. During cold and snowy Colorado winters, he would

paint the concrete floor in his basement to develop his techniques.

"Over the years, I got it all figured out and got pretty good at it," he said.

Since then, he has traveled a lot.

"A couple of years ago, I got to go to the Netherlands. We were actually painting inside a cave in the Netherlands, so that was really cool," Carlson said.

He's also worked in Mexico and Canada and many places in the United States.

SEE FESTIVAL, 2A

Man pleads guilty to gambling conspiracy, money laundering

Crimes occurred in Joplin, Springfield, Branson West

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — An Indian national pleaded guilty in federal court in Springfield on Wednesday to being involved in a multimillion-dollar gambling conspiracy that

occurred at six locations in Southwest Missouri, according to the federal government.

The sites were one at 2331 E. Seventh St. in Joplin, four in Springfield and one in Branson West.

Tushar R. Patel, 40, a resident of Georgia, pleaded guilty before U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Willie J. Epps Jr. to one count each of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, con-

spiracy to operate an illegal gambling business and conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Patel admitted that he and his co-conspirators took in more than \$9.5 million from a wire fraud scheme and illegal gambling businesses. He also told federal authorities that various financial transactions were conducted for the purpose of laundering the proceeds.

On May 14, 2025, Patel was charged, along with eight other people, in a 72-count indictment by a federal grand jury in Springfield. The indictment charges all nine defendants with one count each of participating in a conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to operate an illegal gambling business, and operating illegal gambling businesses from July 1, 2022, to May 13,

2025. In addition to the conspiracy counts, all nine defendants were charged with at least one count of wire fraud, and eight defendants were charged with money laundering.

Through Patel's guilty plea, he admitted that he and his co-conspirators ran illegal gambling businesses at four locations under the guise of internet amusement arcade games, skill game arcades

and adult arcades. Patel and his co-conspirators hired local employees to work in their businesses, which operated contests of chance, gambling devices and slot machines in violation of Missouri and federal law.

Under federal statutes, Patel is subject to a sentence of up to 20 years in federal prison without parole for each count that resulted in his guilty plea.

