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Event to focus on data centers

Candidate forum to be held Sunday at Joplin Public Library

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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A forum allowing voters to ask Southwest Missouri candidates about their

views on hyperscale data centers will be held from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Sunday in a community room at the Joplin Public Library, 1901 E. 20th St.

Organizers said that because there are 27 candidates, they will combine repetitive or frequently asked questions so that all candidates have a chance to address

the issue, according to Kimberly Barker, a local environmentalist.

Topics for the questions could cover concerns about resources including water, utilities, wastewater disposal, tax incentives and policy solutions.

Candidates who have been invited to speak are those in Senate districts 32 and 20, and House

districts 127, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162 and 163, covering the counties of Jasper, Newton, McDonald, Lawrence, Barry, Barton and Dade.

A May meeting in Sarcoxie to discuss data centers and their impact on people living nearby brought attracted up to approximately 200 people.

Geronimo Power, a company based in Minnesota, announced in March that it planned to build a hyperscale data park with multiple data centers on land just southwest of La Russell in eastern Jasper County. The company also announced plans for a 2,000-acre solar farm

SEE FORUM, 2A

Kehoe asks for federal disaster declaration

Severe storms hit parts of Missouri in June

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe has asked President Donald Trump to approve a major disaster declaration to provide federal assistance to 34 counties in response to dangerous flash flooding, several tornadoes and straight-line winds that hit parts of Missouri from June 4-18.

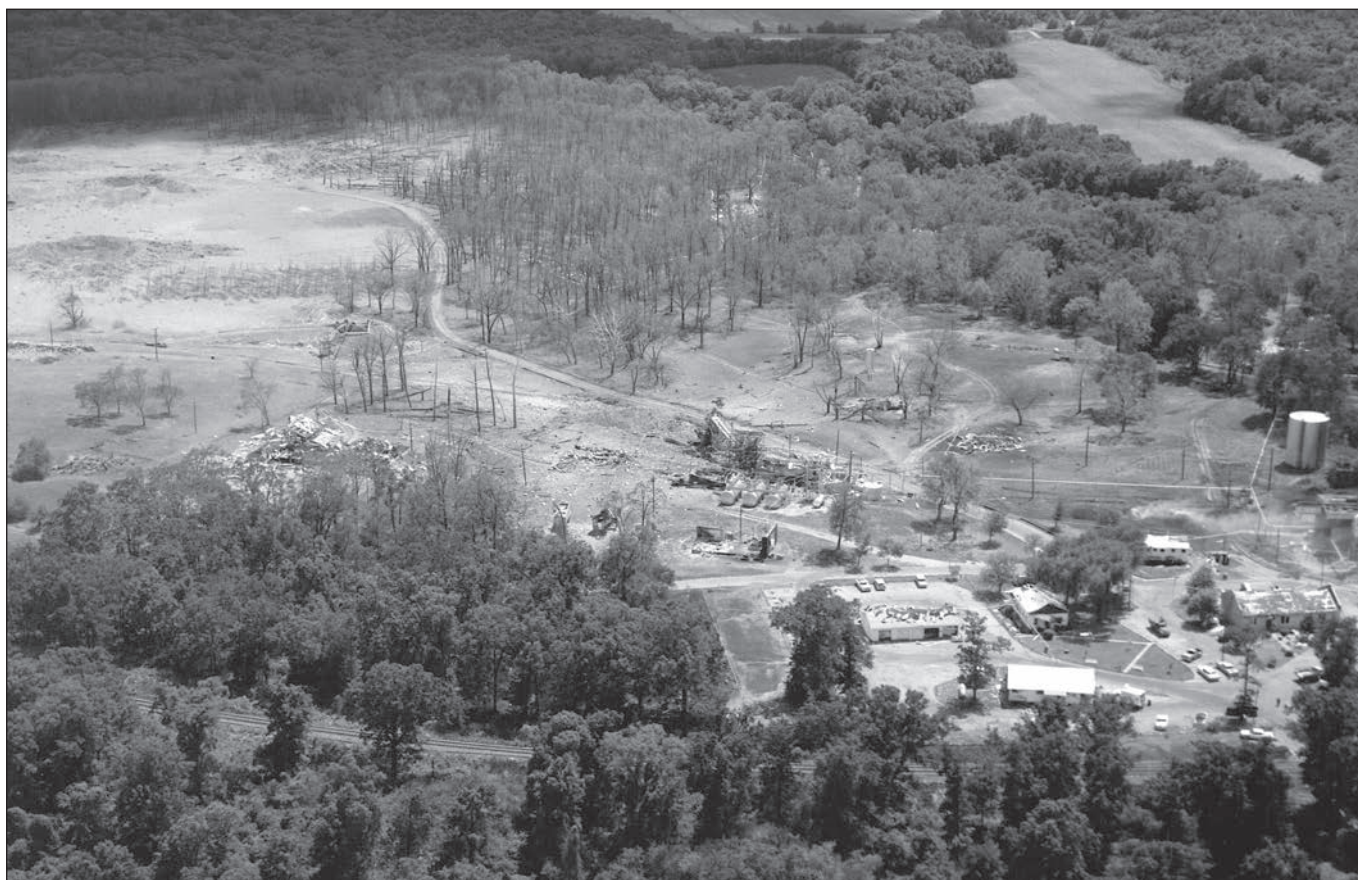
Jasper and Newton counties are included in that request.

"Missourians have shown incredible resilience in the face of repeated severe weather, but the damage from this two-week storm system extended across nearly one-third of the state and has placed a tremendous strain on local communities," Kehoe said in a statement. "Federal assistance will provide critical support as communities continue repairing essential infrastructure and recovering from these devastating storms."

A storm June 13-14 downed trees and limbs in parts of Joplin and the surrounding area, causing power outages as well as damage to homes and cars. At one point, more than 28,000 Liberty customers were without power in Southwest Missouri. According to Joplin officials, there were no reports of injuries.

SEE DECLARATION, 2A

60 YEARS AGO



An aerial view shows the Hercules plant in the aftermath of the explosion July 14, 1966.

COURTESY | DYNO NOBEL INC.

Hercules plant explosion in Carthage still sparks memories

BY JOHN HACKER
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CARTHAGE, Mo. — Tuesday marks the 60th anniversary of what has been called the second-most dramatic event in Carthage history behind only the 1861 battle of Carthage.

A massive explosion July 14, 1966, in a powder magazine at the Hercules Powder Plant on Route HH west of Carthage, where the Dyno Nobel plant is located now, shattered windows on the square in Carthage and in

buildings in Webb City, Cartersville and other surrounding communities.

Lea Wilson, of Carthage, said she recalls the event that destroyed the first home that she and her husband ever owned, not far from the plant.

"Just before the first explosion went off my husband had come home from work for lunch," Wilson said. "I had my own children and several of the neighborhood children playing in the yard. I had fixed him lunch and he had eaten and laid down on the couch for a brief rest

before going back to work. My phone rang. It was on the wall between our kitchen and living room, and I was standing in the doorway. It was a neighbor on the corner from me and her daughter was playing with my kids in my yard.

"The first blast went off and rocked us all. I looked up after that first explosion and saw blue sky. Our whole roof literally lifted off the house. The second explosion came and blew off our front door, which hit my husband in the head. At that point we had no idea what was happening, so we rushed out of the house, gathered up all the young ones in the yard and started walking from the house out back through the pasture."

News reports said the first huge explosion happened at 12:40 p.m. that day. Officials believed there were at least five smaller explosions that kept coming well into the night, keeping residents awake and on their toes.

Reports said the explosion was heard as far away as Springfield and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Some feared at the time that Carthage would fall into the caves that were said to lace the ground beneath it.

Wilson said she and her husband had a car at their home but that they didn't drive out because all roads would have taken them closer to the plant before

SEE BLAST, 2A

Spiva Center gets check for \$153,900

Money comes from group's annual ball

BY JOHN HACKER
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The Friends of St. Avips held their 64th annual St. Avips Ball last month, and presented the proceeds to the Spiva Center for the Arts on Thursday in the form of a big check for \$153,900.

Over the past 64 years, the Friends of St. Avips has raised just shy of \$2 million to support Spiva and the various programs it runs.

"Thank you. That doesn't even begin to cover what you've done for us," Spiva Executive Director Heather Lesmeister said at the presentation ceremony. "This is just

SEE SPIVA, 2A

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