

HARVEST: Nonprofit organization helps farmers in need. **3A** | **GOLF:** Jack Spencer claims Ozark Amateur title. **1B**

Rural Missouri at center of ballot power fight

Amendment 4
on August ballot

BY JASON HANCOCK

Missouri Independent

Supporters of Amendment 4 say it would give rural Missouri a stronger voice. Antwann Rhodes says it would take one away. Rhodes lives in Waynesville, a Pulaski County

town of about 5,600 just outside Fort Leonard Wood, where he settled after retiring from the U.S. Army. He is a real estate agent in south-central Missouri and treasurer of the Missouri Association of Realtors, the organization bankrolling the campaign against the Aug. 4 ballot measure. To Rhodes, Amendment 4 is not rural Missouri's answer to urban political power. It is a proposal that

would make it harder for Missourians in small towns and big cities alike to use the initiative process when politicians in Jefferson City refuse to act. "You basically are giving it up," Rhodes said. "If you give up your constitutional right, your voice would not be heard." That argument is emerging as the central fault line in the final weeks before voters decide Amendment

4: Who actually speaks for rural Missouri and the small towns outside the state's largest cities? Supporters, including rural Republicans and the Missouri Farm Bureau, argue the initiative petition process has allowed expensive campaigns powered by out-of-state money and urban voters to rewrite the state constitution over the objections of much of rural Missouri.

"When something only passes in St. Louis, Columbia, Kansas City and Springfield, that should tell you something," said Doug Kerr, chairman of the Knox County Republican Central Committee. "And look at what it's got us in the rest of the state." Recent resident-led initiatives have expanded Medicaid, legalized recreational marijuana, approved sports betting and added abortion

rights to the Missouri Constitution. Each passed statewide. Each was opposed by much of rural Missouri. "Our voices are not being heard," Kerr said. "We're not just a democracy. We are a democratic republic, and the rights of the minority should at least be heard. And right now, they're not." Opponents, including some small-town real estate

SEE **FIGHT**, 2A

70th anniversary



Elsie Chorum (from left), 12, Sophie Beckham, 11, and Evelyn Chorum, 5, prepare a goat pen during the Jasper County Youth Fair workday Monday. The fair starts Tuesday.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Jasper County Youth Fair being held this week

BY JOHN HACKER

jhacker@joplinglobe.com

CARTHAGE, Mo. — In this busy year of anniversaries, the Jasper County Youth Fair Board almost overlooked its own milestone. "We just figured out it was our 70th year a few days ago," said Roxanne Willard, secretary for the board and an organizer of the fair. "With the 100th year of Route 66 and the 250th Independence Day, we didn't even think about our own event's anniversary. We started in 1956, and every year is special for us because these kids are hard workers. You ask them anything, and they'll just do it." Dozens of young workers, parents and organizers were scrambling around the fairgrounds in Carthage's Municipal Park on Monday making final preparations for Tuesday's opening. Young people were putting



Hayes Harshaw, 7, of Avilla, sweeps dust and gravel off the concrete floor of the new poultry barn.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

up fencing for cattle, sheep and goats and setting up makeshift tables for chicken and rabbit cages. Hundreds of smaller exhibits were already on display in the building on the hill close to the skating rink. Willard said the participants are getting a chance to use a new poultry barn, a new pavilion at the cook shack and a host of other improvements added since the 2025 youth fair. Foundations such as the Steadley Trust, the Helen S. Boylan Foundation and the

McCune-Brooks Hospital Trust gave the Jasper County Youth Fair \$175,000 for a host of improvements. "The exciting thing the kids have been talking about is the air conditioning in the restrooms," Willard said. "That's been the hot topic of talk among the kids. They're so used to getting dressed in the bathrooms where it's sweaty and hot, and now they can change clothes without their clothes sticking to them. They're excited about that." Willard said some of the grant money also went into

renovating the kitchen in the small exhibit building and to building a new covered wash rack for pigs, sheep, goats and other animals. "These improvements mean we have room to grow and we have the facilities to take care of our fair as well as other shows who would want to come in here at other times," she said. "It means we have the support from the community to keep this open." The fair runs through

SEE **FAIR**, 2A

Senate panel to hold hearing in Joplin

Meeting scheduled for Wednesday at MSSU

FROM STAFF REPORTS

news@joplinglobe.com

The Missouri Senate Select Committee on Rural Healthcare will hold a public hearing at 2 p.m. Wednesday in Room 205 of the Ron Richard Athletic Center at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin. The hearing will feature presentations from leading healthcare organizations on the challenges facing rural healthcare and potential solutions to improve access and outcomes across Missouri. Presentations include: • MISSOURI HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, 340B Drug Pricing Program. • MISSOURI PHARMACY ASSOCIATION and Missouri Pharmacy Business Council on pharmacy benefit managers and their impact on pharmacies and patients. • RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION OFFICE on rural health data and

SEE **HEARING**, 2A

Qualifier event open to area cyclists

FROM STAFF REPORTS

news@joplinglobe.com

Joplin will be one of 23 cities around the globe to host a 2026 Velosolutions/UCI Pump Track Qualifier event, Aug. 15-16, but it won't be just for elite professional cyclists. The event, at MOmentum Bike Park, will be open to local riders as well. "Technically, locals can enter the world qualifier too," said Ruth Sawkins, of Rufus Racing, race director. No professional status is required to race. Joplin is one of four U.S. cities chosen for the qualifiers.

SEE **EVENT**, 2A

