

STUDENT LOANS: Millions trying to get lives back on track. **4A** | **BASEBALL:** Webb City team falls to Twin City. **1B**

Announcement on Memorial Hall planned

Organization has been working on saving building

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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An organization formed to raise funds to renovate Joplin's Memorial Hall, Friends of Joplin Memorial Hall, will hold a press conference at 11 a.m. Tuesday

to discuss the status of the effort. The press conference will be open to the public and will be held on the west side of Memorial Hall near the Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Residents backing the

community-driven effort sought local and legislative approval to raise Joplin's lodging tax from 4% to 6% as one of the funding tools to help fund the renovation effort with a goal to make repairs so that the building could be returned to public use. Gov. Mike Kehoe on July 13 signed into law House

Bill 1867, which had been sponsored by Rep. Lane Roberts, for state authorization allowing Joplin to ask voters in an upcoming general election to approve the lodging tax increase. Proponents said in a statement that any money raised by the lodging tax increase would be "used by the city solely to provide moneys for

the construction and maintenance of new capital projects to promote tourism" in the city through programs that will be offered at Memorial Hall. Presenters at the press conference will include Roberts, R-Joplin, and Sen. Jill Carter, R-Granby, who worked to get the bill approved by the Missouri

Legislature before this year's session closed, and members of the Friends of Joplin Memorial Hall. Joplin's Memorial Hall has been closed to the public since 2018 due to the building's deterioration. The Joplin City Council voted 8-1 in 2024 to demolish the

SEE **HALL**, 2A

UP FOR RENEWAL



Bruce Copeland, an attorney and farmer, inspects a watering site built north of Carthage with the help of money from the Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Parks, soil and water sales tax to be on Aug. 4 ballot

BY JOHN HACKER
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Bruce Copeland, an attorney and farmer who works land north of Carthage on Civil War Road, said he has used Soil and Water Conservation District programs to replant his fields with warm-season grasses and to provide sustainable water

sources for his cattle. Copeland said he's also started a rotational grazing system for his cattle, allowing native grasses cattle have grazed down to recover. "If they continue to graze the whole pasture, they'll graze it to oblivion," Copeland said recently. "Rotational grazing lets the soil recover, and it lets the plants recover." Since 1984, Missouri farm-

ers have implemented more than 295,000 conservation practices and projects on cropland, hay fields, pastures and woodlands, and these efforts have prevented more than 194 million tons of soil from eroding, according to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Money for those programs comes from the one-10th-cent parks, soils and water sales tax, which is back on the ballot Aug. 4 as Amendment 1. The tax comes up for renewal every 10 years. Half of the money goes to state parks and historic sites,

and half goes to landowners in the state through voluntary programs developed by the Soil and Water Districts Commission and administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Soil and Water Conservation Program. There are soil and water conservation district boards in each of Missouri's 114 counties. According to DNR: "Before the sales tax was implemented, Missouri lost soil at a rate of 10.8 tons per acre each year on cropland. That number has

SEE **AMENDMENT**, 2A

Blood drive challenge to be Friday

First responders competing for traveling trophy

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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Joplin first responders are partnering with the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks for the fifth annual Joplin Boots, Badges and Bandages Community Challenge Blood Drive on Friday. Donors will receive a limited-edition Boots, Badges and Bandages T-shirt and a chance to enter to win a \$10,000 dream vacation giveaway to the destination of their choice. The blood drive will take place from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Joplin Public Safety Training Center, 5102 N. Swede Lane. The competition between fire, police and EMS awards a traveling trophy to the agency with the most donor support. "Each year, we see our community come together to give the gift of life, and it is truly inspiring. As first responders we witness firsthand the critical need for blood. Your donation could truly save someone's life," Gerald Ezell, Joplin fire chief, said in a statement. Police Chief Richard Pearson said: "This drive comes at a critical time, in summer when donations typically drop, but the need for blood often increases. Whether your Team Fire, Team Police, Team EMS or just Team Joplin, your support makes a real difference."

To help avoid wait times, appointments are encouraged. Donors can schedule an appointment by going to www.cbco.org/bootsandbadges or by calling 417-227-5006. Photo identification is required. People should eat well and drink plenty of fluids prior to donating. "In emergency situations, having blood available can mean the difference between life and death. That is why we are proud to join the Joplin Boots, Badges and Bandages blood drive," Jason Smith, with METS Ambulance, said in the statement. The Community Blood Center of the Ozark is the sole supplier of blood, plasma and platelets to patients at more than 40 area hospitals, including Freeman Health System and Mercy Hospital Joplin.

Charlie 22 to hold fundraising banquet Saturday

Organization celebrating expansion to other areas

BY JOHN HACKER
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Charlie 22 Outdoors, a group dedicated to helping veterans and their families cope with postservice life, will celebrate its accomplishments and raise money to provide more outdoor activities for veterans at its annual banquet

Saturday at the College Heights Athletic Center, 1107 N. Prosperity Ave. in Joplin. Scott Hettinger, a founder of Charlie 22, said doors open for the event at 4 p.m. with dinner at 5 p.m. and a program at 6 p.m. Cost is \$15 per person, and the group has table sponsorships available as well. "It's a chance to celebrate what's happened in the past year, what God's grace has done over this past year," Hettinger said. "The event also brings together

SEE **FUNDRAISER**, 2A



Veterans fish during Operation Little Flat Creek III, held earlier this month by Charlie 22 Outdoors. COURTESY | CHARLIE 22