

NEOSHO: Couple expanding coffee shop, pottery studio. **3A** | **BASEBALL:** Jailbirds win 2 against Carroll Merchants. **1B**

Public meeting on highway planning study set

Event to be held
at Joplin Public Library

FROM STAFF REPORTS
news@joplinglobe.com

A second public meeting will be held Thursday in Joplin for those interested in a planning study for the Missouri Highway 17½/49

corridor and the Joplin West Corridor, the Missouri Department of Transportation has announced. The purpose of the study is to evaluate how these two corridors can support the long-term transportation needs and economic development potential of the area. No funding has been identified or allocated for upgrades or construction

along either of these two corridors, according to MoDOT. The meeting will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursday at the Joplin Public Library Community Room, 1901 E. 20th St. in Joplin. The meetings are open-house style with no formal presentations. People interested in the study may come and go at any time

during the advertised time frame for the meetings. An online public meeting can be accessed to learn about the study, ask questions and leave comments at <http://www.modot.org/projects/route-171-249-joplin-west-corridor-study>. The study will focus on: • **THE EXISTING** Missouri 17½/49 corridor in Jasper County from the Interstate

44/Interstate 49 interchange in Joplin to the I-49/Highway 171/Highway 96/Highway 571 interchange in Carthage. • **THE NEW** Joplin West Corridor in Newton and Jasper counties from I-44 near the Missouri-Oklahoma state line to near the Highway 171/Highway 96/Route YY intersection north of Carl Junction.

The study focuses on safety conditions, roadway operations, projected traffic, local and regional connectivity and economic impact. For those unable to access the online meeting, contact MoDOT's Southwest District Office at 417-895-7600, and accommodation will be made to share the information. A similar meeting was held Tuesday in Carthage.

'Pretty nice thing'



Carthage VFW Auxiliary members Teresa Killman, Nancy Wilson, Camilla Marshall, Chris Rock, Karla Webb and Kim Wilson helped serve about 300 veterans and staff at the Missouri Veterans Home during their fifth annual Christmas in July event. GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Christmas comes to Mount Vernon Veterans Home thanks to area groups

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

MOUNT VERNON, Mo. — George Jones, 89, was in for a surprise when he woke Wednesday and was told they were going to celebrate Christmas. A thermometer outside said it was in the low 90s. Members of Carthage VFW Post 2590 and the Webb City Elks Lodge traveled to Mount Vernon to celebrate their fifth annual Christmas in July with presents for residents and staff, barbecue brisket and baked beans, mac and cheese, and fixings. “I’ve been here a year and a half, and I’ve been to two Christmases in July, and it was a pretty nice thing for the

VFW to do for the men and women here,” Jones said. “I called my daughter already and told her I had Christmas in July, and she said, ‘Does that mean I’ve got to give you a gift?’ I said, ‘Well, it wouldn’t hurt.’” Jones, a U.S. Navy veteran who served early in the Vietnam era on the destroyer USS Boyd, said he was happy with his gift. “I ended up getting a little sack with mini-M&Ms and a \$25 gift card,” he said. “Plus, the 24-pack of Mountain Dew, and that’s a pretty nice gift to give to an old man who’s sitting back not doing anything except maybe watching TV or reading a book.” Kim Wilson, the Carthage VFW hospital chairperson,



George Jones, a resident at the Mount Vernon Veterans Home, got his picture taken with the Carthage VFW Auxiliary’s resident Santa, Jim Hahne, at Wednesday’s fifth annual Christmas in July. COURTESY PHOTO

said the Carthage VFW Auxiliary started Christmas in July in 2021 because they wanted to give those in the Mount Vernon Veterans Home — one of the state’s seven veterans home — something to cele-

brate in the heart of summer. “We started back when because everybody comes up here at Christmastime to the veterans, and sometimes it

SEE **CHRISTMAS**, 2A

Board agrees to Talon Center name

Indoor activity building to
be constructed on campus
of Joplin High School

FROM STAFF REPORTS
news@joplinglobe.com

The Joplin Board of Education unanimously agreed Tuesday to name its new indoor activity building the Talon Center. It is to be built on the campus of Joplin High School and set for completion in the summer of 2028. According to the school district, the name was selected by a committee of district volunteers, including staff, students, parents and community members, and was approved by the board at its July 21 meeting. In April, more than 75% of district voters endorsed a bond issue to raise \$40 million to help pay for a variety of improvements to seven older elementary schools in Joplin and build an activities and athletics center at the high school. The 90,000-square-foot indoor practice facility will include a 90-yard turf football field, locker rooms, weight rooms, classrooms, storage rooms, a dance-cheer room and community room to support a variety of athletic, dance, marching band and other programs at the high school. Also at its July 21 meeting, the board approved a multiyear naming rights partnership for the Talon Center with TAMKO Building Products. According to the district, through this 10-year partnership, TAMKO will serve as the facility’s naming sponsor. “TAMKO has partnered with Joplin Schools on other significant projects, and this next step reflects a shared belief in what our students can achieve when a community comes together around them,” Superintendent Kerry Sachetta said in a statement. “The TAMKO Talon Center will touch many aspects of the student experience, and we’re grateful to work alongside a partner that continues to invest in opportunities that make a lasting difference.” David Humphreys, chairman and CEO of TAMKO, and his wife, Debra, also personally sponsored the indoor turf field, according

SEE **CENTER**, 2A

Sparklight donates \$5,000 to Exploreum

Money to advance
tech, staff training

BY KIMBERLY BARKER
news@joplinglobe.com

Sparklight in Joplin gave \$5,000 to the Schroeder Family Exploreum on Wednesday to fund new technology and advance staff training.

The Schroeder Family Exploreum, 300 S. Main St., which officially opened its first phase earlier this summer, features several indoor and outdoor exhibits for children and young adults to explore the world of science, technology, engineering, art and math. Neely Myers, executive director of the Exploreum, said the money will help purchase new equipment

such as desktop computers and a new customer relationship management donor system. “As we grow into this space and serve more people, our technology needs are growing and our employee numbers are growing — technology needs for the employees but also for the families that we serve,” Myers said. “We were thrilled that we qualified

for this grant, thrilled to receive it and so excited to have Sparklight as our partner.” The donation was provided through Sparklight’s Charitable Giving Campaign, which aims to strengthen the communities it serves through support for local nonprofits, associate volunteerism and grants. Bill Mason, director of

regional operations at Sparklight, said the campaign was launched in 2020 and focuses on three core areas: education and digital literacy, food insecurity, and community development. This project checked two of the three boxes. To date, Sparklight has donated more than \$1.3 million through its Charitable

SEE **DONATION**, 2A

