

HEAT: Cooling centers in Joplin remain open. **3A** | **FOOTBALL:** MSSU program ready for ‘fresh start,’ coach says. **1B**

Induction ceremony to honor 5

Joplin Schools Alumni Hall of Fame event set for October

FROM STAFF REPORTS
news@joplinglobe.com

A Joplin attorney, Scott Vorhees, and a Joplin banker, Margaret “Peggy” Fuller,

are among those who will be honored at the Joplin Schools Alumni Hall of Fame later this year. There also are three who will be recognized posthumously during the ceremony. Vorhees, a graduate of the Joplin High School class of 1993, is a nationally recognized and award-winning personal injury attorney, according to the Joplin

Schools Foundation. He also is known for his work in the Joplin community and with local education and youth through his involvement with Irving Elementary School, the Alliance of Southwest Missouri, Building Bridges, donations to local elementary schools, and mentoring and tutoring students throughout Joplin Schools.

Fuller will receive the meritorious award, given to an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary service and commitment to the Joplin School District and public education. She is a “dedicated community advocate whose guiding philosophy has always been that it takes a village,” according to the foundation. She

moved to Joplin with her husband in 1986 and has since worked to help strengthen the community through volunteer leadership and civic engagement. She recently served as vice president of marketing at Southwest Missouri Bank. Fuller was named the Joplin Area Chamber of

SEE **HONORS**, 2A

Joplin launches lead reduction program

Qualifying homeowners can begin applying

FROM STAFF REPORTS
news@joplinglobe.com

The city of Joplin has begun accepting applications for its new lead hazard reduction program, known as Lead Safe Joplin.

It is designed to help eligible owner-applicants identify and control lead-based paint hazards in qualifying homes within Joplin city limits.

The city said in its announcement last week that it is launching the program in partnership with Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area, which is administering the program, to reduce lead-based paint hazards in homes and improve health outcomes for families throughout the community.

Qualifying homeowners can begin applying, with lead hazard control work anticipated to begin in late summer 2026 following application review, lead inspections, contractor procurement and final project planning. Loni Smith, project coordinator for the city of Joplin Community Development Division, said in a statement: “This program is going to help reduce lead poisoning in our community. It’s really the last and most tedious part of a long story of lead remediation for Joplin. This grant allows us to go house by house, making them lead-safe; minimizing the danger for kids who are most susceptible to lead paint and soil contamination. The city is excited to partner with ESC to administer the program and we encourage residents in homes built before 1978 to apply for this assistance.”

Eligible homeowners may receive free services including:

- **LEAD-BASED** paint inspections and risk assessments.
- **PAINT** stabilization and hazard removal.
- **SOIL REMEDIATION** where needed.
- **CLEARANCE** testing upon project completion.

SEE **LEAD**, 2A

CROWD OF 1,200



Isaac Routh, 3, of Joplin, listens and watches as he learns about fish found in Missouri’s lakes and streams at the Shoal Creek Water Festival on Saturday. GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Shoal Creek Water Festival draws people to Wildcat Park

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

The annual Shoal Creek Water Festival drew about 1,200 people to Wildcat Park on the banks of Shoal Creek on Saturday to watch cardboard boats and learn about water conservation and the wildlife living in Missouri streams and rivers.

Robin Standridge, executive

director of Wildcat Glades Nature Group, said the event also featured dozens of booths and activities revolving around water and the importance of protecting natural waterways. Shoal Creek is a source of drinking water for Joplin and other communities, and also home to several species of conservation concern.

“This event is meant to remind people that getting out in the creek is fun, and there is still a conservation message behind it,” Standridge said. “We just really need to remember to take care of our waterways. So there’s a lot of education circled around

SEE **FESTIVAL**, 2A



Jerrad Vest, of Rogers, Ark., said he raced in the past six Shoal Creek Water Festivals and that this year he went back to the basics for his boat design. The face on the boat is that of Falkor, the lucky dragon in the movie “The NeverEnding Story.” GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

U.S. farmland shrinks while land values, production costs grow

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is the first of a five-part series.

BY ERIC SCICCHITANO
CNHI News

American farms are disappearing. There are fewer farms today than one year ago, 10 years ago and 50 years ago. The number of individual farms operating in the U.S. peaked in 1935 at 6.81 million, ahead of a steady

decline, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, rapidly falling into the 1970s before beginning a slower slide in 1982. The latest federal data shows that in 2025, there were 1.86 million farms, down from 1.88 million in 2024 and 1.99 million in 2020. Acreage dedicated to agriculture is vanishing too. In 1935, there were 1.05 billion acres of land dedicated to



farming, which that year’s Ag Census estimated accounted for slightly more than half of all land in the U.S. In 2025, the total stood at 873.95 million acres and fading year over year.

“I hate to say this, but I think family farms are gone,” said Drew Swanson of the Agricultural History Society and editor of its journal, Agricultural History. “I think part of it is maybe thinking carefully about what we mean when we say ‘family farm,’” he said. There’s the romantic vision: kids at work in the pasture, dad draped in overalls, mom wrapped at the

waist by a plaid apron, big red barn. Swanson gives a different glimpse: family living in a city or the suburbs, labor undertaken by employees, a visit to the farm measured in hours and not miles. “You’ve got a lot of very big, very industrial farms that are ‘family farms,’” Swanson said of fitting within the USDA’s legal definition, “but not in the public imagination of what

a family farm is.”

LARGE FARMS ON RISE

Growth in farmland and operations is found among those in the largest farm demographics — those totaling at least 2,000 acres and with a gross value of at least \$1 million are increasing, while those that are smaller or have less sales shrink away.

SEE **FARMS**, 2A

