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Ross wins GOP nomination for Missouri House District 161

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

CARTHAGE, Mo. — The final tally for Tuesday's primary election widened the county's closest race in favor of Thomas Ross as the Republican candidate for Missouri House District 161, representing part of Joplin.

The final count increased the gap to the point that it eliminated the possibility of a recount, according to



Thomas Ross



Louise Secker

the Jasper County clerk's office.

County Clerk Charlie Davis said his office processed

the Jasper County clerk's office with proper ID to "cure" the ballot.

Davis said of the other three, two were ballots cast by people who voted from overseas and the last one was a ballot from a member of the military that arrived just before the deadline at noon Friday.

After Tuesday night, Ross had 1,586 votes or 50.49% of the vote, and Louise Secker had 1,555 votes, or

49.51% of the vote.

That difference between the two candidates was small enough that it meant that a candidate could request a recall under state law.

But after Friday's certification, a recall was ruled out, Davis said. Four of the provisional and mail-in ballots applied to the 161st District.

Ross added three votes to make his tally 1,589, or

50.52% and Secker added one vote to make her final tally 1,556, or 49.48%.

Davis said the new difference of 1.04% puts the vote margin just outside the 1% that would have allowed a recount.

Ross advances to take on Democrat Aaron Joseph Metzger, who received 1,212 votes as the only Democrat on the primary ballot, in the November general election.

Suspect identified in 4-year-old Joplin shooting

FROM STAFF REPORTS
news@joplinglobe.com

Joplin police said Friday that a suspect has been identified and is facing charges in the fatal shooting of Kenneth Jay Matthews and the wounding of Kristopher Culbertson four years ago.

According to police, on May 16, 2022, first responders were sent to the 500 block of Connor Avenue in reference to gunshots being fired. When officers arrived, they located two men with gunshot wounds.

Culbertson, 23 at the time, was transported to a local hospital in critical condition but later recovered from his wounds.

Matthews, of Webb City, who was 47, was pronounced dead at the scene from gunshot wounds.

According to reports at the time, Matthews and Culbertson were on foot when occupants of a black Ford Taurus SHO opened fire on them.

A police canvass of the neighborhood immediately after the shooting turned up some video surveillance footage that captured images of the suspect vehicle. But

SEE **SUSPECT**, 2A

SENSE OF SERVICE

Medical, dental students fan out across Joplin for We Care Day

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

When first-year students at KCU's medical and dental schools in Joplin come to one agency or another to volunteer, Robin Standridge, executive director of Wildcat Glades Nature Group, says leaders need to be ready.

"The students are really coming out here to work and work hard," Standridge said. "They come to work hard and they work fast. The volunteering is superb and they're a very dedicated group of individuals."

About 20 first-year students from the medical and dental schools came to Wildcat Glades on Friday morning and helped with different projects as part of KCU's We Care Day.

Haley Reardon, director of communication and community relations at KCU, said We Care Day is "the day that



Emmanuel Ajayi, a first-year medical student from Houston, Texas, carries a log to the front of the new outdoor classroom at Wildcat Glades during Friday's We Care Day at KCU. GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

all of our first-year students in our medical and dental programs go out and serve the community."

"We are serving about 20 different organizations today doing various projects, just whatever each of these organizations need," Reardon said. "Our goal is that our students understand from day one that you are going into professions where you are going to serve people, and so we want to ingratiate a sense of service and servant leadership in them from day one when they start their education."

Reardon said some of the groups that have invited KCU students include Lafayette House, Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Four States, Joplin Area Habitat for Humanity, Joplin Schools, Solace House, Souls Harbor and many others.

SEE **CARE**, 2A

Joplin City Council to hold special meeting Monday on budget

Funding substantially less than previous 2 years because of grants

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Joplin's city budget season has arrived and city documents show that there will be a large decrease in next fiscal year's budget as

the result of spending the final amounts of federal grant money obtained over the past few years for local projects.

A special meeting will be held Monday by the Joplin City Council to discuss city budget preparation topics for next year. The meeting starts at 5:45 p.m. at City Hall, 602 S. Main St.

Proposed budget projections show revenue is projected at about \$44.5

million, about \$788,000 less than the \$45.3 million in spending, and substantially less than the previous two years when the budget was heavily bolstered by federal grant funding.

The current year's budget was \$191.4 million. The previous year's budget was \$213 million because federal pandemic-era relief funds were being spent down.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the

federal government initiated grant programs to fund jobs to keep people working and fuel the economy. As a result, Joplin was awarded an initial \$13.8 million in one-time, direct federal funding. That money was used by city officials to seed other grant programs. In all, the city obtained nearly \$100 million for numerous community projects funded by various grants, mostly federal.

Now, ARPA funds and funding from another federal grant source, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, are no longer boosting the budget because those federal grants had to be spent this year by Dec. 31.

Among the extensive documents prepared for the meeting are the City Council priorities set for the 2027 budget year. One of the ways the council has discussed

to generate more revenue is by "exploring ways to diversify city revenue to include property tax, creating a reduction of sales tax dependence."

There are no further details in the meeting documents to explain how the city will address that priority.

In addition, reaffirmed council goals and

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