

Ross withdraws from District 161 Missouri House race

Missouri House District 161 candidate Thomas Ross speaks during the Jasper County Republican Central Committee's candidate forum in July in Carthage. GLOBE FILE



BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

Thomas Ross has agreed to withdraw from the race for Missouri House District 161, which covers much of Joplin, according to Jasper County Republican Party Central Committee Chairman Lynn Ragsdale. Ragsdale said he met Friday with Ross, the GOP nominee in the general election in November.

Ross was arrested Wednesday and transferred to federal custody Thursday after the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri revealed Ross was being charged with conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance for allegedly asking his former campaign manager to plant cocaine and Adderall on his challenger in the primary, Louise Secker. Ross won the primary by

33 votes, 1,589 to 1,556 for Secker. Ragsdale said Ross was being held Friday morning at the St. Clair County Jail in Osceola and had been moved a couple of times in the past two days. "Very briefly he agreed with what Peter Kinder (the state Republican Party chairman) and we said in our releases on Wednesday," Ragsdale said, referring to state and local party offi-

cials calling on Ross to withdraw after the arrest. "I've known Thomas for a while and have been friends with his family, so he was actually glad to see us. He agreed that it would be better for him to focus his attention entirely on this and withdraw from the race. He said he wanted to do what's best for his 161st District constituents."

SEE RACE, 2A

Consultant working on plan for mall, MSSU corridor

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Work is well on the way by a Chicago consulting group, Place Foundry, toward a master plan for the Northpark Mall and Missouri Southern State University corridors. Representatives of the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, Missouri Southern and the city of Joplin have worked together to obtain a plan for redevelopment of that area. Mark Schaer, senior associate on development strategy for Place Foundry, said the firm is working on identifying properties that would be good for development. "Our team has spent some time on the ground in Joplin and on desktop research getting to understand how the mall is performing and how the market is specifically with the mall, as well as understanding Joplin as a whole. Our research is focused to make a plan that makes sense. Also, we spent a lot of time in Joplin the second week of August, gathered a group of stakeholders at the university and other stakeholders to understand people's view of that corridor," Schaer said. The consultants held two sessions with MSSU students to get an understanding for needs in that area. Betsy Mense, president and CEO of the Joplin chamber, said in a statement: "The Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce is happy to join the city of Joplin and MSSU in taking a closer look at this important area of our community and what's possible for its future. The area around MSSU and Northpark Mall has the potential to become a more vibrant area where students, residents and visitors want to spend time. Place Foundry is helping us look at the area with fresh eyes and explore how we can build on what's already there to support Joplin's continued growth."

SEE PLAN, 2A

THINKING TINY

Watered Gardens breaks ground on community for homeless in Joplin

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

A new effort to help people who are homeless in Joplin got underway Friday when Watered Gardens Ministry broke ground on 57 tiny homes. James Whitford, founder and CEO of Watered Gardens, announced the name for the tiny home community will be Freedom Village and said he hopes to have the first phase of 24 homes and a community center ready by April 2027. The groundbreaking was held at 889 E. 12th St. on what will be the location for the third phase of homes and is the northern end of the new community. "At Watered Gardens we've been serving people in poverty and homelessness for 26 years," Whitford said. "And we have noticed



People attending Friday morning's groundbreaking of Watered Gardens' planned Freedom Village take the opportunity to tour a tiny home. GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

over the last number of years that there's been a growing population of people who are truly disabled or older and unable to hold

full-time employment. And if you can't have a full-time job, you're not going to be able to pay the going rent rate. So what this means

is that people are left either homeless, in and out of shelters, on and off the

SEE TINY, 2A

State high court refuses to delay congressional map ruling

Response sets up U.S. Supreme Court appeal

BY RUDI KELLER
Missouri Independent

The Missouri Supreme Court on Friday morning denied a request from Secretary of State Denny Hoskins to pause its order requiring the Nov. 3 congressional election to be conducted using the districts in place for the 2024 election. Hoskins asked for a decision by noon to allow for an "emergency appeal" to the U.S. Supreme Court. His request

SEE COURT, 2A

did not ask the court to block its decision placing a referendum on the gerrymandered congressional map passed by Republican lawmakers in 2025 on the November ballot. The court denied the request without comment. In the request for the stay, Hoskins said the order is unprecedented by directing him to use the congressional maps that controlled the 2022 and 2024 elections instead of the gerrymandered plan muscled through the General Assembly by Republicans. "The court's order violates federal law in several serious respects," Lou



Missouri Secretary of State Denny Hoskins listens Wednesday to arguments in cases challenging his decisions on ballot measures at the Missouri Supreme Court. MISSOURI INDEPENDENT | ANNELISE HANSHAW

Is this your bill?

Before hiding the markers, give My Account and Paperless Billing a try.



Learn more and enroll today!

