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WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

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ON THE TABLE: When making mayonnaise, have a plan. **3A** | **PLAYING OUTSIDE:** Volleyball taken to stadium. **1B**

Federal judge orders Thomas Ross released on bond

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A former candidate for state representative, Thomas Ross, of Joplin, was ordered released from custody Monday by a federal judge.

Ross, 37, faces a one-count federal complaint alleging he conspired to plant drugs on his opponent in the Aug. 4 primary election.

Ross was the Republican candidate for House District 161, which includes much of Joplin. He won the Republican primary for the state representative seat that had been held by Lane Roberts. Roberts could not run because of term limits. Ross won the primary nomination for the seat by 33 votes over his opponent, Joplin real estate agent Louise Secker.

Federal officials said in a statement at the time of his arrest that they were contacted by the Joplin Police Department regarding an alleged public corruption matter. According to the initial information provided by police, Ross' former campaign manager was asked by Ross to plant drugs on Secker.

Authorities said that the informant provided law enforcement with a black nylon glove that he claimed was given to him by Ross. A small, plastic bag was inside the glove. Inside the bag was a small amount of white powder. A cocaine test kit was used on the powder, which indicated a positive match.

Additionally, inside the glove was a pink and white capsule later identified as 20-milligram extended-release amphetamine and dextroamphetamine, also known as Adderall, a Schedule II controlled substance.

Investigators were told that Ross requested that the bag of drugs be placed inside the purse or vehicle of Secker while Ross was out of state on vacation.

A detention hearing for Ross was held Monday in U.S. District Court at Springfield.

Judge David P. Rush noted in the court record that a signed affidavit was filed in support of the charge. No evidence of probable cause was presented, but the court found probable cause and ordered the matter held for grand jury or other proceedings, according to the court record.

The court also found an adequate basis for releasing Ross, who agreed to abide by a signed appearance bond and an order

SEE **ROSS**, 2A

Carthage man arrested after child burned

BY JOHN HACKER
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CARTHAGE, Mo. — A Carthage man was arrested and charged with three felony counts of endangering the welfare of a child last week after police were called to a Carthage apartment for a report of a juvenile who sustained severe burns.

Christopher James Albin, 38, was still being held in the Jasper County Detention Center on \$100,000 cash-only bond after his arraignment Monday, where he pleaded not guilty to all charges and said he would apply for a public defender to represent him.

A bond review hearing is scheduled for 1 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 23, before Division VI Jasper County Circuit Judge Luke Boyer in the courthouse in Carthage.

A sworn statement by Carthage police Detective James Azua, filed with the charges, said the child burned in the incident had injuries requiring immediate medical attention and was taken to Mercy Springfield Hospital. Azua's statement said two other children, ages 6 and 5, were also in the home and that Albin told police that he was asleep and woke to find the 8-year-old child on fire. He attempted to put out the fire, then put the child in the bathtub to try to ease the child's pain, but did not immediately call 911.

Albin told investigators he had used a lighter to light a candle and left the lighter out. He also told investigators he contacted the children's mother and while talking to her he "experienced an asthma-related issue and administered an asthma treatment to himself before calling 911."

"I specifically questioned Albin regarding whether any other items capable of causing a fire had been left within the children's reach, including additional lighters, a torch, or other items associated with the lighting of the candle," Azua wrote. "Albin initially stated there was nothing else left out. Albin stated that he normally keeps such items stored in a backpack in a closet."

While investigating the room where the fire occurred, police officers found additional items that had been left out, including butane fuel containers and an additional torch that Albin had not initially disclosed during questioning. When confronted by the items, Albin said he accidentally left them out.

Albin told officers he had smoked THC in the presence of the children and had lit candles but that he never caught them with a lighter or ever specifically explained the danger of fire to the children.

Azua said he determined that there was probable cause to arrest Albin based on "the totality of the circumstances including Albin's presence in the residence, his admission that he left the lighter, butane fuel and a torch accessible in the residence, his initial failure to disclose the presence of the butane and the additional torch when specifically questioned about items capable of causing a fire, the condition of the children and their diapers, his failure to immediately call 911 following the incident and the resulting injuries sustained" by the child.

HEALTHY PRACTICE



KCU second-year medical student Anish Ali gives Reva Porter, a fifth grader from Dover Hill Elementary School, a physical exam Tuesday as part of Kansas City University's Score 1 for Health program.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Dover Hill students get exams through KCU's Score 1 for Health initiative

BY JOHN HACKER
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Joplin elementary school students were bused to Kansas City University's Joplin

campus Tuesday for head-to-toe medical and dental examinations.

For KCU's medical and dental students, it was a chance to work with people who are not simulated

patients for the first time in two years of classroom education.

For the elementary students — third, fourth and fifth graders from Dover Hill Elementary — it was a chance to meet a future doctor and get used to what a medical provider looks like and to get a third-party medical exam to possibly

identify diseases, injuries or infections before they get worse.

Melissa McAtee, director of operations at KCU's Center for Population Health and Equity, said the program is called Score 1 for Health and that Tuesday was the kickoff for the program in Joplin.

SEE **HEALTH**, 2A

Man pleads guilty to shooting Amazon driver

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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MOUNT VERNON, Mo. — A Wentworth man pleaded guilty Tuesday in Lawrence County Circuit Court to killing an Amazon delivery driver last year on a rural Lawrence County road near his house.

Thomas Edward Coy, 65, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and armed criminal action in the shooting of the Joplin driver. Her name is not listed in court records. The range of punishment in the case is 10 to 30 years in prison.

Coy is charged as a per-

sistent offender having been previously convicted of at least two drug-related offenses in 2004, court records show.

A Lawrence County Sheriff's Department division commander, Lt. Chris D. Berry, wrote in an affidavit in the earlier investigation of the case that Coy was someone with an extensive criminal history that included failure to appear and "many felony convictions."

Coy wrote in plea documents that he shot the driver with a pellet gun, but the document did not reflect whether he had told authorities why he

shot the woman driver.

Berry's statement reported that the delivery truck was seen by a witness about 3:45 p.m. Feb. 5, 2025, on County Road 4152, west of Missouri Highway 97 when it ran off the road, into a field and hit a fence.

About two hours later, sheriff's dispatch received a call from personnel at Mercy Joplin Hospital reporting that the driver — a 23-year-old woman from Joplin — had a bullet wound and the bullet was lodged in the head.

Berry stated that he watched a video in the delivery truck

that showed that the victim's vehicle came to a driveway at 3902 Lawrence County Road 2152 with the victim slumped over in the seat. That address is Coy's house, Berry reported.

In talking to investigators, Coy admitted that he shot the victim with a pellet rifle. Berry's earlier affidavit stated. Coy also admitted to going to the Amazon truck and taking the victim out of the seat and laying her in a roadside ditch.

Coy requested a sentencing report be submitted to Judge David Cole. The judge ordered the report be filed by Oct. 30 for Coy's sentencing.

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