

JASPER COUNTY: Commissioners lift burn ban. **2A**

STAMPEDE: High school, college runners compete. **1B**

Council to hold special meetings, budget sessions

Tuesday session to open with discussion about possible changes in flight services at airport

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Special meetings of the Joplin City Council will be held Tuesday and Wednesday to be followed by budget work sessions each evening.

Tuesday's council meeting will open at 6 p.m. with a discussion about possible changes to the city's flight services provided by funding through the Essential Air Service program. The air service provider,

SkyWest, and an air service consultant, Volaire, told the Joplin Airport Board last month that the number of flights in and out of the current hub in Chicago were to be restricted because of construction that is ongoing at the airport and the number of other flights that go in and out of that airport. The consultant recommended a change in the

hub to Houston.

Only Chicago flights are affected, according to city documents. SkyWest flights to and from Denver are not affected.

SkyWest is a part of United Airlines.

The EAS program subsidizes commercial airlines to maintain scheduled flights to small and rural communities that would otherwise

be unprofitable. The U.S. Department of Transportation provides the subsidies through contracts to air carriers.

Joplin's airport provides 12 round-trip flights to Chicago and one flight a day five days a week to and from Denver, according to Jeremy Haggerman, the city's assistant director of public works. He added that

passenger counts, called the load factor, are 65% to 75% full on a 50-seat plane. With 33 to 35 seats filled, that load factor for EAS flights is good, he said.

In other business, the council will consider an annual agreement between the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

SEE **COUNCIL**, 2A

'Short and muted'



Heat and drought this summer could mute fall color in the Ozarks.

COURTESY | NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Fall leaf colors could be affected by drought, heat

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

Autumn, which arrives Tuesday, is celebrated in Southwest Missouri with long car rides to see the Ozarks erupt into broad color palettes of red and yellow, with fall hikes and events such as the annual Maple Leaf Festival in Carthage. But this year's color could be what Missouri Department of Conservation community forester Jon Skinner called "short and muted" because

of lack of rainfall and days of hot weather that started in early July and lasted until last week.

"We are extremely dry," Skinner said. "You're seeing it show up in bands of trees along bluffs where there's a rock outcrop and shallow soils. Those trees are all turning brown. We're seeing trees that normally drop leaves when they have moisture stress problems, they're doing that. So we're seeing the

SEE **COLORS**, 2A



This red maple heralds autumn's arrival at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. Heat and drought this summer could mute fall color in the Ozarks.

GLOBE FILE

Tickets available for State of the Community event

Accomplishments from 2026 to be recapped

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Tickets are now available for Joplin's next State of the Community event. That event is set for Wednesday, Jan. 27, at the the Harry M. Cornell

Arts & Entertainment Complex, 212 W. Seventh St. Doors will open at 7:30 a.m. A breakfast buffet will be served at 7:45 a.m., and speakers will start at 8:30 a.m. City officials will give attendees information about the status of Joplin's goals, projects and initiatives for 2027. Speakers for the upcoming event will include City Manager Nick Edwards and Joplin Mayor Rob O'Brian. Additionally, updates will be

given by partners who work with or are involved with the city to provide information about how they are serving the community and improving life in Joplin. Those partners include the Joplin School District, the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Joplin Association. Officials from Jasper and Newton counties also will speak. The event also will recap accomplishments from 2026.

The first State of the Community event was held Jan. 14 at the same location. At the initial event earlier this year, video remarks also were made by Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe and Jasper and Newton County commissioners. Keenan Cortez, who was mayor at the time, said, "We wanted to start hosting an annual event like this

SEE **STATE**, 2A

Pacific could see strongest El Niño on record

Effect on Joplin weather hard to predict

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

Weather forecasters are saying this fall and winter could produce one of the strongest El Niños, or warm water pools in the eastern Pacific Ocean, since record keeping started.

Just what that means for the weather around Joplin is harder to predict.

Ben Price, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Springfield, said both El Niño and La Niña produce patterns, but patterns only show what the trends in air temperature and precipitation can be during a given period of time. Specific weather during a specific week or month is still subject to the whims of cold fronts and warm fronts, low-pressure centers and high-pressure centers that can buck the patterns.

"So the significance of a very strong El Niño is that it's more likely for those patterns associated with warm water in the eastern Pacific to occur, but we still can't guarantee an outcome," Price said. "And El Niño promotes a specific pattern that favors above-normal temperatures to our north and below-normal temperatures to our south. It also favors above-normal precipitation to our south and below-normal precipitation to our north. And so we're kind of in that transition zone where it doesn't really favor either side."

Price said the climatologists have recorded 11 strong El Niños since 1950.

"There are quite a few strong El Ninos that resulted in above-normal precipitation for winter time," he said. "So you combine those two together, above-normal temperatures, above-normal precipitation, you're looking probably at a rainier-than-average winter."

A graphic provided by the National Weather Service says the 11 strongest El Niño years were 1958, 1966, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2003, 2010, 2016 and 2024. Some of the trends:

• **SIX TO SEVEN** of those El Niños led to warmer-than-normal temperatures while four to five

SEE **WEATHER**, 2A

