

TRIVIA NIGHT: Event planned at Joplin library. **2A** | **BACKLASH:** Police navigate reactions to license plate readers. **4A**

Joplin Fire Department gets large grant for staffing

Police department may soon be fully staffed

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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Joplin city officials have learned that the fire department has received an \$800,000 grant that, along with additional city funding, will cover the \$1.3 million needed to fill the ranks with six new firefighters and

cover their wages for three years.

Fire Chief Gerald Ezell announced the grant during one of a series of City Council meetings and budget sessions this week.

The department has been selected to receive a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant, awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

According to a city statement, the SAFER grants

were established by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2005 to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained firefighters to staff community departments.

The statuses of all of Joplin's public safety services were discussed during the meetings.

Ezell said that all public safety sales tax positions

and Proposition Action jobs at the department are filled.

Reports from both the fire chief and police chief indicated that the city is coming close to filling most of its public safety positions in those departments.

Police Chief Richard Pearson told the council that it is possible that the police department will fill its vacancies and have no vacant positions by the end of the year. He attributed the

ability to attract officer candidates to pay increases for officers made possible by voter passage of the April 7 half-cent Proposition Police and Fire sales tax measure, which replaced an existing sales tax. That proposal passed with 78% voter approval.

Another law enforcement concern has been a shortage of staffing for dispatching.

A regional dispatch study is to be done this year by the city of Joplin as the result of

City Council discussion.

City Manager Nick Edwards said that the regional study is one of the items in the City Council's budget for 2027.

The study will be done in response to a council request that operational assessments be done periodically of city departments. Edwards said that is a standard practice of most cities. Those assessments would

SEE **GRANT**, 2A

Partnership signed



Joplin School District Superintendent Kerry Sachetta (left) and Missouri Southern State University President Dean Van Galen meet for the traditional handshake after they signed the Future-Ready Joplin College and Career Partnership on Thursday at Joplin High School.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Joplin School District-MSSU deal strengthens pathway from high school to university

BY JOHN HACKER
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Katelyn Fransnelly, a senior at Joplin High School, knows what the Future-Ready Joplin College and Career Partnership can mean for a student moving from high school to college because she said she's living it now.

"I actually am in dual-credit

classes through MSSU," Fransnelly said. "My junior year of high school, the majority of the classes I took were through MSSU, with government, with science, with English. To me, it makes it easier for college to happen, makes it, I guess, a little less scary."

On Thursday, Joplin Superintendent Kerry Sachetta and Missouri Southern State University President Dean Van

Galen signed what they are calling Future-Ready Joplin College and Career Partnership.

According to Southern, the partnership strengthens the pathway from high school to the university and careers by providing Joplin High School students with expanded access to admissions support, financial aid resources, career exploration, leadership opportunities, campus experiences and other programs designed to make the transition to higher education more seamless.

"Our two institutions share

a deep commitment to education, student success and the continued growth of the Joplin community," said Randy Oliver, Joplin High School principal. "Through this partnership, we're able to connect students with valuable learning opportunities, provide meaningful experiences for future educators, support the professional growth of our current staff and build stronger pathways from the classroom to college and careers."

Sachetta said the

SEE **PATH**, 2A

Absentee voting for Nov. 3 election starts

Jasper County clerk recommends that people do their homework on issues

BY JOHN HACKER
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Absentee voting for the general election began this week, meaning people with a reason they can't go to the polls Nov. 3 can come to the Jasper County clerk's offices in the courthouse in Carthage and the courts building in Joplin. They also can go to the Newton County Courthouse in Neosho to vote.

Jasper County Clerk Charlie Davis said another election deadline is looming; Oct. 7 is the last day to register to vote in the Nov. 3 election.

No-excuses absentee voting starts Tuesday, Oct. 20, and will run until Election Day.

Davis said this year's ballot is complicated and recommended people do their homework.

"I looked this one over, and yes, it's complicating and confusing," Davis said. "I thought to myself, I'm a smart man and I'm getting confused by the different ballot measures."

This ballot includes 15 races between individuals, four constitutional amendments, one proposition and two judicial confirmations, one for the state Supreme Court and one for the state's Southern District Court of Appeals.

The ballot includes:

- **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3** to repeal abortion rights that were approved by voters with Amendment 3 in 2024.

- **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 6** to keep the Legislature from weakening or repealing initiatives from the initiative petition process once they're approved by voters.

- **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 7** would establish a public endowment fund that lawmakers would have the state contribute to with the goal of growing it until the interest can pay all the

SEE **VOTING**, 2A

New pavilion dedicated at Carthage's Kellogg Lake Park

Cost of structure, sidewalks around \$140,000, city administrator says

BY JOHN HACKER
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CARTHAGE, Mo. — The Carthage Chamber of Commerce joined the Kellogg Lake Nature Center and Preserve Board, city officials and other leaders to

cut the ribbon and dedicate a new pavilion on the east side of Kellogg Lake.

The 20-foot-by-24-foot structure replaces a smaller pavilion that stood in the same place for a few years.

Jackie Boyer, president of the Kellogg Lake Nature Center and Preserve Board, said she hopes it will become a much-used asset in the park.

"We had this situation where



Jo Ellis (from left) and Jackie Boyer, members of the Kellogg Lake Nature Center and Preserve Board, speak with Carthage Chamber of Commerce President Julie Reams and City Administrator Traci Cox at a ceremony to cut the ribbon on a new pavilion and sidewalks installed on the east side of the lake.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

SEE **PARK**, 2A