

MSSU: University announces 2026 Willcoxon Scholars. **4A** | **VOLLEYBALL:** Carl Junction hosts 16-team tourney. **1B**

Indictment adds charges against Thomas Ross

BY JOHN HACKER
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A federal indictment against former Missouri House of Representatives candidate Thomas Christopher Ross, adds more charges to the one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance Ross was charged with early in September.

The recent federal grand jury indictment charges Ross, of Joplin, who was released recently, with three counts:

- **ONE COUNT** of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and amphetamine.
- **ONE COUNT** of distribution of cocaine and amphetamine.
- **ONE COUNT** of unlawful use of a communication device.

Thomas Ross Ross was the Republican candidate for Missouri House District 161, which includes much of Joplin. He won the Republican primary on Aug. 4 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 on Sept. 1 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 allegedly 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.

Ross was released on bond Sept. 14.

He's scheduled to appear in federal court in Springfield before Magistrate Judge David P. Rush for arraignment and a scheduling conference at 9:30 a.m. Thursday.

State and local Republican leaders called on Ross to withdraw as Republican nominee for Missouri House District 161 after he was arrested and charged.

Ross withdrew, and the the Jasper County Republican Central Committee announced Sept. 4 that its 161st Legislative District Committee unanimously picked Secker as the Republican nominee for Missouri House District 161 in the Nov. 3 general election.

Secker will face Democrat Aaron Metzger, who ran unopposed in the primary and received 1,212 votes.

'Feels like home'



The Forget-Me-Nots play for a crowd in the rain Saturday. The all-female band hails from Wentworth and performs traditional acoustic bluegrass music. This was their first time playing at the Carl Junction Bluegrass Festival.

GLOBE | KIMBERLY BARKER

Carl Junction celebrates 29 years of Bluegrass Festival

BY KIMBERLY BARKER
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CARL JUNCTION, Mo. — Center Creek Park was bustling with a crowd Saturday for the long-awaited 29th annual Carl Junction Bluegrass Festival, featuring local and area musicians.

The free event included live music, vendors, a beer and wine garden, food trucks and a kids area. This year's musical lineup featured Stringed Union, Lonesome Road, Grits & Grass String Band, The Forget-Me-Nots, Route 3 and Borderline Bluegrass.

The annual festival, hosted by the Carl Junction Chamber of Commerce, is billed as the largest and longest running event of its kind in the region. It continues to grow every year.

Fans brought their lawn chairs, blankets, ponchos and umbrellas.

Michael Giblin, of Joplin, said the rain didn't bother him a bit and that it was a welcome relief over the scorching heat. Giblin, who said he loves bluegrass, has attended the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, a popular event in the mountains of Colorado. This was his first time at the Carl Junction event, but it won't be his last.

"We had gone to bluegrass festivals all across Colorado, but we haven't gone to one since we moved to Missouri," said Giblin. "I like bluegrass and old country music, which I've been listening to my whole life. Bluegrass speaks to my soul. It's kind of like when you experience déjà vu. It makes you feel like you've been there before."



A member of the Grits and Grass Bluegrass Band entertains the crowd at the 29th annual Carl Junction Bluegrass Festival on Saturday at Center Creek Park.

GLOBE | LAURIE SISK

Music is my favorite thing in the world."

Shezan and John Cliffman, of Webb City, attended the festival with their two dogs, Tank, an English shepherd, and Gracie, a Havanaese, who couldn't help but bark

to the music. Shezan said she's been listening to bluegrass since she was young, and this is their second year attending Carl Junction's event.

SEE **HOME**, 2A

First vinyl wrap installed on electrical box downtown

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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Sign Designs recently installed the first of the vinyl art wraps planned for downtown electric boxes in Joplin as part of public art initiative called "Art Outside the Box."

It was installed near the intersection of Eighth and Main streets across from Pinnacle Bank.

Lori Haun, executive director of the Downtown Joplin Alliance, said this is the first of nearly 30 down-

town electric boxes that will receive artwork.

The art for the first box was submitted by Margie Moss. Heather Lesmeister, executive director of Spiva Center for the Arts, is adopting the art images to the different-sized electrical boxes.

More boxes will be wrapped in the coming weeks and a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be scheduled this fall with details to be announced, Haun said.

The Downtown Joplin Alliance, in conjunction

with the city of Joplin, Spiva Center for the Arts and Joplin Arts District, invited artists earlier this year to submit original designs for the "Art Outside the Box" art initiative, Haun said. Prizes are being awarded in adult and youth divisions for first, second and third place, with area judges making the final decision.

Selected designs are then professionally reproduced as vinyl wraps and installed on utility boxes throughout the downtown.

The event is made possible by Liberty, the city of Joplin and Visit Joplin.

Haun said in a statement when the event was announced: "Art has the power to transform a space and what better canvas to use than necessary infrastructure to bring art to all corners of downtown. By adding color and vibrancy in these otherwise overlooked areas, downtown continues to surprise and delight."

For more information, contact lori@downtownjoplin.com.



Lori Haun, executive director of the Downtown Joplin Alliance, poses with the first of the downtown electrical boxes that are being wrapped as part of a public art initiative titled "Art Outside the Box." COURTESY | DOWNTOWN JOPLIN ALLIANCE

