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THE JOPLIN GLOBE

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ON THE TABLE: Muffaletta a sandwich that delights. 3A | BIG FINALE: Joplin softball wins to end regular season. 1B

Council told city losing employees because of wages

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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The city of Joplin is experiencing brain drain, also called capital flight, as employees leave for job opportunities they perceive to be more attractive or higher paying. Minimum wage increases set by the state of Missouri also are making it difficult for the city to get ahead of wage increases, particular-

ly for public safety personnel, the City Council was told at a meeting Monday night.

This year, the Missouri minimum wage reached \$15 per hour as the result of ballot measures approved by voters and adjustments made by legislative actions. There are exemptions to the state increases, but those apply only to employees who receive tips and business-

es with gross sales under \$500,000.

Leslie Haase, the city finance director, said that the increase in the state's minimum wage has gone up cumulatively by 91% over the last few years.

"Everything started back in 2018, when Missouri voters passed Proposition B, which set up a schedule of minimum wage increases through 2023 followed by cost-of-living adjust-

ments," Haase said. Before those adjustments, the city only had to follow the federal minimum wage requirements until 2025, when a state law required cities to follow the state's minimum wage law as well.

The state's Proposition B is a different measure than the city of Joplin's Proposition B, she said. The city's Proposition B is a half-cent sales tax voters

approved to fully fund the Police and Firemen's Pension Fund. Haase said Monday that tax is on track to allow the pension fund to be closed out either later this year or in early 2027.

A consultant reported that while cities paid less than other employers, they offered more competitive benefits, the finance director said. But for-profit companies have reconfig-

ured their benefit packages and made them more competitive and appealing to what employees want to have, she said.

While Joplin city officials previously thought they had resolved pay issues, the state's requirements for wage increases is now making it more difficult for the city to afford needed workers, particularly

SEE CITY, 2A

Bringing band back

The Heartland Concert Band, under the direction of Aaron Power, practices in the auditorium of the Memorial Education Center in Joplin as they get ready for Sunday's concert in Webb City Memorial Park.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Heartland Concert Band to re-create historical concert in Webb City

BY JOHN HACKER
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WEBB CITY, Mo. — A recent column by Bill Caldwell in The Joplin Globe inspired the Heartland Concert Band to schedule a concert in Webb City's Memorial Park, re-creating 25 years of history

before recorded music was an option for many people.

The Heartland Concert Band, which has been around for decades, is planning to hold a revival concert in honor of the Webb City Municipal Band concerts held beginning in the early 1900s.

In conjunction with the Webb City Genealogical Society, the Heartland Concert Band will perform the free concert at 3 p.m. Sunday in Webb City Memorial Park, 424 W. Daugherty St.

SEE BAND, 2A

This photo is believed to show band director H.H. Hulett (middle row, third from right) holding a decorated baton. It is a picture of the 1896 Citizens Band of Webb City.

GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

Man dies in Joplin jail Monday

7 others treated for possible overdoses Tuesday

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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A Joplin City Jail inmate died Monday after experiencing a medical emergency, and seven inmates were taken to area hospitals Tuesday for medical emergencies that are believed to be unrelated, city officials reported.

The man who died was a 61-year-old inmate, Christopher Brodie, of Front Royal, Virginia. Police reported that Brodie became ill at 9:22 a.m. Monday and died at a hospital at 10:17 a.m.

An investigation into the death was initiated as required by department policy and was ongoing Tuesday, officials said. In addition, the Jasper County coroner's office scheduled an autopsy to be done Wednesday. Brodie's next of kin have been notified of his death, the city statement reported.

Brodie's death is believed to be a separate incident from medical issues that occurred Tuesday among some other inmates, according to the city.

At 12:37 p.m. Tuesday, Joplin City Jail staff became aware of two inmates who were experiencing symptoms of a medical emergency, including difficulty breathing. Jail staff immediately notified the emergency communication center, and ambulances were dispatched to the jail.

Police said that difficulty breathing is one of the possible symptoms of a drug overdose. It is jail procedure and training to administer Narcan, a drug that reverses an opioid overdose, to inmates who seem to be experiencing symptoms of possible drug overdose, the police statement said.

While jail staff were taking action to address the medical needs of the first two symptomatic inmates, additional jail inmates began showing similar symptoms, and Narcan was administered to them as well. Some of the inmates were described as unresponsive until Narcan was administered.

While the Joplin Fire Department and METS ambulances were en route, jail staff and Joplin police officers provided emergency medical aid to all seven inmates affected until they could be transferred to emergency medical services.

All seven inmates who had complained of medical symptoms were considered to be stable following the administration of Narcan and were transported in non-life-threatening condition in separate ambulances, police said.

The cause of the medical emergency symptoms experienced by the inmates is under investigation.

The jail has a body scanner that is used in an attempt to identify any drugs that inmates may attempt to smuggle into the jail.

PSC announces hearing for Missouri American rate request

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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Public hearings will be held in December around the state, including Joplin, on a rate increase requested by Missouri American Water for its customers.

The Missouri Public Service Commission will hold in-person and virtual hearings starting Dec. 1 to receive customer comments.

On July 1, Missouri American filed a request

with the PSC seeking a net increase in annual base rate revenues of approximately \$191.9 million.

According to the company, that will result in:

- **AN INCREASE** of about \$15 per month for an average customer in Missouri outside of St. Louis County, defined as someone using 4,500 gallons per month.

- **AN INCREASE** of about \$23 per month for an average customer in St. Louis County, defined as someone using 5,900

gallons per month.

According to Missouri American, the requested new rates follow \$1.6 billion in water and wastewater system investments from June 2025 through May 2028.

Rich Svindland, president of Missouri American, said at the time of the request: "These investments strengthen service reliability and enhance water quality — from treatment to tap — while reflecting our employees'

ongoing commitment to the health and safety of the communities we proudly serve."

Investments include replacement of approximately 140 miles of aging water and wastewater pipeline, upgrading of storage tanks, wells, pumping stations, hydrants, meters and wastewater plants, as well as ongoing replacement of lead service lines and improvements to treatment facilities to address regulatory require-

ments, including PFAs and other contaminants of emerging concern.

That includes construction of a new carbon feed system, well site treatment upgrades and filter backwash improvements in Joplin.

The rate request typically takes 11 months.

HEARING SCHEDULE

According to the PSC, there will be five in-person

SEE PSC, 2A

Volume 131 | Number 51

INDEX: Celebration of Life, 2A | News to Go, 3A | Weather, 3A | Sports, 1B | Opinion, 4B | Family Fun, 5B | Classified, 7B