

CARTHAGE: City, school district to hold joint auction. **2A** | **TENNIS:** New Heights girls team wins Class 1 District 5 title. **1B**

\$2 million goal



This rendering shows an event inside a renovated Memorial Hall.

COURTESY | FRIENDS OF JOPLIN MEMORIAL HALL

Friends group rallies support for Memorial Hall project

BY DEBBY WOODIN
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Friends of Joplin Memorial Hall on Thursday kicked off a campaign to raise \$2 million in cash or commitments for initial efforts toward rehabilitating Memorial Hall.

As part of that campaign, there will be naming opportunities as well as the acceptance of donations, said the organization's treasurer, Clifford Wert.

Fundraising will continue until Oct. 1, 2027.

As part of the kickoff, renderings of the proposed floor plans and exterior were unveiled.

The money will cover start-up costs for the project, bridge

interest, operation and long-term sustainability. However, the funds will be separate from the costs for the actual rehabilitation of the building, according to the announcement made inside the building to members of the American Legion Post 13, Joplin city officials and residents who gathered to hear the details of the announcement.

Naming rights will entail devising a naming system for different areas of the building. "Individuals, businesses, or-

ganizations and foundations from Joplin and the area can be permanently recognized with a selected naming opportunity," Wert said. "What a great legacy for the donor in showing generations to come that they honor our veterans and value Memorial Hall as an important community asset."

Bob Harrington, commander of Post 13, welcomed those who came to hear the announcement.

Post 13 had been housed in

Memorial Hall for many years until the building started showing problems, including a roof problem and the accumulation of mold.

"This is a very exciting event for us," he said of the Friends committee and veterans. "As my wife mentioned to me last night, I have been trying to save this building now for 41 years. I chaired two task forces for the city and chaired the last election campaign

SEE **HALL**, 2A



This rendering shows an event taking place at a renovated Memorial Hall.

COURTESY | FRIENDS OF JOPLIN MEMORIAL HALL

Group to meet about Liberty line

Utility says project intended to increase amount of electricity that can be transmitted

BY JOHN HACKER
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

NEOSHO, Mo. — Residents of northern and eastern Newton County in the path of a proposed Liberty transmission line, are planning a meeting next week to discuss the consequences this construction poses to their property.

Protect Rural Missouri, a group of people who live along or near the route of this power line, will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Lampo Building on the south side of Morris Park in Neosho.

Among the topics to be discussed are efforts by residents in Kansas and Oklahoma to stop the line in their states, background on the certificates of need Liberty is operating under to authorize the taking of land in the area, and the role of eminent domain.

The line in Newton County is 20 miles of approximately 90 miles of upgraded transmission lines running from Seneca to near Branson that Liberty officials said they've been assigned to build the lines by the Southwest Power Pool, the regional power authority covering parts of 17 states, including Southwest Missouri and all of Oklahoma and Kansas.

Liberty's share line is part of a 316-mile electricity line running from western Kansas through Oklahoma to Branson.

The line will have towers that are 125 feet tall and require 150-foot easements, according to opponents.

Liberty said the line is intended to increase the amount of electricity that can be transmitted in response to the crippling winter storms in 2021 and 2022 that caused electricity price spikes and outages across

SEE **LIBERTY**, 2A

Joplin High School students to put on 'Murder on the Orient Express'

Performances scheduled for Friday, Saturday, Sunday

BY KIMBERLY BARKER
news@joplinglobe.com

A classic Agatha Christie mystery comes to Joplin High School where the theater department will bring the eccentric cast of characters to life and keep the audience guessing until the big reveal at the end.

Adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig, "Murder on the Orient Express" will have performances at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday with a 2 p.m. matinee Sunday at Joplin High School, 2104 Indiana Ave. Tickets are \$8 for students and seniors and \$10 for adults. Online tickets will not be available for this show, and tickets will need to be purchased at the door.

The drama has comedic elements, an eclectic cast and is set during the 1930s aboard a train. The luxurious Orient Express stops

in its tracks from snow and becomes a crime scene after a passenger is found murdered in his compartment. World-famous detective Hercule Poirot is the one who will solve the case in which every passenger aboard is a possible suspect.

Joplin High School theater teacher and director Ashley Trotnic said this is the theater department's first time putting on "Murder on the Orient Express" and that the students have been working diligently on the play over the past month and a half.

The crew has created set pieces to resemble the train cars that can be wheeled on and off stage. About 30 students are involved in the cast and crew.

"I love the playwright Ken Ludwig," Trotnic said. "He has hilarious comedies. It's very similar to the novel. I read his play adaptation, and it was a great pace. I love all of the different characters. I knew it would be a challenge for the students because there are a lot of

SEE **PLAY**, 2A



Joplin High School student Emet Kehrer practices his lines as detective Hercule Poirot for the upcoming production of "Murder on the Orient Express," set to debut Friday. COURTESY | JOSHUA FRANKLIN

