

Carthage to add playground equipment to two parks

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CARTHAGE, Mo. — Carthage city leaders are considering a proposal to add two new playgrounds to Carthage parks at a cost of almost \$178,000. A council bill up for discussion during Tuesday’s regular Carthage

City Council meeting calls for spending \$177,923 to add playground equipment at the Fair Acres Sports Complex and at Municipal Park. Carthage Parks and Recreation Director Richard Bonine said the new playground at the Fair Acres Sports Complex would be near the baseball diamonds and would be similar to the

playground equipment near the softball fields. “We want to give the kids around the baseball fields the same experience as the kids around the softball field,” Bonine said. Municipal Park will get a new playground installed in the space near the Kiddieland Park where a playground

was located before the city built the playground to the south near the Jasper County Youth Fair grounds in 2023. “That’s sort of an empty part of the park and we wanted to put something there for people to enjoy,” Bonine said. “Maybe someone is looking to avoid a crowd at the one playground

so we’ll have this second playground for people to use.” Bonine said the new playground in that area of Municipal Park may also help drive more traffic to Kiddieland. These new playgrounds will be considered on first reading by the

See **PARKS** on A2

ELECTION 2026

NEW NAMES



Submitted photos

Democrat Aaron Joseph Metzger, left, and **Republican** Louise Secker, right, are candidates for the 161st House District.

Two newcomers vie for Joplin’s Missouri House 161 seat

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Term limits mean Lane Roberts can’t run for the 161st House District this fall, so two newcomers, Louise Secker, a Republican, and Aaron Joseph Metzger, a Democrat, will be on the ballot Nov. 3. House District 161 includes much of Joplin. Roberts, a former Joplin Police

Chief and state Director of Public Safety, served his four terms and is now running unopposed for Jasper County Presiding Commissioner. Secker lost in the Aug. 4 primary to Thomas Ross but was elevated to the Republican nominee after Ross was arrested by federal authorities on charges related to a plan to plant illegal drugs on Secker. • **Secker** said she grew up in Joplin and has been active in the

Joplin community, serving on various boards and commissions while running her own real estate business for years. “I raised my own children here, I’ve got three adult children now who are all living and working in other cities,” Secker said. “I’ve worked in the nonprofit sector for more than 20 years and then run my own business in real estate. I serve on a number of community

boards and a state commission that are focused around volunteering and advocating for vulnerable families.” • **Metzger** said he graduated from Pittsburg State University with a degree in music but decided he wanted to make a career elsewhere. He moved to Joplin 14 years ago.

See **HOUSE 161** on A2

Joplin, JASCO to dedicate new communications tower Thursday

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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A fifth radio tower that will strengthen the countywide public safety system and improve communication between public safety agencies was announced recently by the Joplin Emergency Communications Center and Jasper County Emergency Services. A ribbon cutting will be held for the Belle Center Communications Tower, at Belle Center and Black Cat Roads in northwest Joplin, at 10 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 29. The tower is expected to improve communication and interoperability between police, fire, ambulance services and 911 dispatchers countywide. “The partnership between the city of Joplin and JASCO and the subsequent construction of this tower means that citizens of Joplin and all Jasper County residents will be better served in terms of public safety,” Joplin City Manager Nick Edwards said in a statement. “It is a win for all of us to see this collaboration reach such an important milestone.” The Belle Center tower is the fifth communication tower added to the countywide public safety radio system, and the first project completed through a partnership between JASCO and the city of Joplin. The other four towers are located in Carthage, Sarcoxie, north of Missouri Highway 43, and at the JASCO 911 center on I-49. The \$767,390 tower was constructed on land owned by the city of Joplin and was funded through the Jasper County 911 Sales Tax, which voters approved in 2021. That approval increased the tax from one-tenth of one percent to one-quarter of one percent to support 911 infrastructure, a countywide public safety radio system and emergency dispatch services. Crews finished constructing the tower in March and spent the summer installing communications hardware. Area law enforcement, fire and emergency services personnel recently began

See **TOWER** on A2



Andy Ostmeyer | Globe

More than 1,500 runners turned out last year for the annual Turkey Trot in downtown Joplin.

Registration for annual Joplin turkey trot open

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Registration is open for the Schroeder Family Exploreum’s 15th annual Joplin Turkey Trot, to be held on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday Nov. 26. The run starts and ends in front of the Exploreum, 300 S. Main St. The fundraising event includes a 1-mile Fun Run starting at 7:30 a.m. and a 5K at 8 a.m. on a certified course. The Turkey Trot is one of the largest 5K events in Joplin and last year had more than 1,500 runners. Neely Myers, executive director of the Exploreum, said it is the group’s largest fundraiser, and last year they raised \$40,000, “which we plugged directly back into our programming.”

She also said the race is early enough in the morning that people are back home by mid morning to be with family and have Thanksgiving dinner. Participants in the chip-timed 5K will receive an event shirt, finisher medal, doughnuts and coffee. Registration for the Fun Run is \$30, and the 5K is \$45, with price increases on Nov. 23. People can register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/MO/Joplin/JoplinTurkeyTrot>. This is the second year for the Exploreum to host the Turkey Trot. Ashleigh Teeter of Starlit Running Co. held the Turkey Trot in Joplin for the first 13 years. Freeman Health System is the presenting sponsoring for the event.

See **RUN** on A2