THE JOPLIN GLOBE

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Wentworth man sentenced to 40 years in shooting

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MOUNT VERNON, Mo. — A Wentworth man was sentenced to 40 years in prison on Monday after pleading guilty in September to shooting the driver of an Amazon delivery truck with a pellet rifle on a Lawrence County road near his house.

Thomas Edward Coy, 65, pleaded guilty on Sept. 14 to second-degree murder and armed criminal action in the shooting of the Joplin driver. Her name is not listed in court records.

Coy was sentenced on Monday by Lawrence County Circuit Judge David Allen Cole to 30 years for the second-degree murder charge and 10 years for the armed criminal action charge with the sentences to be served consecutively.

Coy was immediately remanded to the Missouri Department of Corrections for transport to a state prison.

Coy was charged as a persistent offender, having been previously convicted of at least two drug-related offenses in 2004, court records show.

A Lawrence County Sheriff's Department division commander, Lt. Chris D. Berry, wrote in an affidavit in the earlier investigation of the case that Coy was someone with an extensive criminal history that included failure to appear and "many felony convictions."

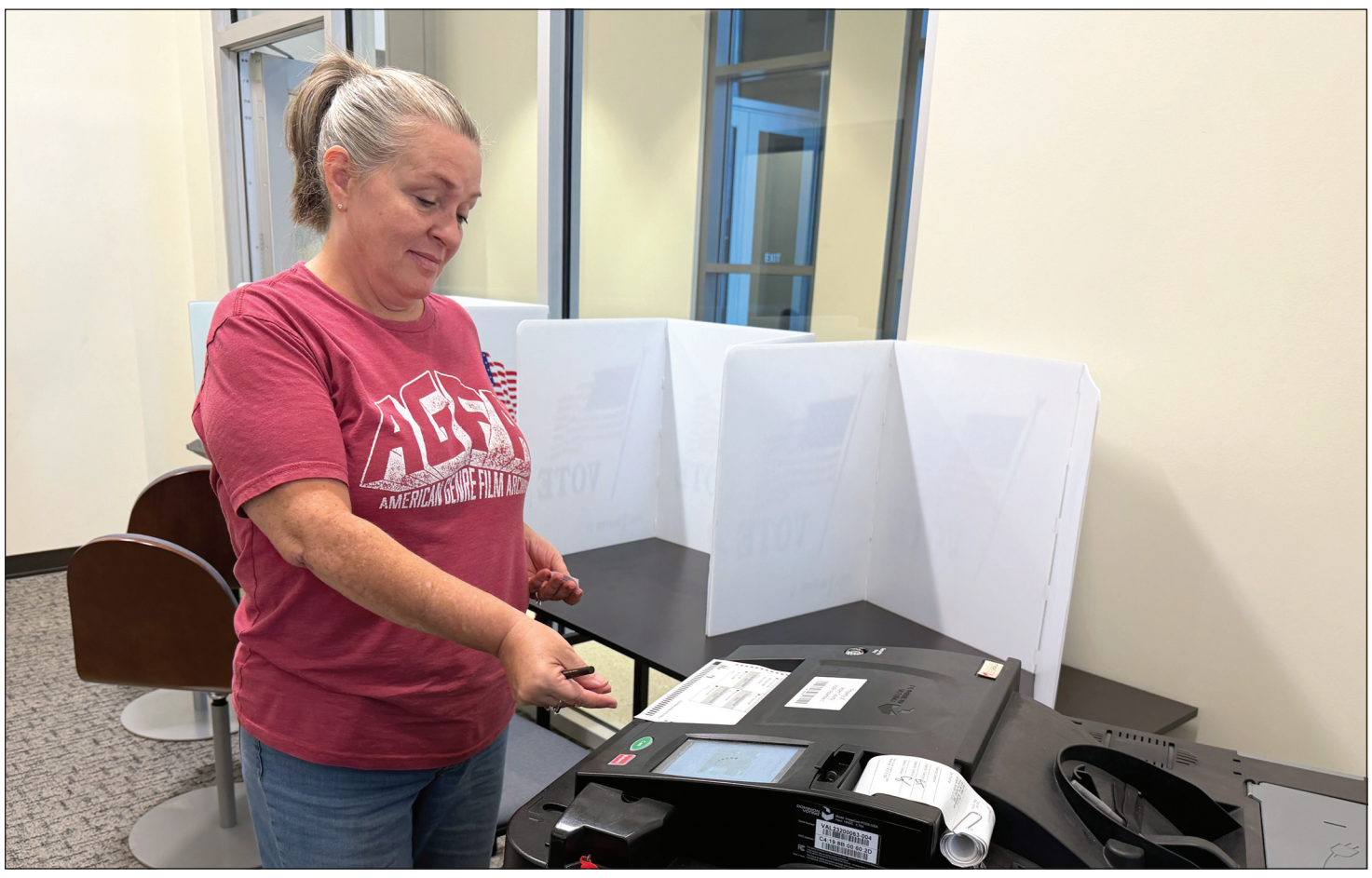
Coy wrote in plea documents that he shot the driver with a pellet gun, but the document did not reflect whether he had told authorities why he shot the woman driver.

Berry's statement reported that the delivery truck was seen by a witness about 3:45 p.m. Feb. 5, 2025, on County Road 4152, west of Missouri Highway 97 when it ran off the road, into a field and hit a fence.

About two hours later, sheriff's dispatch received a call from personnel at Mercy Joplin Hospital reporting that the driver — a 23-year-old woman from Joplin — had a bullet wound and the bullet was lodged in her head.

Berry stated that he watched a video in the delivery truck that showed the victim's vehicle in a driveway at 3902 Lawrence County Road 2152 with the victim slumped over in the seat. That address is Coy's house, Berry reported.

In talking to investigators, Coy admitted that he shot the victim with a pellet rifle, Berry's earlier affidavit stated. Coy also admitted to going to the Amazon truck and taking the victim out of the seat and laying her in a roadside ditch.



Globe | John Hacker

Robin Johnson, of Joplin, was the 3,540th and last absentee voter at the Jasper County Courts Building in Joplin at 5 p.m. Monday, right behind her husband, Jason Johnson, the 3,539th voter in Joplin. Polls open at 6 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. Tuesday across the county.

VOTE TODAY

Election includes ballot questions, legislative, congressional hopefuls

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For people who were not among the 5,500 or so people who voted ahead of time in Jasper County, today is the day to cast your vote at your assigned polling place to make yourself heard in this midterm election.

The last day for in-person absentee voting was Monday and polls open at 6 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. on Tuesday across 46 polling locations in Jasper County and 23 locations in Newton County.

Jasper County Clerk Charlie Davis made a list of things people need to remember as they head to the polls on Tuesday:

• Be sure to bring either federal or state photo identification to the polling place.

• Do not wear campaign T-shirts or hats or other campaign-related items to the polling places.

• Do not take pictures of your voted ballot before putting it into the counting machine at the polling place.

• Use your smartphone to get information about candidates or issues.

• Be sure to vote on both sides of the ballot. There are many races and issues on the ballot for this election, so don't forget to check the back of your ballot for issues and constitutional amendments.

The National Weather Service in Springfield predicts overnight showers and thunderstorms on a

See **VOTE** on A2

Court records: Man charged in death was disabled

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A Joplin man who allegedly shoved his 82-year-old mother to the ground Friday, causing her death, has been charged.

Anthony Betzel, age 47, 1715 S. Rex Ave., Apt. 40, faces a charge of second-degree murder in Jasper County Circuit Court.

He has pleaded not guilty and a bond review hearing for him is scheduled for Wednesday.

The probable cause statement regarding the charge states that a witness reported the incident to Joplin police, saying there was a verbal dispute between a man and the elderly woman in the parking lot of the apartment complex. The witness reported that the man shoved the woman to the ground and told police that she sustained "a bloody injury" on her head.

The woman, the statement discloses, was Karol Betzel. She was taken to a hospital where she was pronounced dead.

An autopsy was to be performed, according to the court document.

Detective Wes Massey also reported in the probable cause statement that, during an interview of the suspect, Betzel "acknowledged being angry and (said) that he threw his mom's head onto the parking lot." The suspect did not make other disclosures, the report states.

Court records list Anthony Betzel as incapacitated and disabled and under the guardian and conservatorship of his mother from September 2023 through December 2025.

Though no withdrawal of the guardian and conservator is noted, her attorney, Terrence Prigmore, filed a motion for his withdrawal as legal counsel in January 2026.

Longtime county collector, Lionbacker dies

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Even seven years after he had retired from the office of Jasper County collector, Stephen Holt was still a fixture at the Jasper County courthouse almost every Election Day, keeping tabs on some of the volunteers and swapping stories with anyone who sat with him.

According to his obituary on the Mason-Woodard Funeral Home website, https://www.masonwoodard.com, Holt died on Friday, Oct. 30 — four days before the Nov. 3 midterm election — at National Health Care in Joplin after an illness.

Current Jasper County Clerk Charlie Davis said Holt wasn't at the courthouse for the Aug. 4 primary election, the first time he had missed coming to the courthouse for an election in years.

"And we were looking forward to him being here tomorrow," Davis said on Monday. "He's definitely going to be missed."

Holt's obituary says Holt was appointed as the Jasper County collector by then-Gov. John Ashcroft in 1989 and he served Jasper County from that office until retiring on March 4, 2019.

Current Jasper County Collector Steve McIntosh said Holt led an efficient county collector's office and worked hard to make it as efficient as possible.

"As collector, it became very apparent to me that he was on the leading edge of some technology at one time," McIntosh said.

"He laid a good base that I was able to take and run with. He had health issues and didn't get to do the things I was doing. I told him one time, 'all I did was take it to the next level that you would have done had you not had the health issues. I just did what you would have done.'"

McIntosh said Holt worked with software vendors to set up custom software for his office.

He also became a leader in several different associations representing counties, county collectors, treasurers and other financial officers.

McIntosh said Holt also enjoyed being involved during elections in

See **HOLT** on A2



Globe file

Retired Jasper County Collector Stephen Holt congratulates longtime poll worker Edith Triplett in this picture taken in November 2024. Holt, who was a fixture at the courthouse in Carthage during every election night count, died on Friday, Oct. 30, after an illness.

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