THE JOPLIN GLOBE

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Joplin Schools' Sachetta announces retirement plan

FROM STAFF REPORTS
NEWS@JOPLINGLOBE.COM

Joplin Schools Superintendent Kerry Sachetta has announced plans to retire effective June 30, 2027.

In a statement Friday, the district said that Sachetta has devoted more than 30 years to public education, including 24 years in Joplin in multiple roles, including Joplin High School principal (2002–2016), assistant superintendent for operations (2016–2022), and superintendent since 2022.

Following the May 22, 2011, tornado, which destroyed Joplin High School, Sachetta and his staff opened an interim high school in fewer than 90 days so students could start the year on time. Working with architects, staff and the community, they also planned the new Joplin High School and Franklin Technology Center, which opened in 2014.

"I am grateful for every opportunity I've had and for the outstanding leaders who showed me the way," Sachetta said in a statement Friday. "Galena gave me my foundation in leadership and school improvement, and in 2002 Joplin trusted me to lead its high school. The work we did together at JHS challenged all of us to learn and grow, and I'm proud of what our staff accomplished, especially in the hardest of times."

Under Sachetta's leadership, and "working alongside teachers, leaders and the Board of Education,"

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KERRY SACHETTA
Joplin Schools Superintendent





Globe photo | Jerry Willis

Steve Conkling, of San Rafael, California, poses with the Corvette embedded in the mural at the Route 66 Mural Park at 619 S. Main St. in Joplin. He is following Route 66, visiting sites along it. "It's beautiful, quite the artwork," Conkling said. "But what a waste of a 'Vette."

MOTHER ROAD DIDN'T DISAPPOINT

Route 66 centennial kept businesses busy this year

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Steve Conkling, of San Rafael, California, is traveling in a motorhome with his wife along Route 66 — one of a huge number of visitors along the Mother Road during its centennial year.

The couple started in St. Louis traveling toward California, including visiting the Joplin area.

"It's beautiful, quite the artwork," Conkling said of the city's Route 66 Mural Park. "But what a waste of a 'Vette."

Conkling stopped at various landmarks in the Four-State Area before traveling to be in Tulsa on the road's birthdate.

Traveling the Mother Road has been an enduring goal for him. "It's something I've dreamed of since the "Route 66" TV program — a lifelong dream, just a dream. You hear about it, and now I'm seeing it. It's a good time."

On Nov. 11, 1926, federal and state highway officials met in North Carolina to adopt a numbered highway system for the United States, including Route 66. The 100th anniversary of the fabled Mother Road was marked on Wednesday but its centennial celebration is a yearlong event.

Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma share portions of the historic highway, and towns and business in our area are part of the celebration.

Joplin is welcoming visitors from around the globe. On Friday, at the 66 Roadside Welcome shop, a Route 66-themed roadside shop carrying souvenirs, apparel, gifts

See **ROUTE 66** on A2

Joplin Arts Commission sees first roundabout model

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A design model of white Hawthorne tree flowers and green leaves has been created by artists on the Joplin Arts Commission as proposed artwork that could be installed in Joplin roundabouts.

The first one was designed with the roundabout at the intersection of Zora Street and Duquesne Road in mind.

Assistant City Manager Tony Robyn told the commission that if the art piece is completed for installation, it will cost about $46,000. Robyn said the surfaces will be paintable in order to keep them maintained since they will be subject to outdoor conditions.

It will take about six months for fabrication of a complete piece to be finished and installed, the commission was told. Asked by commission members about the warranty for the artwork, Robyn said there will be a two-year warranty and that the artists said that leaves and debris will have to be cleared from beneath the sculpture periodically.

A presentation on the initial art project is to be given to the City Council and residents at a Dec. 7 meeting.

"This is a pilot project and we are not locking into doing any others," under the contract with the artists, Robyn said.

Local artists and residents interested in arts are working with Joplin city staff to create ideas for dressing

See **MODEL** on A2

MSSU gift to create medical imaging program

Bill and Tracy Gipson make $750,000 donation to university.

FROM STAFF REPORTS
NEWS@JOPLINGLOBE.COM

Missouri Southern State University on Friday announced a $750,000 commitment from Bill and Tracy Gipson to support the university's medical imaging programs and expand opportunities for students pursuing careers in healthcare.

"We believe in what Missouri Southern represents and its commitment to preparing students for meaningful careers while meeting the needs of our region. The university's focus on health and life sciences is particularly important as the demand for skilled healthcare professionals continues to grow," the couple said in a statement. "We hope this gift will help remove financial barriers for students, provide access to the specialized training and credentials they need, and prepare them for successful careers where they can make a difference in the lives of others."

Part of the gift will establish the Gipson Family Medical Imaging Credentialing Awards, providing financial assistance to eligible students seeking professional credentials in specialized imaging fields.

Bill and Tracy Gipson are longtime supporters and graduates of Southern. Bill Gipson also served on the university's Board of Governors and the Missouri Southern Foundation Board. Today, they serve as co-chairs of the university's Lions Forward Campaign. They also made a $1 million commitment to help launch Southern's master's degree program in data analytics, along with support for student scholarships and Lion Athletics.

"Bill and Tracy's extraordinary generosity has helped MSSU launch and sustain several innovative academic programs, ultimately making a difference in the lives of hundreds

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Tracy and Bill Gipson

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