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DEFENSE STANDS

Late stop followed by game-winning FG lifts Warriors, **1B**



STOLEN DATA

Former Innsbrook Resort employee accused of stealing computer data, **3A**

Third nominee rejected for Warrenton alderman seat

By Jonathan Riley
EDITOR

The Warrenton Board of Aldermen has rejected yet another nominee for the Ward 1 seat whose permanent occupant has remained unclear since Cody Turner won the April election, despite having died before election day.

The latest nomination, voted down 4-1 at a Tuesday, Sept. 1 special meeting, was for Neal St. Onge, a former Missouri state representative and cur-

rent member of the Warren County Ambulance District Board.

Jack Crump, who previously held the seat and ran for reelection but lost to Turner, has continued to serve as the Ward 1 alderman since April. In June, Mayor Eric Schleuter nominated Crump to serve as the appointed Ward 1 alderman until another election can be held next April, but Crump's nomination was rejected on a 3-2 vote.

On Aug. 4, Schleuter nomi-

nated another Ward 1 resident who came forward seeking to fill the vacancy, Frank Cusumano, for the position, though that nomination again failed on a 3-2 vote. Schleuter's nomination of Cusumano came after hearing responses to questions June 16 from both Crump and Cusumano, after which Schleuter recommended Crump for the appointment.

At the Sept. 1 meeting, prior to the vote on St. Onge's nomination, Schleuter asked City Attorney Bradley Pryor to explain

whether St. Onge's serving on the Warren County Ambulance District Board would prevent him from simultaneously serving as an alderman.

In Missouri, there is a general principle of "what are called incompatible offices," Pryor said.

"If two offices are in fact incompatible, then the acceptance of the second office would result in forfeiture of the first office. Now, there's a few nuanced issues here beyond just that. The ouster process to effectuate that forfeiture of the

first office is what is called a quo warranto proceeding, and that can only be brought by the Missouri Attorney General or the Warren County Prosecuting Attorney," he said.

"And so in that situation, that suit would be filed, and then whoever is at issue with respect to that question would have the duty to defend that. That would be their individual duty, not the city's. And in that context, whether or not the offices are

See **NOMINEE** Page 2A



Stories and crafts

Kids and their parents work on a craft activity based on the children's book "Shmoof" by Heidi McKinnon on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Scenic Regional Library in Warrenton. Scenic Regional's Warrenton branch hosts Preschool Storytime events for children up to 5 years old every Tuesday.

Jonathan Riley photo

City, developers answer asphalt plant lawsuit

By Jonathan Riley
EDITOR

The City of Wright City and developers of a proposed asphalt plant have responded to a lawsuit filed in July seeking an injunction and declaratory judgment to prevent plans for the facility from moving forward.

Attorneys for the city filed an answer Aug. 27 to the petition filed July 10 on behalf of plaintiffs Larry and Vickie Zuhone, and on Aug. 28 filed a motion for expedited trial setting.

On Sept. 2, attorneys for Magruder Paving LLC and G&M Concrete & Asphalt Co. Inc., also named as defendants in the Zuhones' suit, filed their own answer. Like the city's answer, it denies a majority of the Zuhones' allegations, while asserting that the companies lack knowledge or information sufficient to respond to others. It requests the court enter a judgment in their favor and dismiss the plaintiff's petition with prejudice.

"Plaintiffs' claims are barred, in whole or in part, because the site plan approved by the Wright City Board of Aldermen on June 11, 2026 was a proper and lawful

See **ASPHALT** Page 2A

Draft of updated county master plan expected to be ready in December

By Jonathan Riley
EDITOR

County commissioners heard an update Thursday, Sept. 3, on progress on the new Warren County Master Plan. Though an exact date has not been set, a second "public open house" for the project, including the unveiling of the draft plan, will likely take place in early December.

Stephen Ibendahl, project manager with i5Group, the company developing the mas-

ter plan for the county, said he hoped to schedule the event, where i5 Group and the county will be "basically kind of rolling out the draft plan," for late November or early December.

Presiding Commissioner Joe Gildehaus said December would work better, though no date was finalized at the meeting. A first open house for the master plan project was held in March.

Ibendahl said the plan outlines three scenarios: One following current trends of population and job growth, one

focused on preservation, and one projecting more rapid suburbanization of the county.

A U.S. Census Bureau population estimate from July 2025 put Warren County's population at just over 39,000 people. Market analysis of demand following current trends projects population growth "kind of on the higher side" at around 24,000 additional people living in the county by 2050, with an increase of about 11,000 jobs, Ibendahl said.

Ibendahl highlighted the

"farmland corridor" located "between Warrenton and Wright City and then kind of along Highway M" as an area likely to see future residential development. Having some idea where future city boundaries will be, and also which areas are likely to remain unincorporated, can be beneficial for decision-making on areas like policing and annexations, he said.

He also presented a scenario of "westward suburbanization" of Warren County that could include not only further expan-

sion of the county's existing larger cities along Interstate 70, but possibly extensive development in areas such as along Highway A, Highway T, and in the Marthasville area.

"These areas could potentially build out at almost 140-, 150,000, so getting your total county population close to, you know, 200,000," Ibendahl said.

He also cautioned, however, that if population growth in the county follows the current

See **READY** Page 2A

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in this issue	Classifieds	4B	Obituaries.....	3B	Real Estate	8B
	Do You Remember ...	7A	Legals	5B-6B	Shot of the Week ...	4A

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