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CAN HURRICANES UPSET INDIANA?

The Hoosiers are a big favorite as they face off Monday against Miami for national championship.
 SPORTS, PAGE 1B

News-Journal

WEEKEND

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A note to readers on comics

Due to decisions by our supplier, Sunday color comics will only be available online in our e-Edition.

You can view the color comics from anywhere on your device, allowing you to enjoy your favorites whether at home or on the go.

If you need help accessing our e-Edition, call our customer service team at (903) 237-7777.

What's inside

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Today's weather

Partly sunny and cooler. High of 50.

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST, PAGE 5A

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CBS 19

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Upshur targets dangerous dogs

Commissioners' vote starts process to open impoundment facility

BY JORDAN GREEN
 jordan.green@news-journal.com

GILMER – Upshur County commissioners voted unanimously Thursday to take the first step toward solving a problem that has plagued the county for nearly 20 years: the large number of loose, dangerous dogs that have harmed people and killed animals.

Following a lengthy presentation from Sheriff Larry Webb, commissioners voted to allow Webb to look for a building that could become an impoundment facility for dangerous dogs that are part of criminal cases. This year, he'll also work with commissioners to fund that facility and hire an animal control officer for the sheriff's office.

That's a "huge step" in the right direction, said Webb, who has served as sheriff for nine years. Previous commissioners didn't address the issue, partly

because of the expense of expanding services.

For several years, county residents and commissioners have discussed the idea of creating a countywide animal shelter, but that idea hasn't gained traction because of the high cost of building and operating such a facility, Webb said. Instead, he has devised a different approach that would take care of the most problematic animals.

Webb will search for a building in the coun-

See DOGS, Page 4A



Upshur County Pct. 2 Commissioner Dustin Nicholson, left, speaks Thursday during a commissioners meeting in Gilmer. At right is Sheriff Larry Webb. (Jordan Green/Longview News-Journal Photo)

'A REFUGE OF HOPE'

Dedication of The Grove at Longview's Magrill Plaza opens weekend of Martin Luther King Jr. Day events



Members of the Woodland Hills Church of Christ perform a gospel duet during Thursday's dedication ceremony at Magrill Plaza commemorating The Grove and the unveiling of a new lighted tree sculpture as part of Longview's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations. (Audrey Blaschke/Longview News-Journal Photo)

BY AUDREY BLASCHKE
 Special to the News-Journal

The city of Longview launched its five-day Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Thursday evening with a dedication ceremony for an art installation commemorating The Grove at Magrill Plaza.

The new lighted tree sculpture at the center of the plaza represents the brush arbor where freedmen gathered in the 1860s, a site tied to the beginnings of Longview's oldest Black churches.

In 1871, John R. Magrill sold the 1-acre tract to the town's Black population, represented by O.J. Taylor, Silas Billup and

Alick Berry. The site remained a gathering place for generations before becoming a city park.

"We are here because free people came together to worship, to pray and to affirm their humanity in a time marked by uncertainty and hardship," said Shannon Moore, District 2 councilwoman, in opening remarks. "This site was a refuge of hope, and their worship services were acts of courage."

John Albertson, Longview's director of Parks and Recreation, said the installation was funded through a Union Pacific grant and had been in development.

See THE GROVE, Page 5A



The Rev. Larry Washington, president of the Longview Area Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, and Marlena Cooper attend Thursday's dedication ceremony at Magrill Plaza. (Audrey Blaschke/News-Journal Photo)

Candidate filing opens with 2 seeking District 3 seat

NEWS-JOURNAL STAFF

Filing for the May 2 Longview City Council election started this week, with three people throwing their names in the hat to fill two seats.

The terms of District 3 Councilman Wray Wade and District 4 Councilman John Nustad expire

in May. Wade, however, is seeking a seat on the Gregg County Commissioners Court. Nustad, 40, filed Wednesday to seek his second three-year term. Nustad is a mortgage loan originator.

Two people filed as candidates for Wade's District 3 seat.

Darrin "Rudy" Rudolph, 60, described himself as "self-em-

ployed" in his filing. This is not his first time to seek an elected office. He previously unsuccessfully challenged Wade.

Brenda J. Woolridge also filed as a candidate for District 3. Woolridge, 75, is retired. She has appeared before the City Council on several occasions recently, includ-

ing when she made a successful request for the city to make improvements to the Harvey Johnson Community Center.

Candidates can continue to file through Feb. 13 during normal business hours at the City Secretary's office at City Hall, 300 W. Cotton St.

Early voting begins April 20, and Election Day is May 2.