



Texarkana Gazette

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Norris makes bid for runoff recount

He trails by less than 1,000 votes

NEAL EARLEY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Republican secretary of state candidate Bryan Norris has requested a recount, his campaign said Thursday.

Norris, a project manager and U.S. Army veteran from Batesville, trails Kim Hammer by fewer than a thousand votes in the runoff for the Republican nomination.

"This is not about being a sore loser," Norris said in a news release. "This is about the voters of Arkansas who deserve to know with absolute certainty that every ballot was counted correctly. When a race is decided by a fraction of a percentage point, the law provides a process for verification. We are using that process exactly as it was intended."

In Arkansas, a candidate may request a recount within two days after the election, unless there are enough outstanding ballots that could change the result, then a candidate would have seven days to request a recount.

Norris' campaign will be required to pay for the costs to recount, but will be refunded if the results of the election change, Samantha Boyd, a spokeswoman for the secretary of state's office said.

According to state law, the amount charged to a candidate to conduct a recount may not exceed the rate of 25 cents per vote cast in the precincts where the recount is requested or a total of \$2,500 for the entire county, whichever is less.

The campaign is seeking a recount in "multiple counties," but didn't specify which ones.

"We will list them when we are done with compiling the list," Norris told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on Thursday.

The winner of the Republican primary will face Democrat Kelly Grappe, of Rose

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NORRIS

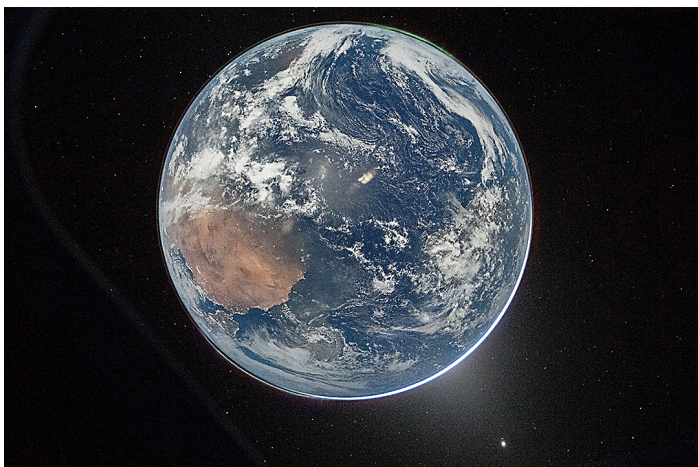


HAMMER

LIGHTS UP, LET'S GO



Tex Owens takes in the scenes as he, father Alan, mother Bethanie and older brother Tuff stand in line to enter the 81st Four States Fair on opening day Friday in Texarkana, Ark. Unlimited ride bands for Friday through Sunday, April 5, are available for \$35. The same deal will be provided the weekend of Friday, April 10, through Sunday, April 12. The midway will open at 5 p.m. weekdays, noon on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays. The Four States Fair has brought in a new partner for the Lights Up, Let's Go carnival, North American Midway Entertainment. (Staff photo by Stevon Gamble)



This image taken from video provided by NASA shows the Artemis II crew, from left, Canadian astronaut and mission specialist Jeremy Hansen, Commander Reid Wiseman, mission specialist Christina Koch and pilot Victor Glover as they appear on a video conference from the moon's orbit Thursday. (NASA via AP)

Artemis II's astronauts capture Earth's beauty as they leave it behind

MARCIA DUNN
AP AEROSPACE WRITER

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The Artemis II astronauts have captured our blue planet's brilliant beauty as they zoom ever closer to the moon.

NASA released the crew's first downlinked images Friday, 1 1/2 days into the first astronaut moonshot in more than half a century.

The first photo taken by commander Reid Wiseman shows a curved slice of Earth in one of the capsule's windows. The second shows the entire globe with the oceans topped by swirling white tendrils of clouds. A green aurora even glows, according to NASA.

As of midmorning Friday, Wiseman and his crew were 100,000 miles (160,000 kilo-

meters) from Earth and were quickly gaining on the moon with another 160,000 miles (258,000 kilometers) to go. They should reach their destination on Monday.

The three Americans and one Canadian will swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, hang a U-turn and then head straight back home without stopping. They fired Orion's main engine Thursday night that set them on their course.

After Mission Control shifted the position of their capsule, the entire Earth complete with northern lights filled their windows.

"It was the most spectacular moment, and it paused all four of us in our tracks," Wiseman said in a TV interview.

They're the first lunar travelers since Apollo 17 in 1972.

Woman sues Domtar for \$1.25M over hand injury

STEVON GAMBLE
TEXARKANA GAZETTE

TEXARKANA, Ark. — An Ashdown, Arkansas, woman is seeking a \$1.25 million judgment against an area paper manufacturer over claims the company violated the Americans with Disabilities Act after she allegedly injured her hand on the job.

Wynnefort Mona Bell filed a federal civil lawsuit against Domtar on March 26 in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Arkansas. She is representing herself in the case and demands a jury trial.

Domtar had not filed a response by Friday afternoon.

Bell claims that in October 2022, she sustained the hand injury at Domtar's Ashdown plant. The injury was the result of an unsafe work environment created by Domtar's negligence, Bell alleges.

The complaint does not detail Bell's work assignment or where she was in the plant at the time of the alleged injury.

The injury required three surgeries, and Bell returned to work in December 2023, according to the complaint.

Bell claims her medical expenses were more than \$113,800.

"Defendant failed to make accommodations for plaintiff, who was ultimately terminated in September 2025," the lawsuit alleges. "Plaintiff was intentionally denied the ability to return to work based on her disability."

Bell also claims she was unfairly treated because of her age and gender.

"She was required to undergo three functional capacity evaluations, as other counterparts were not required to do," the lawsuit states in alleging violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Along with \$1.25 million in punitive damages, Bell is seeking reinstatement of her employment, with full seniority and benefits, as well as lost wages. She also wants compensation for future earnings.

The case has been assigned to District Judge Susan O. Hickey.

Trump budget seeks \$1.5 trillion in defense spending alongside cuts in domestic programs

LISA MASCARO AND KEVIN FREKING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has proposed boosting defense spending to \$1.5 trillion in his 2027 budget released Friday, the largest such request in decades, reflecting his emphasis on U.S. military investments over domestic programs.

The sizable increase for the Pentagon, some 44%, had been telegraphed by the Republican president even before the the U.S.-led war against Iran. The president's plan would also reduce spending on non-defense programs by 10%.

"President Trump promised to reinvest in America's national security infrastructure, to make sure our nation is safe in a dangerous world," wrote Budget Director Russell Vought.

The president's annual budget is considered a reflection of the administration's values and

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Returning program aims to empower girls

SHARDA JAMES
TEXARKANA GAZETTE

TEXARKANA, Ark. — Project Crowned, a five-week life skills and mentorship program for girls, is returning, with a focus on building confidence, healthy habits and positive relationships.

The free program, led by founder Aja Walker, is open to girls ages 10 to 14. Sessions started Friday and will continue each Friday through May 1 at We Are Washington Community Center, 1900 Marietta St. The class is from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Walker said she was in-

spired to bring back Project Crowned to provide a safe place where young girls can be seen, heard and supported.

"I've always had a heart for building confidence, especially in young ladies who may be silently struggling with self-worth, identity or simply trying to find their place in the world," Walker said. "Project Crowned was never just a program; it's a purpose."

Guest speakers will share their experiences to encourage participants. Walker is seeking guest speakers for the April 10 and 17 sessions.

Walker said after seeing the continued need in the community, she knew it was time to bring the series.

"I'm hoping it brings transformation to the community," Walker said. "I want these girls to walk away knowing who they are, understanding their value and feeling empowered to make healthy choices, mentally, emotionally and socially."

Community members interested in enrolling a participant or volunteering as a guest speaker can call Walker at 402-500-0802. Pre-registration is not required.



Girls from Project Crowned display their completion certificates and crowns during the program's final meeting May 14, 2025, at We Are Washington in Texarkana, Ark. Participants who attended at least three sessions received a crown and certificate. (Photo courtesy of Aja Walker)



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