

Holiday Travel 1

DJB

6/30/2021(TBA)

A record-breaking number of Americans are expected to travel by car on this 4th of July holiday weekend. Triple-A spokesperson Nick Chabarría (cha-BARE-ee-uh) says they're expecting the largest number of cars on the road traveling for the holiday in recent memory.

News28

0:21

“...recording in 2000.”

Chabarría says the increase in traffic aligns with the lifting of pandemic travel restrictions, coupled with hesitancy to travel by plane or other methods of transportation. He says the influx in passenger car travel will also be seen in Arkansas and neighboring states.

News29

0:23

“...around 43,000.”

Chabarría says those numbers represent a 32% increase compared to this time last year, and a slight decrease of about 7% compared to pre-pandemic travel in 2019. He says the busiest travel times will likely be late afternoon Thursday, Friday and Monday as well as late morning and early afternoon Saturday.

The state's daily count of covid-19 cases rose Wednesday by 686 — the largest spike in cases since Feb. 25, when 726 new cases were reported. Active cases rose to 3,763, the highest number since the 3,967 reported on March 7.

The number of people hospitalized in the state rose by 19 to 325, the highest since March 8. However, an additional 10,356 people were vaccinated.

"The high number of cases today makes it clear that the Delta Variant is increasing the spread of the virus," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said via Twitter on Wednesday afternoon. "The good news is that vaccinations increased to over 10,000. Let's keep making progress."

The state's death toll from the virus since March 2020, as tracked by the Arkansas Department of Health, rose by 4 to 5,909.

The number of patients on ventilators increased by 6 to 75. The number of Arkansans who have ever been on ventilators because of covid-19 has risen to 1,725.

There were eight more covid patients admitted to intensive care units across the state, increasing the total number of covid ICU patients to 150. The number has steadily increased over the past week.

The number of individuals who received at least one dose of the covid-19 vaccine jumped by 2,258 to 221,986. Individuals fully immunized increased by 4,192 to 993,471.

Delta Variant 2A & 2B

AB/MEH 06/29/2021(TuesPM & WedAM)

New COVID-19 cases in Arkansas continue to climb, and the delta variant is a part of that reason. At his weekly press briefing today (Tues), Governor Asa Hutchinson asked Arkansans to take safety measures when participating in 4th of July activities to stop the spread of the virus. Hutchinson warned the delta variant is becoming more prominent and has more medical consequences.

News13

0:22

“...not been vaccinated.”

Dr. Cam Patterson, chancellor of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, said in-patient numbers are trending sicker and younger than they were a year ago because of the variant.

News14

0:24

“...on a ventilator.”

Patterson predicts this could be the beginning of the third surge of COVID-19. The state reported eight additional deaths today (tues) from the disease. The Department of Health also reported the number of new cases increased by 479. Hospitalizations declined by eight.

Bus Grant 1

DJB

6/29/2021(TuesPM/WedAM)

Central Arkansas' public transit agency is adding five battery-powered electric buses to its fleet. Rock Region Metro has been awarded nearly \$5 million dollars from the Federal Transit Administration, which it will use to purchase up to five 40-foot electric buses. Rock Region Metro spokesperson Becca Green says the grant money will also go toward new infrastructure for the vehicles.

News01

0:20

“...maintain those buses.”

Green says the \$4.9-million-dollar grant will help the agency reach its goal of having a zero carbon emission bus fleet earlier than their planned date of 2025.

News02

0:13

“...ahead of schedule.”

The new buses have a range of 345 miles and are expected to be in service by 2023.

As the 4th of July approaches, Governor Asa Hutchinson is urging Arkansans to take precautionary measures against COVID-19. The state's coronavirus cases have been steadily increasing over the last week. Arkansas reported eight additional deaths today (Tues) from COVID-19. The Department of Health says the number of new cases increased by 479, while hospitalizations declined by eight. At his weekly press briefing today (Tues), Hutchinson said it's important people don't make the situation worse.

News11

0:28

"...of the virus."

Chancellor of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Dr. Cam Patterson, said the state is going in the wrong direction as cases of the delta variant continue to increase.

News12

0:21

"...the state of Arkansas."

Patterson said if this trend continues, it appears the state could be in the beginning of the third surge of COVID-19. At UAMS, Patterson says they are seeing a substantial increase in the number of patients who are requiring mechanical ventilation.

[Global Health](#)

Coronavirus Surges Around The World Are Linked To Delta Variant

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□ □ □ **June 29, 2021 5:02 AM ET**

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

[Noel King](#) talks with

[Diaa Hadid](#) [Jason Beaubien](#) and [Rob Stein](#)

COVID-19 cases are increasing in many, poorly-vaccinated parts of the globe. We check in with reporters in Australia, Sierre Leone and with our science team to talk about the Delta variant's threats.

TEXARKANA, Texas — The Texarkana College Foundation will now award \$2,000 in financial assistance to hundreds of new non-traditional TC students for the academic year 2021-2022 with its new "Roadshow" program.

The program is designed to assist non-traditional students who typically have few opportunities to obtain scholarship funds or financial aid, but who are dedicated to completing a degree or trade skills certificate that places them on a career path to earn higher wages resulting in a brighter future.

"This program benefits students who may not qualify for financial aid or other scholarship funds because they waited to start college and are now a little older and have family and/or job responsibilities," President Dr. Jason Smith said.

Smith said community donors have invested in this special fund through the TC Foundation and want to see more than 100 new students benefit from this initiative during the next year.

TC recruiters have a line-up of stops throughout Bowie County beginning with DeKalb at the Big Daddy's DoNut Shop (July 6 and 7), then in New Boston at Trailhead Pavilion (July 13 and 14), as well as three stops in Texarkana including the Wake Village Albertsons parking lot (July 20), the Central Mall parking lot (July 21) and the Splash Pad at Spring Lake Park (July 28).

Smith said the first 25 people at each stop to apply for these funds will get a free snow cone and a chance to win prizes donated by the TC Foundation.

(Visit texarkanacollege.edu/startover online for more information and to see the dates and times of each Roadshow location or call 903-823-3012.)

Members of the Libertarian Party once again delivered signatures to the Arkansas Secretary of State's office to be recognized as a political party in the state. This comes after the party had its strongest-ever showing in a statewide race, with Senate candidate Ricky Dale Harrington garnering over one-third of the vote last year against Republican incumbent Sen. Tom Cotton. Harrington recently announced he's running for governor. Libertarian Party of Arkansas Chair Michael Pakko says rules governing third parties in Arkansas puts them at a disadvantage compared to Democrats and Republicans.

News04

0:17

"...on the ballot first."

In Arkansas, third parties must garner 3% of the vote in either the gubernatorial or U-S presidential race to retain their status as a political party without having to gather at least 10-thousand valid voter signatures each election cycle. Pakko says he hopes Harrington will be able to meet that threshold in the governor's race which is already crowded with Democratic and Republican candidates.

The Libertarian Party of Arkansas is gearing up for another election cycle following its most successful showing in a statewide race. Candidate Ricky Dale Harrington garnered over 33% of the vote against incumbent Republican U-S Senator Tom Cotton last November, in a race where no Democratic candidate was running. State Libertarian Party Chair Michael Pakko says the party has turned in 14-thousand signatures to the Secretary of State's office, officially designating them as a political party.

News05

0:17

"...years from now."

Pakko says the Libertarian Party would not have to recertify as a political party next election cycle if Harrington gets 3% of the vote in the 2022 gubernatorial election. Harrington faces four Democrats and two Republicans in the race.

AR Libertarians TW

DJB

6/28/2021(MonPM/TuesAM)

Officials with the state Libertarian Party today (Mon) delivered signatures to the Arkansas Secretary of State's office to begin the process of fielding candidates for 2022. KUAR's Daniel Breen spoke with Michael Pakko, chairman of the Libertarian Party of Arkansas, on what to expect this election cycle.

News06

3:18

"...on the ballot."

OUT: That was Libertarian Party of Arkansas chair Michael Pakko, speaking with KUAR's Daniel Breen.

Asa FTN 1

DJB/MEH

6/28/2021(MonPM/TuesAM)

Arkansas' governor says officials continue working to combat vaccine hesitancy as COVID-19 hospitalizations have risen over the last week. Gov. Asa Hutchinson says the urgency of vaccinations has slowed in the state, where only about 50% of adults are fully vaccinated. Speaking on C-B-S's Face The Nation yesterday (Sunday), Hutchinson said the U-S Food and Drug Administration should grant full approval to the coronavirus vaccines in an effort to boost vaccination rates.

News01

0:23

"...mandate it in Arkansas."

Hutchinson said the pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine that ended in late April also contributed to slowing vaccination rates in the state. Despite recently increasing hospitalizations and cases of COVID-19 in the state, Hutchinson says he doesn't envision a return to pandemic-era restrictions on businesses and daily life.

News02

0:25

"...of this pandemic."

Arkansas added more than 16-hundred new COVID-19 cases last week, according to the state Department of Health, with just under 300 people hospitalized with the disease across the state.

A new solar project in northwest Arkansas could become a model for power-sharing partnerships between schools and cities in the state. Antoinette Grajeda from partner station KUAF in Fayetteville has more.

News23 3:47 ABRUPT OUTCUE. "...power service agreement. I'm Antoinette Grajeda."

TEXARKANA, TX- The Texas Commission on the Arts with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided an opportunity for Cultural Districts in the State of Texas to apply for funding with the Texas Rescue Funding Grant limited to around \$2,400 per award. The Texarkana Arts and Historic District was one of the Cultural Districts chosen for funding in the State of Texas, with an award amount of \$2,406.

This grant award will be used to supplement accounts used to pay Perot Theatre Staff, during the 2020 COVID19 closure. Administrative Programs Manger, Keith Beason added, "The Perot Theatre hosts various events throughout the course of the year, attracting many people to our city. This grant award will help with revenue loss during that time, and the great staff that has managed the Perot theatre, during trying times."

For more information, contact Keith Beason at Keith.Beason@txkusa.org or (903) 798-3901.

Education

Administrators Turn To Summer School To Address Pandemic Gaps

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☐ ☐ ☐ **June 27, 2021 8:00 AM ET**
Heard on **Weekend Edition Sunday**

Rosemary Misdary

School district leaders worried about learning gaps caused by the pandemic are now putting a fun twist on an old fix: summer school.

TEXARKANA, Texas — Randy Sams Outreach Center will hold an invitational cornhole tournament next month in an effort to raise funds for its clients.

At 7 p.m. July 24 the Randy Sams Invitational will take place at the Crossties event venue. It will be a double-elimination tournament with individual trophies for the first three places.

Entry fee for a two-person team is \$130 total and for two, two-person teams is \$250. All proceeds will benefit the homeless services at Randy Sams.

"I'm personally super excited about it," said Fundraising Committee Chair Larry Oxford. "We've had a lot of positive support so far. The majority of the people we've approached have been willing to step up and sponsor their teams. It should be a lot of fun."

With the summer heat bearing down on citizens here, Randy Sams' clientele has nearly doubled over the past few months. Due to this, along with expenses on things like air conditioning system repairs, the nonprofit's need for donations has increased.

Executive Director Jennifer Lacefield said this event is a great opportunity to have a great time and contribute to a great cause.

Lacefield and Oxford both say they are looking forward to being able to congregate with community members after what has largely been a tough year for local nonprofits.

More than 80 players are already registered to participate in the tournament. The maximum number of players that can participate is 120.

The deadline to register is July 14.

Brendan Morrow, Staff Writer
Mon, June 28, 2021, 8:19 AM

Covid-19 vaccine ADEM ALTAN/AFP via Getty Images

A new study reportedly suggests the COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna could provide protection for "years."

As [The New York Times reports](#), scientists in a new study sought to determine whether "vaccination alone" will provide long-lasting protection against COVID-19 after research suggested the vaccines may offer years of protection for those who were previously infected with the coronavirus. The study consisted of 41 people who received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and the researchers extracted samples from lymph nodes of 14 participants. They found that 15 weeks after the first dose, "the number of memory cells that recognized the coronavirus had not declined," the *Times* writes.

"The fact that the reactions continued for almost four months after vaccination — that's a very, very good sign," Washington University in St. Louis immunologist Ali Ellebedy, who led the study, told the *Times*.

This suggested, the *Times* writes, that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines could "protect against the coronavirus for years," or "at least, against the existing coronavirus variants." The report notes that even if that's the case, COVID-19 vaccine boosters might still be necessary for some, including older adults and those with weak immune systems. But University of Arizona immunologist Deepta Bhattacharya told the *Times*, "Anything that would actually require a booster would be variant-based, not based on waning of immunity. I just don't see that happening."

COVID Unit 1

AB

06/25/2021 (Mon AM)

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has reopened one of its COVID units as cases in the state continue to rise. The unit opened in 2020 for COVID-19 patients. It was then decommissioned in March and April as in-patient numbers continued to decline. Dr. Stephen Mette (MEH-tuh), CEO of UAMS Medical Center, says the unit reopened because of the hospital's current escalating in-patient numbers.

News11

0:27

“...ready for them.”

Mette says he anticipates the staff will have to open up other COVID units because cases and hospitalizations will continue to rise in Arkansas. He recommends people get fully vaccinated and wear face masks because they are the only defenses in combating the virus.

COVID Unit 2

AB

06/25/2021 (Mon AM)

Due to a rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the state, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has reopened one of its COVID units. At the beginning of the pandemic, all units were open for patients. However, some were closed in March and April because in-patient numbers were on a steady decline. Senior vice chancellor for UAMS Health, Dr. Stephen Mette (MEH-tuh), says he expects the number of COVID-19 patients to increase.

News12

0:18

“...anticipate they will.”

Mette says the only way to combat the coronavirus is to wear face masks and to get a vaccine. As of Friday, Mette says any patient that has been hospitalized with the coronavirus at UAMS, has not been fully vaccinated.

**A TEXAS HIGH TEENAGER IS LIVING THE
DREAM THIS SUMMER BY TAKING A TRIP
TO ENGLAND NOT FOR A
VACATION.....BUT TO GET BETTER AT
HIS FIRST LOVE IN LIFE
SOCCER....**

**STEVE MITCHELL TALKS WITH
MATTHEW DELK ABOUT HIS LATEST
ADVENTURE**

P.J. Ahern Home, 403 Laurel St., Texarkana, Arkansas, hosts a Mad Hatter Tea from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Wear your most outrageous DIY or hand decorated hat for the Best Hat contest. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$20 for TMS members. Registration due by Wednesday. Info: 903-793-4831 or texarkanamuseums.org/events.

Union Baptist Church Center, 520 Houston St., Jefferson, Texas, hosts "Rootin' Tootin' Saloon Show!" a music and comedy revue for the whole family presented by the Opera House Theatre Players, at 7:30 p.m. Friday, July 2, and Saturday, July 3. Tickets are on sale at The Willow Tree and at the door the night of performance. Cost is \$12 per person and wine will be served following performances both nights for a "meet the cast" social time. Info: JeffersonOperaHouseTheatrePlayers.com.

Texarkana Museums Systems presents a walking tour of monuments and memorials in historic downtown Texarkana for celebration of Independence Day, on Saturday, July 3. Living history performers representing different branches of the military will be present. The tour begins at the Museum of Regional History at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Registration available at TexarkanaMuseums.org/Events. Info: 903-793-4831 or Ahern@TexarkanaMuseums.org.

Crossties event venue, 324 E. Broad St., Texarkana, Arkansas, has performers The Steel Woods on Saturday, July 10, in celebration of their new album "All of Your Stones."

Historic Washington State Park presents "Reading, Signing, & Celebrating the Declaration of Independence" at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Saturday, July 3, through Monday, July 5, at the 1874 Courthouse. Afterwards, sign a copy to take home. Admission is free. ALSO: The annual summer concert series Music In The Park is ongoing, with Arkansas National Guard 106th Army Band on Saturday, July 17; and 1859 Marine Band on Saturday, Aug. 21. Shows begin at 7:30 p.m., with the gift shop open for refreshments. Guests are invited to bring lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on. Info: 870-983-2684 or historicwashingtonstatepark.com.

The Texarkana Museums System has "Mischievous at the Museum: A Scooby-Doo Mystery Party." The event is scheduled for 6 p.m. Saturday, July 31 at the P.J. Ahern Home, 403 Laurel St., Texarkana, Arkansas. Tickets must be purchased ahead of time and are available at TexarkanaMuseums.org/Events. Info: 903-793-4831.

Fourth of July fun starts this weekend for anyone looking to enjoy the holiday and celebrate Independence Day in a group setting now that the pandemic's grip on socializing has loosened.

Although Texarkana does not appear to be hosting a big, public fireworks show, they will happen elsewhere. Here's some of what's on tap for July 4th-themed festivities across the region:

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce brings fireworks to the skies above Nashville, Arkansas, Saturday at the 32nd annual Stand Up for America Celebration, which includes much more than the pyrotechnics display starting at 9:20 p.m.

With gates open at 1 p.m., the all-day, all-American festivities at Nashville City Park include antique cars, a youth softball tournament, cornhole tournament, yard sale, live music (including The Bear Creek Boys), vendors, bounce houses and a salute to veterans with a patriotic show starting at 7:30 p.m. There's a \$5 entry fee.

Choctaw Casino in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, hosts a fireworks show and patriotic music on Thursday, July 1, with the festivities starting at 9 p.m. Then Friday, July 2, the entertainment continues there with Twisted Whisky playing everything from Merle Haggard to Van Halen, and then again on Saturday, July 3, with regional band Rocky and the Bullwinkles playing covers from the likes of AC/DC and Gloria Gaynor.

In Jefferson, Texas, the Opera House Theatre Players present the "Rootin' Tootin' Saloon Show" at 7:30 p.m. on July 2 and 3 at the Union Baptist Church Center (520 Houston St.) with a revue-style evening of music and comedy. The Jefferson theater company has presented an Independence Day show annually since 1989.

Expect a true variety of area performers doing turns as Old West-style, vaudeville and nostalgic personalities, such as Jane Maddox wearing a saloon girl costume and singing numbers like "Pecos Bill" as Miss Lilly White, or Sara Davis as Miss Mae Wildwest. Other characters include The Lone Stranger, Johnny River-Rat, Shinar Taildust, Wiley-Riley the Trailboss and many more. Get tickets (\$12 with wine included) at The Willow Tree and at the door.

COVID-Thurs RE MEH 6/24 (Thurs PM/Fri AM)

Arkansas continues seeing an increase in new COVID-19 cases. 383 were reported today (Thurs) by the Department of Health, while the total number of active cases rose by 129. There were three confirmed deaths, the total number since the pandemic began nearing 59-hundred people. In a statement, Governor Asa Hutchinson said the new cases are being mostly driven by two factors: people not getting vaccinated and variants of the virus.

Researchers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are studying ways to help protect the heart health of cancer patients from chemotherapy side effects. Dr. Hui-Ming Chang (WAY-ming) is leading the study, which will be the first Phase 1 cancer clinical trial done at U-A-M-S. The study aims to limit the heart damage caused by a commonly used chemotherapy drug known as doxorubicin (DOX-uh-ROO-buh-SIN). Chang says the negative effects of the drug sometimes aren't felt until well after cancer treatment has ended.

News02

0:11

"...as other people."

Chang's study involves another drug called dexrazoxane (dek-sruh-ZOK-sayn) which has been approved by the F-D-A to help limit heart damage, but can limit the efficacy of chemotherapy drugs. Chang says, by giving the drug four hours before a chemotherapy treatment, it will specifically target certain enzymes that protect the heart while not producing enzymes that interfere with chemotherapy.

News03

0:21

"...can give doxorubicin."

Chang says the first phase of her trial involves giving healthy women aged 18 to 65 a single dose of dexrazoxane (dek-sruh-ZOK-sayn) and studying the drug's behavior in humans. She says the second phase of the trial will study the drug's impact on heart health in 120 breast cancer patients.

Clinton Tourism – 1

DM/

6/24 HOLD

One of central Arkansas' top tourist destinations, the Clinton Presidential Center, plans to reopen after being closed for over a year. Rebecca Tennille (tuh-kneel), spokeswoman for the Clinton Center, says the presidential library will reopen with reduced hours on July 1 (first).

NEWS20 0:17 "...to ramp those up."

While there are no new temporary indoor installations, the center recently unveiled the outdoor installation, "Cool Globes: Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet." Over 20 large globes scattered throughout the Clinton Presidential Park depict different artists' perspectives on climate change.

Clinton Tourism – WRAP

DM/

6/24 HOLD

Tourism in central Arkansas could get a boost with the reopening of the Clinton Presidential Center on July 1 (first). KUAR's David Monteith has more.

NEWS21 0:00 SOC

Many of Little Rock's indoor tourist attractions, like the Clinton Presidential Library, have been closed for over a year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Gretchen Hall, president of the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau, says there are signs tourists are returning to Arkansas' capitol city. Hall expects the reopening of the Clinton Presidential Center to provide an additional boost.

"From a leisure component, I think it is absolutely a driver and brings people here. There are only 13 presidential libraries in the country, so it's a unique component for political buffs, history buffs, those that want to mark that off their bucket list."

Hall says the Clinton Center's new temporary installation could also motivate visitors to return. The outdoor installation, "Cool Globes," focuses on climate change with 26 unique globes. Clinton Center spokeswoman, Rebecca Tennille, says the indoor facilities will operate with reduced hours for at least the immediate future in response to recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arkansas Department of Health.

"Because the Clinton Center is part of the National Archives and Records Administration—we partner with them—we are opening in accordance with their guidelines, as are most of the other presidential libraries in their system."

Tennille says the Clinton Center used the time it was closed to repair and refurbish some permanent exhibits. Volunteers with the center also prepared and delivered 700,000 meals to school kids, families, and retirees in central Arkansas in response to the pandemic.

David Monteith, KUAR News. In Little Rock, I'm David Monteith

New data from the federal government shows personal income has risen in all 50 states, including in Arkansas. KUAR's Daniel Breen explains.

News01

0:45

SOC

The data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis shows personal incomes are up nearly 60% across the country in the first quarter of 2021, largely in part due to the COVID relief package known as the American Rescue Plan. That's compared to the last quarter of 2020, when personal income fell by about 4% in 27 states and D.C. Arkansas posted the fourth-highest increase in the country at just under 81%, behind only Mississippi, Kentucky and West Virginia. The nationwide boost in income was largely due to federal COVID relief packages, mainly because of direct stimulus payments to households. Added compensation for people receiving unemployment insurance also contributed to the gains. DJB KUAR News.

TEXARKANA, TX - The City of Texarkana, Texas was recently awarded \$5,152,402 for sidewalk improvements along College Drive and North Robison Road as a part of the Texas Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) Program. Overall, the Texas Transportation Commission approved funding for 16 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) Program projects from across the state valued at approximately \$25.7 million.

The first award includes bicycle and pedestrian sidewalk infrastructure improvements along College Drive from Robison Road to U.S. 71 (State Line Ave). This project will also include bike and pedestrian signalization improvements at Texas Boulevard.

The second project includes pedestrian sidewalk infrastructure improvements along both sides of North Robison Road from Bright Street to Richmond Road. The proposed improvements will include crosswalks and improvements to multiple existing signals allowing pedestrians to safely cross heavily trafficked roadways. Additional improvements include sidewalks along West 15th street and Milam Street, from Robison Road to Theron Jones Elementary.

The two awarded sidewalk projects originated from Texarkana's 2018 Regional Active Transportation Plan completed by the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization and both ranked in the top ten projects. The plan can be found on the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.texarkanampo.org.

The Texas Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Division (PTN) manages TxDOT's statewide TA program and will be working locally with Atlanta District along with the City of Texarkana to implement the grants. Construction is anticipated to begin during the Summer of 2023.

Religion

Southern Baptists' New Leader Has Many Issues To Tackle

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☐ ☐ ☐ **June 24, 2021 5:11 AM ET**

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

NPR's Rachel Martin talks to pastor Ed Litton, the new president of the Southern Baptist Convention, about the future of America's largest protestant denomination after the group's difficult year.

May Unemployment VR

DJB/MEH 6/23/2021(WedPM/ThursAM)

Arkansas' unemployment rate continues to hold steady. KUAR's Daniel Breen explains.

News04

0:57

SOC

New data from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services shows the state's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged from April to May. At 4.4%, the state remains below the national unemployment rate of 5.8%, which fell by three-tenths of a percent since April. Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality posted the highest gains, with both sectors adding 24-hundred new jobs each. Jobs in trade, transportation and utilities rose by 19-hundred across all three sub-sectors of wholesale, retail and warehousing. Educational and health services saw 12-hundred jobs added, mainly in healthcare and social assistance. Professional and business services saw the largest drop, losing 12-hundred jobs, mainly in the professional, scientific and technical subsector. Despite that, nonfarm payroll jobs are up just over 70-thousand in Arkansas compared to May of 2020. DJB KUAR News.

Police Shooting RE

MEH

6/23 (Wed PM/Thurs AM)

State police are investigating after a teenager was shot and killed by a Lonoke County sheriff's deputy. Authorities say it happened about 3 a.m. today (Wed) during a traffic stop near Cabot. The person shot, who later died at a hospital, has been identified as 17-year-old Hunter Britain of McRae. Few other details have been released. Arkansas State Police said in a statement the circumstances of what led the deputy to shoot the teen will be documented in its investigation. Lonoke County Sheriff John Staley told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette he spoke with Britain's family and called it a horrible situation. A group of family and friends of Britain demonstrated the shooting and spoke with the sheriff.

Bland for Gov 1

MEH/KATV

6/23 (Wed PM/ Thurs AM)

Another candidate is running for Arkansas governor. Democrat Anthony Bland formally launched his campaign today (Wed) in Hot Springs. The 43-year-old Baptist minister told supporters in an announcement streamed live by KATV, channel 7 that his core issues are those that will boost education and the economy.

News15 0:25 “...support all students.”

Bland previously ran for lieutenant governor in 2018. He joins a crowded field with three other Democrats and two Republicans vying for governor so far.

Bland for Gov 2

MEH/KATV

6/23 (Wed PM/Thurs AM)

A fourth Democrat has officially entered the race for governor of Arkansas. Baptist minister Anthony Bland announced his candidacy before a small group of supporters today (Wed) in Hot Springs. He said a key issue for his campaign will be healthcare.

News16 0:17 “...not taken away.”

In Bland’s speech, which was streamed live by KATV, channel 7, he also spoke of the importance of improving education and building an economy that benefits all people through better wages. Three other Democrats – Chris Jones, James Russell and Supha Xayprasith-Mays – are also running for governor. On the Republican side, former White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Attorney General Leslie Rutledge are vying for the nomination.

An Arkansas native and disability advocate is launching a new television program promoting accessibility in short-term rental housing. Lorraine Berry Woodward is developing the show, called “Becoming rentABLE,” in partnership with the national Easterseals organization. Woodward says the inspiration for the show came from the number of guests visiting her own accessible short-term rental property.

News01

0:18

“...places like ours.”

Berry, a native of Conway, says the home improvement-style show will seek to inspire landlords to make disability-friendly modifications, like installing ramps and widening doorways. Woodward says she’s also seeking to create a new certification for accessible properties that goes beyond the guidelines laid out by the Americans for Disabilities Act.

News02

0:23

“...developmental disabilities.”

Woodward says her team is currently renovating a house in Conway to serve as an example of accessible short-term rental properties. She says her show is currently in the pilot stage and is being pitched to numerous networks.

Delta Variant Is The 'Greatest Threat' In The Battle Against The Pandemic, Says Fauci

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□ □ □ **June 22, 2021 4:29 PM ET**
Heard on [All Things Considered](#)

[Rob Stein](#)

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- [Transcript](#)

As the Delta variant accelerates its spread in the United States, Dr. Anthony Fauci calls the dangerous mutant the "greatest threat" to the nation's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Health](#)

TEXARKANA, Ark. — A Miller County man has been arrested on a first-degree murder charge in connection with the shooting death of his wife.

Curtis Carnley, 54, was located in south Miller County Monday afternoon and is being taken to the Miller County Detention Center, said Capt. Mark Lewis, chief deputy of the Miller County Sheriff's Office.

Lewis said a person reported seeing Curtis Carnley walking along Miller County Road 5 shortly before 2 p.m. He was arrested without incident and will be mentally evaluated and booked into the jail where he will be held without bond pending his first court appearance.

Trisha Carnley, 44, was found dead Monday in her home on County Road 10 from a single gunshot wound, according to information from the Miller County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies were notified at 9 a.m. Monday that family members had not been able to reach Trisha Carnley. Deputies responded Monday afternoon and forced entry into the house. They found Trisha Carnley dead from a gunshot wound. A search warrant was obtained and the house searched for evidence.

The victim's body has been sent to the Arkansas State Medical Examiner's Office for an autopsy.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information on the shooting is asked to call the MCSO at 870-774-3001.

Arkansas' Republican governor is voicing his support for federal legislation addressing the disparity in sentencing for crimes related to cocaine and crack cocaine. Gov. Asa Hutchinson testified today (Tues) in front of the U-S Senate Judiciary Committee, in support of a proposed bill known as the EQUAL Act, sponsored by Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey. Hutchinson said imposing harsher sentences for crack cocaine ultimately hampers law enforcement efforts to crack down on drug trafficking.

News01

0:23

"...by that disparity."

Currently on the federal level, crack cocaine sentencing guidelines are 18 times harsher than those for powder cocaine. Hutchinson says that's based solely on the quantity of the drug, which isn't an accurate indicator for how long a prison sentence should be.

News02

0:26

"...be the quantity."

Hutchinson, who was head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration 20 years ago, said the sentencing disparity also disproportionately affects Black Americans. Government data shows that in 2019, 81% of crack cocaine defendants were Black, a number that fell slightly to 76% in 2020.

Solar 1

MEH

6/22 (Tues PM/ Wed AM)

North Little Rock's Wastewater Utility is now being powered in-part by a new solar plant. Completion of the \$1.4 million-dollar array was celebrated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony today (Tues). Mayor Terry Hartwick praised utility officials for pursuing the project which he says will save the city money while being a cleaner source of energy.

News15 0:24

“...without a doubt.”

Officials say the solar plant will save customers \$846-thousand dollars over the next 20 years.

Solar 2

MEH

6/22 (Tues PM/ Wed AM)

North Little Rock has become the latest Arkansas city to harness the power of solar electricity. City leaders held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today (Tues) for a new solar array said to be powering about 20 percent of North Little Rock's Wastewater Utility. Officials say the \$1.4 million-dollar facility will reduce carbon emissions while saving money for customers. Bill Halter is CEO of Scenic Hill Solar, which partnered with the city to built the plant. He said even more savings will be seen in the long run.

News16 0:17

“...for North Little Rock.

In the first 20 years of operation, officials say the solar plant is projected to save the city \$846-thousand dollars.

COVID-Tues VR AB/MEH 6/22 (Tues PM/ Wed AM)

Cases of COVID-19 in Arkansas continue going back up. KUAR's Alexandria Brown has the latest numbers and reaction from the governor.

News11 0: SOC

The Arkansas Department of Health reported eight additional deaths Tuesday, while the number of new cases increased by 485. That's the largest one day increase since March 5th. Total active cases rose by 251 bringing the total to more than 25-hundred people. Hospitalizations increased by 4. In a blunt statement on Twitter, Governor Asa Hutchinson said COVID-19 won't go away until more people take the vaccine. A segment of the state's population has been hesitant to get vaccinated. Hutchinson called it - quote - "sad to see someone go to the hospital or die when it can be prevented."

Arkansas' count of coronavirus cases rose Tuesday by 485 - the largest single-day increase since March 5 and the first one since March 12 that topped 400.

Already at its highest level since March 10, the number of people hospitalized in the state with covid-19 by four, to 285.

It was the eighth day in a row the number of covid-19 patients in the state's hospitals went up.

"Covid-19 won't go away until more people take the vaccine," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said in a tweet.

"Until we increase the number of shots, we will continue to have increased numbers of hospitalizations and new cases like we did today. It is sad to see someone go to the hospital or die when it can be prevented."

After falling by one a day earlier, the number of coronavirus patients who were on ventilators rose back up by one, to 64.

That was tied with the number on Sunday for the largest since March 12.

Tuesday's increase in cases was larger by 395 than the one a day earlier and by 183 than the one the previous Tuesday.

With new cases outpacing recoveries, the number of cases in the state that were considered active rose by 251, to 2,570, the largest total since March 21.

The uptick in new cases and hospitalizations came even as the pace of vaccinations continued to slow.

UPDATED - Husband arrested on first-degree murder charge in Miller County woman's shooting death

TEXARKANA, Ark.--A Miller County man has been arrested on a first-degree murder charge in connection with the shooting death of his wife.

Curtis Carnley, 54, was located in south Miller County Monday afternoon and is being taken to the Miller County Detention Center, said Capt. Mark Lewis, chief deputy of the Miller County Sheriff's Office.

Lewis said shortly before 2 p.m., a person reported seeing Curtis Carnley walking along Miller County Road 5. He was arrested without incident and will be mentally evaluated and booked into the jail where he will be held without bond pending his first court appearance.

Trisha Carnley, 44, was found dead Monday in her home on County Road 10 from a single gunshot wound, according to information from the Miller County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies were notified at 9 a.m. Monday that family members had not been able to reach Trisha Carnley. Deputies responded Monday afternoon and forced entry into the house. They found Trisha Carnley dead from a gunshot wound. A search warrant was obtained and the house searched for evidence. Investigators had been looking for Curtis Carnley since Monday.

The victim's body has been sent to the Arkansas State Medical Examiner's Office for an autopsy.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information on the shooting is asked to call the MCSO at 870-774-3001.

On Monday at approximately 9 a.m., Miller County Deputies were contacted in reference to a missing person.

Family members reported that they had not seen or heard from Trisha Carnley, 44, of Miller County since the previous evening. The residence was secure, but there was not answer at the door.

Later that afternoon, at approximately 1:30 p.m., Miller County investigators and patrol deputies responded to the residence on Miller County Road 10 with family members and upon forcing entry into the home, discovered the body of Carnley.

The preliminary investigation leads investigators to believe that Carnley died as a result of a single gunshot wound.

A search warrant was obtained and the residence was searched and processed for evidence. The victim's husband, Curtis Carnley, 54, is being sought by Miller County Investigators in reference to the ongoing investigation.

No warrants have been issued as of the time of this release.

The victim's body was transported to the Arkansas State Medical Examiner's Office for a determination of the manner and cause of death.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information associated with the incident, or the whereabouts of Curtis Carnley, is requested to contact the Miller County Sheriff's Office.

TEXARKANA, Ark. —A fire at TLC Burgers and Fries on Broad Street in downtown Texarkana is not considered suspicious, according to fire officials.

The restaurant, located at 201 E. Broad St., received some fire damage and heavy smoke damage shortly after 8 p.m. Saturday, said Texarkana Arkansas Fire Chief David Fletcher.

Investigators believe the fire started near the air conditioning unit in the restaurant's kitchen, Fletcher said.

"There was a lot of smoke damage. It will be a while before they can open back up. There is probably about \$75,000 worth of damage," Fletcher said.

Firefighters extinguished the blaze in about 45 minutes, after starting their point of attack at the building's side entrance on Olive Street.

The restaurant had closed for the day and no one was injured.

A unit from Texarkana Texas Fire Department assisted TAFD in fighting the blaze.

It was a busy weekend for firefighters. They also worked a blaze Friday afternoon at an abandoned building on South State Line Avenue.

That fire remains under investigation, Fletcher said.

"We have been busier than we wanted to be," he said.

Arkansans have one more opportunity to publicly speak on the state's newly proposed Medicaid expansion program entitled Arkansas Health and Opportunity for me or "ARHOME." Only one member of the public spoke during today's (Mon) virtual public hearing conducted by the Department of Human Services. The meeting also reviewed the ARHOME's proposed Life 360 home programs and went over the timeline for implementing the expansion, which is aimed to go into effect on January 1. According to DHS, some goals for ARHome include improving health outcomes, and placing an emphasis on maternal and infant health, rural health, behavioral health and chronic disease. Brandie Bland, a patient advocate with VP Medical Consulting, spoke specifically in favor of the proposed Rural Life360 Homes.

NEWS06

:26

"...available to them"

The state's current Medicaid expansion program Arkansas Works is set to expire at the end of this year. State lawmakers passed legislation this year that overhauls the program, including removing the state's work requirement, which was struck down by a federal circuit court in 2020. The next public hearing will take place tomorrow (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. A link can be found on the Department of Human Services' website.

Those who cannot make the meeting can email or mail comments by July 12th, the end of the comment period for the program.

Cocaine Sentences RE

MEH

6/21 (Mon PM/Tues AM)

Governor Asa Hutchinson is scheduled to testify tomorrow (Tues) to a congressional committee in Washington about disparities in federal sentencing guidelines for crack versus powder cocaine. The governor said earlier this month “it’s time to fix an old wrong,” and is advocating changes to what he says has led to unequal punishments for basically identical crimes. In 2019, Black people accounted for 81 percent of all federal crack offenses, while middle-and upper-class white people were more likely to be charged for powder cocaine and face sentences that were less harsh. Hutchinson will be speaking to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee about guidelines adopted in 1986. In a recent op-ed, Hutchinson – who headed the Drug Enforcement Administration two decades ago – called the disparities “shockingly wide” and in need of changes.

EMBARGO UNTIL MONDAY 6/21/21

Kids Count 1

DJB/MEH

6/11/2021(MonAM 6/21)

A new analysis shows the number of uninsured children in Arkansas grew dramatically between 2018 and 2019. The annual Kids Count Data Book released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation examines data collected by the U-S Census Bureau measuring several indicators, including economic wellbeing, health and education. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Executive Director Rich Huddleston says, while the state has shown improvement, Arkansas still remains toward the bottom nationwide.

News29

0:20

“...the 16 indicators.”

The report shows more than one in five children in the state continue to live in poverty. Race Equity Director for Advocacy Maricella Garcia says Black and brown children in Arkansas are more likely to live in poverty than white children.

News30

0:14

“...their white counterparts.”

The study shows more than half of three and four-year-olds in Arkansas attended pre-K, which, while slightly worse than the national average, has remained virtually flat since 2011. Arkansas also ranked slightly better in overall child health rankings, moving to 40th in the nation, though that finding is based on data collected before the COVID-19 pandemic.

MFA Delay 1

DJB/MEH

6/21/21(MonPM/TuesAM)

Officials with the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts are delaying its grand opening. Museum leaders along with its board of trustees announced today (Mon) the reimagined space in Little Rock's MacArthur Park will open in Fall 2022, instead of a planned opening next May. Van Tilbury, president of the museum's board of trustees, said the new deadline gives more time for enhancements.

News01

0:23

"...to do that."

Tilbury says the museum plans to make improvements to its black box theatre, as well as to outdoor landscaping and adding additional gallery space. The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, formerly known as the Arkansas Arts Center, has been operating in a limited capacity since its original space was closed for the renovations in 2019. Board members also approved a roughly \$6.2 million-dollar budget for fiscal year 2022.

Recreation 1A & 1B

MEH

6/21 (Mon PM/ Tues AM)

Governor Asa Hutchinson is creating the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation. He also announced today (Mon) the expansion of outdoor recreational areas in the state as part of an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. Hutchinson says an advisory board of 10 people will provide guidance.

News15 0:19 “...to our state.”

He said there are 96-thousand direct jobs from outdoor recreation in Arkansas, along with \$9 billion dollars annually in economic benefits. The office will be part of the Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism, which is headed by Secretary Stacy Hurst.

News16 0:11 “...residents and visitors.”

The state will soon begin the search for a director of the new office. Officials also announced Blue Mountain is being added to state recreational areas and that a memorandum of understanding has been signed with the federal government to operate Lake Sylvia.

Hospitalizations – 1

DM/DJB

6/21 MonAM

Hospitals in Arkansas are again seeing an increase in the number of patients with Covid-19. On Arkansas PBS this week, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Chancellor Dr. Cam Patterson said the upward trend in severe cases of Covid-19 is causing concern.

NEWS20 0:21 “...intensive care unit care.”

According to the latest data from the Arkansas Department of Health, over 240 people in the state are currently hospitalized with Covid-19. Patterson said variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus are causing more severe disease in unvaccinated people. Over 16-thousand Arkansas have been hospitalized with Covid-19 since the pandemic began.

Hospitalizations – 2

DM/DJB

6/21 MonAM

Some Arkansas medical experts say they’re disturbed by trends in new Covid-19 cases in the state. This week during an Arkansas PBS interview, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences chancellor Dr. Cam Patterson said new, more easily transmissible variants of the virus which causes Covid-19 are infecting younger people more frequently and more severely.

NEWS21 0:15 “...a better lifestyle.”

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, almost 45% of the total U.S. population has been vaccinated. In Arkansas, less than a third of the total population is fully vaccinated.

TEXARKANA, Ark. — The Twin Cities may not likely be holding a Fourth of July fireworks celebration this year.

Except for last year's show, which had to be canceled because of COVID-19, Fourth of July fireworks displays in recent years have traditionally been held at the Four States Fairgrounds. However, Texarkana Arkansas Public Works Employees, contacted late last week, said there are no plans for a display this year.

As of Saturday, Arkansas-side Mayor Allen Brown said that a private group had expressed some interest in holding a local display, but he added that with the Fourth of July holiday now less the two weeks away, it may not be likely.

Variants – 1

DM/SK

6/16 Wed PM/Thur AM

In Arkansas, six variants of the coronavirus that cause Covid-19 have been identified as those labeled as “of concern” by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Jennifer Dillaha (DILL-uh-hey) with the Arkansas Department of Health says testing for the newest, the Delta variant, has to be sent to out-of-state labs.

NEWS20 0:18 “...weeks or more.”

According to the CDC, the three vaccines currently being administered in Arkansas have proven to be effective at protecting against the variants. The pace of vaccinations has dropped in the state and the number of active cases rose to its highest total in a month yesterday (Tuesday).

Variants – WRAP

DM/SK

6/16 Wed PM/Thur AM

The number of cases of Covid-19 caused by variants of the coronavirus is rising in Arkansas. KUAR’s David Monteith spoke with the state’s director of immunizations about the impact of the variants.

NEWS21 2:14 SOC

Earlier this week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention elevated the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV2 virus from variant of interest to variant of concern. Dr. Jennifer Dillaha, with Arkansas Department of Health, says the state currently doesn’t have the capacity to test all samples for variants, but sends potential variants out of state to be tested.

Dillaha 1 0:17 “Since we know that these variants, particularly the Delta Variant is much more easily spread, if we see a cluster of cases, we try to get specimens from the testing that was done on the people in the cluster.”

Museums System hosts Pop to the Culture trivia competition

TEXARKANA, Texas — The Texarkana Museums System invites you to test your 1971 smarts at the upcoming Pop to the Culture trivia competition at the Ace of Clubs House.

Trivia fans can create a team of four or join one from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 19, for this event held on the Ace of Clubs lawn. If you know a random array of facts about the 1970s, this is a great chance to test the depth of your knowledge.

TMS Docent Kristina Ellis has cooked up six categories of questions for trivia time. She found enough trivia to focus on 1971, the year the TMS was founded.

"We're going to have six rounds. Each round is going to have three questions," Ellis said. Each round focuses on a category like sports. They'll have a halftime with bonus points available. Then the next set of three rounds goes.

"After that's done we're going to have a wager round where it's going to be kind of a difficult question, so they're going to have to put something in order. They can wager from zero to 20 points," Ellis said.

When trivia-goers arrive, they will see a coffee bar with donated Starbucks coffee to enjoy. "It's also their 50th (anniversary) this year," Ellis said. And then there are the spoils of trivia victory to be won. "We're going to have a first place, a second place and third place prize," said Ellis.

People can group their own team of four players in advance, or attendees can come by themselves and join a team when they get there.

As to the 1971 trivia categories, they are: sports, pop culture, random, science and technology, music, politics and government. Whether it's musical styles, fashion trends or political upheaval, the 1970s were a busy time.

"I would love people to come and know that there's a lot of places in town that do trivia and I know a lot of it's free, but this is an opportunity for them to gather with maybe people they don't know or have friends that just have somewhere to hang out," Ellis said, suggesting it can be a family event, too.

Union Pacific investigating death of man found near Redwater

TEXARKANA, Texas—Union Pacific Railroad is investigating the death of a man found Tuesday morning along a county road near Redwater in Bowie County.

The body was found about 10 a.m. Tuesday by a Union Pacific train crew on Union Pacific property, said Robynn Tysver, communications manager for Union Pacific. The location was west of Redwater, Texas.

The name of the victim has not been released.

The Bowie County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene along with Union Pacific investigators. Foul play is not suspected but the death remains under investigation.

City Council to vote on downtown entertainment district

TEXARKANA, Texas — During a regular meeting Monday, the City Council will conduct a public hearing and vote on establishing a downtown entertainment district where outdoor drinking would be allowed.

The idea is to mirror a similar district created in 2019 in Texarkana, Arkansas, with the intent to promote development and attract visitors downtown.

If the ordinance creating the district passes, people will be allowed to have open, non-glass containers of alcoholic beverages outdoors, with the exception of Sundays between 2:15 a.m. and noon and other days between 2:15 a.m. and 7 a.m.

The district would, for the most part, coincide with the downtown Arts and Historic District and include the Perot Theatre, Texarkana Regional Arts Center, the Art Park, the Kress Gap, the Ace of Clubs House, Pecan Point and Silvermoon on Broad, but not the Bi-State Justice Building.

The ordinance prohibits the use of glass containers for any liquid on public streets, sidewalks or alleys, and it does not conflict with already existing ordinances pertaining to noise. State law concerning alcohol, including the need for permits to sell alcohol and the prohibition of open containers in vehicles, would remain in effect.

If the ordinance is approved, city staff will evaluate the need for additional waste receptacles and garbage collection.

Rezoning, permits

The Council will also conduct hearings and vote on a number of rezoning and permitting requests:

- Rezoning a vacant tract of land north of 100 Gazola St. to allow multi-family housing to be built there. The land's owner is considering donating it to the Mt. Sinai House of Prayer Church, which has proposed several multi-family building projects in the immediate area.
- Rezoning and granting a special use permit to allow a double-wide manufactured home at 302 Daniels St.

Southern Baptists Prepare To Meet To Elect A Leader Following A Rocky Year

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□ □ □ **June 11, 20215:02 AM ET**

NPR's Rachel Martin talks with Ed Stetzer, a pastor and a professor at Wheaton College, about the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Nashville following a year marked by high-profile departures.

LGBTQ Fund 1

DJB

6/10/2021(ThursPM/FriAM)

A new statewide fund aims to support organizations in Arkansas serving the LGBTQ community. The Bentonville-based Walton Family Foundation announced today (Thurs) it's partnering with the Arkansas Community Foundation to distribute \$1 million dollars worth of grants to groups working to improve the quality of life for LGBTQ Arkansans. The Walton Family Foundation's Luis Gonzalez says it's designed to include members of the community in the process.

News02

0:27

"...applications become available."

The grants of at least \$25-thousand dollars will be distributed by a grant selection committee within the Arkansas Community Foundation. Gonzalez says the program has the capacity to expand with additional community support.

LGBTQ Fund 2

DJB

6/10/2021(ThursPM/FriAM)

A new fund aims to improve the quality of life of LGBTQ Arkansans. The Walton Family Foundation announced today (Thurs) it's partnering with the Arkansas Community Foundation to distribute \$1 million dollars in grants to groups serving the LGBTQ community. That's despite Walmart and its political action committee being one of the largest corporate donors to many state lawmakers who sponsored anti-LGBTQ legislation this year. Walton Foundation spokesperson Luis Gonzalez says the new fund is an effort to counter the increasing challenges faced by members of the community.

News03

0:25

"...doing this work."

Gonzalez says the Arkansas Community Foundation will oversee the distribution of the grants, which will total at least \$25-thousand dollars each.

A new statewide fund, financed by two foundations from the Walton family, aims to support organizations that assist LGBTQ Arkansans. KUAR's Sarah Kellogg has more.

NEWS06**1:03****SOC**

The one-million-dollar fund, which has the potential to grow even larger from other donations, will distribute grants beginning at \$25,000 for Arkansas-based organizations that, according to a news release, "provide critical services to the LGBTQ community." National groups with a local, established presence in the state can also qualify.

The announcement comes more than a month after the end of an Arkansas legislative session that passed multiple bills that discriminated against LGBTQ communities, in particular, Arkansans who are transgender.

The Arkansas Community Foundation is in charge of evaluating grant requests and distributing funding. Chief Program Officer Sarah Kinser says there are certain criteria they are looking for in an application.

CUT**:08****"...the community"**

"We're specifically looking for organizations that offer, legal, health, education and advocacy services or other high-demand needs within the community," Kinser said.

Kinser says the organization aims to have more information for perspective applicants later in the summer, including how to apply and what that application process will look like. She says she suspects the applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as opposed to a hard deadline.

The Pulaski County Circuit Court is ordering the removal of nine members of the 18-member State Plant Board. It follows a ruling last month by the Arkansas Supreme Court that the members had been unconstitutionally chosen by agriculture industry trade groups. In 2017, a group of farmers had challenged a statute that allowed the practice. The Arkansas Legislature this year changed the law, putting all appointments at the discretion of the governor, though that won't take effect until July 28th.

EXARKANA, Texas — A felony charge has been filed against a Wake Village man who allegedly shared an intimate photo of his wife after she filed for divorce.

Anthony Craig Potts, 36, has been charged in Bowie County with publish or threaten to publish intimate visual material.

Potts' wife allegedly filed for divorce from him on April 20, according to a probable cause affidavit. On May 2, the alleged victim received a message from a friend "she went to school with" and who Potts allegedly knows. The message informed the woman that Potts had sent her a nude photo.

The image allegedly captured part of a man's arm with part of a tattoo that Potts has. The woman reported that she never gave her consent for Potts to share the photo with anyone and that if it is being published, Potts is responsible because he was the only person who allegedly had access to it.

Potts is currently free on a \$7,500 personal recognizance bond. If convicted of publishing intimate visual material, he faces six months to two years in a Texas state jail.

TEXARKANA, Ark. — A benefit for injured Texarkana toddler Blake Sampson will take place Saturday at Crossties.

Blake Sampson, 2, is being treated for a serious head injury in a Dallas hospital. His mother, Madison Ball, is a Texarkana resident.

The event at Crossties is in conjunction with the Dwight Neville Memorial Fund, according to organizers.

Events will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will include live music, an auction, a car and bike show, a raffle, and a poker run. The poker run will be from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Admission is \$5 for the door fee and \$20 for the poker run.



The Delta variant, which was first detected in India, now accounts for more than 6% of all infections in the United States, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). And this highly transmissible variant may be responsible for more than 18% of cases in some Western U.S. states.

The variant, also known as B.1.617.2, is spreading rapidly in the United Kingdom and has quickly become the dominant strain there, responsible for more than 60% of infections and causing surges of COVID-19 in some parts of England.

"We cannot let that happen in the United States," Dr. Anthony Fauci said.

Speaking at a White House COVID-19 briefing Tuesday, Fauci warned that the Delta variant may be associated with more severe disease and a higher risk of hospitalization.

The good news is that the vaccines look like they can protect people against the Delta variant. A [new study from Public Health England](#) showed two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine were 88% effective against symptomatic disease from the Delta variant compared with 93% effectiveness against the Alpha variant, the variant first detected in the U.K. The vaccine only provided 33% protection after just one dose.

Fauci urged everyone who has received the first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines to make sure to sign up for a second. "And for those who have still not been vaccinated yet, please get vaccinated," he said.

He said vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and to stop this variant from spreading and becoming dominant in the U.S.

States Say Large Amounts Of J&J Shots May Be Wasted If Not Used Soon

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□ □ □ **June 10, 2021 5:06 AM ET**

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

Anna Huntsman

Ohio hospitals and health departments are trying to figure out how to give out 200,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine that are expiring at the end of the month.

Infant Mortality VR

BT

6/10/2021 (Thurs AM)

The NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro says two professors yesterday (Wed) received a \$10-thousand-dollar grant that could help curb Arkansas' high infant mortality rate. KASU's Brandon Tabor reports.

NEWS

0:43

SOC

NYIT said that professors Christine Hartford and Jennifer Conner received the grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics' Community Access to Child Health program - or CATCH. Officials say Hartford and Conner, along with volunteer NYIT medical students, will conduct interactive group prenatal visits for pregnant women and new mothers living in an underserved community in the Arkansas Delta. The objective is to help participants understand factors important to their infant's health and to connect new and nursing mothers to resources. A recent report from the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service shows the state's infant mortality rate is the third highest in the nation.

In Jonesboro, I'm Brandon Tabor.

Asa Crack RE

DJB/MEH

6/9/2021(WedPM/ThursAM)

Arkansas' governor is calling for new reforms to the criminal justice system to address disparities in sentencing for drug crimes. Gov. Asa Hutchinson said in an op-ed on Fox News' website Tuesday he supports new sentencing laws that seek to bridge the gap in sentencing for crimes related to cocaine and crack cocaine. Hutchinson, who served as the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration under President George W. Bush, voiced his support for federal legislation that imposes the same penalties for possessing both drugs, as is the case under Arkansas law. The Republican governor said having more lenient sentencing guidelines for powder cocaine rarely led to the prosecution of major drug traffickers and sellers.

Arkansas' junior Republican U-S Senator is deriding the Biden Administration's immigration policy. Sen. Tom Cotton spoke on Fox News today (Wed), saying Vice President Kamala Harris' recent trip to central America was unnecessary if the administration isn't serious about taking a hardline stance on immigration.

News02

0:21

"...in 20 years."

Biden overturned the Trump Administration's controversial "Remain in Mexico" program where migrants were forced to stay outside of the U-S while their asylum claims were pending. A Biden Administration task force has also recently identified roughly 4-thousand children who were separated from their families under Trump's zero-tolerance illegal immigration policy.

Arkansas officials are choosing from finalists to create statues of civil rights leader Daisy Bates and musician Johnny Cash to represent the state in the U-S Capitol. This (Wed) morning, members of the Arkansas National Statuary Hall Steering Committee and the Capitol Arts and Grounds Commission met to see Idaho-based sculptor Benjamin Victor's vision for a statue of Bates. Victor said he thought of his own experience attending a multicultural high school when researching Bates, who helped the Little Rock Nine desegregate Central High School in 1957.

News01 0:22 "...life and legacy."

Victor called Bates' story "incredibly moving," saying he's been researching the life of Bates and Cash since being selected as a finalist to make the sculptures earlier this year. He's the only artist being considered for both. In the afternoon, presentations were made by the artists vying to create the Cash statue. Finalist Kevin Kresse of Little Rock praised Cash for his activism for Native Americans and prisoners.

News15 0:22 "...here to you."

On Monday afternoon, the groups will make a final recommendation on which artists should create each statue. Legislation signed into law two years ago enabled the state to replace the current statues which represent the state in the U.S. Capitol.

From the level of dumb today comes this little story. The only reason I'm even reporting it is that it was part of a public hearing and has been showing up on the fake news web sites,

A hearing held by the Ohio state legislature on vaccination mandates took a turn for the worse Tuesday when a notorious anti-vaccine activist testified that vaccines magnetized recipients' bodies.

The Ohio legislature had solicited public comment on a bill prohibiting schools and businesses from requiring coronavirus vaccinations, and [Dr. Sherri Tenpenny](#), who touts the long-debunked theory that vaccines cause autism and has campaigned against the coronavirus jab, took the opportunity to spout misinformation.

She told the panel, "I'm sure you've seen the pictures all over the internet of people who have had these shots and now they're magnetized. They can put a key on their forehead. It sticks. They can put spoons and forks all over them and they can stick, because now we think that there's a metal piece to that. There's been people who have long suspected that there's been some sort of an interface, 'yet to be defined' interface, between what's being injected in these shots and all of the 5G towers."

To be absolutely clear here None of the available coronavirus vaccines magnetize skin, and none of the materials in them are part of cell towers, multiple doctors and medical experts told Reuters, which published a [fact check](#) earlier this month as the conspiracy theory gained steam.

TEXARKANA, Texas — Former congressman, senate nominee and presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke will bring his "Powered by People" organizing campaign to Texarkana on Friday.

O'Rourke, D-El Paso, will speak with local residents at their homes in the afternoon before a public rally at 6 p.m. on the lawn at Twin City Event and Conference Center, 2101 Texas Blvd.

The event will be one among many O'Rourke is holding this year statewide, with the stated goal "to bring the fight for voting rights and democracy to every Texas town."

Such wide-ranging travel was a hallmark of O'Rourke's losing 2018 senate campaign, during which he visited all 254 Texas counties.

He has said he is currently focused on organizing volunteers and registering voters, but he has not ruled out a run for the governor's office in 2022. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott is expected to seek election to a third four-year term.

Health

More Infectious COVID-19 Variants Raise Questions About Vaccines' Effectiveness

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☐ ☐ ☐ **June 9, 2021 5:09 AM ET**

Heard on Morning Edition

Joe Palca

A new study shows that the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine may prevent severe disease — even in the face of dangerous coronavirus variants.

ATLANTA, Texas — The East Texas Republican Women will present a public forum June 15 "to promote awareness of the Marvin Nichols Reservoir issue that will provide water to the Dallas Metroplex by diverting East Texas water resources," according to a news release.

The forum will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Queen City Funeral Home, 421 236 Loop in Queen City. It will be moderated by Kate Stow of the Cass County Citizens Journal-Sun.

Speakers will be conservationist Janice Benzanson and Northeast Texas Water Board members Jim Thompson and Bill Ward. A question and answer session will follow the forum.

Dicamba Stay VR

DJB/MEH

6/8/2021(TuesPM/WedAM)

Arkansas' highest court today (Tues) overturned a court order that prevented farmers from spraying a controversial weedkiller. KUAR's Daniel Breen has the latest:

News01

0:47

SOC

Cotton and soybean farmers in Arkansas haven't been able to spray dicamba for nearly two weeks, since a circuit court issued a temporary restraining order against the state's rules allowing the herbicide to be sprayed until the end of June. The Arkansas Supreme Court has now issued a stay of that restraining order, meaning growers can spray, with some restrictions, until the end of the month. The Arkansas State Plant Board, as it does nearly every year, changed the rules regarding dicamba this year, extending the spraying cutoff date by more than a month. That's despite research showing dicamba can vaporize in higher temperatures and damage nearby non-tolerant crops. Despite the new loosening of restrictions, heavy rain means growers likely won't be able to spray until this weekend at the earliest. DJB KUAR News.

State employees in Arkansas will soon have the opportunity to earn a raise as a result to their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced today (Tuesday) a 3% “performance or merit” bonus that will be given to state agencies, that in turn will distribute to its employees based on their work.

NEWS06

:14

“...100 years”

“This last year, our workforce has shown dedication, resilience and flexibility during this pandemic. It’s been circumstances that no workforce has been through in the last 100 years,” Hutchinson said.

According to Hutchinson, this pay amount to state employees is the largest one since he took over as governor, costing the state around \$11.2 million dollars in state general revenue and a total of \$28 million from “all sources” including federal ones.

Hutchinson said this amount will be added to the employee’s base pay instead of making it a one-time bonus.

The driver of a Freightliner was killed early Tuesday in a multi-vehicle crash on Interstate 30.

At 2:30 a.m., Tuesday, Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers were notified of a multiple vehicle crash on I-30, just west of Spur 74 in Bowie County. The preliminary investigation indicates that a 2011 Freightliner towing a trailer was westbound on I-30 when it hit a cow that was on the highway and traveled across into the eastbound lane where it was struck by a 2021 Chevrolet Malibu, according to a preliminary report from DPS.

The trailer of the Freightliner rolled over across the eastbound lane. A 2005 Freightliner towing a trailer drove through the rolled-over trailer and caught fire. A 2020 Volvo towing trailer was also eastbound and swerved to the left to avoid the crash but struck the detached rear axle of the rolled over trailer.

The driver of the 2005 Freightliner died at the scene.

The driver of the Chevrolet was taken to an area hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The driver and passenger of the Volvo were taken to an area hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The driver of the 2011 Freightliner was not injured.

Texarkana College will host an open house 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday for its new Computerized Numerical Control Machinery course, with demonstrations performed on the college's CNC Vertical Mill machine.

TC will be offering a brand new, 12-week CNC Machinist operator course starting June 21. This class will provide students with knowledge on how to operate CNC machines and write CNC programs. Workforce Coordinator Thomas Holt said the course provides an intensive overview of the skills to perform CNC machining, including work-holding, use of precision instruments, machinist math, inspection, interpreting and confirming blueprint requirements and shop safety.

A grant from the Carl D. Perkins program enabled the college to acquire CNC machines including two 5-axis vertical mini mills and a lathe that totaled \$178,750, as announced in a meeting of the board of trustees in April. The new equipment was purchased with the goal of providing students an opportunity to learn next-level 3-D printing for metalworking to give them a competitive edge when applying for jobs in their fields.

Holt said he expects the growth for workforce jobs where these types of skills are beneficial to rise substantially in the near future.

"If you look at the job opening at any of these jobs sites, you're seeing a minimum of 20 different positions that are available right now," he said. "And 20 doesn't sound like much, but that's just with this skill set. Because this can carry over into other areas, as well."

The open house will be held at the Ledwell Workforce Training Center on TC's Campus.

TEXARKANA, Texas —A man accused of killing two young boys when he intentionally crashed into the van they were riding in earlier this year will not face the death penalty if convicted of capital murder.

Zachary Blaise Salazar, 21, appeared with Texarkana lawyer Jeff Harrelson for arraignment on two charges of capital murder and four counts of aggravated assault before 202nd District Judge John Tidwell. Harrelson entered pleas of not guilty to all charges on Salazar's behalf.

First Assistant District Attorney Kelley Crisp told the court her office is not seeking the death penalty for Salazar.

Crisp said Salazar's history of mental illness is the basis for the state's decision to take the death penalty off the table. If convicted of capital murder in the deaths of 3-year-old James Crowley and 7-year-old Riley Burgess, Salazar will receive an automatic sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

The assault charges stemming from injuries sustained by other occupants of the van are punishable by two to 20 years in prison.

Salazar is being held in the Bowie County jail with bail set at \$5 million. He's been in custody since his arrest following the crash the night of Jan. 13.



TEXARKANA POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS
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TEXARKANA, AR 75504-1885
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www.txkusa.org/arkpolice



Kristi Bennett
Chief of Police

Lieutenant Scott Megason
Division Commander

“Excellence Innovation Integrity”

To: Media

From: Corporal Kelly Pilgreen

Date: June 7, 2021

Re: A shooting occurred at the Fox Creek Apartments.

Yesterday evening around 7:00 pm, officers responded to the Fox Creek Apartments, located at 4303 County Avenue in Texarkana, Arkansas. There was a report of a 22-year-old male shot in the leg. Officers arrived at the scene and found the victim sitting in a vehicle and had what looked to be a gunshot wound to his upper left leg. The victim went to the local hospital by ambulance, where he received treatment for a non-life-threatening injury.

The victim could not give much information on a suspect vehicle or suspect(s). Officers and detectives spoke with possible witnesses at the complex.

The incident is still under investigation.

If anyone has information about this crime, please contact the Criminal Investigation Division at (903)-798-3154 or Crime Stoppers at 903-793-STOP (903-793-7867).

-30-

Corporal Kelly Pilgreen
903-798-3560 (office) 903-748-2086 (cell)
903-798-3023 (fax)
Kelly.pilgreen@txkusa.org

Detectives continue to gather information in Walter Street shooting

TEXARKANA, Ark. —Detectives continue to interview people involved with a Thursday night altercation on Walter Street that left three people with gunshot wounds.

Investigators believe the shootings happened as a result of drug activity and were not random. Arrest warrants are expected soon, but detectives are still gathering information and talking to those involved, a TAPD spokesman said Monday.

At 9 p.m. Thursday, Arkansas-side police responded to a shooting call in the 1600 block of Walter Street. Upon arrival, officers located two victims who were transported to a local hospital. A third victim was later located at a local hospital.

Life saving measures were taken by the responding officers and the medical staff of LifeNet and Wadley Hospital, TAPD reports. Injuries to those involved are no longer considered life threatening.

Multiple arrest warrants are expected to be issued.

(Anyone with information about this event is encouraged to call CrimeStoppers 903-794-STOP or TAPD detectives at 903-798-3154.)

Groundbreaking for new airport passenger terminal set for June 12

TEXARKANA, Ark. — After nearly 20 years of planning, the Texarkana Regional Airport Authority Board will hold a live-streamed groundbreaking ceremony for the \$36 million passenger terminal at noon, June 12.

The ceremony will officially mark the start of this construction project set to replace the current terminal, which was built in 1960 and renovated in 1992.

The new terminal, projected to be completely constructed and open in 2024, will be state-of-the-art and will be accessible to vehicle traffic off of East 19th Street as well as to traffic from Interstate 49.

The project is finance with money from both the cities of Texarkana, Texas ,and Texarkana, Arkansas, as well as by grant funds from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Arkansas Division of Aeronautics and the Texas Department of Transportation.

"The new terminal is a crucial investment in the Texarkana Regional Airport's infrastructure and comprehensive goal to provide an overall better airport experience for our passengers," said Paul Mehrlich, the airport's executive director of aviation. "The new terminal will also contribute to positive economic development in Texarkana and will meet future needs of leisure and business travel in our area."

The new terminal will include an advanced baggage handling system, a well as room for concessions. And for the first in the airport's history, two enclosed passenger boarding bridges that connect from the terminal directly to the aircraft boarding door.

With the new terminal, the airport could potentially add more destination flights and airlines, according to the Texarkana Regional Airport Authority Board.

Besides the ceremony, airport officials are planning to host a vintage 1940s Douglas DC-3 at the event.

INTRO: In this edition of KERA's' ongoing series on personal health, "Vital Signs," the ongoing rise in hepatitis -or inflammation of the liver. The most recent CDC data showed a more than 13-hundred percent increase in the hepatitis A virus between 2015 and 2019. 63-percent increase for hepatitis-C. The data also says the actual number of cases may be greater than those reported. Dr. Mamta Jain (MAHM tuh Jann) leads several Hep-C studies at Dallas-based Parkland Hospital. She talked with KERA's Sam Baker about the increases.

TAG: Dr. Mamta Jain leads a number of HCV studies at Parkland Hospital in Dallas and is a professor of internal medicine at UT-Southwestern Medical Center.

"STAND YOUR GROUND" CLAIM FAILS FOR MAN IN IGUANA KILLING

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) - The "stand your ground" law in Florida didn't hold water when a man tried to claim the privilege in his RECENT encounter in the West Palm Beach Florida area.

A judge in West Palm Beach has ruled this week that PJ Nilaja Patterson will have to stand trial on a felony charge.

The victim in the attack was beaten to death by Patterson after he said that an encounter turned violent when the victim bit him on the arm. Patterson claims that he was only trying to help the victim across the street at the time of the attack. Patterson's lawyers claim that he needed 22 staples to close a wound on his arm from the encounter.

Patterson admitted to the judge that he did indeed commit the crime and was going to invoke the Florida "Stand Your Ground" law as his defense.

The judge said that he didn't buy it and that Prosecutors say that it was Patterson who initiated the attack on the defenseless victim. Prosecutors say that they will present surveillance video at trial to back their charges.

OH did I identify the victim?

The victim was a three foot long tropical Iguana

Patterson He could face up to five years in prison if convicted.

As COVID-19 Restrictions Ease, Airline Employees Are Seeing Trouble On Flights

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□ □ □ **June 4, 2021 7:13 AM ET**

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

[David Schaper](#)

As Americans start to fly again, incidents involving unruly airline passengers are taking off. Fights over people refusing to wear masks are especially common.

Texarkana Museums Systems present a Twilight Tour at Sacred Heart Cemetery "The Talking Dead: Sacred Heart Cemetery" at 8 p.m. Saturday. The guided walking tour includes living history performers in the personas of several of Texarkana's past citizens. Tickets are required in advance and are \$15 each or \$10 for TMS members at TexarkanaMuseums.org/events. No parking is available inside the cemetery, so guests are asked to park nearby and walk to the gate. This is a wheelchair accessible event. Call with any questions regarding parking assistance. Info: 903-793-4831 or Ahern@TexarkanaMuseums.org.

Texarkana College, 2500 N Robison Road, Texarkana, Texas, hosts Kids' College for ages 7-12, beginning Monday through Thursday and June 14 through June 17, with morning sessions from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and afternoon sessions from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Each class lasts for one week and children may take two classes per day. Registration is available online at cbe.texarkanacollege.edu/kidscollege. Info: 903-823-3270.

Hall-Miller Airport, Atlanta, Texas, presents "Bessie Coleman Fly-In: Girls Can Fly" celebrating 100 years since Bessie Coleman earned her international pilot license, on Saturday, June 12. Girls aged 13-19 can register to fly with a South Central Section Ninety-Nine woman pilot, with information available at ninety-nines.org/letsfly. The event is free to the public.

The Scholars present "Keeping History Alive" a Juneteenth celebration, from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, June 19, at Downtown Texarkana Front Street. There will be political and social rights speakers, a parade of professionals, food/craft vendors, 3 on 3 basketball, spades, and domino tournaments, a video game truck and bouncy houses, and live bands/performances. Vendor booth contacts are 903-556-6241 or 903-293-0436. Info: 903-244-1403 or thescholarstxk.org.

Museums & History

The Regional Arts Center is open with reduced hours from noon to 4 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays.

The Museum of Regional History, 219 N State Line Ave, Texarkana, Texas, is celebrating its 50th year by painting groovy designs on flower pots and planting flowers from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday to celebrate 1971. Registration and info: 903-793-4831, aceofclubs@texarkanamuseum.org, or texarkanamuseums.org/events.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1100 North St., Little Rock, offers their virtual Sandwiching in History Tours online at [YouTube.com/arkansaspreservation](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC012345678901234567890). Historic site tours include the Baring Cross Bridge, the Foster Robinsin House and Toltec Mounds State Park. Info: ArkansasPreservation.com.

TEXARKANA, Ark. — The Texarkana Arkansas School District Board increased certified teacher salaries by \$1,000 and classified salaries by \$500 at a special meeting on Thursday evening.

This move follows the Arkansas State Legislature's creation of the Teacher Salary Equalization Fund to up teacher pay statewide.

For the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, the General Assembly has set the statewide target average annual salary at \$51,822. TASD's average annual salary for 2020-2021 was \$46,438.

TASD will receive \$719,609 for both of the next two school years to fund the raises.

They will spend a total of \$445,260 on licensed staff and \$101,318.79 on classified staff. This leaves approximately \$173,030.21 that will remain in the district's salary fund.

Superintendent Becky Kesler said it's possible this remaining money could roll over into the next year or be used for bonuses.

In other business, the board also approved an item to immediately remove the district's mask policy.

Governor Asa Hutchison announced on March 30 that he was lifting the mandate requiring all Arkansas citizens to wear masks in public. Per Hutchison, local school district boards can choose how to go about mandating masks, and the TASD board is doing away with them before summer school.

Arkansas PBS TW MEH 6/3 (Thurs PM/ Fri AM)

Arkansas PBS is expanding its reach with several additional frequencies going on the air this year. As KUAR's Michael Hibblen discusses, the first new signal is now serving the Russellville area.

News15 3:54 SOC

Arkansas PBS AK MEH 6/3 (Thurs PM/ Fri AM)

The first of several new signals for Arkansas PBS is now on the air near Russellville. It's part of a \$6.4 million dollar project funded through the federal CARES Act. Marty Ryall with Arkansas PBS says the goal is to expand the reach of the public broadcaster which had been limited to about three-quarters of the population.

News16 0:18 "...expand with that."

The network, which is part of state government, provided educational programming after schools were closed for in-class instruction last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Arkansas PBS worked with the state Department of Education to produce educational programming to assist in providing remote learning.

Groups in support of term limits for state lawmakers are suing over new restrictions on the petition process. Members of Arkansas Term Limits, along with two national groups, filed the lawsuit last week seeking to block laws that restrict the process of putting initiatives on the ballot through the petition process. Tim Jacob is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, and says similar laws in other states have been struck down as unconstitutional.

News01

0:19

“...with a petition.”

The suit targets a law recently passed by the Arkansas General Assembly that prohibits anyone with a misdemeanor conviction from gathering signatures for petitions. The law also requires a signature-gatherer to be a resident of Arkansas, and prohibits paying canvassers for each signature they collect.

Petition Lawsuit 2

DJB

6/3/2021(ThursPM/FriAM)

A new Arkansas law restricting paid canvassers for ballot petitions is the subject of a federal lawsuit. The group Arkansas Term Limits along with other national groups filed the suit in U-S District Court for Arkansas' Eastern District last week. The suit names Secretary of State John Thurston as the defendant, and is seeking to overturn Act 951 passed by the state legislature earlier this year. Tim Jacob is a plaintiff in the lawsuit, and says a number of restrictions on the petition process already exist.

News02

0:23

“...policy-making process.”

The new law prohibits non-citizens from working as canvassers, and forbids groups from paying canvassers per signature. The law, which became law without Gov. Asa Hutchinson's signature, also bans people with a misdemeanor conviction from canvassing. Jacob says his group also plans to challenge a constitutional amendment proposed by the legislature that would increase the number of votes needed for a citizen-referred ballot initiative to pass.

TEXARKANA, Texas — This week's inaugural 1st Friday at the Regional Arts Center brings the live music of piano player Bass Deese and a chance to unwind with drinks and socializing.

Organized by the Texarkana Regional Arts and Humanities Council, 1st Friday programs will run monthly with live music in Cabe Hall and provide a cash bar for refreshments every first Friday of the month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

This Friday's event is free for all, while future 1st Fridays will be free for 2021-2022 TRAHC members with a drink ticket included. For non-members, the future general admission will be \$10.

Beer, wine, punch and other beverages will be served.

TRAHC Board President Charles Fortenberry says TRAHC held Occasional Thursdays at the RAC years ago with the idea to bring the public into the art museum to see the galleries in a relaxing, post-work atmosphere. This will be similar but on Fridays.

About Deese, Fortenberry said, "He's a keyboardist, and he's multiply talented, but mostly jazz music. That's kind of the format we're trying to develop." TRAHC has reached out to local groups to bring live jazz to the Regional Arts Center.

Jazz music, too, is an original American art form that hasn't received a lot of attention in Texarkana, and there's a link here in Texarkana to Scott Joplin, the ragtime composer and player, said TRAHC's board president.

(The Regional Arts Center is at 321 W. Fourth St. For more information, call 903-792-8681.)

Why Much Of The Media Dismissed Theories That COVID Leaked From Lab

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☐ ☐ ☐ **June 3, 2021 5:13 AM ET**
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

[Noel King](#)

[David Folkenflik](#)

President Biden has ordered a probe into the origins of COVID-19. An examination of how the media has covered the theory that it escaped from a Chinese lab, and why it's getting more attention now.

Arkansas' most recent state revenue report has far outpaced expectations. KUAR's Daniel Breen explains.

News01

0:52

SOC

The state's net available general revenue for the month of May totaled just over \$655 million dollars, nearly an 80% jump over this time last year and about \$263 million dollars above forecast. The latest report from the state Department of Finance and Administration shows results were above forecast in all major categories. A change in the tax deadline caused growth in individual income tax revenue, while revenues from other tax categories like tobacco and gaming also came in above forecast. The state's year-to-date gross revenue also exceeded forecasts by more than a billion dollars. In a statement, Gov. Asa Hutchinson cited "belt-tightening" during the pandemic as the reason for the state's record high \$980 million dollar budget surplus. That's despite reducing the state's top income tax rate to 5.9%. DJB KUAR News.

Community Mural 1

AB/MEH 6/2/21(WedPM & ThursAM)

Downtown Little Rock Partnership is calling for volunteers to help paint the latest mural project in the city. The large-scale mural will be on the north wall of the Cashion Company Insurance Building in the 300 block of Scott Street by local artist Matt McLeod and volunteers. It will portray downtown's theme, "Everyone's Neighborhood," which means everyone is welcome to the area.

Downtown Little Rock Partnership spokeswoman Ellen Coulter says this is a great way to bring the community together after a difficult year.

News11

0:27

"...to do that."

Coulter says those interested in volunteering don't have to be professional painters. People can go to the Downtown Little Rock Partnership's website to sign-up to. Painting begins this month and the mural is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

Community Mural 2

AB/MEH

6/2/21(WedPM & ThursAM)

Volunteers are being invited to participate in creating Little Rock's newest mural. The project will be led by Downtown Little Rock Partnership and local artist Matt McLeod. The mural will be painted on the north wall of the Cashion Company Insurance Building on 321 Scott Street. It will portray the theme, "Everyone's Neighborhood," a slogan that is meant to represent the city's diverse culture. Ellen Coulter, a spokeswoman for Downtown Little Rock Partnership, says she hopes this will get people active in the community.

News12

0:20

"...have to offer."

Coulter says people don't need to have any special artistic abilities to volunteer. Painting begins this month and the mural is expected to be completed later this summer. Those interested in participating can go to the partnership's website to sign-up.

Though recent atypical spring weather has impacted Arkansas crops, causing damage and delaying harvesting for some crops and planting for others, the state's rice farmers have faced weather challenges for longer.

According to Jarrod Hardke, rice extension agronomist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, consecutive wet springs have led to the underplanting of rice for the past three years. Hardke says at the beginning of this spring, they already were predicting a 10% reduction in rice acreage for this season.

NEWS06**:18****“...last year”**

“But as the spring has worn on and we have not been able to plant, it really started to get lower and actually has already probably moved us way down to more like a 25% production in rice acres compared to last year,” Hardke said.

Hardke says the continued rain also creates issues related to standing water such as seedling diseases and even killing some plants. However, in recent years past he says the rainy springs were followed by “mild growing seasons.”

NEWS07**:22****“...the crop”**

“At least for rice, that's a positive. A lot of the mid to late season stresses just haven't really been there. So we've been maintaining very high state average yields, relatively close to our record set several years ago for a state average yield, but staying right there just because the stress isn't there for the crop.”

For this year, Hardke says there is still very high yield potential for rice as long as Arkansas again gets ideal growing weather, which for rice means sunshine and hotter temperatures.

A recent rainy spring has repeated a pattern of growing difficulties for rice farmers over the past few years.

A combination of above average rain, in some cases in very concentrated areas of the state this month, along with a mid-April cold snap, has damaged some ready to harvest crops and delayed the planting of others this year.

Jarrold Hardke with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, says rice planters in Arkansas for the past couple of years have dealt with delayed and reduced planting due to overly rainy conditions.

He says the later rice is planted in the state, the later it will be to harvest it, which could lead to more issues in the future.

NEWS08**:11****“...advantage of them”**

According to Hardke, the more delays happen, the harder it will be to return to an earlier planting season which typically produces a higher yield.

As Arkansas is the largest producer of rice in the country, Hardke says these delays could make export and domestic demands a little tougher to meet.

NEWS09**:17****“...supply chains”**

Hardke says last year's rice yield still places Arkansas in “pretty good shape” even if the state experiences a larger drop this year. However, that also means that next year's planting and yield must be greater in order to recover.

Arkansas' count of coronavirus cases rose Wednesday by 242 - the first daily increase in five days that was larger than the one a week earlier.

After rising the previous two days, the number of people hospitalized in the state with covid-19 fell by 11, to 190.

The state's death toll from the virus, as tracked by the Department of Health, rose by one, to 5,835.

Wednesday's increase in cases was larger by 59 than the one the previous Wednesday.

It was the largest one-day rise since May 25.

After reaching a low for the year on Tuesday, the average daily increase in cases over a rolling seven-day period rose Wednesday by about eight, to 142.

The state's cumulative count of cases rose to 341,692.

The number that were active, which also reached a low for the year on Tuesday, rose by 62, to 1,658, as new cases outpaced recoveries.

Some Texas Lawmakers Disown Part Of Their Plan To Change Voting Rules

**June 2, 2021 5:09 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)**

[Steve Inskip](#)

[Ashley Lopez](#)

A walkout by Texas Democrats over the weekend prevented a final vote on a bill that would have cut back polling hours and reduce access to mail-in voting. Where do things stand now?

TEXARKANA — Leadership Texarkana is accepting applications through June 23 for its 2021-22 class.

The application process is competitive, with about 30 applicants chosen each year.

"The program is not specific to newcomers. We always have participants who have lived here their entire lives," Executive Director Ruth Ellen Whitt said

Leadership Texarkana started in 1979 and has more than 900 graduates who are actively leading.

Whitt said benefits of the program include: connecting, engaging and equipping participants from all public, private and nonprofit sectors;

year-long training in perspectives of economic development, industry, health care, education, politics and quality of life initiatives, and the leadership capacities needed to have a positive effect; and

Those chosen for the class are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions, as well as to provide meaningful leadership and influence in the community upon graduation.

The class costs \$850 for individuals from businesses or organizations with annual operating budgets more than \$250,000 or \$650 for individuals from businesses with operating budgets less than \$250,000. Partial scholarship funding is available.

A Leadership Texarkana recruitment after hours social will be held from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 10, at Twisted Fork Restaurant, at Moores Lane and Summerhill Road. Prospective participants can visit with LT graduates and learn more about the class experience.

The program kicks off Sept. 16-17 with an overnight retreat (pending COVID guidelines), followed by monthly day-long sessions on second Tuesdays from October through April.

Applications are available at LeadershipTexarkana.com, by calling 903-792-0011 or emailing info@leadershiptexarkana.com.

TEXARKANA, Ark. — A woman wanted on a capital murder charge has been arrested in Texarkana, Arkansas.

At 11 a.m. Tuesday, the Texarkana Arkansas Police Department arrested Mahogany Palmer, 22, in the parking lot of the Baymont Inn at 5100 N. State Line Ave.

Palmer was wanted for a capital murder charge in connection with the death of Earnest Jackson, 40, and a felony theft of property charge over \$25,000. She was taken to the Miller County Jail. Bail has not been set yet.

On May 25, TAPD received a 911 call from the Fox Creek Apartments at 4303 County Ave. The apartment manager told the dispatcher that a resident male in his 40s had not been seen or heard from in about a week. The manager asked police to respond to do a welfare check on the male.

Once the officers arrived at the apartment complex, they found Jackson deceased inside the apartment.

Bigo TW

MEH

6/01 (Tues PM/Wed AM)

An Arkansas man, facing federal charges for his role in the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, is raising money for his legal defense. KUAR's Michael Hibblen has reaction:

News15

5:13

SOC

Richard Barnett, also known as "Bigo," became one of the most public faces of the breach at the Capitol when he was photographed in the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with his feet propped up on a desk. Now for a donation of \$100 or more, people can receive a signed copy of that photo.

Joining me to share his thoughts is law professor Robert Steinbuch with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law.

What's your take on Barnett now with a website taking this approach to raising money?

Barnett's attorney Joseph McBride told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette this is to "ensure a robust defense," saying they "will not allow the federal government to bully" Barnett because it has an unlimited budget. What do you think of the tone

A grand jury indicted Barnett on seven charges in connection with the insurrection. He has pleaded not guilty.

Barnett was jailed for several months from January 8 until April 27th. U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper had hesitation about releasing him from custody, especially after filing from federal prosecutors... he was contrite in those months while in custody, now with this bravado, do you think this will make an impression on the judge?

The website also says beyond legal assistance, he needs financial help paying family expenses and bills... saying because of the arrested he lost his job as a "top salesman at a company where he worked for over 15 years. Any ethical issues here

People's Veto 1

DJB/MEH

6/1/2021(TuesPM/WedAM)

Activists are hoping to overturn several laws passed by the Arkansas General Assembly. The group Arkansans for a Unified Natural State today (Tues) announced plans to collect signatures to put a referendum on the ballot next year to overturn laws restricting voting rights and access to medical care for transgender people. Jasmine Banks is co-founder of Reconcile Arkansas and is organizing the petition campaign. She says it's in response to a number of her fellow parents of transgender kids who've left the state because of the anti-trans legislation.

News01

0:18

"...we belong here."

The referenda will attempt to overturn House Bill 1570, which bans gender-affirming medical care for trans minors, as well as the state's newly-enacted "Stand Your Ground" law. Banks says the groups are also attempting to overturn restrictions on absentee and early voting. She says 135-thousand signatures are needed for each referendum to be placed on the ballot.

People's Veto 2

DJB/MEH

6/1/2021(TuesPM/WedAM)

Arkansas activists are attempting to overturn a number of laws passed during this year's legislative session. The groups Reconcile Arkansas and Arkansans for a Unified Natural State announced today (Tues) they plan to collect signatures to place a referendum against the laws on the 2022 ballot. Reconcile Arkansas co-founder Jasmine Banks says the groups have already collected several hundred signatures.

News02

0:25

"...people of Arkansas."

Banks says the groups are attempting to repeal the newly-enacted law banning transgender minors from receiving gender-affirming medical care, the state's new "Stand Your Ground" law, and laws restricting access to absentee and early voting. The groups must collect 135-thousand signatures to place the referenda on the ballot.

LITTLE ROCK — Three Texarkanians are among appointees to various state boards announced recently by Gov. Asa Hutchinson's office.

Remica Gray will serve on the Advisory Council of the Arkansas Arts Council, Anderson Neal will serve on the Board of Examiners in Counseling, and Zachary White will serve on the Criminal Justice Institute Advisory Board.

Gray's reappointment will expire June 30, 2024. The Arkansas Arts Council provides technical and financial assistance to Arkansas arts organizations and other providers of cultural and educational programs.

It grants about \$1.5 million per year to nonprofits, schools, agencies and artists that support, grow and evolve the arts in Arkansas.

Neal replaces Vickie Keeton, and his term will expire Dec. 31, 2022.

The Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling regulates the title and practice of counselors and marriage and family therapists in the state.

White, a sergeant with the Texarkana Arkansas Police Department, was reappointed, and his term will expire Jan. 14, 2025. The Criminal Justice Institute is a part of the University of Arkansas system that provides training and education for certified law enforcement professionals.

The Texarkana, TX Farmers' Market was awarded a grant of \$2,000 by the Texas Department of Agriculture for marketing assistance. This grant was only available to Farmers' Markets that received GO TEXAN certification through the Texas Department of Agriculture. The grant award is to promote the Best Salsa in the Ark-La-Tex Competition that will be held on August 7th, 2021 at the Farmers' Market location on the corner of 3rd Street and Texas Blvd.

City Planner, Keith Beason said, "This is a great momentum booster following the cancellation of the Salsa Competition last year. We look forward to making a big comeback for the 2021 Best Salsa in the Ark-La-Tex Competition." The grant will help with advertising, signage, printing, and paying a guest chef for a cooking demonstration at the event.

Registration for salsa competitors will open soon. Updates will be shared on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TexarkanaFarmersMarket> and on the Farmers' Market website, <https://www.texarkanafarmersmarket.com/>. All salsa entries must be tested by the City of Texarkana, TX Inspections Department before salsa can be distributed.

The Texarkana Farmers' Market is funded in part by a USDA grant and local sponsors. For more information please contact, Keith Beason, Planner II and at 903-798-3901 or email keith.beason@txkusa.org.

[National](#)

Texas Governor Vows Action After Democrats Walk Out Over Voting Bill

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• • • June 1, 2021 5:03 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

Texas Republican State Rep. Travis Clardy talks to NPR's Steve Inskeep about where things stand with the state's restrictive voting bill after a Democratic walkout quashed the measure.

Streetcars – 1

DM/DJB

6/1

TueAM

Streetcar operations are set to resume in North Little Rock today (Tuesday). Rock Region Metro, central Arkansas's public transit organization, stopped streetcar service when the pandemic began last year. Spokesperson Becca Green says riders will not have to pay for the service.

NEWS22 0:16 "...for the streetcar."

Some streetcar routes in Little Rock are expected to be operational by July. Federal mandates require riders of public transit across the country to wear masks. The Biden Administration's mask requirement isn't set to end until September.

Streetcars – 2

DM/DJB

6/1

TueAM

North Little Rock streetcar routes will resume operations today (Tuesday). Becca Green, spokeswoman for Rock Region Metro, says changes have been made to the transit service in time for an expected rise in ridership over the summer.

NEWS23 0:22 "...every 20 minutes."

Green says streetcars are expected to be running again on some Little Rock routes by July. Buses run by the public transit agency have continued to run throughout the pandemic, but streetcars have been idle for over a year. Federal mandates still require the use of masks on all forms of public transportation.

1 in 4 hospital workers who have direct contact with patients had not received a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of May, according to a WebMD and Medscape Medical News analysis of data collected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from 2,500 hospitals across the U.S.

Among the nation's 50 largest hospitals, the percentage of unvaccinated health care workers appears to be even larger, about 1 in 3. Vaccination rates range from a high of 99% at Houston Methodist Hospital, which was the first in the nation to mandate the shots for its workers, to a low between 30% and 40% at some hospitals in Florida.

Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center in Houston has 1,180 beds and sits less than half a mile from Houston Methodist Hospital. But in terms of worker vaccinations, it is further away.

Memorial Hermann reported to HHS that about 32% of its 28,000 workers haven't been vaccinated. The hospital's PR office contests that figure, putting it closer to 25% unvaccinated across their health system. The hospital said it is boosting participation by offering a \$300 "shot of hope" bonus to workers who start their vaccination series by the end of June.

To boost vaccination rates, more hospitals are starting to require the shots, after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [gave its green light](#) to mandates in May.

"We have to protect our health workforce, and we have to protect our patients. Hospitals should be the safest places in the country, and the only way to make them safe is to have a fully vaccinated workforce," Lawrence Gostin, JD, director of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. says.

Blood Shortage 1

MEH

6/30 (Wed PM/Thurs AM)

The Arkansas Blood Institute is making an urgent plea for blood donations heading into the Independence Day weekend. Executive Director Mario Sedlock says a number of factors have come together leading to a critical shortage.

News15 0:25 “...to keep up.”

Sedlock says hospital usage of blood last week was 20 percent higher than in previous years. People can give during a blood drive next Tuesday at Central High School in Little Rock or schedule donations online at Arkansas Blood Institute locations around the state.

Blood Shortage 2

MEH

6/30 (Wed PM/Thurs AM)

The amount of blood available for hospitals remains at a critically low level, according to the nonprofit Arkansas Blood Institute. Executive Director Mario Sedlock says since the pandemic, the number of people making blood donations has not returned to previous levels. That mixed with the typical needs around Independence Day has authorities concerned. After making a national plea last week, Sedlock says some people have given, but more is needed.

News16 0:24 “...4th of July.”

He says the situation was worsened last week by hospitals using 20 percent more blood than is typically needed. People can go to the Arkansas Blood Institute’s website to learn about where blood drives will be held or schedule appointments to give at locations around the state.