

For The Record...

“There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America.” –William J. Clinton

Sheriff’s Dept. Intake Report...

Mississippi County Sheriff’s Department intake report for June 20-26:

Robert Gifford, 82, of Osceola, terroristic threatening second degree;

Demetrios L. Hicks, 26, of Osceola, serve weekends;

Eric Douglas Hollands, 28, of Wilson, aggravated assault;

Ricky Lee Meadows, 53, of Osceola, possession of a controlled substance;

Robert Wayne Spencer III, 30, of Wilson, failure to appear, parole hold and hindering apprehension or prosecution;

Torrance Nelmar Stewart, 20, of Osceola, commitment;

Kimberly Denise Weaver, 50, of Dyess, financial identity fraud (eight counts);

Kordarius White, 21, of Osceola, failure to appear (two counts).

Sheriff Cook warns citizens to lock their vehicle doors

There have been a rash of vehicle break-ins in Mississippi County, according to the Mississippi County Sheriff’s Department.

The sheriff’s department would like to remind the public to not be an easy target. Do not leave valuables in plain sight and always lock vehicle doors.

New trooper assigned to county

Grant Pruitt, 21, is one of the 21 Arkansas State Police recruits who received their trooper commissions recently during a graduation ceremony in the rotunda of the state capitol. The graduates were among an initial field of 227 applicants who were tested and interviewed during 2021. On Jan. 23 this year, 38 recruits assembled at the state police training academy in Little Rock to form Recruit Class 2022-A and began a rigorous 21 week-long training stint.

Pruitt will be assigned to Highway Patrol Division, Troop C, in Mississippi County. He is a graduate of Elkins High School.

The graduates received 1,160 hours of specialized instruction in the academy classrooms and through practical training exercises outside the classroom. The graduates were sworn under oath as Arkansas State Troopers by North Little Rock District Judge Randy Morley.

Over the next month the new troopers will begin reporting to their respective assignments across the state. They will receive an additional five-nine weeks of instruction working alongside a Field Training Officer before being released.

Wanted suspect apprehended

A Manila woman, who had eluded law enforcement officers for more than a month, has been apprehended.

Heather Hitchcock, 34, of Manila, was first arrested on June 9 on an outstanding felony warrant. Handcuffed behind her back and placed in the passenger rear seat of Manila Officer Keith Hill’s patrol vehicle, Hitchcock somehow managed to steal the police car.

Driving away from the scene, she abandoned the patrol vehicle about a mile down the road, approximately 20 yards from her residence.

Officers from Manila Police Department, Mississippi County Sheriff’s Department, Leachville Police Department, Arkansas State Police and Arkansas Game and Fish responded and assisted with the search for Hitchcock. Flir and night vision were utilized, but Hitchcock evaded capture.

At the time the vehicle was stolen, Officer Hill was retrieving a case he had witnessed Hitchcock throwing from her vehicle. Inside the case was a loaded Cobra 380 pistol (five rounds), used methamphetamine pipe, small amounts of marijuana, eight diazepam pills, 15 rounds of 380 ammunition and \$130 in U.S. currency.

On June 23, the Mississippi County Sheriff’s Department, Arkansas Probation and Parole and Osceola Drug Task Force Officers received information that Heather Hitchcock was hiding out at a residence on Mallard Lake Road in Manila.

Upon arrival, family members told officers they had not seen Hitchcock since



Heather Hitchcock

earlier in the day. Sgt. Justin Hooten, Cpl Austin Griffin, and Osceola DTF Officer Colby Newell then approached an old bait shop building on the property where they found the door rigged closed using a bicycle lock cable. When officers pulled on the door, it opened slightly then suddenly slammed shut.

Officers forced the door open and discovered Hitchcock hid under a blanket just inside the door. She was taken into custody without incident.

A probation search was then conducted and approximately two grams of methamphetamine was located in the small room where Hitchcock was staying.

\$48,000 left in fund for Osceola Courthouse

By REVIS BLAYLOCK
NEA Town Courier

Mississippi County Justice Michael White opened the finance meeting on Monday giving an overall review. He said reports show at 42 percent of the year all departments are below or within budget. He commended the department heads for a good job calling the fund balances healthy.

He also informed the committee the county had received the second round, \$3.9 million, from the Revenue Replacement fund. There is \$1.9 million left in the fund for the Blytheville Courthouse project and \$48,000 in the Osceola Courthouse project.

A discussion was held, but no action was taken, on closing out the employee incentive funds established for workers who took the Covid-19 vaccination. Finance Director Kelli Jones said only two people this year had participated. There is about \$21,000 left in the account.

It was decided to take no action at this time.

Justice Molly Jackson and Judge John Alan Nelson gave an update on the Blytheville Courthouse project. There are several items to be completed but it is getting closer.

The first wedding was held there on the outside grounds.

“It was a beautiful day and a beautiful wedding,” Judge Nelson said.

The committee approved the purchase of office equipment for the veterans’ office in the amount of \$3,000. Also approved was \$4,500 to upgrade equipment in the judge’s office for three computers and two monitors and an update for three computers in the judge’s office.

The county received a notice that rent will go from \$300 to \$400 a month for the public defender’s office.

Judge Nelson gave an update on the farmland survey of the 311.6 acres for the leveling project. He said the acreage totals to 138,831 yards. A ballpark figure, if it is in line with the industrial standards, will be about \$1.80 a cubic yard which does not include fuel charges or irrigation.

The committee agreed to allow Judge Nelson to move forward and award the contract at his discretion.

The committee agreed to have Tom Henry, public relations director, look at upgrading the sound equipment used to video meetings. More people are watching the meetings but

have complained that the sound quality is not good.

It has been a year since county officials had discussed signs for bicycle paths.

Judge Nelson said he had talked to ArDOT, explaining the history but was turned down but it was agreed to continue to look for information and right-of-ways.

“If there is even one death prevented, it will be worth it,” Judge Nelson said.

The county juvenile department will receive \$30,000. Five officers qualify for \$5,000 and two for \$2,500. A short discussion was held asking if the county or the individuals will be responsible for taxes and retirement. It was decided to move it to the full court and get more information from the state.

Judge Nelson said the appropriations for the state and federal lobbyists have been beneficial. All three representatives, Sen. John Boozman, Sen. Tom Cotton and Congressman Rick Crawford, have signed a letter of support for the county to be considered for a surplus fire truck for the Blytheville aeroplex. He said on the state level they are looking at help with infrastructure for smaller

Keiser Fire Dept. receives Wildfire Suppression Kits

The Keiser Fire Department was one of many volunteer fire department receiving wildfire suppression kits.

The Rural Fire Protection program, managed by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Forestry Division, received \$279,562.45 as part of the 2021 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant from the United States Forest Service to purchase and distribute 87 Wildfire Suppression Kits to rural volunteer fire departments.

The kits include equipment and gear necessary for the safe suppression of wildfires and have been delivered to the volunteer fire department.

Volunteer fire departments are the primary partner to Forestry crews in wildfire response and suppression but often need the specialized equipment and gear necessary for safe wildfire suppression. Since 2014, 579 volunteer fire departments have received Wildfire Suppression Kits through the Rural Fire Protection program. Kits distributed this year include lightweight wildfire-resistant coveralls and gloves, hand rakes, back-pack water pumps, and leaf blowers.

The application period for next year’s Wildfire Protection Kit program is expected to start in August of 2022. Fire Departments can expect to receive notification in the mail, or can find an application online at agriculture.arkansas.gov/forestry/rural-fire-protection-program/ when the application period opens. Fire Departments may contact Kathryn Mahan-Hooten at Kathryn.Mahan@agriculture.arkansas.gov or (501) 679-3183 with questions regarding the application.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF SALE

Smith Auto Sales and Towing will be conducting a public sale of the following unclaimed vehicles:

- 2008 Nissan Altima (black), VIN:1N4BL21E88N514110
- 2010 Acura RDS (gray), VIN:5J8TB1H29AA00769q
- 1997 Honda Accord (black), VIN:1HGEJ7121VL122370

This sale will be conducted Friday, July 15, 2022 at 12 p.m. at Smith Auto Sales and Towing, located at 1340 West Keiser Avenue, Osceola, AR 72370. Phone number (870) 563-2303.

Notice of Public Virtual Hearing for Rivercrest School District 7-8th Grade Charter School Application



The Rivercrest school district will hold a virtual public hearing on June 30, at 11:00 a.m. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the application for a Conversion Charter School which will be referred to as Rivercrest Jr. High Prep Academy. A direct link will be posted to the district website and social media to provide access to the online hearing. District Website www.Rivercrestcolts.org

INVITATION FOR BID

The Government of Mississippi County, Arkansas is accepting bids to put to grade 311.56 acres of farmland at .05 fall, with levee roads, at a property located approximately 2 miles NW of Luxora, Arkansas. The property is located in Section 6, Township 13N, Range 11E. Cut yards (138,821.58), fill yards (75,304.462), total yards per acre (445.569) and export (44,691). A complete cut sheet may be obtained from the County Judge’s Office upon request.

Bid opening will be Tuesday, July 5, 2022 at 10 a.m. in the County Judge’s Office located at 822 W. Plantation Road, Burdette, AR 72321. 870-763-3212 **BIDS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE’S OFFICE NO LATER THAN 4 P.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2022.** Mississippi County reserves the right to accept or reject any bid.

PUBLIC MEETING INVITATION

The Town of Etowah invites its citizens and other interested persons to a public meeting in City Hall, 4670 West State Highway 136, Etowah, Arkansas, 72428 on Thursday, July 7, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. The purpose of the meeting is to identify potential outdoor park and recreation needs and priorities. Following the identification process, city officials will select those priorities and submit a FUN Park Grant application to the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism’s Outdoor Recreation Grants Program. **Ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and special interest groups are encouraged to attend and participate.**

For those unable to attend the meeting, you may phone 870-531-2340. Written comments may be submitted to P.O. Box 113, Etowah, Arkansas. 72428-0113.



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