

Notice of Public Hearing - AMS Arkansas

Zachary Larison <zlarison@amsschools.org>

Tue 4/11/2023 6:00 AM

To: kwalters@bryantschools.org <kwalters@bryantschools.org>;jermall.wright@lrsd.org <jermall.wright@lrsd.org>;pilewskig@nlrsd.org <pilewskig@nlrsd.org>;cmcnulty@pcssd.org <cmcnulty@pcssd.org>

Cc: Steven Hykes <shykes@amsschools.org>;Erik Greenberg <egreenberg@amsschools.org>

Dear Superintendents Walters, Wright, Pilewski, and McNulty,

I write on behalf of AMS Schools - Arkansas, a replication of the Academies of Math and Science (AMS), a network of charter schools serving 8500 students in low-income communities in Arizona, to inform you of our intent to submit an application for a public, tuition-free, open-enrollment K-8 charter school to serve students in Little Rock, Arkansas. We are hosting a public meeting on May 10, 2023 from 4:00 - 5:00 pm (CDT) at the McMath Library on 2100 John Barrow Rd., Little Rock, AR 72204. We are also hosting the meeting virtually on Zoom (see below).

<https://amsschools.zoom.us/my/littlerock>

Meeting ID: 310 907 1915

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,3109071915# US (Houston)

We look forward to potentially serving students and families in Little Rock. If you have any questions, please contact me directly by phone at 503-707-6652 or by email at zlarison@amsschools.org

Thank you!

Zachary J. Larison

Chief of Staff

Academies of Math & Science | AMS Impact Group

2980 N. Campbell Ave. #130, Tucson, AZ 85719

O: 503-707-6652

www.amsschools.org

Penguins on parade



A pair of visitors admire the penguin exhibit Sunday at the Little Rock Zoo. The zoo offered free admission over the weekend to those affected by the the March 31 tornado. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Colin Murphey)

UCA professor looks forward to April '24 total solar eclipse

COURTNEY EDWARDS
THE SENTINEL RECORD

Hot Springs is in the proximity to experience a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, which Scott Austin, an associate professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Central Arkansas, said could attract visitors from around the country and the world.

Austin visited Hot Springs on Wednesday, speaking to members of the Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club about the impending solar eclipse.

"You guys are familiar with hosting horse races," he said. "This is gonna be, if it's clear on April 8 of next year, it's gonna be kinda like you're hosting the Kentucky Derby. You're gonna have a lot of people."

"I don't know how far out the hotels take reservations. I'm gonna say I'm anticipating if they're taking booking, you're booked up already for that weekend. This is gonna be happening on a Monday, so you're gonna have people rolling in Friday," Austin said. "Especially if the weather forecast looks good."

Compared with the 2017 eclipse, Austin said, the 2024 eclipse from parts of Arkansas will be much more impressive. A total eclipse, in which the moon will block out the sun in the path of totality, which includes Hot Springs, is a rare occurrence, he said.

"The last time Arkansas had a legitimate total solar eclipse was over 100 years ago, 1918," he said. "And from what I've been able to gather it was kinda cloudy that day, so it wasn't totally ideal."

"That's why there are people called eclipse chasers. ...

There are people who do, they see one of these, it's a life-changing experience, they want to see every one they can," Austin said.

Certain criteria are needed for a solar eclipse to take place, he said. Those criteria include the moon being in its new phase and the moon being in the correct place in its orbit.

"The moon's orbit is tilted about 5 degrees relative to our orbit around the sun," Austin said. "Now if that tilt wasn't there, we would have lunar and solar eclipses every month. Every time you had a full moon, you'd have a lunar eclipse. Every time you had a new moon, you'd have a solar eclipse. But because of that tilt, it doesn't always happen every month."

"Most of the time, that shadow either goes above the earth or below the earth, and we don't get any visible eclipses. So that's the other thing," he said. "It has to be in the right phase and the moon needs to be in the same plane as us and the sun."

"Just those two things alone mean that these are relatively rare events. The other thing is if you want a total solar eclipse, you need the moon to be able to totally cover the sun, and it can't always do that. The orbit of the moon isn't a perfect circle," Austin said.

The moon's place in its orbit affects how wide the moon appears in the sky, same as the sun, he said.

"Bottom line is, you might have the moon pass in front of the sun, but if the sun is too big and the moon is too small, it ain't gonna happen, OK?" Austin said. "It'll pass in front of the sun, but you won't get totality. You'll get something

called an annular eclipse."

In 2017, the eclipse covered about 90% of the sun from Arkansas, he said, but the difference between 90% and 100% is much more when discussing solar eclipses.

"People are hooting and hollering because it looks like a black hole in the sky," he said of the line of totality of the 2017 eclipse, which didn't include Arkansas. "Literally, a black hole in the sky. You can see the outer atmosphere of the sun."

"But people went nuts. People didn't go nuts here in 2017 in Arkansas. We were (about) 90%, but there's a big difference between 90 and 100," he said.

The closer to the center of the totality path a person is, the longer they will be able to see the solar eclipse, Austin said, noting that from Hot Springs, the 2024 eclipse will last for about 3 1/2 minutes.

In any other eclipse, it is not safe to look at the sun with no eye protection, but during a total solar eclipse, only while the moon is totally blocking the sun, it is safe to look at the eclipse with no protection, he said.

"If you can see the sun at all, the disc of the sun at all, you don't wanna be looking at it with just your eyes," Austin said.

"You can go online, you can find pictures from optometrists where people have a permanent record on their retina of a partial solar eclipse, where you can see the crescent," he said. "So it's no joke in terms of permanent eye damage."

When looking for protective eyewear, Austin suggested being careful where to shop.

tached to cars and homes, in which volunteers can move the devices to understand how specific structures and building materials impact heat in an area. Real-time data from Little Rock and other participating communities will be presented live at <https://www.heat.gov/>.

NOAA has noticed municipalities' reactions to data. Houston developed a citywide resilience strategy following its participation in the program, and Honolulu officials have cited collection efforts in making decisions about urban tree planting.

Graves mentioned local leaders use captured data while planning infrastructure improvements and renovations, which involve decisions

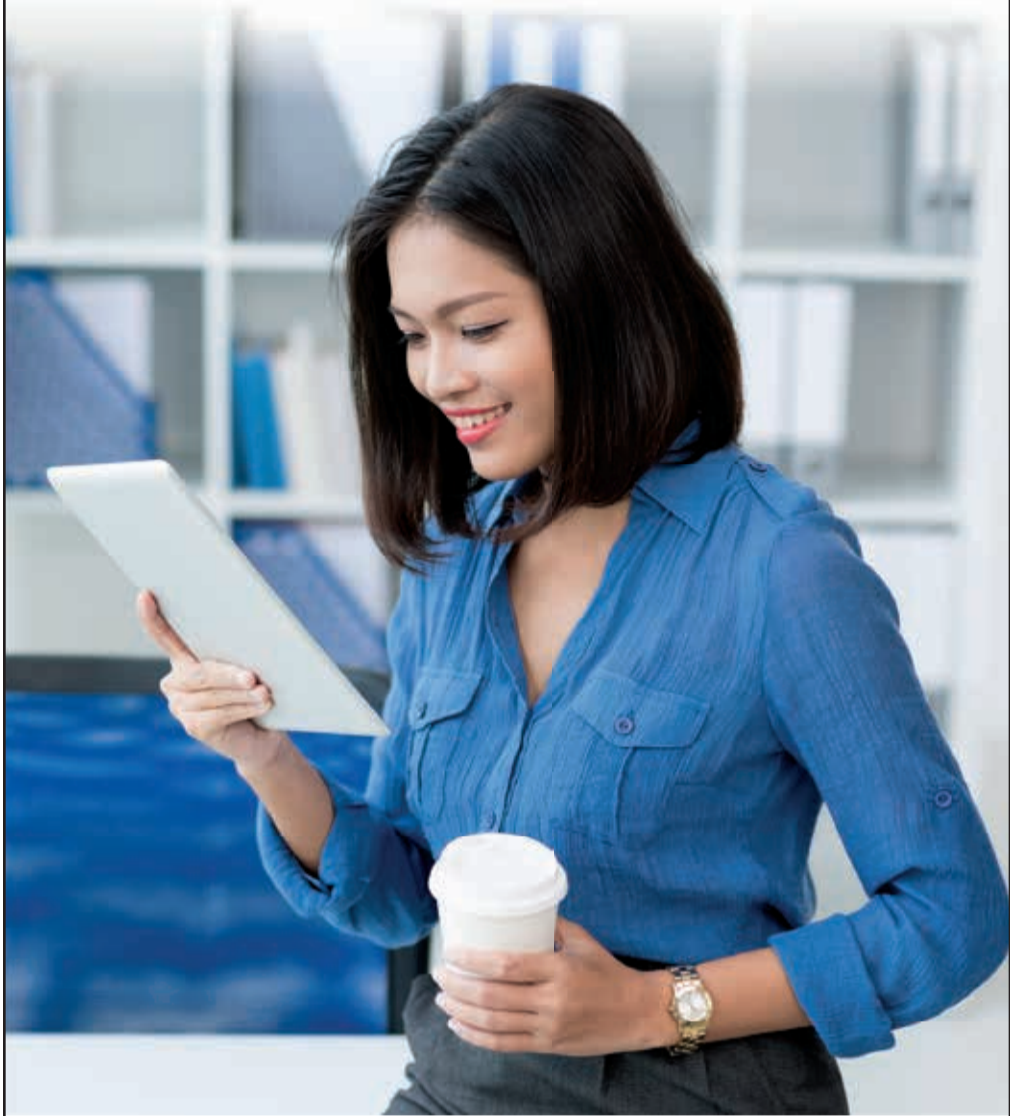
on the materials for projects.

"It's that type of data that's allowing many of these cities to make better decisions about investments, better decisions about where they locate cooling centers, for instance, and understanding of which part of their communities are going to be hit the hardest each time there is a heat wave," he said.

"Those are the types of things that are improving efficiencies, [and] they're reducing costs to residents. They're certainly allowing the cities to maximize efficiency, and at the end of the day, these are going to save lives."

A final report on the data collection efforts will be published toward the end of the year.

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Heat

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urban heat islands stem from the number of heat-related fatalities — [the leading cause of weather fatalities in the country](#) — and climate change's effect on weather.

"As we see climate change worsening the types of extreme weather events and extreme heat, it's going to be absolutely vital for us to have this type of information and provide it to local decision-makers, to residents, and to researchers so we can make better decisions about how to deal with these challenges, how to mitigate these challenges, and how to build a better future that will also save lives," he said.

The Little Rock plan focuses on the city's Sustainability Action Plan and prioritizing urban reforestation. Research in multiple areas, including Little Rock, will additionally concentrate on inequities. Low-income families are often more affected by higher temperatures with greater energy costs and increased health risks.

"A lot of times, people are paying attention to the afternoon heat index values. Another thing to also consider is how far the temperature falls at night or how little it falls in some of these bigger cities or Little Rock," Jones said.

"If you don't have really good relief at night, that can exacerbate the heat stroke and heat exhaustion, and that is something you would normally see over a several-day period."

Data collection efforts can capture temperature and humidity data with sensors at-



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MAY 10

4:00 PM



Amid the devastation



A pedestrian walks Sunday by piles of debris from the March 31 tornado in Murray Park in Little Rock. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Colin Murphey)

Killing

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was shot in the head trying to fight off the attackers, who fled after shooting Martin a second time, wounding her in the hip.

Martin told police the couple was ambushed just as they walked into the apartment.

"We walk up the stairs, didn't hear nothing, didn't see nobody and as I got ready to close the door that's when the short ... one pulled out his gun and shot me in my chest," Martin said. "And Daniel got to fighting with them ... I guess Daniel got to fighting with them once he seen and heard the gunshot."

Her mother was sitting in the living room when the intruders burst in. Martin said her 11-year-old nephew was there but ran into the back and hid under the bed. Martin said she crawled to her mother as the older woman stood up.

"I fell [from being shot] and when I fell, I crawled to my mom," Martin said. "I squeezed my head in between her legs and I just hold her. I can hear her telling the [second] man no, don't shoot her, just don't shoot her."

But the second gunman kept coming, Martin said.

"He's still trying to get to me," she said. "I can see the gun at one point because I look out of her legs, you know, to try to see where he at, and I can see the gun just steady going where I go. He told my mom to move and she was like, no. And I guess that's when he shot me in my hip."

Martin's mother told police that the attackers came through the door so closely behind her daughter and Hill that she thought the men, whom she didn't know, were accompanying the couple.

"I saw another guy with them but I thought he was with them because he was right behind them," Betty Jean Martin told police. "Then all of a sudden another guy comes rushing in as a fight occurred ... Then all of a sudden, I heard gunshots and a lot of fighting, then one came after my daughter trying to shoot her."

Betty Martin told police she begged the men not to shoot her daughter, saying she didn't realize the younger woman had been wounded until after the attackers left.

"I was just begging them, please don't," she said. "I was telling them, please don't shoot her, don't do this!"

Betty Martin said she saw one of the intruders put a gun to Hill's head and shoot just before they left. Martin, a mother of four, died of natural causes four days after the attack.

Hill was called a hero. Martin's nephew Padrick Martin told police that the first shot missed, stating he fell to the ground as Hill rushed to confront the men, grabbing one of the intruders in a choke hold. Martin said he was able to escape then and call for help.

"He was protecting us," the 11-year-old told police. "He was trying to protect us."

Edwina Martin told police that Hill didn't have to be with her that day. She

said Hill was talking about how much he was looking forward to them moving in together. He was also looking for work and optimistic about an upcoming employment opportunity.

Martin had picked him up at her sister's house, only to find Hill was running late while she needed to go meet Brown, so she offered to come back for him later. "He was like, 'well no, I would just rather go with you so we can spend some time together,'" Martin told detectives. "We got to the stop sign and he was like give me a hug and a kiss and I did."

On the ride to the apartment, she and Hill talked about plans for her daughter's birthday, only a couple of days away. In the parking lot of the complex, just before taking the stairs to her mother's apartment and seconds before the fatal ambush, Hill asked her if she loved him, Martin told police.

"I was like, yeah, baby I love you," Martin said.

Hill's family and Martin's relatives told police they believed Brown was responsible for the shootings. Martin told investigators she and Hill were at the apartments to meet Brown, who was supposed to be dropping off their daughter so Martin could braid the girl's hair. She told police Brown was insistent on meeting at the apartment, describing how he had called to make sure she would be there and at what time.

Martin had broken things off with Brown about three months earlier after several years together. Friends of both said the split was contentious, although both were also dating new people. Martin's family told police that her relationship with Brown was rough, describing him as controlling and physically abusive.

Brown never showed up at the apartments that day. He told detectives he was eating pizza with his kids when police called to tell him that Martin had been shot. Brown said he had insisted on them meeting at Martin's mother's apartment because he didn't want her to know he was at another woman's home when they were making arrangements for her to get their daughter.

Brown said he got along fine with Hill after one incident months earlier when Hill had flashed a gun at him in traffic over something Martin had told him about Brown. He told police he had nothing to do with what had happened to them. Two weeks later, he and Martin married.

Four days after their union, police went back to Brown with an arrest warrant, charging him with capital murder and attempted capital murder, accusing him of hiring two men to kill Martin. In a brief post-arrest interview with police before he decided to stop talking, Brown denied any involvement in the shootings, stating he did not know those gunmen.

"Y'all trying to make a fool out of me," Brown said. "What you saying is not making sense. You sitting there laughing at me, looking at me like [a] damn fool. Like I said from the jump, y'all

don't care about my life."

An anonymous tip led police to the gunmen, Quenton Vernard "Boo" Jones and Ivor Shawn "Slick" Gordon, with the pair, like Brown, charged with capital murder and attempted capital murder.

And Gordon claimed to know Brown.

After being identified as the attacker who shot Martin, Gordon told police that Brown had put him up to the attack a month earlier, telling Gordon to "hit both of them," "blow the bitch's head off," and that he didn't care how it was done. Brown's only other instruction was not to hurt the children, Gordon said.

An earlier attempt on Martin's life about a week earlier was unsuccessful, Gordon told police, describing how Brown promised him \$500 and a car Brown owned for a second try at killing her, which resulted in the attack that killed Hill and wounded Martin.

Gordon said he'd been paid \$250 upfront but because Martin survived, Brown substituted an SUV for the car Gordon had been promised along with \$220. A police search of that SUV, a 2002 Chevrolet C1500, turned up bank and pay paperwork belonging to Brown, along with Gordon's watch and a necklace said to belong to Jones.

Jones, identified as Hill's killer, later received a 55-year sentence after pleading guilty to first-degree murder and attempted first-degree murder although he later tried to withdraw his guilty plea while denying he shot Hill.

Gordon declined to further cooperate with prosecutors, taking his case to trial in February 2013. Jurors found him guilty as charged, resulting in an automatic life sentence. Gordon did not testify, and his lawyer acknowledged that Gordon had shot Martin, but called on jurors to reject the capital charges in favor of lesser charges.

By Gordon's trial, all of the charges against Brown had been dropped.

In August 2012, eight months after the shootings, prosecutors announced they could not go forward against Brown, stating in the court that Martin, the "linchpin" in the case against her new husband, had stopped cooperating with authorities and become "increasingly antagonistic" to the efforts to prosecute Brown. Further, prosecutors had recordings of jail phone calls between Martin and Brown that also showed she did not intend to cooperate.

Police didn't find the murder weapon until about three months later when the .40-caliber semi-automatic turned up in the possession of a convicted felon. He told police that he was acquainted with Gordon but he didn't know anybody else involved in the Hill murder case, stating that he'd bought the gun a couple of months earlier for \$100, splitting the cost with his cousin. He said he did not know the name of the seller but it was not Gordon. He was never charged.

When he was arrested in the case, Brown was already known to Little Rock police. He'd accepted a five-year prison sentence in February 2003 for robbery, reduced

from aggravated robbery and manslaughter, for his role in a fatal holdup attempt.

In August 2002, Brown, three months after turning 17, was the lookout for a pair of his teenage friends when they robbed at gunpoint Sigma Imports in the Patterson Square Center at the intersection of Patterson and Hoffman roads, just as the 15-employee wholesaler, now defunct, was closing for the day.

The pair, one masked with a bandana and the other barefaced, demanded money and ordered the workers to lie on the floor. As the employees complied, the business owner saw what was happening, got his own gun, pointed it at the masked man and yelled at him to drop his weapon. As he did that, the barefaced robber, whom the owner had not seen, stepped into view and fired at the manager, who shot back once, hitting the masked gunman.

Both robbers made it out the front door, but the masked one, Charles Edward Patillo, was shot through the back, collapsed and died on the sidewalk. Patillo had turned 17 six weeks earlier.

Brown was the first to be arrested, caught a short time later, riding in a car seen leaving the area.

Charged as an adult, Brown told police he went into the business to scout it out, describing the layout and number of employees to Patillo and 17-year-old Done-ta Lamar West, also known as Don'Ta West, who waited in another car. Brown said they'd been told they could get \$2,000 from a friend, a former Sigma worker, who suggested the company as a target.

One of the Sigma employees had recognized West, the barefaced robber, as a former McClellan High classmate. West pleaded guilty to aggravated robbery in exchange for prosecutors dropping the manslaughter charge and was sentenced to 20 years in prison in March 2003. Required to serve 70% of his sentence, West was approved for parole in February 2017.

Police also knew Martin, court records show. She was under indictment on federal child pornography and extortion charges when she was killed. The charges stemmed from Martin's February 2022 arrest at the Southwest Community Center, 6401 Baseline Road, by Little Rock police who had been flagged down by a teenage boy.

He told officers that he had been selling shoes at school when someone started a rumor the shoes were counterfeit, according to a police report. He said he'd been texted by the mother of one of the kids to whom he had sold shoes, telling him he was going to refund her child's money or she would post a sexually explicit video of the boy on social media. The text included that video. Martin drove up as the officers were talking to the boy and complained about him selling fake shoes to her children who wanted their money back. The phone number she gave police matched the text message, and Martin was arrested and released on \$10,000 bond the next day. Martin was indicted last November.

UALR

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process(es) for named professorships has merit" — to be "sound," according to the decision.

The appeals committee also recommended changes be implemented for the awarding of named professorships before a new dean of UALR's William H. Bowen School of Law is installed. Theresa Beiner announced last fall she will step down from the dean's role effective July 1 and return to a faculty position. The university has narrowed the search for Beiner's successor to a pair of finalists, both of whom visited the law school last month to meet with faculty, staff, and stakeholders.

Colin Crawford, dean and professor of law at Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco, and Christian Johnson, Commonwealth Professor of Law and Business Advising, and director of the Business Advising Program at Widener University Commonwealth Law School, are the finalists.

During a meeting April 10 at the law school, faculty voted to alter rules on named professorships for the future, including emphasizing the last five years of accomplishments of applicants, limiting the size of applications and supporting documents submitted for consideration by applicants to 20 pages, and adding a civility and respect consideration to the existing three qualifications of scholarship, teaching and service.

In addition, named professorships will now generally have five-year terms, instead of four, and while the law school's dean will retain "ultimate discretion" in awarding named professorships, the dean "shall make such a decision after consulting with the Promotion and Tenure Committee and affirmatively seeking input from all members of the faculty, including those who seek appointment," according to the new rules.

Furthermore, the dean "shall notify all faculty that interested and qualified candidates should apply for" named professorships "at a time deemed appropriate by the dean, but normally at least three months before a named professorship becomes available."

"We are aware of the policy changes submitted by the faculty," said Carrie Phillips, UALR's chief communications and marketing officer. "At this time, [they're] being reviewed through the proper university channels."

The university declined comment on Steinbuch's complaint to the state claims commission, as university policy is to not comment publicly on pending litigation, Phillips said.

Law professor Joshua Silverstein motioned to add another consideration — that applicants have not committed acts of discrimi-

nation against other Bowen law school employees — to the criteria for named professorships, but that motion failed April 10, Steinbuch said. Steinbuch said he supported the motion and was disappointed it failed.

Last year, Steinbuch, who joined the Bowen faculty in 2005, filed a complaint with the state claims commission regarding what he argues is improper handling of named professorships by Beiner. The university has made several motions to dismiss his claims since then, and he and Corbitt have filed several amended complaints offering additional information.

Steinbuch feels he should have been awarded the Arkansas Bar Foundation Professorship, which instead went to Lindsey Gustafson.

Steinbuch claims Beiner unilaterally extended the named professorship she holds, the Nadine Baum Distinguished Professor of Law, for a fifth year, which he said not only violates the law school's stated rules, but also is a conflict of interest. He also took issue with Beiner holding the Byron Eisman named professorship open to attract a tax law expert to the faculty, as well as a proposed revision from August 2022 that would focus that named professorship even more on a tax attorney and call it the Byron Eisman Professorship in Taxation.

The revised gift agreement was drafted roughly a month after Steinbuch emailed Beiner with his arguments for him being awarded this particular named professorship, which was vacant.

Steinbuch and Corbitt filed a motion in February to disqualify university counsel from this case, because head university counsel JoAnn Maxey was "part of the re-drafting effort" for the Eisman named professorship last August, Steinbuch said. That re-drafting/revision is "part of the wrongful behavior subject to this very proceeding."

"If anyone is a witness or party to an action, he or she can't be the attorney for anyone but" himself or herself, according to Steinbuch. "The whole entity" of university counsel "should be disqualified" from this case.

Steinbuch is seeking an award of \$10,250 — the annual stipend for holders of a named professorship at Bowen — payment for his attorney fees and "all other just and proper relief."

As part of his filing with the claims commission, Steinbuch notes that prior complaints he has made about the dean's actions have been affirmed on two other occasions. UALR Chancellor Christina Dralle sided with Steinbuch in the instance of putting former President Bill Clinton's name on a named professorship, and a university panel sided with him in a case where Steinbuch was told he couldn't have guest lecturers for his classes when he observes Jewish holidays.

No injuries reported in school bus crash

NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
SPRINGDALE — No injuries were reported when a Springdale school bus carrying children was involved in an accident on Sonora Road early Friday morning.

Deputies responding to the accident were called to 20199 Sonora Road at 7:56 a.m., according to information from the Washington County sheriff's office.

Kelly Cantrell, spokesperson for the sheriff's office, said the bus and one other vehicle were involved. She

said there were children on the bus, but no injuries were reported.

Trent Jones, director of communications for the Springdale School District, confirmed the information from the sheriff's office.

He said a vehicle struck the school bus on Sonora Road, which runs in front of Sonora Elementary School, before the students were dropped off.

"Once the police released the scene, the kids were delivered to school," Jones said.



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Library

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for the library and our community," said Hadi Dudley, library director. "I am excited to kick off construction by celebrating with everyone who's supported [the library] for many years, and in many ways including our patrons and staff. It will be a special day."

The Bentonville City Council approved an agreement for professional services with MSR Design on Sept. 8, 2020. A needs assessment steering committee kicked off the project Sept. 23, 2020, according to a library timeline.

The needs assessment from Minneapolis-based MSR Design originally proposed 65,055 square feet — including the

current 38,500 square feet — for just under \$15 million. The needs assessment was paid for by a \$112,900 grant from the Walton Family Foundation.

The rising cost of construction material pushed the price tag higher, said Dudley and Kristilyn Vercruyse, architect, senior associate at MSR Design. Alternate plans were produced by MSR Design, Dudley said.

"The library is going to give Bentonville more of all the great offerings of the current library including more meeting and study rooms, expanded teen and youth areas, as well as an expanded Friends bookstore, plus community gathering and staff space," Vercruyse said. "On top of that it will also provide patrons with more spaces for flexible and expanded programming including a centrally located makerspace, digital lab

and youth activity room."

This all will be experienced through an enlarged entry allowing a more immediate connection between library staff and patrons. The expansion will feature large windows allowing library programming to be seen from the street and to connect patrons to the expanded veranda, pedestrian trail and outdoor gathering spaces and gardens, Dudley said.

Bentonville native Karen Robbins said an expansion is needed, calling the idea wonderful. She goes to the library every two weeks to pick up a few books.

The Bentonville Library Foundation is closing in on monetary contributions needed to expand the library. The foundation in May 2021 agreed to raise \$10.5 million for the expansion.

Money committed for expansion totals \$15.3 million. The foundation's fundraising efforts have been successful, securing more than \$10.8 million, which will join the city's bond money of \$4.5 million toward the \$16.75 million project. Combined public and private money comprise 92% of the amount needed to date.

The foundation will seek additional investments and naming gifts to help close the gap, Dudley said.

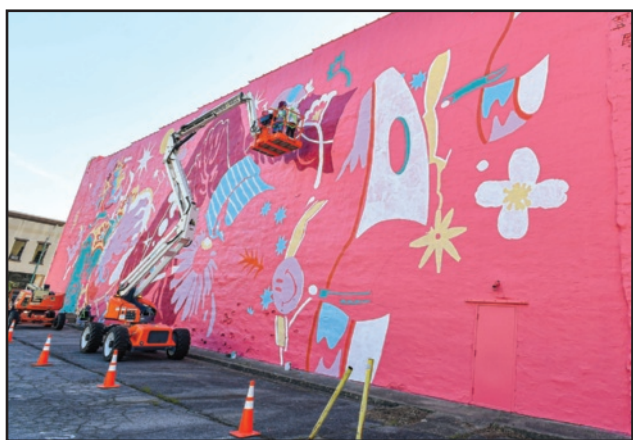
Previous campaign announcements from the library foundation include a \$5.5 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation.

The library opened Oct. 30, 2006, at 405 S. Main St. It was a \$9 million project. The foundation raised \$7 million in donations and the city committed \$2 million, Dudley said.



Children dance during a story time event last Wednesday at the Bentonville Public Library. A groundbreaking event for the library's expansion will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday. A worksite just north of the library is marked off, and the staff parking area is closed. Plans call for a 22,975-square-foot addition to the library. (NWA Democrat-Gazette/Charlie Kaijo)

The Unexpected



Bicicleta Sem Freio, a Brazilian artist, and assistants continue work Sunday on a new mural in downtown Fort Smith as part of the nonprofit 64.6 Downtown's free and accessible art project called The Unexpected. (River Valley Democrat-Gazette/Hank Layton)

Man dies in three-vehicle crash on I-430

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
One motorist was killed early Sunday on Arkansas roads, according to a preliminary fatality report by state police.

Police said Elingtin Muhammad, 22, died just before 1:30 a.m. Sunday in a three-vehicle crash on Interstate 430, near Rodney Parham Road.

Muhammad was traveling south on the interstate when his 2016 Toyota Camry left the roadway, striking the cable barriers within the median, according to police. After striking the barriers, police said, the Camry was facing north on I-430 in the path of oncoming traffic.

The 22-year-old left the

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Camry just before a second vehicle struck his car, pushing it off the roadway and onto the median. Police said a third vehicle then struck and killed Muhammad as it approached the scene. Weather and road conditions were reported as "raining" and "wet."

There were no reported injuries for the drivers and passengers of the two other vehicles.

Jail

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about \$360,000 over budget; the HVAC package, which was about \$246,000 over budget; and the fencing package, which was about \$226,000 over budget.

The county received no bids on an engineered metal building package with a budget of about \$1 million.

Cantrell said the county may not need to rebid the project. He said the county could use the services of several cooperative purchasing programs providing governments access to companies that provide a range of services.

Reaction to the bids exceeding the budgets was mixed among Quorum Court members.

Robert Dennis, justice of the peace for District 10, said he wanted to hear a more detailed presentation on the bids and on proposed changes before they were made.

"If this isn't the project we approved, I want to know more about it," Dennis said.

Suki Highers, justice of the peace for District 11, said the high bids didn't surprise her. Highers said she didn't support the project using American Rescue Plan Act money and wouldn't support anything that added to the cost. Highers also said she would want a report made to the Quorum Court on any

changes.
"Definitely, if we are changing the scale of it, it needs to come back to the Quorum Court," she said.

Willie Leming, justice of the peace for District 13, said the county should proceed with the project, even if the size has to be reduced.

"We need it now so we need to build what we can afford," Leming said.

Beth Coger, justice of the peace for District 9, said the county needs to consider the amount by which the bids exceeded the estimated budget and consider alternatives to building more jail space.

"I'm not surprised," Coger said of the bids exceeding the budget. "We should take a fresh look at the alternatives that have already been identified and that we know are working in other jurisdictions like expanded pre-trial services, mental health courts, expanded drug courts and veterans courts. We can have real pre-trial services for a fraction of that amount of money."

The \$19.8 million covid-related expansion plan originally would have added about 232 beds to the jail in medium-security additions, according to information

presented to justices of the peace. The justices of the peace voted to use part of the more than \$46 million in rescue plan money allocated to the county to pay for the project.

The plan includes adding about 136-beds for women detainees, adding 14,000 to 15,000 square feet. The building now proposed for elimination would have provided 96 beds for men in about 10,000 square feet. The project also calls for expanding the jail's intake area and medical space. Other parts of the

expansion include space for jail administration, enlarging the courtroom at the jail and adding storage space.

The county's estimated cost of the project, including a 10% "covid contingency," was \$19.8 million, according to information from the sheriff's office. That includes \$1 million already spent on design work. The covid contingency portion of the estimated cost would be for addressing any covid-related cost issues, such as supply chain problems or an outbreak of covid in the jail.



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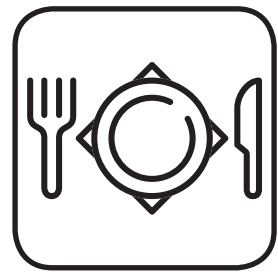





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Brendan Britt (right) teaches students of his street law class at Mount St. Mary Academy in Little Rock. The class was discussing a recent field trip to the Richard Sheppard Arnold Federal Courthouse in Little Rock to observe a plea hearing. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Dale Ellis)

2 people are killed, 3 hurt in crashes on state roadways

ASHLEY SAVAGE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Two people died and three others were injured on Arkansas roads over the weekend, according to preliminary fatality reports by state police.

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Chuck Cosen, 55, died about 12:30 a.m. Sunday in Jefferson County while lying in the left lane of Arkansas 190, police said.

An unidentified driver of a 2013 Lincoln had been traveling in the right lane of the highway and observed a “downed” motorcycle ahead, police said, and the driver switched lanes to avoid the motorcycle.

Police said the vehicle then collided with Cosen, killing the Pine Bluff man. No other injuries were reported. Weather and road conditions were reported as clear and dry.

Late Saturday, Robin Jerkins, 44, died in Madison County in a three-vehicle crash, police said.

Jerkins had “veered left of center” and struck the driver’s side of a second vehicle’s

trailer while traveling on Arkansas 12, police said.

The collision disabled her steering, police said, causing her to veer into the direct path of a third vehicle.

Police said the third vehicle then failed to swerve out of her path, and the vehicles collided.

The impact caused Jerkins to rotate counterclockwise on the highway, coming to rest facing west in the east-bound lane, police said.

The second vehicle was said to have gained control before coming to rest on the right shoulder, while the third vehicle came to rest facing south across both lanes of traffic.

Jason Robertson, 57, Brit Sumter, 41, and a 7-year-old were injured. Weather and road conditions were described as dry.

Court

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many drug cases, explained that although Arkansas law permits use of marijuana for medical purposes with a prescription, federal law still classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug, defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

“Even if you have a medical marijuana card,” she said, “that’s still an illegal drug in the federal system.”

Rudofsky said those interested in a legal career should concentrate early on getting into the best school possible and achieving the best grades possible as basic preparation. Beyond that, he said, intern- ing or seeking out a mentor are ways to begin forming a network of legal contacts.

“Lots of people were incredibly helpful in my career,” he said. “That’s true of a lot of us. We have a desire to kind of pay it forward.”

“Take as many writing classes as you can,” Gray said. “When I went to law school I thought I knew how to write. When I went to law school and got that first D, I discovered that legal writing is a lot different.”

As a practical matter, Gray said, the choice of associates early on often impacts life years down the road, regardless of career aspirations.

“A lot of us like, what we call, the bad boys, OK?” she said. “They’re fun. I understand why we like the bad boys.”

As the 18 junior and senior girls laughed somewhat self-consciously, Gray continued.

“With bad boys come consequences,” she said. “It can be an issue when applying for college or grad school when the question comes up, have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime?”

“Nerds are awesome,” Rudofsky cut in with a broad

“We have to get along to do our jobs well and to arrive at the best resolution. It benefits you to be a people person so that you get along with your adversaries and come up with a solution that’s right for everyone. At the end of the day we’re trying to make sure justice is carried out.”

— Assistant U.S. Attorney Lauren Eldridge

smile. “My 17-year-old self would like to tell you, nerds are fantastic.”

Gray said many of her women clients started off “on the straight and narrow but then Johnny, James or Bobby came along and things kind of went the wrong direction.”

The opposite also holds true, she said.

“I have many clients, men who tell me, ‘I was doing great until I met Sheila,’” she said, “so it’s really important to make right choices now.”

Eldridge said the nature of criminal law requires the naturally adversarial relationship between prosecutors and defense attorneys be conducted in a civil manner.

“We have to get along to do our jobs well and to arrive at the best resolution,” Eldridge said. “It benefits you to be a people person so that you get along with your adversaries and come up with a solution that’s right for everyone. At the end of the day we’re trying to make sure justice is carried out.”

Two days later, discussing the experience in class, the students said there were some surprises.

Yaretzi Carranza, an 18-year-old senior, said her perception of court proceedings turned out to be far different from the reality and she was most surprised by the civility.

“We watch a lot of Judge Judy and things like traffic court on TV and people are very dramatic and screaming at each other,” she said. “I was really surprised by how calm it was and how nice everyone was.”

Ella Tucker, a 16-year-old

junior, on the other hand, said the experience was much like she expected.

“I don’t know if it’s because I’ve sat in the Senate and watched them pass bills but it really was like I expected it to be,” Tucker said.

Miriam Harper, an 18-year-old senior, said the experience gave her a new perspective.

“I was surprised by how young everyone was,” she said. “These were like people you would see everyday on the street ... and it really humanized these people who are making such impactful decisions.”

Britt said he began teaching the Street Law class 15 years ago as a way of giving students a practical, real-world look at the legal system as they prepare to step out into the world.

“It’s kind of an intro to criminal justice more than the facts of law,” he said. “We get into a basic understanding of the court system, the steps in a trial, what happens from arrest to incarceration and all the steps in between.”

Britt said in addition to field trips, the class also has guest speakers, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, and others to provide information about how different facets of the legal system work together.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristin Bryant, he said, is a regular visitor to the class, often bringing an FBI agent or two to speak to the class.

“Kristin will bring one FBI agent and one FBI analyst and they’re all female,” Britt said. “So they get to see these females in these stereotypical-

ly male-dominated roles. I think it’s helpful for them to be able to see women in these positions where they might expect to see a man. When they see women doing these jobs it’s like, ‘oh, I can do this, it’s not just for men, this is something we can absolutely do.’ I think it’s good for them to see that.”

One valuable takeaway, Britt said, is that pulling back the curtain somewhat doesn’t just demystify the law, but also the people who work in law.

“It humanizes the people and it humanizes the process,” he said. “They get to see that these are everyday people working in these jobs doing this important work.”

Program

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at home, school and in cars.

Eleven Benton County deputies, two employees of the Children’s Advocacy Center of Benton County, a Pea Ridge police officer and two other officers — one from Utah and one from Ohio — participated in the training.

Chris Sparks, Police Athletic League president, said the sheriff’s office trained 15 deputies in 2010 to be radKids instructors.

There is only one full-time instructor left with the sheriff’s office, he said. Sparks, a part-time deputy, is also an instructor.

Sparks said the league has trained more than 1,500 children since 2010.

The program is taught each summer when the league holds its youth academy, he said.

Jenkins said the league reaches dozens of children each year with the academy but wants to be able to reach hundreds each year with more instructors.

The goal is to be able to offer the program to schools, after-school programs, churches and other organizations dealing with children.

she said.

Steve Daley, founder and creator of the nonprofit radKids, was the instructor at the training.

Daley said he started the program in 1999. Daley, who was a police officer in Florida, said he was motivated after responding to a call concerning an injured young girl.

He said he was talking to the girl and she wanted to know where Daley was when her mother’s boyfriend hurt her and it was his job to protect her.

“That was the night my whole career changed, because we need to do more for our children than show up,” he said.

Daley said he was assisting a women’s safety program and implemented the same program to reach children.

He said more than 9,000 instructors have been trained, and they have taught over 450,000 children. Daley said there’s been feedback that radKids aided in 200 escapes from abductions and helped stop thousands of sexual assaults.

“So it’s been a wonderful blessing to do it, and the journey’s been long, but we still have to do so much for our kids by giving them their

personal boundaries, critical thinking skills and we use safety to do it,” Daley said.


Children have had to use physical force only 11 times in the 200 escapes, “so these kids are recognizing, avoiding and resisting before being hurt, which was the goal,” he said.

Jenkins said radKids is about more than self-defense. She said the instructors are learning techniques to teach children about empowering themselves to resist certain situations and avoid dangerous ones.

“The hope is we can get in there, teach these kids everything that they need to know so that they can make informed decisions on how to look at a situation and what is best in that situation,” Jenkins said.

One goal of radKids is to get children to own their voices and be able to speak out if someone is making them uncomfortable, she said, adding that children need to be able to feel comfortable saying “no.”

“The instructors will leave here with a curriculum to teach to go into schools and go into different programs and actually teach these kids and educate these kids on what they can do,” Jenkins said.



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