

THE MORNING NEWS

ROGERS

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TODAY IN WEEKEND
IRELAND COMES TO SILVER DOLLAR CITY

PAGE 1E

FRIDAY
APRIL 18, 2008

50¢

HELPING HANDS



J.S. WEDGEWORTH • THE MORNING NEWS

Volunteers with Wal-Mart Lawn and Garden spread mulch Thursday in the playground at the Boys & Girls Club in Bentonville as part of the United Way Day of Caring. Workers with the team landscaped and leveled the playground outside the club while others cleaned the walls inside.

Volunteers Tackle Local Projects

DAY OF CARING ASSISTS 60 GROUPS IN BENTON, WASHINGTON COUNTIES

By Richard Dean Prudenti
THE MORNING NEWS
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A bucket of degreaser and a rag were all Julie Maskill needed to spruce up the bright orange walls leading to the cafeteria in the Boys & Girls Club of Benton County.

About 40 volunteers from Wal-Mart Stores helped clean the inside of the Boys & Girls Club in Bentonville during the annual Day of Caring on Thursday.

AT A GLANCE

DAY OF CARING PROJECTS

For information on participating in future Day of Caring projects, call the community impact manager, Teresa Smith, at 750-1221, or e-mail tsmith@unitedwaynwa.org.

SOURCE: UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

"This is just some basic cleaning to brighten it up," said Maskill, who works in Wal-Mart's horticulture department.

About 750 people volunteered to help 60 local nonprofit organizations

throughout Benton and Washington counties complete 90 projects. Day of Caring is a volunteer program of the United Way of Northwest Arkansas.

"We are all about getting our hands dirty in order

to get the work done for the benefit of all," said Jill Darling, president of the United Way of Northwest Arkansas.

Beverly Resendiz, who works as a Wal-Mart merchandise assistant, said she wanted to help out at the Boys & Girls Club because "we know what a good job they do taking care for the kids and giving the kids a safe place after school," she said.

"Here I get to give back to them," Resendiz said, noting

SEE CARE PAGE 2A

BELLA VISTA PROPERTY OWNERS

Association To Fund Roadwork

GROUP TO DONATE PROVIDED PLAN ASSURES SAFETY

By Anna Fry
THE MORNING NEWS • AFRY@NWAONLINE.NET

BELLA VISTA — The Property Owners Association will give up to \$200,000 for the construction of a road east of O'Niell Circle but only under certain conditions.

The Board of Directors decided Thursday night they intended to donate the money provided the plan assured residents' safety and considered the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Benton County and Missouri's McDonald County are working to widen Gordon Hollow Road, which is a shortcut to Jane, Mo. Bella Vista Mayor Frank Anderson asked the association to contribute the money to build an alternative route that would alleviate O'Niell Drive's anticipated increase in traffic.

Residents filled the spectator section Thursday — Chairwoman Roberta Dale said she hated to resolve the O'Niell

issue because board meetings have never been so well attended. Several residents spoke in support of and opposition to the association contributing to the project.

Mike Clark said he represented 12 homeowners on O'Niell Circle who oppose the road because it's too close to their property. He said the association couldn't justify giving money to something that benefits a few families.

Most objections seemed to be aimed at the road's location. General Manager Tommy Bailey said the city and Cooper Communities, who is donating the land, must make that decision.

Jack Kellog, who lives nearby but not on O'Niell Circle or O'Niell Drive, spoke in support of the road.

"This alternative gives a true road with no regrets, no safety issues," he said. "It has a tremendous future. It's needed."

SEE ROAD PAGE 2A

GETTING STARTED

IN THE NEWS

Polygamists Find Place In Modern Society



While the raid on the West Texas sect earlier this month has focused attention on polygamists who live in communal fashion and dress like 19th-century pioneers, many polygamists are very much part of the modern world, and live right



next door in cities, suburbs and small towns across the West.
FULL STORY, 1B

Travelers Earn First Win In Diamond Series

NORTH LITTLE ROCK — After a 3-9 start against the Texas League South, the Travelers held on against the Naturals 7-5 in their first meeting before a crowd of 6,627 at Dickey-Stephens Park.
FULL STORY, 1C

Epic Rain Event Brings Cascades To Life

FALLSVILLE — There's no better example of the power wielded by rushing water than gazing up at the Glory Hole waterfall and feeling its cool mist on the face. At this wondrous spot in the Buffalo River country, the clear flow of Dismal Creek has worn a hole as big as a truck tire through a thick shelf of rock.
FULL STORY, OUTDOOR ARKANSAS

District Appeals Fiscal Distress Designation

By Lana F. Flowers
THE MORNING NEWS • LFLOWERS@NWAONLINE.NET

The Gentry School District may have only \$53,000 left from its annual \$12 million budget by the time school ends this year, according to Superintendent Randy Barrett.

Officials at the Arkansas Department of Education predict a more dire scenario: The Gentry district could end the school year \$254,225 in the red.

It's the third time the district had declining balances at the end of the school year.

"We are operating with a very minimal balance," Barrett said.

State officials sent the district a letter Feb. 29 notifying Barrett the district was in fiscal distress. Barrett is appealing the designation and the state board will

WEB WATCH

GENTRY DESIGNATION

View the letters and other documentation regarding the Gentry School District's possible designation of being in fiscal distress:

edboard.arkansas.gov/ItemAttachments.aspx?itemid=778&meetingid=66

hear that appeal Monday in Little Rock.

The designation would mean district officials could not "incur any debt" without permission from state education officials. Debt means employment contracts, such as paying teachers, administrators and food services workers; or payments to vendors and suppliers.

The Gentry district has borrowed money in past years to meet its obligations, according to a Feb. 29 letter from Bobbie Davis, the state Department of Education assistant commissioner of fiscal and administrative services.

State officials listed those past loans as "items of concern," including a \$1 million loan in 2004, a \$1.25 million loan in 2007 and an anticipated \$1 million loan in 2009, Davis' letter states.

Barrett acknowledged the district was spending close to the bone, but it was to build a 12-classroom addition to Gentry High School and build a school for kindergarten through 12th grades.

The new school replaced a campus which state education officials declared needed repairs or improvements, Barrett

wrote in a Monday letter to state education officials.

Barrett said Thursday the district also had to spend the money to keep pace with enrollment growth in 2005 and 2006.

However, after those years, the real estate market began declining, growth slowed and fuel costs increased, Barrett said, factors that affected how much money school officials collected and how much they could spend.

Barrett will report to the Gentry School Board on Monday night about the outcome of Monday's state board meeting and the fiscal distress designation.

The bottom line is that the district will spend less money until a 3-mill increase voters approved in September 2007

SEE GREENLAND PAGE 2A

High School Administrators Assure Students Rogers Prom Will Be Safe

By Lana F. Flowers
THE MORNING NEWS • LFLOWERS@NWAONLINE.NET

ROGERS — Rogers High School students who read the exceedingly fine print on their prom tickets should not worry there will be violence at the prom.

"The very safest place for a 17- or 18-year-old student to be is at the prom Saturday night," said Bill Stringer, Rogers High School principal.

Prom tickets state students "Must have Photo ID" to enter

"The very safest place for a 17- or 18-year-old student to be is at the prom Saturday night."

BILL STRINGER
Rogers High School principal

the prom at the high school. The phrase "or you will be shot" is in small type underneath the line about required identification.

High school administrators are not taking the line as a

threat, but said it was an honest mistake by a frustrated graphics design student blowing off steam while repeatedly making requested changes in ticket design.

"I'm convinced that the

teacher who was supervising it and the student involved made a mistake," Stringer said.

The print cannot be read with the naked eye. Stringer said high school administrators had to enlarge the type to read what it said.

The student typed the line about being shot to blow off steam, but then later forgot about it because the type was so small, Stringer said.

The tickets were printed, someone noticed the very small

type and the student realized she forgot to remove the phrase, Stringer said. The student who designed the tickets later told someone what the phrase said and rumors began to spread, Stringer said.

Prom sponsor Melissa Minton said she had no comment about the situation and referred all questions to Stringer.

The principal declined to identify the supervising teacher and the high school graphics design student, or say what

disciplinary action the two might face.

"The people involved are very sorry it got to this level," Stringer said.

Prom safety and security will be tight, Stringer said, as high school administrators, administrators from other schools, teachers, parents and police officers will be there.

"Every student who pulls into this parking lot on prom night will be greeted by a police officer," Stringer said.



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