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TODAY IN NATION & WORLD

RAIN CONTINUES; CORPS CONSIDERS BLASTING LEVEE

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BUDGET SHORTFALL

Feds OK Medicaid Reform

STATE GETS APPROVAL TO MOVE AHEAD WITH PLANS

By John Lyon
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LITTLE ROCK — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Monday gave Arkansas conditional approval to move forward on reforming its Medicaid system.

Matt DeCamp, a spokesman for Gov. Mike Beebe, said the conditional approval means state officials can put together a formal proposal for a waiver the state would need to enact reforms.

In February Beebe asked HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to let the state know by May 1 whether it could proceed with plans for a "payment reform initiative."

"They're going to work with us on it, because of course you need a lot of the Medicare and Medicaid data that they have to come up with what we think will work," DeCamp said. "So we're going to keep our discussions going with the feds and keep talking with everyone in the medical

community and get all the voices heard and start getting some more detailed ideas and plans."

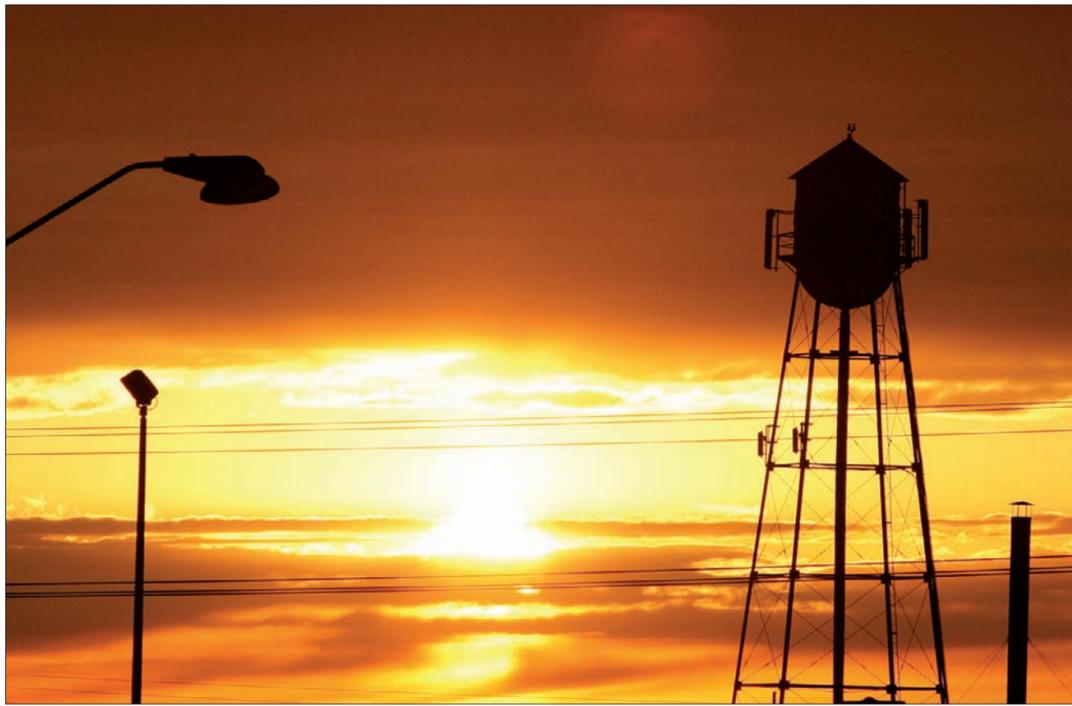
DeCamp said the federal government will still have to sign off on whatever plan the state comes up with, "but based on what they've seen, they're OK with us pursuing that."

"We've had an engaged dialogue underway with the secretary's team," said Arkansas Surgeon General Joe Thompson. "They're interested and excited about the potential development of a new payment strategy. We obviously don't have a plan already worked out, but this is an important step to make sure that there were no legal barriers and that we would have the secretary's support for doing some exploration."

John Selig, director of the state Department of Human Services, called the conditional approval "really good news." He said state officials did not want to start drawing up a proposal until they knew the federal government would

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SUN SIGHTING



KAIA LARSEN • TIMES RECORD

A brilliant orange glow illuminates the sky as the sun peeks out in a break in the clouds Monday evening during a gentle rain. Expect to see more of the sun today with high temperatures in the mid-60s.

Scouts Missing In Forest

LOUISIANA TROOP BELIEVE STRANDED BY RISING WATER IN ARKANSAS

By Nomaan Merchant
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANGLEY — Authorities searched an Arkansas wilderness area Monday for a group of Louisiana Boy Scouts believed to be stranded behind rain-swollen waterways.

No one has heard from the six Scouts and two troop leaders since Thursday, when they arrived at the Albert Pike Recreation Area, a remote area with little cell-phone coverage. State police dispatched a helicopter to help locate the boys, but

RELATED STORIES
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strong winds and low clouds forced the chopper to turn back before it reached the forest. Search crews planned to patrol nearby roadways overnight late Monday and early today, but no one was to go into the woods on foot in the dark.

Last June, flash flooding along the Little Missouri River valley floor killed 20 people in the same recre-

ation area. The Scouts were experienced backpackers for their age — 14 on average and equipped with survival skills — and it was believed they camped along the 26.8-mile Eagle Rock Loop above the flood plain.

Art Hawkins, the executive director of the Scouts' Evangeline Area Council in Lafayette, La., said authorities believe the Scouts were cut off by rising water on the Little Missouri River, whose level tripled over the weekend, or one of its many tributaries.

The Scouts and their two leaders, from Troop 162 in Lafayette, had planned to leave the recreation area between breakfast and lunch on Sunday and arrive in Louisiana that evening. When no one heard from them by late Sunday, Boy Scout officials contacted local authorities, Hawkins said.

One park official, who spoke with the Scouts on Thursday, remembered seeing the boys' vans, and spotted the vehicles outside the Winding Staircase entrance

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9/11 Families Cheer Bin Laden News

By Nomaan Merchant
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK — After hearing of Osama bin Laden's death, Mike Low went into his slain daughter's bedroom to share the news.

The Batesville man sat down in front of a glass case holding the remains of his daughter, Sara, a flight attendant on American Airlines Flight 11 that crashed into the World Trade Center's north tower. He told her Bin Laden had been hunted down.

"This is something we struggle with, and will the rest of our lives," Low said.

Across Arkansas, families torn apart by Sept. 11 responded to news of bin Laden's death with satisfaction, but also grief. Two Arkansans died during the attacks; on Monday, their relatives said the memories of their deaths remained fresh.

"The hurt will always be there," said Debra Lyons Johnson, the cousin of U.S. Navy sailor Nehamon Lyons IV, a Pine Bluff native who died at the Pentagon. "There's not a day that goes by that I don't think of him."

President Barack Obama



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Low, father of 911 World Trade Center victim American Airlines flight attendant Sara Low, describes flags sent to his family that have been flown in honor of his daughter over Afghanistan by members of the U.S. military at a wall displaying memorabilia of his daughter in his Batesville office Monday.

announced bin Laden's death Sunday night, describing an operation carried out earlier in the day. In remarks directed to families who lost relatives, he said, "We have never forgotten your loss."

Deena Burnett Bailey, the wife of one of the victims aboard another hijacked flight that crashed in Pennsylvania, said she had nearly given up hope.

"We as 9/11 families just assumed it was not a priority with our government

any longer," she said.

In the hours after the news broke, Mike Low said he heard from a wide range of people — flight attendants, judges, and a friend standing near Ground Zero in New York.

"For my family and I, it's good, it's desirable, it's right," Low said of bin Laden's death. "It certainly brings an ending to a major quest for all of us."

He added that he was thankful for the families of

slain military members after 9/11. Asked if the news brought him added closure, Low said no.

"I think closure for probably any parent who's lost a child is an elusive thing," he said. "I think it's almost impossible."

"Hopefully, it marks a new beginning," he added.

Johnson said her family continues to celebrate her cousin's birthday, but she struggles to make

SEE FAMILIES PAGE 3A

Greenwood Council OKs 10 Spur Plan

By Ben Boulden
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GREENWOOD — The Greenwood City Council agreed Monday to keep an infrastructure solution to the city's traffic congestion problem on a list of possible future projects.

There was some confusion and discussion among aldermen about how firmly Greenwood was committing itself on a schedule of projects to the widening of Arkansas 10 Spur through the town to relieve traffic congestion.

Planning Director Sonny Bell said the project would serve as a placeholder for

the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department for their planning and budgeting for the next five years.

Meanwhile, the city and the highway department can continue to explore other options, such as a southern bypass to help produce the same relief.

Putting the widening on the schedule of projects does not preclude opting later to build the bypass instead, he said. It does enable the highway department to set aside money for a Greenwood project.

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GETTING STARTED

IN THE NEWS

Military Language Training Draws Praise

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Gunfire on a distant range and the roar of cargo planes overhead are the sounds usually associated with paratroopers in training. Now add to those the halting conversation between American soldiers practicing Dari.

Libyans Want Revenge For NATO Strike

TRIPOLI, Libya — Libyans shouting for revenge buried Moammar Gadhafi's second youngest son to the thundering sound of anti-aircraft fire Monday, as South Africa warned that the NATO bombing that killed him would only bring more violence.



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