

THE BENTON COUNTY

DAILY RECORD



Bush's Move Helps Defense

Rogers Sophomore Changes Positions
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Brochure Shows Local Foods

Publication Becomes Available On Saturday
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Puppets Take The Park

Kids' Fest Opens Door To Creativity
WHAT'S UP!



COUNTY PROPOSAL

Budget Includes Raises

COMMITTEE HEARS RECOMMENDATION FOR 2.2 PERCENT PAY INCREASE

By Tom Sissom
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BENTONVILLE — Raises of about 5 percent for Benton County employees and most elected officials will be part of the proposed 2012 budget to be considered by the Finance Committee beginning Tuesday.

The Personnel Committee heard a report Thursday on the county's pay structure that included recommendations for a 2.2 percent across-the-board increase for employees and additional merit increases ranging from 1.5 percent to 3.3 percent. County officials salaries also

WHAT'S NEXT
BUDGET WORK

Work on Benton County's 2012 budget will continue with a special meeting of the county Finance Committee at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at the County Administration Building at 215. E. Central Ave. in Bentonville.

SOURCE: STAFF REPORT

were considered in the study by the Johanson Group of Fayetteville. Blair Johanson, company president, presented the findings along with

Barb Ludwig, the county's human resources director.

Johanson told the committee the county's salary structure has become skewed in recent years when compared with both other governmental entities and private businesses. He said the county needs to consider the 2.2 percent cost-of-living raises and the merit raises and adjusting the pay grades at the upper levels to bring the pay structure in line with comparable organizations.

Elected officials' pay also should be reviewed, according to Johanson, in part because the county

has grown and is considered a Class 7 county, along with Pulaski and Washington counties. Before the 2010 Census, Pulaski County had been the state's only Class 7 county.

According to the information presented, Benton County's elected officials are now paid at 74 percent or 75 percent of the maximum allowed by state law. The county judge and sheriff are at 75 percent and receive salaries of \$86,278. The county clerk, assessor, collector, and treasurer are at 74 percent

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Directors Hear Members' Concerns

LESS THAN 20 PEOPLE SHOW UP TO PICKET

By Lynn Atkins
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BELLA VISTA — Steve Johnson of the Concerned Citizens of Bella Vista made 30 picket signs for use outside a meeting of the Property Owners Association board Thursday.

Although the group collected more than 2,000 signatures last summer on a petition calling for a special meeting of the association membership, less than 20 members showed up to picket. Most expressed concern about directors appointed to the board by other directors.

Several picketers spoke during the meeting's open forum.

Jim Parsons was elected to the board in May but was removed within weeks because he refused to sign a complete conflict of interest statement. During the forum he asked directors to sign a pledge stating they would support the elimination of a portion of that statement.

"You're going to have to do it," he said, explaining the courts will not force the board to change the conflict of interest statement.

Other members of the citizen group spoke about a proposed bylaw change to make appointments last only until the next election and the planning process for the membership meeting.

Ken Kobylinski said director George DeGroot, who was appointed to finish a term, should not be the chairman of the Rules and Regulations Committee, the committee that would recommend a change in the procedure to fill vacant terms.

"You should not be ruling on this," he told DeGroot.

"Legally every member of this board is equal. No one is superior," association attorney Chastity Clark said. Every member gained his seat legally, she said.

Chairwoman Kelli Russell said

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FAMILY COOK-OFF



STAFF PHOTO J.S. WEDGEWORTH

Jacob Griffin, 15, of Bentonville peels potatoes Thursday during the the Boys & Girls Club Family Cook-Off sponsored by Kimberly-Clark. Four families competed in the one-hour cooking event that encourages families to spend time together.

Retirement Buyout To Save School District Millions

By Amye Buckley
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ROGERS — The ripple effect from the June 30 buyout of 89 district employees is expected to save money in the long run for Rogers School District.

A report released to the School Board on Tuesday indicated officials expect to save at least \$4.1 million over eight years. That estimate comes from limited data. The savings will be much greater, said Kathy Hanlon, district treasurer.

"It's not scientific, but from what I'm looking at with the numbers, I think it's closer to \$7 million," Hanlon said.

Additional savings are possible when a district promotes from within, said Katy Rose, senior vice

BY THE NUMBERS
ROGERS BUYOUT

- 11 administrators
- 51 certified employees
- 27 classified employees

Five Years Of New Teacher Hires

- 124: 2011-12 school year
- 56: 2010-11 school year
- 70: 2009-10 school year
- 100: 2008-09 school year

Five Years Of Enrollment Numbers

- 78: 2007-08 school year
- 14,148: 2011-12 school year
- 13,780: 2010-11 school year
- 13,654: 2009-10 school year
- 13,487: 2008-09 school year
- 13,286: 2007-08 school year

SOURCE: STAFF REPORT

president Educators Preferred Corp., the company that oversaw the buyout plan and study.

"It is hard to put on paper," Rose said of the savings from in-district changes stemming from buyout retirements.

Rogers has a large pool of qualified applicants to choose from for first-year teachers, Rose said, and moving local applicants up the ladder makes financial sense.

"They better understand the culture of the School District,"

Rose said.

Eighty-nine took the buyout option: 51 teachers, 11 administrators and 27 classified staffers. The early retirement program cost the district \$2.8 million, but \$2.6 million was supported by American Reinvestment and Recovery Act money, Hanlon said.

Early retirement plans create savings for the School District. As senior teachers retire or move into administration, their replacements are often at entry level. A starting teacher makes \$42,500 in Rogers, while an administrative position may net an individual \$100,000 or more each year.

"That's a big savings," Hanlon said.

Roger Hill, assistant superintendent for human resources, got his new title as a result of changing

positions within the district.

Open positions were filled before school began, said the former Kirksey Middle School principal.

"The buyout did not hurt instruction at all," Hill said.

The district hired 124 teachers this year; last year there were 56 hires.

"A little bit is growth, and a little bit of that is retirement," Hill said.

Although Oakdale Middle School has a new principal and assistant principal, there has been a strong sense of continuity, said Marianne Zondlak, Oakdale Parent-Teacher Organization president. The school has a good energy, and Zondlak is optimistic about the school year.

"I think there's new things coming," she said, "but it's going to be done right and it's going to be done solidly."



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