



Tower evacuated following wildfire

DON THOMASON
The Sentinel-Record

Hot Springs Mountain Tower was evacuated Thursday afternoon after a wildfire broke out on the mountainside below the nearby pagoda shelter overlook on North Mountain Drive.

Air tankers under contract with the Arkansas Forestry Commission were later called in to drop water on the fire. Both the tower and the shelter are located at the top of Hot Springs Mountain in Hot Springs National Park. Neither structure was affected by the fire.

Crews from the Hot Springs Fire Department and the National Park Service **WILDFIRE, PAGE 4A**



The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

MOUNTAIN DROP: A Western Pilot Service single-engine air tanker drops a load of water on a wildfire burning on Hot Springs Mountain Thursday afternoon below Hot Springs Mountain Tower.

State starts fiscal year with revenues up

ANDREW DEMILLO
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas' fiscal year began with revenues tracking slightly ahead of forecast and above last year's figures, though a dip in sales tax revenue hurt gains in individual and corporate income tax collections, the state's finance office said Thursday.

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration said that the state's revenues in July totaled \$403.9 million. That's \$26.9 million above last year and \$15.3 million above forecast. The state's fiscal year began July 1.

"We think our forecast is pretty much where we thought it would be right now," said Tim Leathers, the department's deputy director.

Individual income taxes for July totaled \$212.1 million, \$18.5 million above last year and \$12.8 million above forecast. Corporate income tax collections totaled \$25.9 million, which was \$700,000 above last year and \$3.3 million above forecast.

Sales tax collections totaled \$177.9 million, which was \$1 million below last year and below forecast by \$7.5 million

Gov. Mike Beebe said he was concerned about the dip **REVENUES, PAGE 3A**

Jail sex investigation headed to prosecutor

JIM NEWSOM
The Sentinel-Record

The Garland County Sheriff's Department has concluded an investigation into an allegation that Deputy Jason Carr had sexual relations with an unidentified female jail inmate.

Sheriff's Capt. Shelby Terry said Thursday that the investigation's findings will be forwarded to Garland County Prosecutor Steve Oliver today or Monday for review.

"I'm typing everything up right now and it's going to be presented to the prosecuting attorney," Terry said.

Terry said he could not discuss the investigation or its findings.

Garland County Sheriff Larry Sanders said Monday that Carr, 40, had been placed on paid administrative leave pending the investigation. He said that while Carr might not be criminally prosecuted, the deputy would be immediately terminated if the investigation reveals he had sex with the female inmate.

Sanders said Carr works within the Garland County Detention Center. The sheriff said the allegation was reported to authorities last week.

Sanders said the department's investigation would involve taking statements "from everybody involved, any possible witnesses, anything like that and go from there."

PROSECUTOR, PAGE 3A



The Sentinel-Record/Richard Rasmussen

ANNEXATION HEARING: Fountain Lake Mayor Jack Fields, left, responds to a question by attorney John Howard during an annexation hearing in Garland County Court on Thursday. Fountain Lake wants to annex 560 acres of property extending from the 7000 block of Park Avenue to the Danville Road area on Highway 5.

Judge takes FL annexation petition under advisement

JIM NEWSOM
The Sentinel-Record

County Judge Rick Davis on Thursday took under advisement a petition by Mayor Jack Fields to annex some 560 acres into the incorporated town of Fountain Lake.

Davis said at the end of a Garland County Court hearing that he would decide whether to allow the annexation after he reviews all information pertaining to bringing the area from the 7000 block of Park Avenue to the Old Danville Road area along Highway 5 into Fountain Lake. He said that could be between 10 and 30 days.

Davis asked Fields to provide additional information **ANNEXATION, PAGE 9A**

Tax-free weekend benefits shoppers, merchants

JENN BALLARD
The Sentinel-Record

For the second year, businesses across the state will sell selected items tax free this weekend, and state Rep. John Vines, D-District 25, said the "holiday" has been very beneficial for the state and Garland County.

This weekend, from 12:01 a.m. Saturday until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, selected items such as back-to-school supplies and clothing can be purchased without paying city, county or state taxes.

During the 2011 session of the Arkansas Legis-

lature, Vines was one of the sponsors of Act 757, which created the tax-free weekend.

"My good friend, Rep. Matt Shepherd, R-District 6, in El Dorado, came up with the idea, and he asked a couple of us to join on as sponsors," Vines said. "We ran it in the 88th General Assembly, which was the last session."

Vines said passing the tax break was important to Garland County and Hot Springs because "we're such a tourist and destination area."

"I thought it was going to be beneficial for our merchants and retailers to try to keep some

of those dollars in the state," he said, adding that many of the surrounding states also provide similar tax-free holidays.

"It seemed like a lot of the dollars were flowing to those communities (surrounding states) that we wanted to keep here," he said.

Vines said the guidelines of other states' holidays were researched before determining what to include in Arkansas' tax holiday.

"Each state was different and unique, but we **TAX-FREE, PAGE 4A**

NPCC president shows personal side of education

JENN BALLARD
The Sentinel-Record

National Park Community College president Sally Carder discussed the importance of education and how it impacted her upbringing during Wednesday's meeting of the Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club at the Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa.

"This is going to be different kind of program," she said told the Rotarians.

"We usually give programs on projects and different things, but this one is going to be on service, and the kind of service people give others to direct them."

Carder showed a video of herself making a speech about her upbringing, and noted that her father was a "functional alcoholic."

"Dad worked for eight months out of the year. He loved **EDUCATION, PAGE 3A**



The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

EDUCATIONAL STRENGTH: National Park Community College president Sally Carder, left, talks with Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club president Christi Hughes Batts after making a presentation to the club on Wednesday.

Almost half of Arkansas in worst drought category

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK — Almost half of Arkansas is mired in an exceptional drought, the worst of four categories assigned by the U.S. Drought Monitor, which released its weekly report Thursday.

Corn growers are harvesting their crop, and finding that, despite irrigation, some ears are smaller than in an ordinary year. That means lower yields for growers.

Soybean plants are entering a growth phase in which they need plenty of water, an increasingly scarce commodity for some farmers.

The U.S. Drought Monitor map shows 44 percent of Arkansas to be in exceptional drought, up from 34 percent a week before. Eighty percent of the state is in extreme or exceptional drought.

Rain fell in parts of the state Thursday, with some **DROUGHT, PAGE 3A**



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MOSTLY SUNNY.
HIGHS NEAR 100.
LOWS IN THE MID
70S.

SUNRISE: 6:24 A.M.
SUNSET: 8:13 P.M.

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Weather

SATURDAY:
HIGH 98° LOW 76°
SUNDAY:
HIGH 96° LOW 76°

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a reader of *The Sentinel-Record*
for 37-plus years