

The Baxter Bulletin

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Peel man accused in child's rape



MCSO
Michael Terry Todd: Accused in rape of 10-year-old.

Search warrant also turns up drugs, firearms and cash at suspect's home

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An investigation by the Marion County Sheriff's Office and Flippin Police Department has resulted in a litany of charges against a 56-year-old Peel man.

According to a news release from

Flippin Police Department spokesperson Dusty Smith, Michael Terry Todd was arrested Tuesday nine felony charges and one misdemeanor offense.

Smith said the arrest stems from a joint investigation by the sheriff's office and Flippin police after a report was received alleging Todd had sexu-

al contact with a 10-year-old child. Information was developed during the investigation by the Flippin Police Department and an arrest warrant was granted for the offense of rape, Smith added. A search warrant was also issued for Todd's residence in Peel as authorities sought additional physical evidence.

Todd was located traveling in a vehicle on Tuesday by Flippin police, who conducted a traffic stop to arrest Todd on the rape charges. Smith said during the course of the stop, officers

from the sheriff's department searched the vehicle Todd was traveling in and located methamphetamine, oxycodone, a firearm and U.S. currency.

Special agents from the Arkansas State Police joined Marion County authorities to execute a search warrant at Todd's residence later Tuesday afternoon and located methamphetamine with a street value of \$85,000. Smith said officers also lo-

See **TODD**, Page 9A

FLIPPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION



JOSH DOOLEY/THE BAXTER BULLETIN

Construction crews work Wednesday on the new Flippin Elementary School. Officials say the school is currently expected to be completed by January.

STATE LAW OVERTURNED

Judge: Ban on robocalls illegal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK — A federal judge said an Arkansas law that bans automated telephone calls to anyone in the state in connection to a political campaign is unconstitutional.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that the judge struck down the 1981 law banning robocalls on Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Leon Holmes said the law violates the First Amendment because it is a content-based restriction on speech.

The judge said that as content-based restriction on speech, the state law must be reviewed under a "strict scrutiny standard," meaning that the state must prove that its restriction on speech advances a "compelling state interest."

Virginia political consultant Victor Gresham challenged the law's validity in May. Gresham said he wants to make automated calls, including telephone surveys, advocacy calls and get-out-the-vote messages, on behalf of his political clients.

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge was named as the sole defendant as the chief law enforcement officer in the state. A spokeswoman for Rutledge declined to comment on the judge's ruling.

Rutledge's office argued that the robocall ban protected recipients from unwanted, intrusive speech in their homes and prevented the tying up of telephone lines involved with emergency calls. The office said those protections were compelling interests.

The judge said that those privacy interests may be substantial, but they are not compelling.

"Banning calls made through an automated telephone system in connection with a political campaign cannot be justified by saying that the ban is needed to (protect) residential privacy and public safety when no limit is placed on other types of political calls that also may intrude on residential privacy or seize telephone lines," Holmes wrote.



FILE

U.S. District Judge Leon Holmes: Arkansas' 1981 ban on robocalls violates the First Amendment.

Progress report

Officials: Safer, more-efficient \$6.5 million facility on schedule

BILLY JEAN-LOUIS | BLouis@BAXTERBULLETIN.COM

FLIPPIN — As cracks grew in the nearly 40- to 80-year-old Flippin Public Schools' buildings, school officials raised concerns for students' safety.

Flippin Superintendent Kelvin Hudson said the district is constantly repairing roofs and keeping water out of the way.

Upgrading these buildings with electric codes and plumbing would be cost-prohibitive — plus, they are not energy efficient. Taxpayers agreed to invest in a new Flippin Elementary School to put aside these worries.

In mid-January of 2017, the district is scheduled to wrap up the elementary construction project — set to house kindergarten through fourth grade — that began in April, costing the district about \$6.5 million.

"Everything is going very smoothly currently," Hudson said. "We didn't run into anything with the dirt work, and actually, we appeared to be a little ahead of schedule, so things are going on really well. It's going up very quickly."

Dale Query, former superintendent for Flippin, said the primary factor for construction funding is local tax money. To acquire local tax money, the voters had to pass a tax.

The district asked them to pass a 2.5 mill increase in their property taxes for funding, which they agreed upon. The election was in 2012, which means the money came in 2013, Query recalled, where later the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) shelter began.

"The federal government paid 75 percent of the

See **FLIPPIN**, Page 9A



JOSH DOOLEY/THE BAXTER BULLETIN

Flippin Superintendent Kelvin Hudson, right, looks over construction of the district's new elementary school with school board member and former elementary school principal Curt Bryant.

The 45,000-square-foot, one-story facility which will boast 24 classrooms, an art room, library, and more, with staggered windows that will capture natural light.

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index

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