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Judges Change Legislative Districts

DECEMBER 02ND 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Judges Change Legislative Districts

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

JEFFERSON CITY — The new set of state legislative maps released this week have left politicians abuzz throughout the ShowMe State, and may paint a new political picture in many parts of Missouri.

The Missouri Appellate Apportionment Commission has filed new state Senate and House of Representatives redistricting plans and maps with the Missouri Secretary of State.

The Supreme Court of Missouri as prescribed by the state constitution appointed the Commission when bipartisan citizen apportionment commissions failed to reach agreement on new district lines in September. The state constitution gave the six appellate court judges 90 days to complete the task.

The new district boundaries could change the complexion in Southeast Missouri, where the 25th Senatorial District's western border is the county line between Stoddard and Butler counties. The 25th district will include Stoddard, Dunklin, Pemiscot, New Madrid, Mississippi, Scott, Bollinger and Wayne counties.

The 33rd District will now include Butler, Ripley, Carter, Oregon, Shannon, Dent, Texas, Howell and Ozark.

Dexter's Republican Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, who currently represents the 25th District, cannot seek re-election due to term limits. Rep. Billy Pat Wright, R-Dexter, and Rep. Terry Swinger, D-Caruthersville, are now two of the district's announced candidates. Both cannot seek re-election to the House due to term limits.

Joining them is Rep. Ellen Brandom, R-Sikeston, who had planned to become a candidate for in the 27th Senatorial District, Brandom's part of Scott County is now in the 25th District, and she has announced that she will run for that seat.

The new 33rd District will include Poplar Bluff and West Plains.

Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff announced earlier this year he would be a candidate for the State Senate in the old 25th district. He is said to be a candidate with Rep. Ward Franz from Howell County, State Rep. Don Wells of Texas County and Jason Smith of Dent County.

The 151st District returns to being a Stoddard County district with an added slice of western Scott County. No candidate from either party has announced their intention to seek the 151st district spot in the Missouri House of Representatives.

Republicans currently hold at 26-8 majority over Democrats in the State Senate. House Republicans hold at 106-57 majority over Democrats.

Six judges sat on the panel responsible for the new House and Senate maps. Serving on the commission were three judges appointed by Democrat governors – Lisa White Hardwich from the Western District, Robert G. Dowd Jr. from the Eastern District and Nancy Steffen Rahmeyer from the Southern District. The other three members were appointed by a Republican governor – Don E. Burrell Jr., from the Southern District, Roy L. Richter from the Eastern District and James E. Welsh from the Western District.

All six judges on the panel signed off on the two legislative district maps.

The districts take effect for primary and general elections next year. Candidate filing for election to the new districts begins February 28, 2012.

Redistricting occurs every ten years following the census. Based on the 2010 Census, Missouri’s resident population increased by 7% to 5,988,927. This increase, combined with regional population shifts, required significant changes in the state’s 34 current Senate districts and 163 current House districts to meet the constitutional requirement that district be as equal in population as practicable.

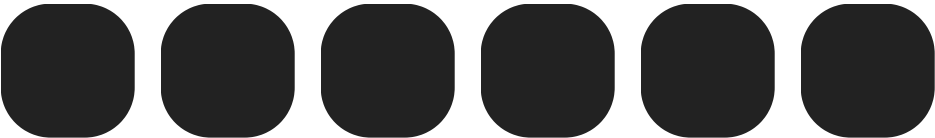
This is only the second time in state history that a judicial panel has redistricted both chambers of the General Assembly.

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College Has 'Golden' Year In Dexter

DECEMBER 01ST 2011 BY UNKNOWN

College Has 'Golden' Year In Dexter

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

It's been a busy year for the folks at Three Rivers College, but it is all a part of a 'Golden Age' for community colleges in the nation.

Dr. Devin Stephenson spoke about a year filled with growth for the community college during a luncheon with his Dexter President's Advisory Committee on Wednesday. The luncheon was attended by more than 30 leaders in business, government and education from the Stoddard County area. The lunch meeting was held in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room adjacent to the college center on Market Street.

Stephenson assumed the leadership position at the Southeast Missouri college in July 2009, and he has been on a fast track since his arrival in the area. And the college has been on a fast track as well, riding the crest of a wave of growth for community colleges nationwide.

The opening of the Dexter center in January of this year is just one of many developments with the college. Where 12 months ago there were no students enrolled at the local center, today they are preparing for Spring 2012 semester that will include more than 200 area students.

Stephenson announced yesterday that the college has even greater plans in store for the Dexter facility – in growth in programs, growth in the number of students enrolled locally, and growth in the facility.

“Over the last six months we have been looking at what we can do here,” Stephenson told those gathered for the luncheon meeting. “We have applied for a \$2.1 million grant to build a conference/convention center that will be attached to this building or close to this building. We feel very confident that we are going to be approved for that.”

Stephenson said the college will have to match that grant with approximately a half million

“It will give Dexter – it will give our college – a place if we wanted to have a banquet or seminars, then we could do that here close. We have the vision,” he said. “We can utilize

it in a really powerful way.”

Stephenson was joined with Dr. Wes Payne, vice president of learning, local coordinators Bill Hampton and Ann Matthews, and other college personnel.

Payne pointed out that the Green Diesel program offered at the Dexter campus is one of only two green diesel training programs in the county.

“I think the ‘calling card’ that was placed here is the Green Diesel program,” Payne said. “It started fairly small, and it’s through the roof right now. It is a program that is unique. Every student that comes out of this program – if they want one – will have a job.”

Payne noted that the college already has business partners asking when students will graduate and be ready to enter the job market, due to the high demand for trained mechanics.

“We also want to look at student’s needs and where they are going,” he said. “My goal is to get as many programs that are viable approved and in place so that students can progress through the Dexter Center and out the other side as graduates.”

Photo Above: Dr. Devin Stephenson, president of Three Rivers College, speaks to a luncheon meeting in Dexter on Wednesday. Behind the college president is Dr. Wes Payne, vice president of learning at the college, and Dexter center coordinator Bill Hampton. (SMT Photo by Annabeth Miller)

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Building Toward The Future

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MSH Angels Brighten The Holiday

NOVEMBER 30TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

MSH Angels Brighten The Holiday

The Christmas season is fast approaching. For most it is a season of giving.

Many elderly in our community are alone and may not get to be in on the receiving end of the season. So each year, Missouri Southern Healthcare puts together an Angel Tree, to bring joy to those nursing home and residential care residents.

"Our Angel Tree has been going on for nearly 15 years," said Sue Swift, Certified Nurse Assistant at Missouri Southern Healthcare. "The way it works is that we contact the nursing homes and residential care centers and ask them for residents who don't have any family around."

Swift said the facilities provided the names along with things the named individuals needed, like clothes in specified sizes; and wanted, like books, candy or for some women, makeup.

"We ask for about 10 per facility," she said.

Swift said such individuals might lack a family because the family members have all moved off, or even all passed away. But whatever the reason, she said, she and co-worker Jeanette Powell compiled the names, identified them by number and put the numbers on a paper cutout angel on a Christmas at the ICU/CCU nurses' station.

"This year we had a total of 86," Swift said. The names come from senior care or living facilities in Malden, Essex, Dexter, Bloomfield and Puxico.

The angels remain on the tree until someone from the hospital or community “adopts” an angel and purchases the desired items listed on the front of the angel. The person who adopts the angel then wraps the items and labels them with the appropriate number of the adopted angel.

"It's totally anonymous," Swift said, "And it's not just the hospital staff that adopts. "We welcome members of the community to come in, also."

If you are interested in “adopting” an angel, you may stop by Missouri Southern Healthcare and do so.

Once all gifts have been received for the Angels, Swift and Powell divide up the gifts and deliver them to the various facilities.

The goal is to have all the gifts delivered before the given facility holds its Christmas party.

"That way they will be able to get something at the party," Swift said.

In addition, she continued, the facility holds a gift or two back for presentation on Christmas Day.

"That way they get to have a Christmas even though they may not have a family to get it for them," Swift said. "And they deserve it. These are the neediest in our community.

"And since they served us, when we were young, it's time for us to serve them."

Families, individuals or groups who would like to adopt an Angel from the tree at Missouri Southern Healthcare may do so by visiting the medical center by Dec. 12. Just ask a Auxiliary member at the front desk about "adopting a Christmas angel."

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Early Snow Blankets Area; Closes Schools

NOVEMBER 29TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Early Snow Blankets Area; Closes Schools

SMT News Report

Did we really think we would wake up to a winter wonderland? Just days after Thanksgiving? But a front moved into Southeast Missouri on Monday and left behind a blanket of snow, sloppy roadways, and a bevy of schools that are closed on Tuesday.

The list of schools includes

- Bernie
- Bloomfield
- Campbell
- Dexter
- Dexter Adult Education & GED
- Dexter Head Start
- Southeast Missouri State University @ Malden, Sikeston & Kennett – Delay 3 hours
- Richland
- Risco
- Stoddard County ARC
- Three Rivers College – Delay 2 hours

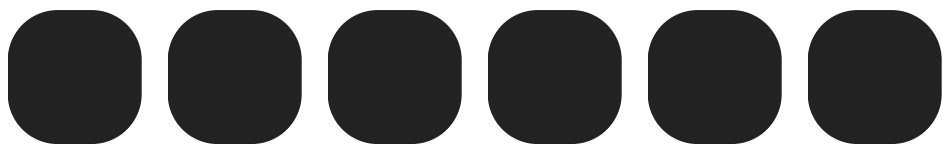
The National Weather Service forecast for Tuesday calls for rain, possibly mixed with more snow before noon, this a slight chance of rain. The high Tuesday will be 41.

Tuesday night should be clear with a low around 26. The forecast for Wednesday calls for sunshine to return with a high near 44.

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Patrol To Conduct Checkpoint, Saturation In Area

NOVEMBER 28TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Patrol To Conduct Checkpoint, Saturation In Area

POPLAR BLUFF - Captain George E. Ridens, commanding officer of Troop E of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, announced that during the month of December 2011, the Patrol will conduct a sobriety checkpoint and a driving while intoxicated saturation in the region.

The sobriety checkpoint will be in Butler County, and the saturation will be in Butler, Cape Girardeau, Scott, Stoddard, Dunklin, Pemiscot, and New Madrid counties. The operation will be conducted by the Missouri State Highway Patrol in cooperation with other local area law enforcement agencies.

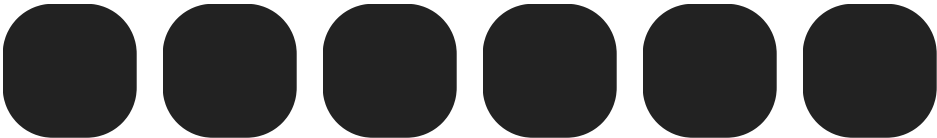
The checkpoint is a static operation on a specific highway that is designed to check every driver to ensure they are sober. The driving while intoxicated saturation is a mobile operation in which troopers saturate a specific area in an effort to arrest intoxicated drivers.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol urges all citizens to report any vehicle they observe operating in a careless manner. The public can contact the Highway Patrol toll-free at 1-800-525-5555 or on their cellular phone at *55.

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