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# Flags Ordered to Half Staff Until Sunset, March 31, 2023

MARCH 29TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Flags Ordered to Half Staff Until Sunset, March 31, 2023

A Proclamation Honoring The Victims Of The Tragedy In Nashville, Tennessee

As a mark of respect for the victims of the senseless acts of violence perpetrated on March 27, 2023, in Nashville, Tennessee, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby order that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset, March 31, 2023. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

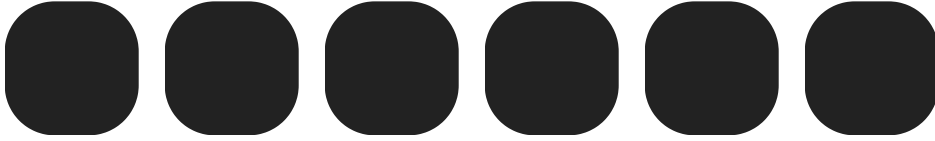
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-seventh.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

President of the United States of America

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## Today is National Vietnam War Veterans Day

MARCH 29TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Today is National Vietnam War Veterans Day

My father was a Vietnam War Veteran. He served in the Army. I never understood as a child what it meant to be a War Veteran or even a Veteran. As an adult I'm very thankful to those that served and serve today.

Many who returned from the war were not respected and it took a very long time for them to be honored. Honor them today by flying the greatest national on earth's flag and if you see a VETERAN today, let them know how much you appreciate them. Thank them for their service and sacrifice. All too often we forget, let's not forget today.

National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29 honors the men and women who served and sacrificed during the longest conflict in United States history.

It was on March 29, 1973, when combat and combat support units withdrew from South Vietnam. Generations later, Veterans of this time period are gaining the respect that was not so freely given upon their return. Involving five U.S. presidents, crossing nearly two decades and 500,000 U.S.military personnel, it left an indelible mark on the American psyche.

Returning Veterans did not always receive respectful welcomes upon their arrive on American soil. There were 58,000 killed, never to return. National Vietnam War Veterans Day recognize the military service of these men and women

who answered the call to service their country when she needed them. They didn't make the decisions to go to war.

On National Vietnam War Veterans Day, we recognize the service and duty rendered by all servicemen and women of this era.

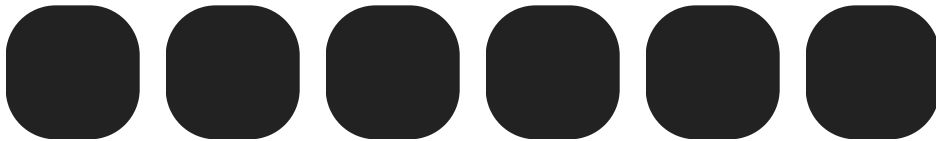
Around the country, commemorative events, speeches and luncheons are being held inviting Vietnam Veterans as honored guests. Thank a Vietnam Veteran. Buy them a drink or lunch. Send them a shout out using #VietnamWarVeteransDay on social media.

U.S. Sens. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., and Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., introduced legislation in 2017 to honor Vietnam Veterans with a day on the anniversary of the withdrawal of military units from South Vietnam.

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## CAIRO BRIDGE CLOSURE - US 60/62

MARCH 23RD 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

[CAIRO BRIDGE CLOSURE - US 60/62](#)

## BRIDGE CLOSURE - US 60/62

Alexander County, Illinois and Mississippi County, Missouri

Cairo, IL - The Illinois Department of Transportation would like to alert motorists traveling in the Cairo area that the US 60/62 bridge over the Mississippi River will be closed to all traffic.

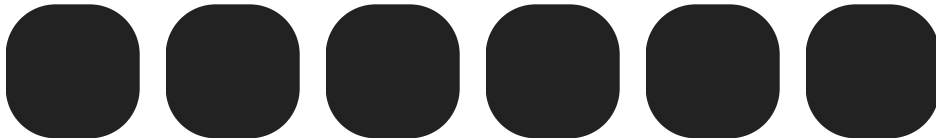
Critical issues were discovered during the Routine Inspection that started March 13, 2023. The bridge will remain closed until a plan can be developed and implemented.

Message board will be in place to direct traffic.

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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, March 20, 2023

MARCH 20TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, March 20, 2023

The Stoddard County Commission meeting opened with a Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Presiding Greg Mathis.

### **Health Insurance Update**

Closed session was held on Friday, Mr. John McCarty from Arch Brokerage, Cecil Weeks and his staff along with the Commissioners discussed the insurance. They will work with the insurance company to reconcile the census each month. No further discussion.

### **Steve Jordan Termination Update**

As of last week, Mr. Cecil Week's has not received any information or letter from Jordan's attorney. "We will leave that alone for the time being," commented Mathis.

### **Letting of Depository Bid (4) Year Term**

Motion to approve Letting of Depository Bid (4) Year Term to be placed in the newspaper and send a letter to all the banks in Stoddard County made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Greg Lintz. All three voted yes.

"We will send a letter to the banks," stated Mathis. "It will also be placed in the newspaper." It must be approved by 10:00 a.m. April 24th with a start date by July 1, 2023 made by

### **VanGuard Computer Systems**

The VanGuard Appraisals, Inc. Computer Systems 5 year contract extension request was presented by Dan Creg, Assessor. The Assessor's office uses this system for everything in their office. The cost is \$93,025.00 for the 5 years. There is also a 5 year Service Contract totaling \$19, 250.00.

Motion to allow Assessor, Dan Creg, to enter into a 5-year contract with VanGuard Appraisals, Inc. for their computer systems made by Commissioner Greg Lintz. Seconded by Jarrell. All three voted yes.

### **Dale Moreland, Castor Township**

Castor Township will be applying for ARPA Funds. County Road 413 needs much repair including asphalt. For a cost of \$100,000 Causey Asphalt said they could do about 3/4 of a mile. Mr. Mathis stated that it would have to bid out via the newspaper and that Mr. Moreland needed to get a letter of request to Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission of what exactly what Castor Township plans to do with the monies requests. Then get approval from the attorney if this is a good project or not.

Motion to accept the meeting minutes from the Regular Session on March 6, 2023. Jarrell made the motion, seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes.

Motion to accept the meeting minutes for the Regular Session on March 13, 2023 made by Lintz. Seconded by Jarrell. All three voted yes.

Motion to accept the meeting minutes for Closed Session on March 17, 2023 made by Jarrell. Seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes.

Plans to have Commissioner Appointed C.D. Stewart potentially sworn in at the next meeting. The Senate has been out on Spring break and do not convene until March 20th in the afternoon. The Committee has approved him, but the Senate has not had the opportunity to vote yet.

Motion to approve the Adds & Abates for February 2023 from the Collector's Office made by Commissioner Jarrell, Seconded by Commissioner Lintz. All three voted yes.

Commissioner Jarrell left the meeting early to represent the County Commissioners at the GoSEMO Fiber event in Sikeston. SEMO Electric Cooperative has been awarded 3 broadband grants to expand services in rural Southeast Missouri (see attached press release). An official award announcement at the cooperative offices with the MO Broadband Office director and staff has been scheduled for Monday, March 20th at 11:30 a.m.

### **Sawyer Smith, Prosecuting Attorney**

Mr. Smith has requested to add a glass window inside the Prosecuting Attorney's office. This will be on the Agenda for next week. Mathis states he may ask other office holders if they would like the same in their office.

Mr. Smith also presented the Commissioners with a potential source for a grant for Child Sex Crimes advocacy and investigation. The grant is capped at \$100,000 and is an ARPA Fund Grant through the State of Missouri. The grant can be used to hire additional employees for support to prosecute Child Sex Cases. The grant opened on March 13, 2023 and is open until May 13, 2023. This would be a part-time position and save the taxpayers in Stoddard County.

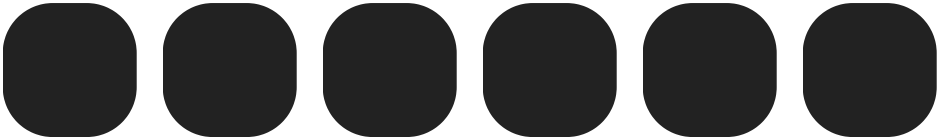
Since Mrs. Jarrell had left the meeting Mr. Mathis wanted her to have an opportunity to look over the document submitted by Smith. Mr. Smith requested a special meeting by the Commissioners this week to approve the grant proposal. Mr. Mathis will consider this once he has additional information as the document given is not all the information, but a Terms and Conditions for Contractor Receipt of Federal ARPA SFRF Funds and not the actual application for the grant.

Motion to adjourn at 12:01 p.m. by Lintz, seconded by Mathis. Both voted yes to adjourn the regular meeting.

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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, March 13, 2023

MARCH 20TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, March 13, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioners opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for our county.

### **City of Dexter Update:**

Dexter City Administrator Dave Wyman asked the commission to enter into an agreement for the \$800,000 ARPA Funds for the new hotel project. He said both the city aldermen and the Commission are required to enter into this agreement for the ARPA Funds for the sewer.

Motion to accept the intergovernmental cooperative agreement for \$800,000 for ARPA funds for the city of Dexter. Commissioners Carol Jarrell made that motion. Seconded by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.. Both voted yes and signed the agreement.

### **Ivan Schrader Update:**

"As you all are aware a warrant (also known as a payment voucher) was given to the Treasurer's office at the end of 2022 in the Sum of \$4730.18 check number 50196 drafted in 2022 budget, for the Treasurer to sign a check and release funds for an Invoice resulting in legal fees Ivan Schrader Law Firm performed," said Speakman. "At the time I was given conflicting opinions of the legality of releasing these funds. (commissioner, county counsel, and retained counsel)."

Josh Speakman stated, "I was given conflicted opinions on dispersing the check to Ivan Schrader. I reached out to the Attorney General. State Statute 49.070 I then reached out to the County's legal team, Mr. Sawyer Smith.

"What fund did this come out of," asked Mathis. Speakman said you would have to look at the voucher.

The Collector's only obligation was to either release the funds or not.

"Ivan Schrader should not have been called in the first place," stated Jarrell. " We had another attorney that we voted for to represented the County. Spending another \$4,730.18 out of the taxpayers money is awful. Cecil Weeks and Danny Talkington should have never called Schrader and gotten involved. We should have hired Travis



Elliot, who is the County's attorney on record,

Speakman said he then signed the check and it has since cleared the bank.

## **Insurance**

I believe there are some issues with COBRA. The County just got COBRA information two weeks ago; however some employees retired or terminated employment as far back as January 1, 2023. County employees who served 20 + years and have not reached the age of 65 can continue to be on the Healthcare Plan," Mathis said. "They do not have to COBRA."

\$783.74 is what Pam Wheeler, County Clerk's office who handles the insurance and Human Resources duties had on record for Retiree's to pay; however one retiree who attended the meeting said she was paying \$776.21.

COBRA folks to send check tot he COBRA administrator. Any monies that people have paid to the Treasury. They need to be paying to the COBRA administrator.

We didn't have a COBRA administrator prior to 1/1/2023 per Cecil Weeks so former employees were paying directly to the Treasurer/Collector's office. Since they now have a COBRA Administrator who is a third party to the insurance company the former employees were to pay them directly for continuation of coverage. They were never told this and have been paying Speakman's office.

"We did not have COBRA until last week," stated Pam Wheeler. "Once we put a spreadsheet we discovered there were two different amounts."

Speakman asked, " What do we do with the revenue that has already been taken in for a retiree or terminated employee?"

Also the number the Clerk's office has for the number of employees is different than what Arch Brokerage/HealthEZ is charging and has not been right for the invoicing for the past three months.

Weeks stated that they have not been reconciling each month with an updated employee census, but they needed to start. He also said that they have refunded the County and prorated employees; however the invoice do not clearly show those changes.

The COBRA premium was set under the plan with Arch Brokerage at \$731.11 for each employees and COBRA is \$776.21.

"Bottom line, I am calling Arch Brokerage and find out what is going on," stated Mathis. "We will have Speakman, Weeks, Wheeler, myself, Jarrell, and Stewart on this conference call!"

"I think we are trying to kill a mouse with a hand grenade. So we will get this taken care of this week," continued Mathis.

"I am showing 59 employees and Wheeler is showing 69 employees with the HealthEZ," commented Speakman. "Pam looked at the census this morning and they still haven't taken some people off."

### **Human Resources**

Mr. Week's office handles the Human Resources duties for the county, all the paperwork, insurance, benefits, liability insurance, etc. He and Wheeler stated that they do not get new hires and termination information timely from the sheriff's department.

Before a new employee starts he/she is come to the Clerk's office and fill out new hire paperwork. Also as soon as that employee is terminated or quits information must be sent over to the Clerk's office timely not two weeks later.

"We will get with the Sheriff's department and get this cleared up," stated Mathis.

### **Outlaw Report for Tax Year: 2017**

Speakman brought in the Outlaw Report for Personal Property Taxes that is from 2017 to write off about \$40,000 which is down by 20% over the past years. This is on people who have passed away or moved out of the area. Motion to accept the Outlaw Report for Tax Year ending in 2017 made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Mathis. Both voted yes.

### **Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission**

The staff had a meeting for the rural broadband for Puxico School District. They reiterated that they are working on the Engineering Report. Once that is completed they will put out for bid.

City of Bloomfield's ARPA funding request is a good request for the \$400,000.

City of Advance has completed their administrative proposals and have applied for the CDGB Grant.

Lambert asked if the Commission could sign a contract to request an additional \$47,796.00 for a CDGB Grant for the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission building project. Motion made by Jarrell. Mathis seconded it. Both voted yes.

### **Hazard Mitigation Plan for Stoddard County Resolution No. 02-2023**

Motion to accept the Hazard Mitigation Plan update made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Mathis. Both voted yes.

The Resolution stated the Stoddard County Commission adopting the Stoddard County 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

Whereas the Stoddard County Commission recognizes the threat that natural hazards pose to people and property within the Stoddard County Commission and no community is immune from hazards whether it be tornado/severe thunderstorm, flood, severe winter weather, drought, heat wave, earthquake, dam failure, or wildfire and recognizes the importance of enhancing the ability to withstand natural hazards as well as the importance of reducing the human suffering, property damage, interruption of public services and economic losses caused by those hazards; and

Whereas the Stoddard County Commission has participated in the preparation of a multi-jurisdictional local hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as the 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, hereafter referred to as the PLAN, in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000; and

Whereas the Stoddard County commission recognizes that land use policies have a major impact on whether people and property are exposed to natural hazards, the Stoddard County Commission will endeavor to integrate the PLAN into the comprehensive planning process; and

Whereas adoption by the Stoddard County commission demonstrates their commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the PLAN.

In accordance with the Stoddard County policies, the Stoddard County Commission adopts the final FEMA-approved plan for Stoddard County for the purpose of building a safer community by reducing natural hazard vulnerability.

### **Advertising Letter of Depository Bid (4) Year Term**

The County Clerk drafts the Depository spec information and Mathis asked for a copy during the meeting.

The Clerk's office will send out a letter to each bank in the County. The Commission will open the bid and talk to the banks and then decide. This is in reference to checking and savings account for the County.

Mrs. Jarrell had to leave at 11 a.m. so it will be voted on next week. The Commission has until late April to make a decision so they have plenty of time to get the information out to the banks.

### **C.D. Stewart, New Stoddard County Commissioner**

The committee did approve his appointment and now it goes to the main floor of the Senate. The Senate will be back in session on March 20, 2023. Once his confirmation is voted on when they return from spring break then he will be sworn in at the Commission Chambers.

### **Update on Generator for Sheriff's Department**

The letter will be made today, certified and they will have 10 days to respond once received.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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