

AROUND SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

Military drilling at two bases

Two military bases on the Coast are having training exercises this week.

A month-long Marine Corps training exercise is taking place in and around Keesler Air Force Base through May 23. Area residents will likely hear more aircraft noise, officials said.

Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport will conduct a force-protection exercise Thursday beginning at 9:30 a.m., officials said. The base's gates will be closed for 30-45 minutes.

A similar exercise was held Tuesday morning.

— Regina Zilbermints

USPS carriers to collect food as they deliver mail

Saturday is the 23rd anniversary of the Letter Carriers' Food Drive to Stamp Out Hunger.

Last year, 73 million pounds of food was collected by postal carriers nationwide, feeding 30 million people. More than 1.3 billion pounds of food has been collected since the drive began in 1993.

Residents are encouraged to leave non-perishable foods such as canned soup, canned vegetables, pasta, rice or cereal next to their mailbox Saturday.

Carriers will collect the donations as they deliver for local food banks or pantries.

— Sun Herald

Grant lets MDOT, cities offer seasonal jobs for youth

JACKSON COUNTY

The Mississippi Department of Transportation announced its partnership with Gautier and Ocean Springs to provide transportation-related jobs for residents ages 16-25.

The cities were awarded \$35,000 from Federal Highway Administration for their Urban Youth Corps Program, which will provide on-the-job training, work experience and basic life skills.

Ocean Springs selected landscaping work for the program.

Gautier selected beautification with participants working in landscaping and litter control along the city's main routes.

For details, contact Ocean Springs' human resources at 872-3338 or Gautier's at 497-8000. The application deadline is 5 p.m. May 15.

— James Skrmetta

Rescheduled rappel off Beau Rivage set for June

BILOXI

Habitat for Humanity's Over The Edge fundraiser has been rescheduled for June 6.

Participants will rappel 278 feet from the 27th floor of the Beau Rivage. Each person going over the edge raised at least \$1,000 for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Habitat for Humanity.

Weather postponed April 18's rappel. Adele Lyons, the organization's director of development, said spots are still available for anyone interested in rappelling and raising money for Habitat. Participants must raise a minimum of \$5,000.

— Justin Mitchell

4 South Mississippi students named National Merit Scholars

By REGINA ZILBERMINTS
rzilbermints@sunherald.com

Four students from South Mississippi have been awarded the prestigious National Merit Scholarship.

Emily Lorraine Tipton of Gulfport, Charles B. Hern of Long Beach, Michael D. Crump of Lucedale, and Brennan Matthew Newton of Pass

Christian were among 22 Mississippi students to win the award.

Nationwide, 2,500 students were announced as Merit Scholars, chosen from more than 15,000 finalists.

Each student received a \$2,500 scholarship.

They were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high

school counselors based on academic record, contributions and leadership in their schools and communities, an essay and a recommendation.

The process began in October 2013 when 1.4 million high school juniors took a test that served as an initial screening.

Fewer than 1 percent of

those students were named semifinalists and 16,000 of those semifinalists were selected to advance in the competition.

There are several announcements throughout the spring and by the end of this selection process about 7,600 finalists will have earned a total of \$34 million in college scholarships.

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

Red Cross fights fires with info, detectors

By VICKI TERRINONI
Special to the Sun Herald

Red Cross volunteers and staff members went door to door in a Gulfport neighborhood Tuesday morning checking on the status of residents' smoke detectors and installing them if needed.

The mission is part of Home Fire Preparedness Campaign, a Red Cross initiative to have 25 percent fewer home-fire injuries and deaths in five years. The initiative is in its second year.

In Mississippi, 2,100 homes have some type of fire annually, said Martha Duvall, disaster workforce engagement specialist in the Gulfport Red Cross office.

"Mississippi has the highest rate of home fires in the nation," said John McFarland, executive director of the Southeast Mississippi Chapter of the Red Cross. "We are teaching people to have a disaster plan and checking smoke detectors."

The Red Cross frequently goes door to door for its Home Fire Preparedness Campaign, but Tuesday's



Red Cross volunteers check the map to decide which block to canvass for the Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign.

event was part of a two-day retreat for regional lead volunteers and staff members, "so we have more volunteers," McFarland said.

Mississippi averages 41.2 fire deaths per million annually, according to Statemaster.com, a database of statistical comparisons between states on a variety of issues.

McFarland said Mississippi is a rural state so in some areas homes are far from the volunteer fire department and response time is longer.

"On the Coast, we have lots of fire stations and property can be saved because

of the quicker response," he said.

However, for many reasons, property and lives are still lost. Lack of an escape plan contributes to the issue. In addition to installing and checking smoke detectors, volunteers Tuesday gave out escape plans and asked residents to sit down as a family and discuss such a plan. "The death rates are dropping statewide as more and more people have plans," McFarland said.

Mary McInnis received a new smoke detector Tuesday and was thankful for the knock on her door.

"It is really nice of them to

do this for me," she said.

Gulfport firefighters came to install any smoke detectors needed.

In one hour, they estimated they installed about eight detectors and checked the batteries on others already in homes.

McFarland recommends changing the batteries in smoke detectors twice a year when clocks are changed for Daylight Saving Time.

The Red Cross has given out about 1,000 smoke detectors statewide this year.

The goal is to install 5,000 in the next fiscal year beginning July 1, McFarland said.

Supervisor questions \$1.2M beach facelift

By WESLEY MULLER
wmuller@sunherald.com
Twitter: WesleyMullerSH

HANCOCK COUNTY — The beaches from Bayou Caddy to Bay St. Louis looked almost perfect Monday afternoon, boasting unblemished white sands free of litter. But the \$1.2 million paid to restore them has one county supervisor worried.

In October, supervisors approved a Hurricane Isaac Sand Beach Restoration Project based on an available FEMA grant.

The process returned 76,000 cubic yards of sand from the Gulf of Mexico onto shore, imported 23,000 cubic yards of sand to replenish areas and screened about 100 acres to remove debris from the sand.

The grant, however, came with a cost estimate of about \$642,000 for a defined scope of work that included about



A stretch of beach in Waveland appears unblemished Monday, thanks to a nearly completed \$1.2 million restoration project approved by Hancock County supervisors.

35,000 cubic yards of sand retrieval and 67 acres of screening.

In a 4-1 vote, the board approved a change order to the project. Supervisor Tony Wayne Ladner was the lone dissenter.

Substantial completion is expected within the next few

weeks, County Grant Administrator Eric Church said.

After that, the ball is in FEMA's court. As FEMA distributes grant dollars as reimbursements for completed work, the county has so far fronted the entire cost.

Shoreline property is divided into two portions. The

first 150 feet or so of sand from U.S. 90 toward the water is the Army Corps of Engineers' responsibility. The remainder, about 100 feet, is the county's responsibility.

FEMA's grant estimate covers the county's portion.

This division made it impractical to replenish just the county's portion of beach, Church said, because doing so would have created a trench of water between the highway and a sliver of beach.

Supervisor Steve Seymour on several occasions said it was important to have the beaches look nice before the summer tourism season starts.

Ladner agreed but thought it was more important to secure the funding first.

"My reason for voting against is it needs to be done but to give FEMA time to get back with us in writing that they would cover it," Ladner said.

Grass will be next sign of progress at MGM Park

By MARY PEREZ
meperez@sunherald.com

BILOXI — Seats are going in and grass will be going down at MGM Park as it gets closer to completion so the Biloxi Shuckers can play at home.

Jason Wold of Yates Con-

struction told the City Council on Tuesday he expects the stadium turf to be laid starting Thursday or Friday. Crews are working Saturdays and Sundays, he said.

Council President Felix Gines said he was at the stadium Tuesday. He said the video boards will be in-

stalled soon.

The news wasn't as good at City Hall, which is now without an elevator.

"The elevator has failed," said David Nichols, director of administration.

It is about 40 years old, and Nichols said it will cost about \$37,000 to repair it.

Crews will have to dig down below City Hall and replace the mechanism. Repairs will take about six weeks, and while work is under way, the council meetings will move to the Biloxi Civic Center on Howard Avenue starting with the next meeting May 19.

SOUND OFF

THE VOICE OF SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

soundoff@sunherald.com

GOP diversity

Republicans have put forth a woman, an African-American and Hispanic candidate(s) for presidential nominations. I don't think anyone can now claim that the GOP is the party of old white men any longer.

Benefits of expansion

In states expanding Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act, hospital operators are reporting less unpaid medical bills and falling charity expenses. Montana will be the 30th state to expand; giving 70,000 people health care benefits and saving rural hospitals from closing.

Contradictions in science

Why is it that the people who like to accuse other people of "denying science" when it comes to climate change, are for the most part, the same people that deny the science that has confirmed that life begins at conception. A fetus, at the time of conception, has human DNA, which means it is a living, human baby at that point. I guess we'll always have "science deniers."

Here's an idea

Our younger generations don't understand the danger of smoking chemical concoctions sold to them by those who could care less whether they live or die. Since we older generations can't seem to get that point across, I have a suggestion to those intent on using Spice. If you're a Spice user, ask your dope dealer to "enjoy" a joint with you. If he or she refuses then you should have a pretty good indication as to why.

Thanks!

Today, we buried my best friend of over 40 years. I would like to thank the police departments from Gulfport and Biloxi for providing for a safe procession from the funeral home to the VA Cemetery. Thank you also to all the people along the way who pulled off to the side of the road to show their respect. And finally, my thanks to the honor guard. You were perfect. Thank you to all involved for the respect and professionalism displayed for my friend. He truly deserved it.

Insulting

Seriously? "Astronauts Wives Club"? How low is ABC going to go with their programming? This is an insult to every astronaut and their wife ever. If this makes it past two episodes, it will only mean that the watchers are as stupid as the creators of the show. I sure hope some of our brave astronauts can sue the pants off them for defamation of character.

What were they thinking?

I am a Christian and I would be appalled if there was a contest in a Muslim country about drawing cartoons of Jesus. It is no surprise to me that there was an incident in Texas last week due to the contest there about making cartoons of the prophet Mohammed. What were the event planners thinking? This has nothing to do with "Free speech."

SunHerald

Established daily as The Sun Herald Oct. 1, 1985. Formerly The Herald, founded Oct. 4, 1884 and The Sun, founded Oct. 1, 1973. Published daily by Gulf Publishing Company, Inc. d/b/a SunHerald MultiMedia, 205 DeBuys Road, Gulfport, MS 39507; mailing address: P.O. Box 4567, Biloxi, MS 39535-4567

Subscriber Services: 1-800-346-2472 or www.SunHerald.com
USPS 121-290 Automatic renewal available with **ezpay**

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Gulf Publishing Co. Inc., 205 DeBuys Road, Gulfport MS 39507. Periodicals postage paid at Gulfport, MS and additional offices.

Weekly subscription rates for home delivery print-digital: Daily, \$7; Monday-Friday, \$4.50; Thursday-Sunday, \$3.40; Wednesday and Sunday, \$3.60; Sunday only, \$3.20. Carrier delivered subscriptions include the following premium content editions in 2015: Jan. 30, June 11, July 30, Aug. 29, Sept. 17, Oct. 3 and Nov. 26. All home delivery subscriptions are subject to a \$1 premium day charge for these special editions and expiration dates will be adjusted accordingly.

Daily subscription rates include SunHerald print and digital package. For other options, call 800-346-2472 or select Customer Services at SunHerald.com. All rates subject to change.

HOW TO REACH US
Area code (228)

SWITCHBOARD:
896-2100

ADVERTISING
Classified: 896-2380
Retail: 896-2484

NEWSROOM
896-2390
or 1-800-346-5022