

Parsons Sun

WEEKEND, SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 27-28, 2019 — 75 CENTS

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THIS ISSUE

BACK TO SCHOOL!
 A STRESS-FREE MORNING ROUTINE FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

Walmart

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WEEKEND SUN:
 • See the Back to School edition and Walmart, RetailMeNot Everyday and P&G inserts inside.
 • Opinion Page is Page 4.

■ Volume 147
 ■ Issue 29
 ■ 18 Pages
 ■ 2 Sections

STATE NEWS

Inaction on vote security puts onus on states

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The death of a bill in Congress this week that would have bolstered election security systems puts more pressure on states to prevent cyberattacks from Russia that former special counsel Robert Mueller warned against this week. But many states are paralyzed by their own inaction.

State and local election officials want to replace aging or outdated equipment before the 2020 election, but many have said they lack the money to do so. In some states, recent legislative sessions produced little progress.

The issue took on greater urgency this week in Washington as Mueller bluntly told lawmakers about Russian meddling in American elections: "They're doing it as we

See VOTE, Page 3.

DEATHS

Obituaries or notices for the following people can be found on Page 2 in today's Sun:

- Robert Andrews
- Greg Olds
- Wanda Maxson-Ladage
- Leslie Sutherland

FUNERALS

ROBERT ANDREWS, 94, of Parsons, service at 11 a.m. Aug. 10 at First Presbyterian Church.

SHELBY BRIDGEWATER JR., 90, of Parsons, service at 10:30 a.m. Friday at Oakwood Cemetery.

WANDA MAXSON-LADAGE, 89, of Parsons, service at 10 a.m. Friday at First Baptist Church, Altamont.

LOCAL SMILES



Kimberly Littlepage, 10, Oswego.



Jamie Willey/Sun photo

Renee Roberts gives Taylor Gentry a "Sharpie tattoo" of a sunflower on her wrist as Laci Allen watches during a party Friday in downtown Parsons celebrating the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SKIL celebrates ADA anniversary

BY JAMIE WILLEY
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Many of the people benefiting from the Americans with Disabilities Act today don't even remember the struggles those with disabilities had before the law took effect 29 years ago.

Shari Coatney, CEO of Southeast Kansas Independent Living, pointed out that fact during a community celebration Friday in downtown Parsons on the anniversary of President George H.W. Bush's signing of the ADA.

The younger generations don't remember a time when curb cuts were lacking or when it was difficult for people relying on wheelchairs to do simple things such as paying a city utility bill, Coatney said.

"Learn from this. The struggles were real, and the rights that you have today that you take for granted because that's just the way it is, your brothers and sisters who are older than you fought for those rights," Coatney said.

It was a big battle to get to the point where people with disabilities were treated equally as others, she said.

"We have done it, and now we are celebrating every year. Every year we cele-



Kansas state Sen. Dan Goddard of Parsons speaks during the ADA celebration.

brate our equal rights," Coatney said.

Kansas state Sen. Dan Goddard and Rep. Richard Proehl, both of Parsons, were among those attending the celebration that included free hot dogs, popcorn and ice cream, water inflatables for kids, live musical entertainment by Duke Mason and drawings.

Coatney said Goddard is a big supporter of the disability community's efforts. He takes the time to listen to concerns and represents SKIL well in Topeka.

"It's just really nice having a senator who gets it," Coatney said.

See ADA, Page 3.

Gold Award project brings fun to seniors

BY COLLEEN WILLIAMSON
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Lauren Baldwin stood to the right of the chairs in the Parsons Good Samaritan activity room watching as Mary Seaver lifted the Nintendo Wii controller that delivered a bowling ball on the screen down the alley, knocking down eight pins.

Baldwin encouraged an excited Seaver, who moments later captured a spare. Baldwin cheered and gave a smiling Seaver a high five.

Next it was Deborah Haney's turn. Baldwin talked to her as she bowled, and encouraged her despite the split she wasn't able to capture.

Baldwin, a member of Girl Scout Troop 70161 under leader Ginny Wommack, decided to pursue her Gold Award by providing activities for the elderly in assisted living facilities.

The Gold Award recognizes girls in grades nine through 12 who demonstrate extraordinary leadership through projects that have a sustainable impact in their communities.

Comparable to the Eagle Scout rank in Boy Scouts, the Gold Award is the highest achievement for a Girl Scout. While only 6% of Girl Scouts nationwide earn the award, Baldwin is the fourth Girl Scout in Wommack's troop in the last year to accept the challenge and complete a Gold Award project.

"My project, I just call Wii Activity because I couldn't come up with a super clever name, I wanted to incorporate some physical and mental health into the nursing homes and get some intergenerational activity going because it is good for both the girls and the residents here," Baldwin said. "Whenever I started it, it was more about the mobility. It is where I was kind of coming from at first. As I went on I noticed it helped more with their mental health, just having fun and producing good vibes in here. It became more of the



Colleen Williamson/Sun photo

Lauren Baldwin reacts to a roll in a game of Nintendo Wii bowling at Good Samaritan Center.

intergenerational part."

Baldwin said most of the centers she has been to have had a Wii that more often than not was frequently used when first purchased. Then as those initial residents using it moved out or passed on, the Wii's have sat unused. All it required from her was putting them to use and engaging with some residents to encourage them to have

See PROJECT, Page 8.



Courtesy photo

Master Morgan Webb stands with his student, Conner Barcus, 12, who earned his black belt last weekend.

Boy earns taekwondo black belt

BY COLLEEN WILLIAMSON
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Despite preparing for eight years for the test he was taking, Conner Barcus was nervous.

"Super nervous," he said.

But he passed with flying colors, coming home to Parsons with his taekwondo black belt.

It has been quite the journey for the 12 year old.

Sitting in his stroller at age 2, Conner would watch the moves of the students in Master Morgan Webb's taekwondo class that included his brother, Tanner, who was four years older.

Following in his brother's footsteps, at age 4, Conner began taking classes, too, devoting two times a week to developing his skills.

"That's twice a week all year. It's not like football or baseball where you have a season," Kendra Barcus, his mother, said.

Given the devotion to the sport, basically about every year in class he would test, showing his proficiency, and advance a belt — white, yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, brown and red.

"I like sparring," Conner said of his main reason for staying in the program, though there were other reasons, including close friendships. He competed in a couple of tournaments a few years ago but found he didn't care as much about the competition part. It did help to prepare him for his end goal, though.

Before he knew it, his candidacy for black belt was before him.

"That's what his brother did. He started at 4 and tested for his black belt at 12," Barcus said.

Asked what he was most nervous about, he said, "The whole test."

"He didn't want to let anyone down. He didn't want to let Master down or us," Barcus said. "He worked really hard. He's probably studied an hour, an hour and a half every day probably three or four weeks before he went. The start of summer he started out studying shorter amounts of time and then built up until he had it ingrained in his head. It's mental and physical."

In preparation, he not only had to know the forms, self-defense moves and how to spar, but also answers to an oral test, including practical applications, history and some Korean.

Then came his test day in Greenwood, Mississippi, before a panel of six people.

"It took four hours," Conner said, revealing it was very tiring, though perhaps as much from nerves as performance.

See BARCUS, Page 8.

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