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PAPER TRAILS



LINDA CAILLOUET

## Arkansans get shot at Grammys

**GRAMMYS ARKIE-STYLE:** Levon Helm, originally from Marvell, has received a second Grammy nomination. In 2008, he took home two Grammys — a Lifetime Achievement award for his work with The Band and another for Best Traditional Folk Album for his *Dirt Farmer*. His latest release, *Electric Dirt*, has been nominated for Best Americana Album. And he's competing with another Arkansan — former University of Arkansas at Fayetteville student Lucinda Williams. Meanwhile, in the Best Southern, Country or Bluegrass Gospel Album category, Tracy Lawrence, formerly of Foreman, has received his first Grammy nomination for his inspirational album, *The Rock*.

**HOMECOMING:** Speaking of Grammy winners, David Hodges, who scored two with the band Evanescence, will be in Summit Church in North Little Rock's new original production *The Light* at 9 and 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Dec. 13.

**STRUNG ALONG:** In other music news, Garrett Overcash of Brinkley will be a featured violin soloist in the annual *Christmas at Belmont* holiday TV special. The show, filmed at the Nashville university and hosted by Belmont alumna and country singer Trisha Yearwood, airs nationally Dec. 23 on PBS.

**PRIZED IDOLS:** Arkansans could land Fox's *American Idol* winner Kris Allen and finalists Adam Lambert and Allison Iraheta for a Little Rock gig.

The contest, courtesy of Fox's *American Idol* host and disc jockey Ryan Seacrest's syndicated radio show, has residents of cities across the nation competing to cast the most votes to get the trio to their town. To vote, visit [tinyurl.com/ye5uqmw](http://tinyurl.com/ye5uqmw).

As of Sunday, New York was leading with 4,100 votes, but Little Rock was second with 3,599.

There's no limit to the number of votes that may be cast. The contest ends Dec. 18.

**ON THE FRONT BURNER:** The Junior League of Little Rock's latest cookbook, *Big Taste of Little Rock*, has been named Best Fundraising Cookbook in the United States by Gourmand World Cookbook Awards. The Junior League will receive the official award at the Paris Cookbook Fair on Feb. 11 and will be eligible to win an award for Best Fundraising Cookbook in the World.

*Big Taste of Little Rock* was released last January. All proceeds from its sales help fund the league's community projects.

*Paper Trails* appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Contact Linda Caillouet at (501) 399-3636 or at [lcaillouet@arkansasonline.com](mailto:lcaillouet@arkansasonline.com)

## Having a sack of fun



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/RICK MCFARLAND  
Camryn Jenkins (left), 9, and her sister Courtlyn, 6, of Sherwood, team up in a sack race at the Plum Bayou Log House during the Christmas Frolic at the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock on Sunday.

# Candidates for state posts trickling in

## Bids expected this week

MICHAEL R. WICKLINE  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

With the candidate filing period for the 2010 election still three months away, the array of announced candidates is growing.

Springdale's Mark Darr said he intends to announce this week his bid for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

Republican Rep. Mark Martin of Prairie Grove said he plans to make up his mind after Christmas whether to run for secretary of state.

So far, no Republican has announced an intention to run for any of the seven constitutional offices, all held by Democrats.

The marquee race of the 2010 election likely will be for the U.S. Senate, a race in which seven Republicans seek to be nominated to try to defeat Democratic Sen. Blanche Lincoln of Little Rock.

Darr, owner of pizza restaurants in Little Rock and Rogers, has formed a committee to explore the possibility of running for lieutenant governor, a job held by



Darr

North Little Rock Democrat Bill Halter, who was elected in 2006 over then-state Sen. Jim Holt, another Republican from Springdale.

The lieutenant governor serves as acting governor when the governor is out of state and presides over the state Senate.

According to the exploratory committee's latest filing Nov. 25, it raised \$11,426 and spent \$9,739 through October.

Darr, who hasn't previously run for an elected office, said he plans to both formally announce his candidacy and his campaign manager this week.

He plans to offer "a conservative alternative" and push for the state government's Web site to have a "state checkbook," similar to Alaska's, to allow the public to see where taxpayer dollars are being spent.

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# Mahony, school-policy lawmaker, dies at 70

SETH BLOMELEY  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Jodie Mahony, known for his quick wit, blunt talk and white socks, loved the legislative process so much he refused to let it go after term limits forced him out after 36 years in the House and Senate.

He died on Saturday at Medical Center of South Arkansas in El Dorado, after years of battling prostate cancer.

He was 70. "Arkansas has lost an outstanding man who exemplifies public service in our state," Gov. Mike Beebe said in a news release Sunday.

Mahony became a part-time aide to Benny Petrus, then speaker of the state House of Representatives, during the 2007 legislative session after his long legislative career ended.

But recently he spent less time at the Capitol and more

time at hospitals. He exhibited little sign of the illness when he did come to work, keeping tuned to the legislative business at hand and walking at, as usual, a brisk pace.

"Obviously, I enjoy what I'm doing here," Mahony once said. "I get satisfaction out of accomplishing things.



Mahony

On a congressional level, you accomplish bigger things, but here, you accomplish more things, and you have that interpersonal contact, and I relish that."

Born Joseph K. Mahony II in El Dorado on Sept. 12, 1939, he grew up among attorneys. His grandfather was a lawyer and both of his parents were lawyers.

Mahony followed in their footsteps. He had not practiced law for the past several

years but maintained his law office to oversee his family's extensive timber and oil interests.

First elected to the House in 1970, he served 24 years before winning a Senate seat in 1994. In 2002, after two four-year terms, when term limits kept him from seeking re-election as a senator, he ran for the House again, where he still had two two-year terms to go under the term-limits

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# Bridge opening set for summer

## Cable-stayed span already landmark

NOEL E. OMAN  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Drivers can expect to use a new Mississippi River crossing in southeast Arkansas for the first time in nearly 70 years by summer.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation recently awarded the final contract needed to complete the \$284 million bridge carrying U.S. 82 over the Mississippi River, a bridge engineers say is the longest cable-stayed design on the river.

The work left on the bridge deck involves putting down a "latex-modified concrete riding surface" on the three bridge spans totaling 2,560 feet and connecting them to the approaches on both sides of the river.

The modified concrete mix is typically used on

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## Adding sparkle to parade float



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STEPHEN B. THORNTON

Thomas Metcalf, 16, (right) adds a little sparkle to the Star of Bethlehem with beads as he and other members of Boy Scout Troop 431 prepare their float before the start of Sunday afternoon's North Little Rock Christmas Parade. At left is scout mother Ann Wirges and Scoutmaster Tim Metcalf, second from left.

# PB budget to shrink \$600,000; no layoffs seen

MIKE LINN  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

**PINE BLUFF** — Pine Bluff Mayor Carl Redus Jr.'s proposed 2010 budget shows city revenue for next year will decline by about \$600,000, although officials do not expect any layoffs.

City Finance Director

Steve Miller said revenue from inspection fees and sales, property and occupational taxes are all down from a year ago, and revenue is expected to dip to \$25.7 million in 2010 from \$26.3 million this year.

Miller said departments found savings without cutting

personnel or services.

The Pine Bluff City Council is expected to vote on the mayor's proposed 2010 budget on Dec. 21.

"The big issue we have right up front is that our local source revenue right now in 2009 is \$600,000 lower than it was last year," Miller said.

"We don't expect there to be a big improvement in 2010, and I think we're being conservative in our revenue forecast. Still, \$600,000 is a lot to make up in our expenses."

Redus said it was a challenging budget year, not only for Pine Bluff, but for other

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# NLR cuts 2010 cash for parks, cop cars

JAKE SANDLIN  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Money for police cars, street sweepers, sanitation equipment and parks usually found in North Little Rock's budget are absent for 2010, according to a proposal Mayor Patrick Hays released last week.

Such expenditures are awaiting an expected \$5 million to \$7 million bond issue, plus a separate bond issue for parks, Hays said.

The bond issues could go to the City Council for approval as soon as January.

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