

Enterprise-Journal

The one newspaper in the world most interested in this community



122ND YEAR ■ NO. 146 McCOMB, MISSISSIPPI
www.enterprise-journal.com

Hitting the road

McComb faces toughest district test at under-the-radar Wayne Co.



A8

On the stump: Manufacturer's group leaning right in judicial races. NEWS A

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2012 75 CENTS



HIGHLIGHTS

Debris removal continues

A first pass for Hurricane Isaac debris removal should be done by Friday, McComb Public Works officials said.

A second pass will be done Wednesday, Oct. 10.

Only vegetative debris resulting from Hurricane Isaac will be picked up by the debris removal contractor.

City officials are asking residents not to place debris near trees, utility poles, fire hydrants or on water meters.

The city will resume regular pick-up of yard maintenance debris after the second pass by debris contractor CrowderGulf.

In Summit, town officials said Tuesday that contractor Oddee Smith Construction of Brookhaven has made a first pass through town and two more will be made next week.

Ryan Holmes of Dungan Engineering, the debris monitor for Summit, said residents with debris from the storm should place it by the curb for removal. Storm debris doesn't include vegetation with green leaves, he said, adding that will not be removed.

A street sweeper will come through town after a third and final pass to clean off smaller sticks and leaves that larger machinery leave behind.



Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney points to President Barack Obama during the presidential debate at the University of Denver on Wednesday. It was the first of three debates between the two.

Romney relishes

GOP nominee storms back onto trail after solid debate performance

DENVER (AP) — Little more than a month from Election Day, Republican Mitt Romney is barreling out of the first presidential debate energized by a solid performance that telegraphed his determination to take it to President Barack Obama with gusto. The president, intent on keeping his momentum from stalling, is warning Americans that his GOP rival's policy prescriptions for a fragile economy are more fantasy than reality.

Standing toe-to-toe with the president for the first time in the campaign, Romney held his own and more at a time when there already were signs that the race is tightening in some of the battleground states where Obama has enjoyed an advantage. Obama kept his cool and signaled that he won't let up on his message that Romney's plans on taxes, health care, the deficit and more just don't add up.

"It's fun," Romney declared well into Wednesday night's 90-minute faceoff, clearly relishing the back-and-forth.

"It's arithmetic," said Obama, hammering at Romney's conspicuous lack of details with far less enthusiasm.

After a few days of relative calm as the candidates prepared for the first of their three debates, the campaign

now bursts out of Colorado in all directions, with an itinerary that touches down in some of the most hotly contested battleground states over the next few days: Obama campaigns in Colorado and Wisconsin, then on to Virginia and Ohio. Romney and running mate Paul Ryan are off to Virginia today, then Romney spends more time in Virginia before moving on to Florida. Vice President Joe Biden is bound for Iowa.

With a 13-day break before their next debate, Obama and Romney have time to hone their arguments while their campaigns continue to bombard the most hotly contested states with negative ads that go far beyond the more restrained jibes the candidates leveled from their respective podiums. Obama made no mention, for example, of Romney's caught-on-tape remark that he's not worried about the 47 percent of Americans who don't pay taxes. Democratic ads, though, have been making hay with the comment.

Asked why the president didn't raise the video, Obama senior political adviser David Axelrod suggested on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" that he didn't need to since it has been so widely seen and heard.

Rawlings agreed to allow 15 minutes before or after the meeting to let residents speak — if they have filled out the form.

McComb debates public comment policy

BY MEGAN HUCKABY
ENTERPRISE-JOURNAL

One McComb selectman wants the public to have a 15-minute open forum to address the city board, while the mayor wants to stick with the more formal process already in place.

Selectman Tammy Witherspoon said Tuesday that she wants there to be a more concise way for the public to be recognized.

As the policy stands, residents have to go to City Hall and fill out a form by 5 p.m. on Wednesdays before board meetings to request to be placed on the board's agenda and state what they want to talk about.

City officials said the form will be put online to make it easier to access.

Witherspoon said she wants there to be 15 minutes at either the beginning or the end of the meetings for residents to say whatever they like.

"I think we owe that to our constituents," she said.

She said there could be guidelines, such as only allowing each person to speak for two minutes.

Mayor Whitney Rawlings said he wants to keep the current process because it allows the board to be prepared to address residents' concerns.

"We welcome public comment," he said. "Everyone has the right to come in and fill out that form and come before us and speak."

Rawlings agreed to allow 15 minutes before or after the meeting to let residents speak — if they have filled out the form.

"You are going to have to know what's on John Doe's mind or Jane Doe's mind when they get up there to speak," Rawlings said.

Board attorney Wayne Dowdy said Witherspoon's suggestion would take away Rawling's authority to run the meetings.

"In my opinion, you are telling the mayor, by that, how to conduct the meeting," Dowdy said.

However, if Rawlings chooses not to recognize someone in the audience who raises a hand, the board can overrule the chair and recognize the resident, Dowdy noted.

"Do you really want that — for the board to start appealing the chair?" Witherspoon asked.

SEE CITY, PAGE A3

Hospital names quality improvement director

BY KAREN FREEMAN
ENTERPRISE JOURNAL

Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center has named Dr. Kevin Richardson as Medical Director of Quality Improvement.

Although he will continue his OB/GYN and robotic surgery practice, Richardson's new role will involve working closely with both administrators and other physician leaders to "prepare our hospital for future healthcare reform, while at the same time establishing SMRMC as one of the top hospitals in the nation."

Richardson began the post on Monday. "Although our hospital currently performs very well on most of the reportable national quality measures, we as physicians and patient

advocates recognize that there is always room for improvement," he said.

Over the past year, while serving as Southwest's chief of staff, Richardson worked to increase physician awareness of the latest "best-practice" guidelines known as Core Measures.

"We set up an audience response system and a 'quiz' at the beginning of each medical staff meeting to allow physicians to test their knowledge on various quality and patient safety standards. A data analysis program enabled us to identify our strengths and shed light on opportunities for additional education."

Call it the age of the hospital "report card."

SEE HOSPITAL, PAGE A2



From left are Lyn Gurney; Dr. Kevin Richardson, director of quality improvement; and COO Richard Williams.

PHILIP HALL | ENTERPRISE-JOURNAL

Summit gets \$1.6M shaved from wastewater costs

BY MATT WILLIAMSON
ENTERPRISE JOURNAL

Summit received good news Tuesday on its new wastewater treatment facility in the form of \$1.6 million coming off the price tag for the \$3 million project.

Town officials received word that Summit will get a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant. Plus, the Mississippi De-

partment of Environmental Quality said it will float the town a \$2.4 million loan and subsidize \$1 million of that.

"So basically, they wrote off \$1 million," Ryan Holmes of Dungan Engineering told the town council.

This is a big turnaround from where the town was a few months ago, when it was deciding whether to pump wastewater to McComb's

new treatment facility or build its own plant. Either option came with projected costs that some officials questioned whether the town or its residents — who at the time were facing the possibility of staggering water rate increases — could afford.

The town raised its water rates 2 percent last month, and the new rates will first appear on November water bills. Officials noted that the

Mississippi Rural Water Association recommends annual 2 percent hikes to keep pace with the Consumer Price Index and rising operating costs.

Holmes and Dungan's Micah Bull calculated a rate increase against the costs of the new plant and determined that town officials weren't far off the mark, and a 2.9 percent increase would have covered it.

"The rate is going to be about where it needs to be," Bull said.

"We've been blessed. Things worked in our favor," Holmes said.

That wasn't the only good news the town received. Officials also noted that the USDA's Rural Development announced that it had awarded Summit a \$43,114 grant to pay for two new police cars.

DEATHS

- Johnnie M. Allen, 83
- Celia F. Butler, 92
- Hugh Miller, 61
- Clarence Morgan Jr.
- Rayfield Washington

A3

OUTSIDE

Friday



Sunny
High: 88
Low: 62
Rain: None
Wind: E, 5

A2

CONTACT US

TO SUBSCRIBE 684-2713
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday Friday

NEWS, ADVERTISING 684-2421
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday Friday

INSIDE

- CLASSIFIEDS A11
- COMICS A10
- LOTTERIES A2
- OBITUARIES A3
- OPINION A4
- SPORTS A8
- STOCKS A9
- TV GRID A5



0 4879 1 8903

In focus



SUBMITTED

Showing academic talent

Nine North Pike Middle School students recently qualified through the Duke University Talent Identification program to take the ACT or SAT in the seventh grade. They obtained a score that placed them at or above the 95th percentile on

the Mississippi Curriculum Test. They are, from left, front row, Autumn Fortenberry, Brianna Rimes and Austin Fortenberry; back row, Ross Spears, Adam Leonard, Roslynn Floyd, Annie Parker, Logan Larrimore and Bryson Tymes.

HOSPITAL: Officials say move will improve care

FROM PAGE 1

For many years, Richardson said hospitals have been required to monitor various quality performance measures and report these scores to the federal government and accreditation agencies.

More recently, he noted, hospital performance scores have been made public via the Internet. Under the Affordable Care Act, hospitals will be required to report on even more quality, safety and patient satisfaction measures.

"Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that the quality of care that is provided is accurately reflected on our performance report card, and that any shortcomings get promptly addressed," he said.

Richardson commended the hospital administration for taking an active role in promoting healthcare quality, hospital safety and patient satisfaction.

"By appointing a physician to oversee quality initiatives, our hospital is aligning itself with the top healthcare institutions in the country, many of which have appointed quality improvement directors over the past year," Richardson said. "We are fortunate to have an incredible performance improvement team at our hospital."

Leading that team is Lyn Gurney, who has worked with Richardson over the past year on quality performance projects.

Richardson has been an active staff member at Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center for the past 10 years. He moved to McComb in 2002 after completing an OB/GYN residency at Charity

'His clinical skills are impeccable ... He's the right person for the job.'

Richard Williams

On Dr. Richardson's new role

Hospital in New Orleans. As an undergraduate at Emory University in Atlanta, he earned degrees in biology and art history. He also spent a semester in England studying healthcare policy at the London School of Economics.

Richardson plans to pursue board certification in health care quality and management through the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review. Maintaining this certification requires completion of continuing educational, participation at national conferences and four-hour written exam every two years.

Gurney and hospital chief operating officer Richard Williams are pleased to have Richardson in the role.

"He'll work with us on every aspect of quality, which is a huge part of the healthcare landscape now," Gurney said. "He will be that liaison between quality and the physicians and work with the physicians to ensure that they incorporate quality — not just their idea of quality — but requirements that we're

bound to by the government, into their everyday practice.

"It's a little bit of a new paradigm in that more than ever before we do all have to be on the same page," she said. "It's just a new thought process. We've all got to be focused on the same thing."

And, administrators say the doctor-to-doctor dialogue is best. Already, quality improvement personnel are working with nursing staff and other ancillary health care staffers.

"Communicating with physicians is a little bit different. ... Dr. Richardson will give us a unique perspective, from a doctor to a doctor," Gurney said.

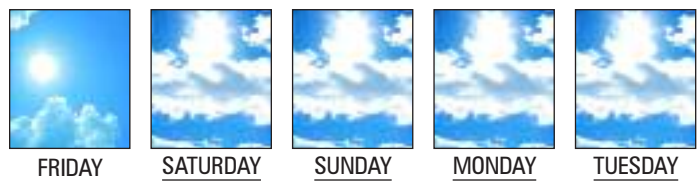
Williams said the move is one he hopes will vault the hospital and Southwest Health System into a nationally recognized network.

"We're extremely excited about this. Our goal is to become a top 100 hospital, and that is the reason behind it," Williams said. "We sat down and Dr. Richardson, myself and Norman Price decided to go forward with it after (Richardson's) chief of staff tenure."

"His clinical skills are impeccable, his knowledge of quality issues is excellent. He's the right person for the job," Williams said of Richardson. "We expect good results in the first year, and there are a lot of things he can help us on especially peer-to-peer conversations."

Gurney said she and Richardson will have in-depth discussions to "talk about what's going on at our hospital and nationwide as far as changes in health care. They come so frequently."

THE WEATHER



Day	Weather	Hi	Lo
FRIDAY	Sunny	High 80s	Low 60s
SATURDAY	Partly cloudy	Hi: Low 80s	Lo: Low 50s
SUNDAY	Partly cloudy	Hi: Low 70s	Lo: High 40s
MONDAY	Partly cloudy	Hi: Mid 70s	Lo: Low 50s
TUESDAY	Partly cloudy	Hi: Near 80	Lo: Near 60

Mississippi River stages

	Flood Stage	Stage Today	24 hr change		Flood Stage	Stage Today	24 hr change
Cairo	40	10.6	-0.8	Natchez	48	13.5	+0.6
Memphis	34	-5.6	+0.2	Red River	48	18.4	+0.6
Greenville	48	9.5	+0.1	Baton Rouge	35	6.2	+0.4
Vicksburg	43	4.8	+0.5	New Orleans	17	2.9	+0.3

Pearl River stages

	Flood Stage	Stage Wed.	24 hr change		Flood Stage	Stage Wed.	24 hr change
Jackson	28	6.2	-1.5	Monticello	22	8.3	-0.1
Rockport	25	e9.4	-0.9	Columbia	17	3.7	0.3

LOUISIANA LOTTERY

BATON ROUGE (AP) — Lottery officials say the winning ticket in Wednesday's \$50 million Powerball drawing was sold in Delaware and there were no big winners in Louisiana. Here are Wednesday's winning numbers:

Powerball: 17 23 36 55 59, Powerball 10
 Next Powerball jackpot: \$40 million
Lotto: 11 14 17 18 33 37 **Easy 5:** 05 12 16 18 33
Pick 3: 4 8 6 **Pick 4:** 4 7 0 3

AMITE MARRIAGES

FROM STAFF REPORTS

LIBERTY— Here are marriage licenses applied for recently in Amite County, according to courthouse records:

- Eddy Grover May and Helen Marie Sullivan.
- Daryl Watkins and Virginia Hughes Patterson.

DEBATE: Romney to sharpen focus in policy speeches

FROM PAGE 1

"The president's belief is that's something that has been very much a part of the discussion," Axelrod said.

In next few weeks, Romney is expected to give a number of speeches filling in details as he tries to sharpen the contrast with Obama while answering criticism that he hasn't outlined his plans. The Republican challenger begins with a foreign policy speech in Virginia on Monday. Subsequent speeches are expected to focus on his plans for job creation, debt and spending.

Romney has promised to balance the budget in eight years to 10 years, but hasn't explained just how he'll do it. Instead, he's promised a set of principles, some of which — like increasing Pentagon spending and restoring more than \$700 billion in cuts to Medicare over the coming decade — work against that goal. He also has said he will not consider tax increases.

Obama argued that it's all too much. "At some point, I think the American people have to ask themselves, is the reason that Governor Romney is keeping all these plans

to replace secret because they're too good? Is it because that somehow middle-class families are going to benefit too much from them? No."

The president went on to say the nation faces tough problems that defy simple solutions and said his own choices were benefiting middle-class families.

Romney maintained it was Obama who was crushing the middle class and getting the numbers wrong, telling him. "Mr. President, you're entitled to your own airplane and your own house, but not your own facts."