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INSIDE

CELEBRATIONS



West Virginia and North Central West Virginia have more than their share of "good ghost tales."

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SPORTS



WVU proved to be no match for No. 2 Baylor, either on the ground or through the air, in a 62-38 loss.

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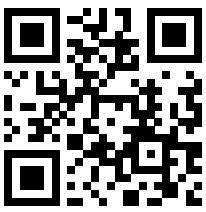
ON THE WEB

ONLINE POLL

Who do you think won the Democratic presidential debate on Tuesday?

- a) Hillary Clinton37.2%
- b) Bernie Sanders41%
- c) Jim Webb11.5%
- d) Martin O'Malley2.6%
- e) Lincoln Chafee7.7%

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Obama visit will spotlight W.Va.'s drug epidemic

More than 500 overdose deaths yearly since 2010

by Jeremiah Shelor
STAFF WRITER

CLARKSBURG — It's become a depressing refrain to say West Virginia is in the throes of a substance abuse epidemic, but the numbers

underscore the bitter reality. Though West Virginia is far from the only state struggling with a rise in narcotics abuse over the past 15 years, the Mountain State typifies the extent of the problem.

In 2014, West Virginia recorded 628 drug overdose deaths, with the vast majority of those (546) being opiate-related, according to figures provided by the state Department of Health and

Human Resources.

The state has recorded more than 500 overdose deaths each year since 2010, including a high of 656 in 2011. Through the first half of 2015, West Virginia has already seen 338



Gupta

overdose deaths, 297 of those being opiate-related, according to the state's figures.

It's this epidemic that will be the focus of a planned visit from President Barack Obama to Charleston this week.

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Area schools say 'no' to stocking overdose drug

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The impact of substance abuse as a public health issue is far-reaching.

That's according to Dr. Rahul Gupta, commissioner for the state Department of Health and Human Resources' Bureau for Public Health.

"Overdose deaths is one way to look at the problem," Gupta said.

See DRUGS, A10



Staff photos by Zach Tuggle

Above: 4-year-old Brevin Forinash feeds a goat Saturday at the annual Fall Frolic in Quiet Dell. Below: 5-year-old Bromley Forinash tries an old-fashioned mode of transportation.

Fall Frolic gives visitors glimpse of a simpler time

by Zach Tuggle
STAFF WRITER

QUIET DELL — West Virginia Heritage Crafts' annual Fall Frolic brought people to the old Quiet Dell Schoolhouse throughout the afternoon Saturday.

Despite temperatures cooler than expected, visitors listened to old-time music, watched artisans create their wares and enjoyed a petting zoo.

The zoo gave children a chance to hand-feed goats and ride donkeys around

the lawn of the schoolhouse.

"Today has been really cold, but it's been a good day to ride donkeys," said 12-year-old Kassey Posey, a Clarksburg resident.

Posey has been helping petting zoo operator Kenny Fragmin train his donkeys for riding since she was 6 years old.

"I've been riding since I was little," Posey said.

Fragmin has operated the zoo with his son, Bryan, for 8 years. They started it after a local day care invited them to visit with a few of their farm animals.



See FROLIC, A6



Left: Martha Hesson of St. Marys weaves a basket during the Fall Frolic. Right: Jocelyn Cole, 13, of Bridgeport and Kassey Posey, 12, of Clarksburg, go for a ride.

Home rule cities put plans into action at their own pace

Sales tax proposals tabled, considered, enacted in Clarksburg, Bridgeport, Fairmont

by Jim Davis
STAFF WRITER

CLARKSBURG — Some area cities in the state's pilot home rule program are gradually putting their plans in place, while others seem to be in a state of flux.

Clarksburg would appear to fall into the latter group following Thursday night's city council meeting.

City council tabled an ordi-

nance to enact a sales tax while approving the first reading of a companion measure to reduce some business and occupation taxes.

"We'll have recommendations in the near future regarding both items," City Manager Martin Howe said.

Clarksburg was accepted into the home rule program last October.

Home rule gives cities more say in how they govern by al-

lowing them to implement ordinances, acts, resolutions, rules and regulations without regard to state laws.

Municipalities in the home rule program can impose a sales tax up to 1 percent, provided they reduce or eliminate some B&O taxes.

A municipal sales tax would

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More area cities show interest

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be in addition to the state sales tax, which is 6 percent.

Clarksburg's proposals include enacting a 1 percent sales tax in exchange for cutting B&O taxes in retail sales and manufacturing.

A 1 percent sales tax would generate about \$3 million in revenues, while the B&O cuts would amount to \$790,000, according to the city's home rule plan.

The \$2.2 million in net rev-

enue would go toward police and firefighter pensions, infrastructure improvements and economic development activities, according to the home rule plan.

The city's revenues would drop substantially if council were to approve only the B&O tax cuts, Howe said.

"It would require drastic budget changes," Howe added.

See CITIES, A9

States now must enact oil and gas agreement

Workforce training seen as key to industry investment within Appalachian Basin

by Jeremiah Shelor
STAFF WRITER

CLARKSBURG — Leaders from West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio have all agreed the states must work together to develop the resources laden in the Marcellus and Utica shales.

At the 2015 Tri-State Shale Summit in Morgantown, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, along with Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, signed a document outlining plans to work cooperatively in making the most of the opportunities presented by the oil and gas industry that occupies portions of all three states.

But now officials must work to put those plans into meaningful action.

That's according to Keith Burdette, cabinet secretary of the state Department of Commerce and executive director of the West Virginia Development Office.

"The photo op is over. We're going to have to get down to some very serious discussions about what the structure looks like and how we make it effective," Burdette said.

Burdette indicated the three states will put together work groups focused on specific is-

ssues touched on in the tri-state agreement. The four key areas specified in the agreement are marketing and promotion, workforce development, transportation and infrastructure and research.

While the states will continue to operate independently, Burdette said there's a significant amount of common interest when it comes to the growth of the oil and gas industry in the Appalachian Basin.

"Most of the development in this industry kind of defies borders. Yes, we're going to continue to compete for the plants, for the investments. But most of this is clustered along the borders of the three states in most instances," Burdette said. "It's really more about how do we link arms and build the kind of workforce and the type of messaging that enhances us equally and at the same time enhances our ability to recruit investments to the individual states."



Burdette

See GAS, A9

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