

QUICK HITS

Teens from 15 states learn Mandarin Chinese at Ole Miss

OXFORD (AP) — Thirty American teenagers are learning to speak Mandarin Chinese during an intensive summer program at the University of Mississippi. Now in its 11th year, Mississippi Star-Talk is a federally funded program for students who will be high school sophomores, juniors and seniors.

A university news release says language classes are taught at three levels, and students learn about Chinese culture. Those completing the program receive academic credit for high

school or college.

4 people charged after string of auto burglaries

D'IBERVILLE (AP) — Authorities say four people have been charged in connection with several auto burglaries that took place over a five-hour period.

Jackson County Sheriff Mike Ezell said in a press release that there were 11 burglaries reported in D'Iberville and seven in Jackson County. The thefts occurred between 11:30 p.m. Sunday and 4 a.m. Monday. Ezell says investigators recovered \$2,000 in cash, makeup, identification and credit cards.

FLOODING

FROM PAGE 1A

ground enough that a large tree toppled onto a Waste Pro garbage truck Tuesday as it was traveling along East Washington Street near Rogers Street. The driver and passenger were able to climb out and were not injured, Brookhaven Police Chief Kenneth Collins said.

"Our drivers were driving down the road and they said they heard a crack and a loud pop on the roof of the vehicle," said Waste Pro site manager John Gibson. "They came to a stop and got out of the vehicle and it was a tree."

The continuous rain Tuesday caused several families in Lincoln County and within the city to need assistance leaving their homes.

Several families were rescued Tuesday morning after heavy rain flooded a creek and pushed water into the yards of several mobile homes on Jakes Trail, Lincoln County Emergency Manager Clifford Galey said.

Deputies with Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, firefighters with New Sight Volunteer Fire Department and an officer with Brookhaven Police Department assisted Lincoln County Emergency Management with the evacuation, he said.

Police Cpl. Jonathan Alford drove BPD's recently purchased humvee, which was used to get several residents and at least one dog out of their homes, which were surrounded in some places by four feet of water from a nearby creek which usually dumps into the Bogue Chitto River.

"The water came up and they didn't have any way to get out, so we went in and got them," Galey said.

The rescue was some time after 10 a.m. By noon, the water started to recede, he said.

New Sight VFD Chief Cory Smith said several of his volunteers joined the other first responders to help get the people out safely. He's used to high water

in that area.

"It's never been a rescue before, but it floods every time we get a torrential rain," he said.

The humvee was also used a few times within the city limits for some water rescues, Collins said.

Residents at multiple locations in flooded areas of the city called for assistance from police because they couldn't get out of their homes, he said. No injuries were reported.

Ken Powell said about five feet of water had accumulated behind R.B. Wall.

"We have a creek back behind the store that swelled pretty quickly," he said. "We had some log trucks back there and the owners started getting nervous when the water was getting close to the cabin, so they moved them out of there. We did have an 8,000- and 10,000-pound tanks move around from the water and our dumpster got carried off in the creek."

Powell said it was the most water he'd seen there in 30 years.

"We had close to 8 inches of water knocking up against the store, but our employees kept doing their jobs and serving customers and pumping gas," he said.

The NWS estimates that as much as 11 inches of rain has fallen in the area in the past 48 hours.

Part of Brookhaven Street near Hwy. 550 collapsed Tuesday, crumbling into the ditch, Collins said. Officers placed barricades up, but several motorists apparently moved the barricades several times throughout the afternoon drive through, Collins said.

Other roads, like Monticello, Washington and Center streets and West Industrial Park Road, were closed due to flooding and reopened as the water receded, said Brookhaven Street Department Supervisor Burt Wilson.

According to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Hwy. 43 between New Hebron and Joe Buckley Road is closed until further notice due to flooding.

Reporter Matt Rushing contributed to this report.

RUNNING

FROM PAGE 1A

times, and how running was a vital part of getting my life back — how it helped me return to happy-go-lucky Ouida.

"Writing this book was empowering, as well as heart-wrenching. It brought back a lot of painful memories. I had to shed a few tears. The process was painful yet therapeutic. I had to overcome, and running was a part of the healing process."

But Brown's book is not just a story of what she has been through. She wants it to be helpful for others, as well.

"When people think about running, they think about the physical aspect," Brown said, "but people don't think about running as far as the mental and spiritual aspects."

Brown wants her story to help readers focus on their health from every angle, and believes running can be the avenue for others that it has been for her.

"It can be therapeutic for you as it was for me," she said.

Brown's book will release Aug. 7 and will be available on her Amazon webpage, amazon.com/author/ouidabrownmdpt.

Gardeners expecting smaller melons

Entries accepted Aug. 5 for annual 4th grade watermelon contest

By Donna Campbell
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"What a melon." That's what Lincoln County fourth graders are likely to hear when they bring their best Congo watermelons for the Master Gardeners to judge Aug. 5 at the Brookhaven Exchange Club Fair.

Entries for the Lincoln County Master Gardeners' annual contest will be accepted 4-6 p.m. at the former livestock shed near the entrance to the fair. The winner will be announced at 6:01 p.m.

Growing the biggest

melon can bring a top prize of \$100, said gardening enthusiast and club member Steve Edge. Second place earns \$50 and the third place winner gets \$25. Watermelons are judged on their weight.

The Master Gardeners distributed about three pounds of Congo watermelon seeds — that's about 18,000 seeds — to more than 540 fourth graders several months ago. Now it's time to reap what they sowed, he said.

Congo watermelons do well in Lincoln County

soil and take about 90 days from planting to picking. They're a sweeter melon than most, with white seeds, he said.

It's not your typical watermelon that can be purchased at area fruit stands or grocery stores, which makes it a good contest melon, he said.

Edge urges all fourth graders who planted their seeds to enter the contest Aug. 5, no matter what size their entry may be. He said last year's winner was over 20 pounds, but this year's crop probably won't be nearly that

heavy. "This growing season has been cooler and wetter than normal. I expect the watermelons to be smaller than normal this year," he said. "It's been a cool summer. It's much cooler than we normally see. Watermelon likes hot weather."

The club received 11 entries last year. He anticipates a few more this time around.

"I know there are kids out there who have got them growing," he said. "Every year we get a few more."

BRIDGES

FROM PAGE 1A

\$5 million in bonds to pay for bridge repairs.

Slightly more than a third of the 308 bridges in Lincoln County have some wooden components — meaning they may have timber pilings, abutments, rails or some other part made of wood.

County engineer Ryan Holmes told supervisors Monday that Lincoln County probably has more bridges that include timber than any other county in the state. It's at least in the top three, he said.

Bridges are rated on a 10-point scale — 0 is failed and beyond repair while 9 is considered excellent. Of the timber bridges inspected by Dungan Engineering recently, 89 were rated 3 or less. Bridges rated 3 are in serious condition, rated 2 are in critical condition and rated 1 are considered imminent failure. Bridges rated 1 are closed to traffic until repaired.

Holmes took those 89 bridges and separated them into four additional categories of A, B, C and D — based on location and usage. "A" bridges are located on routes with the highest amount of traffic and daily use. "D" bridges are on routes with the least use.

The supervisors were given a list of all the low-rated bridges, divided into each of their five districts, with their rating of A-D, an estimate of repair costs and a date of when that bridge would come up next for inspection by the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

Holmes asked the board to review the list and assign their own ratings to them — to order them by what they considered to be the most pressing repair or replacement needs to the least — and return the lists to his office so a more accurate cost estimate can be determined for the bridges assigned the highest priority. Each district has a budget for infrastructure. Once supervisors have ranked the greatest needs on their lists, they will draw a line at the point where they can spend no more at this time for repairs. Bridge projects above the line are the ones that will be addressed.

The Local System Bridge Program has historically provided an average of \$500,000 annually to the county for use in maintaining and repairing bridges. Funds approved in the 2016 state legislative session were released to counties in 2017, so those funds are available for use on bridges located on locally-maintained routes.

However, the Legislature did not approve funding of the LSBP for 2018 in its recent sessions, removing those monies from consideration for bridge upkeep and repair in 2018. Money from LSBP must be requested for specific bridge projects, and — according to District 3 Supervisor Nolan Williamson — takes an average of 465 days to receive. Bond money remains the alternative.

District 4 Supervisor Eddie Brown said that bridges that are on state

aid routes will not be addressed with the bond money.

"It makes no sense to use local money on state aid roads where the state is supposed to pay for that," Brown said. "We hope that they're going to come through on that."

Waiting for state funds has not helped the county so far, said Williamson, since no funds have come this year and the worst bridges need to be repaired as soon as possible.

"We're not going to sit here and let all this infrastructure collapse," Williamson said.

Brown said he is cur-

rently working with Holmes to assess which bridges can be replaced with box culverts, which can be placed for a fraction of the cost of repairing or replacing a bridge with new construction. He's also taking a more critical look at the bridges in his district to make sure the ones that need attention the most are the ones that get it.

Holmes said each of the people who are responsible for inspecting and repairing the bridges have to be able to sleep at night, knowing they made the right choices to keep people safe.

"We take all this very seriously," he said.

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Eddie Brown



Nolan Williamson

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