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VA falls short with female veterans

GARANCE BURKE
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Already pilloried for long wait times for medical appointments, the beleaguered Department of Veterans Affairs has fallen short of another commitment: to attend to the needs of the rising ranks of female veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, many of them of child-bearing age.

Even the head of the VA's office of women's health acknowledges that persistent shortcomings remain in caring for the 390,000 female vets seen last year at its hospitals and clinics — despite an investment of more than $1.3 billion since 2008, including the training of hundreds of medical professionals in the fundamentals of treating the female body.

According to an Associated Press review of VA internal documents, inspector general reports and interviews:

• Nationwide, nearly one in four VA hospitals does not have a fulltime gynecologist on staff. And about 140 of the 920 community-based clinics serving veterans in rural areas do not have a designated women's health provider, despite the goal that every clinic would have one.

• When community-based clinics refer veterans to a nearby university or other private

VETERANS, PAGE 3A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

CROWNING MOMENT: Miss Arkansas 2013 Amy Crain crowns Miss Ouachita River Ashton Campbell as Miss Arkansas 2014 during the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant on Saturday at Summit Arena. Campbell, who is from Hindsville, attends the University of Arkansas. Her platform is Aim Higher: Setting Our Sights On Higher Education.

Campbell crowned as Miss Arkansas

ALISON B. HARBOUR
The Sentinel-Record

First-time contestant Ashton Campbell, 20, received the Miss Arkansas 2014 title and crown on Saturday at Summit Arena.

A student at the University of Arkansas, Campbell competed as Miss Ouachita River and was named a preliminary swimsuit winner at the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant.

Her parents are Roger and Tonia Campbell, of Hindsville. Her platform is Aim Higher: Setting Our Sights on Higher Education. She was named Miss Arkansas' Outstanding Teen in 2012.

For her talent presentation, she sang "Note to God," partly an emotional prayer that she had heard pop singer Charice perform on "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

"I am looking forward to the job of Miss Arkansas particularly because that is what I came here for above everything else, above the pageant and the scholarship, which is amazing from the Miss Arkansas Scholarship organization, but I am really looking forward to the job and for working with Jessie (Ward Bennett) and this incredible organization," Campbell told *The Sentinel-Record* during a reception in her honor following the pageant at Embassy Suites Hot Springs — Hotel & Spa.

Miss Arkansas 2013 Amy Crain presented the crown to Campbell, who walked the runway smiling and waving to the crowd, as a colorful sea of confetti rained down on her coronation. Her fellow contestants surrounded her with hugs and best wishes and she posed for photographs.

She received a $20,000 scholarship and will represent Arkansas at the Miss America 2015 competition Sept. 9-14 at Atlantic City, N.J. Campbell received numerous awards during the evening, including the Ashlen Batson Esprit de corps, the Julie Blackwood "Smart" Swimsuit Award, the Newcomer Award, the Tony Bowls People's Choice Award, the Jessie Bennett Leadership Award, and the Hudgens Business Leadership Award. Earlier in the week, she received the Preliminary Lifestyle and Fitness in Swimsuit Award.

Along with Campbell, judg-

PAGEANT, PAGE 4A

The Sentinel-Record/Beth Bright

ELECTRIC ENTHUSIASM: Shena Ball began work as the operator of the Tesla Theater in May 2012 and was promoted earlier this year to director of education. Ball spends her time getting to know the needs of area educators to develop better educational programs through Mid-America Science Museum.

SPARK OF INTEREST

Director of education develops love for museum in community

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mid-America Science Museum, an integral part of Hot Springs and Garland County for more than 30 years, will undergo a major renovation later this year. This is one in a continuing series of articles exploring the museum's place in the community.

BETH BRIGHT
The Sentinel-Record

Getting individuals enthusiastic about education takes just a spark of inspiration, and the excitement spreads like electricity through the community.

As the former operator of the Tesla Theater, Director of Education Shena Ball uses that vibrance and electricity to develop educational programs at Mid-America Science Museum.

"I started out with the Tesla Theater in 2012, and it's hard not to love that exhibit," she said walking through the lower level of exhibits. As children, parents and teachers make their way through the museum, Ball still finds time to step out on the floor and connect with visitors.

"The experiences you have in the theater with people are something very special. Many people don't even know who Nikola Tesla was and I'll be honest, I didn't even really know who he was until I started working in the theater. After extensive research on Tesla, it became like making a new friend. I had a lady with a Ph.D. come up to me after a show once asking why she had never heard of this man and I told her he's just left out of the history books."

Ball has a background in education, and staying involved with individuals who use the museum is important to developing educational programs that will benefit everyone who visits.

MUSEUM, PAGE 2A

The Sentinel-Record/Richard Rasmussen

VOLUNTEER LOGO: Hot Springs Police Department volunteers, graduates of the citizen police academy classes, will wear bright yellow shirts with a distinctive identification logo.

HSPD starts volunteer program

DON THOMASON
The Sentinel-Record

The Hot Springs Police Department has kicked off a Community Assisted Policing volunteer program to provide non-uniformed services for the department, Chief David Flory said Friday.

"Whether you're a governmental agency or some kind of business, looking for ways to be more efficient is kind of the trend for the last few years. With cutbacks, especially in municipal budgets, you're always looking for ways to do more work with less money," Flory said.

He said law enforcement agencies have used volunteers across the board in America for a number of years, with the volunteers typically cultivated from graduates of citizen police academy classes.

"That is what we're doing. We've been doing citizen police classes for a number of years and we just completed one about a month ago. One of my big goals was to create a volunteer program in order to create some efficiency within the organization where the police force is multiplied and you get free work from the volunteers who want to give back to their community by relieving officers

POLICE, PAGE 4A

State preps for carbon release regulations

CHUCK BARTELS
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas' utilities and representatives of business and government will soon hold their first detailed talk about the proposed federal regulations intended to reduce the nation's climate-warming emissions by 30 percent by 2030.

President Barack Obama announced the initiative earlier this month, and each state is asked to develop its own plan for reaching its goal — a cut of nearly 45 percent for Arkansas, which gets about half of its electricity from coal-fired power plants and the rest from a mix of natural gas, nuclear and hydroelectric.

"If not, the federal government will (develop the standards). It's important for the stakeholders in this state who are most familiar with our energy sources and resources to come evaluate this on our own," said Colette Honorable, chairman of the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission.

The panel oversees the state Department of Environmental Quality, which has organized a Wednesday meeting with the state Public Service Commission for an opening discussion about the emissions plan.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Arkansas is among the top third of the nation's consumers of electricity on a per-customer basis. Food manufacturing, an important source of jobs, and other industries require large amounts of power, as does agriculture. Arkansas produces half of the nation's rice, and demand rises after harvest when the rice is being dried.

Obama's plan has been well-received by the state's environmental groups but businesses and utilities foresee problems on the horizon if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency puts the regulations in place.

"Anything we can do to reduce carbon emissions and slow the

CARBON, PAGE 2A

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Weather

CHANCE OF STORMS. HIGHS IN THE HIGH 80S. LOWS IN THE LOW 70S.

SUNRISE: 6 A.M.
SUNSET: 8:28 P.M.

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TUESDAY: HIGH 86° LOW 71°

WEDNESDAY: HIGH 86° LOW 70°

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