UKRAINE
Russian troops take over Ukraine's Crimea region
WORLD ■ PAGE 6A

OAKLAWN
Valid Commander shows he's legit
SPORTS ■ PAGE 1B

SUNDAY
March 2, 2014

The Sentinel-Record

Four sections,
36 pages
Number 61, Volume 137
$1.25

www.hotsr.com

Published daily in Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas, since 1877

Park Avenue set to reopen

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

DAMAGE: Crews work on demolishing the remains of the Majestic Hotel on Saturday.

CALEB TAYLOR
The Sentinel-Record

Crews made more progress on demolishing the burned remnants of the Majestic Hotel on Saturday morning in order to get Park Avenue reopened late Saturday night.

County Judge Rick Davis, who consulted on the demolition, said Saturday that crews worked through Friday night and into the morning to raze the entire structure except one corner of the building.

Kevin Coakley of Coakley Co. Inc., the company working on the demolition, said the remaining corner was brought down at approximately 5 p.m., and that officials hoped to have made enough progress by 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. in order to reopen Park Avenue.

Davis said Saturday morning that city officials hoped to have the burned building demolished, leaving only the height of one floor, so that Park Avenue could be reopened on Saturday.

"We'll finish before the day is over," Davis said. "The big fear is if we left all 50 feet of it standing after being burned that it would possibly fall out over Park Avenue. I'm hoping we'll finish today. We've got a corner of the building that is being kind of tedious."

Davis said officials planned to put fencing and barricades around the structure after the demolition to discourage curious types from going inside the

MAJESTIC, PAGE 5A

Grand marshal 'having a ball,' ready to go green

BETH BRIGHT
The Sentinel-Record

The city of Hot Springs has a lot to look forward to on March 17, as celebrity grand marshal Jim Belushi takes a short break from his schedule and makes his first trip to Arkansas.

A Chicago native, Belushi is no stranger to the holiday. Coincidentally, Chicago's celebration, which involves dyeing the Chicago River green, and Hot Springs' parade were both placed on a top 10 list of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States by NBC's "Today Show," in 2012, and vacationrentals.com.

With an infectious laugh and bigger-than-life personality, Belushi is a perfect match for what is considered one of the biggest little St. Patrick's Day parades in the South.

As the day draws closer, Belushi said he's coming into the First Ever 11th Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade unsure of what to expect.

"I've never been to Hot Springs, I've never heard of the parade, but when my assistant sent me the invitation I just laughed," he told *The Sentinel-Record*. "I thought the idea was absolutely hilarious and said 'Of course I'll do this.'"

Like a fish out of water, he said, Belushi is looking forward to seeing where "this 98-foot long journey" is going to take him, as it will be a nice break between filming projects and other gigs.

To say his life is busy lately might be an understatement, but Belushi said he's "having lots of fun" touring with his improv comedy troupe "Jim Belushi and the Board of Comedy," filming for the big screen and television, and performing alongside Dan Aykroyd with "The Blues Brothers" and his own blues band, "The Sacred Hearts."

"I've been filming this really beautiful and funny film directed by Kenny Ortega and written by James Orr called 'A Change of Heart,'" he said.

PARADE, PAGE 3A

FOLO may get aid from Congress

CALEB TAYLOR
The Sentinel-Record

Friends of Lake Ouachita would once again be allowed to collect visitor user fees and take that revenue to spend on improvements to Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend campgrounds if recent bills introduced by Arkansas' congressional delegation are passed into law.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced in September 2013 that "it lacks authority to permit the nonprofit, cooperating association Friends of Lake Ouachita to reinvest user fees collected from patrons of the Crystal Springs and Tompkins Bend campgrounds at Lake Ouachita."

However, U.S. Rep. Tom Cotton, R-District 4, introduced a bill, sponsored by Arkansas's three other House members, Wednesday to allow the Corps of Engineers to restore such programs.

"Despite years of successful operation, the Corps recently

FOLO, PAGE 5A

Ready for summer

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

Reid Bennett, 6, left, and his brother, Graham Bennett, 10, both of Little Rock, explore a Sea Doo Saturday at the 28th annual Hot Springs Boat, Tackle & RV Show at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The show continues from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today.

NPCC wary of 'private option' battle

JAY BELL
The Sentinel-Record

National Park Community College President Sally Carder says the school's officials are monitoring the Legislature's actions involving the state's Medicaid expansion compromise and its potential impact on NPCC.

Carder discussed the the "private option" and how it would affect the college at the NPCC Board of Trustees regular meeting on Wednesday.

The House delayed plans to vote for a fifth time on the "private option" Tuesday. No vote was held on Wednesday or Thursday. The House adjourned Thursday until Monday afternoon.

Carder said the college's stance on the issue is for the Legislature to reauthorize the program. She said $90 million would be cut from the state budget if the program was not renewed.

NPCC, PAGE 4A

Wintertime drawdown to end on Friday

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The annual wintertime drawdown of lakes Hamilton and Catherine will end Friday, according to Entergy Arkansas Inc.

"We are hoping that the extreme cold temperatures we received this winter will help in reducing the amount of nuisance vegetation on the lakes this coming summer season," Bobby Pharr, manager of Entergy's hydro operations, said earlier this week.

"A winter with lower-than-normal temperatures, when we were scheduled for a 5-foot drawdown, is just what we needed. This allowed more lakebed to be exposed to the freezing temperatures and hopefully killed more of the bad aquatic weeds," Pharr said.

Both lakes were drawn down 5 feet in November 2013. The lakes will rise approximately 6 inches per day beginning Friday until March 15, when they are expected to be at their normal summertime levels.

The lakes are drawn down each winter to facilitate shoreline maintenance and inspection and to help control nuisance aquatic vegetation.

It is important to have the lakes back to normal summertime levels before fish spawning activity begins, which is normally around mid-March, Entergy said in a news release.

"Lakefront property owners should

DRAWDOWN, PAGE 3A

Weather

SHOWERS LIKELY. HIGHS IN THE MID 50S. LOWS IN THE LOW 20S.

SUNRISE: 6:41 A.M.
SUNSET: 6:08 P.M.

MORE ON PAGE 2A

MONDAY:
HIGH 32° LOW 21°

TUESDAY:
HIGH 45° LOW 28°

Index

Arts, etc.	2C	Obituaries	6-7B
Classified	1-6D	Viewpoints	8-9B
Sports	1-5B	School News	9-11A
FYI	2A	Politics Today	12A
Lifestyles	5-8C	Statistics	10B

Subscriber of the Day

Recognizing
Tommy Hodges,
a reader of *The Sentinel-Record*
for 20-plus years

8 32116 00100 4

• 300 Spring St. Hot Springs, AR 71901 • To subscribe or place an advertisement, call 501-623-7711 or 922-0979 in Hot Springs Village •