

# ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

February 23, 2013

---

## Green Forest schools spend \$140K on iPads for students (Carroll County News)

GREEN FOREST -- School Board members voted to spend more than \$140,000 on iPads and shatter-proof window tinting at a meeting Monday night.

Green Forest Superintendent Matt Summers said purchasing the iPads was a "proactive" move meant to prepare the district for coming changes.

The Arkansas Department of Education will begin requiring districts to complete standardized tests via the Internet in 2015, Summers said, and the state has recommended schools purchase one device for every two students.

Monday's vote still falls short of that recommendation -- providing only 270 devices, or 30 for each grade level from kindergarten to eighth.

Summers said board members would consider purchasing additional units -- for high school students, among others -- if extra funds are available when the district closes out its budget in June.

In addition to testing, Summers said the iPads would be used for day-to-day classroom instruction. Teachers have already begun experimenting with 90 iPads purchased at the end of last year -- at a cost of approximately \$50,000.

"We wanted to put it in our teachers' hands (first)," Summers said, in the hope that they could learn the technology early and later help students do the same.

The devices purchased Monday were second generation iPads, which included 16 Gigabytes of memory and a two-year warranty. They were purchased for \$132,934.50 from Apple, Inc.

According to information the superintendent provided to board members, no other companies were solicited for bids because "only one company (could) furnish the items."

School security

Also Monday, board members approved spending nearly \$10,000 on shatter-proof window film.

The film, purchased through American Window Tinting, of Fayetteville, will be installed on building entrances across campus.

Summers said the company had been pitching its product to schools throughout the region since a gunman killed 20 students and six adults at a Newtown, Conn. elementary school in December.

The product's primary purpose is to provide additional security, Summers said. However, he added the film would also decrease utility costs by better insulating buildings.

The superintendent said the purchase was one element of an effort to improve school security in the wake of the Newtown massacre.

Another element -- the hiring of a second school resource officer -- is also moving forward, though Summers said Monday this would not happen until next year. He did not say how the additional officer would be funded.

#### Other news

In other news, the District will soon begin accepting bids for a project to improve drainage and install more sidewalks at Tiger Stadium.

Summers said the initial construction of the stadium had left a number of "loose ends," in addition to the water and sidewalk problems, which will also be remedied.

The work will cost an estimated \$50,000 to \$70,000, Summers said, and should be completed by the second week in April, in time for the First National Bank Senior High Track Meet on May 2.

Bids will be opened at 2 p.m. on Mar. 5, in the Alumni Center.

In other business, board members:

- \* Renewed the board's liability insurance. The annual premium for the policy, purchased from Bancorp South Insurance Services through the Arkansas School Board Association, is \$5,916.

- \* Renewed the District's contract with Charles Nichols, of the Family Psychological Center, to provide special education services for Green Forest schools on an as-needed basis during this school year.

- \* Approved last year's legislative audit.

- \* Approved a request by middle and high school choir students to sell cookie dough to raise money for group activities.

- \* Approved a request by the Future Business Leaders of America to solicit donations for the Arkansas Children's Hospital.

- \* Approved a request by the District lunch ladies to sell students sunglasses branded with the school logo. Proceeds will go toward scholarships.

- \* Approved two fundraiser requests by the Green Forest Education Foundation. The foundation will sell books featuring photos of every graduating class since 1898. The foundation will also host a trivia night on Mar. 14. There will be a \$10 entry fee for the event, with participants asked to bring a side dish. The proceeds of both fundraisers will go toward scholarships for area students.

The School Board will meet again at 5 p.m. on Mar. 26, in the Alumni Building on the Green Forest School campus. The meeting was rescheduled from its normal time because of Spring Break. For more information, call 870-438-5201.

---

Kindergarten Girl Left on Benton School Bus Walks to School (CW TV News, Little Rock)

BENTON, AR - Tuesday morning a Benton mom got a call that her daughter was left on a school bus after everyone got off including the driver.

"There's a million thoughts that would go through a mom's mind," she said.

We aren't saying who she is for the sake of her child's identity.

She says her kindergarten daughter apparently missed the Perrin Elementary stop in the morning. She claims when the driver made the final drop at the Junior High, he got off and left.

"She got off the bus and started walking through morning school traffic trying to get back to school."

Her school is over a mile away but she says her daughter wasn't phased.

"She's a brave little girl," she remarked. "She's not scared of nothing."

She's apparently not afraid of anything, except however for maybe getting in trouble.

"I think that she thought she would get in trouble if she spoke up and was gonna rectify the situation herself and get to school."

Now it's the mom who left to rectify what happened and what should be done.

Alaina Mitchell's daughter rides the same bus but she doesn't want her to anymore.

If it were up to her she said, "There should be some type of disciplinary action for this driver if he's not terminated. I'd rather take her to school myself and pick her up because that's not responsible."

This particular unnamed mom says she's not asking for that.

She says everyone from the principal to the Superintendent has gone above and beyond to fix the problem.

She claimed she's working with the district on changing, amending and/or enforcing the policies.

"Everything is being handled and its gonna get worked out and I'm satisfied with how they're handling everything."

We tried reaching out to the school district through calls and e-mails but as of publication had no response.

According to the Arkansas State Police, for a bus driver to receive their commercial drivers license they have to take a test that specifically mentions the procedure requiring the driver to "walk through the bus and check for hiding/sleeping students and items left by students."

This mom says she's still proud to be a part of the Benton School District.

---

## **Sequestration: Thousands of jobs, millions in funding at stake for Arkansas (Pine Bluff Commercial)**

WASHINGTON – Thousands of Arkansans could lose their jobs and the state could lose millions in federal support if Congress fails to strike a deal on indiscriminate budget cuts set to take effect on March 1.

The cuts, divided between defense and domestic programs, were designed back in 2011 to be an unpalatable time bomb to force policy makers to reach a compromise on reducing the nation's deficit.

Federal Controller Danny Werfel estimated that the hit the automatic cuts would deliver to the national economy “translates into hundreds of thousands – if not more – of job losses.”

About 9,150 Arkansans could lose their jobs due to the impact of sequestration, according to a George Mason University study prepared for the Aerospace Industries Association.

Arkansas could also suffer a \$920 million loss in economic productivity because of the cuts, according to the study by GMU economist Stephen Fuller.

Lawmakers return to Capitol Hill on Monday with Democrats, Republicans and the White House opposed to the \$85 billion in automatic spending cuts but lacking any agreement on how to avoid them.

“Sequestration is going to be bad. It creates a lot of hardship,” said Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark.

Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., said that time appears to be running out on reaching an agreement.

“Given the time frame, it appears we are going to have to work through (sequestration),” Boozman said.

Pryor and Boozman spoke at a recent Senate Appropriations hearing where agency leaders described the impact the broad-based cuts are expected to have on the nation. In the last week, more details have surfaced.

Medicaid, Social Security, Food Stamps, veteran benefits and federal transportation dollars are exempt from the cuts. Nearly 900 discretionary spending accounts will be reduced by 9.4 percent for defense and 8.2 percent for domestic programs.

### **Defense**

The Pentagon plans for sequestration include: A \$23 million reduction to Pine Bluff Arsenal, a cut of \$9.4 million to Fort Chaffee in Fort Smith and \$17.8 million to Camp Robinson in North Little Rock. The Arkansas National Guard would lose \$13.3 million and the Arkansas Army Reserve \$6.82 million.

The Air Force and Army also plan to furlough civilian employees likely one day a week for up to 22 weeks starting in late April. A projected 2,782 Arkansans would lose \$19.6 million in wages.

Defense Comptroller Robert Hale said the military furloughs would save between \$4 billion and \$5 billion, leaving another \$40 billion to be extracted from cutbacks in weapons purchases, service contracts and other Pentagon spending.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said that furloughing food safety inspectors would be the last option for the agency to achieve required cuts but acknowledged it is a possibility given the need to reduce USDA's budget by \$2 billion.

Arkansas could be hit particularly hard if the 6,000 meat safety inspectors face furloughs because poultry and other processors cannot operate without them in the plant.

"These furlough could result in as much as 15 days of lost production, costing roughly over \$10 billion in production losses, and industry workers would experience over \$400 million in lost wages," Vilsack said.

Closing meat processing plants for 15 days would mean as much as 3.3 billion pounds of chicken and 2 billion pounds of egg products would not be processed – driving up prices and disrupting the food supply, Pryor said.

### Airports

Arkansans who use rural airports could also feel an immediate impact as plans are under way — should sequestration be triggered — to close the air traffic control towers at airports in Fort Smith, Springdale, Fayetteville and Rogers. The overnight shift at the control tower in Little Rock would end, according to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

The closings are part of the Federal Aviation Administration plans to save \$600 million by shutting 100 air traffic control towers at small airports, eliminating overnight shifts at 60 towers and furloughing 47,000 employees at least one day a pay period.

### Education

Arkansas would lose nearly \$26 million it receives through 19 federal programs, according to estimates provided by the National Education Association.

The largest hit would be to public school districts serving large populations of students from low-income families. About 250 Title 1 school districts in Arkansas would lose \$7.9 million.

Little Rock would likely lose more than \$500,000, Fort Smith and Pulaski County more than \$250,000 each, North Little Rock around \$225,000, Pine Bluff and Springdale more than \$150,000 each, and Fayetteville and Rogers more than \$120,000 each, based on the NEA figures.

The association's estimate for Arkansas also includes a \$5.7 million cut in IDEA Special Education grants and a \$3.8 million reduction in Head Start funding.

A sequester report by Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee projected different losses in education funding for Arkansas. They said the state would lose nearly \$6.3 million in Title 1, nearly \$6 million in special education and about \$4 million in Head Start funding.

Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and the UA-Pine Bluff could lose as much as \$3.6 million in research grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and Department of Energy, according to a coalition of university associations.

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, meanwhile, is bracing for as much as \$12.2 million in reduced federal funding for research and patient care under sequestration.

Arkansas would also lose about \$3.9 million in federal funds for job training programs, according to the National Skills Coalition. The coalition estimates that more than 10,000 fewer Arkansans would be assisted because of sequestration.

#### Alternatives

No formal legislation has been offered in the current session of Congress to replace the automatic spending cuts, but the White House, House Republicans and Senate Democrats have outlined separate plans.

Senate Democratic leaders have outlined an alternative that would raise \$110 billion. Half would come by requiring households earning more than \$2 million a year to pay at least 30 percent of their income in federal taxes. The other half would come by eliminating direct payments to farmers and from reduced military spending after the planned end to combat operations in Afghanistan next year.

The Agriculture Council of Arkansas opposes the cuts to farm subsidies.

“Eliminating this important program for farmers without a viable safety net alternative for this region is irresponsible and damaging to Arkansas agriculture,” said Andrew Grobmyer, executive vice president of the council.

House Republicans have balked at raising any additional revenues to close the deficit, insisting instead that the across-the-board cuts should be replaced with more thoughtful spending reductions.

“By insisting we tax our way out of this mess rather than accept our spending addiction, the president and Senate Democrats are threatening the security of our nation, and any proposal that replaces real spending cuts with more taxes will not and should not be approved,” said Rep. Steve Womack, R-Rogers.

Alternative spending cuts that Republicans have suggested include reductions in the Food Stamp program, cuts to ObamaCare and elimination of waste, fraud and abuse in other programs.