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## Susan Redden: Area Democrats, Republicans plan debate watch parties

Susan Redden 17 hrs ago

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Area Democrats and Republicans will gather in respective campaign headquarters Monday to watch the first debate between presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

The debate will be broadcast at 8 p.m. and the GOP event will start at 6:30 p.m. with dinner, according to Jimmy Morris, executive director of the Jasper County Republican Central Committee. GOP campaign headquarters are located at 2640 E. 32nd St.

“We’re hoping for a good turnout; there’s definitely a lot of interest,” he said.

Democrats also will hold a watch party, also starting with food, at 7 p.m. at campaign headquarters at 106 S. Main St.

Both parties also are distributing campaign signs and materials and running get-out-the-vote programs out of their headquarters. Hours for the Democrat office are 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, noon to 8 p.m. on Saturday and 2 to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Operating hours will be extended in October, according Krista Stark, executive director of Southwest Missouri Democrats.

In addition, she said, volunteers will hold a voter registration drive Thursday as part of the Webb City High School homecoming parade.

Hours of the GOP headquarters are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Neosho resident Genevieve Williams, Democrat candidate for Congress from Missouri’s 7th District, will tour the 11 counties in the district starting Sept. 30. Specifics of the tour will be announced on the campaign website.

Williams pointed out the tour will take place at the same time that incumbent Rep. Billy Long will be holding a campaign fundraiser in Las Vegas. That event is set for the Wynn Las Vegas; suggested contributions to attend will start at \$2,500.

"What I'll be doing," Williams said, "is meeting with people in the district, talking with them and listening to them, which is what I think a member of Congress should be doing."

She noted she and Benjamin Brixey, the Libertarian candidate, had accepted invitations for a candidate debate set for Oct. 26 at Missouri State University in Springfield.

Missouri Health Care for All and other local groups will join together Oct. 7 for a forum on issues involving health and mental health in the upcoming election.

The event, set for 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the Joplin campus of Missouri State University, 724 Illinois Ave., will include information from Missouri Health Care for All, the Joplin Community Clinic and the Joplin chapter of the National Organization for Mental Illness on the importance of accessibility to health care and mental health care.

Arielle Speer is a volunteer for the Missouri group, which has been urging Missouri lawmakers to expand Medicaid to extend health care to more state residents. She said access to mental health care also is important and was needed by Joplin residents who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after the May 2011 tornado.

The GOP campaign headquarters was a stopping place last week for FRC Action's Values Bus Tour.

Brent Keiler, director for FRC Action, said the bus will make stops in 20 states before the November election to emphasize the importance of conservative values when voters make decisions in state and national elections. He said the organization is endorsing the re-election campaign of U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt and is backing Josh Hawley, who is running for Missouri attorney general.

Susan Redden is a former reporter for The Joplin Globe.

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