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## Susan Redden: Speakers' list grows for Jasper-Newton County Lincoln Days

By Susan Redden [sredden@joplinglobe.com](mailto:sredden@joplinglobe.com) Feb 24, 2017



Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft has been added to the list of speakers for the annual Jasper-Newton County Lincoln Days banquet on Saturday, March 4.

Those attending the event at the Joplin Convention and Trade Center also will hear from Lt. Gov. Mike Parson, Missouri GOP Chairman Todd Graves, and U.S. Rep. Billy Long.

Gov. Eric Greitens and other Republican statewide officials have been invited, according to Nick Myers, chairman of the Newton County Republican Central Committee, which, with its Jasper County counterparts, organizes the annual gathering.

Myers said Long's speech is expected to include comments on his recent meeting with President Donald Trump. Long was invited to the White House recently for a meeting with the president, as one of approximately 10 lawmakers who had supported Trump since the beginning of his campaign.

Banquet tickets are \$40 each and can be reserved online at [joplinlincolnday.com](http://joplinlincolnday.com) or obtained at the Software Center, 2604 E. Seventh St. or the offices of Nick Myers, 5031 S. Range Line. More information is available by calling 417-626-8699.

Monday will be the last day the committee can accept organizations or individuals who want to be event sponsors, Myers said. The banquet raises funds for party activities in the two counties.

Though he hasn't confirmed for the local event, Greitens is in Springfield this weekend for the annual Missouri Lincoln Days. He is to hold a meet-and-greet event today, and several members of his cabinet will speak and answer questions.

U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt also will be a Lincoln Days breakfast speaker today. Several groups, headed by the Missouri Medicaid Coalition, have asked Blunt to meet with them in a gathering they plan outside the convention center.

During the current congressional recess, some federal lawmakers have held town hall meetings and have encountered angry constituents fearful they will lose health coverage if Republican majorities follow through with plans to repeal and replace the federal health care act. No GOP lawmakers who represent the region have scheduled meetings, though U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, will answer constituents' questions via Facebook on Monday.

Krista Stark, executive director of Southwest Missouri Democrats, said she and members of the group have sent letters to Long, urging him to have a town hall.

"He needs to hear the concerns of residents from the 7th District," she said.

### Trump vs. the media

There's nothing new about an adversarial relationship between the media and government. But, I never thought I would see a time when officials would single out reporters from news organizations and ban them from a press briefing supposedly open to all news organizations that cover the White House.

That happened yesterday when reporters for five news organizations, including The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and CNN, were blocked from a question-and-answer session with White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer.

Time magazine, USA Today and The Associated Press boycotted the briefing in protest. Reporters from other "mainstream" outlets were allowed in, along with those for organizations including Breitbart and Fox News.

Spokesmen for CNN said the ban "is how they retaliate when you report facts they don't like."

The briefing reportedly focused on CNN reports involving an FBI probe investigating whether Trump advisers were in contact with Russian government intelligence officials before the election.

A U.S. Senate committee also has launched an inquiry after intelligence agencies determined that Russia was involved in hacking the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign in an effort to aid Trump's bid for the presidency.

Susan Redden is a former reporter for The Joplin Globe.

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