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Idaho Statesman

Vouchers would help Boise private schools, hurt rural areas

BY RYAN SUPPE
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Challis, the seat and largest city in Custer County, is home to about 1,000 people, two public schools and no private schools. If a Challis resident

wanted to attend a private school, the closest option is in Sun Valley — 119 miles away. Twenty of Idaho's 44 counties didn't have a private school as of December, according to data compiled by the Idaho State Department of Education and analyzed by the Idaho States-

man. Of the state's 120 private schools, about three in four were in one of four counties: Ada, Canyon, Kootenai and Twin Falls. A handful of Republican lawmakers this session pushed legislation that would have diverted public school funds to

private and home-school families through education savings accounts, a private school voucher mechanism. "School choice" advocates argued Idaho parents should be able use their tax dollars at their preferred school, even if it's private. But the lack of private school

options in rural areas, and the concentration of private schools in urban areas, means that under a school voucher system, rural taxpayers would subsidize urban private schools at their own expense. "Rural schools depend heavily on state funding," Dale Layne, of the Idaho Rural Schools Association, told lawmakers last month. Education savings accounts and vouchers "siphon dollars away from the rural schools to pay for students mostly in urban areas."

SEE SCHOOLS, 2A



Sculptures specialist Eric Silver gets a closer look at a piece brought in for appraisal at the "Antiques Roadshow" event at the Idaho Botanical Garden last May.

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Antiques Roadshow to feature three episodes from Boise

BY RACHEL ROBERTS
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After fans of "Antiques Roadshow" packed the Idaho Botanical Garden last May with various family heirlooms, rare works of art and historical artifacts, the show is set to air

three hourlong episodes filmed in Boise in the coming weeks. Season 27 of the 20-time Emmy-nominated series began airing in January with visits to Cheekwood Estate & Gardens in Nashville, Tennessee; Santa Fe's Museum Hill in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Filoli in Woodside, California; and Shelburne

Museum in Shelburne, Vermont. "After two years of pandemic filming, being back on location with our full Roadshow appraisal events was a dream come true," said executive producer Marsha Bemko in a news release. "The energy and excitement on set was palpable, and

the stories and treasures captured for this new season wowed us all. When the episodes premiere, I know our fans will be wowed, too." Boise's turn in the spotlight will be April 3, April 10 and April 17 — all Mondays — on

SEE ANTIQUES, 3A

Federal aid coming to tornado-wrecked Mississippi

BY LEAH WILLINGHAM
Associated Press

President Joe Biden issued an emergency declaration for Mississippi early Sunday, making federal funding available to the areas hardest hit Friday night by a deadly tornado that ripped through the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest regions of the U.S.

At least 25 people were killed and dozens of others were injured in Mississippi as the massive storm ripped through several towns on its hour-long path. One man was killed after his trailer home flipped several times in Alabama.

Search and recovery crews on Sunday resumed the daunting task of digging through the debris of flattened and battered homes, commercial buildings and municipal offices after hundreds of people were displaced.

A tornado reportedly touched down early Sunday in Troup County, Georgia, near the Alabama state line, according to the Georgia Mutual Aid Group. Affected areas included the county seat of LaGrange, about 67 miles southwest of Atlanta.

Following Biden's declaration, federal funding can be used for recovery efforts in Mississippi's Carroll, Humphreys, Monroe and Sharkey counties, including temporary housing, home repairs, loans covering uninsured property losses and other individual and business programs, the White House said in a statement.

The twister flattened entire blocks, obliterated houses, ripped a steeple off a church and toppled

SEE FEDERAL AID, 2A

Ukraine demands emergency UN meeting over Putin nuke plan

BY KARL RITTER
Associated Press

KYIV, UKRAINE

Ukraine's government on Sunday called for an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council to "counter the Kremlin's nuclear blackmail" after Russian President Vladimir Putin revealed plans to station tactical atomic weapons in Belarus.

One Ukrainian official said

that Russia "took Belarus as a nuclear hostage."

But Moscow said it was making the move in response to the West's increasing military support for Ukraine. Putin announced the plan in a television interview that aired on Saturday, saying it was triggered by a U.K. decision this past week to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing rounds containing depleted uranium.

Putin argued that by deploy-

ing its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, Russia was following the lead of the United States. He noted that Washington has nuclear weapons based in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

"We are doing what they have been doing for decades, stationing them in certain allied countries, preparing the launch platforms and training their crews,"

SEE UKRAINE, 2A



LIBKOS AP

Smoke rises Sunday from burning buildings in Bakhmut, the site of heavy battles with Russian troops in the Donetsk region, Ukraine.



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