

Youth rodeo a family affair

Two generations organize, third competes in Conway competition. – Arkansas, 1B



Office dogs? It's heads, tails

Some people love them, some hate them, some people sneeze. – Business, 1G

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

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In the news

■ **Billy McFarland**, one of the organizers of the haphazardly set up Fyre Festival that was billed as a private-island extravaganza in the Bahamas but was postponed after attendees who had paid as much as \$250,000 each began arriving, was arrested in New York on accusations of making “false representations to investors” in the event.

■ **Carles Puigdemont**, president of Spain's Catalonia region, praised a letter of support for independence as signed by 500 of the region's mayors, and vowed to push forward with an October referendum on autonomy regardless of warnings from the government in Madrid.

■ **Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani**, Qatar's foreign minister, rejected anew the demands from four Arab states that have accused the Persian Gulf state of supporting terrorism, and affirmed that Qatar is “prepared to face whatever consequences” once Monday's deadline for compliance passes.

■ **Olivia de Havilland**, the 101-year-old *Gone with the Wind* actress, filed a lawsuit against FX Networks and *Feud* producer Ryan Murphy, alleging that the TV drama used her name and identity without permission and damaged her reputation.

■ **James Cromwell**, the 77-year-old actor, was sentenced to a week in jail for refusing to pay fines related to his arrest during a December 2015 protest at a natural-gas-fired power plant being built in Wawayanda, N.Y.

■ **Jaroslaw Kaczynski**, leader of Poland's ruling Law and Justice party, praised his country's “new success” in getting to host President Donald Trump ahead of a Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, and suggested that other European states are envious.

■ **Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost**, an Army spokesman, responded to a push by New York congressmen to rename Stonewall Jackson Drive and General Lee Avenue in Brooklyn, saying the street names represent individuals, not causes, and were chosen “in the spirit of reconciliation.”

■ **Zach Landis**, 11, was uninjured after he was awakened by a crash in his bedroom in Anchorage, Alaska, where a black bear had crawled through the window before scrambling back out.

■ **Benjamin Hornberger**, 23, a participant at a rally in Pennsylvania's Gettysburg National Military Park, was in good spirits as paramedics took him to a hospital for care after he accidentally shot himself when a revolver holstered to his leg went off.

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK Today Showers and thunderstorms possible. **High** 89, light southwest winds. **Tonight** Mostly cloudy. **Low** 74.



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28 revelers hurt in LR shooting



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STATON BREIDENTHAL



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MITCHELL PE MASILUN

Little Rock Police Department crime scene personnel (top) collect evidence Saturday morning after the shooting at Power Ultra Lounge at 220 W. Sixth St. At a news conference Saturday afternoon at City Hall, Little Rock Police Chief Kenton Buckner (lower photo, right) said two off-duty officers working as security guards outside the club ended their shift 30 minutes before the shooting but reportedly had turned away a man openly carrying a gun in the entourage of the Memphis rapper who was performing Friday night. Police believe the man later entered the club from a separate entrance.

Witness: Nightclub became a ‘war zone’

SCOTT CARROLL, AZIZA MUSA, ERIC BESSON AND HUNTER FIELD ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

A barrage of gunfire in a crowded downtown nightclub early Saturday injured 25 people, and three others were hurt as they fled the building, Little Rock police said.

Police Chief Kenton Buckner said officers were called about 2:30 a.m. to Power Ultra Lounge at 220 W. Sixth St., where “rival groups,” which he also referred to as gangs, had opened fire after a dispute during a rap concert.

“We do not believe this was an act of terror or an active shooter situation,” Buckner said.

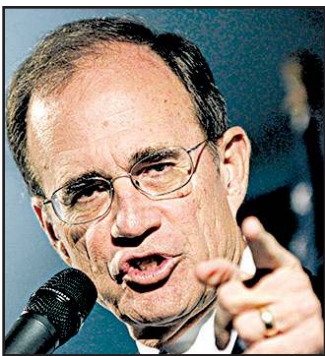
Witnesses said dozens of people rushed for the exits as bullets flew and the injured pleaded for help. Police estimated that between 20 and 40 shots were fired.

“They just got to shooting out of nowhere,” said Jaron Eackles, 25, who said he was shot in the leg and the stomach. “You couldn’t see who it was. It was like 40

See **SHOOTING**, Page 6A

UPDATE

Watch for more today at
arkansasonline.com



AP

Republican Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann of Mississippi said officials “can go jump in the Gulf of Mexico” if he’s asked to turn over voter information.

Some states balk at voter-data request

Can’t legally release it, they say in response to president’s election-fraud panel

COMPILED BY
DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF
FROM WIRE REPORTS

More than two dozen states have refused to fully comply with a White House request to turn over voter registration data, including sensitive information like partial Social Security numbers, party affiliations and military status.

Among the most populous

ones refusing are California and New York. But even some conservative states, such as Texas, that voted for President Donald Trump say they can provide only partial responses because of state law limitations.

Trump expressed frustration with the situation Saturday, saying in a tweet: “Numerous states are refusing to give information to the

very distinguished VOTER FRAUD PANEL. What are they trying to hide?”

The refusals could effectively scuttle much of the work of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity before it even begins. Officials on the panel said they planned to compare the state records with databases of illegal and legal foreigners to determine if large

numbers of unqualified voters are participating in U.S. elections.

Trump established the commission to investigate allegations of voter fraud in the 2016 elections, but Democrats have blasted it as a biased panel that is merely looking for ways to suppress the vote.

Critics have complained that the panel is stacked with

See **VOTERS**, Page 13A

One toke over the line a literal in Texarkana

Medical pot won’t be legal in Texas

ERIC BESSON
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Coming soon to Texarkana, a transformation of life-altering proportions: Medicine on one side of the street but an illegal substance on the other.

As Arkansas readies to become the first state in the Bible Belt where marijuana is legally prescribed and sold to patients, officials in Texar-

kana, Texas, say police there will not recognize Arkansas’ pot permission slips during traffic stops and can arrest people for drug possession.

Kenny Haskin, city manager of Texarkana, Ark., said prospective marijuana growers and sellers are reaching out to him on a daily basis to ask about local rules in what will be one of the state’s

See **MARIJUANA**, Page 7A

After ‘13 oil spill, homes still for sale, suits linger

DEBRA HALE-SHELTON
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

More than four years after an aging pipeline ruptured and spilled thousands of gallons of oil into a Mayflower neighborhood, the legal fallout lingers.

At one point, at least 17 lawsuits filed against pipeline owner Exxon Mobil Corp. or its subsidiaries were pending in state and federal

courts. Six were in U.S. District Court in Little Rock; the remainder were in Faulkner County Circuit Court in Conway.

Today, five lawsuits are pending in circuit court. And the only case still pending in a federal court was filed, not against the oil giant, but by it.

The Pegasus pipeline, built in 1947-48, cracked open

See **OIL SPILL**, Page 8A



AP/NG HAN GUAN

Pro-democracy protesters clash with pro-Chinese counterprotesters Saturday in Hong Kong during a march to demand greater openness and to oppose China’s creeping influence in the city.

Don’t threaten China, Xi warns Hong Kong

COMPILED BY
DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF
FOM WIRE REPORTS

HONG KONG — Chinese President Xi Jinping warned Saturday that any activities in Hong Kong seen as threatening China’s sovereignty and stability would be “absolutely impermissible.” It was some of his harshest language yet

U.S. PRESSURES China for more results in ending North Korea nuclear threat. Page 12A.

against burgeoning separatist sentiment in the territory.

In a speech marking 20 years since the city became a semiautonomous Chinese region after its hand-over from

Britain, Xi pledged Beijing’s support for the “one country, two systems” blueprint, under which Hong Kong controls many of its own affairs and retains civil liberties, including free speech.

However, he said Hong Kong had to do more to shore up security and boost patriotism.

See **HONG KONG**, Page 12A

Shooting

• Continued from Page 1A
shots. I hit the ground and just went to the door, and I ended up getting shot. You couldn't see anything. It felt like it was never going to stop.”

Buckner said the injured ranged in age from 16 to 35. They were taken to multiple hospitals in central Arkansas for treatment. Three were reportedly in critical condition Saturday afternoon.

The shooting occurred as Little Rock struggles with an increase in violent crime that police said began late in 2016 and continues.

Buckner said police are investigating whether the nightclub shooting is connected to any previous shootings in the city.

The chief said police did not have any suspects in the nightclub shooting as of late Saturday, and investigators didn't know if the shooters were among the injured. No arrests had been made late Saturday.

“I want to reassure our public that this was not an act of terrorism but a tragedy, a local community tragedy,” Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola said. “It does not appear to be a planned shooting. It appears there was a disagreement amongst a small subset of individuals at a concert that turned violent because of the presence of rivalries and weapons.”

The FBI and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said their agencies are assisting Little Rock police in the investigation.

Little Rock officials said two off-duty officers were working as security guards in a parking lot across the street from the club before the shooting. The officers confronted a man in the entourage of Memphis rapper Finesse 2Tymes, who performed at the club early Saturday. Police said the man was openly carrying a gun, and officers stopped him from going into the nightclub.

Investigators believe the man later went into the club through a separate entrance, according to police.

Community leaders and elected officials in Arkansas and across the country condemned the shooting, offered support to the injured and expressed their gratitude to first responders.

In Little Rock, officials announced Saturday afternoon that the city is shutting down Power Ultra Lounge on grounds that it was operating illegally as an events center and nightclub. City Manager Bruce Moore said the building was licensed as a restaurant.

UAMS Medical Center in Little Rock treated 11 of the shooting victims. Most were treated and released, said Leslie Taylor, vice chancellor for the Office of Communications and Marketing. All of those people had injuries that were not considered life-threatening, she said.

Three of the injured were taken to CHI St. Vincent hospital and were listed in stable condition, said Aaron Sadler, a hospital spokesman.

One couple, who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation, said their nephew — “an innocent bystander” — was shot in the arm at the club. He will recover, they said, and was resting at UAMS medical center Saturday. The couple added that his family is praying for all the victims.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STATON BREIDENTHAL
A Little Rock police team collects evidence Saturday outside the Power Ultra Lounge in the city's downtown, where gunfire around 2:30 a.m. injured more than two dozen people. A witness said some people broke windows on the second floor of the venue to try to escape.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STATON BREIDENTHAL
Three men who declined to give their names stand Saturday morning in the parking lot across from the Power Ultra Lounge at 220 W. Sixth St. They said they were not at the club when shots were fired.

Ten victims originally were taken to Baptist Health hospitals, said Mark Lowman, vice president for strategic development. As of 3 p.m. Saturday, he said, the hospital system had treated seven victims in total, four in Little Rock and three in North Little Rock.

One person injured in the shooting was taken to Conway Regional Medical Center, according to Metropolitan Emergency Medical Services of Little Rock.

“By the grace of God,” Stodola said, “all the victims are expected to survive.”

FROM CLUB TO ‘WAR ZONE’

Melvin Smith, 25, said he was sitting near the stage at Power Ultra Lounge when two men started shooting at other men.

He said it looked “like an assassination attempt.”

“They just started shooting simultaneously and then return shots was fired,” said Smith, adding that two of his friends were shot below the waist. “Then some more peo-



Video and photos on the web
arkansasonline.com/
LRclubshooting

ple went and got more guns and came back and there was more shooting outside. It was just a war zone.”

He said victims were “laying on the floor and begging for help,” but no one stopped to assist them. Smith said he saw people try to open the windows on the second-floor venue to escape the gunfire.

“People were pushing each other down, tripping, just trying to get out,” he said.

Smith's mother, Kaneisha Farr, 46, was in the club when the gunfire began.

“Blood was everywhere,” she said. “People was laying on the floor. I was trying to make sure me and my kids was OK.”

A video posted on Facebook early Saturday appears

to show the beginning of the shooting. The cellphone footage shows Finesse 2Tymes and other performers onstage when a volley of gunfire begins. The screen goes dark, and people are heard screaming. One woman can be heard yelling, “Go! Go!”

The screen remains dark as the shots continue.

Eackles said security guards conducted pat-down searches at the club's entrance but did not check IDs. He said he did not see any fights or arguments in the club before the shooting. Once the gunfire started, he didn't look to see who was doing the shooting.

“I was focused on not dying,” Eackles said. “Just trying to get out.”

Tyrone Jackson, 44, said the shooter appeared to be indiscriminately firing at people who laid on the club's floor.

Jackson, who watched the concert from the VIP area, said he first heard the gunfire as Finesse 2Tymes performed. He estimated he was 15 feet away from a shooter, whom he described as a man with short dreadlocks and wearing a white T-shirt and blue shorts.

At one point, the gunfire paused and the man left the room. When people began to stand up, he returned.

“I thought I told you m***** to get down,” the man shouted.

He then fired several more rounds.

“He was shooting at them while they were on the ground,” Jackson said. “They were laying down, and he was shooting at them.”

LEADERS REACT

Among elected officials condemning the shooting Sat-

urday was Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who expressed concern over the increase in violent crime in Little Rock.

“Little Rock's crime problem seems to be intensifying,” Hutchinson said in a statement Saturday. “Every few days it seems a high-profile shooting dominates the news, culminating with this morning's events. I have spoken this morning with Mayor Stodola and I have offered both my heartfelt concern over this senseless violent tragedy and state assets as needed to address the continued threat of violence in our community.”

Former Arizona Congressman Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot and critically injured at a meeting with constituents in 2011, said in a statement that the shooting was “devastating.”

She also condemned a shooting that left two people dead and six injured at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York on Friday.

“The rate of gun violence in our nation is unacceptable, and solutions to make our communities safer are possible,” Giffords said. “It's time to stand together in support of an action that will make horrific events like these less likely in the future.”

U.S. Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., also issued a statement.

“Cathy and I send our prayers to the victims of this tragic violence,” the statement read. “I continue to stand and support law enforcement to fight this ongoing reckless violence in our capital city.”

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said in a statement that she was grateful for the first responders who saved multiple lives Saturday.

“Today, we all awoke to the tragic news that this senseless act of violence occurred right in the heart of our capital city,” she said. “As state and community leaders, it is out responsibility to encourage a civil, peaceful discourse and that violence can never be the solution to solve our differences.”

RISING VIOLENCE

Saturday's shooting is the latest in a surge of violent crime in Little Rock that has frustrated police and community leaders.

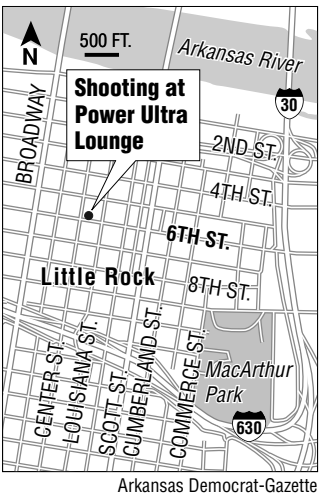
There had been 1,386 incidents of violent crime — homicide, robbery, rape and aggravated assault — this year in the city as of Monday, up 24 percent from what police reported through the same date in 2016, according to preliminary data.

Police have linked many of the incidents to feuding gangs whose hostility deepened in late 2016 after the fatal shooting of a 2-year-old girl, Ramiya Reed. The toddler was riding in the back seat of a car with her mother when she was struck by gunfire. Police believe Ramiya was not the shooter's intended target.

Buckner said police are investigating whether Saturday's shooting is connected to the city's previous violence.

Other violent crimes in the city, such as the killing of 3-year-old Acen King in December, have made headlines around the world. Acen was fatally shot in his grandmother's car in what police described as an act of “road rage.”

The Police Department has increased patrols in certain areas of the city and intensified its community outreach efforts as part of a campaign to stem the increase in violent crime. Additionally,



“They just started shooting simultaneously and then return shots was fired. Then some more people went and got more guns and came back and there was more shooting outside. It was just a war zone.”
— Melvin Smith, 25, who said he was sitting near the stage when two men started shooting in what Smith said looked “like an assassination attempt.”

In February police loosened restrictions on police chases. Buckner said some criminals in the city had become “emboldened” because they don't believe officers would pursue them.

The department also participates in a U.S. Department of Justice program, the Violence Reduction Network, that provides police with advanced training and federal resources in cities with high levels of violent crime.

Police have made arrests in Ramiya's killing and numerous other crimes that they believe are connected to her death, but the department has received little cooperation from witnesses and victims in many other cases.

On Thursday, an 18-year-old man was shot multiple times as he drove on Colonel Glenn Road. A 7-year-old boy was injured in a drive-by shooting Tuesday in the 1100 block of Washington Street. Three days before that, two people were injured in a drive-by shooting in the 4500 block of Montclair Avenue.

In addition to those shootings, police have investigated at least a dozen reports of gunfire that have damaged homes, businesses and vehicles over the past 10 days.

Benny Johnson, founder and president of the anti-violence group Arkansas Stop the Violence, called on police and elected officials to do more to address the bloodshed in Little Rock.

“The city has been out of control for a long time,” he said Saturday. “We think every shooting should be treated [with the same urgency] as it was today.”

TREATING THE INJURED

Little Rock police and ambulance officials said medical kits issued to police officers in 2015 played a vital role in treating Saturday's injured.

In 2015, the Police Department equipped each of

Continued on following page

Curb violence, prayer leaders implore at LR vigil

ERIC BESSON
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Prayer leaders called for a communitywide effort to curb violence in Little Rock during a vigil Saturday night after an early morning shooting inside a downtown nightclub left 28 people injured.

“I'm curious as to, before you leave here, that you will make yourself known to somebody you don't know and connect with that individual,” said Robert Holt, executive director of the non-profit Let Our Violence End. “Because right now we are all connected in this time of prayer, but will we continue to connect from this point forward?”

About 100 people attended the candlelight vigil 18 hours after gunfire broke out inside Power Ultra Lounge, where 25 people listening to a rap concert suffered gunshot wounds and three more were hurt during the rush to escape, according to police.

Two victims were considered to be in critical condition after the shooting, but Mayor Mark Stodola said officials expected that all would survive.

“God, we come and we give you thanks that no lives were lost last night. We know that chaos came quickly, but God, your grace was sufficient,” the Rev. Carissa Rodgers said. “But God, we also lament all of the lives that were lost recently in our community by guns and by drive-bys and by other forms of violence happening amongst us.”

Little Rock Police Chief Kenton Buckner said the shooting followed a dispute between “rival groups,” which came as the department has reported an increase in violent crime dating to late 2016. Police did not make an arrest or identify suspects Saturday.

Religious leaders spoke for about 30 minutes Saturday night. By the time they

were finished, the small white candles held by those who gathered had burned to nubs and dripped wax on the floor. Shirts in the audience read “Moms Demand Action,” “Volunteer” and “Vietnam Veteran.”

Evening rainfall forced organizers to move the vigil to a building across from Second Baptist Church Downtown on Eighth Street, rather than the originally planned location on the steps of City Hall.

David Freeman, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in downtown Little Rock, recalled his Central High School graduating class of 25 years ago. Gun violence killed three of his classmates, he said.

“This is nothing new,” Freeman said. “Unless our prayers tonight are a call to action, unless you and I — you and I — do something, we'll let another 25 years go by and we'll gather here again. Let us pray.”



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MITCHELL PE MASILUN
Naome Shelton, 5, of North Little Rock takes part in a downtown Little Rock candlelight vigil Saturday evening after the nightclub shooting earlier. Religious leaders spoke at the vigil for about half an hour.

• Continued from previous page

its more than 500 officers with emergency medical kits known as blowout packs. Each kit contains a tourniquet, hemostatic gauze, bandages, pressure bandage, gloves and two chest seals.

Little Rock police acquired the medical kits, which cost about \$89 apiece, through a grant from the Arkansas Trauma System.

The city's ambulance service, Metropolitan Emergency Medical Services of Little Rock, trained the department to use the packs, and identify and treat traumatic injuries, such as gunshot wounds.

The only medical training Little Rock police received previously was CPR.

MEMS director of operations Greg Thompson said Saturday that officers treated several people injured in the shooting before medics arrived. He said five tourniquets and one chest seal were used.

"A few years ago we never would have seen anything like that," Thompson said. "I believe their actions had a very positive impact on the outcome of this event."

Buckner said he "could not be prouder" of the officers who responded to the shooting.

One of the first cases of Little Rock police using the packs was a shooting outside Power Ultra Lounge in September 2015. A 32-year-old man, who witnesses said was drunk and had been loitering outside the club, was shot in the chest in a disturbance with someone in a sport utility vehicle.

Officers treated the man at the scene before medics arrived. He survived.

Dr. Bill Beck was the on-



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MITCHELL PE MASILUN

Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola (left), with Little Rock city directors and other officials standing behind him at a news conference Saturday, said the shooting appears to have been "a disagreement amongst a small subset of individuals at a concert that turned violent because of the presence of rivalries and weapons." Of the club where the shooting occurred, Stodola said, "We will be shutting this location down, absolutely."

call surgeon Saturday at UAMS Medical Center when medics transported in 11 patients, officials said. Beck said he and his colleagues could not remember a time when so many victims came from one incident.

Beck praised the work of emergency responders from police to medics.

"This is certainly something that people prepare for in Little Rock," he said, "but it's something that is not common."

NIGHTCLUB SHUTTERED

Little Rock officials said the city will file a lawsuit in circuit court to compel Power Ultra Lounge to be closed. The city has a criminal abatement program that targets properties that police fre-

quently respond to because of criminal complaints.

"We will be shutting this location down, absolutely," Stodola said.

Little Rock also will review its rules for private clubs and special events, Stodola and City Manager Bruce Moore said.

Power Ultra Lounge, licensed with the state as a restaurant, is supposed to stop serving alcohol at 2 a.m., about a half-hour before the shooting was reported, according to Stodola.

Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Control took emergency action after the shooting Saturday and suspended Power Ultra Club's "restaurant mixed drink maximum" permit.

According to the agen-

cy's order, the club had three "Class A" violations: failing to be a good neighbor, allowing the possession of weapons on the premises and disorderly conduct.

The state's Department of Finance and Administration-Alcoholic Beverage Control Enforcement is investigating and may issue additional citations.

"We will exercise the authority granted us under the law to preserve and safeguard the public safety," said Mary Robin Casteel, director of Alcoholic Beverage Control. "We feel the events which are alleged to have occurred warrant our decision to suspend liquor sales at this location pending further action by the board."

Beverage Control has suspended the club's permit 11

times for failure to pay appropriate sales taxes, said Jake Bleed, spokesman for the Department of Finance and Administration, which oversees Beverage Control. The agency also has taken "enforcement action" seven times since 2012 regarding multiple offenses at the club, he said, adding that his office will provide the club's full file after the weekend.

Herman Lewis, who owns the nightclub, holds the alcohol-serving permit. Efforts to reach him for comment Saturday were not successful. A woman who identified herself as his mother said in a phone call that Lewis was "shook up" from the shooting and did not want to speak to a reporter.

Lewis is the registered agent for two lounges in Little Rock, according to the Arkansas secretary of state website.

One of the lounges — Power Bar and Grill LLC at 900 Russenberger Road in Little Rock — has lost its license.

The other — Power Kitchen & Bar Inc. — has a listed address of 220 W. Sixth St., the site of Saturday's shooting. It's listed as a nonprofit corporation in "good standing" on the secretary of state website.

On June 2, Lewis was sued by Auto-Chlor System of the Mid South for failing to pay for leased dishwashing equipment at the lounge. The civil complaint, which is in Pulaski County District Court, alleges that Lewis owes \$7,350.

Lewis has had previous legal problems with the city of Little Rock.

In 2010, the city closed his event center, Studio Indigo at 5919 W. 12th St., for not having a business license.

The city alleged that Lewis was improperly operating a nightclub. He argued that he wasn't operating a nightclub, if he didn't charge admission or for alcoholic drinks.

Lewis was sued by the Arkansas Department of Labor in November 2015. He failed to appear, so a district judge found in favor of the Labor Department, ordering Lewis to pay \$3,600. Details about the suit were unclear.

Buckner said Saturday that police had received numerous complaints about drug activity at Power Ultra Lounge. He said vice detectives went to the club about 12:30 a.m. Saturday to make a routine check but made no arrests.

It was quiet later Saturday morning along the block where the shooting occurred as police investigated the scene. Curious neighbors peeked out of windows, and morning walkers and joggers stopped to look at the broken windows and debris scattered in front of the lounge.

Crime scene technicians entered and left the club carrying evidence bags. Upstairs a strobe light and projection screen was still illuminated and could be seen through the building's busted windows.

Several neighbors who live in apartments across the street said they were saddened by the shooting but not surprised. They said they regularly call police because of commotions coming from the club. Each weekend, they said, loud music and fights break out in the parking lot.

Residents declined to give their names, fearing retribution.

"This was bound to happen," one resident said. "It was only a matter of time."

Marijuana

• Continued from Page 1A

most unique marijuana marketplaces, where legal and illegal possession depends on a border line.

"The inquiries here — for whatever reason — are extremely, extremely aggressive," said Haskin, who fields about three calls a day. "They are coming in from all over the country."

The Arkansas Medical Marijuana Commission on Friday began accepting applications from people seeking to grow and sell marijuana. The application period will close Sept. 18, and Arkansas will eventually license up to 32 dispensaries and five cultivation facilities in the state. The ability to legally purchase medical marijuana in Arkansas is expected sometime early next year.

Cities across Arkansas have taken different approaches to the coming new industry.

Two cities have adopted monthslong bans on pot-related businesses. At least one city has loosened its land-use rules to open the door to such businesses. And many cities have taken no action, simply letting state laws dictate pot business placement.

"There's been absolutely nothing shaking around here," El Dorado Mayor Frank Hash said.

STRADDLING THE LINE

Arkansas' six neighbors prohibit marijuana use, putting border cities in some sticky situations regarding the pot law's rollout. But the problems are particularly complex in Texarkana, which shares a street, a U.S. post office, and even its name with its Texas neighbor.

"Several buildings straddle the [state] line," Haskin said. "It's very difficult to tell when you're in Texas and when you're in Arkansas."

About 30,000 people, roughly 1 percent of Arkansas' population, live in Texarkana, Ark. Another 37,000 people live in Texarkana, Texas. The combined Texarkana population is on par with Jonesboro, Arkansas' fifth-largest city.

For Arkansans to legally possess medical marijuana, the state Department of Health, which will administer medical-marijuana registry cards, will require an Arkansas-issued identification or driver's license — complete with a name and address that match a required doctor's certification.

The Health Department says only Arkansas residents will be allowed to receive the cards. The state is currently taking applications for the medical marijuana registry cards. To apply for one, a patient must have a doctor's certification that he suffers from one of 18 medical conditions

for which he can be prescribed marijuana as a treatment.

The Health Department has reiterated that it is currently still illegal to possess marijuana in Arkansas.

Haskin says he's open to new pot businesses going in on his side of the line, but Texas authorities are not.

Shawn Vaughn, a spokesman for the Texarkana, Texas, Police Department, said officers there will not recognize Arkansas Health Department-issued cards on prescribed marijuana.

"From our perspective, it's still illegal in any shape, form or fashion in Texas," Vaughn said. "Anybody who has marijuana, medical or otherwise, in their possession ... would be subject to arrest in Texas."

The Texas Department of Public Safety, which oversees highway patrols in that state, did not respond to specific questions about how its troopers plan to handle Arkansas-prescribed marijuana cases.

"Marijuana possession is illegal in Texas," the department simply said.

Under the new Arkansas law, qualifying patients and caregivers will be allowed to buy up to 2½ ounces of marijuana every 14 days.

Holding that amount in Texas would be a misdemeanor or punishable by up to one year in prison and a maximum fine of \$4,000. That's on par with Arkansas' law, which will continue to apply to people who don't have prescriptions for marijuana.

"If you're an Arkansas resident and you've been permitted to acquire medical marijuana, you probably need to keep it home," Texarkana, Texas, City Manager John Whitson said.

Avoiding Texas won't be easy in that city where the two states are "melded together," Haskin said.

The miles-long State Line Avenue bisects the city. Northbound drivers are in Arkansas, but a U-turn would put them in Texas.

Liquor stores, banned on the Texas side of town, are popular along northbound State Line Avenue.

So a medical-marijuana dispensary along State Line Avenue would create a challenge for buyers.

Texarkana officials looked into banning dispensaries along the heavily trafficked roadway but opted against it. In places, property there could accommodate dispensaries without running afoul of local zoning laws and the state-required buffer zone around churches and schools, Haskin said.

City officials are advising caution for dispensary developers.

State Line Avenue "is where we generate a lot of traffic," Haskin said. "I could see why ... State Line would

**More information on the Web**
Interactive map of states' marijuana laws
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marijuanalaws

be an area of interest. Taking into consideration the fact that Texas has not endorsed the medical marijuana effort, certainly that puts the potential customer in a compromising situation, I would say."

OTHER CITIES VARY

The federal government — which classifies marijuana as a drug with no medical purpose and a high potential for abuse — still considers it illegal to grow, buy, sell, possess or ingest.

Including Arkansas, 29 states have passed laws to allow doctors to prescribe marijuana as treatment for a variety of ailments. Eight states have legalized recreational use of pot.

None of the six states that border Arkansas — Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana — have legalized marijuana, aside from allowing cannabis oil for limited afflictions, such as severe epilepsy.

Generally, two Arkansas laws will govern where dispensaries and cultivation facilities can operate in the state.

One requires a buffer zone

around schools and churches — 3,000 feet for cultivation and 1,500 feet for dispensaries. The other law bans cities from imposing stricter placement requirements on medical-marijuana facilities than they do on traditional pharmacies.

Siloam Springs and Hot Springs, however, have imposed monthslong moratoriums on medical marijuana businesses, the strongest stance against the industry.

Fort Smith, meanwhile, opened more of its land for medical marijuana purposes. Several weeks ago the city's board voted to allow pharmacies — and thus marijuana growers and sellers — into areas zoned for industrial use.

"We weren't trying to make it easier or more difficult," Mayor Sandy Sanders said. "We just felt it would be more appropriate to have [the businesses] in a manufacturing area rather than a commercial zone."

Little Rock's Planning Commission adopted the state's definitions for dispensaries and cultivation facilities into its zoning laws. It also agreed to the marijuana-pharmacies provisions.

The commission's action still requires Board of Directors' approval. Zoning specific to the state's largest city allows pharmacies in commercial, industrial and office areas, with some exceptions.

El Dorado, 15 miles north of the Louisiana border, is

taking a similar approach. City leaders don't plan to change zoning rules in ways that would expand or limit access to medical-marijuana facilities, the city's mayor said.

In Marion, which is roughly 11 miles from Memphis, city officials reached out to the Arkansas Municipal League for guidance on how it can keep out marijuana facilities, a staff attorney said.

Repeated attempts to reach the mayor, who works out of an insurance office in the east Arkansas city of 12,000, were unsuccessful.

Helena-West Helena Mayor Jay Hollowell said Phillips County residents are working on proposals to open dispensaries and a cultivation facility in the Arkansas Delta city and its broader county. Officials are not planning to change zoning rules or impose any restrictions, he said.

"We kind of look at it as an economic development tool," Hollowell said. "We feel like

— especially if this group is successful in the cultivation piece — it could add 50 to 60 jobs to our community. We take that serious."

Hot Springs' temporary ban sparked interest in Texarkana, Haskin said. The two cities are in the same geographic region that the Medical Marijuana Commission will use to spread out dispensary licenses.

The potential for the border city to acquire an additional dispensary because of Hot Springs' moratorium "looms large," Haskin said.

On Wednesday, Haskin said, Texarkana may become one of the first cities in the state to set local licensing fees for marijuana businesses.

The Board of Directors will consider an ordinance to require \$50,000 per year for a cultivation license, \$7,500 for an initial dispensary license and an \$11,250 annual renewal fee for dispensaries, according to its agenda.

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