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'Voter Express Van Tour' to stop in MH

From staff reports

The Voter Express Van Tour will make a stop in Mountain Home next week to distribute information to area voters.

The tour is sponsored by the AARP-Arkansas and Twin Lakes Chapter 529, according to Susan Kaye of the Twin Lakes chapter.

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The van comes from Little Rock. Volunteers from the local chapter will spend two days visiting with people, handing out AARP election guides, gubernatorial candidate information, voter registration materials and AARP issue statements.

"The AARP-Arkansas Voter Express van tour is one way AARP is getting its election message out," Kaye said. "Research shows people over 50 vote more than people under 40."

The AARP wants voters to know where the organization stands on several issues:

- One is supporting Arkansans' right to live in their own homes as long as possible, she said. This can be done by allocating Medicaid funding so consumers can afford more caregiving services at home and in their communities. One way to achieve this is to rebalance long-term care funding so that Medicaid "money follows the person" instead of any long-term care provider.
- A second issue is protecting consumers from short-term, high-interest loans at "fees" as high as 400 percent, Kaye added. This practice, often called payday lending, sidesteps the Arkansas Constitution's 17 percent annual interest limit.
- A third issue is protecting consumers' rights to hold nursing homes accountable for neglect or abuse of nursing home residents by opposing so-called "tort reform" laws which shield nursing homes from liability.

The schedule includes a stop from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday at Harps in Mountain Home. The van will participate in the Baxter County Fair parade later that afternoon.