



The Paducah Sun

TUESDAY, September 26, 2017

www.paducahsun.com

Vol. 121 No. 269

N. Korean envoy calls Trump tweet a war declaration

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — North Korea's top diplomat said Monday that a weekend tweet by U.S. President Donald Trump was a "declaration of war" and North Korea has the right to retaliate by shooting down U.S. bombers, even in international airspace.

It was the latest escalation in a week of undiplomatic exchanges between North Korea and the U.S. during the U.N. General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting.

Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho told reporters that the United Nations and the international community have said in recent days that they didn't want "the war of words" to turn into "real action."

But he said that by tweeting that North Korea's leadership led by Kim Jong Un "won't be around much longer," Trump "declared the war on our country."

Under the U.N. Charter, Ri said, North Korea has the right to self-defense and "every right" to take countermeasures, "including the right to shoot down the United States strategic bombers even when they're not yet inside the airspace border of our country."

Hours later, the White House pushed back on Ri's claim, saying: "We have not declared war on North Korea." The Trump administration, referring to the tweet, stressed that the U.S. is not seeking to overthrow North Korea's government.

U.S. Cabinet officials, particularly Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, have insisted that the U.S.-led campaign of diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea is focused on eliminating the pariah state's nuclear weapons program, not its totalitarian government.

Please see **TWEET** | 9A



RYAN HEIMENS | The Sun

Melissa Cherry, Destinations International chief marketing officer, speaks during an opening session at the 2017 UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art meeting at the Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center on Monday.

Creative Cities participants cite current tourism trends

BY LAUREL BLACK

lblack@paducahsun.com

Panelists had plenty to say about tourism during the opening panel discussion at the UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art meeting, but a few key words kept surfacing at the Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center on Monday.

Those words were "authenticity," "meaningful experiences" and "fulfillment" — all

of which today's tourists are seeking, and all of which cities and towns like Paducah can offer.

"In many ways, I think smaller cities or towns are set up very well to deliver those kinds of experiences for people," said Nathan Lump, editor-in-chief of Travel + Leisure magazine. He served as the moderator for the Monday morning session.

"I might go to a great res-

taurant here and be able to have a conversation with a chef, or go to a distillery and talk to the distiller, and in bigger places, sometimes that's harder," Lump said. "I really think those make more meaningful experiences."

Kristen Branscum, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Tourism,

Please see **TRENDS** | 9A

Missed deadline leads to lower tax rate for McCracken County

BY JOHN PFEIFER

jpfeifer@paducahsun.com

The McCracken County property tax rate will drop slightly for the second time in three years because the county fiscal court missed a deadline.

The deadline applies to a taxing body that wants to increase tax revenues by holding its rate flat at a time when property values increase.

Two weeks ago, Judge-Executive Bob Leeper said he would recommend keeping the county rate at \$96 for the owner of a \$100,000 house. That rate, combined with a \$148 million increase in the value of real property, would produce nearly \$150,000 in additional revenue for the county.

However, an eight-year-old Kentucky statute requires

taxing bodies that wish to raise revenues in this manner to hold a public hearing and approve the rate within 45 days of the county establishing its assessment.

Neither was done in time.

The assessment was set on July 25 and the public hearing scheduled for

Please see **LOWER** | 9A

Collins' opposition all but defeats health bill

BY ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The last-gasp Republican drive to tear down President Barack Obama's health care law essentially died Monday as Maine Sen. Susan Collins joined a small but decisive cluster of GOP senators in opposing the push.

The Maine moderate said in a statement that the legislation would make "devastating" cuts in the Medicaid program for poor and disabled people, drive up premiums for millions and weaken protections Obama's law gives people with pre-existing medical conditions. She said the legislation is "deeply flawed," despite eleventh-hour changes its sponsors have made in



Collins

search of support.

The only way Republicans could resuscitate their push would be to change opposing senators' minds, which they've

tried unsuccessfully to do for months. Collins told reporters that she made her decision despite a phone call from President Donald Trump, who's been futilely trying to press unhappy GOP senators to back the measure.

"They're still working it and a lot of conversations are going on," No. 3 Senate GOP

Please see **GOP** | 9A

TRENDS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

Gina Stouffer, president of the Lou Hammond Group; Catherine Prather, executive vice president of the National Tour Association; and Melissa Cherry, chief marketing officer of Destinations International, were the day's featured speakers.

Each looked at tourism through a slightly different lens, but all agreed the most recent travel trends show people aren't booking flights or setting off on road trips just to snap a picture with the best-known monuments and head home. Instead, travelers of all demographics are searching for unique experiences, personal fulfillment and activities that speak to their individual passions.

"Travelers are seeking deeper and more transformative (trips)," said Cherry, citing new data from a study that Destinations International released this summer. "They want experiences that can't be duplicated, memories that will last forever, and that (desire) is not going to change."

Contrary to the popular image of tour company customers — large groups of older people — tour companies are seeing smaller groups of younger travelers, Prather said, with an increased demand for customized travel.

This bodes well for Paducah, for Kentucky in general and for the other UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk



UNESCO delegates walk Monday through downtown Paducah on their way to the National Quilt Museum.

Art, Branscum said.

She touted Kentucky as a state of "makers," from artists to farmers to distillers, and said the state possesses diverse assets.

The department's "seven pillars" of focus are arts, bourbon, culinary experiences, cultural heritage, horses, music and the outdoors. Such activities hold broad appeal for today's tourists.

"Learning how to do woodworking, learning how to hand-stitch quilts — that's something they're going to take back with them forever," she said. "We can enhance that tourism experience just by being us."

She added that in 2016, the tourism industry was the third-largest generator of revenue in the state, behind automobiles and health care.

The presenters also discussed the usefulness

of the UNESCO designation to a city.

"We use the designation whenever we talk about Paducah," Stouffer said during the panel, adding that it's helped the town receive coverage in newspapers and magazines from the Chicago Tribune to the National Geographic Traveler to USA Today.

Branscum, of the Kentucky Department of Tourism, said the designation has been a "door-opener" for the commonwealth and encouraged Kentuckians to embrace it.

"For people who wouldn't think about traveling to Kentucky, the UNESCO designation gives them that peace of mind," she said. "It cuts through the clutter and helps position Kentucky in a place where we're a top-of-mind destination."

As editor-in-chief for the largest consumer

travel magazine in the U.S., Lump affirmed the usefulness of the designation.

"What the UNESCO organization does is on the one hand, confer legitimacy to the particular qualities of destinations that make them great. In doing that, it also shines a light on those qualities for people who might not know about those things," Lump said.

This week's Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art annual meeting is the first of its kind to be held in the U.S. Public events scheduled for this afternoon include an opening reception for the Paducah School of Art & Design's "Pride of Place" exhibition at 4 p.m. and a Paducah Life Magazine Literary Soiree at 5:30 p.m. at the McCracken County Public Library.

ration of war" against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the country's official name — and it made a similar statement after a new round of U.N. sanctions in December. The North Korean leader used the words again Friday.

The foreign minister's brief statement to a throng of reporters outside his hotel before

destroy the DPRK, we will consider with seriousness exercising of a corresponding, highest level of hardline countermeasure in history," Kim said.

On Monday, Ri escalated the threat by saying Trump's weekend claim that North Korea's leaders would soon be gone "is clearly a declaration of war."

TEEN

CONTINUED FROM 1A

Each Monday in the online edition and Tuesday in the print edition, The Sun features a teen selected from nominees submitted by guidance counselors throughout the region.

Near the end of the school year, one of the students profiled will be named Teen of the Year and receive a \$5,000 scholarship. An additional student will be chosen for an Inspiration Award and a \$1,000 scholarship.

In addition to his focus on school work and mentoring kids, Brooks is a defensive captain and star safety for the Paducah Tilghman Tornado football team. He is also a regional champion and state runner-up in varsity track and field.

Brooks loves football but never saw himself as a player until fifth grade.

"I grew up playing soccer, but then in fifth grade I decided to try football," he said. "I was hesitant and wanted to go back to soccer, but one of the football coaches said he saw something in me. That fired me up to keep with

football, and I've loved it ever since."

Brooks will attend Western Kentucky University, where he plans to major in philosophy and religious studies. After that, he isn't sure if he will go on to seminary, but he does know he wants to work with disadvantaged youth to some capacity.

He said one of his favorite volunteer activities is mentoring someone who has a similar life to his own. "It's really important to learn how to be a man," Brooks said. "For me, I didn't have that growing up. For generations coming up, I believe it's good for kids to learn about the Lord and for them to know that they're not alone on whatever dark path they go down."

Corbin Snardon, Title One counselor for Paducah Public Schools, said Brooks is a strong leader and has accomplished much through self-discipline.

"Bryson has struggled through multiple adversities and conquered every challenge set before him," Snardon said. "He is resilient and possesses a true grit of character worth being emulated."