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[Health](#)
[History](#)
[Jobs](#)
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[Opinion](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Sports](#)
[Stocks](#)

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[Anniversary](#)
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[Classified Line Ad](#)

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[View Index](#)

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[Argus-Courier](#)
[Paris Express](#)

Suits No Surprise

By Glenn M. Parrish, Democrat Editor
Tuesday, May 24, 2005 3:16 PM CDT

Lawsuits challenging the collective work of the Legislature concerning education reform were not a shock to either Sen. Ed Wilkinson or Rep. John Paul Wells.

However, both feel the Legislature met its obligation.

"We met the challenge," Wilkinson, D-Greenwood, told the Booneville Rotary Club Friday after pointing out several education reform measures enacted during the 85th General Assembly.

Wells, D-Paris, who was at Friday's meeting, agrees.

"I believe we did exactly what the mandate says," said Wells. "If I didn't, I wouldn't have voted for it.

Arkansas Supreme Court justices spent an hour last week hearing the merits of why it should, and should not, reopen the case commonly known as Lake View.

David Matthews, an attorney for the Rogers School District, one of 47 school districts who claim the Legislature back-tracked on financial promises made in the wake of the Court's action last year, told justices Thursday the Court's active participation is key in making the state's education system constitutional.

The state's contention is that any suit must begin in a trial court, effectively assuring the matter would not be resolved for several years.

Matthews argued the Court should re-appoint the special masters it appointed last year, when the Legislature was found to have been on the right track.

Wilkinson believes that would be the wrong course of action.

"I hope the Supreme Court does not go in with these special masters," said Wilkinson. "If they do (something) I hope they do it on their own." ...

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[Horoscope](#)
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SP 500	1186.79	-7.28 ↓
Russ 2000	606.18	-6.77 ↓
AMEX	1456.33	-9.46 ↓
NYSE	7119.71	-34.27 ↓
30 YR BOND	44.02	0.36 ↑

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