

Ceasing plans

Commissioners vote 2-1 to stop work toward 68-acre project

By BAILEY CLINE
The Commercial Review
Planning for infrastructure on the county's 68 acres on the west side of Portland will come to a halt.

Jay County Commissioners decided in a 2-1 vote Monday to notify planning firm Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates to stop development work on the property along Votaw Street in Portland.

Jay County Council and Jay County Redevelopment Commission also voted earlier this month to stop the development, which involves ceasing payments to the planning firm coordinating efforts to build infrastructure on the property.

Next steps could include all three entities agreeing to rescind an interlocal agreement that obligated American Rescue Plan funds toward the effort. Approximately \$1.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act dollars backed the commercial and housing development project. Additional funding from the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) 2.0 grant was expected but hasn't been formally announced.

The county purchased the 68-acre property for \$1.1 million in March 2023.

Commissioner Duane Monroe explained earlier this month that consulting firm Baker Tilly has indicated the county could reallocate American Rescue Plan Act dollars aimed at the project.

County attorney Wes Schemenaur has cautioned local officials, pointing out American Rescue Plan Act dollars were distributed in a unique fashion to communities and voicing concerns about the county being forced to pay the funds back if an issue comes up in future audits.

He noted at the redevelopment commission's meeting Thursday that the 68-acre project has been solely paid for with American Rescue Plan Act dollars deemed as revenue replacement, and suggested that if officials choose to reallocate the funds they are cautious how they're spent. Revenue replacement



Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates

The above graphic shows the location of the 68 acres Jay County bought in March 2023 as the potential site of a housing development. Industrial Park Drive is located at the bottom of the map, with Votaw Street running along the left side. Jay County Commissioners on Monday voted 2-1 to cease plans toward the development. Their decision followed similar votes from Jay County Council and Jay County Redevelopment Commission.

ment uses could include payroll or health insurance costs, or other paid obligations prior to Dec. 31, 2024.

County officials have discussed using American Rescue Plan Act dollars to help pay for outfitting emergency responders with new radios, a nearly \$7 million project.

Portland City Council agreed earlier this year to con-

tribute \$400,000 toward the project, contingent on receiving a match from Jay County Redevelopment Commission. (Commissioners decided in a 2-1 vote not to request redevelopment commission to supply that match.) Portland Redevelopment Commission last week also voted to support moving forward with the project.

In November 2024, commis-

sioners, council and redevelopment commission entered into an interlocal agreement obligating American Rescue Plan Act dollars toward the project.

The redevelopment commission decided last week to send a letter to commissioners and council declaring intent to rescind the agreement.

See **Plans** page 2

Aker won't seek third term

By BAILEY CLINE
and RAY COONEY
The Commercial Review

The county will have a new commissioner in 2027.

Jay County Commissioners president Chad Aker announced Monday he will not seek a third term for the middle district commissioner seat. His term runs through the end of 2026.

"I've got one last thing — everybody's been asking me," Aker said at the end of the regular commissioners meeting.

He read from a prepared statement, reviewing accomplishments he's contributed to over the last seven years as a county official. Among those, he included converting more than 40 miles of stone roads to hard surface, improving employee compensation and supporting development of a new facility for Jay County Solid Waste Management District.

"These accomplishments required a substantial investment of time and effort, which I have largely found rewarding," he said. "However, after careful consideration, I have decided not to seek a third term in office and to decline the nomination for commissioner president. This decision will allow me to devote additional time to my family and personal responsibilities."

Bryan Alexander, a Jay County Council member and former Jay School Board member, and Aaron Loy, who serves on the Portland Board of Zoning Appeals and Jay County Fair Board, both announced their intentions to run for the middle district commissioner seat in late November. At that time, Aker said he was going to "hold off on that decision right now."

Election filing for the 2026 primaries begins Wednesday, Jan. 7. Offices up for election in 2026 include the middle district commissioner seat, as well as four Jay County Council seats, sheriff, auditor, recorder and assessor.

See **Aker** page 2

Leaders preview session

By LESLIE BONILLA MUNIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Indiana's top legislative leaders on Thursday sketched out a restrained agenda — including tweaks to a contentious property tax law — ahead of an unusually short Statehouse session that is also expected to feature movement on health care, child care and utilities.

The Indiana General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene Jan. 5 for a breakneck eight-week session.

Lawmakers can meet until mid-March during a non-budget year, but plan to adjourn early to offset the two weeks they spent this month on a failed partisan redistricting proposal.

"We've adjusted the calendar," House Speaker Todd Huston, R-

Tax law tweaks, child care and healthcare are on agenda

Fishers, said. "We will finish before the end of February ... and people are going to have early March off to watch basketball."

He and other key lawmakers spoke Thursday at the annual Dentons Legislative Conference, held at the Indiana Convention Center in downtown Indianapolis.

The compressed schedule will present "the No. 1 limiting factor this session," said Sen. Mike Crider, R-Greenfield. Crider, a Senate

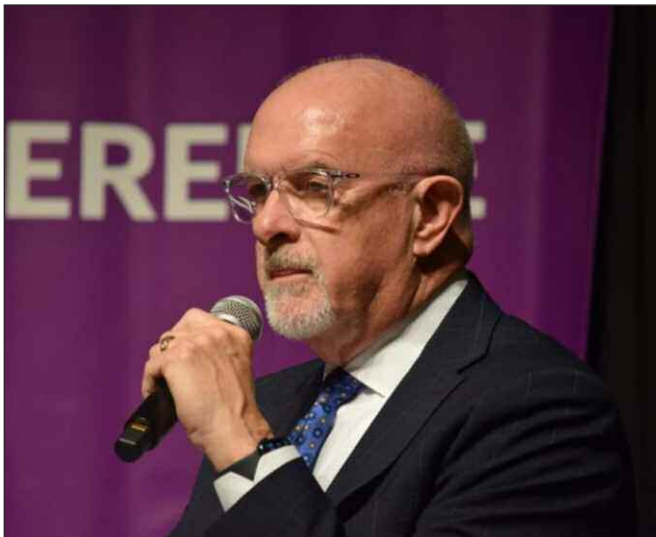
committee chair, said the panels may only have time for one hearing each.

Bills that don't get committee votes won't advance further in the legislative process.

Crider appeared in place of the Senate's absent GOP leader, President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray.

The Martinsville senator has faced heavy criticism from fellow Republicans over the maps' defeat.

See **Session** page 2



Indiana Capital Chronicle/Casey Smith

State Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, speaks at the annual Dentons Legislative Conference in Indianapolis on Thursday. Holdman said there are plans to address concerns about the impact of Senate Enrolled Act 1 on local government units.

Deaths

Robert Harris, 53, Pennville
Donald Stafford Jr., 57, Pennville
Details on page 2.

Weather

The high temperature was 36 degrees Sunday in Jay County. The low was 25.

Tonight's low will be in the lower 30s. Skies will be mostly cloudy Wednesday with a high in the upper 40s. The high will climb into the 50s on Christmas.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Second Harvest Food Bank will host tailgate food distributions.

They are scheduled for:

•Friday, Dec. 26, at Goodrich Park, 701 N. Union St., Winchester

Tailgates are scheduled for 10 a.m.

Coming up

Wednesday — Coverage of next week's Dunkirk City Council meeting.

Thursday — No newspaper in observance of Christmas.

Friday — Results from the East Central Indiana Classic wrestling tournament.



Session ...

Continued from page 1

Bray “had a longstanding in-district commitment that was on his calendar before he was even invited to Denton’s, so he wasn’t able to participate this year,” spokeswoman Molly Swigart said.

House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta, D-Fort Wayne, encouraged lawmakers to be “very careful” crafting their bills amid the time pressures.

“I felt like Senate Enrolled Act 1 was done very quickly ... and we’re seeing that there are problems with that,” he told reporters, referring to a behemoth local government finance law approved in April.

“I do think that if you rush through legislation, you end up

making some harmful mistakes, and so we’ve got to be very careful about that,” GiaQuinta added.

Edits are expected on the local government finance law, which offers Hoosiers property tax relief while expanding income taxing potential. But schools, libraries and other units are still set to lose out on millions of dollars they would have otherwise collected.

Some communities “are just concerned about how they’re going to make that difference up,” said Sen. Travis Holdman, the Senate’s tax policy head. “We need some time to talk about that.”

“I’ve been a proponent of pushing some of these dates out a little further on the timeline,

just to give us some more time to figure some things out,” added Holdman, R-Markle.

He and others are also “looking really hard” at the amounts that could be gained via local income tax.

Social safety net scrutiny could continue, despite a rosier revenue forecast unveiled Thursday.

This year’s Senate Bill 1 — the number reserved for the majority caucus’ top priority — “will look at aligning Indiana statutes with what passed at the federal level,” Crider said, including changes to work requirements for Medicaid and the anti-hunger Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Indiana enrollment in Medi-

caid, the low-income health care program, has dropped by about 300,000 people throughout the year, totaling 1.7 million in November, according to the forecast.

That hasn’t halted spending worries.

“We have people in the program that need to be off ... We couldn’t take folks off the program during the Covid years,” Holdman said. “I think we’ll get there. But at the current rate, it’s just not sustainable.”

Indiana already conducted a year-long “unwinding” process post-COVID.

Huston, the House’s GOP leader, predicted an otherwise “quieter” 2026 session for health care.






“We’ve done a lot. I think this session we probably need to let some stuff bake,” he said. “... Let’s see how it works and get some of the data back that we’ve requested.”

But the 2027 session “will be all about health care,” as the General Assembly grapples with federal changes that shift Medicaid costs onto states.

During a lunchtime fireside chat, Indiana Gov. Mike Braun reiterated that cutting health care costs for patients is his top priority, but didn’t offer specific policy proposals. He didn’t take reporter questions.

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This story was edited for length. For the full version, visit indianacapitalchronicle.com.

CR almanac				
Wednesday 12/24	Thursday 12/25	Friday 12/26	Saturday 12/27	Sunday 12/28
 46/41 Christmas Eve looks to be cloudy with temperatures in the 40s throughout the day.	 48/40 Cloudy skies with temperatures in the 40s on Christmas Day.	 56/41 There's a 60% chance of showers Friday morning, with the temperature reaching up to 56 degrees.	 54/47 Saturday's forecast shows mostly cloudy skies with a low temperature around 47.	 50/15 Sunday looks like showers and wind, with the high in the 50s and the low in the teens.

Lotteries	
Powerball Estimated jackpot: \$1.6 billion	15-17-18-20-22-25-28-30-31-40-51-53-68-70-74-77 Cash 5: 1-14-24-35-45 Estimated jackpot: \$85,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$100 million	Ohio Sunday Midday Pick 3: 8-2-3 Pick 4: 1-3-0-9 Pick 5: 5-4-7-9-5 Evening Pick 3: 0-0-5 Pick 4: 6-3-3-3 Pick 5: 7-6-4-7-1 Rolling Cash 5: 1-20-29-33-34 Estimated jackpot: \$140,000
Hoosier Sunday Midday Daily Three: 5-5-2 Daily Four: 2-1-9-8 Quick Draw: 3-5-9-15-19-26-27-29-30-31-34-35-37-42-45-52-57-64-72-73 Evening Daily Three: 7-4-0 Daily Four: 3-1-8-4 Quick Draw: 4-5-8-10-	

Markets	
Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.66 Jan. corn4.64 Feb. corn4.64	Jan. beans10.45 Wheat4.69
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.64 Jan. corn4.61 Feb. corn4.58	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.46 Jan. corn4.46 Beans10.45 Jan. beans10.45 Wheat4.85
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.51 Jan. corn4.51 Beans10.42	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.61 Jan. corn4.56 Beans10.17 Jan. beans10.17 Wheat4.64

Today in history	
In 1783 , George Washington resigned his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army at the Maryland State House in Annapolis, where the Continental Congress was meeting.	former labor leader and the country’s first president post-communism, in the presidential election.
In 1972 , Pittsburgh Steelers running back Franco Harris picked a ricocheted ball out of the air just before it would have hit the ground and took it for a touchdown in a playoff game against the Oakland Raiders. The play would become known as the Immaculate Reception.	In 2006 , the Fort Land State House in Annapolis, where the Continental Congress was meeting.
In 1995 , Aleksander Kwasniewski was inaugurated as president of Poland. He had narrowly defeated Lech Walesa, a	Recovery High School boys basketball team ran its record to 5-1 with a 64-52 victory over the Arcanum Trojans. Tony Diller led the Indians with 14 points, 12 of which came in the second half.
	In 2020 , the Jay County High School wrestling team defeated Norwell, Union City, Greenville and Monroe Central in the Jay County Super Duals, an event put together in place of the annual East Central Indiana Classic during the coronavirus pandemic.
	—The CR

Citizen’s calendar	
Today 6 p.m. — Pennville Town Council public hearing and regular meeting, town hall, 105 N. Washington St.	
Monday, Jan. 5 3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland. 5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland. 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village	

Local/Indiana

Obituaries

Robert Harris
Jan. 25, 1972-Dec. 19, 2025

Robert Lincoln Harris, 53, of Pennville, Indiana, died quietly in his sleep at The Waters of Dunkirk on Friday, Dec. 19, 2025.

Born in Marion on Jan. 25, 1972, to William Keith and Roberta Lee (Edgington) Harris, Lincoln grew up the youngest of 10 children and attended Pennville Elementary School and Jay County High School.

Lincoln loved music and all sports, especially football, cheering on the Indiana Hoosiers and his beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. Diagnosed with



Harris

Type 1 Diabetes as a teenager, Lincoln experienced years of health struggles including gastroparesis that kept him ill for many years.

He was preceded in death by his mother Roberta (Bobbi) Harris; nephew Travis Horton; and grandparents Basil and Nellie Harris and Robert and Helen Edgington.

Lincoln is survived by his two sons, Noah and Breckin Harris; father William (Bill) Harris Sr.; and siblings Christi Harris, Montpelier, Bill Harris Jr. (Cheri), Pennville, Connie Brumbaugh, Pennville, Jeff Harris, Pennville, Andy Harris Sr. (Regina), Dunkirk, Wes (Lisa) Harris, Bryant, Tom (Priscilla) Harris, Canfield, Ohio, Alison (Rex) Mahon, Dunkirk, Andrea (David) Newton, Vicksburg, Michigan; and several

nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

A celebration of life will be held for Lincoln in the spring of 2026.

Arrangements entrusted to Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland.

Donald Earl Stafford Jr., Pennville, June 19, 1968-Dec. 19, 2025. Services will be held at a later date.

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The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services.

There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.

Felony court news

Methamphetamine
A man was sentenced in Jay Superior Court to prison for possession of methamphetamine.

Christian M. Rowls, 37, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine, a Level 6 felony, and being a

habitual offender. He was sentenced to 180 days in Indiana Department of Correction, with his sentence enhanced by an additional 1,095 days for being a habitual offender. Rowls was given 444 days credit for time served, fined \$25, assessed \$189 in

court costs and ordered to pay a \$200 drug abuse, prosecution, interdiction and correction fee. As part of his plea agreement, a Class A misdemeanor for criminal trespassing and a Class B misdemeanor for public intoxication were dismissed.

Aker ...

Continued from page 1

Aker, a Republican, took office in 2019 after defeating his cousin Brian Aker by 163 votes in November 2018. He had knocked off incumbent Barry Hudson and Caleb Lutes in a three-way primary.

He went on to beat Democrat Joel Bowers 4,109-1,219 in the 2022 general election after defeating Alexander by a nearly two-to-one margin in the GOP primary.

Aker said he is hopeful that the next commissioner will bring dedication and energy to the role along with a “clear and forward-looking vision for the county’s future.”

“I appreciate all you do as president,” said commissioner Doug Horn to Aker before his announcement Monday. “That’s a lot of paperwork.”

“Yeah, you’ve been a good leader,” added commissioner Duane Monroe. “Even though we may not agree on everything, I appreciate (you).”

Plans ...

Continued from page 1

Commissioners president Chad Aker said he disagreed with plans to reallocate the funds and cease the project, pointing to concerns from Schemenaur.

“I’m going to go with what my attorney’s telling me, and I’m not in favor of trying to reallocate that money because I don’t know if it’s going to bite us in the butt come two, three years down the road,” said Aker.

Commissioners Doug Horn and Monroe then voted to stop further work on the project, with Aker dissenting.

Relatedly, commissioners agreed to rent the 68-acre property out for farming purposes next year to Chris Muhlenkamp at \$420 an acre, or \$28,560 total.

Other bids submitted for farming were from Steve Schoenlein of Schoenlein Brothers at \$376 per acre, Simon Dirksen at \$337 per acre and Aaron Post at \$330 per acre.

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For more news from the commissioners’ meeting, see Wednesday’s newspaper.

SERVICES
Today
Mann, Frederick: 10 a.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.
Medsker, Kathleen: 11 a.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.

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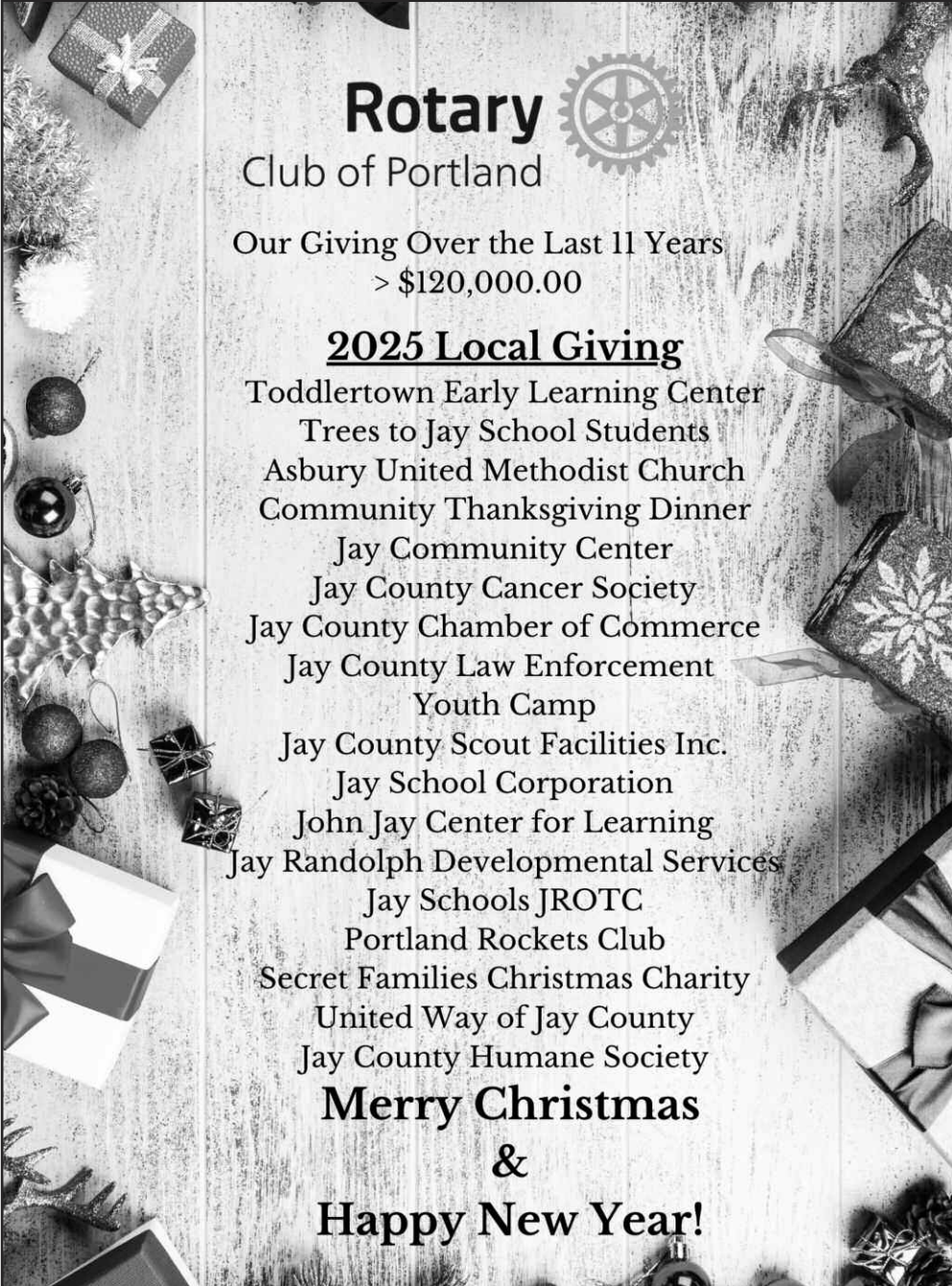
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Asbury United Methodist Church
Community Thanksgiving Dinner
Jay Community Center
Jay County Cancer Society
Jay County Chamber of Commerce
Jay County Law Enforcement
Youth Camp
Jay County Scout Facilities Inc.
Jay School Corporation
John Jay Center for Learning
Jay Randolph Developmental Services
Jay Schools JROTC
Portland Rockets Club
Secret Families Christmas Charity
United Way of Jay County
Jay County Humane Society

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Photo provided

New member

Portland Evening Optimist Club recently inducted Desirae Bonifield, pictured above at right with sponsor Leland LeMaster.

It's time to reflect

By OLIVIA SMITH
The Commercial Review

Christmas has always been both my favorite and my least favorite season. There's something magical about it, the lights, the music, the sense that something special is in the air, but at the same time, it can feel overwhelming. In today's world, Christmas often turns into a nonstop rush. It feels like there's always something you're supposed to be doing next, with barely a moment to slow down and breathe.

Social media doesn't help. Everywhere you look, it seems like everyone else is having the "perfect" Christmas: hosting a friends Christmas party, ice skating with their boyfriend, baking cookies, caroling, decorating flawlessly, and somehow affording it all. Without even realizing it, you start to feel like you're falling behind if your season doesn't look like that. There's pressure to buy the perfect gifts, to spend money you may not even have, and to keep up appearances just to prove you're enjoying the season

You're On Your Own, Kid



the "right" way. On top of that, the end of the year brings its own weight. It's a time when we naturally reflect, and sometimes that reflection comes with disappointments; goals that weren't met, and quiet worries about what needs to change next year. Corporations know this stress all too well. They take advantage of it, marking things as "on sale" and convincing us we're saving money, when often we're spending more than we planned simply because it feels expected.

Somewhere in all this busyness, it's easy to forget why Christmas matters in the first place. And while it may sound like the ending of a Christmas movie, there's truth in it. Christ-

mas began as a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Santa Claus himself was inspired by St. Nicholas, who was known not for excess, but for generosity and kindness. At its core, the season was meant to be about giving, gratitude and love.

Christmas was never supposed to be about being constantly entertained or having the most exciting plans. It was about slowing down, spending time with family and friends, and simply enjoying one another's presence without pressure or expectations. It's about appreciating what we already have and remembering the greatest gift of all: God sending His Son so that we could experience forgiveness, grace and hope.

When everything else is stripped away, Christmas invites us to rest, to reflect, and to be grateful. Maybe it doesn't have to be perfect to be meaningful. Maybe it's enough to be present, to give with a willing heart, and to let the season be a reminder of love rather than stress.

Sisterhood has gone downhill

I met someone a year later, and he moved in a year after that. Then my sister started driving a wedge. Blanche has always been manipulative and controlling. She refused to pay rent and wanted to clean my house in exchange for it. After many fights, silent treatment, etc. — not only me but also with our parents, brother, her daughter and her son-in-law — my now-fiance and I decided to sell the property and move out of state.

I'm concerned Blanche will give us trouble about moving out. She can barely pay her own bills, let alone pay rent somewhere else. My fiance says it's not our problem, we need to live our lives and staying stuck in a hostile environment is unhealthy. My concern is that Blanche is my sister, and I hate to see her kicked out on the street. What should I do if she refuses to leave? She has received a legal eviction notice that gives her eight months to go. My fiance says we may have to call the sheriff to escort her out. — DREADING IT IN ARIZONA

DEAR DREADING IT: Your

Dear Abby



sister has eight months to make other living arrangements, so she isn't going to be "out on the street" overnight. Discuss this messy problem with an attorney and enlist their help. If you can manage it, document the condition of the house she's occupying.

Your fiance may be right about your sister, so when the time comes for her to leave, consider having law enforcement present to ensure she doesn't damage your property.

DEAR ABBY: I am a widow. Most of my friends are married. What do you think about them calling and touching base with me only when they are in their cars run-

ning errands? They never call from home while they're with their husbands. Are they hiding the fact that they are calling their single friend? I think it's rude to call someone while fighting traffic and making stops like the bank drive-up window.

I have thought about asking them to call me back when they get home, but they sound like they are just too busy to do that. I'm getting to the point where I just don't answer their calls. I also have a married friend who only texts and never talks on the phone. — AFTERTHOUGHT IN FLORIDA

DEAR AFTERTHOUGHT: Your friends may have busy schedules and little free time, which is why they call you from their cars. They may also prefer that what they discuss with you be just between the two of you, with no one else listening in. I do not think you should take this as personally as you seem to have taken it. For a definitive answer to your question, you must ask your friends why they do this.

Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email news@thecr.com.

Tuesday

JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS — Meet at 8 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Richard's Restaurant.

COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP — A group for anyone with a

substance use disorder that helps individuals find connections as they develop long-term recovery meets at noon each Tuesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

A BETTER LIFE – BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for substance abuse. Meal starts at 6 p.m. and the meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at the

Nazarene Fellowship Building across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 7 p.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (567) 279-8352 or (260) 729-7000.

Wednesday

WEDNESDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB — Will meet at 8 a.m. in the east room of Richards Restaurant. All women are invited to attend. Includes activities and devotional time.

PING PONG — Will be played from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays at West Jay Community Center.

PORTLAND ROTARY CLUB — Will meet at noon each Wednesday in the cafe at John Jay Center for Learning, 101 S. Meridian St., Portland.

EUCHRE CLUB — Will meet at 2 p.m. the fourth Wednesday of each month at Chalet Village Health and Rehabilitation in the North Lounge.

COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING — A non-confrontational, evidence-based intervention for helping families affected by addiction meets at 4 p.m. each Wednesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

PORTLAND EAGLES — Will meet at 6 p.m., on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Eagles' lodge, 320 N. Meridian St., Portland.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Beginnings, a support group for friends and families of alcoholics, will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Zion Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland.

Sudoku

			5	1			7	
4				3	8		9	2
			6			1		
	7	8		6	5			
								8
1	6		4	8	7			
		1	8	4		9		
8	5	2	9				4	1
9							8	

Level: Beginner

Saturday's Solution

8	7	2	1	3	6	9	5	4
3	4	9	8	7	5	6	2	1
5	1	6	9	4	2	7	3	8
2	8	7	3	5	1	4	6	9
6	3	4	7	8	9	5	1	2
9	5	1	2	6	4	3	8	7
4	9	8	5	2	3	1	7	6
1	2	3	6	9	7	8	4	5
7	6	5	4	1	8	2	9	3

The objective is to fill a nine-by nine grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine three-by-three boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

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Cuts are diminishing IU programs

By NATE LAMAR

Indiana’s politically engaged have all jokingly heard the term, “People’s Republic of Bloomington,” while those less politically engaged may all either love or hate Indiana University basketball.

While I am not an IU alum, I am concerned by two recent developments there which are “a huge step down the road to turning a world-class university into a regional machine for turning out narrow vocational degrees,” to quote Paula M. Krebs, a 1992 IU graduate.

As I wrote in a summer guest column, our state government forced six Indiana public universities to cut or consolidate over 400 academic degree programs.

Nate LaMar



This included international business at Ball State University, but the impact was disproportionately felt by IU’s 70 foreign languages (the most of any U.S. university). More recently, the U.S. Department of Education announced an end to Title VI funding for over a dozen IU programs that “do not advance American interests or values.” (Indiana Public Media, Sept. 12).

U.S. Sen. Todd Young (R-Indiana) is more than just a friend and fellow service academy graduate. More relevantly to today’s world, he is a fellow former member of the intelligence community. He understands the value of Title VI grants, which are used to create experts on national security and cultural understanding.

Affected most by these Title VI federal budget cuts is IU’s renowned Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, along with the Kelley School of Business’ Center for International Business Education & Research (CIBER). In addition to IU’s Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship, the following six National

Resource Centers at IU are also affected: African Studies Program; Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies; Center for the Study of Global Change; Center for the Study of the Middle East; Inner Asian & Uralic National Resource Center; and the Robert F. Byrnes Russian & East European Institute.

Over the past year, I have made a few business trips to Southeast Asia that have included some “frontiers of freedom” facing increased threats from Chinese influence. According to “The Economist” of Oct. 25, Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy recently published a study based on diplomatic, security, economic, soft-power and signaling factors showing

that nine of 10 Southeast Asian nations have become more aligned with China since 2004. Prior to 2004, six of the 10 were more aligned with the U.S.

If the national security implications of IU’s Title VI programs “do not advance American interests or values,” then what does? I challenge U.S. Secretary of Education (and former World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) owner) Linda McMahon and IU president Pamela Whitten to answer this question.

LaMar, an international director and former Army officer, majored in Middle Eastern Studies at West Point, and also served as Henry County Council President from 2009 to 2019.

Minimum wage increase is needed

The Baltimore Sun
Tribune News Service

Democrats may not have pulled off the political upset of the 21st century in the recent special election in Tennessee, but Republican Matt Van Epps’ single-digit margin of victory in a much-watched Seventh District congressional race should give his party pause.

The GOP candidate should have won by at least twice as much, given the district’s distinctly conservative leanings. But 34-year-old progressive Democrat Aftyn Behn, a state lawmaker, struck a nerve with a campaign that focused on affordability and frustration with Washington.

Following strong Democratic showings in New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial races last month, should Republicans be sweating next year’s midterms and the possibility of losing their slim House majority?

Absolutely. But don’t just listen to Nashville area voters to hear that message. Economic concerns show up in all sorts of voter polls. It’s clear that average folks, including MAGA enthusiasts, are worried about making ends meet.

How can the president change voters’ negative perceptions of the economy and boost his popularity numbers in a short period of time?

Lowering tariffs would probably help. But there’s one other possibility that some have floated, which he could pursue immediately without necessarily having much impact at all on those living in the Northeast or West Coast who traditionally vote for Democrats.

How? By raising the federal minimum wage to account for inflation.

It’s an idea that runs counter to GOP impulses to moderate wage growth. For starters, there is the belief that raising the minimum wage reduces jobs, incentivizes automation and stifles economic growth — many argue that paying people more makes the aggregate minimum wage workforce make less. There’s some truth to that.

In 2023, California stunned the nation, with Gov. Gavin Newsom signing into law a \$20 minimum wage for fast food workers. Within a year, nearly 10,000 employees lost their jobs, and fast-food prices increased, in some places by nearly 10%.

Guest Opinion

As a first-time candidate for president, Trump opposed a \$15 per hour minimum wage a decade ago. But the times have changed, and prices have gone up as a result of inflation. If the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour instituted in 2009 were simply increased to compensate for inflation, it would be in the neighborhood of \$14 to \$15 today.

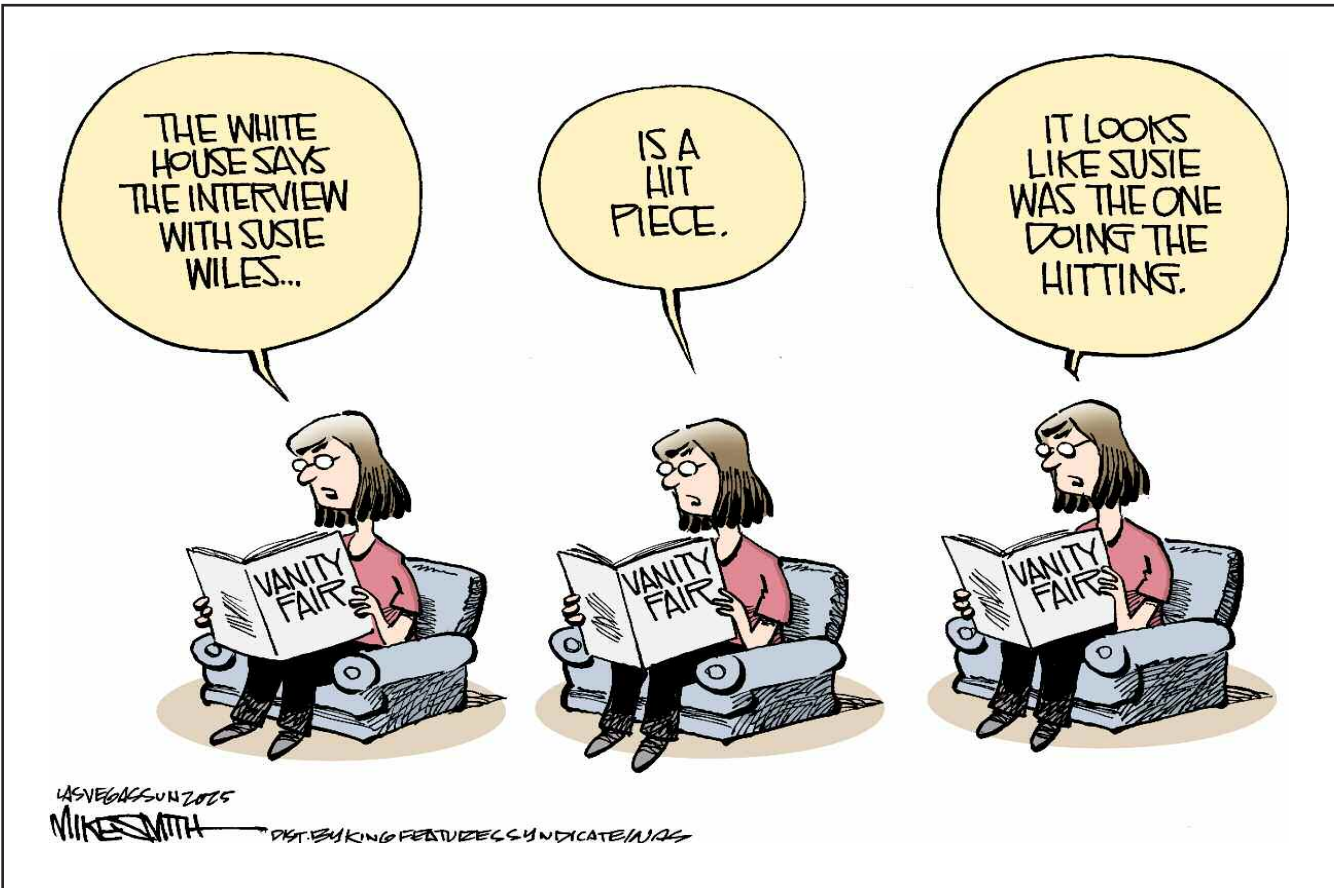
Of course, some states have less need of a higher minimum wage than others. The power of the dollar is different everywhere. For example, \$100 in Baltimore goes 8.3% further than in New York. That’s why the Supplemental Poverty Measure was introduced in 2009 to take into consideration how far money takes you, even if you’re making less.

Over two-thirds of the states have raised their minimum wage. So, states like Maryland, where the minimum wage is already \$15 an hour, would receive no benefit under a federal minimum wage increase to \$15. Same with Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, Illinois, California, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Washington and some others. Not so in Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene country: Georgia follows the federal minimum wage as do states like Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and on.

A \$7.25 minimum wage certainly cannot last forever. Think of what a meal or a gallon of gas would cost in the 1970s versus today. Over just the past decade, the purchasing power of the dollar has decreased by 35%.

We can acknowledge how unsustainable an unwavering minimum wage is while also acknowledging that not every state needs the higher \$20, even \$30-an-hour minimum wage that advocates in states like California have called for.

However, we may be at a point where Republicans can advocate for a sensible minimum wage and show you can be pro-worker and pro-business and perhaps even look like the grown-up non-socialist in the room.



Much was learned in 2025

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Just like going to class, there is a lot to glean from watching state government in action. And 2025 was full of lessons.

As we wrap up the year, here are the top five things I learned:

Data Centers

Data centers aren’t going away — and neither is the sentiment of Hoosiers against them. As many as 30 massive data centers are in the works in the state. Lawmakers and state officials seem annoyed that citizens keep fighting them — a form of not-in-my-backyard over and over again. But that’s because citizens don’t see the advantages. There are fair questions about companies using energy and water resources, and the benefits aren’t clear. There is an initial burst of investment and construction jobs, but the full-time employment is often low. Property tax abatements mean local schools and government aren’t getting new revenue. Add to that a massive state sales tax exemption worth hundreds of millions, and it’s legitimately unclear what Hoosiers are getting out of new data centers.

President Donald Trump

Trump’s popularity has a limit. While Hoosier Republicans gave him an 82% favorable rating in a recent poll, Senate Republicans defeated a move to redraw Indiana’s congressional districts for purely partisan reasons. Despite enormous pressure over more than four months, senators stood on their principles and refused to yield to political primary threats and intimidation tactics like swatting. I couldn’t have imagined the president of the United States calling out senators by name — but that’s where we were. And now, everyone will be watching to see if

Niki Kelly



national influencers really plow money into state Senate seats to get retribution.

Education matters

When education stakeholders focus — with resources, data and effort — it works. Indiana saw big gains in third grade reading proficiency thanks to a literacy effort backed by state and private philanthropy dollars. While some students will be repeating third grade, the additional remediation that lawmakers and state officials made available means it was far less than originally feared. The state’s chronic absenteeism rate is also improving after hitting a “crisis” level. That led to a more intensive law targeting absences. One area that needs similar focus is Indiana’s college-going rate, which continues to disappoint.

Hurting the pool

Poor people are the target of cuts in state government. Gov. Mike Braun’s administration is trying to reign in Medicaid enrollment — and therefore expenses — by imposing additional verification checks, work requirements and more. Similarly, those on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will no longer be able to buy a candy bar or a Dr. Pepper. But perhaps the biggest impact is coming from cuts to childcare vouchers. With fewer vouchers and provider rates slashed, day care centers are closing. And that means fewer people in the workforce. I can’t help but note that at the same time these cuts are happening, lawmakers

removed limitations for state-paid private school vouchers.

IEDC

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation doesn’t have a blank check anymore. During former Gov. Eric Holcomb’s tenure, the spending by the IEDC was legit insane. And legislators seemed hesitant to question or block any of it. An audit of the quasi-governmental agency and related entities turned up lots of conflicts and lapses in process. Lawmakers slashed the IEDC’s budget. How they spend their money is also still up for debate. And some local officials say the entity lacks a clear vision. With a new board and focus on smaller businesses outside of Indianapolis, it remains to be seen which version of the agency is better for Indiana.

Rising costs

I was going to stop at five, but I can’t ignore the growth in utility and health care costs. The latter have grown for decades, and nothing lawmakers do seem to make a dent. And the General Assembly has really tried — putting more work on the health care side than many other issues. But because so much health care policy is controlled at the federal level, state policies can only have so much impact. But the rising energy prices are startling and new. Utility rates have a myriad of culprits behind them, and 2026 will be focused on dealing with those. Everyone has some blame on this one: utility companies living large on massive profits; lawmakers allowing companies to raise rates for many expenses; utility regulators approving hikes that are simply not justified or affordable; and the continued fight over renewables vs. coal.

Kelly, editor-in-chief of Indiana Capital Chronicle, has covered the Indiana Statehouse since 1999.

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—Thomas Jefferson

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Photo provided

Bank donates

First Bank of Berne recently made a series of donations to local organizations. Pictured at left, Tanner McClain and Tracy Carpenter of the bank present a \$1,000 donation to Mindy Weaver, Linda Conn, Americus Milthaler and Val Smith of Jay County Humane Society. Other recent donations included \$3,000 to Pennville Community Park, \$1,500 to Jayland Angel Tree, \$1,500 to John Jay Center for Learning and \$1,200 to Youth Service Bureau.

Mercer Health awards Poeppelman

A local graduate has been awarded a scholarship to pursue a medical degree.

Mercer Health Medical Staff recently announced that it has selected Cassandra Poeppelman to receive its 2025 Mercer Health Medical Staff Scholarship.

Poeppelman, a Fort Recovery High School graduate, is pursuing a doctor of medicine degree with graduation from Boonshoft School of Medicine expected in May 2029. Her undergraduate research has included exploring respiratory control and developmental physiology.

The scholarship awards \$2,000 annually to a medical school student who “has shown a strong connection to Mercer Health or the surrounding communities.”

“We are pleased to recognize a first-year medical student who is committed to returning to serve this community,” said Dr. Jeff Otte, chief of staff at Mercer Health. “It is encouraging to see local talent investing in the future of rural healthcare, and Mercer Health is proud to support her early clinical development.”

Also, Chartis named Mercer Health as one of the top 100 rural and community hospitals in the country. It was the fourth time in the last five years that it has earned the recognition.

For more information about the scholarship, visit mercervhealth.com/scholarship-program.

Board adds

Jay County Chamber of Commerce recently announced a list of new board members.

Newly named to the board are Mark Leavell, Rebecca Thornburg, Aaron Helm, Kimbra Reynolds, Jodie Wendel, Afton Ridgway, Michele Goldman, Lindsay Hardyman and Tracy Gross. They join returning board members Josh Stewart, Zach Chenoweth, Randy Stephen, Seth Scott, Shauna Runkle and Dru Hall.

The chamber also welcomed

Business roundup

new members Inner Sanctum Piercing & Tattoo, Grandma's Favorites, Elle & Em Boutique and the Town of Bryant. The chamber will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Inner Sanctum, 326 S. Main St., Dunkirk, at 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 8.

Hospital adds

Adams Memorial Hospital has installed a new MRI scanner.

The hospital in Decatur now has a Siemens Magnetom Altea 1.5 Tesla MRI scanner as well as a new scan room, technologist's room and equipment room. The new equipment has been in use since Nov. 11.

Restaurant donates

Regional McDonald's owners and operators recently delivered holiday-themed socks and festive treats to the Ronald McDonald House at Parkview Regional Medical Center in Fort Wayne.

The visit coincided with the launch of Round Up for RMHC in the McDonald's app, which allows customers to donate to Ronald McDonald House Charities.

“We're grateful for the continued support from McDonald's Owner/Operators, especially during the holidays,” said Jenifer Veatch, CEO of RMHC of Northeast Indiana, in a news release. “Their visits bring comfort, smiles, and a sense of togetherness to families who are going through an incredibly difficult time.”

Bowen names

Bowen Health has opened new clinics offering mental health care, psychiatric services and substance abuse resources in Fort Wayne and Kokomo.

The new locations are at 1313

W. Washington Center Road, Fort Wayne, and 2312 S. Dixon Road, Kokomo.

“We believe that it won't take long for you to see what the Bowen difference is,” said president and CEO Dr. Rob Ryan in a news release. “Number one is relational. When you come here, we want to know you by name when you walk in the door. And then there is convenience. Just because you may live in a rural community doesn't mean you have to forgo the care you need because it's only available in a larger city. We are so thankful to be part of the Howard County family.”

Also, Ryan has been appointed to the American Hospital Association's Committee on Behavioral Health.

Bowen Health serves northeast Indiana including Jay, Blackford, Delaware, Adams and Wells counties.

Agreement filed

Indiana Michigan Power filed a joint settlement on its expedited generation resource plan last week with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.

If approved, the plan would create a procedure and timeline for Indiana Michigan Power to seek approvals for new energy generation resources. The agreement also involves Amazon Data Services.

“I&M is focused on providing reliable, affordable power to all our customers,” said Steve Baker, I&M's president and chief operating officer, in a news release. “The ability to acquire the resources we need at competitive prices is important to helping us achieve that goal.”

Organization created

The Indiana Center for Business Ethics has been launched to support businesses in the state.

The non-profit organization works to provide research and education while also partnering with organizations on business ethics. An initial study showed

that organizations with ethical practices have greater employee retention, improved employee engagement and better reputations.

The information from the study will be used to help organizations with improving communication, training and leadership.

For more information, visit indianabusinessethics.org.

Association awards

The Indiana Builders Association presented honors recently during its Hoosier Excellence Awards.

Among the awards were: Remodeler of the Year — Provision Builders owners Jen and Will Miller, New Carlisle

Don Cassidy Associate of the Year — Nick Prentice, chief operating officer of Builders Association of North Central Indiana

Settlement reached

Dollar General has agreed to a payment to settle claims that it overcharged customers.

The retail chain will pay at least \$15 million to settle the claims, The Guardian reported. The settlement involves multiple states that allege shoppers were charged higher prices than were posted on the shelves.

It follows a \$1.55 million agreement reached earlier this month to settle similar claims in Pennsylvania.

Members added

Ardagh Holdings S.A., the parent company of Ardagh Group, has named Galdino Claro and Richard Navarre to its board of directors. It also appointed Todd Brents as its interim chief financial officer beginning Jan. 1

Claro is an independent consultant who has served for companies including Sims Limited and Harsco Metals and Minerals. Navarre is the retired chairman, CEO and president of Covia Corporation. Brents is a senior partner who leads finance practice with Beckway.

Ardagh owns and operates glass manufacturing facilities in Dunkirk and Winchester.

Partner named

Subway has appointed Cheong Oh SW as master franchise partner in South Korea.

Cheong Oh SW will support operations of existing Subway locations in the country while also assuming responsibility for expansion, management and development. He has operated Domino's Pizza in Korea since 1990.

“We are pleased to welcome Cheong Oh SW as our master franchise partner in South Korea,” said Joseph Hsu, president of Subway Asia Pacific, in a news release. “Their leadership and expertise will help drive the next chapter of growth for Subway, strengthening our position as the leading sandwich destination and meeting the growing demand in the market.”

Courses scheduled

Indiana Chamber of Commerce has several programs coming up.

General Occupational Safety and Health Administration courses will be held beginning Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Also, the Indiana Safety and Health Conference & Expo will be held from Feb. 23 through 25. It will feature a variety of speakers as well as more than 60 educational sessions. Actor, author and host of “America's Got Talent” Terry Crews will speak about mental health. Motivational speaker Tim Page-Bottorff will also lead a session on improving safety.

The courses and expo will be held at the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Conference Center in Indianapolis.

For more information, visit indianachamber.com.

Does your business have news to share? Email us at news@thecr.com to be included in our weekly business roundup.

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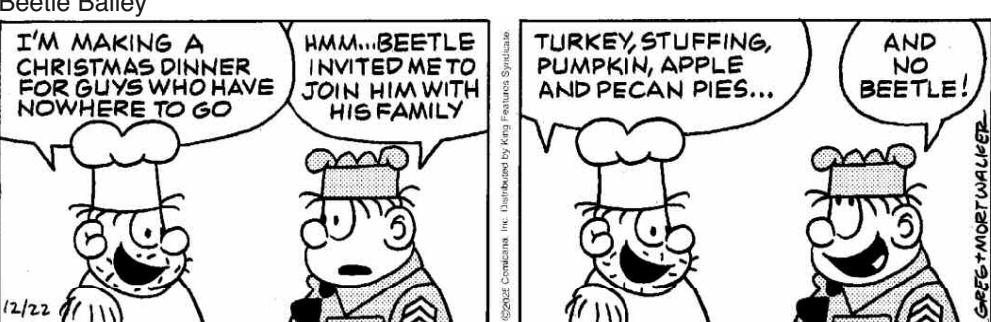
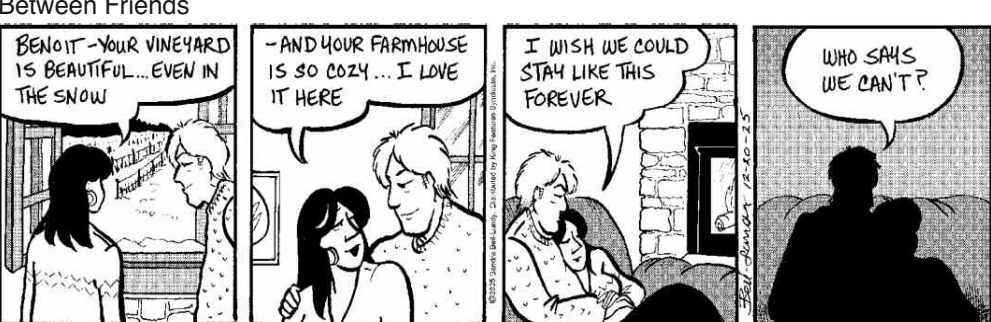
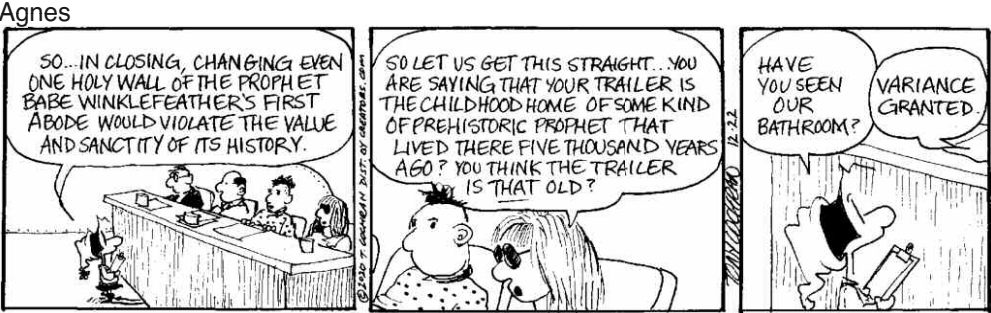
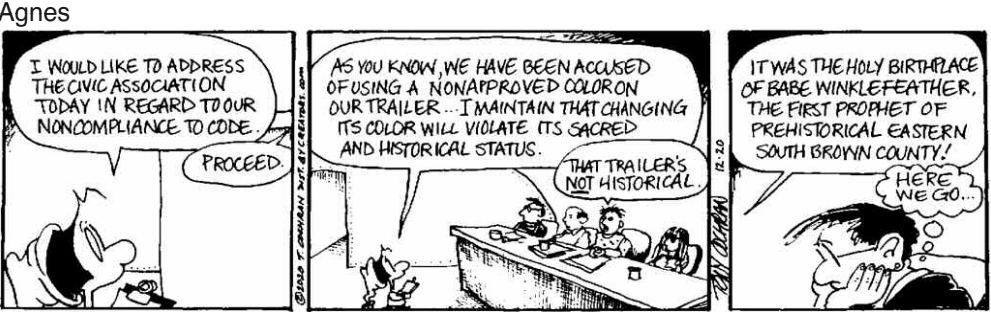
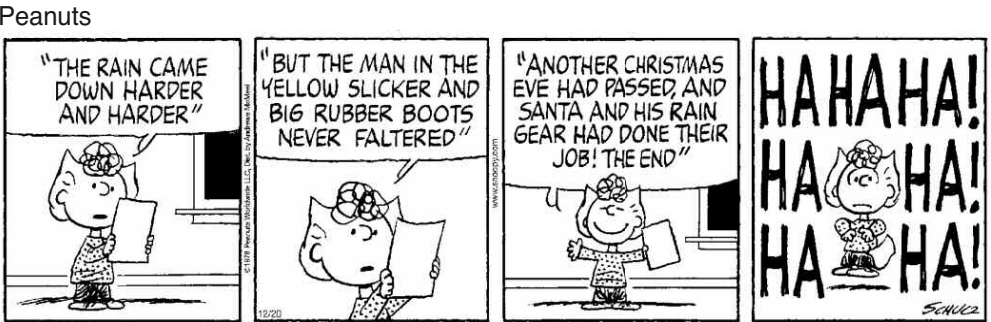
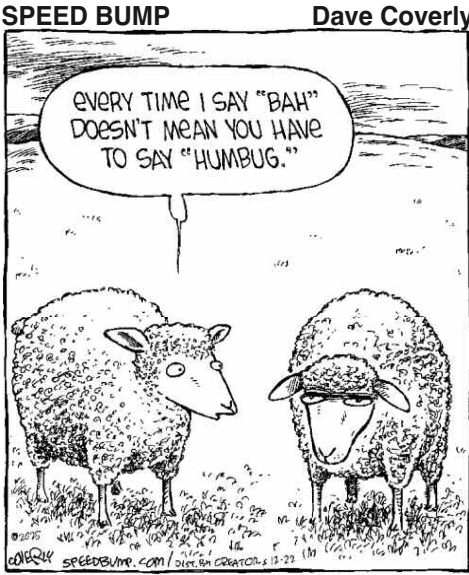
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We Deliver

Laughter

Maybe it's a chuckle from reading a vintage Peanuts cartoon. Maybe it's a column by a member of The CR staff. But we try to keep our sense of humor.

The Commercial Review *We Deliver*



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Hallie Schwieterman blasts through a group of Starfires to put up a layup during Saturday's 75-44 victory. Schwieterman took advantage of South Adams' press on multiple occasions to finish with 19 points.

Box score

South Adams Starfires
at Jay County Patriots

Girls varsity summary

South Adams (5-8, 1-3 ACAC)

	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Schwartz	0-6	0-0	0
Smith	0-3	2-4	2
Sprunger	0-2	1-2	1
Trausch	4-9	8-9	16
Lehman	9-22	3-7	23
KBollenbchr	0-1	0-0	0
CBollenbchr	0-0	2-2	2
Geels	0-1	0-0	0
Tenorio	0-4	0-0	0
Totals	13-48	16-24	44
	.271	.667	

Def. Rebound percentage: .519

Jay County (7-3, 2-0 ACAC)

	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
KSchwtrmn	5-7	2-3	12
Newton	5-7	0-0	13
HSchwtrmn	9-16	0-1	19
Brunswick	4-8	1-2	9
Dirksen	0-0	0-0	0
Lekue Mgro	1-1	0-0	2
May	1-4	2-2	4
Peters	8-13	0-1	16
Kaigler	0-0	0-0	0
Totals	33-56	5-9	75
	.589	.556	

Def. Rebound percentage: .641

Score by quarters:

S. Adams 11 9 13 11—44

Jay Co. 30 12 21 12—75

3-point shooting:

South Adams 2-14 (Lehman 2-6, Smith 0-1, Sprunger 0-1, Trausch 0-1, Tenorio 0-2, Schwartz 0-3). Jay County 4-5 (Newton 3-3, HSchwierman 1-2).

Rebounds:

South Adams 28 (Lehman 10, Trausch 6, Team 4, Sprunger 2, Geels 2, Tenorio 2, Schwartz, CBollenbacher), Jay County 38 (Peters 6, Team 6, KSchwierman 5, HSchwierman 5, May 5, Newton 3, Dirksen 2, Lekue Mgaro 2, Kaigler).

Assists:

South Adams 3 (Lehman 2, Smith), Jay County 17 (KSchwierman 5, Newton 3, Brunswick 3, May 3, HSchwierman 2, Lekue Mgaro).

Blocks:

South Adams 1 (Lehman), Jay County 4 (KSchwierman, HSchwierman, Peters).

Personal fouls:

South Adams 9 (Trausch 3, KBollenbacher 2, CBollenbacher 2, Schwartz, Sprunger), Jay County 17 (KSchwierman 4, May 4, Peters 3, Brunswick 2, Dirksen 2, HSchwierman, Lekue Mgaro).

Turnovers:

South Adams 27. Jay County 24.

First ...

Continued from page 8

“The girls are obviously looking for their shots, but they’re also finding each other and sharing the basketball,” McIntire said. “That’s so important because down the road it can’t just be the Hallie Schwieterman show or the Karsyn Schweierman show, but those two will still score for us.”

By sharing the ball so well, Jay County ended up having five players score nine or more points. Hallie and Karsyn Schwieterman both predictably scored well with the former putting up 19 to lead JCHS and the latter adding in 12 points.

Newton matched her career high with 13 points, while Charlee Peters set a new career mark with 16.

“I feel pretty good,” said Peters, three hoops in the first and third quarters. “Karsyn (Schwieterman) has been throwing me a lot of good passes recently and I was able to catch them tonight and put it right back up.”

Brunswick was the Patriot with nine points. Natalie May and Araitz Lekue Magro both found the basket as well.

While JCHS had four players in double figures and three more with field goals, only two of the Starfires (5-8, 1-3 ACAC) hit shots from the field. Ana Lehman finished with a game-high 23 points on 8-of-22 (40.9%) shooting and Laney Trausch had a pair of buckets in each half for 16 points.

“Lehman’s a good athlete,” McIntire said. “We knew that coming in and knew she was somebody we needed to be focused on because she can drive and shoot from the outside.”

“(Trausch) is a very athletic kid and we gave her too many second opportunities. ...

“But overall, we knew the other kids really were not scoring threats and we needed to focus on those two.”

Along with generally sharing the ball, Jay County took advantage of South Adams in transition. The Patriots scored 64% (48 of the 75) points when changing sides of the court.

Of those 48 transition points, 19 (39.6%) came off of turnovers, 11 (22.9%) were the result of beating the press and 16 (33.3%) were scored by the Patriots ripping down a rebound and running or pushing after a quick inbounds pass.

“We were just making space and getting open,” said Karsyn Schwieterman about breaking the press. “We have a couple of plays and Hallie is really good at getting open. ... Once we get it in, we can just (beat them), especially when they are in man because it’s just one-on-one.”

DK Metcalf involved in altercation with fan

By ADAM BITTNER
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Tribune News Service

DK Metcalf could soon find himself in some trouble with the NFL.

The Pittsburgh Steelers receiver was seen by CBS cameras swiping at a fan in the stands at Ford Field during the second quarter of his team’s game against the Lions Sunday in Detroit.

CBS sideline reporter Tracy Wolfson reported that no one else on the Steelers’ bench acknowledged the incident.

Steelers wide receiver swiped at Detroit fan late in first half

Metcalf was not flagged for the sideline incident and was in the lineup for the following drive.

CBS rules analyst Gene Steratore later explained that Metcalf could not be penalized in-game because referees did not see the incident.

However, Metcalf could face

a fine or suspension with his team heading into a crucial Week 17 matchup against the Cleveland Browns next week at Acrisure Stadium.

Per the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s Brian Batko, who is on the scene in Detroit, Metcalf after the incident returned to his usual spot on the Steelers’ sideline, at times standing and watching the game, then sitting next to teammates on the bench.

Meanwhile, the fan spent much of the final two minutes of the first half talking to security and a police officer. Other fans were also involved and appeared to be showing cell phone video of the incident. Members of the Steelers staff were in the discussions, as well.

The fan was in good spirits, smiling with those around him as he continued to interact with an officer. He was eventually escorted out with two seconds left in the first half, pumping his fist as he walked up the steps.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today	Saturday
Jay County — Boys wrestling hosts ECIC tournament — 9 a.m.	Jay County — Boys basketball vs. Wapahani — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Girls bowling vs. Parkway at Speedway Lanes — 9 a.m.;	Fort Recovery — Girls bowling vs. Parkway at Speedway Lanes — 9 a.m.;

Wrestling at Parkway — 9 a.m.; Girls basketball vs. Preble Shawnee — 11 a.m.; Boys bowling vs. Parkway at Speedway Lanes — 1 p.m.; Boys basketball at South Adams — 6 p.m.

TV schedule

Today
2 p.m. — College football Boca Raton Bowl: Toledo vs. Louisville

(ESPN)

2 p.m. — College basketball: Grambling State at Ohio State (BTN)

4 p.m. — College basketball: UC Riverside at UCLA (BTN)

4 p.m. — NHL: Pittsburgh Penguins at Toronto Maple Leafs (TNT)

5:30 p.m. — College football New Orleans Bowl: Western Kentucky vs. Southern Miss (ESPN)

6 p.m. — College basketball: Harvard at St. John’s (FS1)

6:30 p.m. — NHL: Dallas Stars at Detroit Red Wings (TNT)

7:30 p.m. — NBA: Milwaukee Bucks at Indiana Pacers (FDSN Indiana)

9 p.m. — College football Frisco Bowl: UNLV vs. Ohio (ESPN)

9 p.m. — NHL: Philadelphia Flyers at Chicago Blackhawks (TNT)

10:30 p.m. — NBA: Houston Rockets at Los Angeles Clippers (NBC)

Wednesday

8 p.m. — College football Hawai’i Bowl: Cal vs. Hawai’i (ESPN)

Thursday

12 p.m. — NBA: Cleveland Cavaliers at New York Knicks (ESPN)

2:30 p.m. — NBA: San Antonio Spurs at Oklahoma City Thunder (ESPN)

4:30 p.m. — NFL: Detroit Lions at Minnesota Vikings (CBS)

5 p.m. — NBA: Dallas Mavericks at Golden State Warriors (ESPN)

8 p.m. — NBA: Houston Rockets at Los Angeles Lakers (ESPN)

8:15 p.m. — NFL: Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs (ABC)

10:30 p.m. — NBA: Minnesota Timberwolves at Denver Nuggets (ESPN)

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To have an event listed in “Sports on tap”, email details to sports@thecr.com

90 SALE CALENDAR

PUBLIC AUCTION
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026
10:00 A.M.
Location: 7851 W. 400 N.,
Pennville, IN 47369
OPEN HOUSE:
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025 - 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 2026 - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
OR BY APPOINTMENT
REAL ESTATE BEING OFFERED:
1 Ω STORY HOME - 3,208 SQ. FT.; 3 BDRM; 1 BATH; KITCHEN; DINING RM/LIVING RM COMBO; UTILITY RM; BASEMENT W/ WOOD STOVE; DETACHED GARAGE; 2 BARN; PASTURES; STEEL GRAIN BIN; 6.46 +/- ACRES.
CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION!!
TERMS OF SALE:
10% Non-refundable deposit day of sale. Property being sold as-is, where is. New Survey has been completed in December 2025. Taxes prorated until day of closing. Possession at closing. Closing to be held within 45 days or less from day of auction. Title Insurance will be provided and taxes prorated to the day of closing. ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE DAY OF AUCTION WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER

90 SALE CALENDAR

ANYTHING IN PRINT. OWNER - LARRY MOSER ESTATE
Mel Smitley's Real Estate & Auctioneering
119 E Main St. Portland, IN
Laci Smitley - AU10600051
260-729-2281 - Cell
Ryan Davidson AU10600063 260-726-5076

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100 JOBS WANTED

Pole barns, roofing, remodeling. 260-849-2489.

130 MISC. FOR SALE

SCRATCH PADS ARE BACK various bundles sizes and XL pads. \$1.25 plus tax. Pick up at The Commercial Review Tuesday thru Friday 10am to 4pm.

PAPER END ROLLS FOR SALE Various sizes and prices. Call The Commercial Review at 260-726-8141 for more information.

190 FARMERS COLUMN

AG RENTAL Spreaders: BBI, Artsway Vertical. New Holland 228 skid loaders w/full cab, heat/ac. Fort Recovery 419-852-0309

200 FOR RENT

LEASE SPACE available, Coldwater, OH. Manufacturing, warehousing, assembly, distribution, offices, inside and outdoor storage. Easy access to major highways and railroad access with loading docks and overhead

200 FOR RENT

cranes available. Contact Sycamore Group, 419-678-5318, www.sycamorespace.com

230 AUTOS, TRUCKS

WE PAY CASH for junk autos. We pick up at your location. 1-765-546-2642 or 1-765-857-1071. Slocum's Salvage

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
City of Dunkirk
2026 CCMG Dunkirk Project
Sealed Bids for the 2026 CCMG Dunkirk Project will be received by the City of Dunkirk at the Jay County Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian Street, Suite D, Portland, Indiana 47371, until Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 10:00 a.m local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. The Project includes the following Work: The resurfacing of various streets within the City of Dunkirk. Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be found and downloaded at the following website: choiceoneengineering.com/projects-out-for-bid. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office of Choice One. For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.
Owner: City of Dunkirk
By: Jack Robbins
Title: Mayor
Date: December 23, 2025
December 30, 2025
CR 12-23,30-2025-HSPAXLP

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
Town of Redkey
2026 CCMG Redkey Project
Sealed Bids for the 2026 CCMG Redkey Project will be received by the Town of Redkey at the Jay County Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian Street, Suite B, Portland, Indiana 47371, until Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 10:00 a.m local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. The Project includes the following Work: The resurfacing of various streets within the Town of Redkey. Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be found and downloaded at the following website: choiceoneengineering.com/projects-out-for-bid. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office of Choice One. For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.
Owner: Town of Redkey
By: Brenda Beaty
Title: Council President
Date: December 23, 2025
December 30, 2025
CR 12-23,30-2025-HSPAXLP

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given that sealed bids will be received in the office of the Jay County Auditor, at the Courthouse in Portland, Indiana, 47371, Friday, January 09, 2026 until the hour of 4:00 PM local time for Item 1 to be delivered to the county in the amounts and at such time as ordered by the head of the department. Sealed bids will be opened at the Commissioner meeting on January 12, 2026 after 9:00 a.m. Bids are to be from January 12, 2026 through December 31, 2026. Specifications are available in the Jay County Highway Dept, Portland, Indiana, 47371 for the following items:
1) Corrugated Metal Pipe
2) Aluminum Box Culverts
3) Precast Concrete Arch Structures and Boxes
4) All Steel Bridge Packages including Beam Span and Truss Structures
5) Bridge Decking products
6) Galvanized Steel Guardrail
7) High Density Polyethylene Culvert Pipe
8) Culvert Liner products
9) Slope Stabilization and Erosion Control and Stormwater products.
Successful Bidder must have a representative available to assist Owner in sizing and installation of structures and rehab materials for all items. Bidder must provide a professional engineer (PE) on products as noted.
Items 1 thru 9 shall be considered as a unit, with bid to be complete for all items and material to be delivered and unloaded as specified by the Owner.
Quote net prices only, no price escalation clauses
The delivery time and availability of materials are to be listed and considered as part of the bid.
All materials must meet all federal and state highway specifications with a design load capacity to meet AASHTO guidelines. Manufacturer's material certification sheets must accompany bid where appropriate.
All materials must be manufactured and fabricated in the United States of America.
Owner reserves the right to accept and or reject any and all bids. The Board of Commissioners reserve the right to reject any and/or all bids, or to accept the one(s) which, in their judgement will be in the best interest of Jay County, being the best and/or lowest response and responsible bidder for each line or class of materials by the order of the Board of Commissioners of Jay County, Indiana.
Emily Franks
Jay County Auditor
CR: December 10 & December 23, 2025
CR 12-10,23-2025-HSPAXLP

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

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in The Commercial Review Call
726-8141

30 in the first

Strong opening quarter pushes Jay past Starfires

By ANDREW BALKO
The Commercial Review

The Patriots had a rocky start as they dropped two of their first three games of the season.

But they are starting to find their groove after picking up their sixth straight heading into the Christmas break.

The Jay County High School girls basketball team played strong in the first and third quarters to secure a 75-44 victory over the South Adams Starfires on Saturday to extend its winning streak to six and remain undefeated at home and in the Allen County Athletic Conference.

“The first quarter I thought was good,” said JCHS coach Sherri McIntire. “I felt like the second quarter we had too many turnovers.

“I’m pleased we’re going into break 7-3, we’ve gone on a win streak. Obviously I’m happy we got an ACAC win, but I felt like we came and went too much tonight. We didn’t play consistently at our level.”

While McIntire felt like her team took the foot off the gas pedal at certain points in the game, she was thrilled with the first eight minutes as Jay County (7-3) developed a 30-11 lead.

The Patriots made 13 shots in the period, nine of which came as the result of an assist. Elizabeth Brunswick and Raylah Newton each dished out three assists in the period while Natalie May had one of her three in the first and Karsyn Schwieterman gave out two of her game-high five assists.

See First page 7

Charlee Peters of the Jay County High School girls basketball team turns her torso to try and save a ball that’s heading out of bounds during Saturday’s 75-44 win over South Adams. Peters scored a career-high 16 points to join Raylah Newton, Hallie Schwieterman and Karsyn Schwieterman in double figures.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Crawford, Rowles led at Findlay Invite

FINDLAY, Ohio — One Patriot hit a career milestone and another found herself standing on the podium in the top five.

No. 6 Katie Rowles and No. 10 Amara Crawford both had big days for the Jay County High School girls wrestling team on Saturday at the Findlay Invitational.

The Patriots finished in 25th with 60 points, while Olentangy Orange topped the field of 76 with 223.5 points.

Rowles picked up her 100th career win en route to an eighth-place finish in the 100-pound weight class. The senior won her first three matches but fell in the quarterfinal to Bella Graziani of Tinora. Rowles picked up one more win before falling two more times.

Crawford had the highest finish of the Patriots by placing fifth in the 170 bracket.

The JCHS junior had a bye before rattling off two wins and losing in the quarterfinal. She won two more matches in the consolation bracket before losing to Julia Bollenbacher of host Findlay in the semifinal. She capped off her run by pinning Mediapolis’ Peyton Johnson in 2 minutes, 32 seconds.

Four more Patriots earned points for the team. Despite dropping her first round match, Maleah Parsons won three bouts in the consolation bracket of the 135-pound weight class to earn points for the team.

Madison Gage, Alexis Tipton and Kenady Lyons all earned points as well with Tipton winning two matches and the others both claiming one.

Tribe blasts Ansonia by 25 points in win

ANSONIA, Ohio — The Indians hit a slight bump in the road when they opened Midwest Athletic Conference play. But they seem to be right back on track ever since.

The Fort Recovery High School boys basketball team rolled through the Ansonia Tigers for a 52-27 victory on Saturday.

Breaker Jutte led the Tribe (5-1) with 16 points. The junior finished the first half with just two points after splitting a pair of free throws. He bounced back in the second half to get two hoops in each quarter and sink seven more foul shots.

Hudson Overman also reached double figures with 11 points.

Other FRHS scoring efforts came from Brody Barga (eight points), Douglas Bihn (six), Colson Post (five), Dylan Klenke (two), Kolton Thompson (two) and Carter Fortkamp (two).

Carson Tobe, Jacob MacNutt and Graham

games, the Tribe (4-1, 2-0 MAC) shot 534.

Fort Recovery had a high of 177 in the Baker games to beat Marion Local.

Maggie Frey led the Flyers (0-4, 0-2 MAC) with a 295 series.

Boys roll

COLDWATER, Ohio — Fort Recovery’s boys bowling team rolled past the Marion Local Flyers 2,812-2,015 at Pla-Mor Lanes on Saturday.

Gabe Acheson posted the high game of the day with 258 pins. He opened with a 177 game to make for a 435 series

A.J. Siefring had the next-best series of 330 pins.

The only other game over 200 pins for Fort Recovery (6-0, 2-0 MAC) came from Anthony Roessner with a 210.

Isaac Schulze rolled the high series for Marion Local (0-4, 0-2) at 312 pins.

The Indians averaged 205.4 pins in the Baker game to seal the victory.

Local Roundup

Coppess all scored six points to lead the Tigers (1-4).

Brown leads

COLDWATER, Ohio — Deanna Brown had a strong day as she powered the Fort Recovery girls bowling team past the Marion Local Flyers 2,338-1,885 on Saturday at Pla-Mor Lanes.

Brown started off strong with a 202 before rolling a match-high 234 in the second game.

Lilah Thein also broke the 200 club with a 201 in her first game. She followed up with a 184 for a 385 series.

Elizabeth Kahlig was the other Indian to bowl two games, finishing with a 281 series.

In the other individual

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Pork Steaks	\$3 ¹⁹ lb	Beef Stew Meat	\$7 ⁴⁹ lb
rope style, stuffed Sausage	\$3 ³⁹ lb	Hot Pepper Cheese	\$5 ⁹⁹ lb
Country Style Sausage	\$2 ⁹⁹ lb		

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Whole Bone In Hams (avg. 18-22 lbs) \$3.69/lb half \$3.99/lb

Whole Semi Boneless Hams (avg. 15-18 lbs) \$3.99/lb

Whole Spiral Sliced & Fire Glazed Hams \$5.49/lb half \$5.99/lb

Whole Boneless Pit Hams \$4.99/lb half \$5.49/lb

Prime Rib \$20.99/lb Seasoned \$21.49/lb

Whole Fillet \$27.99/lb

Individual Fillets \$26.99/lb

Standing Rib Roast (bone-in prime rib) ... \$19.99/lb (seasoned) \$20.49/lb

*while supplies last, no rain checks, sale prices reflected at the register

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