

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Shining at state

Miss Jay County Fair Queen Gretchen Link finished as the fourth runner-up Sunday in the Indiana State Fair Queen Pageant at Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis. Link became just the second Jay County queen to make the state fair court, following 1986 Indiana State Fair Queen Tina Schwieterman. The only others who made the top 10 were Beth Ninde in 1978, Jessica Howell in 2006 and Rachel Heitkamp in 2024. Presley Hampton of Jackson County was selected as Miss Indiana State Fair 2026. Others joining Link on this year's court are first runner-up Kylie Cox of Tippecanoe County, second runner-up Addison Buckley of Hancock County and third runner-up Lexi Wilhoite of Vermilion County.



Photo provided

Miss Jay County Gretchen Link finishes as fourth runner-up in state fair queen pageant

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

Gretchen Link walked into the Indiana State Fair Queen Pageant over the weekend with the mindset that she was simply there for the ride.

But as the weekend progressed, Link zoned in on her goal — to brightly represent Jay County.

She found confidence on the stage and made it through the first two finals rounds.

"I felt like I had won just being in the Top 10," she said.

Then the judges named her to Miss Indiana State Fair Queen's court.

Link earned fourth runner-up at the state fair queen competition Sunday, making her the second Jay County queen in

history to earn a spot on the state fair queen court. She joined Miss Indiana State Fair Queen Presley Hampton of Jackson County, first runner-up Kylie Cox of Tippecanoe County, second runner-up Addison Buckley of Hancock County and third runner-up Lexi Wilhoite of Vermilion County.

"I don't think that it has even sunk in yet," Link said. "I know to some people, it might not be a huge deal, but I think for me knowing how much it means to Jay County as a whole, and just how rare it is obviously for a county to make it to the Sweet 16, to the Top 10, to be on court, I feel so accomplished. I'm defi-

nitely proud of myself, but still so shocked and feeling so, just, humbled."

There have been four other Jay County representatives who have made the Top 10, but only one other local queen has made the court — Tina (Schwieterman) Easton, who earned the Miss Indiana State Fair Queen title in 1986. The others who made the top 10 were Beth Ninde in 1978, Jessica Howell in 2006 and Rachel Heitkamp in 2024.

Link faced off against 77 other women in the three-day competition, which started with interviews and speeches Friday at Indiana State Fairgrounds. The contest continued Saturday with additional preliminary judging open to the

public. Final rounds kicked off Sunday, with 16 semi-finalists delivering speeches in professional wear. Ten finalists then answered an on-stage question while sporting formal wear before judges named court members.

"I would definitely say in the finals round, it's more pressure," Link recalled. "There are a lot more nerves on the second competition night with the finals. With the quick elimination ... and more quick changes for outfits."

She talked about her experience getting to know the other contestants. She said they joked around with the idea of hosting a 2026 Indiana State Fair Queen pageant reunion someday.

See **Shining** page 2

Rubio: U.S. will blockade, pressure Venezuela

Maduro was arrested and faces narcoterrorism charges

By JOSEPH WILKINSON

New York Daily News

Tribune News Service

The U.S. plans to control Venezuela through an oil "quarantine" and a coordinated pressure campaign — but could still send in ground troops if President Trump decides to, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday.

"What you're seeing right now is an oil quarantine that allows us to exert tremendous leverage over what happens next," Rubio said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think what you see as a force posture is one of the largest naval deployments in modern history, certainly in the Western Hemisphere."

But Rubio said Trump also planned to keep all his options open and could send American troops into the country if Venezuela's new leadership does not cooperate.

The nation's vice president, Delcy Rodriguez, took temporary control of the nation after U.S. forces snatched leader Nicolas Maduro early Saturday. But Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Sunday that Rodriguez's position was tenuous in the eyes of the U.S.

"You can lead or you can get out of the way, because we're not going to allow you to continue to subvert American influence," Noem said on "Fox News Sunday." "We're looking for a leader that will stand up beside us."

Rubio also explicitly said the U.S. planned to bring international oil companies in to alter Venezuela's oil industry, which is the dominant factor in the country's floundering economy.

Venezuelan oil fields have become less productive since Maduro took over the nation following Hugo Chavez's death in 2013, and Rubio pitched U.S. intervention as a way to improve production.

See **Venezuela** page 2

Circle Centre shuts down

By JOSEPH S. PETE

The Times (Munster)

Tribune News Service

The best-known mall in Indiana closed for good and will be replaced by a redevelopment.

The Hoosier State is home to many larger malls with fancier stores, but none had a more prominent location than the Circle Centre Mall in the heart of downtown Indianapolis. Countless Hoosiers passed through its corridors or stopped to grab a bite at one of its many restaurants flanking downtown Indy's busiest streets.

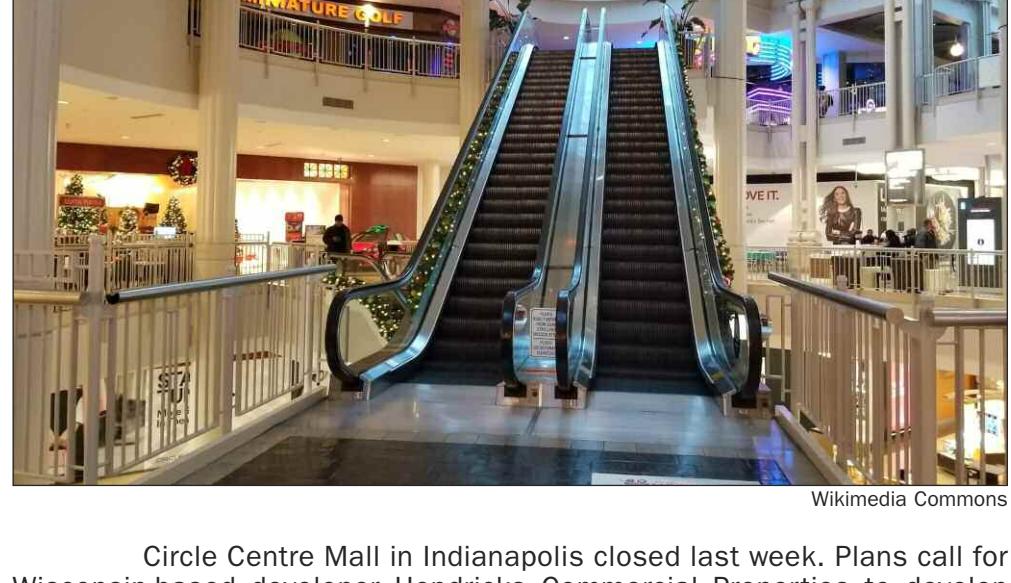
The four-story Circle Centre Mall was developed in the mid-1990s for

more than \$300 million in order to repurpose the former L.S. Ayres and William H. Block department stores downtown and restore retail vitality downtown at a time when people were more likely to shop at suburban malls. It lost its department store anchors of Nordstrom and then Carson.

It was home to a wide array of retailers, a multi-

plex, a glow-in-the-dark indoor golf course, Brown Mackie College and a third-floor food court with a Johnny Rockets. Many people at least passed through it when navigating downtown as it was connected via a series of skywalks to hotels, the Artsgarden, the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium.

See **Shuts** page 2



Circle Centre Mall in Indianapolis closed last week. Plans call for Wisconsin-based developer Hendricks Commercial Properties to develop the site into an open-air urban neighborhood with retail, dining, entertainment, offices, apartments and public plazas.

In review

A hearing on a motion to dismiss in Portland clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips' lawsuit against Portland Police Chief Dustin Mock and investigator Jeff Hopkins has been pushed back.

The hearing that was scheduled for today has been moved to 2:30 p.m. April 25 in Delaware Circuit Court 3.

Weather

The high temperature Sunday was 34 degrees. The low was 25.

Expect a low in the mid 30s tonight with winds gusting to 20 mph. Skies will be partly cloudy early Wednesday before clearing. The high will reach the upper 40s.

See page 2 for an extended forecast.

In review

Second Harvest Food Bank will host tailgate food distributions:

• Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Jay County Fairgrounds, 806 E. Votaw St., Portland

• Thursday, Jan. 8, at Muncie Mall, 3401 N. Granville Ave., Muncie

All tailgates are scheduled for 10 a.m.

Coming up

Wednesday — Details from this week's Jay School Board meeting.

Thursday — Results from the Jay County girls basketball game against Concordia.

Friday — A look at bills that have been proposed by local legislators.



Venezuela ...

Continued from page 1
"They need investment from private companies who are only going to invest under certain guarantees and conditions," he said on "Face the Nation." "We want the oil industry in that country not to go to the benefit of pirates and adversaries of the United States."

Venezuelan oil exports have been officially sanctioned since 2017. Most of the country's oil

exports from the state-owned company, PDVSA, are sold on the black market in China.

In mid-December, Trump instituted an oil "blockade" surrounding Venezuela, stopping all sanctioned ships from entering or exiting the country through a massive U.S. Navy deployment. Rubio said Sunday

that blockade, which he referred to as an "oil quarantine," would allow the U.S. to

dictate terms with whatever Venezuelan leadership emerges.

"My number one objective is America," Rubio said on ABC's "This Week." "We care about Venezuela. We want it to do well moving forward. But our number one objective here is America."

Many observers have criticized the U.S. operation in Venezuela, which local leaders

said killed 40 people, as a violation of international law. The plot involved several military aircraft and bombs dropped on the capital city of Caracas.

On Sunday, Rubio described it as a law enforcement operation to arrest Maduro, who was indicted for narcoterrorism under U.S. law. He was jailed in Brooklyn upon his arrival in the U.S. Saturday night.

Several other members of

Maduro's regime, who face similar American criminal charges, remain in Venezuela, ostensibly in positions of power.

"We have learned through the years when America tries to do regime change and nation-building in this way, the American people pay the price in both blood and in dollars," Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, said on "This Week."

CR almanac

Wednesday 1/7	Thursday 1/8	Friday 1/9	Saturday 1/10	Sunday 1/11
45/37	57/52	61/46	49/27	31/24
Mostly cloudy on Wednesday when the low will be around 37 degrees.	Thursday's forecast shows an 80% chance of rain with temperatures in the 50s.	Friday looks to be rainy with a 50% chance of showers throughout the day.	Chance of rain Saturday with mostly cloudy skies and temperatures dipping to the 20s.	Sunday's forecast looks like mostly sunny skies with a low around 24.

Shining ...

Continued from page 1
"Spending three days with so many girls who are all so uplifting, so kind, so accomplished, so professional, it does something to your heart," she said.

She also spoke highly of her time rooming with 14 other contestants. Two of them — Miss Indiana State Fair Queen Presley Hampton and third runner-up Lexi Wilhoite — also made the court.

"I got to hang out and chat with Presley a lot during the weekend," Link said. "Nobody knows and expects the winner, but I knew that she was definitely a special one. I felt very proud that I was able to connect with her."

Link, a graduate of the 50th class of Jay County High School, attends Ball State University. She's studying exercise science with plans to become an occupational therapist. Link has also considered becoming a clinical exercise physiologist. Either way, she said, she plans to stay in the health care field.

She also continues to serve as a cantor at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Portland.

Link will return to Indianapolis in early August for the Indiana State Fair Queen court day, an event celebrating the court while they wear state fair sashes and their county crowns. She'll also be there for queens day, which involves honoring all newly crowned queens across the state.

In the mean time, she's looking forward to her home county pageant this summer.

"I'm even more excited for (this) year's Jay County queen pageant," she said. "I cannot wait to find out who the next Miss Jay County is



Photo provided

Gretchen Link of Jay County poses for a photo backstage this weekend during the Indiana State Fair Queen Pageant. She will return to the state fairgrounds for Indiana State Fair Queen court day and queens day in August.

and help her through the process of the state fair pageant, and I hope that we can continue growing and bettering as a county pageant. I have several new ideas to bring up with Optimists, and I am just very optimistic about the future of Jay County's pageant."

Markets

Cooper Farms	Feb. beans	10.48
Fort Recovery	Wheat	4.63
Corn.....		4.56
Feb. corn		4.58
March corn		4.58
ADM		
Montpelier	Corn.....	4.38
	Feb. corn	4.40
	Beans	10.35
	Feb. beans	10.42
	Wheat	4.88
POET Biorefining		
Portland		
Corn.....		4.56
Feb. corn		4.50
March corn		4.50
The Andersons		
Richland Township		
Corn		4.43
Feb. corn		4.45
Beans		10.39
		4.63

Today in history

In 1907, Maria Montessori opened her first school, the Casa dei Bambini, in San Lorenzo, Rome, Italy. The Montessori Method, which found popularity across the globe, served to educate underprivileged children who were assumed to be unable to learn. Today there are around 5,000 Montessori schools serving more than a million children.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his "Four Freedoms" State of the Union address, outlining freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear as essential human rights.

In 1950, Great Britain announced its recognition of the People's Republic of China.

—The CR

In 2004, the Fort Recovery High School girls basketball team dominated the visiting South Adams Starfires 74-35 behind 11 points from freshman Holly Stein and 10 from senior Jenn Stahl.

In 2021, supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol, disrupting a session of Congress during which the results of the 2020 election were to be certified with Democrat Joe Biden defeating the Republican incumbent.

In 2022, Portland Board of Works approved the purchase of new trash totes for city residents at a cost of \$235,000 in an effort to make the trash pick-up process safer and more efficient.

Shuts ...

Continued from page 1

Beloit, Wisconsin-based developer Hendricks Commercial Properties, which also developed the Bottleworks District at the historic Coca-Cola bottling plant on Mass Avenue, will transform it into a mixed-use district known as Traction Yards. The two-block-long property will be turned from an enclosed mall into an open-air urban neighborhood with retail, dining, entertainment, offices, apartments and public plazas.

The new name is meant to evoke the city's industrial and rail heritage.

"Traction Yards will be a destination that symbolizes movement, connection and the next chapter of downtown Indianapolis," said Rob Gerbitz, president and CEO of Hendricks Commercial Properties. "This brand captures the spirit of what we're creating, which is a place where people want to be every day, not just during special events or conventions."

Traction Yards will include 400,000 square feet of retail, dining and entertainment space. It will have another 100,000 square feet of office space, 300 residential units and outdoor gathering spaces that will host live music and other events.

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Illness stripped joy from holiday

By CHRIS SCHANZ

The Commercial Review

It wasn't supposed to happen this way.

The joy of the season was gone. In early December, Baby Schanz got sick and missed a day of day care. The bug that got her eventually made its way to me, but it wasn't anything too serious.

I had some chest congestion — something I seemingly get each year, now — and my seasonal sore throat. I figured after about a week or so I'd be in the clear and ready for our daughter's first conscious Christmas holiday.

(While technically her second Christmas, it was to be the first where she'd actually be excited for the tree and have an idea of what the gifts under it were about.)

The week passed. The illness didn't.

On Dec. 19, I started feeling a little off. I wasn't able to finish my lunch, and for the remainder of the workday my stomach just felt a bit uneasy.

That night, the first round started.

Fever. Chills. Shivers. Muscle aches. Cold sweats. Headache. Pounding chest.

I took a COVID-19 test and it

Parental Ponderings



was negative. Tylenol and rest should do the trick, right?

I missed work the next day, and stayed home the remainder of the week — though continued to work — so I wouldn't infect my coworkers before the holidays.

I shook the fever, improved over the weekend, and was anticipating a great Christmas week.

But then Chrissy began to take a turn.

My nephew contracted COVID, a fever made its way through his home and we eventually canceled our family Christmas gathering, which was set for Christmas Eve.

It was unfortunate because my family hadn't gotten together in a while for various reasons. We were all looking forward to getting together for the holiday, but sicknesses threw a wrench into those plans.

Our household managed to be A-OK by Christmas Day, so we had our own festivities. My wife

and I had a blast bringing the presents from the basement and putting them under the tree for Baby Schanz, even going to the extreme of rearranging them a bunch of times based on what we wanted her to see or play with first.

Since our daughter had been sleeping in bed with us for the better part of a month, which is a story for another column, our plan was to have her stay in bed with her mom while I turned the tree lights on, prepped coffee and then sat on the couch to record her reaction when she came into the living room and saw the tree.

Her look was priceless when she saw a plush rocking horse that she went to immediately.

We continued to record videos of her opening her gifts to share with our family so they could see her reaction. It's a memory my wife and I will certainly never forget.

Then, the day after Christmas, my fever returned. So too did the headaches, chills and cold sweats.

More Tylenol, and a day later the fever was gone. I thought I felt OK.

Boy was I wrong.

That Sunday, I had a fever again. The headache was the worst it had been, so much so that a handful of rogue headbutts from my daughter caused so much pain it put me in tears.

Finally, last week, I manned up and went to urgent care to get

some antibiotics. The doctor said I probably got hit by two separate afflictions.

I can — knock on wood — say the antibiotics worked and I'm finally healthy again.

My family is on the mend, too, and we've rescheduled our holiday festivities.

This year's Christmas holiday was supposed to be full of joy. Instead, it was void of any holly-jolly feelings. Thinking back, I was ill last year, too.

We just hope the third Christmas as a dad won't follow the same trend.

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Schanz is a former CR Sports Editor. Email him at christopher.schanz@gmail.com.

Family chooses side in divorce

Dear Abby



have carried for all these years — and will continue to carry after his demise.

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DEAR ABBY: How does one approach, by phone, email or in person, a couple — close friends of many years — whose husband is slipping into dementia? Do we acknowledge and commiserate, pretend nothing is amiss, stop communicating and seeing them? Or ... WHAT, exactly?

The profound tragedy is that the husband has been an intellectual and executive giant of immense quality, with abundant gifts and skills.

Watching this slow-motion tragedy unfold is agonizing. Not knowing what to say or do compounds the pain. — DELIVERING PAINFUL NEWS

DEAR DELIVERING: Social isolation is a killer. People in the early to middle stages of dementia are capable of being social. What you should continue to do is be the friend to this couple that you always have been and take your guidance from the wife. She will appreciate your kindness and support during this difficult time.

Because he had cheated on our mom numerous times, he was removed from his ministry and went into education. I tried to resolve my feelings with him, but he would never admit his faults. When I finally asked him to tell me the truth, he refused.

I am now in my 60s and still angry at him. I have a wonderful wife and two beautiful kids he has never met. Before he dies, I'd like to tell him how I feel about him and ask him one more time to tell the truth. Is this worth the effort? He is 92, so I don't have much time. — ANGRY STILL IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR ANGRY: Your efforts will be better spent if you meet with your father and tell him you forgive him for his transgressions. Do this not for him but for yourself, to free you from the burden of anger you

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GRAPHIC
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NEWSPAPERS

Community Calendar

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

Tuesday

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 — 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 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.

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.

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. For more information, call (260) 726-8229.

A BETTER LIFE — BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday at Redkey United Methodist Church, 122 W. Main St.



Sudoku

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

Level: Beginner

Saturday's Solution

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

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.

Work to make '26 the best it can be

Journal Gazette & Times-Courier
(Mattoon, Ill.)

Tribune News Service

Welcome to 2026.

As we begin the new year, let's look at it as a blank slate.

Much of what will happen in this year will be out of our control, especially when it comes to our government at the state and national levels.

We will just have to hope for the best and trust our leaders

Guest Editorial

to do the right thing. However, we can hold them accountable — and let them know what we want and how we feel. We just

need to let our voices be heard.

What we have control over, though, is how we conduct ourselves. We can take the high road and be more civil to our neighbors and to those who may not necessarily agree with our points of view.

We all can strive to be better.

Personally, there is much we all can do.

For one, there are the ever-

popular New Year's resolutions. We can work to get in better shape or do something we've always wanted to do but haven't yet.

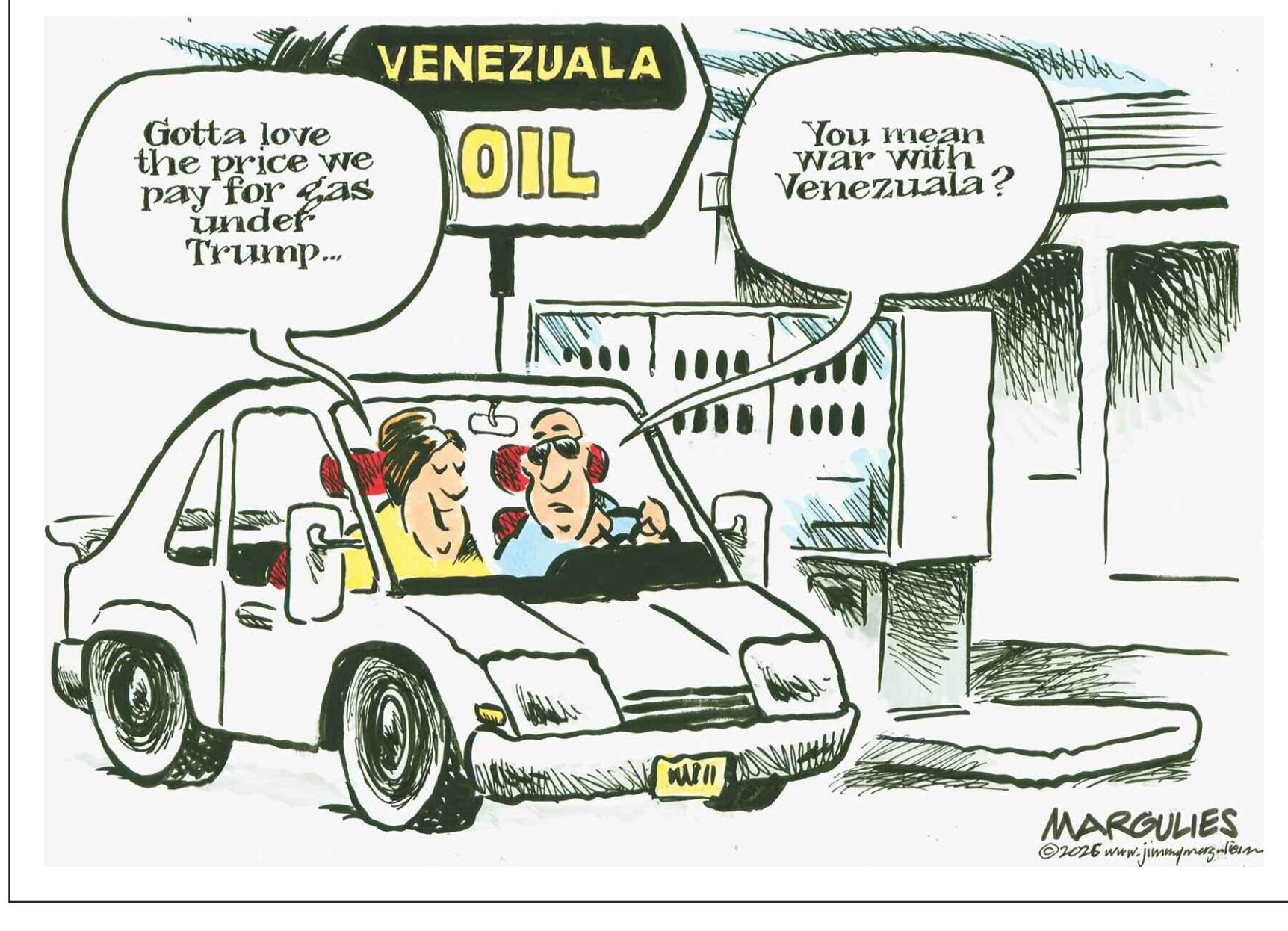
There also are plenty of opportunities where we can volunteer and make our community a better place. Find something that interests you and devote some time and effort to it. Not only will you make a difference in someone

else's life you will feel better about yourself.

The important thing is that a new year offers us a new start. That blank slate ... well, it's up to us to figure out how we fill it.

We can make the year what we want it to be. We just have to take the first step and be proactive, instead of being reactive.

Happy 2026 to everyone. Make it a good year.



Health chaos will have consequences

By LISA JARVIS

Bloomberg Opinion

Tribune News Service

The unprecedented turmoil at the top U.S. health agencies, under the leadership of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is sure to have a long-term impact on the well-being of Americans. Although Kennedy's mantra has been to "Make America Healthy Again," the most visible changes he and his allies have made within the Department of Health and Human Services in 2025 appear, in practice, designed to do the opposite.

The consequences of Kennedy's first year in office — marked by sweeping cuts in funding and personnel at the agencies under his purview, the erosion of expertise and the mainstreaming of anti-vaccine rhetoric into national policy — will unfold over years or even decades. However, several key metrics could serve as early indicators of how quickly Kennedy's influence, combined with President Donald Trump's broader agenda, will shape Americans' health.

From the spread of preventable diseases to access to both established and emerging drugs and vaccines to health care coverage, here are a few things I'll be paying attention to in 2026:

Measles could worsen

Kennedy faced his first significant test within days of his confirmation: a rapidly spreading measles outbreak in West Texas. Unfortunately, he failed the exam. He waffled for weeks, failing to forcefully encourage vaccination, while simultaneously promoting unproven treatments for the virus. Meanwhile, the Trump administration's deep cuts to the Centers for Disease Control

Lisa Jarvis



and Prevention left local health authorities struggling to contend with the outbreak.

By July, measles cases had reached 1,288, their highest level since the virus was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000. By late December, the number of cases had grown to 2,012, of which approximately 87% were associated with an ongoing outbreak. Cases have been reported in several states, and at least three unvaccinated people are reported to have died from the disease.

The situation has continued to deteriorate as we head into 2026, as evidenced by an accelerating outbreak in South Carolina that, by mid-December, had infected more than 135 people and sent hundreds more into quarantine. The question for 2026 seems to be not whether, but when, the U.S. will lose its measles elimination status — and how severe the consequences may become amid future outbreaks.

Fewer receive shots

The measles outbreak was fueled by vulnerabilities in the vaccine safety net that helps keep everyone protected. Eliminated diseases remain eliminated only if enough people — typically around 95% of the population — are immunized. Data indicate that acceptance of routine childhood vaccines is softening, and the share of children entering kindergarten with all their shots has gradually declined over the

past five years. During the same period, many more children received non-medical exemptions from required vaccinations.

The question now becomes how Kennedy's influence over both public opinion and actual policy might amplify those twin trends. Last summer, he overhauled the influential CDC advisory panel that makes recommendations on the use of vaccines nationwide, appointing members who more closely align with his anti-vaccine views. The panel has since restricted the use of certain vaccines, most notably by revoking the longstanding advice that all newborns be vaccinated against hepatitis B. The group is also poised, under Trump's direction, to review the entire childhood immunization schedule, raising concerns about rollbacks of other established protections.

Meanwhile, lawmakers, emboldened by Kennedy's actions, have sought to pass laws that make it easier for parents to obtain exemptions that allow their children to forgo routine vaccinations. Kindergarten exemption data for this school year could provide our first indication of whether these efforts have significantly affected parents' decision-making.

A crisis in insurance

During the Biden administration, the number of uninsured Americans fell to record lows, largely due to the introduction of pandemic-era subsidies that made insurance purchased through the Affordable Care Act more affordable. The looming expiration of those tax credits at the end of this year led to months of congressional gridlock over whether and how to extend them. Democrats advocated

extending them, while Republicans debated whether they should be preserved in a more limited form or discarded altogether.

Lawmakers failed to reach a consensus before Congress adjourned for the year. The expiration of the credits means millions of Americans will see their insurance premiums roughly double in January. Negotiations will continue after the holiday break, and if a deal is reached, health policy experts at KFF say the Trump administration could help consumers by making the subsidies retroactive to Jan. 1 and extending the sign-up deadline to allow enrollees to switch to more affordable plans.

The stakes are high: The number of Americans receiving coverage through ACA plans has more than doubled since 2020 to more than 24 million. Without the subsidies, some 4.2 million people are projected to forgo coverage.

Early numbers from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services suggest that fewer new customers are enrolling in ACA plans, but they also indicate a slight increase in returning customers compared with this time in 2024. And, of course, the ultimate unknown is how many Americans will end up uninsured — and how that could affect the nation's long-term health and strain its infrastructure.

Approval process unclear

U.S. consumers have long benefited from the country's leadership in biomedical innovation, a position predicated on a gold-standard regulatory body that carefully evaluates scores of new drugs, vaccines and medical devices each year.

But that typically predictable

approval process has been disrupted by turmoil and ever-shifting policies at the Food and Drug Administration. As FDA Commissioner Marty Makary puts existing vaccines and other long-used drugs under new scrutiny, there is reason to worry that the approval thresholds for newer ones could become unreasonably high.

At the same time, Makary is intent on speeding up new drug approvals. He is reportedly planning to reduce the number of late-stage studies required for FDA approval from two to one. He has also introduced a controversial "national priority review voucher," which promises reviews within weeks for companies that align with Trump's focus on affordability, domestic manufacturing, and unmet public health needs.

All of this is unfolding at a time of significant churn at the FDA, both at the leadership level and among the career scientists who review new products. The question for next year is whether the flow of new therapies can increase without compromising safety and efficacy — a difficult balance to strike.

These key health measures use real-time data to capture the immediate impact of a transformed HHS. But it is essential to ensure there is a full accounting of the many other areas — including opioid deaths, maternal mortality, and drug prices — that could be affected by the seismic shifts to our nation's health infrastructure.

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Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry.

The Commercial Review



US PS 125820

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"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have government without newspapers or newspapers without government I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."

—Thomas Jefferson

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We welcome letters to the editor, which are accepted by email only to letters@thecr.com. They should be 700 words or fewer, signed, with city/town of residence and include a phone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit for content and clarity.

Financial education

Last month, First Bank of Berne partnered with Jay County Junior-Senior High School for financial education. Bank employees visited the school to teach seniors about financial concepts including interest, amortization and the importance of saving money. Pictured, First Bank of Berne mortgage loan originator Tanner McClain shares a lesson with students.



Photo provided

Stewart to lead chamber board

Jay County Chamber of Commerce has elected its officers for 2026.

Josh Stewart will serve as president of the chamber. Shauana Runkle will be vice president, and Seth Scott will serve as secretary.

The chamber also has several ribbon-cutting ceremonies scheduled.

• 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 8 — Inner Sanctum Piercing & Tattoo, 326 S. Main St., Dunkirk

• 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16 — The Brass Bell, 135 S. Union St., Pennville

• 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 24 — Two Mama's on Tap, 2 W. High St., Redkey

For more information about the chamber, visit jaycounty-chamber.com.

Training available

Ivy Tech Community College and Vision Corner Learning Center are teaming to offer learning opportunities.

A "Working Genius Workshop" is scheduled for 8 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 28. It will include an assessment for building better teams and learning about the "types of genius involved in getting anything done."

Vision Corner is located at 202 N. Columbia St., Union City. The

Business roundup

registration deadline is Jan. 21. Email ewigginton@ivytech.edu or call (765) 966-2656 ext. 4106.

Vision Corner will also host ServSafe training from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 2. To register, visit inrla.org/events.

Purchase complete

First Financial Bank closed its acquisition of BankFinancial Corporation on Thursday.

BankFinancial is a Chicago-based firm with 18 financial centers. The purchase brings First Financial to \$22 billion in assets.

"Expanding our presence in Chicago presents us with significant opportunities for growth and profitability because of the many solutions we can bring to new and existing clients in this market," said Archie Brown, president and CEO of First Financial Bank, in a news release. "First Financial exists to create opportunities to help our clients and communities thrive, and we look forward to

the impact we can have with this approach in Chicago."

First Financial has locations in Portland, Fort Recovery, Union City and Hartford City.

ServSafe classes set

John Jay Center for Learning in Portland will host a pair of ServSafe training courses in the spring.

Training will be available on Tuesdays, March 31 and May 19. John Jay is located at 101 S. Meridian St., Portland.

For more information, call (260) 729-5525.

Adding stations

Walmart has announced that it plans to add 31 new charging locations for electric vehicles.

The retail chain currently has 16 charging locations, with plans to add new sites in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona and Florida. The bulk of those — 21 — will be in Texas and Arizona.

Named to board

Ardagh Group has appointed Todd Brents as its interim chief financial officer and named Galdino Claro and Richard Navarre to its board of directors.

Brents leads finance for professional services and consult-

ing business Beckway. He takes over for John Sheehan, who retired Dec. 31.

Ardagh has started the search process for a permanent chief financial officer.

Claro is an independent consultant who has served as CEO of companies including Harsco Metals and Minerals. Navarre is the retired chairman, CEO and president of Covia Corporation.

Ardagh operates glass manufacturing facilities in Dunkirk and Winchester.

New facility planned

An Invenergy subsidiary is planning a new wind farm in Oklahoma, OK Energy Today reported.

The publication noted a recent filing by Southwest Power Pool for a 35-turbine, 214-megawatt project near McAlester, Oklahoma. Overland Station Wind Energy, an Invenergy subsidiary, is listed as the developer of the project.

Invenergy is planning Skycrest Solar in northwest Jay County.

Suit settled

Tyson Foods has agreed to an \$82.5 million settlement for a proposed class-action lawsuit from grocery retailers and other businesses.

Tyson was accused of conspiring to inflate beef prices in the U.S. by restricting supply. The proposed settlement was made public last week in U.S. District Court in Minnesota.

According to Reuters, attorneys for the plaintiffs are working on a final settlement agreement to be presented for judicial approval.

Tyson operates Tyson Mexican Original in Portland.

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.

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

For more information, visit indianachamber.com.

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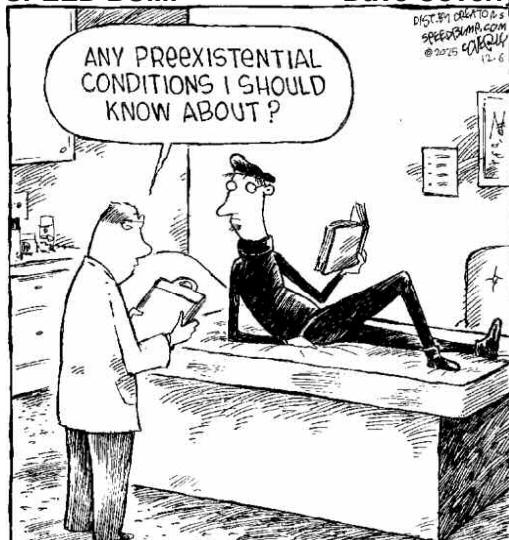
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SPEED BUMP



Dave Coverly

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



By Bil Keane

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

By the sweat of the brow

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH

♦ Q 8 4 2
♦ 10 6 2
♦ 8 5 3
♦ A J 7

WEST

♦ K
♦ Q J 9 8
♦ A Q 7 4
♦ 9 8 5 3

EAST

♦ J 9 6
♦ 7 5 4 3
♦ J 10 9
♦ A 10 6 2

The bidding:

South West North East

4 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

4 ♠

Opening lead — queen of hearts.

The outcome of most contracts depends largely on how the defender's cards are distributed. This refers not only to how the suits are divided, but also to the location of the missing high cards.

Nevertheless, a thoughtful declarer can sometimes overcome a bad lie of the cards by allowing for the possibility that it may exist and adopting the proper precautionary measures.

Consider this deal where West leads the queen of hearts against

four spades. Declarer sees immediately that he will lose at least one trump trick and two or three diamond tricks. He doesn't know at the outset how he will fare in either suit because he doesn't know how the opposing cards are divided.

South begins by taking the heart queen with the ace and cashes the ace of spades. As it happens, West's king falls. Declarer now knows he will eventually have to lose a trump trick to East's jack.

With the trump situation clarified, declarer now turns his attention to the question of how many diamond tricks he will lose. If the diamond ace is on his right, he is in good shape; but if it is on his left, he is in danger of losing three diamond tricks and the contract.

The challenge at this point is to make the contract even if West has the ace. To guard against this contingency, declarer first cashes the king of hearts and queen of spades.

He then plays the K-Q-A of clubs, followed by dummy's ten of hearts. But instead of ruffing the ten, South discards a diamond!

West takes the ten with the jack but unhappily has no safe exit card. He must either lead a diamond or hand declarer a ruff-and-discard, and whichever he chooses, South makes four spades.

Tomorrow: The 100% solution.

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1-6

CRYPTOQUIP

UT X J X L M F T H Z C G L O G G W R

P L Z C U D P A X B O G X B J Y U K G

F Z E W U B O U Y, R J Z E H M F Z E

B X H H U Y X A H Z Z K G L X D P ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I WOULD LIKE A BOOSTER TO HELP ME TIDY UP WITH A BROOM, I MIGHT TAKE MY SWEEPING PILLS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals C

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 "Heaven forbid!"	23 Both band (Pref.)
1 Umps	41 "—Blue?"	3 Distant
5 Some	42 "The Kite	24 Japanese
printers	Runner"	wrestlers
8 Criminal,	boy	26 Incorrect
to cops	43 "Trans-	term
12 Jai —	formers"	27 Gridlock
13 Sushi fish	actress	sound
14 During	48 Arizona	28 Done
15 Gold de-	river	with
pository	49 Blunder	29 TV's
17 Eliza-	50 Small	"Warrior
bethan	combo	Princess"
18 Succor	51 Envelope	31 Author
19 Coin flips	abbr.	Uris
21 Brainy	52 Stephen	34 Capital of
24 "Auld	of "Still	Iran
Lang —"	Crazy"	35 Emu-
25 Scene	53 Missile	lates
stealers	shelter	Monet
26 Jewelry	54 Teeming	37 Nashville
container,	11 Share-	awards
often	able PC	org.
30 Wagerers'	files	38 Lady —
site	16 DIY buy	("Poker
(Abbr.)	20 "Step —!"	Face" singer)
31 Maximum	21 Broadway	39 Skip
32 Leading	1 U.K.	40 River
lady?	military	deposit
33 Chicago	fliers	41 Taj
baseball	DOWN	Mahal
team	1. U.K.	site
35 Hammer	26	44 Before
part		45 Thurs.
36 Eternities	31	follower
37 Oscar-	34	46 Peanut
winning	36	product
director	37	47 Tic-tac-
Frank	41	toe loser

Solution time: 22 mins.

J	A	M	V	O	I	D	S	E	A	T
ORG	END	DOW	AGO							
EMMA	STONE	RE	EO							
CLEVER	TSA	HASTEN								
AOL	LIL	SASHA								
ROMA	OO	RIOS								
ASSAM	PIE	GOP								
TRIG	GRANTS									
SERENA	TAM									
AVE	EVERSINCE									
LEE	RENEE	ION								
TNT	SLOES	BYE								

Yesterday's answer 1-6

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14			
15				16					17		
					18			19	20		
21	22	23				24				27	28
25				26						29	
30				31					32		
33		34							35		
				36				37			
38	39	40						41			
42				43	44				45	46	47
48				49				50			
51				52				53			

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Mike Tomlin revels in adding Rodgers

By AUSTIN HERTZOG

pennlive.com

Tribune News Service

The Pittsburgh Steelers became AFC North champions for the first time since 2020 Sunday night with a 26-24 victory over the Baltimore Ravens at Acrisure Stadium.

It was dramatic every step of the way with the Steelers escaping defeat when rookie kicker Tyler Loop missed a 44-yard field goal attempt in the closing seconds that would have ended the Steelers' season.

Instead, the Steelers' season continues, as does the season and career at future Hall of Fame quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Rodgers found Calvin Austin III for a 26-yard touchdown pass with 55 seconds to give the Steelers the lead for good.

Head coach Mike Tomlin spoke about his affinity for Rodgers and the purpose of bringing in the 42-year-old, four-time MVP.

"I've admired him from afar for a long time. It was good to do it with him," Tomlin said. "I've said multiple times here in recent weeks, this was the vision in the spring when we pursued him."

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I've said multiple times here in recent weeks, this was the vision in the spring when we pursued him.

— Mike Tomlin, Steelers coach

"I've admired him from afar for a long time. It was good to do it with him," Tomlin said. "I've said multiple times here in recent weeks, this was the vision in the spring when we pursued him."

"That's why you do business with a 41, 42-year-old guy. Been there, done that for a guy with a resume like his. He's not only capable, he thrives in it."

"I think he put that on display tonight."

Rodgers was 31-for-47

FR ...

Continued from page 8

The Tribe (6-3) had a rough first half as it got outpaced 30-14. Botkins (8-0) scored 20 points in the first quarter alone.

Breaker Jutte was the Indians' leading scorer with 15 points, while Brody Barga added 11.

Braylon Dilworth added five points in the third quarter, while Douglas Bihm had four points in the first half and Colson Post added four in the second. Grant Fortkamp and Hudson Overman combined for three points, all on free throws.

Eli Pitts led the Trojans with 17 while Will Monnin and James Steinke added 12 apiece.

Fort Recovery (7-1, 3-1 Midwest Athletic Conference) stayed even with St. Henry (5-2, 4-0 MAC) in the Baker games at 811-809 but were too far behind from the individual games.

A.J. Siefring posted the high series of 342 pins for the Tribe. He opened with a 205 but slipped with a 137 in his second game. No other Indian bowled more than one game in the match. Gabe Acheson had the second-best game of 177.

Continued from page 8

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