

Thursday, January 8, 2026

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Jay County Commissioner candidate Aaron Loy consults with Jay County clerk Missy Elliott on Wednesday morning while going through the process to file to run for office. Bryan Alexander and Loy, both Republicans, filed Wednesday to run for the middle district commissioner seat. Incumbent Republican Chad Aker announced last month that he will not seek re-election.

First hopefuls file

By BAILEY CLINE
and RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Two familiar names will be on the ballot for sheriff again in the May primary.

Both rural Portland residents have served multiple terms.

Incumbent Jay County Sheriff Ray Newton joined incumbent Jay County recorder Angie Byrum and Jay County Commissioner candidate Aaron Loy as the first local candidates to file for election when Jay County Clerk's Office opened at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday. Fellow Republican Dwane Ford filed to challenge him for the party's nomination about a half hour later.

Election filings for the 2026 primaries started Wednesday. Offices up for election include sheriff, the middle district Jay County Commissioner seat, recorder, four Jay County Coun-

cil seats, auditor and assessor. The deadline to file is Feb. 6.

Also filing as of noon Wednesday were:

• Current Jay County Council member Bryan Alexander for the middle district commissioner seat.

• Jay County Council member Cindy Bracy for re-election.

• Angela Moeller of rural Portland and Cherrie Geesaman of Pennville for assessor.

• Emily Franks for re-election as auditor.

They are all Republicans.

In separate news releases, State Sen. Travis Holdman (R-Markle) announced that he will seek re-election and Democrat John Bartlett of Hartford City announced he is running again for state representative in District 33. Both filed at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis.

See File page 2

County settles pair of disputes

Commissioners OK agreements with Coleman, Whitenack

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

The county has agreed to two settlements.

Jay County Commissioners approved settlement agreements in lawsuits against Kristin Coleman and Donald and Christine Whitenack during a special session Tuesday.

Commissioners agreed to a \$19,754.88 settlement with Coleman in her case to seek wages and attorney fees and a \$17,500 settlement with Donald and Christine Whitenack for additional right-of-way access on their property for upcoming bridge construction.

Coleman, who formerly served as jail matron at Jay County Sheriff's Office, filed a civil tort case in Jay Superior Court nearly a year ago against the Jay County Sheriff, Jay County Commissioners and Jay County Auditor. She sought more than \$19,700 in wages and attorney fees from the county.

According to a formal complaint filed with the case, Coleman's lawyer alleged "the Sheriff, the Commissioners, and the Auditor intentionally, knowingly, willfully, and wantonly discriminated against her on the basis of her disability/perceived disability/recorder of impairment, denied (Coleman) wages she had earned, and retaliated against her for utilizing time off work pursuant to the (Family and Medical Leave Act), causing (her) to suffer the loss of her job and job-related benefits, including income and health insurance, and subjected her to emotional distress and other damages and injuries."

Coleman worked for the county for more than a decade, having served as jail matron at Jay County Sheriff's Office for five years.

See Settles page 2

Deaths

Allyssah Hughes, 27, Bath, Ohio
Mary Gallagher, 90, Dunkirk
Details on page 2.

Weather

The high temperature was 52 degrees Tuesday in Jay County. The low was 37.

Rain is expected tonight with winds gusting to 30 mph and a low in the lower 50s. Expect mostly cloudy skies

Friday with rain possible and a high in the lower 60s.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Applications are open for the 2026 Indiana Senate Page Program. The program allows students in sixth through eighth grade to spend a day at the Indiana Statehouse. They will listen to debates, assist with tasks and meet their state senator. For more information, IndianaSenateRepublians.com/Page-Program.

Coming up

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

Saturday — Coverage of the JCHS girls basketball game against Bluffton.

Tuesday — Details from Monday's Jay County Commissioners meeting.

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Obituaries

Allyssah Hughes

Feb. 27, 1998-Jan. 2, 2026

Allyssah Marie Hughes, also known as Ally or Alice, 27, of Bath, Illinois, passed away at 2:36 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026.

She was born on Feb. 27, 1998 in Jacksonville, Illinois, to Jason Hughes and Jennifer Thresher.

Allyssah is survived by her father, Jason (Sarah Campbell) Hughes; mother, Jennifer (Adam) Marshall; siblings, Madison Marshall of Bath, Mercedes Marshall and Mason Marshall of Bellevue, Florida, and James Hughes and Sierra Hughes of Lebanon, Indiana; grandparents, Faye Hughes



of Bath, Frances "Finn" Thresher of Chandlerville, and Jane Crouch of Dunkirk, Indiana; and her precious fur babies, her dog, Link, and cats, Desmond and Ramona. Also surviving are her uncles, Terry (Melissa) Thresher, Mike (Amanda) Hughes, and David Pierce; aunts, Karen (Rick) Showalter, and Kelly Bailey; and several great-aunts, great-uncles and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, James Floyd Bailey, Dencil Thresher and Phil Crouch; great-grandparents, Lloyd "Poogy" and Bertha Hughes and Leo T. and Helen Finn; aunts, Sharon Hughes, Carol Bailey and Merry Gay Pierce; and uncles, Russell Hughes, Sarge Bailey and Jon Bailey.

Allyssah was a 2016 graduate of Jay County High School in

Portland, Indiana, and then got her CNA certification through Miller's Merry Manor in Dunkirk, Indiana. Most recently, she was working at Sunny Acres Nursing Home in Petersburg, Illinois.

Allyssah was very active in the National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture, Inc. and was a member of the West Jay Optimist Club in Dunkirk, Indiana.

She loved the "Supernatural" TV series and was an avid collector of "Supernatural" merchandise, patches and pins of her favorite bands for her battle jacket, and Briar Horse Collections. She loved animals and listening to music.

Allyssah was a sincere, honest, compassionate, empathetic and caring person. It would do

the world a lot of good if more people were like her. She never met a stranger and would help anyone who came to her for help. She was an excellent and loyal friend and a force to be reckoned with.

Cremation rites have been accorded and a Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, at noon at the Bath Village Hall. Food will be provided, but anyone wanting to contribute a dish or dessert is more than welcome. The village hall basement will be open at 10:30 a.m. for drop offs.

Memorial donations may be made in Allyssah's name to Sunny Acres Nursing Home in Petersburg, Tows and Tails in Fernandina, Florida, or Juniper Wildlife Refuge in Tallahassee, Florida.

Condolences can be left for her family at hurleyfh.com.

Hurley Funeral Home in Havana is in charge of arrangements.

Mary R. Gallagher, Dunkirk, Sept. 28, 1935-Jan. 5, 2026. Services will be at 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, at Walker & Glancy Funeral Home, 109 W. Windsor St., Montpelier.

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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.

CR almanac

Friday 1/9	Saturday 1/10	Sunday 1/11	Monday 1/12	Tuesday 1/13
61/40	47/23	29/23	40/33	47/36

Friday's weather looks to be rainy in the morning with a low in the 40s at night. Saturday's forecast shows an 85% chance of rain with temperatures during the day in the upper 40s. Sunday's weather looks like cloudy skies with a low around 23 degrees. Mostly sunny on Monday when the low will be around 33 degrees. Mostly sunny skies are expected Tuesday when the high will be around 47.

File ...

Continued from page 1

Ford, a former conservation officer, spent two terms as Jay County sheriff from 2015 through 2022, defeating Newton for the Republican nomination in the May 2018 primary. Ford was unable to seek re-election in 2022 because of term limits.

While he has enjoyed the last four years spending time with his grandchildren in retirement, he said Wednesday he would like to return to the job.

"I just like the job as law enforcement, and I enjoyed the time when I was in there," he said, pointing to term limits. "I sat out my term, so I'm ready to jump back in there if I get a chance."

Newton, who started at the sheriff's office as a deputy in 1991, has spent nearly three terms as sheriff. He served from 2007 to 2014 and wasn't able to run again because of term limits. In 2021, he was elected as sheriff after defeating Democrat "Watermellon" Jim Phillips in the general election.

Newton shared hopes to

continue ongoing and upcoming projects, such as updates to Jay County Jail. He talked about improving department training and updating policies, and he referenced grants the department pursued and new equipment including body cameras, in-car cameras and new firearms.

"I want to do positive things for Jay County — I think we have been doing them," he said. "(I want to) just continue to provide a better service for the community, and that starts at the top ..."

Radio upgrades are a main focus for both Newton and Ford. The department has been looking into new radios for emergency responders across the county for years. County officials in September signed a \$4.64 million lease agreement with Motorola for the new equipment, with various Jay County departments slated to receive new devices by the end of the year.

Along those lines, Ford said he's also expecting to handle discussions about

a centralized dispatch center. Portland City Council voted in December to explore consolidating emergency responder dispatching.

Newton advocated for continuing to raise wages for sheriff's office employees to make their salaries comparable to other agencies. He shared plans to approach Jay County Council again during the budgeting process this fall.

Holdman represents District 19, which includes Jay, Blackford, Adams and Wells counties and part of Allen County. He has served in the Indiana Senate since 2008, is the majority caucus chair and chairs its tax and fiscal policy committee.

"Indiana works best when government lives within its means, and families keep more of what they earn," Holdman said in the release. "I'm running for re-election to continue fighting for low taxes, affordable health care, and the conservative values that make our communities strong."

Bartlett was among more than 25 Indiana Rural Summit Coalition members to file to run for state house and senate seats Wednesday morning.

A Democrat, he is making his third run for the House District 33 seat, which represents two-thirds of Jay County, all of Blackford and Randolph counties, and part of Delaware and Henry counties.

Republican J.D. Prescott of Union City is the incumbent.

Prescott defeated Bartlett for the District 33 seat in the 2022 and 2024 general elections, receiving 70% or more of the vote each time.

Both Alexander and Loy announced their candidacies for commissioner late last year. Incumbent commissioner Chad Aker has decided to step away from the seat at the end of his term.

Filing to run for Republican Party Convention delegate Wednesday were Jay County Republican Party chair Jenae Blasdel, Jon Eads of Portland and Alexander.

Lotteries

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$105 million

Daily Three: 9-6-1

Daily Four: 8-0-9-9

Quick Draw: 2-7-15-22

34-38-40-46-47-49-55-56-58

60-62-63-64-65-71-76

Mega Millions

9-39-47-58-68

Mega Ball: 24

Estimated jackpot: \$199 million

Tuesday

Midday

Pick 3: 2-6-0

Pick 4: 4-8-5-4

Pick 5: 3-5-5-5-2

Evening

Pick 3: 0-6-4

Pick 4: 3-0-7-7

Pick 5: 8-4-9-6-8

Rolling Cash: 15-20-22

25-32

Estimated jackpot: \$140,000

Markets

Cooper Farms

Fort Recovery

Corn 4.65

Feb. corn 4.67

March corn 4.67

Feb. beans 10.64

Wheat 4.75

ADM

Montpelier

Corn 4.47

Feb. corn 4.49

Beans 10.50

Feb. beans 10.57

Wheat 4.99

POET Biorefining

Portland

Corn 4.65

Feb. corn 4.59

March corn 4.59

Corn 4.62

Feb. corn 4.57

Beans 10.22

March beans 10.37

Wheat 4.74

The Andersons

Richland Township

Corn 4.52

Feb. corn 4.54

Beans 10.55

Feb. beans 10.64

Wheat 4.75

Settles ...

Continued from page 1

Despite accruing about 200 hours of compensatory time — she said in her complaint she had been initially told she would be paid for those hours in two disbursements — she was informed Dec. 16, 2022, "she was not eligible to be paid for her earned comp time or overtime, citing policy, even though she had been accruing comp time, had previously been able to cash in comp time, and had also been paid overtime as recently as November 2022."

She submitted Family and Medical Leave Act paperwork on Dec. 21, 2022, for time off related to her cancer diagnosis.

Pointing to the personnel policy handbook, Jay County Commissioners decided not to pay Coleman for her compensatory time at their meeting Dec. 27, 2022, with Newton supporting the denial, the complaint says.

Three days later, Coleman informed the sheriff's office she would be returning when she was released by her doctor to return to work.

She received a certified letter from Newton on Jan. 21, 2023, indicating her employment had been terminated on Jan. 1 while on Family and Medical Leave Act leave. The letter

states the matron job is a political appointive position of the sheriff and may be terminated by the sheriff at any time.

A wage claim application approved by Indiana Department of Labor in March 2023 established Coleman's claim at \$19,754.88 — the same amount approved by commissioners Tuesday.

County attorney Wes Schemenauer noted the decision should conclude the lawsuit.

Commissioners filed a lawsuit against Donald and Christine Whitenack in November.

Plans are to make improvements to the bridge on county road 350 West between Indiana 26 and county road 200 North. According to a complaint for appropriation of real estate filed with the case, the county would need permanent and temporary right-of-way appropriated by the Whitenacks "for improved public access and public safety."

Commissioners offered \$4,600 including damages to Donald and Christine Whitenack, the complaint says, and they have been unable to negotiate the acquisition of about 0.337 acres of property.

Schemenauer said the Whitenacks have agreed to an initial counteroffer of \$17,500, and he said he thinks that's

a fair resolution based on discussion at commissioners' executive session earlier Tuesday. Commissioner Chad Aker agreed.

"I think it's a small price to pay for the benefits that we get out of this, the new bridges and stuff we get out of this for a minimum cost," he said.

Commissioners also agreed Tuesday to sign a letter stating Minnich Poultry doesn't need a road use agreement for its upcoming construction of a new feed mill and biochar manufacturing and distribution plant in Noble Township.

Aker said he spoke earlier Tuesday with John Hemmelgarn, director of Jay/Portland Building and Planning Department. Hemmelgarn recommended the county implement a road use agreement with the company for Minnich Poultry's prospective project.

"The discussions we've had, I feel that it would not be beneficial for us to push for a road use agreement, I think we all are leaning that way, I think this opens up a can of worms that we really don't want to open up," he said.

Commissioners Duane Monroe and Doug Horn agreed. Aker added Jay County Highway Department concurred a road use agreement wouldn't be required for the work.

Excitement ...

Continued from page 1

Bales also updated the board about the state's Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) 2.0 following a regional steering committee meeting earlier in the day. She reported that READI funds that have been designated for projects can be reallocated to other projects within the county. The process to do so involves making a presentation to the regional steering committee for approval, followed by permission from Indiana Economic Development Corporation.

The discussion involved the proposed housing development on 68 county-owned acres on the west side of Portland. It was preliminarily slat-

ed to receive \$1.2 million in READI grant funding, but county officials have been moving to pull the plug on the project.



Photo provided

Winning tree

Fort Recovery VFW Post 6515 scored the People's Choice Award in the Fort Festival of Trees this year at Fort Recovery Public Library. Pictured above, the tree celebrates the United States of America's semiquincentennial anniversary.

Relative doesn't get message

Dear Abby



will have more disposable income.

.....

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I (we're both male) have been together since 2007. We moved to Arizona in 2010. Most of our family lives in the Midwest. We have been visiting our families as often as possible, at least every other year. Our son-in-law refuses to let us stay the night in his home when we visit. His excuse is, he doesn't want to have to explain to his two daughters why we sleep in the same bed. (The daughters are 6 and 8.)

My husband and I no longer feel comfortable around our son-in-law, and we told our daughter we feel it would be best to skip this year's visit. She offered to put us up in a hotel. We declined the offer and said we have other friends we can visit. Our daughter then offered to come and visit us with our granddaughters. We also declined that offer.

Are we doing the right thing? We feel the son-in-law is using his daughters as an excuse for his own homophobic feelings toward us. — UNWELCOME IN THE WEST

DEAR UNWELCOME: I see nothing positive to be gained by punishing your daughter and your 6- and 8-year-old grandchildren, who have offered viable alternatives, because their father is uncomfortable with your sexual orientation. Let your daughter visit and bring the children. Foster a strong relationship with all of them. If you succeed, your narrow-minded son-in-law may find himself increasingly marginalized.

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Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



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Community Calendar

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

Thursday

SMART RECOVERY — A group for those struggling with addiction that focuses on motivation, coping with cravings, managing thoughts, feelings and behavior, and living a balanced life meets at 11 a.m. each Thursday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

JAY COUNTY TRAILS CLUB — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at Jay Community Center.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — A 12-step Christian recovery program meets at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. each Thursday at A Second

Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

Friday

PAST RECOVERY SERVICES — Peer Addiction Support Team recovery support group meets at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. each Friday at the Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition office at 100 N. Meridian St., Portland. To learn more information, please call (260) 251-3259.

CINCINNATUS LEAGUE — Will hold its next meeting at noon Friday, Jan. 9, at Harmony Cafe in Portland.

Saturday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E.

High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

Sunday

A BETTER LIFE — BRIDANNAS HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. each Sunday at Fellowship Baptist Church, 289 S. 200 West, Portland. Come early for a meal. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

Monday

PORLTAD BREAKFAST OPTIMISTS — Will meet at 7 a.m. for breakfast at Richards Restaurant.

PING PONG — Will be played from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday at Jay Community Center.

JAY COUNTY DRUG PREVENTION COALITION — Will meet at noon the second Monday of each month at Jay County Campus of Arts Place, 131 E Walnut St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

EUCHRE — Will be played starting at 1 p.m. each Monday at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United

Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

THE LIFE CENTER — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy, as well as help with the needs of the family. The center is located at 1209 S. Shank St., Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (260) 726-8636.

Walk-ins accepted.

BREAD OF LIFE COMMUNITY FAMILY MEAL — Will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Asbury United Methodist Church, 204 E. Arch St. in Portland. Everyone is welcome.

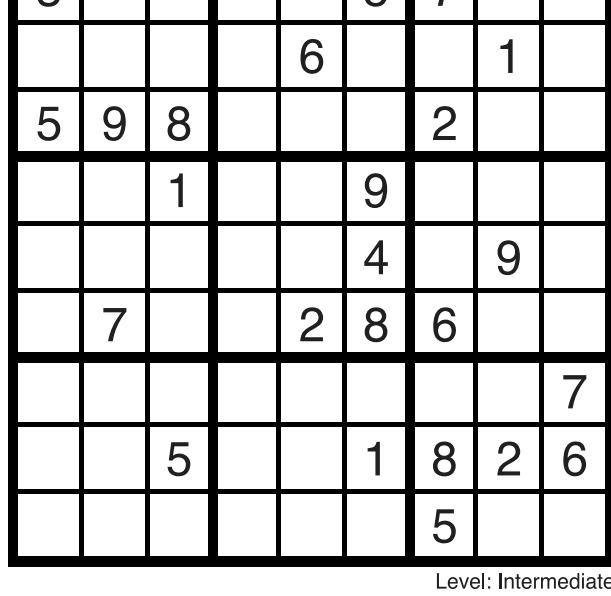
PORTLAND EVENING OPTIMIST CLUB — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Monday of each month at Richards Restaurant.

REDISCOVERING JOY — The support group of widows and widowers meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at R & R Fabrications, 601 E. Washington St., St. Henry, Ohio.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Monday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St.

in Portland.

Sudoku



Wednesday's Solution

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

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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Law misapplied to support plants

Chicago Tribune

Tribune News Service

The Trump administration is badly stretching the law to keep open coal-fired power plants throughout the Midwest that otherwise would have shuttered under well-thought-out, long-term strategies.

The latest examples are in neighboring Indiana, where the Department of Energy late last month ordered utilities not to close two aging power stations that otherwise would have been taken out of service by the end of last month. The orders mean that the Schahfer station in Wheatfield, Indiana, and the F.B. Culley station in Warrick County, Indiana, will remain open for 90 days.

If DOE's previous actions in Michigan are a guide, where DOE saved a coal-fired plant about 35 miles east of Grand

Guest Editorial

Rapids from closure beginning in May, those Indiana plants will likely get another 90-day reprieve after the current one expires and likely more such orders once the next 90 days pass by.

President Donald Trump long has supported the continued burning of coal to produce electricity despite risks to human health as well the emissions' well-established contributions to Earth's warming climate. At the same time, Trump recently acted to kill five large-scale wind farms already under construction in the Atlantic that are slated to

generate enough power to serve 2.5 million household and business customers. Trump seems to detest wind power as much as he professes to love coal power.

In the case of the Michigan and Indiana coal plants, the Energy Department is ordering them kept alive under provisions of the Federal Power Act that are meant for reliability crises, such as those caused by natural disasters.

The Schahfer plant, located about 75 miles southeast of Chicago, was slated for closure years ago under a comprehensive plan put together by Northern Indiana Public Service Co. (NIPSCO), which serves much of the northern third of the state. While there are legitimate concerns throughout the Midwest about future reliability due to new data centers and their substantial power consumption,

there is no looming emergency that justifies the administration's action here.

Regional power-grid managers, in concert with utilities, have the ability to order plants on the chopping block to continue running if there are threats to reliability, and they use that authority from time to time. The Energy Department doesn't get involved in those decisions ordinarily.

That's how such decisions should continue to be made.

Heavy-handed government involvement in energy markets is not unique to Washington. We've seen governments at the state level, including in Illinois, get overly involved in determining the proper mix of power generation — usually to the detriment of ratepayers. Trump's thumb on the scale to favor coal burners will have the same effect. After

all, these plants were closing in part because they're more expensive than other available energy sources. Ratepayers will shoulder that cost at a time when inflation and affordability are top public concerns.

Slowly but surely, the U.S. is moving in the direction of clean energy. With some exceptions, the market is doing a pretty good job of making that transition as cost effectively as possible. Government has a role to play — as a setter of environmental standards, for example — but shouldn't be picking winners and losers.

That's true in Illinois, where we've seen heavy-handed moves from those opposed to fossil fuels founder on realities of supply and demand. And it's true of the Trump administration's market interference in Indiana and Michigan.



Rural fortunes are in for a reversal

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

Small towns are in for a sobering stretch of economic challenges as elected officials reverse pandemic-era policies that had been reviving them.

COVID-19 was a huge, unexpected opportunity for rural America. The pandemic brought jobs and people to places that had been in decline.

One reason is the pandemic brought a sharp shift in household consumption toward goods and away from services.

Rural America, the manufacturing heartland, benefited from job growth in 2022 and 2023. That growth slowed by 2024, but legislation like Sen. Todd Young's CHIPS Act offered at least a hint that we might be entering a period of more stable factory employment.

Unlike most of the world, the U.S. economy boomed after COVID.

The effects were particularly

Michael J. Hicks



came to rural America for economic opportunity.

This was a rare advantage for rural places with low quality of life. Economic migrants are driven more by good-paying jobs than luxuries such as walkable neighborhoods or nationally ranked schools. As was the case during the 19th and early-20th centuries, immigrants moved to places native-born Americans were fleeing.

Immigration became a once-in-a-century opportunity for rural places facing the deepest economic decline.

The pandemic also brought opportunities to rural places with high quality of life and small job markets. That's because COVID accelerated remote work, severing the geographic ties between homes and offices and permitting families to choose rural com-

munities while keeping their jobs.

New businesses also grew during the pandemic, bringing an excess supply of college-educated workers.

Meanwhile, rural America continued to benefit from tax policies, both federal and state. Rural Americans are older, poorer and face higher rates of disability. They pay less taxes and collect more benefits than their urban or suburban counterparts.

Indiana's poorest rural county receives about \$16,000 more per year in per-capita federal transfer payments than it pays. That same county receives \$1,500 more per resident in state taxes than it pays.

Along with this, place-based economic policies favored rural counties. For example, child care tax credits, a popular state policy, did more to allow rural families to work than almost any other policy in the past half-century.

Taken together, these policies and economic realities offered rural America a brighter future. Today, everything I've just mentioned is at risk, or gone entirely.

The Trump administration has ended remote work for federal workers. Many states, including Indiana, have followed suit for state workers. That directly hurts rural America.

Tariffs and the trade war have reversed manufacturing employment and production. They are also eviscerating agricultural exports. Job growth effectively stopped in April. The deepest job losses are just now settling into rural America, with losses clustered in manufacturing, logistics and agriculture.

Immigration has also stopped, and with it the prospects of population growth for about two-thirds of rural counties. This loss of new families means employers won't consider these places — they need workers. Schools will shrink, churches will lose congregants and decline will accelerate.

Federal funding will slow under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. That's unsurprising and inevitable given our large federal debt. But, despite what many believe, the geography

of those cuts is dominated by rural places.

The deepest cuts come to Medicaid and other anti-poverty programs that see their heaviest use in rural places. This will lead to the closure of a number of rural hospitals across the country by 2030, as they rely so heavily on this support.

There's little disagreement on the magnitude of these effects in Washington, D.C., and statehouses across the country. But rural Americans voted so overwhelmingly for the GOP that neither party has much incentive to address these problems.

And so, they will come to pass until the 1 in 5 Americans who live in rural places decide the current policy environment is robbing them of a prosperous future.

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Hicks is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University. Email him at mhicks@bsu.edu.

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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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**Asbury United
Methodist**

204 E. Arch St., Portland
Josh Arthur
(260) 726-8464
Services: 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.
asburyministries.org

**Bellefontain
United Methodist**

440 S. 600 East
Pamela Freeman
Services: 9 a.m.

Bluff Point Friends

80 E. 650 South
Services: 10 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

Boundary St. Paul

Corner of Treaty Line
Road and county road 300
East
Ava Gannon
(260) 726-2373
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Bryant Wesleyan

209 S. Hendricks St.
Paul VanCise
(260) 997-6231
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.
bryantwesleyanchurch.com

**Calvary United
Methodist**

301 N. Main St., Dunkirk
Susan Durovey-Antrim
(765) 499-0368
Services: 10:30 a.m.
susan.duroveyantrim@jmc.org

Christ Chapel

2535 Wabash Road, Fort
Recovery
(419) 733-1469
christchapelfr.com

**Church of
the Living God
(Miracle Missions)**

8472 S. 800 East, Union
City
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**Church of
God
of Prophecy**

797 N. Creagor Ave., Por-
tland
Nanette Weesner
(260) 766-9334
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nanybell@yahoo.com

**Church of the
Brethren**

Floral and Chicago
avenues, Portland
Kevin McClung
(260) 729-7295
Services: 10 a.m.

**Church of the
Living God**

South Broad Street,
Dunkirk
Services: 7 p.m., 7 p.m.
Friday

Collett Nazarene

450 South, 1 mile west of
U.S. 27
Billy Stanton
(260) 251-2403
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Cornerstone Baptist

211 E. Main St., Portland
Wayne Ward
(260) 726-7714
Services: 10 a.m.

**Cornerstone Church of
Pennville**

190 W. Main St., Pennville
Jack Houck
(260) 729-2164
Services: 10:30 a.m.

Dunkirk Nazarene

226 E. Center St.,
Dunkirk
Tom Fett
(765) 768-6199
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Evangelical Methodist

930 W. Main St., Portland
Steve Arnold
(260) 251-0970
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6 p.m.

**Fairview United
Methodist/Jay County**

2875 E. 200 South
Pamela Freeman
Lay leader: Beth Stephen
(260) 726-9184
Services: 10:15 a.m.

Faith Community

9560 W. 200 South,
Dunkirk
Mark Acree
(260) 251-0987
Services: 10 a.m.

Family Worship Center

200 E. Elder St., Portland
Ronald Willis
(260) 726-4844
Services: 11 a.m., 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
thefamilyworshipcenter.org

Fellowship Baptist

289 S. 200 West
Hugh Kelly
(260) 726-8873
Services: 9 a.m., 11 a.m.
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
pastorkelly@fbc-portal.com

First Church of Christ

1049 Union City Road,
Fort Recovery
David J. Nicholson
(419) 375-2860
Services: 10:30 a.m.
fccftrerecovery.org

**First Community
Baptist**

341 S. Meridian St., Red-
key
Everett Bilbrey Jr.
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.
Services: 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; 7 p.m. Wednesday

First Free Will Baptist

12369 W. 600 South,
Dunkirk
Sunday school: 10 a.m.
Services: 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m., 6 p.m. Wednesday

First Presbyterian

402 N. Ship St., Portland
Rev. M. Rex Espiritu
(260) 726-8462
Services: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday school: 10:15 a.m.
firstpcportland.org

**Fort Recovery Church
of the Nazarene**

401 E. Boundary St., Fort
Recovery
(419) 375-4680
Services: 10:30 a.m.
Kids vision and teen
ministries: 6 p.m. Wednes-
day
frnaz@frontier.com

**Fort Recovery
United Methodist**

309 E. Boundary St., Fort
Recovery
Rev. Carol McKay
(304) 617-0101
Services: 9 a.m.

**Full Gospel
Lighthouse Tabernacle**

468 E. Washington St.,
Dunkirk
Robert Thomas
(765) 348-4620
Services: 6:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Thursday

**Geneva First
United Methodist**

100 W. Line St., Geneva
Barry McCune
(260) 368-7655
Services: 9:30 a.m.

Geneva Nazarene

225 Decatur St., Geneva
(260) 525-8609
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
Sunday school: 9 a.m.
Prayer meeting: 6 p.m.
Wednesday

Gilead Church

County road 650 North,
one-quarter mile east of
Balbec

Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Hickory Grove
Church of the
Brethren**

Indiana 1 and Indiana 26
Earl Doll
(260) 731-4477
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**High Street
United Methodist**

435 High St., Geneva
Rev. Joseph Hampton
(260) 368-7233
Services: 9 a.m.

Holy Trinity Catholic

7321 E. Indiana 67,
Bryant
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
Services: 8 a.m., 4:30 p.m.
Saturday

**Hopewell of
Life Ministries**

County road 200 South, 2
miles east of Indiana 1
Rev. Ruth Funk
(260) 251-8581
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

**Immaculate
Conception Catholic**

506 E. Walnut St., Port-
land
Fr. Peter Logsdon
Fr. Martin Sandhage
(260) 726-7055
Services: 5:30 p.m. Saturday,
10:30 a.m. Sunday

Kingsley Full Gospel

4030 S. 700 East, Dunkirk
Stuart Phillips
Services: 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday

Faith Community

9560 W. 200 South,
Dunkirk
Mark Acree
(260) 251-0987
Services: 10 a.m.

**Mary Help
of Christians**

403 Sharpsburg Road,
Fort Recovery
Rev. Alexander Witt
(419) 375-4153
Services: 4:30 p.m. Saturday,
9 a.m.

**Mount Tabor
Community Church**

216 W. Pleasant St.,
Dunkirk
Scott McClain
(765) 768-7273
Services: 9:30 a.m.

**Mount Zion
United Methodist**

County roads 600 East
and 200 North
Rev. Darrell Borders
(260) 726-4786
Services: 9 a.m.

**New Beginnings
Holiness Church
of Blaine**

4017 W. 200 South
Randy Smith
(260) 251-2406
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nbofblaine.com

**New Covenant
Fellowship**

1238 W. 450 South
Chuck Myers
(260) 251-0063
Services: 10:30 a.m.

New Life Ministries

415 S. Helen St., Portland
Dr. Kay Fairchild
(260) 223-2961
Services: 4 p.m.
drkayfairchild.com

**New Mt. Pleasant
United Methodist**

5905 S. Como Road
Neil Butcher
(765) 499-7838
Services: 9 a.m.

**Noble Congregational
Christian**

1964 N. 800 East
Aaron Huey
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Oak Grove
United Methodist**

829 S. Indiana 1
Neil Butcher
(765) 760-9085
Services: 10:45 a.m.

**Portland Church of
Christ**

1217 W. Votaw St., Port-
land
Bob Graham
(260) 726-7777
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.
Services: 10:20 a.m.
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wednes-
day
portlandcoc.com

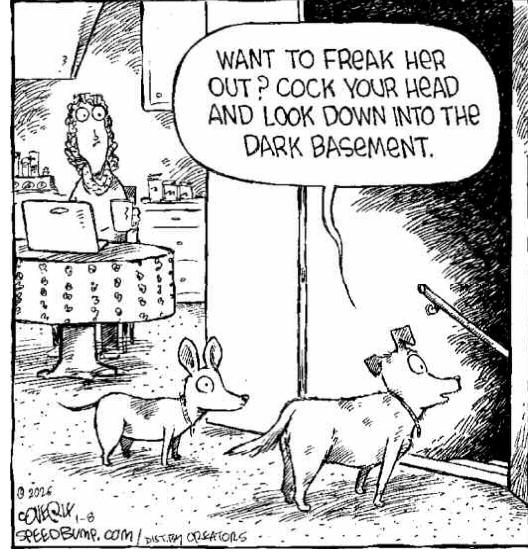
**Portland First
Church of Nazarene**

920 S. Shank St., Portland
Steve Cecil
(260) 726-8040
Services: 10:45 a.m.

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Bruce Bryan
(765) 9

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Continued from page 8
Despite the younger Schwieterman's big night, her focus remained on her sister's accomplishment.

"I'm so proud of her," Karsyn Schwieterman said. "I mean, I've been waiting for this... She also wanted it to be a three, and then it was, and it was so awesome."

Even after punching her ticket to the 1,000-point club, Hallie Schwieterman made sure to recognize Karsyn's exploits.

"She's just amazing," Hallie Schwieterman said. "Having her on the court is, it's such a blessing, and I'm so thankful that I get to share these moments with her and get to share time on the court with her. She's so reliable all the time, and she has such a hard game and she's so competitive, which obviously, I think it kind of runs in our family."

The competitiveness in the Schwieterman bloodline has produced tangible results, and not just for Hallie. Her older sister, Renna Schwieterman, is the all-time scoring leader in Jay County history, having stacked up 1,754 points in her career. (Renna will be inducted to the Jay County High School Athletic Wall of Fame at halftime of Friday's game against Bluffton.)

Though Hallie Schwieterman likely has several more milestones within reach after solidifying her-

I'm so glad that God blessed me with the talent that He did, and the family and the community. It's just, I'm so blessed, and I can't put into words how grateful I am for everything that I have.

—Hallie Schwieterman

self as the eighth overall Patriot and fifth Jay County girl to reach 1,000 points, continuing to win remains the guard's priority.

"Points-wise, I don't really have a goal," Hallie Schwieterman said. "I mean, breaking records, I don't really care to do it. I just want to win as many games as we can as a team and stuff, and I just want to get as far as we can in the tournament because I think we have a very good team this year."



The Commercial Review/Ethan Oskroba

Hallie Schwieterman embraces coach Sherri McIntire after scoring her 1,000th career point. Schwieterman is now the fifth-highest scorer in the history of Jay County girls basketball, with Shelby Caldwell (1,071 points), Carissa Phillips (1,073) and Shannon Freeman (1,458) next up on the list. The Patriots' all-time leading scorer is Renna Schwieterman, Hallie's older sister, with 1,754 points.

Jay girls swim returns by beating Braves

Local Roundup

freestyle (27.01) and 100 breaststroke (1:21.10).

Westgerdes matched Laux with wins in the 200 IM (2:15.55) and 500 freestyle (5:41.75). Glentzer's time of 58.16 seconds won the 100 butterfly, while he claimed the 100 backstroke in 1:01.94.

Other individual wins for the girls came from Brooklynn Byrum (200 freestyle), Lauren Fisher (100 butterfly), Sophia Hoevel (100 freestyle) and Avery Wentz (100 backstroke). Grady Warvel claimed the 200 freestyle for the boys, while Peyton Yowell claimed the 50 freestyle.

The Patriot girls won all three relays. The JCHS

boys claimed the 200 medley relay and the 400 freestyle relay.

Three wins each

BERNE — Fort Recovery's swim teams battled with South Adams and Minster on Tuesday night.

The girls and boys each had a trio of first-place finishes.

Theresa Hippel started the meet right for Tribe girls with a win in the 1-meter diving. Autumn Luethold had the other individual victory in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Luethold, Claire Wenning, Aubrey Shuttleworth and Liza Knapke combined to win the 200 freestyle relay as well.

The victories for the boys came from Carson Fullenkamp and Caleb Smith. Fullenkamp won both the 200 individual medley and 100 butterfly. Smith placed first in the 50 freestyle. While he only finished second in the 100

breaststroke, he broke his school record for the third time this season with a swim of 1 minute, 7.39 seconds.

Pats fall

COLDWATER, Ohio — The Jay County boys wrestling team dropped a close match to the Coldwater Cavaliers on Tuesday 30-25.

The Patriots (11-5) did well in the lower weight classes as they claimed wins in the 113, 120, 126 and 138-pound matches.

Jason Landers ran off 16 points to get a tech fall on Cameron Bradley 3 minutes, 6 seconds into the 138 contest. Corbin Lothridge and Alexander Rivers both earned major decisions with the former beating T.J. Gross 12-0 in the 113-pound match and the latter topping Brent Heuing 12-3 in the 126 contest.

The only other JCHS victory came from Bryan Fields in the 175 match. He

needed just 41 seconds to pin Coldwater's Landon Garcia.

Jay County lost the other four matches via fall to end up with the loss.

Eighth grade wins

YORKTOWN — Jay County Junior High School's boys basketball teams split with the Yorktown Tigers on Tuesday.

The eighth grade team fell 31-29 with Arabella Link scoring 10 points. Following Link were Boo Towell, Kinne Homan and Brenna Weitzel with seven, six and five points, respectively. Emmi Clark also hit a free throw.

The seventh graders pulled out a 25-6 victory against the Tigers. Gretchen Petro led the way with eight points, while Haley Comer had seven. Kendall Farr and Alyssa Schwieterman both had three points, while Makenna Wellman and Brooklyn McGill each found the basket once for two apiece.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today

Jay County — Swim vs. Celina/Coldwater — 6 p.m.; Freshman basketball at Anderson — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball vs. Selma — 6 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball at Fort Recovery — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls basketball at New Bre-

men — 6 p.m.; Middle school boys basketball at Celina — 5:30 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball vs. Jay County — 6 p.m.

Laux topped the 200-yard individual medley in 2 minutes, 39.67 seconds and the 500 freestyle in 6:30.89. Elly Bryrum's wins came in the 50

freestyle (27.01) and 100

breaststroke (1:21.10).

Westgerdes matched

Laux with wins in the 200

IM (2:15.55) and 500

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Patriot girls swim
returns with victory,
see local roundup

FR boys basketball faces
New Bremen on Friday,
see Sports on tap

Page 8

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The Commercial Review

Sports

Schwieterman hits 1,000 career points

Junior becomes 8th Patriot to reach milestone mark

By ETHAN OSKROBA

The Commercial Review
As Hallie Schwieterman generated space just to the left of the top of the key and fired up a 3-pointer, it looked like so many previous baskets in her Jay County career.

Though the junior has made nailing long-range shots a regular occurrence, this one was special. It cemented her presence in the 1,000-point club as the Jay County High School girls basketball team rolicked to a 74-45 home victory over the Concordia Cadets on Tuesday.

"I was really excited about it," Hallie Schwieterman said. "I mean, just actually doing it, it's like, wow. You realize that you've been playing for three years and stuff, and it's very surreal, and it's like, 'Oh my gosh, I hit a thousand points,' and none of that could have happened if I didn't have the coaches and the teammates that I had that lift me up every day, and I wouldn't have the confidence that I do without them."

Hallie Schwieterman entered the game needing just six points to etch her name into Jay County lore. She recorded a pair of layups in the first quarter before drilling the historic 3-pointer 12 seconds into the second period.

The junior raised her arms in celebration and was mobbed by her teammates as the game was briefly paused to recognize the achievement.

"Hallie Schwieterman is a special, special person on and off the basketball court," said Jay County coach Sherri McIntire. "Just so proud of her to get to that 1,000 points. You don't know how many hours that young lady spends in the gym, and with a basketball in her hand and playing basketball, and it has paid off."

While hard work was a key ingredient in Hallie Schwieterman's scoring proficiency, the guard also made sure to remain thankful for the other factors that helped her along the way.



The Commercial Review/Ethan Oskroba

Hallie Schwieterman of the Jay County High School girls basketball team shoots the 3-pointer that pushed her past 1,000 career points during Tuesday's 74-45 win over the Concordia Cadets. Schwieterman's shot came with 7:48 remaining in the second quarter and made her the eighth Jay County player and fifth Patriot girl to join the 1,000-point club.

"I'm so glad that God blessed me with the talent that He did, and the family and the community," she said. "It's just,

I'm so blessed, and I can't put into words how grateful I am for everything that I have."

Hallie Schwieterman

went on to finish the night with 24 points while adding three more 3-pointers, but she wasn't the only Patriot to deliver

a memorable performance.

Her freshman sister Karsyn Schwieterman

notched the first 30-point

game of her young career, amassing 31. She also snared seven offensive rebounds as the Patriots (9-4) claimed 20 offensive boards to the 12 defensive rebounds captured by the Cadets (2-13).

See 1,000 page 7

CARS Special Section

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Deadline for ads is Feb. 4

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