

Former Portland firefighter died after collision

Bemis was driving for Spirit EMS when bus was struck

ARCANUM, Ohio — A Portland native died Friday after he was involved in a traffic collision. Chris Bemis, 63, St. Marys, Ohio, died at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, following the collision in Darke County, Ohio. Bemis was born in Portland and had previously served with Portland Fire Department and Rescue 19. "The Portland Fire Department extends our deepest condolences following the tragic loss of Chris Bemis," the department said in a Facebook post. "His dedication to public service continued beyond our department, and his loss is felt deeply by all who had the honor of knowing and working alongside him." According to a report from Darke County Sheriff's Office, Bemis was driving south in a Spirit EMS transport bus on Ohio 49 at about 7:20 a.m. Friday when a northbound cargo van pulling a trailer crossed the center line. The van hit the 2023 Chevrolet medical transport bus Bemis was driving. The collision occurred near Ohio 49's intersection with Pittsburg-Laura Road, about 12 miles southeast of Greenville. After the initial collision, the van continued north and hit a 2013 Dodge sedan driven by 18-year-old Kenadie Hensley of Arcanum, Ohio. Both the van and sedan caught on fire. The driver and passenger of the van were pronounced dead at the scene of the collision. See Collision page 2

ACAC victory

Jay County High School boys basketball captain Aiden Phillips hoists the Allen County Athletic Conference tournament championship trophy after the Patriots beat Heritage 50-41 at South Adams on Saturday. Gradin Swoveland put together a massive third quarter for JCHS, scoring all 10 of his team's points to get an edge on Heritage. For more on the game, see page 8.



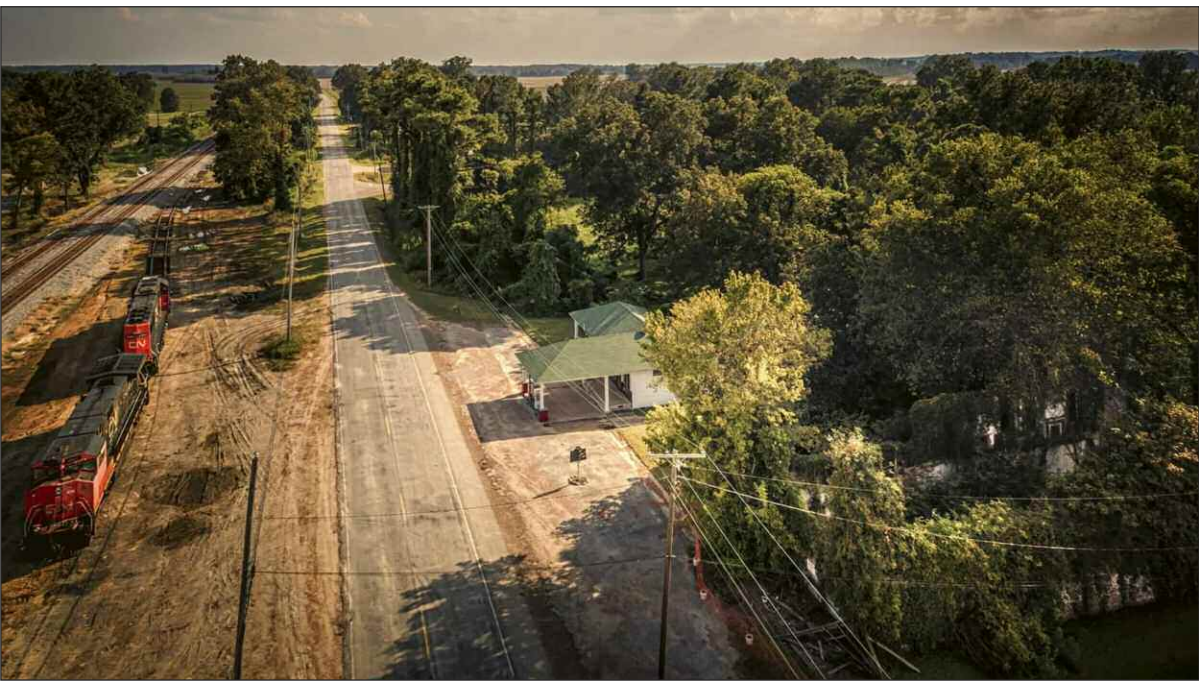
The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

New exhibit opens Saturday at Minnetrista

Photos and accounts explore Till's life, legacy

By RAY COONEY The Commercial Review

The murder of Emmett Till and subsequent trial served as inspiration for many in the civil rights movement. A new exhibit examines the life and legacy of the 14-year-old boy and his mother. "Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See" opens Saturday at Minnetrista Museum & Gardens in Muncie. "Emmett Till's story is not distant history — it continues to shape the world we live in," said Sebastián Encina, director of curation and exhibition at Minnetrista. "This exhibition asks



United States Civil Rights Trail

visitors to sit with the reality of what happened, to understand the courage of Mamie Till-Mobley, and to recognize how memory, truth, and responsibility are deeply connected. Remembering is not passive work — it

requires attention, care, and action." Till was visiting family in Money, Mississippi, in 1955 and had an encounter at Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market involving co-owner Carolyn

Bryant. Accounts of what happened vary. Carolyn Bryant, her husband Roy Bryant and his half-brother John William "J.W." Milam abducted Till, who was later beaten and shot before his body

The image at left from the United States Civil Rights Trail shows an overhead view of Bryant's Grocery store in Money, Mississippi. The store was the site of an incident that led to the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955. A new exhibit that opens Saturday at Minnetrista Museum & Gardens in Muncie explores Till's life and legacy. was thrown into the Tallahatchie River. Till's body was found three days later, and in the subsequent trial an all-white, all-male jury took just 67 minutes to acquit Bryant and Milam. See Exhibit page 2

Deaths

Chris Bemis, 63, St. Marys, Ohio  
Les Spohn, 78, Greenville, Ohio  
Shirley Duncan, 78, Geneva  
Details on page 2.

Weather

The high temperature was 20 degrees Sunday. The low was 11.  
Tonight's low will be 14 with winds gusting to 25 mph. Expect mostly cloudy skies Wednesday with a slight chance of snow in the morning and continued windy conditions.  
For an extended forecast,

In review

Second Harvest Food Bank will host tailgate distributions:  
•Wednesday at Redkey Morgan Park, 102 W. Holmes Ave., Redkey  
•Thursday at Muncie Mall, 3401 N. Granville Ave., Muncie  
•Friday at Goodrich Park, 701 N. Union St., Winchester  
All tailgates are scheduled for 10 a.m.

Coming up

Wednesday — Details from this week's Portland City Council meeting.  
Thursday — Results from the Jay County swim meet against Muncie Central.  
Friday — Coverage of this week's Portland Board of Aviation meeting.





# Obituaries

## Chris Bemis

July 18, 1962-Jan. 16, 2026  
Chris Bemis, age 63, a resident of St. Marys, Ohio, passed away on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. He was a former Portland resident.

Chris was born July 18, 1962, in Portland, Indiana, the son of Richard and June (Allred) Bemis. He was very active in his community, serving on Jay County Rescue 19 and the Portland Fire Department for many years. He was currently employed at Spirit Medical Transport in Greenville, Ohio. He was an active member of Anchor Church in Celina, Ohio.



Bemis

Survivors include:  
His children — Christy Gross (husband: Calvin), St. Marys, Ohio, Jason Bemis (wife: Brianna), Dunkirk, Indiana, and Preston Bemis (wife: Lindsey), Monroe, Indiana  
Grandchildren — Sarah, Faith, Simon, Haisley, Kason and Judah  
Visitation will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, from 3 to 8 p.m. at Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland. Funeral services will be held on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Family Worship Center, 200 E. Elder St., Portland, Indiana. Jason Bemis and Simon Young will officiate the service and burial will follow at Lisbon Cemetery, north of Union City, Indiana.  
Memorials may be directed to the Matt Aker Memorial Scholar-

ship Fund through The Portland Foundation.  
Condolences may be expressed at williamsonspencer.com.  
**Les Spohn**  
Dec. 19, 1947-Jan. 17, 2026  
Les Spohn, 78, of Greenville, Ohio, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, at 12:22 p.m. at EverHeart Hospice Care Center, Greenville, Ohio.  
Les was a 30-year survivor of Parkinson's Disease as of January.  
He was born Dec. 19, 1947, in Asheville, North Carolina, the son of the late Hubert and Molly (Tinsley) Spohn.  
Les worked for Coca-Cola for 35 years as a sales manager in Union City then as a general manager in Portland, Indiana. He was a member of Sertoma Club and the Masonic Lodge. He

was an avid collector of Coca-Cola memorabilia and loved golfing.  
Les is survived by his wife of 59 years, Cindy Spohn of Greenville, whom he married June 16, 1966; his children and spouses, Tracy and Steve Spohn-Witt of Johns Creek, Georgia, and Doug and Tina Spohn of Delaware, Ohio; and his grandchildren, Jack Spohn, Madi Spohn, Meg Spohn, Jonna Spohn, Trevor Witt, Tyler Witt and Sam Witt.  
A Celebration of Les' life will be held on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026, at 3 p.m. at Zechar Bailey Funeral Home, Greenville, Ohio, with Chaplain Tish Shepherd officiating. The family will receive



Spohn

friends one hour prior to the celebration of life service.  
Memorial contributions may be made to EverHeart Hospice.  
Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at zecharbailey.com for the Spohn family.  
**Shirley Jean Duncan**, Geneva, Aug. 27, 1947-Jan. 16, 2026. Services will be at 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 23, at Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 N. Washington St., Geneva.

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

## CR almanac

Wednesday 1/21	Thursday 1/22	Friday 1/23	Saturday 1/24	Sunday 1/25
<b>38/19</b>	<b>24/9</b>	<b>18/-2</b>	<b>10/-1</b>	<b>15/5</b>
There will be a 20% chance of snow with winds gusting to 35 mph. The high will be 38.	Skies will be mostly sunny with a high in the mid 20s.	Expect a high of 18 under mostly cloudy skies with the low dropping to below zero in the evening.	Conditions will continue to be cold with a high of 10. Skies will be partly sunny.	The forecast calls for a slight chance of snow with the high topping out in the mid-teens.

## Lotteries

<b>Powerball</b> Estimated jackpot: \$193 million	22-23-24-28-32-42-43-48-51-52-53-54-55-56-60-66-74 Cash 5: 23-28-32-33-43 Estimated jackpot: \$267,000
<b>Mega Millions</b> Estimated jackpot: \$250 million	<b>Ohio</b> Sunday Midday Pick 3: 3-1-7 Pick 4: 8-4-6-5 Pick 5: 2-8-8-6-9 Evening Pick 3: 9-6-1 Pick 4: 8-5-1-8 Pick 5: 3-7-5-3-3 Rolling Cash 5: 2-4-8-17-26 Estimated jackpot: \$130,000
<b>Hoosier</b> Sunday Midday Daily Three: 8-6-4 Daily Four: 5-6-6-9 Quick Draw: 5-12-14-15-17-29-30-31-32-34-35-36-39-48-49-53-58-68-72-77 Evening Daily Three: 5-7-3 Daily Four: 7-4-8-5 Quick Draw: 4-17-21-	

## Markets

<b>Cooper Farms Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.43 Feb. corn .....4.45	Wheat .....4.83
<b>POET Biorefining Portland</b> Corn.....4.43 Feb. corn .....4.40 March corn .....4.37	<b>ADM Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.27 Feb. corn .....4.29 Beans .....10.47 Feb. beans .....10.51 Wheat .....5.03
<b>The Andersons Richland Township</b> Corn .....4.34 Feb. corn .....4.36 Beans .....10.49 Feb. beans .....10.53	<b>Heartland St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.40 Feb. corn .....4.40 Beans .....10.23 March beans .....10.23 Wheat .....4.78

## Today in history

In 1801, United States president John Adams nominated John Marshall as chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.  
In 1981, the Iran hostage crisis ended. After 15 months, 52 United States citizens were released from a group of Islamists.  
In 1986, the United States celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a federal holiday for the first time.  
In 2016, a man robbed MainSource Bank, 120 E. Main St., Portland. He stole an undisclosed amount of cash and fled on foot. It was Portland's second bank robbery in less than a year.

In 2023, Mara Bader won the 200-yard individual medley and 100 breaststroke to lead the Jay County High School girls swim team to its sixth consecutive Allen County Athletic Conference championship.  
In 2024, the Jay County High School boys basketball team defeated Hagerstown 58-37 less than 24 hours after blowing out South Adams 54-19.  
In 2025, Jay School Board heard a report from accounting and consulting firm Baker Tilly and architecture and engineering firm Barton Coe Vilamaa as it began considering potential capital improvement projects. — The CR

## Citizen's calendar

<b>Tuesday, Jan. 20</b> 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 6 p.m. — Jackson Township Advisory Board, 5341 W. 400 North, Portland.	<b>Wednesday, Jan. 21</b> 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North.
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## Collision ...

Continued from page 2  
Their identities have not yet been released.  
Bemis was trapped in the transport bus and had to be extricated by emergency responders. He was transported to Miami Valley Hospital, where he later died from his injuries.  
Bonnie Behee, 62, New Madison, Ohio, and a juvenile were passengers in the medical transport bus at the time of the collision. They were transported to Wayne HealthCare with non-life-threatening injuries.  
Hensley was treated at the scene and released.  
Bemis had worked for Spirit EMS for about two years. Spirit EMS

president and CEO Ben Hathaway told WHIO-TV of Dayton that one of the main duties Bemis had was taking children to school. He was transporting a 12-year-old student to Franklin Monroe Local Schools at the time of the collision, Hathaway said.  
“Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone involved in this terrible tragedy,” Hathaway told WHIO. “We are devastated by the loss of our teammate and deeply saddened for the other families who are grieving today.”  
Funeral services for Bemis, who is survived by three children and six grandchildren, will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 23, at Family Wor-

ship Center, 200 E. Elder St., Portland.  
A vigil in remembrance of Bemis and the other two deceased men was held Friday evening at Darke County Fairgrounds in Greenville.  
Arcanum Fire Department, Arcanum Rescue, Pittsburg Fire Department, Darke County Sheriff's Office, Arcanum Police Department, Greenville Fire Department, Greenville Township EMS and Care-flight all assisted at the scene.  
Ohio 49 was closed for about five hours following the collision.  
Darke County Coroner's Office and Darke County Sheriff's Office are continuing to investigate the incident.

## Capsule Reports

**Three-vehicle crash**  
More than \$25,000 worth of damage resulted from a three-vehicle collision caused by a car parked on a U.S. highway.  
According to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report, Gregory A. Poling of Portland was driving his 2002 Chevrolet Silverado south on U.S. 27 near county road 700 South just after 3 a.m. Thursday. Poling told police that he did not see a vehicle parked in the roadway and his truck struck a 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee.  
The report says that the

Jeep was running but parked and did not have any lights on.  
Following the initial collision, Poling's truck slid sideways and struck the rear of a northbound 2018 Dodge Ram truck driven by Taylor A. Donnelly of Portland.  
The Jeep, registered to Samantha B. Ward of Pike-ton, Ohio, was determined to be stolen. The sheriff's office report says that Granvel A. Wamsley of Wellston, Ohio, who was in the Jeep at the time of the collision appeared to be in an altered state. Formal criminal charges are pending.  
The Jeep and Silverado both sustained heavy damage and were towed from the scene. The Ram is registered to Cooper Farms of Fort Recovery, Ohio.

**Playground hit**  
A rural Portland teen was involved in a traffic incident Sunday that resulted in damage to playground equipment.  
Nicholas J. Laux, 17, was driving a 2008 Chevrolet Impala east on county road 400 North about 8 a.m. Sunday. He told police that he

had slowed down to pass a buggy and was speeding back up when he lost control of the vehicle coming over a hill. According to a Jay County Sheriff's Office report, the Impala went off the south side of the road and struck playground equipment at The Church at Westchester.  
Damage was estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.  
The Impala is registered to Lewis P. Laux of rural Portland.

## Exhibit ...

Continued from page 1  
The free exhibit that will be open through April 12 at Minnetrista, in the Center Building, Gallery 3, “examines the life and legacy” of Till and the efforts of his mother Mamie Till-Mobley to share her son's story. Created by the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley Institute, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, the Till family, and The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, it features images and first-hand narratives.  
Minnetrista, 1200 N. Minnetrista Parkway, Muncie, is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, visit minnetrista.net.

## Felony arrests

**Possession**  
A Ridgeville man was arrested Saturday for drug possession.  
Alex J. Chalfant, 39, 9239 W. Indiana 28, was preliminarily charged with a Level 6 felony for possession of methamphetamine. He was also charged with misdemeanors for possession of marijuana and possession of paraphernalia.  
He was booked into Jay County Jail and later released on a \$4,500 bond.

**Stolen property**  
A Muncie man was arrested Thursday for possession of stolen property.  
Andre Lamar Washington, 209 N. Jefferson St., Muncie, was preliminarily charged with a Level 5 felony for possession of stolen property. He is also facing a Level 6 felony charge for possession of a controlled substance. He was being held in Jay County Jail on a \$13,000 bond.

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SERVICES

Friday, Jan. 23  
**Bemis**, Chris: 11 a.m., Family Worship Center, 200 E. Elder St., Portland.  
**Duncan**, Shirley: 11 a.m., Downing & Glancy Funeral Home, 100 Washington St., Geneva.

Sunday, Jan. 25  
**Spohn**, Les: 3 p.m., Zechar Bailey Funeral Home, 1499 N. Broadway St., Greenville, Ohio.

Saturday, Feb. 28  
**Hughes**, Allyssah: noon, 205 E. 1st St., Bath, Illinois.

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# A full schedule needs boundaries

By **OLIVIA SMITH**  
The Commercial Review

Classes are back in session, and the semester is officially in full swing.

It's only been a couple of weeks since we returned, yet it already feels like everyone I talk to is overwhelmed. Assignments are piling up, calendars are filling fast, and the pressure to do it all seems to hit almost immediately.

College is undeniably stressful, and balancing good grades, a social life, a job and extracurricular activities can feel like juggling a dozen things at

*You're on  
Your Own,  
Kid*



once. Most of us signed up for these commitments with the best intentions, not realizing just how quickly the semester would pick up speed.

With all of this going on, one of the biggest lessons I'm learning is the importance of

saying "no." That can be especially hard when the opportunity is something I genuinely want to do or when it feels like everyone else is managing just fine. But learning when to step back is just as important as learning when to jump in. Saying no doesn't mean you're failing or missing out; it means you're recognizing your limits and respecting them.

Finding balance doesn't mean giving up fun or meaningful experiences. It means being intentional with your time and energy so you don't overextend yourself and end

up more stressed and exhausted than before.

When we spread ourselves too thin, even the things we love can start to feel like chores. Giving ourselves permission to slow down can make a huge difference in how we experience the semester.

This has been especially challenging for me as an extrovert who wants to do everything under the sun. I thrive on being around people and staying busy, so learning to pause has felt uncomfortable.

Still, I'm beginning to realize that taking care of myself

mentally, physically and emotionally is what allows me to show up fully for the things I choose to say "yes" to.

College is a busy and demanding season of life, but it's also a time for growth and self-discovery. If we allow ourselves grace, set boundaries and remember that we're only human, the semester may start to feel a little more manageable.

We don't have to do everything to have a fulfilling college experience.

Sometimes doing less allows us to enjoy it more.

## Freshmen, sophomores named to honor roll

Jay County Junior-Senior High School recently announced its honor roll for the first semester.

Making the honor roll were freshmen Sydney Aly, Kaylyn Bell, Madeline Benirschke, Leonard Bihn, Colton Blalock, Ashlynn Brunswick, Elly Byrum, Kenlee Calvert, Jackeline Caralampio-Ramirez, Addisyn Castillo, Madison Clark, Kenton Cochran, Brody Collins, Adryen Cox and Kaidah Cross.

Also Eli Davidson, Claudia Dirksen, Henry Dirksen, Paul Dirksen, Samuel Doll, Makenzie Farr,

Gavin Fennig, Emery Forthofer, Marilee Galle-gos-Vargas, Gabrielle Gibson, Annisyn Gundrum, Skylah Honeycutt, Isobel Huelskamp, Ayla Jackson, Dillon Jellison, Kellan Kirby, Karsen Kuhn, Cory Landers, Maria Laux and Charlotte LeMaster.

Also Reny Lingo, Haley Litmer, Caison Lloyd, Carter Lloyd, Tailyon Lorton, Kenady Lyons, Brielle McConnell, Madison McLaughlin, Zoe McLaughlin, Angel Navarro-Garcia, Jacoby Penrod, Charlotte Peters, Ava Peterson, Jessa Powell, Chevelle Pryor, Sophia Reagan, Madeline

Richards, Larissa Ross and Ella Roussey.

Also Gracie Rowles, Kendall Schemenaur, Alivya Schwieterman, Karsyn Schwieterman, Aubree Shannon, Spencer Smitley, Avery Snow, Arman Solis, Connor Stultz, Crystal Swartzen-truber, Madysen Taylor, Kylee Timmerman, Brayden Tobe, Chloe Torres, Morgan Trinidad, Jaylee Twigg, Jace Vance, Tinley Walker, Jackson Walter, Grady Warvel, Hailey Welling, Kali Wendel, Lila Wendel, Tamara White-head, Samuel Wiggins and Cooper Wright.

Sophomores on the

honor roll were Makenna Avery, Brayden Barlow, Raif Beiswanger, Rock-land Beiswanger, Ava Bice, Elena Bihn, Makay-la Bishop, Presleigh Blunk, Elizabeth Bram-lett, Bristol Brewster, Madalyn Brewster, Bray-lon Brown, Chloe Brown, Elizabeth Brunswick, Ivan Brunswick, Emilee Buckner and Brooklynn Byrum.

Also Gavin Byrum, Evelyn Carter, Mylee Castillo, Mariela Castro-Martell, Amara Craw-ford, Emmeline Crouch, Isaiah Dailey, Jaxon DeHoff, Kevin Dues, Abby Fifer, Kaitlyn Fish-

er, Elias Fosnaugh, Oak-land Gaerke, Cooper Glentzer, Jacob Grijalva, Angel Gutierrez, Amelia Heath, Emalyn Homan, Halle Homan, Jessie Homan and Mallory Hud-son.

Also Cody Jacobs, Drake Jacobs, Amanda Jones, Lyla Kunkler, Cheyenne Ladewig, Audrey LeMaster, Freder-ick Lingo, London Lloyd, Aiden Loyd, Avery Lykins, Ava May, Natalie May, Raylynn Meyer, Alexander Miller, Emma Miller, Kylie Moeller, Zoey Moore-Carlin, Alyvia Muhlenkamp, Owen Muhlenkamp,

Danika Myers and Kali Newell.

Also Brooklyn Padgett, Allison Paul, Gabrielle Petro, Jadalyn Plessinger, Gabriela Raines, Hailee Randall, Braelyn Rathbun, Maverick Reier, Milee Rickard, Alexander Rivers, Jaycee Rowles, Alexis Schoenlein and Peyton Schoenlein.

Also Kylie Shannon, Cohen Shimp, Kent Siegrist, Kason Sims, Nicholas Snow, Adam Stephen, Carson Tarter, Bailey Towell, Anja Vujnovic, Braden Wells, Carson Westgerdes, Samuel Westgerdes, Kaitlyn Wil-helm and Danielle Wright.

## Daughter concerned about parents' screen time

DEAR ABBY: My young daughter and I had the pleasure of spending three months with my parents while my husband was deployed. We had a lovely visit, but over the course of our stay, I noticed my parents were spending more time on their phones than previously. Both are retired and in their mid-60s.

I'm glad they are keeping up with technology, but I'm also concerned that their phone use may have a negative impact on their social health, behavioral health and mental acuity as they age. Growing up, we never had the TV or computers in our main living space, and screen time was limited. We ate dinner together every night, and social-ization and conversation was an expectation.

*Dear  
Abby*



During my stay, my parents brought their phones to the din-ner table and grabbed them midmeal to answer messages or search things on the internet. Throughout the days, I'd look up from what I was doing and see them glued to their screens. This new behavior is so differ-ent from the way they raised me. How can I speak to them about my concerns and encour-age them to consider decreas-

ing their phone usage? — NOTICED THE CHANGE IN WASHINGTON

DEAR NOTICED: Yes, many things have changed since the time when you were raised. But if you think the day has arrived for you to parent your parents, forget about it. It not only won't work, but it could also cause resentment because they are adults and not impression-able teenagers being educat-ed about social interaction.

DEAR ABBY: My college roommate and I became close friends. I always thought he was a little bit arrogant. When I caught him getting upset that a girl liked me and not him, I realized he has always been

about comparing and compet-ing.

At age 30, after we ended up working for the same company, we had a falling-out. I'm sure he has his complaints about me, but I am no longer interested in being his friend. We're 36 now and still involved in our fantasy football league, so we see each other from time to time. We're generally civil to each other, especially for the sake of the league.

Well, he now wants to rekindle the friendship and keeps asking me to hang out. I've made excus-es so far, and I wish he would take a hint, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to eventually tell him (again) that I'm not interest-ed in hanging out. I don't want to hurt his feelings any more than I

have to. Please help. — NOT FEELING IT IN KANSAS

DEAR NOT FEELING IT: You are not obligated to have anything more to do with this person than you wish. If the only time the two of you interact is during the fantasy football season, he shouldn't be too hard to avoid. When he asks to hang out, continue doing what you have been, which is to say you are busy. Eventually, he may take the hint.

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

## Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email [news@thecr.com](mailto:news@thecr.com).

**Today**

JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS — Meet at 11:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the chapel at Indiana University Health Jay Hospi-tal.

COMPASSIONATE CON-NECTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP — A

group for anyone with a substance use disorder that helps individuals find con-nections 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.

FRIENDS OF JAY COUN-TY LIBRARY — Will meet at 6 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month at the library.

A BETTER LIFE – BRI-ANNA'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 Build-ing across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

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

**Wednesday**

WEDNESDAY MORN-ING 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 Cen-ter.

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

COMMUNITY REIN-FORCEMENT AND FAMI-LY 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 Outpa-tient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Begin-nings, 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 infor-mation, call (260) 726-8229.

A BETTER LIFE – BRI-ANNA'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. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

**Thursday**

LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES — Free and confidential consultations with a lawyer are avail-able from 10 a.m. to noon at Jay County Public Library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland. Consulting is available on topics includ-ing divorce, custody, guardianship, tenant-landlord issues, bankrupt-cy, debt collection, estates and immigration. Those interested in participating should sign up in advance at the library, 315 N. Ship

St., Portland, or by calling (260) 726-7890.

SMART RECOVERY — A group for those strug-gling with addiction that focuses on motivation, coping with cravings, managing thoughts, feel-ings and behavior, and liv-ing a balanced life meets at 11 a.m. each Thursday in the IU Health Jay Outpa-tient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

CELEBRATE RECOV-ERY — 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 Port-land. For more informa-tion, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP — Meets at 5:30 p.m. at Persimmon Ridge Rehabilitation Centre, 200 N. Park St., Portland.

# Sudoku

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

Level: Beginner

### Saturday's Solution

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

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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# Homeowners need to get tax relief

By DAVID BOTTORFF

Senate Enrolled Act 1 (SEA 1) of the 2025 session was the most significant overhaul of Indiana's property taxes and local government finance system in a generation. Although the law presents challenges for local units of government, it also advances important goals: greater transparency, increased accountability, and a more equitable tax structure.

Prior to SEA 1, Indiana's income tax laws often provided revenue to local units without requiring those units to take a public vote on the tax. Local governments were also unintentionally rewarded for maintaining property-tax-funded debt and increasing levies, since doing so generated higher property tax collections and a larger share of income tax distributions. SEA 1 addresses these longstanding issues by capping and constraining debt issuance and requiring more units to hold public meetings before establishing or increasing local income tax rates.

David Bottorff



Even before SEA 1, counties demonstrated a long history of prudent fiscal management. County governments uniquely provide essential services not only to residents but also to every other local unit of government. County officials serve as both collectors and distributors of local taxes. This responsibility gives counties a detailed understanding of their communities' financial pressures and a clear picture of how policy changes affect taxpayers and the units relying on county-distributed revenues.

Understanding levies

Property tax levies are the total amount local units of gov-

ernment may collect through property taxes to fund its annual operations and public services.

Debt service levies are taxes imposed to repay money borrowed for capital projects or other obligations. These levies are calculated annually to ensure a unit meets its legally required debt payments.

From 2019 to 2025, county property tax levies experienced the smallest year-to-year growth among major unit types, except for libraries. Debt service levies followed a similar pattern: county debt service growth remained consistently below the statewide average for other local unit types.

Immediate need

A major focus of SEA 1 is providing property tax relief to homeowners, and the need for that relief was clear. In 2012, homeowners paid 42% of all property taxes collected statewide. By 2025, their share had grown to 51%. From 2012 to

2018, residential assessed values increased by less than 4% per year. But beginning in 2019, annual increases exceeded 8%, fueled largely by rapid growth in home market values that far outpaced other property types. As market values surged, the property tax burden shifted disproportionately onto homeowners.

To rebalance the system, SEA 1 phases in an increase to the homeowners' deduction, ultimately allowing homeowners to deduct 67% of their home's market value by 2031. At that point, homeowners will pay taxes on only 33% of their home's assessed value. This phased-in change will gradually shift some of the tax burden back to other property classes, restoring balance to the system.

Moving forward

As with any generational policy change, aspects of SEA 1 will require continued review and refinement. But its guiding goals to enhance transparency, pro-

vide stronger accountability, and more equitable tax structure should remain central to the system going forward. We want to ensure that counties have the funds to provide constitutional and statutory services like the courts, prosecutors, public defenders, jails, elections and maintaining public property records.

The next step in property tax reform is ensuring that when one unit provides tax relief, other units cannot absorb that capacity for their own spending. Under current law, if a unit reduces its levy to provide relief, other units can "claim" that unused tax capacity, undermining the intended benefit to taxpayers. For property owners to truly experience relief, Indiana must ensure that reductions offered by one unit are not offset by increases elsewhere.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bottorff is executive director of the Association of Indiana Counties.

## Support freedom for Iranian people

New York Daily News  
Tribune News Service

Donald Trump is right to offer America's support to the people of Iran seeking freedom from repressive theocratic rule and warn the tottering regime of Ayatollah Khamenei not to attack his own population. Freedom for Iran will come from the desires of the Iranian public, now surging through the streets across the country, not American arms, but keeping the Revolutionary Guard on notice serves the cause of liberty, which is in our national interest.

Standing up for people seeking freedom should always be America's role in the world and President Barack Obama failed to rally to the side of the Iranians when they went to the streets in mass protests against the crooked election in 2009. Obama was too timid and the ayatollah and the Revolutionary Guard cracked down, preserving the system of tyranny. Now, 17 years later, here is another chance for a better life for Iranians and we must stand by the people in their brave struggle.

Iran under the mullahs is the world's leading exporter of terrorism and is still trying to obtain nuclear weapons, despite having their nuke facilities successfully bombed by the U.S. and Israel in June. Sitting on the among the world's largest deposits of natural gas and oil, Iran doesn't need nuclear energy, but Khamenei covets an atomic weapon in his war against the West (particularly the United States) and for his demented dream to destroy our ally Israel.

Just think how much better for Iran and for the whole world if there was a popular and legitimate democratic government in Tehran more interested in improving the lot of the Iranian people than waging war in the name of religious fanaticism.

That regime has now killed hundreds of Iranians who only want freedom and to express anger where the inflation rate has topped 40%. Isolated economically and diplomatically by tough international sanctions for its terrorism and nuclear pursuits, the regime only wants to preserve itself.

Iran has no more

### Guest Editorial

Just think how much better for Iran and for the whole world if there was a popular and legitimate democratic government in Tehran ...

friends. Israel has knocked out Iran's proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah. Their client state of Syria is no more. Even their Venezuelan buddy Nicolás Maduro is now sitting in a Brooklyn jail. The regime has never been as alone as now.

Exiled Reza Pahlavi, the son of the late shah, is receiving support as people respond to his calls for nightly protests. In response, the mullahs shut down the internet, but still the protests continue and grow, and the killing of protesters mounts. The more the regime kills its own people, the weaker it gets.

Freedom will come at some point to the people of Iran and they will cast off the terror of the mullahs (the internal terror and the external terror) and rejoin the community of nations and the world will rejoice. Everyone should hope that that time has now come. It was 47 years ago this week, Jan. 16, when the shah fled Iran and he was overthrown by the revolution. That revolution is now the oppressor and is killing the people in the streets.

The ayatollah, at age 86 and in power for 36 years, is incapable of reform. In the end, he will lose and the Iranian people will win. The only question is how many he will kill and how long he will delay that day of freedom.



## Many spend time on symbols

By NIKI KELLY

Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

I waffle between being annoyed by bills that are filed every year to designate some new state symbol or icon and finding them harmless ways to tout Hoosier individuality.

This year's poster child is a move to make the breaded tenderloin the state sandwich.

Do we really need a state sandwich? No. And it does take up some legislative time to push one of these bills through a session. So far, the tenderloin bill has passed the Senate and is headed to the House.

Time will tell if it joins our list of state emblems.

The fact is, the number of state emblems has proliferated in recent years. We are way beyond a state tree (tulip), seal (bison leaping over a log) and flower (peony). We have 16 of these entities now, with six of them put into law since 2005.

State rifle. Check.  
State aircraft. Check.  
State snack. Check.  
State fossil. Check.

A few years ago, there were attempts to add a state mammal and a state fruit, but they didn't pass.

This proliferation isn't just happening here in Indiana — other states have some crazy stuff on the books. I reached out to editors at

Niki Kelly



our sister outlets around the nation and rounded up some examples.

Let's start with New Mexico, which has both a state aroma and a related "state question." I'm sure you are as curious as I was. New Mexico is the first state in the nation to have its own official aroma: green chiles roasting in the fall. The follow-up state question refers to the color of the chiles: "Red or green?"

Indiana's state aroma? I'm going to go with manure or burning leaves. The state question would be, "IU or Purdue?"

Next up is Missouri, which has the American bullfrog as its state amphibian and jumping jacks as the state exercise.

If these were adopted in Indiana, I envision the salamander — and playing HORSE in the driveway during twilight hours.

Michigan has a fascinating one: state soil. In 1990, Michigan declared Kalkaska sand as its official state soil. It's relatively infer-

tile, owing to its acidic nature, but nonetheless abundant, according to the Michigan Nature Association.

Based on my land, Indiana's state soil could be clay.

My favorite comes next from Utah — a state cooking pot. And it's none other than the Dutch oven. Utahns also have a state gem, which is topaz.

In Indiana, I would say the cast iron skillet could be our cooking pot. As for a state gem, I think the geode is the way to go. They are abundant and beautiful.

The last one I will highlight is currently under consideration in Kentucky. A Senate bill there would establish the Treeing Walker Coonhound as the state dog breed.

This could be testy here in Indiana, as dog lovers all believe their breeds are best. But I looked at the personality traits of various breeds and settled on a Labrador. They are known for being kind, friendly, outgoing and trusting. That sounds like a Hoosier to me.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

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# The Commercial Review

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Photo provided

Bank donates

Citizens National Bank recently donated \$50,000 toward a private patient suite that will be part of Mercer Health's Childbirth Center expansion and renovation. The project at Mercer County Community Hospital in Coldwater, Ohio, will include additional rooms, space for Cesarean procedures and an enhanced nursery. Pictured, from left, are Danielle Dues and Deb Hemmelgarn of Mercer Health, Andrew Rosenbeck of Citizens National Bank and Jon Dingleidine, Mercer Health CEO.

IU Health names new president

Indiana University Health has named Art Vasquez as president of its new north region. Vasquez has worked for IU Health since 2016, most recently as president of its west region. He takes over for Jeff Bird, who recently retired as president of IU Health's east central region. Under IU Health's restructuring, the north region includes facilities in Jay, Blackford, Delaware, Allen, Tiptecanoe, White, Clinton and Tipton counties. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to support the exceptional teams at IU Health Ball, Blackford, Jay and Fort Wayne," Vasquez said in a news release. "These communities have a long and proud history of delivering outstanding care. My focus is ensuring our teams have what they need to continue serving patients and strengthening local partnerships."

**Nominations open**

Indiana Manufacturers Association is accepting nominations for its 2026 Manufacturing Excellence Awards. The awards honor Indiana companies and individuals for their outstanding work, exceptional contributions and impact on the future of manufacturing. They are open to all manufacturers in the state. Awards that will be presented this year include the Community Impact, Emerging Leader, Lifetime Achievement, Manufacturing Talent Champion, Outstanding Woman Leader in Manufacturing and Safety Champion.

Business roundup

Anyone can make a nomination by going online to indianamfg.com/2026-manufacturing-excellence-awards. The deadline is April 30.

**New members added**

Jay County Chamber of Commerce has added Elle & Em Boutique and Springer's LLC as new members. The chamber is also planning new features — Female-Founded Fridays and Small Business Saturday. A chamber ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at Two Mama's on Tap, 2 W. High St., Redkey. For more information about the chamber, visit jaycounty-chamber.com.

**Leaders named**

Bowen Health has filled several leadership roles. Kim Richard was named director of nursing, with Esther Wilcox as director of clinical programming and Holly Hirschy-Hurd as clinical educator. Dustin Babb and Chris Watts were named regional facilities managers. Richard previously served as a nurse practitioner at Bowen's Wabash location. Wilcox spent

a decade as a licensed marriage and family therapist, and Hirschy-Hurd has worked for Bowen for 20 years as a therapist and clinical supervisor. Bowen Health serves north-east Indiana including Jay, Blackford, Delaware, Adams and Wells counties.

**STEM center launched**

Ball State University has launched its STEM Education Center as a hub for advancing teaching and learning in Indiana. The STEM Education Center will seek to expand access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics instruction and train future teachers in those areas. Housed in BSU's College of Sciences and Humanities, it will be a center for youth programs, school and community partnerships and faculty-led research. "Indiana and the nation are facing a real shortage of qualified STEM teachers, and the STEM Education Center is designed to be part of the solution," associate dean Andrew Gatza said. "This center brings together the people, partnerships, and research that already exist across Ball State — and gives us a stronger structure to expand what works: hands-on learning experiences for young students, support for teachers and schools, and a clear pathway that helps more Ball State students see themselves as future STEM educators." For more information or to

inquire about partnerships, email amgatza@bsu.edu.

**Grant cycle open**

Applications are open for CenterPoint Energy Foundation's grants supporting non-profit programs and initiatives focusing on literacy, STEM and workforce development. Grants are available for non-profit organizations located in CenterPoint's service area. Priority is given to programs serving low-to-moderate income families and under-resourced communities. "The CenterPoint Energy Foundation creates positive, meaningful change within the communities where we have the privilege to provide electric and natural gas service," said Mike Roeder, president of CenterPoint Energy Indiana, in a news release. "The Foundation remains committed to initiatives and programs enriching the lives of those living and working within our service areas, while powering possibilities for a better tomorrow. We encourage qualified nonprofit organizations focusing on education to apply for a grant through Feb. 13." For more information, visit CenterPointEnergy.com/Foundation.

**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 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.

**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 21 and May 19. John Jay is located at 101 S. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 729-5525.

**Courses scheduled**

Indiana Chamber of Commerce will host its annual safety and health conference next month. The Indiana Safety and Health Conference & Expo will be held from Feb. 23 through 25 at the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Conference Center in Indianapolis. It will feature a variety of speakers as well as more than 60 educational sessions. For more information, visit indianachamber.com.

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**Yesterday's answer 1-20**

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53					54				55			

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1/20

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GREG + MORT WALKER

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# Outshoot ...

Continued from page 8  
Jay County stuck with BHS the whole way through. The game was tied 25-25 at halftime, but the Tigers started the third quarter with a 9-0 run before Elizabeth Brunswick finally hit a 3-pointer to stop the bleeding. A 7-0 spurt by the Patriots left them one point short of the Tigers heading into the final eight minutes.

Ault split a pair of free throws to open the fourth quarter and Charlee Peters knocked down a pair to tie the game at 42-42 with 6:50 remaining.

The Patriots faltered again, giving up seven unanswered points — Ault had five on a pair of drives and a free throw while Carlee Strunk found the hoop on a third-chance opportunity — to go down 49-42.

Jay County again clawed back into the game to trail by just one point with 3:49 remaining, but couldn't complete the comeback as Bluffton ended the game on a 14-4 run.

"I felt like we just struggled a little more finishing tonight," McIntire said. "I felt like sometimes we'd get a good look and wouldn't finish or wouldn't make the right decision with the basketball and turn it over.

"I've still got to be pleased with our kids' effort. It just was Bluffton's night tonight. It wasn't Jay County's. We're all disappointed, but we can't sit and dwell on this. We've got to get ready for next week."

Both teams had three girls score in double figures. Ault led Bluffton with 24 while Dick scored the



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County High School's Natalie May gears up to fire off a 3-pointer during Saturday's ACAC championship against Bluffton at South Adams. The Tigers came prepared for the 1-3-1 zone that earned the Patriots an 18-point win in the first matchup and in turn pulled off a 65-54 upset of JCHS to claim their second straight conference tournament title.

final seven points for the Tigers to finish with 20. Strunk hit some key shots in the fourth quarter as well to finish with 16.

Karsyn Schwieterman ended with a game-high

25 points, but the Tigers held Hallie Schwieterman to just 11 points, seven of which came in the first half. Peters also just hit 10 points for Jay County.

Box score				
Jay County Patriots vs. Bluffton Tigers				
Girls varsity summary ACAC championship				
Jay County (12-6)				
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS	
KSchwtrmn	10-14	3-3	25	
Newton	0-1	0-0	0	
HSchwtrmn	3-17	4-6	11	
Brunswick	3-7	1-2	8	
Dirksen	0-2	0-0	0	
Lekue Magro	0-0	0-0	0	
May	0-1	0-0	0	
Peters	2-6	6-9	10	
Totals	18-48	14-20	54	
	.375	.700		
Def. Rebound percentage: .542				
Bluffton (14-5)				
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS	
Nash	0-5	0-0	0	
Dick	5-9	7-7	20	
KoAult	9-13	5-6	24	
Strunk	7-13	0-3	16	
KaAult	1-3	0-0	3	
Gibson	0-0	0-0	0	
Eisenhut	1-1	0-0	2	
Totals	23-44	12-16	65	
	.523	.750		
Def. Rebound percentage: .647				
Score by quarters:				
Jay Co.	13	12	15	14—54
Bluffton	15	10	16	24—65
3-point shooting: Jay County 4-18 (KSchwierterman 2-2, Brunswick 1-4, HSchwierterman 1-10, Newton 0-1, May 0-1), Bluffton 7-17 (Dick 3-6, Strunk 2-5, KoAult 1-3, KaAult 1-3).				
Rebounds: Jay County 25 (Peters 6, Team 6, HSchwierterman 5, Brunswick 5, KSchwierterman 2, Dirksen), Bluffton 31 (Dick 7, Eisenhut 6, Team 6, Nash 5, Strunk 3, KoAult 2, KaAult, Gibson).				
Assists: Jay County 14 (HSchwierterman 5, Brunswick 4, KSchwierterman 2, Newton, May, Peters), Bluffton 10 (Nash 3, Dick 2, KoAult 2, Eisenhut).				
Blocks: Jay County 1 (Brunswick), Bluffton 1 (Eisenhut).				
Personal fouls: Jay County 16 (HSchwierterman 4, Newton 3, Dirksen 3, Brunswick 2, May 2, KSchwierterman, Peters), Bluffton 17 (Nash 4, Dick 4, KoAult 4, Strunk 2, KaAult, Gibson, Eisenhut).				
Turnovers: Jay County 14. Bluffton 22.				

# Nets ...

Continued from page 8  
Taylor gave the lead back to Heritage with a drive to the tin, but Swoveland came back down the floor, got to the free-throw line and tied the game back up. He scored four more points with an inside-hand layup and a pair of foul shots to give JCHS a 30-26 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

He got going right away in the fourth with a bunny off a baseline-out-of-bounds pass from Gabe Overton to extend the lead to six.

"It's huge," Swoveland said. "Basketball is a game of momentum. Whoever has the momentum is going to win the game. We were able to maintain it through and through and we played great in the second half."

While Swoveland didn't score again in the game, Jay County found the hoop four more times in the quarter and went 10-for-15 from the charity stripe to close out the game. (Swoveland, Comer and Cole Forthofer all made five or more free throws in the game.)

"That's really what got us there at the end, them fouling us and hitting free throws," said Comer, who was named the Hilliard Gates Most Valuable Player for scoring 48 points in the tournament. "It's great and we've got a great team. We're going to do great things and this is just the beginning."

Jay County's size was able to bother Heritage throughout the game. The

Patriots missed 24 shots inside the arc while the JCHS forwards scored 18 points. Forthofer finished with 12-point, 12-rebound double-double despite dealing with foul trouble.

While Jay County's frontcourt struggled with foul trouble – Sommers also had three fouls in the second quarter – Heritage couldn't keep its guards on the floor. Taylor and Taurean Brown, the point guard, each had three fouls in the first half. Brown also picked up a fourth early in the third period and fouled out with 5:06 remaining in the game.

"It's tough," Sovine said. "Yout take Taurean Brown out of the game and it's going to be hard to win games. I think he's one of the best players in the conference. He's our leader, our point guard, sets us up in our offense and on defense."

Along with cutting down the nets, the Patriots have won their last eight games and will look to continue that momentum when they host South Adams on Jan. 23.

"They're playing with a lot of confidence right now," Rigby said. "Which is good, they should be. They're playing well and they're doing the things I've been asking them to do at the highest effort level and that's all you can ask for as a coach.

"I think we're in a good spot. I know we've got a lot left in us. We can get a lot better, but I think we're playing pretty well right now."

# Roundup ...

Continued from page 8  
Jadyn Wyerick also rolled two games for the Indians (9-2, 5-0 MAC) posting scores of 171 and 149.

With just one individual game each, Elizabeth Kahlig added 159 pins for the Tribe while Malia Grisez had 147.

Fort Recovery flirted with 200 pins in the first Baker game while winning the series 791-728.

## Can't slow Perrott

CONVOY, Ohio — The Fort Recovery boys basketball team couldn't slow down Hayden Perrott as the Knight dropped 32 points for Crestview in Saturday's 65-61 loss.

Perrott found the hoop nine times and hit 12 free throws to power the Knights (9-6). He had seven or more points in each period with the second quarter being his best with a pair of 3-pointers,

a 2-point bucket and one free throw.

Three of the Indians (8-5) reached double figures in the game. Colson Post had a career day with 18 points, all of which came from triples.

Breaker Jutte and Hudson Overman both added 15 points, with the latter doing all of his damage in the second half.

Brody Barga was one point away from breaking double dig-

its, while Braylon Dilworth had three points and Grant Fortkamp added one.

## Tribe falls

COLDWATER, Ohio — The Fort Recovery boys bowling team fell at Pla-Mor Lanes on Saturday to the New Bremen Cardinals 2,711-2,675.

Reece LeFevre had a massive day for the Indians (9-3, 4-2 MAC), rolling games of 235 and 234 pins

for the match-high series of 469.

The rest of the Tribe couldn't keep up as Anthony Roessner had a 347-pin series, Garrett Diller rolled a 325 and A.J. Siefring shot 323.

Leland Wilson had 178 pins in one game of work, while Gabe Acheson rolled a 139.

Vinny Goings led the Cardinals (5-5, 3-3 MAC) with a 408 series.

New Bremen also won the five Baker games 957-894.

90 SALE CALENDAR

**PUBLIC AUCTION**  
Located: Bubp Exhibition Hall at the Jay County Fairgrounds, 806 W Votaw St., Portland, IN  
Saturday Morning JANUARY 24, 2026 9:30 A.M.  
ANTIQUES - OLD & COLLECTORS ITEMS  
Jewelry; brass bookends; Bakelite handled cutlery; Roseville 946 - 6" doubled handled vase; Longaberger; Carnival Glass; Cranberry candy dish; Amberina fluted vase and tall red vase; ; several pieces of Pyrex; Germany plates; Pink Depression; 1 gallon wood barrel; 1 gallon wood barrel; lightning rods with balls; St Marys OH oil can; Wapak #2, #8 and #9 irons; 9 pt. brass lightning rod top; US Army compass; skeleton keys; Bedrock PLANES: Stanley #605 and #606, Bailey #5, Stanley #113, Stanley #68, Stanley #80, Stanley #5, Stanley #71, Stanley Bailey #5, Millers Falls #68, #603 and Stanley #68 to name a few; American Electric wall telephone; Wilhelm Telephone Co. wall phone; advertising oil cans; soda and medicine bottles; 100# brass front scale; manuals; brass school bell; pipe

90 SALE CALENDAR

wrenches; files; chisels; wedges; screw jack; stirrups; feed sacks; car books; tractor books; and other items not listed.  
Auctioneers Note: Auction Preview will be held starting at 8:00 a.m. day of auction. Please visit Auction Zip for photos.  
RICHARD STACHLER  
Loy Auction AC#31600027  
Auctioneers  
Gary Loy AU01031608  
Travis Theurer AU11200131  
Aaron Loy AU11200112  
Kaden Khayyata AU12400069

**PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY**  
JANUARY 31ST, 2026 TIME 10:00 A.M.  
LOCATED: 6278 W. 300 N. PENNVILLE, IN  
BACKHOE-TRACTOR-CAMPER-TRAILER  
Allis Chalmers I-400 Loader Backhoe. Allis Chalmers WD45 Tractor. 1997 Prowler Fifth Wheel Camper. 2010 Single Axel Utility Trailer w/ Ramp. 2001 Dodge Dakota 4x4 (rough). Small Portable Chicken House. Charcoal Hog Roaster on Transport. Troybilt Pony Rototiller. Cushman Scooter. Mini Bikes. Bicycles. Gas Powered Wood Chipper.

90 SALE CALENDAR

Push Mowers. 1 1/2" Pacer Trash Pump. Apartment Sized Chest Freezer. 5 Drawer Dresser. Portable Dish Washer. Other Items Not Mentioned.  
OWNERS: Randy Morgan and Patricia Morgan  
Note: Check Auctionsoft and AuctionZip for more photos. Online bidding available.  
SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE  
AC31800004  
AUCTIONEERS  
Zane Shawver Lic. #AU10500168  
260-729-2229  
Pete D. Shawver Lic. #AU19700040  
260-726-5587

**PUBLIC AUCTION**  
Saturday, February 14th, 2026 10:00am  
OPEN HOUSE February 2nd, 4-6 PM  
BLACKFORD COUNTY HOUSE~  
BUILDINGS~POND APPROX 5 ACRES  
BLACKFORD SCHOOLS  
3 BEDROOM ~ 2 BATH 1576 SQUARE FEET~2 CAR GARAGE  
TRACT 1: Buildings~ Pond~ Approx. 5 Acres  
TRACT 2: Approx. 30 Acres  
TRACT 3: Tract 1 & 2 Combined  
Seller: JUDY KAY  
WASHBURN ESTATE IAA Auctioneer  
HEARTLAND Auction & Realty, INC.  
445 E 100 N, Decatur, IN  
260-724-3499  
ELLENBERGER Auctions, Inc.  
AUCTION COMPANY NUMBER, AC30200063  
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Send resume to jaypccboard@gmail.com

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**110 HELP WANTED**

**TOWN OF REDKEY ACCEPTING** applications for Deputy Marshall. Experience preferred but not mandatory. Apply at the Redkey Town Hall. Applications accepted from January 12-23.

**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.

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**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN USING** soil and water conservation practices such as cover crops or grassed waterways on the ground you farm? Let us help you! Your land and the way you manage it can make a positive difference. The Upper Mississinewa River Watershed Cost-Share Program is now accepting applications, available at the following county Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices: Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Jay, Randolph, and Darke. Selected applicants will be reimbursed up to 75% of the cost of their chosen practice(s). This program

190 FARMERS COLUMN

supports newly implemented practices; pre-existing structures and practices do not qualify, outside of cover crops. The maximum amount paid out for vegetative practices is \$5,000, and for structural practices is \$15,000. There are approximately 40 eligible practices, from livestock fences to pollinator habitat and much more. Priority will be given to those within subwatersheds at Deer Creek, Upper Big Lick Creek, Halfway Creek, Bush Creek, and Gray Branch. Others may be prioritized depending on the number of applications received. If you have questions about the program, please call Clair Burt at the Delaware

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

**Public Notice**  
STATE OF INDIANA  
COUNTY OF JAY, SS:  
IN THE JAY CIRCUIT COURT  
2026 TERM  
38C01-2601-EU-000001  
In the Matter of the Unsupervised Administration of the Estate of:  
Patsy Hodge, Deceased No. NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION  
Notice is hereby given that Michael Hodge and Barbara Vanhorn was, on the 8th day of January, 2026, appointed Co-Personal Representative of the estate of Patsy Hodge deceased, who died on November 17, 2025. All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the office of the Clerk of this Court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred.  
Dated at Portland, Indiana, this 8th day of January, 2026.  
HINKLE, RACSTER, SCHEMENAUR & LANDERS  
Melissa Elliott  
121 W. High Street Clerk of the Circuit Court,  
Portland, IN 47371 For Jay County, Indiana  
Attorney  
CR 1-13,20-2026-HSPAXLP

190 FARMERS COLUMN

County SWCD at 765-747-5531 ext. 3. The application deadline is January 31, 2026.

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**250 PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Public Notice**  
NOTICE TO BIDDERS FOR JAY SCHOOL CORPORATION  
JAY COUNTY, INDIANA  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Board of School Trustees of the Jay School Corporation (the "Owner") will receive sealed bids for the Jay County Jr/Sr High School Renovations. Bids will be accepted at Jay County School Corporation Administration Office, 414 East Floral Avenue, Portland, Indiana, until 10:00 a.m. (local time), on February 9, 2026. Bids will be opened and tabulated at that time in the Board Room. A Pre-Bid Meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at Jay County Jr./Sr. High School, 2072 West SR 67, Portland, Indiana. All bidding and construction shall be in accordance with construction documents prepared by Barton-Coe-Vilamaa, Architect and Engineers, Inc., which can be obtained from the office of Barton-Coe-Vilamaa. Call 260/489-9079 (office of Barton-Coe-Vilamaa) to request an invitation to receive digital access to the bidding documents. Bidders will be required to file, with their bids, a certified check made payable to Jay School Corporation or a Bid Bond for an amount not less than five percent (5%) of their maximum bid or bids. Should a successful bidder withdraw its bid, or fail to execute a satisfactory Contract, Jay School Corporation may then declare the bid deposit or bid bond to be forfeited as liquidated damages. Each successful bidder shall be required to furnish an approved Performance Bond and a Labor and Materials Payment Bond which cover faithful performance of the contract and the payment of all obligations arising thereunder. A Maintenance Bond shall also be required. Said bonds shall remain in full force and effect for twelve months from the substantial completion of the Work. The contract will be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder complying with the conditions for bidding, provided the bid is reasonable and it is to the best interest of the Owner to accept it. The Owner reserves the right to reject the bid of any or all bidder in accordance with Indiana Code 36-1-12. Bids not reaching said office by 10:00 a.m. on February 9, 2026 will not be opened and will be returned unopened to the original bidder.  
Dated this 13th day of January 2026.  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
JAY SCHOOL CORPORATION  
CR 1-13,20,2026-HSPAXLP



Cutting down nets

Jay pulled away in third quarter to claim its third ACAC title

**By ANDREW BALKO**  
The Commercial Review

BERNE — The battle of the Patriots stayed close throughout the first half with both teams knotted at 20 heading to the intermission.

The Patriots from the north scored the first two buckets of the third quarter and held the players from Portland without a bucket for over four minutes.

But Gradin Swoveland wasn't going to go down easy.

The senior from the Jay County High School boys basketball team stepped up to score all 10 points in the third quarter to lead the Patriots past the Heritage Patriots 50-41 in the Allen County Athletic Conference championship hosted by South Adams on Saturday.

Jay County (10-2) denied Heritage (12-4) its first conference title since 2019, which was the sixth in school history. Jay County claimed its third tournament title and the first since 2022.

"I'm proud of the guys," said JCHS coach Tyler Rigby, who got to cut down the nets for the first time as a head coach. "They battled, it was a physical game. I told them going into it, it's going to be a different speed than we played the last couple of games."

"Heritage is really good. They got some really good talent, really good size at the guard spots. ... Really well coached. We knew it was going to be a dogfight. We made it a little ugly I guess, but we thrive in ugly right now."

Heritage struck first in the second half with Lantae Cassel going coast to coast for a layup. Just over two and a half minutes went by before Cassel threw the ball at the rim to go up 24-20.

Heritage's defense locked Jay County up to begin the half. Through the first four minutes, four Patriots missed shots and they committed three turnovers.

"It was just being in our gaps," said HHS coach Kyle Sovine. "We were controlling (Jayden) Comer and (Gradin) Swoveland."

"Then offensively, we were finding the gaps and finishing. But overall, I didn't think we finished very well tonight. If we scored 50% in the paint, it could have been a different outcome."

The defense finally cracked as Swoveland got aggressive. The senior broke the drought by backing down Lucas Taylor and fading away with 3:31 remaining in the quarter. Thirty seconds later, Swoveland drove on Taylor before spinning baseline to get to the rim to tie the game.

"I just had to start playing aggressive," Swoveland said. "I was being pretty weak. I was letting them shove me. The shots weren't falling, so I had to get to the rim and make something happen. Thankfully, I was able to find my gaps and my teammates were able to help."

See Nets page 7



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Kade Sommers of the Jay County High School boys basketball team drops a pass off across the lane to Aiden Phillips to take an eight-point lead in Saturday's Allen County Athletic Conference championship against Heritage. Jay County claimed its third ACAC tournament title by beating the Patriots 50-41.

Box score

Jay County Patriots  
vs. Heritage Patriots

Boys varsity summary  
ACAC championship

	Heritage (12-4)		
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Cassel	6-13	1-2	14
Brown	1-6	3-5	5
Feasby	0-0	0-0	0
Taylor	4-9	0-1	8
Harris	1-6	2-3	4
Galentine	3-12	4-6	10
Kerr	0-0	0-0	0
Oliver	0-0	0-0	0
Thiele	0-0	0-0	0
Bowers	0-3	0-0	0
Totals	15-49	10-17	41
	.306	.588	

Def. Rebound percentage: .600

	Jay County (10-2)		
	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	PTS
Overton	2-6	0-0	4
Comer	1-8	9-12	12
Barnett	0-0	0-0	0
Wasson	0-1	0-0	0
Forthofer	3-6	6-11	12
Phillips	3-5	0-0	6
Swoveland	5-16	5-6	16
Sommers	0-1	0-0	0
Totals	14-43	20-29	50
	.326	.690	

Def. Rebound percentage: .659

Score by quarters:

Jay Co.	9	11	10	20—50
Heritage	9	11	6	15—41

3-point shooting: Jay County 2-10 (Swoveland 1-3, Comer 1-5, Overton 0-2), Heritage 1-8 (Cassel 1-2, Brown 0-1, Galentine 0-5).

Rebounds: Jay County 39 (Forthofer 12, Phillips 8, Overton 5, Team 5, Comer 3, Sommers). Heritage 32 (Team 8, Galentine 6, Cassel 5, Taylor 5, Harris 3, Bowers 3, Brown, Feasby).

Assists: Jay County 5 (Overton 2, Forthofer, Swoveland, Sommers). Heritage 1 (Taylor).

Blocks: Jay County 6 (Comer 3, Swoveland 2, Forthofer). Heritage 2 (Bowers 2).

Personal fouls: Jay County 15 (Forthofer 4, Swoveland 3, Sommers 3, Comer 2, Phillips 2, Overton). Heritage 21 (Brown 5, Taylor 4, Galentine 4, Cassel 2, Feasby, Harris, Thiele).

Turnovers: Jay County 10. Heritage 11.

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Boneless Arm Roasts	\$6 <sup>99</sup> <sub>lb</sub>	Sweet, Mild Italian Sausage	\$2 <sup>99</sup> <sub>lb</sub>
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Tigers outshoot Jay in ACAC title game

**By ANDREW BALKO**  
The Commercial Review

BERNE — The 1-3-1 zone gave the Tigers nightmares the first time the Patriots faced them.

In the rematch, they picked it apart as the Tigers caught fire from deep and outshot the Patriots all night to claim back-to-back tournament titles.

The Jay County High School girls basketball team couldn't mount a full comeback or slow down the Bluffton Tigers enough on Saturday as it dropped the Allen County Athletic Conference title game 65-54 at South Adams.

The victory gave the Tigers (14-5) their second ACAC tournament victory with the first coming last year. Jay County (12-6) last claimed the title in 2025, which was its seventh total and fifth consecutive.

"Obviously disappointed for our kids," said JCHS coach Sherri McIntire. "To get to the championship and not be able to finish is disappointing. ... I think the difference in the game was the physicality. They were a lot more physical in this game tonight and we didn't match that physicality."

"And also, they shot the daylights out of it. Sometimes you just gotta tip your hats because they shot the ball extremely well."

Eight days earlier, Jay County beat Bluffton by 18 points after switching to a 1-3-1 zone defense in the second half to outscore the Tigers 39-25. The Patriots started with the zone set in the title match, but it wasn't nearly as effective.

Bluffton hit four 3-pointers in the first half by penetrating the arc and kicking it

back out. Khloe Dick did most of the damage from deep as she sunk a trio of triples.

With shots falling from the outside, the Tigers were able to drive with more success as the Patriots had to be ready to close out when the ball got sprayed. Konley Ault, who was named the Hilliard Gates Most Valuable Player for scoring 70 points in the tournament, took advantage of putting the ball on the court as she hit 4-of-5 drives to the cup.

In total, the Tigers shot 23-of-44 (52.3%) from the floor, while hitting 7-of-17 (41.2%) of their 3-point shots.

"We did a couple of things," said BHS coach Doug Curtis. "First thing we did is, we made threes, which we didn't the first time. The second thing we did was, we played catch back-and-forth and let their most athletic player play. So tonight we didn't do that. We went after them in the gaps so she had to be behind or to the side all the time and then tried to play off one side more."

"That worked a lot better. She still got points obviously, because she's so quick on the runouts, we're not going to stand somebody down (on defense). So when we do have those live-ball turnovers, it's not good. But when we weren't a live-ball turnover, it was good, because we weren't play catch and letting her be an athlete all the time."

By keeping the ball on one side of the floor, Bluffton prevented the turnovers that led directly to points for Jay County. The Patriots finished with just 10 transition points, despite getting 22 Tigers turnovers.

See Outshoot page 7

Grapplers earn 2nd

FORT WAYNE — The Patriots followed up a tough week with a runner-up finish.

The Jay County High School boys wrestling team took second place at the Wild Bill Invitational hosted by Concordia Lutheran on Saturday.

The Patriots earned 227 points, falling short of Snider's 252.5 for the title.

Jay County had a pair of champions in Syllas Wenk and Bryan Fields.

Wenk won the 120-pound championship match against Churubusco's Tristen Heath with a pin in 47 seconds. Fields needed 3

Local Roundup

minutes 32 seconds to claim the 175 title over Kyle Warrix of CHS.

Alex Rivers (126-pound bracket) and Caleb Sibray (165) both earned second place in their respective weight classes.

Jay County also had five wrestlers finish third, one claim fourth and two place sixth.

**Still perfect**

COLDWATER, Ohio — Fort Recovery's girls bowling team is still perfect in the Midwest Athletic Conference after beating the New Bremen Cardinals 2,561-2,157 at Pla-Mor Lanes on Saturday.

A 216-pin game led Deanna Brown to the high series of the day at 411.

Liliana Williams and Lilah Thien also beat out the top bowler for New Bremen (3-6, 2-3 MAC), Summer Kuenning shot a 324, with series of 367 and 366.

See Roundup page 7