

# The Commercial Review

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## Council, mayor clash again

**By RAY COONEY**  
The Commercial Review

Another meeting resulted in another clash between city council and the mayor.

Portland City Council and Mayor Jeff Westlake were at odds again Tuesday about a study on merging city police dispatch with Jay County Sheriff's Office.

The council also tabled a proposed livestock ordinance that had been approved on first reading on Jan. 5.

The police dispatch issue came up again, with council member Ron May saying Westlake is "dead set" against it.

The council has discussed the

### *Westlake says he would not cooperate with dispatch study*

issue multiple times since September, saying such a change would make sense to be handled in conjunction with a countywide project to upgrade radio equipment for emergency responders. The city currently handles dispatching for its police while the

county dispatch handles its deputies, 911 calls and all of the county's fire departments.

Barry Ritter of Ritter Strategic Services, a public safety consulting firm, told council members at their Dec. 1 meeting that a staffing study would be necessary

to determine staffing levels if dispatching services were consolidated. At that meeting, the council voted unanimously to move forward with a process to explore consolidating emergency dispatch.

May was critical of the mayor's stance, saying a study on the issue has not yet been completed.

"I think looking out for the city, I think we need to entertain some things that we don't want to entertain, and that's one of them," said May. He reiterated previous council comments about consolidation improving public safety while also saving money.


As he has previously, Westlake said his concern is protecting the jobs of employees who might be affected by a consolidation, either by jobs being cut or pay and benefits being reduced.

Council member Ashley Hilfiker suggested that the mayor and Police Chief Dustin Mock could negotiate pay and benefits in a potential agreement with the county if a consolidation were to move forward. She again accused the mayor of digging in his heels and not having an open mind.

She asked that the city move forward with a study on consolidation.

See **Clash** page 2

# State set a record for corn production



## Indiana harvested 1.07 billion bushels in 2025

**By RAY COONEY**  
The Commercial Review

Indiana farmers set a record for corn production in 2025.

The state produced an estimated 1.07 billion bushels of corn last year, matching the state record according to the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service's crop production annual summary that was released last week.

Indiana also produced 323.09 million bushels of soybeans.

Ohio came in at 584.6 million bushels of corn and 258.64 million bushels of soybeans.

The corn yield in the United States hit a new record high of 17 billion bushels, with an average yield also at a record 186.5 bushels per acre. That was up 14% from 2024.

Indiana's total production for corn was sixth-highest in the nation. It trailed Iowa, which led the way with 2.77 billion bushels, Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota and South Dakota. The state's average yield was 204 bushels per acre.

Other states joining Indiana with record corn yields were Georgia, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

National soybean production came in at 4.26 billion bushels and a record average of 53 bushels per acre. The total was down 3% from 2024.

While not a record high, Indiana still ranked fourth in the nation for soybean production. It trailed only Illinois (639.38 million), Iowa and Minnesota. At 59.5 bushels per acre, the state came in well above the national average.

Ohio's average yields were 185 bushels per acre for corn and 53 bushels per acre for soybeans.

The report also showed national sunflower production more than doubling to 2.32 billion pounds from a record low in 2024, sorghum up 27% to 437 million bushels, peanuts up 11% to 7.18 billion pounds, oats up 2% to 69.6 million bushels, and wheat and hay each up less than 1%.

Rice was down 7%, with cotton down 3% and barley down 2%.

## State Senate advances school phone ban

### *Bill would prohibit use during school day*

**By CASEY SMITH**  
Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

A divided Indiana Senate approved a bill Tuesday to tighten school cell-phone restrictions, advancing the proposal to the House despite concerns about safety, cost and enforcement.

Senate Bill 78, authored by Sen. Jeff Raatz, R-Richmond, passed the chamber 28-19



Tribune News Service/syracuse.com/Lauren Long

The Indiana Senate approved a bill Tuesday that would require public schools to ban cell phone use during the school day.

after a 40-minute floor debate.

Eight Democrats and 11 Republicans voted against the measure. GOP votes in opposition were

cast by Sens. Ron Alting of Lafayette, Eric Bassler of Washington, Vaneta Becker of Evansville, Justin Busch of Fort Wayne, Dan Dernulc of Highland, Aaron Freeman of Indianapolis, Jean Leising of Oldenburg, Ryan Mishler of Mishawaka, Jim Tomes of Wadesville, Kyle Walker of Lawrence and Greg Walker of Columbus.

The legislation would require all public schools to adopt a ban that prohibits students from using or possessing a wireless communication device during the school day and requires that any teacher-directed use of a device "for educational purposes" occur only on school-supplied devices.

It also mandates that each district choose between two enforcement models: a "no device policy," in which students may not bring phones to school at all; or a "secure storage policy," in which

students may bring phones but must store them so they are "inaccessible throughout the school day."

The bill expands the definition of "wireless communication device" to include smartwatches connected to a phone, cell tower or the Internet.

Under current state law, students are prohibited from using phones during instructional time, but they can use them during lunch and passing periods.

Raatz said the bill is driven by mounting evidence in favor of phone-free schools.

"It's proven statistically that kids need a distraction-free day in school," he said. "Adults need to be in charge. Students need to listen."

Raatz further told sena-

tors his bill intentionally leaves some policy decisions to local schools, but he acknowledged that four key issues will still need to be resolved in the opposing chamber.

He cited elementary school storage options; exceptions for student access to phones for work-based learning opportunities and athletics; hashing out specifics for smart watch connectivity; and dealing with policy implications on school-sponsored devices.

Democrats and some Republicans who spoke against the bill on Tuesday argued that while limiting distractions in the classroom can improve student learning, the bill creates practical and safety concerns as well as costs for schools.

See **Ban** page 2

### In review

Two new candidates have filed to run for election. Nathan Springer filed to run for Penn Township Trustee, and Brenda Manns filed to run for an at-large seat on Pennville Town Council. (Two town council seats are up for election this year.) Both new candidates are Republicans.

The filing deadline is Feb. 6.

### Weather

Jay County had a low of 8 degrees Tuesday. The high was 22.

Tonight's low will be 6 with wind chill values below zero.

Expect partly cloudy skies Friday with a high of 11 and winds gusting to 25 mph.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

### In review

Jay County Public Library will host a "Planning Your Garden Workshop" at 6 p.m. Tuesday. The event will include best practices and help with planning garden spaces. Registration is required in advance by calling (260) 726-7890 or visiting the library, 315 N. Ship St., Portland.

### Coming up

**Friday** — Coverage of this week's Portland Board of Aviation meeting.

**Saturday** — Details from the JCHS boys basketball game against South Adams.

**Tuesday** — Coverage of Monday's Jay County Commissioners meeting.

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# Ban ...

Continued from page 1

Sen. Fady Qaddoura, D-Indianapolis, said research supports reducing distractions but was opposed to advancing a bill with unresolved problems.

“Rather than fixing these issues on the House side, I always prefer that we get the job done here,” Qaddoura said, adding that storage costs and enforcement would be burdensome for large Hoosier schools. “Teachers are supportive of the idea of limiting the cellphones in the classroom ... but the implementation is the problem.”

Sen. La Keisha Jackson, D-

Indianapolis, also opposed the bill, pointing to school shootings and emergencies.

“If you have not been in that situation,” she said, “you do not know what it feels like to be helpless without a cellphone or some type of contact to contact somebody.”

Leising, among the objecting GOP senators, questioned why lawmakers were expanding restrictions instead of enforcing existing law.

“I wish that rather than having this bill, we would be addressing how we can fix what we already have in place,” Leising said.

Additionally, Sen. Shelli Yoder, D-Bloomington, pressed Raatz on enforcement and flexibility, calling the bill “government overreach and an unfunded mandate.” She argued, too, that the policy “has no teeth.”

“If schools are having issues with the current policy we passed ... let’s help them,” Yoder said, warning that expanding the mandate without clear enforcement or funding would not solve those problems.

Raatz countered that schools already enforce behavioral rules daily and should not be micro-managed by lawmakers.

“We should not legislate all the way down,” he said. “The bottom line is, the school does it every day and kids — yes, they learn their behavior.”

“They learn because of the restrictions that are set in place,” Raatz continued. “You can’t have (the device) — and if you have it, you’re going to get in trouble.”






Byrne, a Republican who supported the bill, reiterated that the policy would improve student outcomes at no cost to the state.

“The locals,” he added, “will be able to figure it out.”

The Senate vote came the same day a national coalition of child well-being groups released a report grading Indiana a “C” for its current phone-free school policy, citing the state’s limitation of restrictions to instructional time rather than the entire school day.

The report found that states with “bell-to-bell” phone bans — requiring students to store devices in secure, inaccessible locations for the full school day — are more likely to see improvements in academic performance, student mental health and teacher satisfaction.

## CR almanac

Friday 1/23	Saturday 1/24	Sunday 1/25	Monday 1/26	Tuesday 1/27
 <b>11-2</b> Skies will be mostly cloudy with a high of 11 degrees and winds gusting to 25 mph.	 <b>10/5</b> The high will be 10 degrees under mostly cloudy skies. There is a 20% chance of snow in the afternoon.	 <b>15/3</b> There is a 30% chance of snow during the morning hours. The high will be 15.	 <b>17/3</b> Skies will be mostly sunny with a high of 17.	 <b>23/10</b> Temperatures will warm slightly to a high of 23 Skies are expected to be mostly sunny.

## Lotteries

<b>Powerball</b> Estimated jackpot: \$209 million	Daily Three: 2-0-8 Daily Four: 8-8-5-8 Quick Draw: 1-9-10-14-24-25-27-31-35-36-41-47-49-50-51-59-60-64-72-75
<b>Mega Millions</b> 8-47-50-56-70 Mega Ball: 12 Estimated jackpot: \$266 million	<b>Ohio</b> Tuesday Midday Pick 3: 5-5-6 Pick 4: 2-7-3-5 Pick 5: 5-7-2-5-5 Evening Pick 3: 8-4-3 Pick 4: 4-2-4-5 Pick 5: 3-7-5-8-4 Rolling Cash: 11-13-20-23-25 Estimated jackpot: \$110,000
<b>Hoosier</b> Tuesday Midday Daily Three: 9-6-5 Daily Four: 4-3-6-9 Quick Draw: 1-3-5-10-14-16-22-30-32-33-34-39-51-52-60-70-72-76-78-79 Evening	

## Markets

<b>Cooper Farms Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.42 Feb. corn .....4.44 March corn .....4.44	Feb. beans .....10.51 Wheat ..... 4.74
<b>POET Biorefining Portland</b> Corn.....4.42 Feb. corn .....4.39 March corn .....4.36	<b>ADM Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.26 Feb. corn .....4.28 Beans .....10.45 Feb. beans .....10.49 Wheat .....4.96
<b>The Andersons Richland Township</b> Corn .....4.33 Feb. corn .....4.33 Beans .....10.47	<b>Heartland St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.39 Feb. corn .....4.39 Beans .....10.21 March beans .....10.21 Wheat .....4.65

## Today in history

In 1973, the United States Supreme Court issued Roe v. Wade, ruling that a Texas statute criminalizing abortion generally violated a woman’s constitutional rights. The decision opened the door for legalized abortion in the United States for about 49 years before the court overturned its decision in June 2022 in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

In 1997, the U.S. Senate confirmed Madeleine Albright as secretary of state, making her the first woman to hold the position. Her appointment was widely seen as a breakthrough moment for women in top-level American foreign policy leadership.

In 2006, Kobe Bryant scored 81 points for the Los Angeles Lakers in a win over the Toronto Raptors, producing the second-highest single-game total in NBA history. The performance became one of basketball’s most replayed and discussed scoring feats of the modern era.

In 2018, Jay School Board set in motion a multi-million dollar project to prepare East and General Shank elementary schools for their new roles in the coming year. Plans for more consolidation efforts approved months later included shifting General Shanks to operate as the corporation’s central office, preschool and special programs.

In 2024, Jay School Board approved a project to add lights to the Jay County High School baseball and softball fields.

— The CR

## Citizen’s calendar

<b>Friday, Jan. 23</b> 8 a.m. — Portland Redevelopment Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.	3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, Portland.
<b>Monday, Jan. 26</b> 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.	6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.

# Local/Indiana

## Clash ...

Continued from page 1

Council president Kent McClung asked for clarification, saying he was under the impression that the previous vote would move the study forward. Westlake responded that Ritter Strategic Services, which presented information to the council before its vote, has not yet been hired. He has repeatedly said he wants the city’s board of works to be involved in the process.

The board of works discussed the issue at its Jan. 8 meeting, with member Steve McIntosh saying he feels consolidation is worth exploring because it could streamline operations. He suggested scheduling a special meeting to receive more information from Ritter.

A special meeting was scheduled for Jan. 14, but was canceled because the council chambers were not available at the designated time. (By state statute, changing the meeting time would have required 48 hours’ notice to the public.) Ritter is now scheduled to attend the regular board of works meeting Thursday, Feb. 5.

McClung pushed the mayor regarding his stance on the issue, with Westlake saying he is opposed to the study.

“What has been expressed this evening is that while the city council wants the study for central dispatch to see if it’s feasible or not ... that it was never your intention to do that,” said McClung.

Pushed by May later in the evening, Westlake also said he would not cooperate with a study if the council moved forward with a contract with Ritter.

During a discussion of how council could move forward, city attorney Wes Schemenaur suggested that the city council engage independent legal counsel. He said such questions put him in a difficult position as the city attorney, since the mayor and council are at odds.

The council briefly discussed hiring their own attorney, but ultimately followed a suggestion from member Dave Golden to wait and see what the board of works decides.

“I would like to give the mayor and the board of works a chance to follow the proper procedure here and see what happens,” he said.

Also Tuesday, the council heard from Portland resident Amanda Conn regarding a proposed ordinance regulating livestock within the city. As passed on first reading at the council’s previous meeting, the ordinance would have banned most farm animals, including roosters.

*‘What has been expressed this evening is that while the city council wants the study for central dispatch to see if it’s feasible or not ... that it was never your intention to do that.’*

—Kent McClung, City council president

For chickens, it set limits of five per residential lot and set requirements for coops and run space, visual barriers and setbacks.

Conn said she agrees that roosters should not be within city limits but asked council members to consider allowing other animals. She said she has chickens, ducks and small dairy goats at her property for her children who are in 4-H and said neighbors have not expressed any problems. She presented a petition signed by neighbors and other city residents.

She asked the council members to take 4-H members into consideration, requesting the limit on chickens be raised to 10. She also asked that two goats be allowed per child. She added that she is willing to put up a privacy fence.

Westlake said he had visited Conn’s home and that the property is well-kept. He asked about how manure is handled, with Conn responding that it is turned over in flower beds on her property and taken to other family members’ properties.

Council members Michele Brewster and Matt Goldsworthy read letters they had received from residents in support of allowing chickens and ducks.

May indicated that his main concern was roosters, as mentioned in an original complaint by Portland resident Aaron Kuhn late last year.

Hilfiker expressed concern about there being enough space for farm animals while saying she is fine with meeting somewhere in the middle. She reminded council members that they are unlikely to make everyone happy.

Council members voted to table the issue, with plans to discuss possible revisions. Schemenaur urged them to make sure whatever rules they settle on are well-defined.

In other business:

- McClung acknowledged Monday’s celebration of Martin Luther

King Jr. Day. He referenced King’s legacy. “I would like us all to remember the message of peace and non-violent demonstration,” he said. “This is a great country and it is meant for all of us.”

- Council members discussed whether an ordinance is needed to regulate electric bikes. May, who previously raised the issue, and McClung noted that in some cases the bikes can go as fast as a moped. Goldsworthy confirmed with Mock that electric bikes have to follow the rules of the road, including stopping at stop signs. The council took no action on the issue.
- Hilfiker asked if police had seen an uptick in solicitors filing with the city, saying she had seen several in her neighborhood and that they were sometimes there outside of designated hours. (The council passed an ordinance in 2025 that requires a \$25 fee for a two-week permit, with soliciting hours limited from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Police Chief Dustin Mock said some have been in but that there has not been a significant increase. Westlake suggested that residents call police if there are problems.
- Phillips reminded residents to leave water dripping during times of extreme cold to avoid freezing pipes.
- Goldsworthy asked about holiday trash pick-up schedules, with Phillips noting that the schedule is posted on the city’s website.
- Council member Mike Aker asked about enforcement of the city’s ordinance regarding parked vehicles. Westlake said the city’s code enforcement officer has been addressing the issue.
- Brewster and Golden congratulated Indiana University on its win over Miami in Monday night’s College Football Playoff national championship game.
- May suggested that the city consider providing trash pick-up service for businesses. Currently, trash pick-up is residential only.

## Capsule Reports

### Injuries minor

A Muncie man walked away with minor injuries Sunday after the vehicle he was driving went off Indiana 67 and flipped, landing on its top in a creek.

Jay County Sheriff’s Office was called about 9:30 p.m. Sunday regarding an individual walking north along Indiana 67 toward Redkey and damage to a guardrail at the intersection of the highway and county road 700 South. The responding deputy was unable to locate the individual but learned from an Indiana Department of Transportation employee that there was a vehicle in Halfway Creek, northeast of the intersection.

Other deputies eventually located the driver, Bailee Gipson, 18, Muncie, at a Redkey residence. According to a sheriff’s office report, Gipson said he was unable to call anyone from the accident scene and walked to the residence in Redkey to call police.

Gipson was driving his 2007 Chevrolet Monte Carlo northeast on Indiana 67 when the rear of the vehicle slid out from behind him in the snowy conditions. He told police he lost control of the Monte Carlo. The report says it appears the car

struck a guardrail, flipped end-over-end and came to a stop on its top in the creek that runs along the south-east side of the highway.

Gipson had minor bleeding from a head injury as a result of the accident.

Damage was estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

SERVICES

Today

Lovell, Carol: 1:30 p.m., Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home, 308 W. Washington St., Bluffton.

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.

Service listings provided by

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# Take steps to help prevent falls

By BRIAN ISON

As you age, falls can pose an increased threat to your overall health and well-being. Now is the time to take preventive steps to reduce your risk of falls and develop a fall-safety checklist.

### How important is fall prevention?

More than one-third of adults age 65 and older fall each year. Of those, about 10% sustain a serious injury. Reducing in-home hazards can lower the risk of falling and subsequent fractures by 19%. Your risk of a serious injury is much greater if you have osteoporosis when you fall.

## Your Health Matters



### What are some factors that may contribute to an increased risk of falling?

- Type of footwear
- Certain medications
- Decreased endurance, balance and strength in your legs and core (trunk)
- Pets that can get underfoot
- Problems with bladder control
- Poor lighting and eyesight
- Dizziness

- Lack of feeling in your feet
- Poor posture that leads to poor balance
- Loose throw rugs

### What are some in-home items to check for fall risk?

**Stairs:** Have handrails on both sides and along the full length of the stairs. If there is no carpet, install nonslip rubber treads. Make sure there is a light switch at the top and bottoms.

**Bathrooms:** Use nonskid mats in the tub or shower. Install grab bars within reach. Consider a raised toilet seat. Keep floors dry and nonslippery.

**Kitchens:** Keep items you use often on lower shelves and within easy reach.

**Bedrooms:** Keep a lamp within reach of the bed. Use nightlights so you can see where you are walking.

**Other tips:** Get up slowly after sitting or lying down. Wear shoes inside and outside, and avoid going barefoot. Keep a phone within reach in case you fall. Post emergency numbers in large print near each phone. Consider subscribing to a medical alert system.

### What are some additional things to consider to help prevent falls?

•Consider a community-based strength training class. These classes can reduce your risk of falling and possible fractures by 29% to 49%.

- Have your vision checked at least once a year.
- Consult your pharmacist about your medications.
- Talk to your medical provider about physical therapy to assess your balance and strength.

A physical therapist can develop an individualized home program to improve strength and balance and determine the appropriate assistive device, such as a walker or cane.

For more information, contact IU Health Jay Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation at (260) 726-1911.

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*Ison is the supervisor at IU Health Jay Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation.*

# Staying steady helps with discipline

By JANN BLACKSTONE

Tribune News Service

**Q:** My son's father and I actually get along pretty well. When our son cut his last class at school and was caught skateboarding at the park, I told him I was calling his dad. He begged me not to, but I called anyway and let his father yell at him on the spot. It definitely got his attention. Wasn't that good ex-etiquette?

**A:** In essence it was good ex-etiquette because you reached out for help and that's the second rule of Good Ex-etiquette for Parents: "Ask for help if you need it." From the outside, it probably felt like the perfect example of parents being "on the same page."

## Ex-etiquette



But here's the part most parents in your position miss — when you hand discipline over to the other parent, you quietly give away your own parenting authority. In two-home families, children are constantly learning how power works. They already know that Mom's house is not Dad's house. When the adult standing in front of them says, "Wait until your other parent hears about this,"

the child doesn't hear teamwork. He hears: "This parent can't really manage this on their own." You are now the weak link.

Over time, this creates a dangerous habit. Your child learns to stall. They learn that consequences don't really exist until the other parent, the disciplinarian, gets involved. And that means your voice starts to matter less, not more. As a result, when you hear, "Please don't tell Dad (or Mom)," you are faced with a dilemma that tugs at your heartstrings. "My child trusts me to keep him safe," and you inwardly debate if you should tell the other parent.

You should never hide

things from your co-parent to protect your child from accountability.

Of course, anticipating problems and coming to an agreement before the child needs discipline is the ideal approach. But at times, time is of the essence, and you can't wait until "Dad or Mom gets home" because Dad or Mom doesn't live there. That's when parents who truly co-parent anticipate the problem, agree to the proper response and stick to that agreement when faced with the need to discipline. If, at the spur of the moment, there is a need to deviate from the agreed upon strategy, true co-parents acknowledge their co-parent's parental power and trust that par-

ent to make good on-the-spot decisions based on the best interest of their child.

Later, after emotions settle, make sure you inform the other parent, so you both stay aware of patterns and concerns. That's responsible communication. But the consequence for the child's poor choice should already be in motion by then. That would be a perfect time for the parent who wasn't present to have a discussion with the child to reinforce the decision. Then the child knows, "Your mother/father and I discussed it and we agree."

When your child knows that each parent is steady, capable and confident on

their own, something important happens — they stop looking for cracks in the system. They stop shopping for reactions. And they start understanding that responsibility follows them wherever they go, not because someone might yell, but because the adults in their life are in full agreement and mean what they say. That's good ex-etiquette.

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*Blackstone is a child custody mediator and the author of "The Bonus Family Handbook: The Definitive Guide to Co-parenting and Creating Stronger Families. She can be reached at bonusfamilies.com or jann@bonusfamilies.com.*

# Marriage is mired in middle age doldrums

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I have been together 30-plus years. When our love was new, it was all smiles, hand-holding and thrills when we saw each other after a long day at work or school. And, I guess, that's normal.

Now, three kids and three grandkids later, we're edging past our mid-50s and there isn't much left. There are no more smiles and no more hand-holding, only two sad adults. We still love each other.

Neither of us wants to be apart from the other, but we don't know how to bring back happiness.

We hardly touch, and neither of us remembers the last time we smiled or even really laughed. We sit in the same room, living two completely

## Dear Abby



different lives. I am partially disabled, so there are no more long walks or outside activities, which we used to do 20 years ago.

We are now wondering: Is this the rest of our lives? Are we going to spend the next 20-plus years in a depressing marriage in which we love each other but no longer have anything in common? Our youngest daughter is 8, and our youngest grandson is 5. We

watch the kids (15, 9, 8, 5) in the evening so our eldest can work. Is there any hope for us? — SAD SPOUSE IN NEW YORK

**DEAR SAD SPOUSE:** You say that you and your husband love each other. There is hope for reviving your marriage if you agree to go to couples counseling together. Marriage involves more than smiles, hand-holding and thrills. It is a deep and caring partnership. Few couples can sustain the excitement of their honeymoon years. You and your husband have already done the hard work. Now you need to find your way back together.

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**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I were dining with friends

in a high-end restaurant. The food was great, and so was the conversation. My husband leaned close to me and whispered, "She's brushing her teeth!" I glanced to my left. I had thought the gal at the next table was just using a toothpick. No, she was vigorously brushing with a full-sized toothbrush!

After about a minute, she placed the toothbrush into a cosmetic bag and pulled out a denture container. She then proceeded to insert and adjust her retainer. We were flabbergasted. Never in all my years have I seen such appalling table manners. Perhaps we shouldn't have been staring, but it was one of those moments in which you are frozen to the spot.

Abby, that restaurant has

very nice bathrooms. What is happening to our society? — SHOCKED IN THE SOUTH

**DEAR SHOCKED:** I understand why this woman's performance stopped you cold. But, please, don't blame "society" for her ignorance of the rules of etiquette, which dictate that to avoid grossing out those around us in public, we should excuse ourselves from the table and take care of our oral hygiene privately, IN THE RESTROOM if needed.

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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.*

# Community Calendar

Notices of upcoming club meetings will appear in Community Calendar as space is available.

To submit an item, email news@thecr.com.

### Today

**LAWYERS** — Free and confidential consultations with a lawyer are available from 10 a.m. to noon at Jay County Public Library, 315

N. Ship St., Portland. Consulting is available on topics including divorce, custody, guardianship, tenant-landlord issues, bankruptcy, 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 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.

**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.

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

### 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., Port-

land. To learn more information, please call (260) 251-3259.

### 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 – BRIANNA'S 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.

## Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

### Wednesday's Solution

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

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.

# CARS

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# Commandments belong in church

**The Evening News and the Tribune (Jeffersonville)**  
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Faith and government are pillars of our country that work best when they're separate.

Pilgrims eyed a new home for economic opportunities, but also for freedom of and from religion. They wanted to escape the overreach of the Church of England, and they established such a place in what is now the U.S.

Religious beliefs certainly inspire and shape the opinions and stances of many Americans, including elected officials. But our government is intended to serve all citizens, from atheists to those who practice religions that are less common. The line is crossed when the system favors one belief over others.

Government shouldn't impede

## Hoosier Editorial

religion, just as religion shouldn't be forced on those who hold differing views. It's the American way. Unfortunately, some Hoosier officeholders are seeking to force their religious beliefs into public spaces.

Gov. Mike Braun and Attorney General Todd Rokita are pushing to have a federal injunction lifted so a monument displaying the Ten Commandments can be reinstalled on the Statehouse grounds. In the legislature, Republican State Rep. Michelle

Davis is sponsoring a bill that would require schools to display a poster of the Ten Commandments in each classroom and library.

These proposals tread on the rights of Hoosiers. They're also unnecessary. There's no law preventing people from studying or following the Ten Commandments in their private lives. Pushing those beliefs into public spaces is an entirely different situation.

Those who support displaying the Ten Commandments in the public domain should be honest and ask themselves a simple question — would they feel the same if scripture from the Quran were to be engraved on a monument at the capital? Would they get behind posters with

Hindu beliefs being plastered on the walls of classrooms?

If the answer is "no," then this is nothing more than Christian Nationalism. It's an attempt to force beliefs on others, and it's wrong.

How would a Muslim student feel about seeing only the Ten Commandments displayed in his school library? How would a non-believer react to seeing a monument displayed at the capital praising beliefs and a narrative she doesn't share?

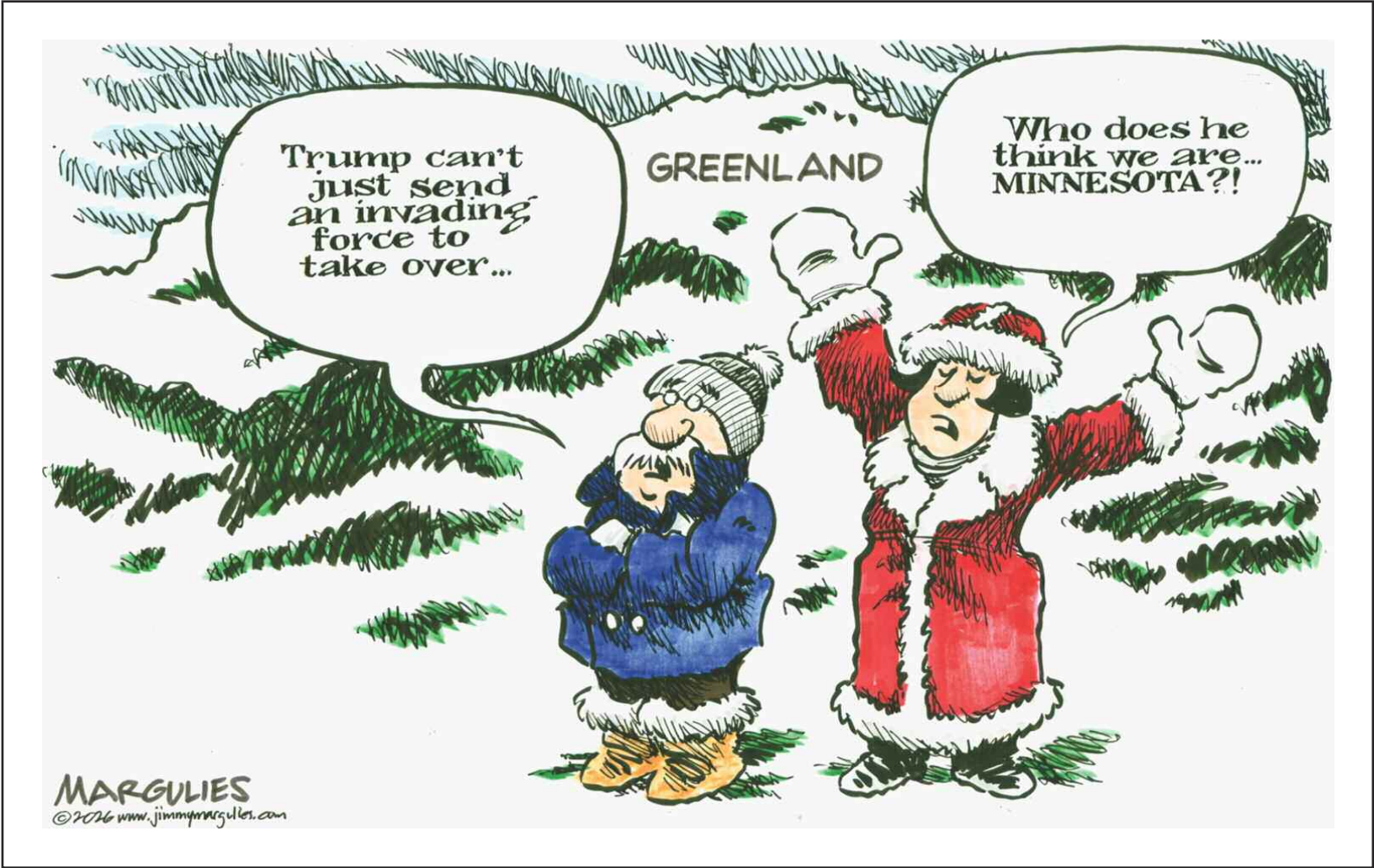
Indiana lawmakers who are backing these efforts should remember when a Satanic Temple band was allowed to perform inside of the Statehouse in 2023. It was permitted after former Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch assisted in getting a Christian prayer rally

inside of the Statehouse due to inclement weather.

Her decision backfired because religious liberty doesn't apply to just Christianity. If one group's beliefs are permitted in a public space then all should be allowed. If not, lawsuits often follow.

Instead of getting caught in another embarrassing situation, Braun, Rokita and Davis should keep their religious doctrines out of the public square. Those beliefs belong in churches, not public schools or the Statehouse.

There are more pressing matters for the governor, attorney general and legislature than using public spaces and potentially taxpayer money to push religion. Keep church and state separate.



# SEA 1 effects breaks, schools, services

**By MICHAEL J. HICKS**

One of the thornier issues in tax policy is anticipating behavioral, or second-order, effects. These are normally analyzed over a couple of years to avoid unintended consequences.

That didn't happen with last year's Senate Enrolled Act 1. The looming effects are worth noting, beginning with the size and scope of tax changes across businesses, families and local government.

Last year's SEA1 was a modest short-term tax cut for households that own homes, maybe \$300 a year for those with a \$375,000 house and no other exemptions.

Over the long term, it is almost certainly a tax increase. Local governments will have to raise income taxes to levels that are almost certain to offset all the household property tax cuts. Meanwhile, SEA1 was among the largest state-level business tax cuts in U.S. history.

The business tax cuts came in two ways.

First, the law eliminated business personal property taxes for about 85% of companies. It did this by raising the tax exemption threshold from \$80,000 to \$2 million in equipment and property. Before SEA1, only the smallest businesses — think a local florist or a one-truck plumbing company — were exempt from these taxes. Now, even an Applebee's restaurant or a medium-sized retailer won't have to pay. That's a massive cut.

Second, the law eliminated what's known as the "30% floor." Under the old system, businesses had to keep paying taxes on their equipment and machinery as long as they were using it, even as it aged and lost value. The equip-

## Michael J. Hicks



ment could never be valued at less than 30% of its original cost for tax purposes.

Now, that floor is gone, which means major manufacturers and other companies with expensive equipment will see their tax bills plummet as their machinery ages. This is the single largest tax break for capital-intensive businesses that I'm aware of in any state.

The result is that nearly all local governments will see tax revenue cuts of 10% or more. A large proportion will see revenues drop by 20% or more, and some face cuts approaching 40%.

To offset some of these revenue losses, local governments can impose higher local income taxes, while schools can pursue referenda for additional property tax dollars.

I'll save most of this for a later column, but it is worth noting that this will have enormous distributional effects on families and communities. Affluent, mostly older Hoosiers will enjoy a larger tax cut while poorer, younger families see big tax increases, accompanied by public service cuts.

So, what are the second-order effects of SEA1 on businesses, families and local governments?

First, this is a windfall for existing businesses. If Indiana were a high-tax state, a large tax

cut would likely move business investment into the state. But Indiana is a low-tax state.

A private sector study used to justify SEA1 claimed that Indiana's taxes on manufacturing and life sciences were high. But, if you read the fine print, you'd see that's misleading. The authors admitted they didn't include tax abatements or exemptions — the special breaks that Indiana routinely grants to businesses. When you factor those in, Indiana actually ranks as one of the lowest business tax states in the country.

There's very little reason to think this tax law will spur new business investment. Indiana was already a low-tax state for businesses.

The same logic applies to the property tax cuts for families. The cuts are modest and go mostly to older homeowners with paid-off mortgages — the people least likely to move. Meanwhile, the income tax increases that local governments will likely impose to replace lost revenue will hit younger, working families harder. Those are precisely the mobile families who cities and towns want to attract and retain.

In short, SEA1 is a perfectly designed tax cut to benefit relatively well-off taxpayers in the state without incentivizing any additional job or population growth.

The unintended consequences will fall hardest on local governments and the people who depend on their services. I see three major effects.

First, property tax abatements for businesses become nearly worthless. Cities and counties have long offered these abate-

ments — temporary tax breaks — to attract new companies. The benefits were always overstated, but now they're practically nonexistent. Without the 30% floor, new businesses will see their taxable property values drop rapidly as equipment ages. Any tax revenue gains disappear quickly, and with the abatement on top of that, communities get essentially nothing.

It will take a few years, but cities and counties will eventually realize the best strategy under SEA1 isn't chasing new businesses, it's attracting wealthy residents. This shift won't necessarily hurt most Hoosiers, but it's bad news for economic developers and their consultants.

Second, SEA1 will force rural school consolidations. Suburban schools face serious cuts — Noblesville will lose 8.2% of its property tax revenues. Urban schools will suffer too, with Muncie losing 12.6%. However, rural schools are most at risk. They're already underfunded, face much higher transportation costs per student and have fewer buildings they can close to save money.

Within two years, Randolph Eastern will lose 10.1% of its property tax levy. Logansport will lose 22.2% and Barr-Reeve will lose 9.2%. Despite what you hear from the Statehouse or on talk radio, these schools have no fat to cut. For dozens of rural school districts, SEA1 means asking voters for more money through referenda, consolidating with other districts, or both.

Third, public services will decline. Even with local income tax increases phasing in over the next few years, quality-of-life

investments across Indiana will stall. I'm talking about the spending that keeps communities livable: police and fire protection, good schools, well-maintained libraries, parks and trails.

Some of these effects will occur almost immediately. In many small towns, there will be nights without police patrols. Large cities will have fewer resources to address crime and homelessness. That won't make any taxpayers better off.

Other effects will take years to notice. Deferred maintenance will make many of Indiana's public buildings and parks resemble our local streets — an embarrassment that is hard to hide.

Some local governments will become more efficient, and that is a good thing. But, it is easy to judge whether or not Hoosier voters think they are overtaxed for the level of public services they now receive. Hoosiers are moving quickly from the low-tax, low-public service counties to the high-tax, high-public service counties. From that, we can infer that mobile Hoosiers are thirsting for more and better public services, and they are willing to pay for them.

SEA1 means that they'll get fewer public services, precisely what people are voting against with their feet. That, folks, will be an unhappy consequence.

\*\*\*\*\*

*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.*

# The Commercial Review

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Area churches are listed with location, pastor and phone number, services and website or email address. All services are Sunday, unless otherwise indicated.

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

**Bellefountain 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@in.unc.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., Portland  
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-portland.com

**First Church of Christ**  
1049 Union City Road, Fort Recovery  
David J. Nicholson  
(419) 375-2860  
Services: 10:30 a.m.  
fccftrecovery.org

**First Community Baptist**  
341 S. Meridian St., Redkey  
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. Wednesday  
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., Portland  
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

**Mary Help of Christians**  
403 Sharpshurg 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.  
nbholiness.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.

**Pleasant Hill**  
9945 N. 800 East, Union City  
Bruce Bryan  
(765) 964-3664  
Services: 9 a.m., 6 p.m.  
mypleasanthillchurch.org

**Portland Church of Christ**  
1217 W. Votaw St., Portland  
Bob Graham  
(260) 726-7777  
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.  
Services: 10:20 a.m.  
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wednesday  
portlandcoc.com

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

**Portland Friends**  
226 E. Main St., Portland  
Herb Hummel  
(260) 202-9732  
Services: 10 a.m.  
Sunday school: 9 a.m.

**Praise Chapel Church of God**  
4527 E. 1000 North (Jay-Randolph county line)  
Rev. Josh Canfield  
(765) 584-7045  
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Redeemer Lutheran**  
Malin and Elm streets, Bryant  
(260) 997-6787  
Services: 9:30 a.m.

**Redkey Faith Ministries**  
9811 W. Indiana 67, southwest of Redkey  
Rev. Craig and Robin Cotherman  
(765) 369-2920  
Services: 10 a.m.  
RedkeyFaith.org

**Redkey First Christian**  
Union and Malin streets  
Jeff Hammers  
(765) 468-6172  
Services: 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**Redkey United Methodist**  
122 W. Main St.  
Lori McIntosh  
(765) 369-2085  
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Redkey Church of the Nazarene**  
801 W. High St.  
Fred Stevens  
(765) 369-2676  
redkeynaz.org  
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Wednesday

**River of Life**  
722 W. Main St., Portland  
Susan Hathaway  
(260) 729-1095  
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**The ROCK**  
1605 N. Meridian St., Portland  
Matt Ransom  
(260) 726-7474  
Services: 10 a.m.  
matt@therockjc.org

**Salamonia Church of Christ**  
3900 S. 600 East  
Bruce Phillips  
(260) 335-2017  
Services: 9 a.m.

**Second Chance at Life Ministries**  
228 S. Meridian St., Portland  
Dave Keen (260) 251-8792  
Mike Eads (260) 703-0733  
Services: 10:30 a.m.

**St. Joseph Catholic**  
1689 St. Joe Road, Fort Recovery  
Rev. Alexander Witt  
Services: 7:30 a.m. Sunday

**St. Mary's Catholic**  
346 S. Broad St., Dunkirk  
Rev. Kevin Hurley  
Services: 5 p.m. Saturday, 5:30 p.m. Thursday

**St. Paul Catholic**  
517 Meiring Road, Fort Recovery  
Rev. Alexander Witt  
Services: 11 a.m. Sunday

**St. Peter Catholic**  
1477 Philothea Road, Fort Recovery  
Rev. Alexander Witt  
Services: 9 a.m. Sunday

**Sugar Grove Nazarene**  
3984 N. 550 West, Portland  
Pastor Mike Heckman  
(615) 517-1017  
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.  
Services: 10:30 a.m.  
Bible study: 6 p.m. Wednesday

**Sugar Grove Church**  
County roads 600 South and 1150 West, Dunkirk  
Scott McClain  
Services: 9 a.m.

**Temple Baptist**  
17920 Indiana 167, Dunkirk  
John Elam  
(765) 768-7708  
Sunday school: 10 a.m.  
Services: 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., 7 p.m. Wednesday  
7pillarsdirector@gmail.com  
templebaptistin.com

**The Church at Westchester**  
4487 E. 400 North  
(260) 726-6311  
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.  
Services: 10:35 a.m.  
churchatwestchester.org

**Trinity Lutheran**  
301 N. Wayne St., Fort Recovery  
Ron McCallum  
(419) 375-4498  
Services: 9 a.m. (contemporary service, fourth Sunday)

**Trinity ArchBridge Church**  
323 S. Meridian St., Portland  
Dan Vore  
(260) 726-8391  
Sunday school: 9 a.m.  
Services: 10:15 a.m.  
portlandtrinity.com

**Union Chapel**  
6200 N. 375 West, Bryant  
Interim Pastor Chris Kruchkow  
(260) 849-0687  
Services: 10:20 a.m., 6 p.m.

**Union Chapel Church of the Nazarene**  
County road 900 North (Jay-Wells county line)  
Fred Stevens  
Services: 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

**Walnut Corner**  
County roads 200 North and 500 West  
Steve Rogers  
(260) 251-1113  
Services: 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday school: 9:30 a.m.

**West Walnut Church of Christ**  
204 W. Walnut St., Portland  
Gil Alicea  
(260) 726-4691  
Services: 10 a.m.  
westwalnutchurchof-christ.org

**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Ron McCallum  
218 E. High St., Portland  
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zionlutheranportland@gmail.com  
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Agnes

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Between Friends

Blondie

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Beetle Bailey

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By Steve Becker

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West dealer.  
Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ 7 3  
♥ K 6 5  
♦ A K 9 7 3  
♣ A J 8

**WEST**  
♠ A K Q 5 4  
♥ 10 9 8  
♦ J 10 8 5 2  
♣ —

**EAST**  
♠ J 10 9 8 6  
♥ 4 3 2  
♦ 4  
♣ 10 5 4 3

**SOUTH**  
♠ 2  
♥ A Q J 7  
♦ Q 6  
♣ K Q 9 7 6 2

The bidding:  
West North East South  
1 ♠ Dble 2 ♠ 3 ♠  
Pass 4 ♦ Pass 6 ♣  
Opening lead — king of spades.

This hand occurred in a multiple team-of-four match. At most tables, West opened with a spade despite holding only 10 high-card points. Most of the North players doubled one spade rather than overall with two diamonds, and the bidding then took off in different directions at the various tables.

At one table, the auction went as shown, South taking a blind stab at six clubs, which proved to be lay-down. At other tables the contract was four or six hearts, or five or six clubs, and in each case — except one — declarer scored the obvious 12 tricks.

Our story concerns itself with what happened at this one table, where South became declarer at six hearts rather than six clubs. Here West decided that, on the bidding, the chances of stopping the slam with normal defense were virtually non-existent. And so, instead of leading the king of spades, he led the four!

No truer arrow was ever shot! Declarer followed low from dummy, on which East played the six, and West died a thousand deaths before South produced the deuce.

It did not take long for East to figure out why West had underled the A-K-Q of spades. He dutifully returned a club, and West's ruff sank the slam.

Had West made the more normal lead of a high spade, South would have made the slam easily. But with West's imagination working over-time, South had to pay off to a well-reasoned opening lead.

1-22

CRYPTOQUIP

LOUP CKV'WU YBMPRPRA QK  
AK KVQ RP M PKRIC  
WMRPIQKWF, CKV IOKVBE YVQ  
KP IKFU QOVPEUWLUMW.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF COUSTEAU  
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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals H

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS  
1 Nile  
5 Priestly  
8 Sleeping  
12 "George  
of the  
Jungle"  
elephant  
13 Spring  
month  
14 Fill com-  
pletely  
15 Rwandan  
people  
16 Glutton  
17 Swindle  
18 Nail  
polish  
20 Oil cartel  
22 Rhode  
Island's  
nickname  
26 Acid in  
proteins  
29 NYPD  
investi-  
gator  
30 Unpro-  
cessed  
31 Actress  
Moore  
32 Baseball  
execs  
33 Lose  
color  
34 Fist bump

DOWN  
35 Architect  
I.M.  
55 Santa's  
ride  
37 Hawaii's  
nickname  
1 Tennis  
legend  
Arthur  
2 Avoid  
3 Anti-fur  
org.  
4 Italian  
dessert  
5 Suffi-  
cient  
6 Chou  
En-  
7 Events of  
the past  
8 Plus  
9 Monte  
Carlo  
game  
10 JFK info  
11 Rep.'s  
rival  
19 Friendly  
leader?  
21 Calif.  
clock  
setting  
23 Fess up  
24 "I did it!"  
25 Barnyard  
females  
26 "— pinch  
of salt ..."  
27 Repast  
28 Fraud  
32 Hand  
signal  
33 Spanish  
celebra-  
tions  
35 Lobbying  
org.  
36 Sch. fund-  
raising gp.  
38 Coin toss  
call  
39 Vowel  
group  
42 Relate  
43 North  
Sea  
feeder  
44 Peruse  
45 Corpulent  
46 Historic  
period  
48 — de  
plume

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-22

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# Beltran, Jones selected

By **ABBEY MASTRACCO**  
New York Daily News  
Tribune News Service

NEW YORK — The Mets could be getting a third cap in Cooperstown this summer, and their first in a decade with the selection of Carlos Beltrán to the Baseball Hall of Fame. The former center fielder was selected by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America in his fourth year on the ballot, the Hall of Fame committee announced Tuesday night.

Beltrán and Braves legend Andruw Jones, the other member of the 2026 Hall of Fame class, also become the first center fielders to become enshrined in the Hall since 2016 when Ken Griffey Jr. became the 24th. It's a position that requires a certain amount of talent, acumen and gumption, which is why so few have been inducted since the turn of the century.

It speaks to the impact Beltrán made on the field over parts of 20 seasons with the Mets, Yankees, Kansas City Royals, St.



Tribune News Service/Ezra Shaw

Carlos Beltran celebrates a walk-off home run for the New York Mets to beat the St. Louis Cardinals 8-7 on Aug. 22, 2006.

Louis Cardinals, Texas Rangers, San Francisco Giants and Houston Astros. A five-tool player with power from both

sides of the plate and speed that made him a weapon on the basepaths and in the outfield, he helped five teams reach

the postseason, including the Mets in 2006. Looking at the JAWS metric, a system created by Jay Jaffe to determine

Hall of Fame worthiness, Beltrán's numbers are comparable to others at the same position who have already been elected to Cooperstown. The average WAR of Hall of Fame center fielders is 71.7, while Beltrán's is 70, his peak WAR was 44.4 (position average is 44.7), and his total JAWS is 57.2, only one point off the average of the enshrined center fielders (58.2).

For his career, Beltran slashed .279/.350/.486 with 2,725 total hits, 565 doubles, 78 triples, 435 home runs, 1,587 RBIs, 1,582 runs scored and 312 stolen bases, compiling 70.0 bWAR. The switch-hitter from Puerto Rico was a nine-time All-Star who won three Gold Glove Awards, two Silver Slugger Awards and was named the AL Rookie of the Year in 1999.

In 65 postseason games, Beltrán hit .307 with a 1.021 OPS and 16 home runs. He hit eight home runs and drove in 14 runs in his first-ever playoff run with the Houston

Astros in 2004, and drove in 15 runs to help the St. Louis Cardinals reach the World Series in 2013. While the Cards ultimately came up short against the Boston Red Sox, Beltrán finally won a ring with the Astros in 2017, his first World Series title.

Beltrán was eventually implicated in Houston's 2017 sign-stealing scandal. A 2020 investigation by MLB named Beltrán specifically as one of the leaders of the system.

A special assistant in the Mets front office, Beltrán played 839 games for the team over seven seasons from 2005-2011, and spent parts of three seasons with the Yankees as well from 2014-2016. He has previously said he will enter the Hall as a Met.

Beltrán and Jones, along with Jeff Kent, who was selected for entrance by the Contemporary Baseball Era Committee July 26 in Cooperstown, N.Y. Jones spent the final two seasons of his career with the Yankees from 2011-2012, and Kent was



The Commercial Review/Ethan Oskroba

Kaitlyn Fisher of the Jay County High School girls swim team competes in the 100-yard butterfly race as the Patriots host the Muncie Central Bearcats on Tuesday. Fisher finished second to teammate Maria Laux in the event.

## Sports on tap

### Local schedule

**Today**  
Jay County — Girls basketball at Delta — 6 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball vs. Mississinewa — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at South Adams — 5:30 p.m.; Junior high wrestling at Adams Central — 5:30 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball vs. South Adams — 6 p.m.; Junior high swim vs. New Castle — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Girls basketball at Coldwater — 6 p.m.

**Friday**  
Jay County — Boys wrestling in Allen County Athletic Conference tournament at Bluffton — 6 p.m.; Boys basketball vs. South Adams — 6 p.m.

Fort Recovery — Boys bowling vs. Mississinewa Valley — 4:30 p.m.; Girls bowling vs. Mississinewa Valley — 4:30 p.m.; Boys basketball vs. Coldwater — 6 p.m.

### TV schedule

**Today**  
3 a.m. — Australian Open tennis (ESPN2)

6 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Michigan at Rutgers (BTN); Iowa at Maryland (NBC)

7 p.m. — College basketball: South Florida at UAB (ESPN2); Wisconsin at Penn State (FS1)

7:30 p.m. — Women's college basketball: South Carolina at Oklahoma (ESPN); UConn at Georgetown (TNT)

8 p.m. — Women's college basketball: USC at Michigan State (BTN)

9:30 p.m. — NHL: Detroit Red Wings at Minnesota Wild (ESPN)

**Friday**  
3 a.m. — Australian Open tennis (ESPN2)

5 p.m. — College wrestling: Purdue at Michigan State (BTN)

5:30 p.m. — College basketball: St. Louis at St. Bonaventure (ESPN2)

6 p.m. — College basketball: Indiana at Rutgers (FS1)

7 p.m. — NHL: Tampa Bay Lightning at Chicago Blackhawks (ESPN)

7 p.m. — College wrestling: Minnesota at Ohio State (BTN)

8 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Oklahoma City Thunder (FDSN Indiana)

8 p.m. — College basketball: Ohio State at Michigan (FOX); Marquette at Butler (FS1); Akron at Ohio (ESPNU)

9 p.m. — Australian Open tennis (ESPN2)

10 p.m. — College basketball: Utah State at Colorado State (FS1)

.....

To have an event listed in "Sports on tap", email details to [sports@thecr.com](mailto:sports@thecr.com)

<div><b>90 SALE CALENDAR</b></div> <div><b>PUBLIC AUCTION</b> 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 &amp; COLLECTORS ITEMS Jewelry; brass bookends; Bakelite handled cutlery; Roseville 946 ñ 6i 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; Ñ gallon wood barrel; lightning rods with balls; St Marys OH oil can; Wapac #2, #8 and #9 irons; 9 pt. brass lightning rod top; US Army compass; skeleton keys; Bedrock PLANES: Stanley #605 and #606, Bailey #5 Ñ, 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; 100ñ brass front scale; manuals; brass school bell; pipe wrenches; files; chisels; wedges; screw jack; stir-</div>	<div><b>90 SALE CALENDAR</b></div> <div>rupes; 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 <b>PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY JANUARY 31ST, 2026 TIME 10:00 A.M. LOCATED: 6278 W. 300 N. PENNVILLE, IN BACKHOE-TRACTOR-CAMPER-TRAILER</b> 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. Push Mowers. 1 1/2i Pacer Trash Pump. Apartment Sized Chest Freezer. 5 Drawer Dresser. Portable Dish Washer. Other Items Not</div>	<div><b>90 SALE CALENDAR</b></div> <div>Mentioned. 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Slocum's Salvage</div>	<div><b>250 PUBLIC NOTICE</b></div> <div><b>Public Notice</b> STATE OF INDIANA IN THE JAY CIRCUIT COURT COUNTY OF JAY, SS: 2026 TERM In the Matter of the Unsupervised Administration of the Estate of: Suzanne Fields, Deceased No. 38CO1-2601-EU-00002 NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION Notice is hereby given that John Lyons was, on the 9th day of January, 2026, appointed Personal Representative of the estate of Suzanne Fields deceased, who died on December 16, 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 9th day of January, 2026. Melissa Elliott Clerk of the Circuit Court, For Jay County, Indiana HINKLE, RACSTER, SCHEMENAUR &amp; LANDERS 121 W. High Street Portland, IN 47371 Attorney CR 1-15,22-2026-HSPXLP</div> <div><b>THE CLASSIFIEDS</b> Find it - Buy It Sell It! <b>(260) 726-8141</b></div>
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# Back home again

## Patriots split with MC in first home meet since Dec. 6

**By ETHAN OSKROBA**  
The Commercial Review

The Patriots hadn't hosted a meet in over a month. Even their training routine was derailed as their home pool received maintenance.

The recent tribulations didn't show in the results.

The Jay County High School girls swim team stomped the Muncie Central Bearcats 219-53 while the Patriot boys lost a razor-thin 150-147 decision on Tuesday.

"I'm super pleased with where we're at, given the circumstances and not having a pool and bouncing around trying to train at other schools and things like that," said Jay County coach Matt Slavik. "All the way across the board, kids showed a lot of improvement. We showed a lot of determination tonight."

Despite the suboptimal circumstances, both the Jay County girls (5-3) and boys (3-5) produced a bevy of time decreases in the Patriots' first home event of 2026. Jay County stayed prepared by continuing its regular routine in the weight room and training at different facilities while awaiting a return.

"We just adjusted some things so that we could get more out of less, I guess," Slavik said. "And they responded well. Unfortunately, our distance swimmers probably didn't get the yardage



The Commercial Review/Ethan Oskroba

Carson Westgerdes of the Jay County High School swim team hoists himself out of the water during the breaststroke portion of his victory in the boys 200-yard individual medley at Tuesday's meet against the visiting Muncie Central Bearcats. Jay County bested the Bearcats 219-53 on the girls side but the boys fell 150-147.

they needed, but we'll get there."

If Jay County's Grady Warvel wasn't able to log enough buildup, it wasn't evident in his performance. The freshman, who

hasn't always competed in the distance events this season, earned victories with new career bests in both the 200- and 500-yard freestyles. His time of 5:34.38 in the 500

marked a career low by nearly five seconds.

"I've been doing high school and club swim, so I feel like both of those have really helped condition me for such a long

race like that," Warvel said.

Despite the Jay County boys losing by five points or less for the third time of the season, Warvel was one of two Patriot

boys to win multiple individual events. Cooper Glentzer earned victories in the 100-yard freestyle and backstroke.

On the girls' side, Elly Byrum mirrored Warvel's freestyle prowess but did her best work in the shorter races. The freshman won the 100- and 200-yard freestyle, with her time of 59.58 marking her first sub-one-minute result in the 100 of her freshman season.

"I just tried to do strong underwaters and then fast turns, and then I tried to minimize my breathing to a minimum and just went a strong last 25," Elly Byrum said.

Elly Byrum was joined by Maria Laux (200 individual medley, 100 butterfly) and sister Brooklynn Byrum (500 freestyle, 100 breaststroke) with multiple non-relay triumphs.

In total, the Byrums accounted for four of Jay County's nine individual victories, with their success fueled by a symbiotic relationship.

"She is a year older than me, and so she's had a little more experience," Elly Byrum said. "And she just helps me, before my race, she just helps me feel prepared and kind of comforts me, so when I just overwhelm myself with everything, she calms me down and helps me out."

See **Home** page 7

Continued from page 8

# IT'S ALL UP TO YOU ...

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The Graphic Printing Company is bringing back its People's Choice special section. This special section gives you, our readers, the opportunity to recognize your favorites.

**Here's the concept:**  
For the next few weeks you vote for your favorites in a variety of categories: We tally the votes.

The winners in each category will be listed in a special section to run next month, along with other top vote-getters. The winners of the "Best Overall" category will be featured in the special section. Eligibility is limited to those in The Graphic Printing Company's coverage area, which includes all of Jay, Randolph and Blackford counties, as well as portions of the adjacent counties including Fort Recovery and Geneva.

### The Categories

#### Best Overall

Antique shop  
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Doctor  
Entertainment option  
Farm implement sales  
Financial advisor  
Florist  
Funeral home  
Furniture  
Gas station

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Other  
*(is there something that doesn't quite fit the above)*

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Winners will be acknowledged in a special section to run in late February.  
Did we miss a category?  
Let us know and we'll consider adding it to the list next year.

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# Huelskamp, Homan led FR past Starfires

BERNE — The Tribe has struggled with one thing or another over the past 22 days.

But when they crossed the border, everything went right for them.

Fort Recovery High School's girls basketball team crossed over into Indiana to beat the South Adams Starfires 45-38 on Tuesday.

The win snapped a three-game skid for the Tribe (3-12). The Indians fell behind early as Ana Lehman, who finished with 19 points to lead the Starfires (5-13), found the hoop four times. FRHS came back strong in the second quarter to claim a 23-18 lead heading into the half.

Makenna Huelskamp led the Tribe with 20 points. The junior hit two threes in the second quarter and another in the fourth. She found the hoop in the first and third as well while going 5-of-6 from the charity stripe.

Bridget Homan didn't score in the first quarter, but the FRHS center got going in the second half to finish with 14 points.

Maddy Schoenlein hit a pair of threes in the second quarter, Cameron Muhlenkamp had four points in the first half and Kayla Gaerke split a pair of free throws in the opening period.

## Jay drops

OSSIAN — The Jay County girls basketball team couldn't handle the Class 4A No. 8 Norwell Knights on Tuesday, resulting in an 88-48 loss.

Hallie and Karsyn Schwieterman combined for 24 first-half points, but the Patriots (12-7) couldn't slow down Norwell's duo of Macie Saalfrank and Vanessa Rosswurm. They combined for 29 points, while the rest of the Knights (17-4) added 24 as well.

Karsyn Schwieterman

scored a game-high 21 points, while Hallie Schwieterman followed with 20. The other three starters combined for just seven points as Natalie May made a pair of free throws in the third quarter, Elizabeth Brunswick found the basket in the fourth and Raylah Newton hit a triple in the final period.

Rosswurm led Norwell with 20 points, while Saalfrank finished with 19.

Jada Dale and Ashley Waldman also scored in double figures with 13 and 12 points, respectively. Six more Knights scored for a combined 24 points.

## Still perfect

The Jay County Junior/Senior High School eighth-grade boys basketball team remained unbeaten in dominant fashion, overwhelming St. Henry Middle School 50-26 on Tuesday.

Finn Hemmelgarn was the top scorer for the Patriots (15-0), posting 15 points.

He was joined in double figures by Abram Lee, who contributed 11.

Six other Patriots found their way onto the score-sheet, with Job Dirksen (nine points), Jaylen Brown (five), Roman Clamme (three), Bentley Comer (three), Eli Homan (two) and Jenson Edwards (two) also scoring for Jay County.

The Patriots have just two games left on their regular-season schedule and will seek to complete their quest for perfection with wins over South Adams and Adams Central.

The Allen County Ath-

letic Conference tournament begins on Jan. 26.

## Seventh thwarted

The seventh-grade Jay County boys were unable to capture the success of their older counterparts, falling 42-28 to St. Henry.

Sawyer Smitley was the Patriots' top scorer with nine points.

He was followed by Carter May and Beckham Hough, who tallied five apiece.

Cruz Darby (three points), Parker Wasson (two), Ryker Price (two) and Henry Teeter (two) also contributed to Jay County (8-7) in the scoring column.

## Towell stars

The Jay County eighth-grade girls basketball team steamrolled Heritage 36-8 on Tuesday.

Boo Towell put fear into Heritage with a game-high 15 points.

Arabella Link (eight points) and Brenna Weitzel (six) were next up for the Patriots (10-4).

Kinze Homan's four points and Kyla Sims' three rounded out Jay County's total.

## Team effort

Eight different Patriots scored for the seventh-grade Patriot girls as they handled Heritage by a 42-7 score.

Haley Comer amassed 10 points and was the only Jay County player in double figures.

She was followed closely by Gretchen Petro (nine points) and Remi LeMaster (six).

The Patriots (13-1) also got solid outings from Makenna Wellman (five points), Remi Saint (four), Kendall Farr (four).

Evie Skirvin (two points) and Adalee Rigby (two) also scored for the Patriots.

Kenzie Farr tacked on a pair of assists.