

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

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 consolidating 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 produc-

tion 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



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

Hughland, 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.



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
 11/2	 10/5	 15/3	 17/3	 23/10
Skies will be mostly cloudy with a high of 11 degrees and winds gusting to 25 mph.	The high will be 10 degrees under mostly cloudy skies. There is a 20% chance of snow in the afternoon.	There is a 30% chance of snow during the morning hours. The high will be 15.	Skies will be mostly sunny with a high of 17.	Temperatures will warm slightly to a high of 23. Skies are expected to be mostly sunny.

Lotteries

Powerball 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
Mega Millions 8-47-50-56-70 Mega Ball: 12 Estimated jackpot: \$266 million	
Ohio 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	
Hoosier 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	Estimated jackpot: \$110,000

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery	Feb. beans 10.51 Wheat 4.74
Corn.....4.42	
Feb. corn.....4.44	
March corn.....4.44	
ADM Montpelier	
Corn.....4.26	
Feb. corn.....4.28	
Beans 10.45	
Feb. beans 10.49	
Wheat 4.96	
POET Biorefining Portland	
Corn.....4.42	
Feb. corn.....4.39	
March corn.....4.36	

The Andersons Richland Township	Feb. beans 10.47
Corn 4.33	
Feb. corn 4.33	
Beans 10.47	

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

— The CR

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

3:45 p.m. — Jay County Solid Waste Management District, 5948 W. Indiana 67, 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.

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 Schemenauer 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.

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. Schemenauer 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

SERVICES

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

Friday, Jan. 23
Bernis, 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
**PROGRESSIVE
DEL TORO
OFFICE PRODUCTS**
120 N. Meridian St.
Portland, Indiana 47371
(260) 726-9201
progressiveofficeproducts.com

1/4-page black and white

\$176

1/4-page color ad

\$226

Commandments belong in church

The Evening News and
the Tribune (Jeffersonville)

Tribune News Service

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 over-reach 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?

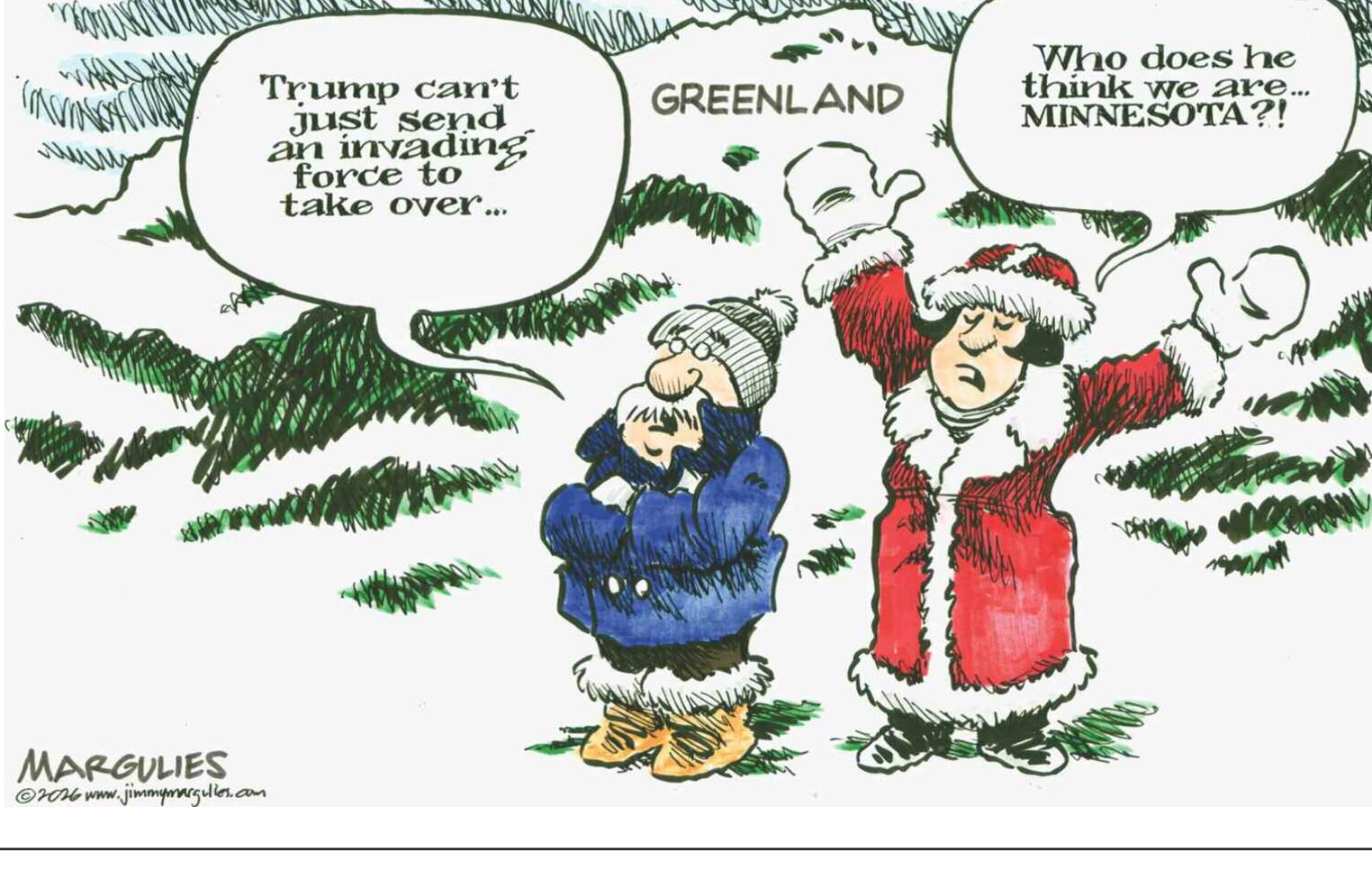
Indiana lawmakers who are backing these efforts should remember when a Satanic Temple band was allowed to perform inside of the Statehouse in 2023. It was permitted after former Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch assisted in getting a Christian prayer rally

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-

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



US PS 125820

HUGH N. RONALD (1911-1983), Publisher Emeritus
JOHN C. "JACK" RONALD (1948-2022), Publisher Emeritus

RAY COONEY

President, editor and publisher

TONIA HARDY

Business manager

LOUISE RONALD

Board chair

BRIAN DODD

Production manager

VOLUME 152—NUMBER 185

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026

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

—Thomas Jefferson

Subscription rates

Internet-only: Three days - \$3; Monthly auto-pay - \$10; 13 weeks - \$32; six months - \$60; one year - \$108.

City (walking - where available): Monthly auto-pay - \$12; 13 weeks - \$38; six months - \$72; one year - \$129.

Motor route (where available): Monthly auto-pay - \$13; 13 weeks - \$46; six months - \$78; one year - \$148.

Mail: Monthly auto-pay - \$15; 13 weeks - \$53; six months - \$86; one year - \$161.

Home delivery problems: Call (260) 251-9588

The Commercial Review is published daily except Sundays, Mondays and six holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas — holidays are observed on Tuesday when they fall on a Monday) by The Graphic Printing Co. Inc., 309 W. Main St., Portland, Indiana 47371. Periodical postage paid (USPS 125820) at Portland, Indiana, Postmaster: Send address changes to The Commercial Review, 309 W. Main St., PO. Box 1049, Portland, Indiana 47371 or call (260) 726-8141.

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

www.thecr.com

Area churches are listed with location, pastor and phone number, services and website or email address.

All services are Sunday, unless otherwise indicated.

This Area Church page is made possible through the courtesy of the following sponsors!



Great Food,
No Bull!

1204 W. Votaw Portland
(260) 726-9647

Portland Insurance
Insurance made simple

(260) 726-9345
115 E. Main St.
Portland, IN

www.portins.com

pak-a-sak
and
SUBWAY
Dunkirk • Redkey • Albany
Open
24 Hours

**Baird-Freeman
Funeral Home**

The Teeter Family

221 N. Meridian St.
Portland, IN 47371
(260) 726-7171

**FAITH
CAN MOVE
MOUNTAINS**

Auto Parts
Used Auto and
Truck Parts
www.williamsautopartsinc.com
1127 S. Detroit Ave.
Portland, IN 47371
(260) 726-8001
All inventory online

**In this house
of worship,
we honor
EQUALITY.
JUSTICE.
LOVE.
RESPECT.**

Swiss Village, Inc.
Independent Living Homes
Independent Living Apartments
Residential & Assisted Living
Short Term Rehabilitation
Healthcare & Dementia Care
Therapy Services
Res. # 350-527-5123 • www.swissvillageinc.com

**Where the
MEMBERS
are the OWNERS**
CROSSROADS
TANDEM TRAILER SALES
(765) 768-6554
18918 N. Highway 157 N
Dunkirk, IN

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

**Bellefontain
United Methodist**

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

Bluff Point Friends

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

Boundary St. Paul

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

Bryant Wesleyan

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

**Calvary United
Methodist**

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

Christ Chapel

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

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

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

**Church of
God
of Prophecy**

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

**Church of the
Brethren**

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

**Church of
the Living God**

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

Collett Nazarene

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

Cornerstone Baptist

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

**Cornerstone Church of
Pennville**

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

Dunkirk Nazarene

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

Evangelical Methodist

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

**Fairview United
Methodist/Jay County**

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

Faith Community

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

Family Worship Center

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

Fellowship Baptist

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

First Church of Christ

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

**First Community
Baptist**

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

First Free Will Baptist

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

First Presbyterian

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

**Fort Recovery Church
of the Nazarene**

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

**Fort Recovery
United Methodist**

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

**Full Gospel
Lighthouse Tabernacle**

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

**Geneva First
United Methodist**

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

Geneva Nazarene

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

Gilead Church

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

Services: 10:30 a.m.

**Hickory Grove
Church of the
Brethren**

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

**High Street
United Methodist**

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

Holy Trinity Catholic

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

**Hopewell of
Life Ministries**

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

**Immaculate
Conception Catholic**

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

Kingsley Full Gospel

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

Faith Community

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

**Mary Help
of Christians**

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

**Mount Tabor
Community Church**

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

**Mount Zion
United Methodist**

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

**New Beginnings
Holiness Church
of Blaine**

4017 W. 200 South
Randy Smith
(260) 251-2406
Services: 10 a.m., 6 p.m.
nblholiness.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., Port-
land
Bob Graham
(260) 726-7777
Bible class: 9:15 a.m.
Services: 10:20 a.m.
Bible School: 6 p.m. Wednes-
day
portlandcoc.com

**Portland First
Church of Nazarene**

SPEED BUMP



Dave Coverly

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



By Bil Keane

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Imaginative defense

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.

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 took 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 overtime, South had to pay off to a well-reasoned opening lead.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.

©2026 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



00 CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED ADS

260-726-8141
ADVERTISING RATES
20 Word Minimum

Effective 07/01/2018:

Minimum charge....

\$12.40

1 insertion.....62¢/word

2 insertions.....81¢/word

3 insertions.....96¢/word

6 insertions.... \$1.14/word

12 insertions. \$1.52/word

26 insertions. \$1.77/word

Includes

Online.....FREE

Classified Display \$6.95/

per column inch

No borders or logos

allowed on Classified

Page

Card of Thanks Up to

100 words.... \$13.00

In Memory Up to 100

words.... \$13.00

Advertising Deadline is

12:00 p.m. the day prior

to publication.

Pre-Payment required

for: Rummage sales,

business opportunities,

jobs wanted, boats and

sporting equipment,

wanted to rent, motor-

ized vehicles, real estate

and mobile homes.

40 NOTICES

PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to check your ad the first day it appears. We cannot be responsible for more than one day's incorrect copy. We try hard not to make mistakes, but they do happen, and we may not know unless you call to tell us. Call before 12:00 pm for corrections. The Commercial Review, 309 W Main, Portland, Indiana 260-726-8141.

FREE TO PLAY POKER PERIL

Tournament. Saturday, January 24, 2026 7:00 PM. Located: Vineyard at Evergreen Farm, 4949 Siegrist Jutter Rd, Coldwater, OH

60 SERVICES

J. L. CONSTRUCTION & ROOFING LLC. Amish crew. Custom built homes, new garages, pole barns, interior/ exterior remodeling, drywall, windows, doors, siding, roofing, foundations. 260-726-5062, leave message.

GOODHEW'S ALL SEASON Construction- Specializing in standing seam metal roofs. When Quality Counts, Count On Us. A company you can trust. Member of the BBB. New Installation and repairs. Call Rodney Thornbury, owner 765-509-0191

SEAMSTRESS NAN HOMEMADE Sewing and Alterations, Quilts, Baby Blankets, Appliqués, Zippers, Hemming, Memory T-Shirt, Special Orders, Wedding & Prom Gowns. 260.766.9334

The Commercial Review

Newspaper Delivery

Comments or

Problems?

Call our

Circulation

Hotline

260-251-9588

After 4:00 p.m.

Leave Message Please.

Carrier Delivery

Deadlines

Tuesday - Friday:

6:00 p.m.

Saturday Morning:

8:00 a.m.

The Commercial Review

309 West Main St.,

Portland.

Front Office Hours:

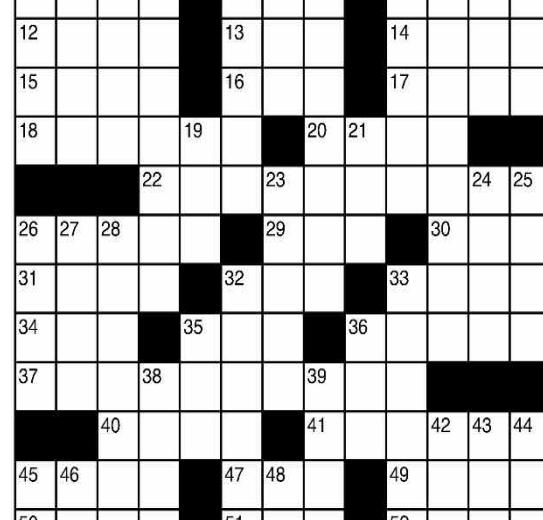
Tuesday - Friday

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Circulation Department

Hours:

10:00 am - 4:00 p.m.



Yesterday's answer 1-22

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35	Architect	54	Big bird of	11	Rep.'s
1	Nile	I.M.	55	Australia	rival	
vipers	36	Pocket	55	Santa's	19	Friendly
5	Priestly	bread	ride	leader?	21	Calif.
garment	37	Hawaii's	DOWN	clock	clock	
8	Sleeping	nickname	40	setting	setting	
12	"George	41	Faction	23	Fess up	
	of the	Spring	40	4	"I did it!"	
	Jungle"	holiday	41	2	25	Barnyard
	elephant	45	Greek	3	females	feeder
13	Spring	cheese	47	4	6	26
	month	month	49	Italian	— pinch	“— pinch
14	Fill	40	Introduction	5	of salt ...	of salt ...
completely	41	to	to	7	27	Repast
	market-	42	marketing?	Events	8	Fraud
15	Rwandan	43	people	of	9	Hand
people	44	Former	44	the	signal	signal
16	Glutton	45	Yankee	51	33	Spanish
	17	Swindle	slugger,	52	celebrations	celebrations
	18	Nail	to fans	53	35	Lobbying
	polish	46	4	Old	org.	org.
20	Oil	47	Half of bi-	salts	5	Sch. fund-
cartel	cartel	48	49	10	raising	raising
22	Rhode	50	Introduction	JFK	group	gp.
Island's	Island's	51	to	info	42	Relate
nickname	nickname	52	market-	32	North	
26	Acid	53	people	33	Sea	
in	proteins	54	4	34	feeder	
29	NYPD	55	5	35	44	45
investi-	investi-	56	6	36	Historic	Peruse
gator	gator	57	7	37	period	
30	Unpro-	58	8	38	46	
cessed	cessed	59	9	39	47	
31	Actress	60	10	40	48	
Moore	Moore	61	11	41	49	
32	Baseball	62	12	42	50	
execs	execs	63	13	43	51	
33	Lose					

Jay eighth grade boys hoops stayed unbeaten, see roundup below

Sports

FRHS girls basketball faces Coldwater today, see Sports on tap

Page 8

www.thecr.com

The Commercial Review

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

IT'S ALL UP TO YOU... PEOPLE'S CHOICE

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 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.

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
Appliance sales
Auto parts store
Auto service and repair
Bank/credit union
Boutique/clothing
Car dealership
Chiropractor
Coffee spot
Community Event
Construction
Convenience store
Daycare facilities
Dentists
Doctor
Entertainment option
Farm implement sales
Financial advisor
Florist
Funeral home
Furniture
Gas station

Greenhouse
Gym
Hair salon/barber
Hardware store
Home improvement
Industry
Insurance
Landscaping
Law office
Nail salon
New business
Non-profit organization
Park
Photographer
Pizza
Real estate and auction
Restaurant (non-pizza)
Veterinarian and pet services
Other
(is there something that doesn't quite fit the above)

To vote, visit thecr.com, winchesternewsgazette.com or hartfordcitynewstimes.com and click on the "People's choice" link.

(Rather than making this multiple choice, we are leaving each category open-ended. That leaves the voting up to you, the readers, and avoids the possibility that we might leave off an option that would be worthy of the winning vote.)

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.

To advertise in People's Choice ...

Contact Lindsey at L.Cochran@thecr.com or (260) 726-8141

Advertising options:

Six columns by 10.5 inches full color (limited availability): \$500
Six columns by 10.5 inches black and white: \$300
Three columns by 10.5 inches black and white: \$200
3 columns by 5 inches black and white: \$125
3 columns by 3 inches black and white: \$75

Huelskamp, Homan led FR past Starfires

athletic 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.

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.

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.

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.

Karsyn Schwieterman

The Allen County Ath-