

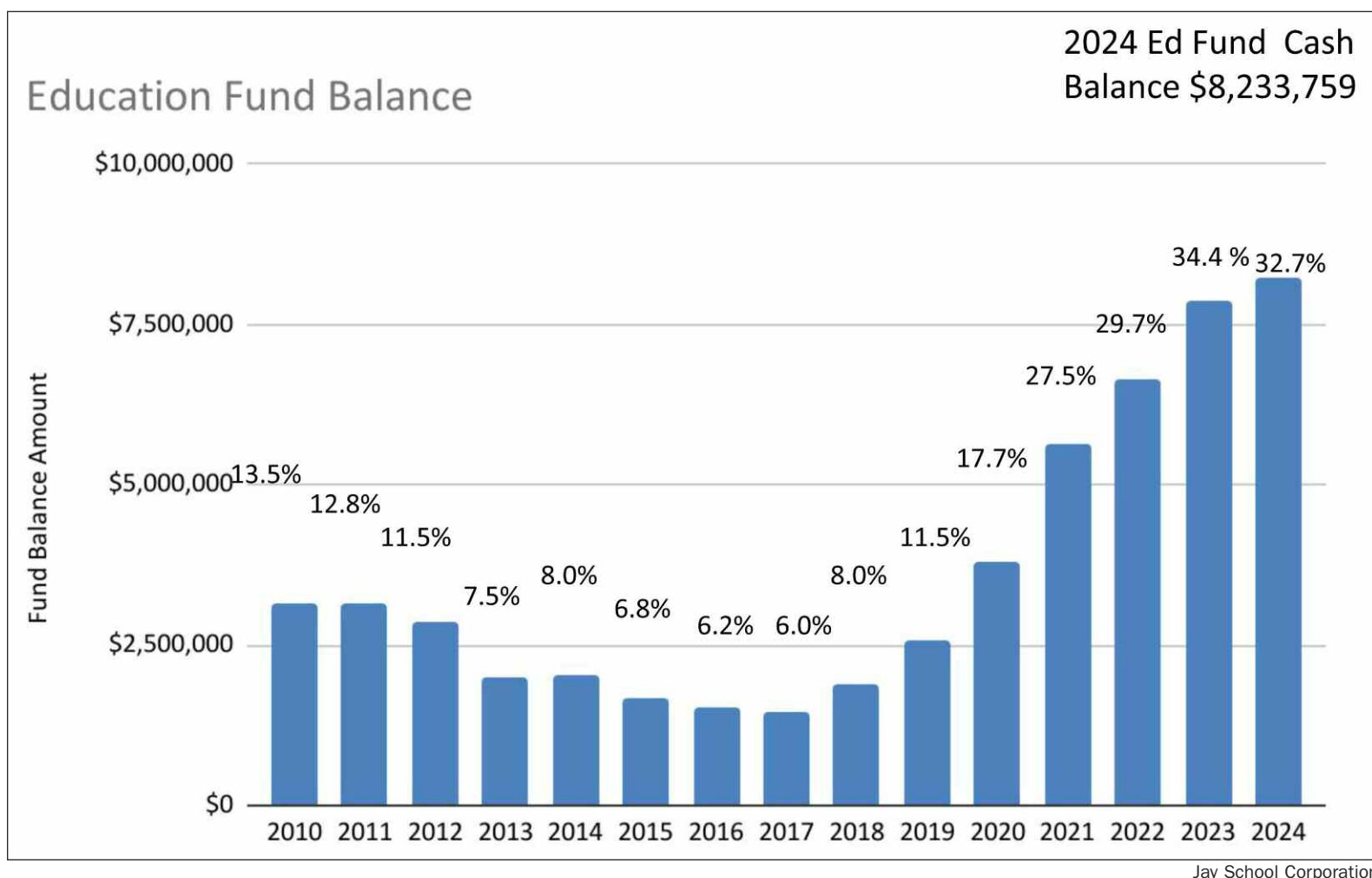
The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Strong finances



Jay School Corporation's board of finance received its annual report during its meeting Monday. The report shows the education fund with a year-end balance of \$8.23 million, the highest in more than 30 years. The corporation's operations fund was also at its highest point in more than three decades. The above graphic shows education fund cash balances over the course of the last 15 years. They have grown from about \$1.5 million in 2017.

School corporation's year-end cash balances in its education, operations funds were up again in 2024

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

School finances have continued to show growth.

The Jay School Corporation Board of Finance on Monday received its annual report showing the education and operations funds with balances of \$8.2 million and \$6.4 million, respectively.

Business manager Shannon Current told the board of finance, made up of the seven members of Jay School Board, that both funds had positive cash flows in 2024.

The education fund balance went up by about \$300,000 after finishing 2023 at \$7.9 million. The operations fund total went up by more than \$1.7 million after finishing 2023 at \$4.68 million.

In both cases, cash balances were at their highest mark in

more than 30 years. (Both had set records last year as well.)

Jay Schools superintendent Jeremy Gulley noted that the board has a goal of keeping cash balances of at least 20% of annual expenses. Both major funds are currently above that threshold, with the education fund at 32.7% and the operations fund at 59.6%.

The rainy day fund came in at \$1.82 million (no change from 2023) and the food service fund came in at \$823,153.

Board member Jon Eads asked about the fund, which has grown from \$70,782.36 at the end of 2016.

Gulley said the closure of schools — the corporation has consolidated from 10 school buildings to six — brought savings that allowed funds to be moved into rainy day. He also noted that funds from the sale of the former administration build-

ing on Tyson Road that is now the home of Brigade went into the rainy day fund.

The food service fund was down from \$1.34 million at the end of 2023 after funds were spent on the renovation of the commons at Jay County Junior-Senior High School and other upgrades to food service across the corporation.

Current also shared a report on investments, noting that the school corporation earned \$953,630.16 in interest in 2024. (Interest goes into the operations fund, which explains most of its increase last year.) Interest has seen a significant uptick in recent years, from \$25,304 in 2021 to \$238,081 in 2022 to \$761,207 in 2023 before pushing close to \$1 million last year.

"That's a difference maker," said Gulley.

In the previous decade, the

largest amount of interest earned in a single year was \$139,703.

Despite the positive outlook, Gulley cautioned board members that budget surpluses and year-end balance increases are not guaranteed to continue. He pointed out that costs go up while Jay School Corporation enrollment continues to decline. Since sitting at about 3,000 for the 2020-21 school year, enrollment has dipped to 2,817.

"So good news, a string of good news," said Gulley. (Year-end balances have increased every year since 2017.) "But we just can't say for sure."

He told the board that a review of finances will be held each month in order to evaluate what might need to be done to keep the corporation in a strong position.

See **Finances** page 5

City agrees to \$\$ for JCDC

Organization will get half in January, and half in July

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

Jay County Development Corporation will be getting some much-needed financial support from the City of Portland.

During its first meeting of 2025 on Monday, Portland City Council agreed to pay its \$50,000 allocation to JCDC in two payments — one in January and the other in July.

The issue was on the city council agenda again at the request of council member Dave Golden, who spoke in support of providing the funding to help JCDC operate and to support its search for a new executive director.

"The vast majority of JCDC funding comes from the commissioners. ... And last year, JCDC received zero from the commissioners," said Golden. "JCDC's looking for a director and I feel like the inaction of the commissioners has kind of forced our hands."

"And I don't want the incoming director to say, 'Where's the financial support from the county, from the cities?' I would like to see us take the lead on this and hopefully the new commissioners will follow suit."

The county, which provides the bulk of JCDC's funding, did not make any payments to the organization in 2024 as the sides were not able to reach a contract agreement.

Council member Matt Goldsworthy offered support for Golden's suggestion of paying out half of the funds in January and the other half in July.

See **City** page 2

Light contract OK'd

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

FORT RECOVERY — Village representatives have been discussing a street lighting agreement for months.

A final version came to Fort Recovery Village Council for approval Monday.

Council authorized village administrator Randy Diller to sign a five-year contract with Miami Valley Lighting of Dayton, Ohio, for continuing to use its street lights across the village.

Miami Valley Lighting offers street light services, which include designing, installing and maintaining lights. The company provides street light services to other communities, including the City of Oakwood, Ohio, and the Vil-

lage of Pittsburg, Ohio, as well as the University of Dayton.

Out of the 250 lights on public grounds and streets in Fort Recovery, Miami Valley Lighting owns about 75. Diller explained the village spends about \$3 a month per light it owns and approximately \$15 to \$20 per light Miami Valley Lighting owns. The village has been slowly purchasing its own lights over the

years, and Diller shared hopes for the village to remove most of the remaining 75 lights owned by the company within the next five years.

Also Monday, council heard Ohio Environmental Protection Agency recently inspected the village's water plant and gave the village a notice of violation regarding its sand filters.

See **OK'd** page 5

Five-year agreement approved with Miami Valley Lighting



Tribune News Service/Lexington Herald-Leader/Tasha Poullard

Snow-covered

A man attempts to dig his vehicle out of the snow on New Circle Rd on Sunday in Lexington, Kentucky. On day two of Winter Storm Blair, the University of Kentucky announced it would be closed Tuesday and in-person activities will be canceled. About 4 inches of snow fell Sunday and Monday in the Lexington area.

Deaths

Shirley Litmer, 76, Fort Recovery
Details on page 2.

Weather

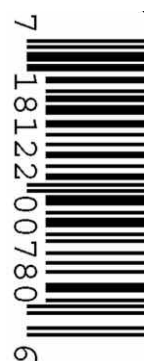
The temperature in Jay County hovered between 21 and 27 degrees Monday. Tonight's forecast calls for a low in the single digits. Skies will be mostly sunny Thursday with a high around 20. A chance of snow is expected Friday. See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

The United States Postal Service will be closed Thursday in observance of a day of mourning following the death of former President Jimmy Carter. Those who receive their newspaper by mail will not have delivery Thursday. The Thursday and Friday newspapers will be delivered together on Friday.

Coming up

Thursday — Results from the JCHS wrestling match against Coldwater.
Friday — Coverage of this week's Jay County Council meeting.
Saturday — Details from the diving competition at the Jay County Invitational.



Obituaries

Shirley Litmer

March 23, 1948-Jan. 5, 2025
Shirley E. Litmer, age 76, of Fort Recovery, Ohio, passed away peacefully at her home on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. She was born on March 23, 1948, in Greenville, Ohio, to the late Daniel and Lovina (Bruner) Shaner. Shirley is survived by her husband of 57 years, Ronald P. Litmer, whom she married on July 22, 1967; her children, Sandra Litmer and Kevin Drosch of Chickasaw, Ohio, Tina Lit-

mer and Duane Crabtree of Fort Recovery, and Joshua and Allie Litmer of Celina, Ohio; her son-in-law, Marvin “Keith” Lewis of Fort Recovery; her granddaughters, Shaylyne Litmer and Calleigh Crabtree, both of Fort Recovery; her sister, Diana and Bill Hinshaw of Portland; her sister-in-law, Linda Shaner of Rossburg, Ohio; and her in-laws, Tom and Eileen Litmer



Litmer

of Fort Recovery, Dolores Fortman of Fort Recovery, Kenny and Linda Litmer of Monroe, Vern and June Litmer of Miamisburg, Ohio, and Linda and Bill Stout of St. Henry, Ohio. In addition to her parents, Shirley was preceded in death by her daughter, Deborah Lewis; her brother, Ronald Shaner; her brother-in-law, Jim Fortman; and her father-in-law and mother-in-law, Clarence and Rose Litmer. Shirley was a 1966 graduate of Fort Recovery High School.

She retired from Fort Recovery Industries, but her favorite job was being a homemaker and devoted wife, mother and grandmother. Shirley enjoyed scrapbooking and was a member of a nationwide group called Creative Memories. She also enjoyed crocheting and spending time with her family. A celebration of Shirley’s life will be held at a later date. Memorial contributions may be given to EverHeart Hospice, 1350 N. Broadway St., Greenville, OH, or the Cancer Association of Mercer County,

P.O. Box 624, Celina, OH 45822. Condolences may be shared with the family by visiting brockmanboeckmanfh.com.
.....
The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services. There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.

CR almanac

| Thursday 1/9 | Friday 1/10 | Saturday 1/11 | Sunday 1/12 | Monday 1/13 |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | | | |
| 22/15 | 27/21 | 25/20 | 30/26 | 28/14 |
| Mostly sunny on Thursday, when the low at night may be in the teens. | There's a slight chance of snow on Friday with a higher chance at night. Cloudy. | Mostly cloudy skies are expected Saturday, when the high may hit the mid 20s. | Another day of mostly cloudy skies is in the forecast for Sunday. | Mostly cloudy skies on Monday with highs in the upper 20s. |

Lotteries

| | |
|---|--|
| Powerball Monday 17-34-46-66-67 Power Ball: 14 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$240 million | Daily Four: 3-1-4-1 Quick Draw: 2-8-15-18-20-23-24-34-38-42-52-58-60-62-64-66-68-75-76-77 Cash 5: 4-13-26-36-44 Estimated jackpot: \$275,000 |
| Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$62 million | Ohio Monday Midday Pick 3: 4-9-7 Pick 4: 8-4-0-5 Pick 5: 3-5-4-5-3 Evening Pick 3: 2-4-7 Pick 4: 4-7-7-5 Pick 5: 2-2-9-2-7 Rolling Cash: 21-23-24-27-36 Estimated jackpot: \$150,000 |
| Hoosier Monday Midday Daily Three: 7-7-9 Daily Four: 6-7-0-7 Quick Draw: 1-3-4-6-11-14-21-23-29-32-34-39-44-53-59-65-67-70-74-79 Evening Daily Three: 9-7-2 | |

Markets

| | |
|---|--|
| Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.61 Feb. corn4.63 March corn4.65 | Feb. beans9.99 Wheat 4.93 |
| POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.60 Feb. corn4.63 March corn4.65 | ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.50 Feb. corn4.51 Beans.....9.89 Feb. beans9.93 Wheat5.03 |
| The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.54 Feb. corn4.54 Beans.....9.92 | Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.61 March corn4.61 Beans9.67 March beans9.72 Wheat4.83 |

Today in history

On Jan. 8, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, declared an “unconditional war on poverty in America.”
In 1815, the last major engagement of the War of 1812 came to an end as U.S. forces defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans, not having received word of the signing of a peace treaty.
In 1867, the U.S. House of Representatives joined the Senate in overriding President Andrew Johnson’s veto of the District of Columbia Suffrage Bill, giving Black men in the nation’s capital the right to vote.
In 1935, rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.
In 1972, the Fort Recovery High School boys basketball team clobbered the host Ansonia Tigers 69-45. Fred Aisenbrey led a balanced scoring effort with 15 points.
In 2019, Jay County Health Department urged residents to get flu shots as confirmed cases of the virus were high in Jay County. Officials referred to the influenza virus as “very viable” and said there was a “higher prevalence” of the flu earlier than usual.
—AP and The CR

Citizen’s calendar

| | |
|---|--|
| Wednesday 7 a.m. — Jay County Board of Health, Jay County Health Department, 504 W. Arch St., Portland. 6 p.m. — Jay County Council, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. | 6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St. 6 p.m. — Fort Recovery School Board, community room, high school, 400 E. Butler St. 6 p.m. — Jay County Country Living Advisory Board, 1194 E. 200 North, Portland. 7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St. |
| Monday 9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland. | 7 p.m. — Fort Recovery Park Board, village hall, 201 S. Main St. |

Capsule Reports

Lost control

A Portland man lost control of the vehicle he was driving, causing it to spin and strike the car behind on Indiana 67 near county road 200 East about 5:30 a.m. Monday. Brayden M. Sprunger, 22, Portland, was driving a 2017 Chevrolet Silverado east on Indiana 67 behind a 2009 Toyota Camry driven by 18-year-old Yermi Deivi Velasquez of Portland. Velasquez lost control on a patch of ice on the road, causing the vehicle he was driving to spin 180 degrees and slam into Sprunger’s truck. Sprunger admitted to police he was following Velasquez’s vehicle too closely. Velasquez admitted to driving without a license. The owner of the vehicle, Jesse Y. Gonzalez of Union City, also admitted to not having insurance on the vehicle, according

to a Jay County Sheriff’s Office report.

Velasquez was preliminarily charged with a Class C misdemeanor for operating a vehicle without a license. He was released from Jay County Jail on a \$1,000 bond. The 2009 Toyota Camry was towed. Damage is estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

Flipped truck

A Redkey man complained of head pain after losing control of his vehicle on Indiana 1 and flipping it about 10:36 a.m. Monday. Darren J. Fisher, 18, was driving his 2005 Mazda B-Series truck south on the highway when he began to drift off the right side of the road. He overcorrected, according to a Jay County Sheriff’s Office report,

causing him to go off the east side of the road and flip his truck.

Fisher was trapped in his vehicle, which was towed. Damage is estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Hit tree

A Montpelier woman lost control of her car and crashed into a tree along Indiana 18 in Jay County about 6:30 p.m. Monday. Brittani N. Kirk, 34, was driving a 2003 Dodge Neon west on the highway near county road 750 West when she went off the north side of the road. She overcorrected, causing her to go off the south side of the road and slide into a tree. The vehicle Kirk was driving is registered to Andrew L. Batten of Pennville, and it was towed. Damage is estimated between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

City ...

Continued from page 1
Answering a question from council member Ron May, clerk-treasurer Lori Phillips said the payment to JCDC has traditionally been made in full in July. JCDC board president Angela Paxson explained that the organization currently only has enough funding to get through February. She said her plan is to visit Jay County Commissioners’ meeting on Jan. 27 to talk about funding.

“We can’t effectively hire a new director until we have some committed funding,” she said, noting that requests for assistance with grants, loans and other issues continue to come in to the office. Previous executive director Travis Richards resigned in November but is continuing to assist JCDC on a part-time basis. “Once we meet with the commissioners and hopefully get a commitment, we’ll have a better idea of our timeline,” she added later.

Council member Ashley Hilfiker asked about what would happen if commissioners do not provide funding. Paxson said the organization would have to postpone searching for an executive director and would not have funding to pay current staff. Hilfiker expressed her feeling that with the city doing its part, others need to step up. “I really feel that we can start in the right direction — it’s a new year — start on the right foot with our commissioners,” said Paxson. “And that’s my plan. And I hope and I really do feel like that’s their goal too.”

May expressed his feeling that commissioners would be on board to support the organization. Paxson noted that her conversations with all three commissioners — two are new this year — have been positive.

Mayor Jeff Westlake said he’s supportive of providing the funding, with McClung adding that he wants to make sure JCDC stays afloat.

Council members Michele Brewster, Mike Aker, McClung, Goldsworthy, Golden, Hilfiker and May voted unanimously in favor of providing \$25,000 to JCDC this month with the second payment to come in July.

Commenting later in the meeting, Golden referenced information provided to him from JCDC that shows a return on investment of 1,412%.

“You are providing a fabulous service to our city,” he said.

‘We can’t effectively hire a new director until we have some committed funding.’

—Angela Paxson, JCDC board president

In other business, council:

•Was informed by the mayor following a question from Brewster that the new traffic lights along Meridian Street in the downtown area are now expected to be in place in mid-February. The mayor also expressed some skepticism, as the end date for the project has continued to move. It was originally expected to be complete in November.

•Heard May ask his fellow council members to get

feedback from the public regarding a proposed “social park” at the former site of the Bailey Building at the southwest corner of Main and Commerce streets in Portland. He said his preference would be to see the property, which is currently owned by the city, be sold so it can return to the tax rolls.

•Re-elected McClung as its president.

•Heard McClung comment on a proposal from a state legislator for the elim-

ination of local property taxes in favor of implementing a sales tax on services. He said he is against the proposal, expressing concern about how the sales tax money would be distributed back to the towns, cities, schools and libraries. “My fear is, if we eliminate the property tax, we might be at the beginning of eliminating municipal, local government,” he said.

•Learned from Phillips that there is \$192,981.40 in city funds that were encumbered in 2024 that will be spent in 2025.

•Heard Goldsworthy urge for a “new year, new you” situation for the community to come together and work with each other. “Hopefully we can get started in a better direction for the whole county.”

SERVICES

Today

Boice, Katherine: 4:30 p.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.
Hartman, Philip: 7 p.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.

Friday

Grile, Steven: 6 p.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.

Sunday

Hunt, Ruth Ann: 1:30 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church, 415 N. Main St., Springboro, Ohio.

Service listings provided by

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Jay County Development Corporation

NOW SEEKING:
Executive Director of Economic Development

Responsibilities include serving as the principal industrial/business promoter by providing support for new growth and promoting new enterprises to locate in Jay County, providing leadership and support to develop and implement county-wide plans, and developing ties among Jay County communities and organizations. This position requires a bachelor’s degree in economics, business administration, industrial engineering, or related field with a minimum of three years’ experience in related field.

Interested candidates may see a full job description or learn more at www.jaycountydevelopment.org or by calling 260-726-9311. Resumes may be mailed to 118 S Meridian St, Ste B, Portland, IN 47371 or emailed to jhayes@jaycodev.org.

Learn to embrace change

It can be challenging to support loved ones as they navigate the changes that come with aging.

A local facility is providing insight into how to help with their care and safety.

Adams Woodcrest Assisted Living will host Embracing Change, an event designed to provide families with valuable insights and practice advice for making informed decisions, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 23. Doctor Beth Kaskel will share the presentation, discussing common challenges families face and how assisted living can provide solutions.

To reserve a spot, call (260) 724-3311 or email amy.hake@adamshealthnetwork.org. Reservations are required by Jan. 20.

Joins association

Lillian Johnson is a new

Taking Note

junior member of the American Angus Association.

Junior members of the association, which is headquartered in Missouri, can register cattle, participate in programs and be involved in shows and other regional and national events.

Wool sculptures

There's a wool art exhibit on display now at Arts Place.

Gary Schmitt's "Gravity and Flight: Wool Sculptures" art is now available to view in the High N. Ronald gallery, Jay County

Campus of Arts Place, 131 E. Walnut St., Portland. The free exhibit — it will be on display until Feb. 14 — features various sculptures primarily crafted from wool.

Reading challenge

Jay County Public Library's adult and teen winter reading challenge returns this month.

Challenge cards will be available at the library from Jan. 13 through March 1. Adults and teens must complete at least four spaces on their cards before turning them in for prize drawings. All cards will also be entered into a grand prize drawing for a Kindle Paperwhite.

Also, an after-school activity for children to knit scarves, is slated from 4 to 5 p.m. or 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

Recovering alcoholic questions relationship

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I were together for 11 years, married for six of them. I had an alcohol addiction for the last few years, which led to my being unfaithful. He never drank, so he had a hard time understanding my addiction problem. After I got a DUI, he finally left me.

Two weeks later, he was already in another relationship! We divorced a year later. I have spent the last 14 months changing my life. I have been sober this whole time, attended AA meetings and seen a psychotherapist as well as an addiction therapist. I have been devastated since my husband left. I have lost 20 pounds that I didn't need to lose, and I leave my house only to work. I haven't even entertained the idea of seeing or talking to another man.

My ex has been telling me off and on that he wants to try and work things out with me, which is something I want more than anything. I know I hurt him, and he's no longer the same person. I want to show him I'm different and we can be happy, but he won't fully commit to anything and just keeps hurting me. Should I continue to pursue this or try to find a way to move on? — NOW SOBER IN VIRGINIA

DEAR NOW SOBER: If your sobriety is important to you, you cannot cling to a person who "keeps hurting you." (I wish you had mentioned how he does this, but in the end, you must do what is good for YOU.) Did the way he treated you — or your perception of it — have something to do with your drinking and infidelity?

You stated that he says he wants to work things out. His skittishness may stem from the hurt he experienced because of what you put him through. If you decide to rekindle your relationship, do so only under certain conditions: He must end the relationship with the person he's involved with if they are still together, attend Al-Anon meetings so he can learn more about the disease

Dear Abby



of alcoholism and attend relationship counseling sessions with you.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 64-year-old gay man, originally from the Deep South, living in a large metropolitan area. I have been here for more than 30 years. My problem is, I am unable to keep my cool when talking with my aging parents. I have insisted several times that I do not wish to discuss politics, but my request is ignored by Mom especially because she refuses to acknowledge my sexual orientation. She sings the praises of the most anti-gay politicians with no regard for my feelings. When I try to gently change the subject, most times, she won't let it go.

I have reached the point that I no longer wish to speak to either of my parents. The hurtful things they have said break my heart. Should I follow my gut and cut them off, or continue to remain silent and endure the hurt? I know they won't change. — WOUNDED HEART IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR WOUNDED HEART: Silence helps no one. As you have discovered, it leads only to more of the same. Tell them the hurtful things they have said are heartbreaking. You have already made clear to your mother that you do not wish to discuss politics. This time, tell them that if they raise the subject again, it will be the end of the conversation and you will hang up. If they ignore you and do it again, follow through.

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.

Coffee may protect cognition

American Heart Association News
Tribune News Service

Drinking multiple cups of coffee each day may help prevent cognitive decline in people with a common type of heart rhythm disorder, new research suggests.

The study, recently published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, adds to a body of research dispelling the belief that people with irregular heart rhythms such as atrial fibrillation, or AFib, should be discouraged from drinking caffeinated beverages, the authors said.

"Many myths are around, but our study found no reason to discourage or forbid a patient with AFib from drinking coffee," senior study author Dr. Jürg H. Beer said in a news release. Beer is a professor of medicine and hematology at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. "Instead, say, 'Enjoy, it may even be good for you!'"

AFib affects more than 5 million people in the U.S. and is the most common type of heart rhythm disorder in adults. People with AFib face a higher risk for

cognitive decline, stroke and dementia.

Guidelines for diagnosing and managing AFib, released jointly in 2023 by the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, American College of Clinical Pharmacy and the Heart Rhythm Society, reported no benefit from avoiding coffee to prevent abnormal heart rhythms in people with AFib. However, the guidelines note that abstaining from coffee could reduce symptoms in people for whom caffeine triggers or worsens symptoms such as dizziness and fatigue.

Federal dietary guidelines say three to five 8-ounce cups of black coffee a day can be part of a healthy diet. But the AHA warns that many popular coffee drinks, such as lattes and macchiatos, often include added sugar and fat, making them high in calories.

In the new study, researchers analyzed cognitive assessments for 2,413 people diagnosed with AFib at 14 health centers who enrolled in the Swiss Atrial Fibrillation Cohort Study between

2014 and 2017. Participants, who were an average 73 years old, completed several cognitive tests and reported how many cups of caffeinated coffee they drank during the past 12 months. The researchers did not use a standard cup size, and information was not collected on added sweeteners, creams or flavors.

Researchers also analyzed markers of inflammation, which are associated with both Alzheimer's disease and AFib.

Overall, higher coffee consumption was linked to higher cognitive test scores. Study participants who drank more than five cups of coffee a day scored higher on attention, processing speed and visuomotor coordination than those who drank less than one cup. The cognitive age among those who drank the most coffee was calculated to be 6.7 years younger compared to those who drank the least. And inflammatory markers were more than 20% lower in people who drank more than five cups of coffee a day compared to people who drank less than one cup daily.

Community Calendar

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

Today

WEDNESDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB — Will meet at 8 a.m. in the east room of Richards Restaurant. All women are invited to attend. Includes activities and devotional time.

PING PONG — Will be played from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays at West Jay Community Center.

BRYANT/NEW CORYDON SENIOR CITIZENS — Will meet at 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday at the Bryant Community Center for a carry-in dinner Meat

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

COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT AND FAMILY TRAINING — A non-confrontational, evidence-based intervention for helping families affected by addiction meets at 4 p.m. each Wednesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

JAY COUNTY CIVIC

THEATRE — Holds its regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the boardroom at Arts Place, 131 E. Walnut St., Portland.

PORTLAND EAGLES — Will meet at 6 p.m., on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Eagles' lodge, 320 N. Meridian St., Portland.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Beginnings, a support group for friends and families of alcoholics, will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Zion Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-8229.

A BETTER LIFE - BRANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday at Redkey United Methodist Church, 122 W. Main St. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

Thursday 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.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH JAY HOSPITAL OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet at 6 p.m. the second Thursday of each month in Indiana University Health Jay Hospital Conference Room B. The group is for ostomy and intestinal diversion patients and their friends and family to offer mutual support and learn about the latest products and information.

Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

Tuesday's Solution

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

The objective is to fill a nine-by-nine grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine three-by-three boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.



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Hike brought a jaw-dropping start

Editor's note: This column is being reprinted from Jan. 7, 2015. Jack was a big believer in First Day hikes. They're a wonderful idea, but in Indiana they also take a good amount of commitment. New Year's Day is usually going to be cold and, sometimes, wet and sloppy like it was this year. Still, getting out into nature and fresh air is a great way to spark renewal.

By JACK RONALD
The Commercial Review

It's called a First Day hike. That's because you take the hike on Jan. 1, the first day of the year. I'm not sure when I took my first one. It may have been 10 years ago or thereabouts. All I know is, it was cold. And everyone else in the house thought I was crazy. But for some reason, that New Year's Day, I woke up wanting to take a hike, no matter how cold it was. I felt the need to clear my head, to get away from the mental clutter

Back in the Saddle



ter and junk, and I figured that getting in touch with nature — no matter what the temperature — was the right way to go about it. That first year, I went alone. As I said, everyone else in the house thought I was crazy. And it was great. Sure, I was freezing. January winds were whipping around painfully. But I was alone. I connected with the natural world. And I came back renewed, refreshed and ready to face the year ahead. Oddly enough, it didn't become an annual thing. Some years it seemed important. Other years it didn't. And it wasn't always a solitary event. Connie has come with me a

time or two. Even then, we don't talk much when we're out there on the First Day. Instead, we listen. We look. We get a better sense of where we fit into the scheme of things. Thursday, the two of us headed up to the Loblolly Wetlands Nature Preserve. We bundled up, though I'd hiked in colder conditions. Still, long johns and extra layers made sense. So did my down parka, which I've had for roughly 20 years. Connie opted for earmuffs. I wore a wool cap (remembering conversations with my old friend Jay Miller: "Where's your hat?") and had a balaclava tucked in my pocket if the wind was too fierce. As we drove out, I wondered if anyone else would be there. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has been promoting First Day hikes in state parks the past several years. There was one that I knew of at Oubache State Park in Wells County, but for me that First Day is best addressed in ones and twos, not in groups.

I was pleased, then, when we found the parking lot on county road 250 West north of Ind. 18 empty. It would be just the two of us. We headed east, through the sedge fields toward the pond and the woods, listening to the wind in the trees and the music made by the rustling grasses. Then we took what's called the Upland Trail, though it's only hilly by Jay County standards. It wound north and east up through the woodlands beyond the pond. Before we'd gone far, we flushed some deer. One at first, then two, then a third and finally a fourth. They headed south out of our way. A couple more were flushed as we made our way out of the woodlands and back to the path that goes around one section of wetlands. The last time we'd been out that way the path was muddy and mucky, but this time it was frozen, so we extended the hike and wandered around the lowland.

As we went, the birds announced our arrival: Sparrows, cardinals and blue jays. Nothing special to anyone with a backyard bird feeder. Then, for some reason, I paused to look to my left. We were walking between the wetland and the Loblolly Ditch. Technically, it may be the Loblolly Creek, but at that point it is simply a ditch. I looked down into the ditch to my left and saw it: Roughly 12 feet away, a great blue heron stood in the flowing water. Maybe he was dozing. Maybe he was watching for lunch to go swimming by. At any rate a second or two after I saw him, he became aware of me. And he unfolded those magnificent wings and stretched up toward the sky above the ditch and took flight. And I stood there, camera around my neck with its lens cap on, my jaw dropped and mouth agape. And I remembered why a First Day hike can be such a good, good thing.

To shorten war, tighten sanctions

Bloomberg Opinion
Tribune News Service

As Bloomberg News has reported, President Joe Biden is considering ramping up sanctions on Russia before he leaves office, hoping to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin ahead of possible talks to end the war in Ukraine. As with previous decisions to loosen restrictions on Kyiv's use of U.S. weapons, such a shift would be overdue — but welcome nonetheless. If negotiations to end Putin's brutal invasion are to take place, then the imperative for Western democracies must be to strengthen Ukraine's hand first. Outside of greater military support, it would be hard to send a more powerful message of resolve than to squeeze the oil and gas revenue that funded nearly one-third of Russia's federal budget in 2023.

Russia is arguably the most sanctioned country in the world, with measures hitting everything from transport to finance, energy and technology. It may also now be the most adept at sanctions-busting. Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and other former Soviet states have seen rocketing trade as transshipment hubs for Western luxury goods, from leather handbags to Mercedes-Benz sedans. Meanwhile, China has helped keep the Russian war machine running with raw materials, microchips, drone parts and other dual-use technologies.

Perhaps the most significant failure has been an oil price cap, put in place to curb Putin's revenue without destabilizing global supply. While the scheme initially worked roughly as designed, limiting sales to less than \$60 per barrel, Russia has long since adapted. It has procured access to a "shadow fleet" of hundreds of vessels, which rely on either non-Western suppliers of maritime insurance and other services, or self-declared "attestations" that they are complying with the cap, in order to transport Russian oil.

Attempts to tighten enforcement have either been performative or ineffective. Meanwhile, China, India and Turkey have done a

Guest Editorial

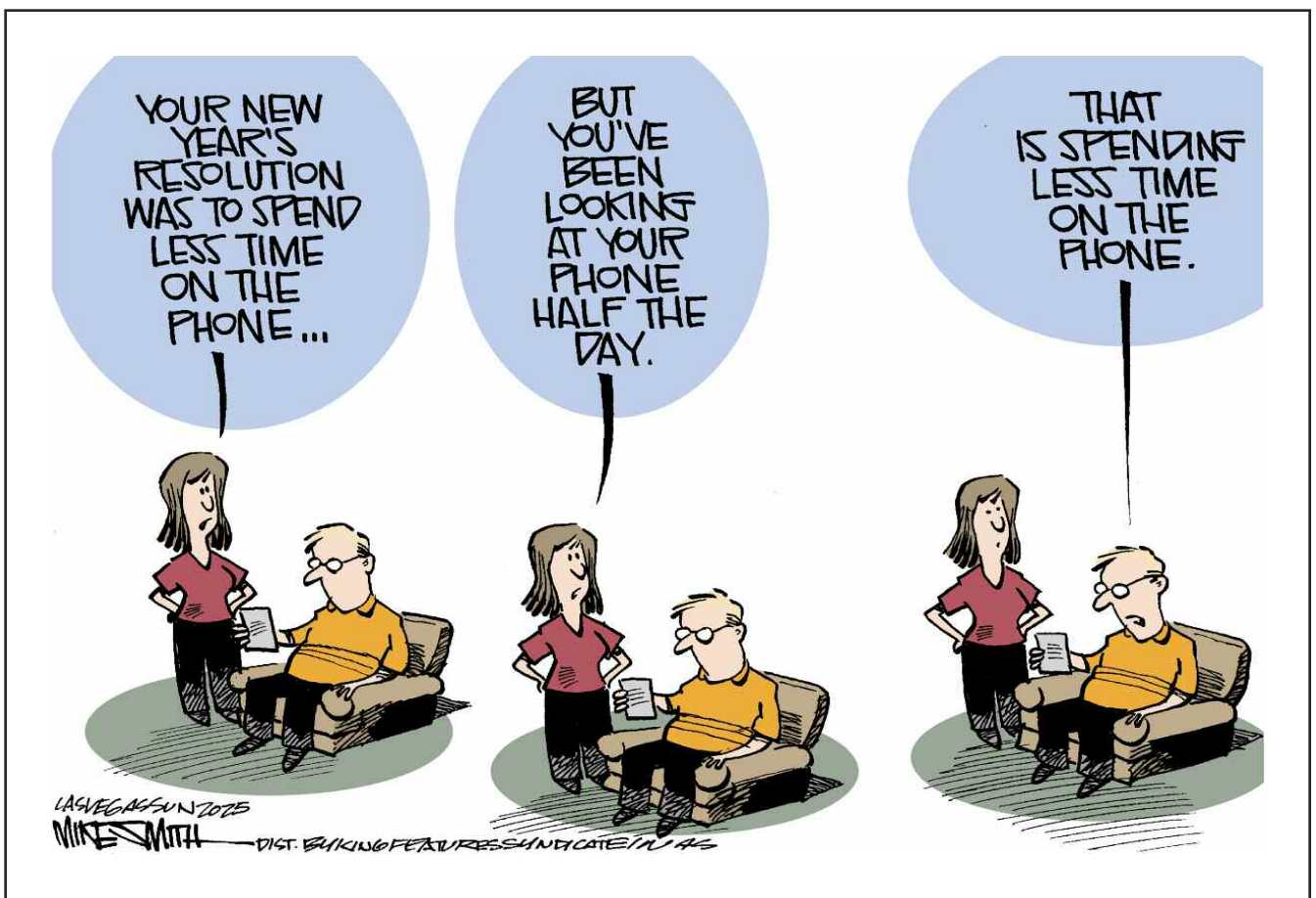
booming business turning that crude into jet fuel and other petroleum products that are then sold legally into the European Union, U.S. and elsewhere.

Sanctioning more shadow tankers should limit the overall number available to Putin. To have a real impact, though, Western countries will have to target buyers, including the refiners buying oil above the price cap and the financial institutions facilitating such purchases.

Conditions are fortuitous: With crude prices hovering around \$75 per barrel, any disruption in supplies should be manageable. The bigger challenge will be diplomatic. India, which the U.S. is cultivating as a security partner, already resents having to comply with American sanctions on Iran and other nations, while China has shown itself increasingly willing to retaliate against U.S. strictures. Giving companies and banks, say, a reasonable window to act before suffering secondary sanctions might ease some frictions.

Meanwhile, the EU should standardize enforcement measures, which differ by member state, and ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to the effort. Requiring shipowners to submit more detailed paperwork, with breakdowns for various services, would make it harder to falsify attestations.

Sanctions are nearly always subject to leaks and cheats. Nevertheless, they have raised the costs of war for Putin, whose economy is under serious strain. They also provide Ukraine and Western leaders — including self-avowed dealmaker Donald Trump — some much-needed bargaining power. In what time he has left, Biden should aim to leave his successor as much of that leverage as he can.



Death penalty should end

By BRANDON GARRETT
The Charlotte Observer
Tribune News Service

Across the country, death sentences began a steep and steady decline twenty-five years ago. Today, just a relic of the prior practice remains in a handful of scattered counties, which maintain the practice at great public expense. North Carolina is no exception to this national trend. The death penalty is at the end of its rope. There are good reasons why.

As a law professor who works to promote effective policy, it is clear to me that many of our responses to crime are based on inertia and emotion rather than solid evidence. That is especially true for the death penalty, which has no deterrent effect, costs taxpayers dearly and is riddled with errors and biases.

That is why Gov. Roy Cooper's commutation of 15 death sentences to life without parole sentences bears great significance. Cooper is the first governor in the history of North Carolina's modern death penalty to grant more than two such commutations. With his action, Cooper acknowledged, in detailing a series of factors these cases implicated, the death penalty's flaws and the responsibility of elected leaders to move away from this failed policy. His death row commutations, alongside other commutations and pardons, are part of a larger effort to move toward smarter approaches to public safety.

In 2020, Cooper created the Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice, a huge step towards addressing racial inequities embedded in our criminal system. In 2021, he created the Juvenile Sentence Review Board to begin to ameliorate excessive sentences imposed on children.

Brandon Garrett



In 2023, he formed the Office of Violence Prevention, which takes a public health approach to preventing violence by strengthening communities. Research shows these types of tactics do far more to prevent future violence than excessive prison sentences or executions.

Now, Cooper is leading the way on addressing North Carolina's oversized death row. Before these 15 commutations, it housed 136 people, nearly all of whom were sentenced more than 20 years ago. Today, capital trials are rare and juries almost never choose death sentences. In 2024, just three death penalty trials occurred with no new death sentences. A new Gallup poll found death penalty support continuing to erode among all groups, but especially among young people.

Most on death row were tried in a different era, when North Carolina had some of the highest death sentencing rates in the country and an unreasonable, and later repealed, law forcing prosecutors to pursue death in every aggravated first-degree murder. This law, unique in the nation, resulted in dozens of death sentences a year, mostly handled by overburdened and underpaid defense attorneys because North Carolina did not create a statewide public defense service until 2001.

The creation of Indigent Defense

Services was one of many reforms in the late 1990s and early 2000s that transformed death penalty trials. In my research, I have found that adequate resources for defense offices can play a huge role in death sentencing. Yet, most of those now awaiting execution predated those reforms. In more recent years, litigation under the Racial Justice Act has also raised serious questions about the role of race in North Carolina's death sentences.

It will take visionary actions like Cooper's to ensure that executions based on unfair and racially biased trials are never carried out. Several years ago, Virginia ceased its use of the death penalty because the costly practice had effectively ended on the ground.

Many more cases raise the same factors as the 15 that the Governor addressed. I hope that the Governor's action will only be the start of a concerted effort to take legal action to move North Carolina away from the death penalty. On the ground, our communities have already largely severed our ties to this ineffective policy. We should instead focus our resources and energy on finding solutions to violence that hold offenders accountable while actually making our communities safer. Other leaders should take a cue from Cooper, who has shown a willingness to enact smart public safety policy with justice as a guiding principle.

.....
Garrett is the L. Neil Williams Professor of Law, at Duke University School of Law and the director of the Wilson Center for Science and Justice.

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—Thomas Jefferson

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Tribune News Service/Getty Images/AFP/Anthony Wallace

Supporting Yoon

Supporters of impeached South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol react during a rally near his residence in Seoul on Monday. South Korean investigators trying to arrest suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol have asked for an extension to the warrant that expired Monday, with the embattled leader holed up in his residence.

Finances ...

Continued from page 1
Board members Ron Laux, Donna Geesaman, Marcie Vormohr, Chip Phillips, Chad Towell, Aaron Clark and Eads also approved First Bank of Berne and First Merchants Bank as depositories. (It was the first meeting for new board members Towell, Eads and Clark, all of whom were uncontested in the November election. They take over the seats previously held by Vickie Reitz, Jason Phillips and Phil Ford, all of whom did not seek re-election.)

During its organizational meeting before the board of finance meeting, board members elected Ron Laux as president, Donna Geesaman as vice president and Marcie Vormohr as secretary.

The board also made the following reappointments: Josh Atkinson of Coldren, Frantz & Sprunger as corporation attorney; Amy Matthews of Church, Church, Hittle & Antrim as legal counsel on an as-needed basis; Shannon Current as treasurer; Irene Taylor as deputy treasurer; Trent Paxson, Current and Taylor as authorized users of the safe deposit box; and Current and Taylor as small claims courts representatives.

Gulley appointed Geesaman, Phillips and Eads to the board's insurance committee and Laux appointed himself, Geesaman and Vormohr to the negotiations committee. Laux also appointed Jon Eads as the board's legislative delegate.

The board also approved the hiring of Ava Stockton as a vocational agriculture teacher at Jay County Junior-Senior High School. It accepted the resignation of high school physical education/health teacher Brad Horn.

Board members were also reminded to fill out and/or update conflict of interest statements.

OK'd ...

Continued from page 1
"They are noticing that the sand filters are getting too much growth too quickly," said Diller. He explained OEPA is requiring the village to hire an engineering firm to conduct a study on the filters, which Diller reminded council will be eliminated if the village decides to move forward with a project that involves switching the village's water softening process to reverse osmosis membrane treatment. (Currently, it uses a lime and caustic soda treatment.)

In related news, council approved a \$9,675 pay request from Marvin Gnagy of PMG Consulting and Rob Shoaf of Shoaf Consulting. Gnagy and

Shoaf are putting together final design plans related to the water plant project.

Also, Diller noted he and water supervisor Aidan O'Dell will meet with Eagon and Associates on Jan. 17 to discuss plans and possible locations for a third well. Diller explained their next steps will be contacting property owners and finalizing a plan, which is required prior to submitting details for the water plant project.

In other business, council members Al Post, Cliff Wendel, Scott Pearson, Erik Fiely, Greg Schmitz and Luke Knapke:

•Decided to move council's next regular meeting to 6 p.m. Jan. 20. (Last month, council scheduled a public hearing for

6:30 p.m. Jan. 20 to discuss a request for a zoning map amendment from Brandon and Amanda Wierick for their property at 105 S. Elm St.)

•Approved a \$105,202 pay request from Caldwell Tanks for work related to installing a second water tower in the village. Council also agreed to transfer the dollars between funds to pay the company, which estimates the project should be completed by July.

•Received officer Haiden Stidham's resignation letter, effective Dec. 31.

•Approved various appointments from mayor Dave Kaup, including: Post as the village's representative on Southwest Mercer Fire District; Kaup as

the village's representative on Southern Mercer County Joint Ambulance District; Roberta Staugler as records training officer for council; Lori Koch for another two-year term on income tax board; Jose Faller for another five-year term on park board and Steve Diller to fill Bill Bechtol's term — Bechtol, who has been on park board since its formation in 1981 and served as president since '93, recently retired from the position — through the end of 2026; Tina Bechtol and Rose Cain both for another two-year term on design review board; and Ron Koppelman for a three-year term on tree commission.

•Appointed Post as village council president.

Bill expands public benefits

By JENNIFER SHUTT
States Newsroom
statesnewsroom.com

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden has expanded Social Security benefits for more than 2 million Americans by signing broadly bipartisan legislation that Congress approved late last year.

The ceremony on Sunday marked one of the last times Biden is expected to sign major legislation as president, since Congress is now controlled by Republicans and his term is set to end on Jan. 20, when President-elect Donald Trump takes the oath of office.

"By signing this bill, we're extending Social Security benefits for millions of teachers ... and other public employees, and their spouses and survivors," Biden said. "That means an estimated average of \$360 per month increase. That's a big deal."

The nearly 2.5 million people covered under the new law, he said, would "receive a lump sum payment of thousands of dollars to make up for the

shortfall in benefits they should have gotten in 2024."

The House voted 327-75 in November to pass the bill and the Senate voted 76-20 in December to send the bill to Biden.

The new law eliminates the windfall elimination provision and government pension offset that for decades had reduced the amount some Americans receive in Social Security benefits.

Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who attended the signing ceremony at the White House, released a written statement saying she was "pleased" that "these unfair provisions in our Social Security system have finally been repealed."

"This is a victory for thousands of teachers, first responders, public servants, and the countless advocates who fought for years to correct this unfairness," Collins wrote. "For too long, the WEP and GPO have denied retirees and their spouses the Social Security benefits ..."



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SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly

A THIRD SHOW TO BINGE? ARE YOU SURE?

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

1-8
"There he is! Somebody run upstairs and stomp on the floor!"

Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

It takes two to tango

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ J 10 8
♥ Q 10
♦ 9 8 5
♣ K Q 10 7 2

EAST
♠ A 7
♥ J 8 6 5 3
♦ Q 6
♣ A 8 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q 9 6 5 3
♥ A
♦ A J 4
♣ J 6 5

The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
4♠

Opening lead — nine of clubs.

There are many worthwhile conventions that enable a good defensive pair to score all the tricks to which they're entitled. Some players ignore these conventions, relying more on instinct than science, but this is a dangerous way to play the game.

Take the present deal, which features top-notch partnership defense. West leads a club, East winning dummy's queen with the ace. East, diagnosing the lead as a possible singleton, returns the three of clubs, ruffed by West with the deuce.

East's return of the three, rather than just any club, is conventional. It says that, as between hearts and diamonds, he would prefer that West lead the lower-ranking suit next. (Had East preferred a heart return, he would have led the eight of clubs to ask for the higher-ranking suit.)

Accordingly, West leads the diamond three to East's queen and South's ace. Declarer plays a trump to dummy's jack and East's ace, and now East has a genuine problem.

If he thinks West has another trump, East should return a club; but if he thinks West has no more trumps, his best chance is a diamond return. With only his own 13 cards to rely on, East might easily go wrong and hand South the contract. But another convention, the trump echo, comes to his rescue.

West's ruff with the two of spades, followed later by the play of the four, denies a holding of three trumps. If West had started with the 6-4-2, for example, he would have ruffed the club at trick two with the four and later played the deuce to indicate possession of a third trump.

East therefore returns a diamond at trick five, and four spades goes down two. With a club return, South makes the contract.

Tomorrow: The rabbit-in-the-hat trick.
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CRYPTOQUIP

T N E L F H N W E I G H F K N S N P U
R N D R I I Y H D W M Z L G U Q P I M N W G

I P R L M, Q N I Q X N Z L S N E L X X N Y
K N L E L P T W S I P N.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN SEVERAL RESEARCH LABS ARE CULTIVATING SIMILAR BACTERIA, THERE MIGHT BE A CULTURE WAR.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals P

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Banner on "The View" fig. | 1 Two-stroke drumbeat |
| 5 Invoice | 2 Misplace |
| 8 Experts | 3 Border on |
| 12 Earring site | 4 Swiss metropol- |
| 13 Brit's restroom | 5 Foreman foe |
| 14 Carry on | 6 Cattle call |
| 15 Capital of Paraguay | 7 Author Morrison |
| 17 Slender weapon | 8 Venezuelan corn patty |
| 18 Rationed (out) | 9 Capital of South Africa |
| 19 Urges forward | 10 Daring Knievel |
| 21 "La Dolce —" | 11 Beholds |
| 24 Granola morsel | 16 Roman |
| 25 Luke's teacher | 17 Roman |
| 28 Folklore monster | 18 401 |
| 30 Mel of Coopers-town | 19 401 |
| 33 "Caught ya!" | 20 Cham-pagne brand |
| 34 Welcome | 21 Ripped |
| 35 Bankroll | 22 Rep |
| 36 "Tasty!" | 23 Candied veggie |
| 37 Give temporarily | 24 Resis-tance unit |
| 38 Burden | 25 Capital of Syria |
| | 26 Make over |
| | 27 Sigma follower |
| | 28 QBs' goals |
| | 29 Glitzy rock genre |
| | 30 Fixate |
| | 31 Peculiar |
| | 32 Irate |
| | 33 Grate |
| | 34 Canyon come-back |
| | 35 Con-cludes |
| | 36 Con-spiracy |
| | 37 Barak of Israel |
| | 38 Guitarist Lofgren |
| | 39 Rock producer Brian |
| | 40 Method |

Solution time: 23 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | P | T | S | F | I | G | I | R | I | S |
| P | E | A | K | I | N | N | N | O | D | E |
| P | R | I | Y | A | N | K | A | S | O | L |
| W | A | V | E | D | P | I | N | R | H | M |
| A | C | I | D | P | R | I | N | C | E | S |
| R | E | D | W | A | G | E | D | D | I | L |
| P | R | I | S | O | N | E | R | L | A | L |
| O | O | P | S | D | I | M | L | I | Y | |
| P | E | L | O | S | I | L | O | T | | |
| A | M | A | T | P | R | I | M | A | T | E |
| G | U | S | H | E | E | L | N | I | N | E |
| E | S | T | E | S | O | Y | Y | E | T | I |

Yesterday's answer 1-8

Peanuts

I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED, SIR...

WELL, THOSE HOCKEY PLAYERS WERE ABOUT TO GIVE ME A ROUGH TIME, AND YOU CAME RUNNING OUT TO HELP ME, MARCIE

BUT I SLIPPED AND FELL ON THE ICE, HUH?

I'LL SAY YOU DID!

LET'S GO BACK AND SHORTEN A FEW LIFE SPANS, SIR!

LATER, MARCIE, LATER

Rose is Rose

ONE NAPPING KITTY IS MY LIMIT... TAKE A VOTE TO DECIDE WHICH KITTY STAYS.

I VOTE FOR ME.

I VOTE FOR ME.

I HAVE TO VOTE FOR ME... I LIVE HERE.

Agnes

I AM GOING TO BE A FAMOUS DESIGNER OF VARIOUS THINGS.

WHAT WILL YOU DESIGN?

WEREN'T YOU LISTENING? VARIOUS THINGS.

I THINK YOU HAVE TO NARROW IT DOWN.

OK... FINE! HOLSTERS FOR SLEDGEHAMMERS OR TINY LACE GLOVES WITH OPEN FINGERS.

NOW BROADEN IT UP.

Hi and Lois

UGH! HOW CAN YOU EAT THAT MUSH?!

I CAN'T JUST CHOMP DOWN ON A FILET MIGNON, Y'KNOW!

Between Friends

"TRACKING TECHNOLOGY USED IN THIS STORE"— CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? YOU CAN'T BUY A BAG OF POTATOES WITHOUT BEING MONITORED?!

I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE BIT! IT'S AN INVASION OF PRIVACY! IT'S BIG BROTHER!

CAN'T WE GO OUT IN PUBLIC WITHOUT BEING SUBJECTED TO SCRUTINY?!!

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

Blondie

I'M SORRY ABOUT OUR DISAGREEMENT, HONEY... LET'S JUST KISS IT AWAY AND CALL IT A NIGHT.

THAT WOULD BE NICE, DEAR.

DID IT WORK?

NOT EVEN CLOSE, DEAR.

Snuffy Smith

HEARD ENNY GOOD JOKES LATELY, UNCA SNUFFY?

HEARD A WHOLE BUNCH LAST NIGHT AT TH' CARD GAME!!

CAN YA TELL ME SOME?

I CAN TELL YA ALL OF 'EM, JUGHAID!!

IF I CAN STILL R'MEMBER 'EM BY TH' TIME YA GIT OLD 'NUFF TO HEAR 'EM!!

Beetle Bailey

IT'S BEEN NICE TO SHARE A FEW STORIES WITH MY MEN

CAN WE GO TO OUR TENTS NOW, SIR?

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Ohio State wins in double OT

By **MARCUS FULLER**
Star Tribune
Tribune News Service

Gophers coach Ben Johnson faced the worst-case scenario with his team's first Big Ten win this season on the line Monday night against Ohio State.

A two-point lead and leading scorer Dawson Garcia were gone in an instant after he fouled out with 5.4 seconds left in the second half.

Even with that dire situation, the Gophers had chances to pull out the win, but missed free throws and poor late-game decisions led to a tough-to-swallow 89-88 double overtime loss Monday against the Buckeyes in front of an announced crowd of 7,611 at Williams Arena.

The Gophers (8-7, 0-4) saw Parker Fox, Lu'Cye Patterson and Isaac Asuma post career highs in maroon and gold to combine for 59 points. But Johnson said going 12-for-27 on free throws was a big reason why they remain the only winless team left in conference play. Ohio State shot 29-for-32 at the foul line.

"That's a hurt locker room," Johnson said. "You've got an opportunity right there to just kind of back everything you've been preaching and talking. Everything that those guys have been listening to and trying to apply. It's just hard when you don't reap the rewards of all of that."

The Buckeyes (10-5, 2-2), who beat No. 4 Kentucky at Madison Square Garden on Dec. 21, avenged an 88-79 loss last year in Minneapolis after an 8-0 run to



Tribune News Service/Star Tribune/Carlos Gonzalez

The Gophers' Dawson Garcia (3) is defended by Ohio State's Sean Stewart (13) in the first half at Williams Arena on Monday night. The Buckeyes held off Minnesota 89-88 in double overtime.

Mike Mitchell Jr., who had 18 points, missed two free throws with a chance to extend it to a four-point advantage with six seconds left for the Gophers.

Johnson's frustration grew when Kadyn Betts mistakenly fouled Ohio State's John Mobley after the Buckeyes inbounded the ball, which led to the tying free throws to force a second OT.

In the second half, Asuma's third three-pointer gave the Gophers their largest lead at 59-52 with just under six minutes left, but Ohio State went on a 10-3 run to tie it.

With the score 62-62 in regulation, Garcia missed two free throws with less than two minutes to play, but his teammates seemingly bailed him out. Fox's steal on the ensuing possession led to an uncontested dunk for Garcia for a two-point lead.

That seemed to end it until a late turnover gave the Buckeyes the chance to steal the victory with the botched defensive rotation that led to Garcia fouling out.

Johnson was hoping to see the Gophers get what he called a "breakthrough win" soon. They lost to Michigan State, Indiana and Purdue by an average of nearly 18 points per game to open the conference slate, but they never had a chance like they did Monday.

"It just comes down to making plays down the stretch, which we weren't able to do to secure the victory," Asuma said. "We just have to learn from it and just push through and breakthrough to figure it out for the rest of the season."

Tops ...

Continued from page 8
They dominated the glass and closed period on a 12-0 run to cut their deficit to eight entering the final frame.

Clowney scored nine of his 14 points in a third-quarter run where he went 2-for-2 from deep. Fernandez played nine guys in the period, and all but Williams and Day/Ron Sharpe got a bucket.

The Pacers led by 24

points two minutes into the second half.

"I was very, very proud of them and the way they played all the way through," Fernandez said. "Just kept fighting until the end."

But it wasn't enough. Indiana woke up and won the fourth quarter 35-29 to earn its 19th win of the season.

Brooklyn just ran out of firepower in the end. Tyrese Haliburton and

Benedict Mathurin led the Pacers with 23 and 20 points, respectively, and Pascal Siakam added 19 points.

Sharpe was the Nets' leading scorer with 16 points off the bench.

Brooklyn also turned it over 14 times, which gifted the Pacers 23 points. It failed to score 100 points for a second straight game, falling to 13-23 this season 0-2 in their current homestand.

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Thursday
Jay County — Swim tri meet — 6 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball vs. Anderson — 6 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at Selma — 5:30 p.m.; Junior high girls basketball vs. Fort Recovery — 6 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Girls basketball vs. New Bremen — 6 p.m.; Middle school boys basketball vs. Celina — 5:30 p.m.; Middle school girls basketball at Jay County — 6 p.m.

Friday
Jay County — Girls wrestling regional at Alexandria — 9 a.m.; Swim Jay County Invitational (diving) — 6 p.m.; Girls basketball (varsity only) at Bluffton — 6:30 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Boys bowling vs. Fort Loramie — 4:30 p.m.; Girls bowling

vs. Fort Loramie — 4:30 p.m.; Boys basketball at New Bremen — 6 p.m.

TV sports

Wednesday
6:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Connecticut at Villanova (FS1)
7 p.m. — Men's college basketball: USC at Indiana (BTN); Mississippi at Arkansas (ESPN2)
7 p.m. — NBA basketball: Oklahoma City Thunder at Cleveland Cavaliers (ESPN); Chicago Bulls at Indiana Pacers (FDSN Indiana)
7:30 p.m. — NHL hockey: Colorado Avalanche at Chicago Blackhawks (TNT)
9 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Penn State at Illinois (BTN)
8:30 p.m. — Women's college basketball: USC at Maryland (FS1)
9:30 p.m. — NBA basketball: San

Antonio Spurs at Milwaukee Bucks (ESPN)

10 p.m. — NHL hockey: Florida Panthers at Utah Hockey Club (TNT)
10:30 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Air Force at San Diego State (FS1)

Thursday
2 p.m. — Soccer: Super Cup — Mallorca at Real Madrid (ESPN2)
5 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Texas A&M at Souther Carolina (ESPN2)
6 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Purdue at Rutgers (FS1); Oregon at Ohio State (BTN)
7:30 p.m. — College football: Notre Dame at Penn State (ESPN)
8 p.m. — Men's college basketball: Washington at Michigan State (BTN)
8:30 p.m. — NBA basketball: Portland Trail Blazers at Dallas Mavericks (ABC)

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For more information on consigning your farm machinery please call: Dusty Uhlenhake 419-733-3096 Rick Uhlenhake 419-852-0800 Machinery consigned by January 17, 2025 can be advertised</p> <p>BID ONLINE NOW! Real Estate & Personal Auction Real Estate Ends Jan. 14th @ 3pm 2 Beds / 1 Ba. 840 sq. ft., with fireplace, w/ 1 Car Garage . OPEN HOUSE Sun, Jan. 5th @ 1-2pm Sun, Jan. 12th @ 1-2pm Personal Property Sells online Ending Jan. 15th @ 6pm For Details go to www.NessBros.com Sellers: Nesbitt Guardian Anna 260.264.1319 Auction Manager</p> <p>PUBLIC AUCTION Located: Bearcreek Farms, 8341 N 400 E, Bryant, IN January 6th, 2025 6:00 P.M. 75 Acres-Bearcreek Township Jay County, IN Parcel 1-55 acres with 53 acres of tillable ground. Soil types include Blount-Glywood, Pewamo and Glywood clay. Parcel 2-20 acres of woods. Parcel 3-Combination of Parcels 1 and 2. Acreages are subject to pending survey. Farm has access off Highway 27. For more information contact Gary Loy, Auctioneer (260) 726-5160 or Kim Loy, Real Estate Broker at (260) 726-2700 LANA NINDE, JULIE HUMMEL, COREY BUBP AND CHRISTO-</p> | <p>PHER BUBP Loy Auction AC#31600027 Auctioneers Gary Loy AU01031608 Travis Theurer AU11200131 Aaron Loy AU11200112 Kaden Khayyata AU12400069</p> <p>REAL ESTATE AUCTION Saturday, January 11, 2025 10:00 AM Location of Sale: Bearcreek Farms 8341 N 400 E, Bryant, IN Real Estate: 56.54 acres-Sec. 4 Bearcreek Twp. Property located East of 27 on Jay & Adams Co. Line. Selling 2 parcels & combinations. Marilyn Hough, Owner Sale conducted by Green Auction # 260-589-8474. See SoldonGreen.com for details and flyers. Rob Green AU19500011</p> <p>REAL ESTATE PUBLIC AUCTION Located: 935 W Walnut St, Portland, IN January 14th, 2025 6:00 P. M. This residential property offers a 2 bedroom home with approximately 892 square feet of living space. Additional features of the home include 1 full bath, new gas forced air furnace with central air, new water heater, vinyl siding, asphalt shingle roof, and concrete patio with covered canopy. Property also has a 22i x 22i detached garage and fenced in back yard. This property would make an excellent starter home or rental investment property. For more information or private showing contact Gary Loy Auctioneer at 260-726-5160 or Kim Loy Real Estate Broker at 260-726-2700 or Missy Puterbaugh at 260-224-4200 PATRICIA GIBSON</p> | <p>Loy Auction AC#31600027 Auctioneers Gary Loy AU01031608</p> <p>100 JOBS WANTED</p> <p>AMISH CREW LOOKING FOR any work. No job is too big or small. Pole barns, roofing, remodeling. 260-849-2489.</p> <p>110 HELP WANTED</p> <p>DUNKIRK FIRE DEPARTMENT IS currently seeking a full-time firefighter. Current hours are two 24-hour shifts a week with the possibility of overtime when required. 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The work will include roof repair or replacement, ADA accessibility, heating and cooling replacement, water heater replacement, and lighting and electrical upgrades. Persons interested in placement on the bidder's list must submit their name, company name, phone number, address, email, and Federal ID number or Social Security number to Chris Nevels at Chris.NEVELS@egis-group.com. Contractors must meet all county and state licensing requirements. Proof of adequate liability insurance and workmen's compensation coverage must be provided. Contractors are required to maintain liability coverage for work done throughout the construction period. The policy must name the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) as additionally insured. The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) has adopted a state goal of 10% participation for minority and female-owned businesses. These businesses are encouraged to participate. The work to be performed under this contract is subject to the requirements of section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended, 12 U.S.C. 1701u (section 3). The purpose of section 3 is to ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by HUD assistance or HUD-assisted projects covered by section 3 shall, to the greatest extent feasible, be directed to low- and very low-income persons, particularly persons who are recipients of HUD assistance for housing. Bidders on this work shall be required to comply with the provisions of the President's Executive Order No. 11246, as amended. A meeting will be held on January 16, 2025, at 10:00 am at the auditorium in the courthouse located at 120 N. Court Street, Portland, Indiana 47371. Any contractor interested in bidding on this program is encouraged to attend. The first set of homes is available for bid. Bid specifications can be obtained from Chris Nevels at Chris.NEVELS@egis-group.com. Only bids received by Auditor's Office at 120 N. Court Street Suite 202, before 8:45 am (Eastern Time) on January 27, 2025, will be considered. The envelope must be marked "Jay County OOR Group 1." Bids may be mailed or hand-delivered to the Auditor's Office at 120 N. Court Street Suite 202. No electronic bids will be accepted. Jay County Commissioners will open bids on January 27, 2025, at 9:15 am in the auditorium. If there are any questions regarding the program or improvements to the houses, please contact Chris Nevels at 317-558-7540. CR 1-8,15-2025-HSPXJLP</p> |

Sports

Cotton Bowl prepares for winter weather

a statement to The Dallas Morning News that they are aware of the anticipated weather conditions ahead of the game.

"We are routinely monitoring weather reports and we are in close contact with AT&T Stadium and local officials," a Cotton Bowl spokesperson said. "We always have plans for inclement weather. Should conditions warrant it, we will communicate to everyone attending and connected with this year's Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic."

The spokesperson did not respond to questions about whether the Cotton Bowl and College Football Playoff are considering postponing the game due to weather.

Just over a decade ago, AT&T Stadium had icy conditions when hosting the Super Bowl in 2011. Though snow did not fall on the day of the game in Arlington, nearly four inches accumulated the week before.

That led to a halftime show worker suing the Dallas Cowboys and stadium architects after he was injured by ice and snow falling from AT&T Stadium. The worker said he suffered a skull fracture and lasting medical problems as a result.

An out-of-court settlement was reached in 2014.

At least six people suffered a range of injuries on the Friday before Super Bowl XLV when warming weather melted layers of ice and snow on the stadium roof.

Since that Super Bowl, the Cowboys have installed a ridge-like ice guard on the stadium roof to prevent similar problems.

The guard is designed to stop or slow the slide of ice and snow and break up larger chunks. The team also installed a system that pumps warmer water onto the roof to prevent build-up of ice and snow.

Snow is expected ahead of playoff semifinal in Texas

By LIA ASSIMAKOPOULOS
The Dallas Morning News
Tribune News Service

DALLAS — Fans traveling to Arlington this week for the Cotton Bowl featuring Texas and Ohio State may be met with wintry weather conditions.

Weather forecasters are expecting a strong cold front in the region, which began Sunday, with high temperatures around 40 degrees and with lows in the 20s this week. Meteorologists are calling for "measurable" snow to begin falling Wednesday night on Dallas-Fort Worth.

The rain-snow mix is expected to last into Friday, according to the National Weather Service in Fort Worth.

The Cotton Bowl at AT&T Stadium will be the site of the College Football Playoff semifinal game between Texas and Ohio State, which kicks off Friday at 7:30 p.m. ET. Fan events are scheduled to begin Thursday.

Cotton Bowl officials said in



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Long shot

Jay County High School sophomore Jayden Comer launches a 3-pointer from near half court Saturday in front of Muncie Central's Shemar Taylor. The Patriots knocked off the Bearcats 36-28 to even their record at 4-4. They will be in action again Saturday when they host Adams Central.

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Indiana tops the short-handed Nets

Pacers pull away from Brooklyn in fourth

By C.J. HOLMES
New York Daily News
Tribune News Service

The Nets played without Cam Thomas, Cam Johnson, D'Angelo Russell and others.

The Pacers were happy to take advantage.

The Indiana Pacers pulled away from a short-handed Brooklyn Nets squad Monday night for a 113-99 victory.

Brooklyn started Keon Johnson, Tyrese Martin, Ziaire Williams, Noah Clowney and Nic Claxton and found itself down 16 points at halftime while shooting just 34.8% from the field and 31.6% from 3-point range with eight turnovers.

Indiana had three players in double figures in the first half while the Nets, paced by Williams and Martin, had none.

However, sometimes the scariest opponents are a group of guys with something to prove and nothing to lose. These Nets kept chipping away.

The Nets limited Indiana to 31.8% shooting (2-for-11 from deep) in the third quarter and converted on 52% of their attempts.

See **Tops** page 7

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