

# The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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Indiana Capital Chronicle/Casey Smith

## Holdman tax bills head to floor of Senate

*Legislation addresses income tax rate and review by agency*

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

INDIANAPOLIS — Two tax-related bills authored or co-authored by Jay County's state senator cleared committee Tuesday.

Two more were held for a vote at a later date.

The Indiana Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee unanimously passed Senate Bills 451 and 452, sending them to the Senate floor for second reading.

Senate Bills 314 and 316 were held.

Both bills that passed did so without opposition.

Holdman's Senate Bill 451 implements a reduction of the income tax rate by .05% during even numbered years beginning in 2030, if state general fund revenue is forecasted to increase by at least 3%. The bill is an extension of existing state law that has seen the income tax rate decrease from 3.4% in 2015 to the current 3.05%. It is set to drop to 2.95% in 2027.

David Ober of Indiana Chamber of Commerce and Andrew Berger of Indiana Manufacturers Association spoke in support of the legislation, with Ober saying it will keep the state's tax rate competitive and will be beneficial to businesses.

Holdman, who represents Jay, Blackford, Adams and Wells counties and the southwest portion of Allen County, asked Ober if the .05% and 3% figures are reasonable. He said they are in times of "regular" inflation and added that the legislation is structured to give the state legislature time to adjust if changes are needed.

Explaining Senate Bill 452, Holdman said it was brought forward by the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency. It allows for systematic review of tax incentives.

See Holdman page 2

Members of the Senate education committee hear testimony on multiple bills during a meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 22 at the Indiana Statehouse. Bills regarding absenteeism, athletic transfers, homeschool and other issues are advancing through the legislative process.

## Education issues

### General assembly moves various bills

By CASEY SMITH

Indiana Capital Chronicle  
indianacapitalchronicle.com

Ten education bills are already advancing in the early weeks of the 2025 legislative session, including those seeking to improve kindergarten through 12th grade student attendance, guarantee better teacher benefits, and remove "unnecessary or outdated" school regulations.

The assortment of House and Senate bills are largely headed to their respective full chambers — those with fiscal impacts will first need approval from budget committees, though.

Indiana's GOP supermajorities, along with new Republican Gov. Mike Braun, said their education agendas

prioritize school deregulations and private school choice expansions.

House and Senate Democrats, meanwhile, are pushing for public education funding increases and increased access to pre-K programming, in addition to other measures.

Nearly three dozen education-related bills were filed across the two chambers. Many of those are unlikely to get hearings. Even fewer bills will make it across the legislative finish line by the end of April.

A handful of bills that have been subject to public testimony — and are now on deck for possible amendments and committee votes — deal with school counselor supports, student "well-being" and

"resiliency" resources, college graduate job placements, school board vacancies, charter school police departments, teacher grants, and rollbacks to educator and administrator licensure requirements.

It's not yet clear which of the other proposals will see discussion in committee, including a bill to replace some public schools with charters, and another that would ban transgender girls from playing on women's college teams.

Deadlines are still weeks away for House and Senate bills to advance to full chambers, but even dead bill language can remerge before the session concludes.

Here's a look at the education bills gaining traction so far:

#### House Bill 1002 "Deregulating" schools

Bill author: Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis

**What it does:** The omnibus House Republican priority bill intends to eliminate regulations for schools by repealing, loosening or eliminating existing requirements related to teacher training, professional development, school programming, administrative duties, and school boards, among other changes. Portions of the bill delete expired education provisions, like outdated curricular requirements and grant funds that no longer exist. An amended draft of the bill adopted Wednesday retained multiple sections related to reporting and operation requirements for the charter schools.

See Education page 2

## Putin pushed for deal

*Trump says sanctions will come if war does not end soon*

By AKAYLA GARDNER

Bloomberg News  
Tribune News Service

President Donald Trump stepped up pressure Wednesday on Russia to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, and threatened financial penalties on the country if it refuses to conclude fighting swiftly.

In a Truth Social post, Trump said Russian President Vladimir Putin should make a deal "soon," or else he would "have no other choice" but to impose additional taxes, tariffs and sanctions on

Russian imports to the U.S., along with "other participating countries."

Trump campaigned on promises to rapidly end the conflict that began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. He's dialed back those pledges more recently and acknowledged the difficulty of reaching an agreement to stop the fighting, with the Russian army recording steady advances. The U.S. has been Ukraine's biggest financial and military backer, and Trump has sig-

naled he could reduce the support.

"I'm not looking to hurt Russia. I love the Russian people, and always had a very good relationship with President Putin," Trump said. "Let's get this war, which never would have started if I were President, over with! We can do it the easy way, or the hard way - and the easy way is always better. It's time to 'MAKE A DEAL.' NO MORE LIVES SHOULD BE LOST!!!"

It's not clear what goods would be subject to the penalties that Trump threatened, or which other nations might join such an effort. The Trump administration could potentially target Russia's major oil producers, a move that incoming Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent endorsed last week.



Tribune News Service/Getty Images/AFP/Roman Pilipey

Ukrainian rescuers work to extinguish a fire at the site of a missile attack in Kyiv on Dec. 20 amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On Wednesday, President Donald Trump stepped up pressure on Russia to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, threatening financial penalties if fighting is not concluded quickly.

#### Deaths

**Paul Hiser, 80**, Fort Recovery  
Details on page 2.

#### Weather

Jay County had a high temperature of 19 degrees Wednesday.

Tonight's low will be 10 degrees with winds gusting to 25 miles per hour. Expect mostly cloudy skies Saturday with a high in the lower 30s and continued windy conditions. See page 2 for an extended forecast.

#### In review

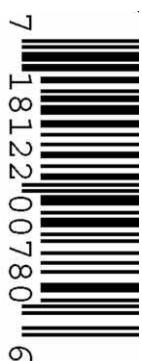
Jay County Solid Waste Management District will have recycling trailers available today. Trailers will be open from 9 a.m. to noon in the shopping center at 220 Lincoln St., Portland, and Dunkirk City Park.

#### Coming up

**Saturday** — Results from the JCHS boys basketball game at South Adams.

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

**Wednesday** — Details from next week's Dunkirk City Council meeting.



# Obituaries

## Paul Hiser

June 8, 1944-Jan. 20, 2025  
Paul Hiser, age 80, a resident of Fort Recovery, passed away on Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, while on hospice at St. Rita's Hospital in Lima, Ohio.

Paul was born June 8, 1944, in Portland, Indiana, the son of Delma and Mary (Schroder) Hiser. He graduated from Madi-

son Township School and worked for Fort Recovery Equity for most of his life. Paul was an avid runner and competed in 10 ultra-marathons.

Paul married Elizabeth Taylor on Aug. 5, 1974, and she passed away on June 2, 2016.



Hiser

Survivors include: His son — Paul M. Hiser Stepchildren — Bill Garland, Ed Garland (wife: Johnna), Chuck Williams, Danny Garland, Linda Carr (husband: Tommy) and Tammy Schrul (Mark Noggler) Two nephews — Brian Hiser (wife: Tammie) and Kyle Hiser (wife: Jennifer) He was preceded in death

by his faithful companion Abby. Graveside services will be held on Monday at 3 p.m. at Salamonia Cemetery in Salamonia, Indiana. Arrangements entrusted to Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home in Portland. Condolences may be expressed at williamson-spencer.com.

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*The Commercial Review publishes death notices for those with a connection to our coverage area free of charge. They include the name, city of residence, birth/death date and time/date/location of services. There is a charge for obituaries, which are accepted only from funeral homes or mortuary services.*

## CR almanac

Saturday 1/25	Sunday 1/26	Monday 1/27	Tuesday 1/28	Wednesday 1/29
<b>36/24</b>	<b>30/18</b>	<b>37/30</b>	<b>39/30</b>	<b>38/24</b>
Mostly cloudy, when wind gusts may jump as high as 25 mph. Lows in the 20s.	Sunday looks to be mostly cloudy by day with a high of 30 degrees.	Monday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with highs in the upper 30s.	Mostly sunny skies on Tuesday when the high will be in the upper 30s.	Wednesday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with highs in the upper 30s.

## Lotteries

<b>Powerball</b> 8-41-52-53-58 Power Ball: 7 Power Play: 3 Estimated jackpot: \$331 million	Daily Four: 2-9-3-0 Quick Draw: 3-4-5-6-7-15-18-19-21-24-27-36-38-42-43-51-57-59-78-79 Cash 5: 6-19-22-29-44 Estimated jackpot: \$105,000
<b>Mega Millions</b> Estimated jackpot: \$113 million	<b>Ohio</b> Wednesday Midday Pick 3: 2-6-5 Pick 4: 3-6-2-3 Pick 5: 9-3-9-2-8 Evening Pick 3: 3-9-7 Pick 4: 5-4-2-9 Pick 5: 0-3-5-8-3 Rolling Cash: 10-14-18-20-22 Estimated jackpot: \$130,000
<b>Hoosier</b> Wednesday Midday Daily Three: 6-8-5 Daily Four: 1-7-0-8 Quick Draw: 4-5-19-27-28-35-36-41-49-52-54-56-59-61-65-70-73-75-77-79 Evening Daily Three: 6-8-6	

## Markets

<b>Cooper Farms Fort Recovery</b> Corn.....4.85 Feb. corn .....4.84 March corn .....4.87	Feb. beans .....10.54 Wheat ..... 5.04
<b>POET Biorefining Portland</b> Corn.....4.86 Feb. corn .....4.88 March corn .....4.90	<b>ADM Montpelier</b> Corn.....4.79 Feb. corn .....4.79 Beans .....10.50 Feb. beans .....10.53 Wheat .....5.19
<b>The Andersons Richland Township</b> Corn .....4.81 Feb. corn .....4.81 Beans .....10.51	<b>Heartland St. Anthony</b> Corn.....4.78 Feb. corn .....4.78 Beans .....10.26 March beans .....10.31 Wheat .....4.94

## Today in history

In 41, Roman emperor Caligula was murdered by Cassius Chaerea, Cornelius Sabinus and others at the Palatine Games.  
In 1556, an earthquake killed 830,000 in central China.  
In 1848, prospector James W. Marshall discovered gold near Coloma California on property owned by Johann A. Sutter. Marshall made his find while constructing a sawmill on the American River. The discovery launched the Gold Rush, with almost 100,000 moving to California the following year in hopes of striking it rich.  
In 1874, British prime minister Winston Churchill was born in Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, England. Churchill led Britain through the bulk of World War II, taking over as prime minister after the resignation of Neville Chamberlain on May 10, 1940.  
In 2011, Jay County Solid Waste District hired Bettie Jacobs as its educator. Jacobs, who also served as the educator for Jay County Soil and Water Conservation District, was contracted to work an average of 20 hours a month promoting recycling and other waste reduction initiatives.  
In 2022, Jay School Board approved a one-year contract with ESS, an education management and staffing firm, in an effort to help recruit substitute teachers during a nationwide shortage.  
—The CR

## Citizen's calendar

<b>Today</b> 8 a.m. — Portland Redevelopment Commission, Community Resource Center, 118 S. Meridian St., Portland.	torium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.
<b>Monday</b> 8:45 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, auditorium, courthouse, 120 N. Court St., Portland.	6 p.m. — Dunkirk Board of Works, city building, 131 S. Main St.
9 a.m. — Jay County Commissioners, audi-	7 p.m. — Dunkirk City Council, city building, 131 S. Main St.
	<b>Tuesday</b> 6 p.m. — Redkey Town Council, park cabin, 50 Mooney St.

## Holdman ...

Continued from page 1  
There was no testimony on the bill. The committee passed both Senate Bill 451 and 452 unanimously. State Sen. Scott Baldwin (R-Noblesville) presented Senate Bills 314 and 316, both of which he co-authored with Holdman. He explained that Senate Bill 314

clarifies one of his previous bills to allow entities to take tax benefits when filing estimates rather than waiting for filing tax returns. Senate Bill 316 addresses investment partnerships that involve out-of-state residents, codifying that such income will be allocated to the state of residence for tax purposes.

Hamilton County resident Brian Myers and Ober both spoke in support of both bills. There was no testimony or questions in opposition. Senate Bills 314 and 316 were both held for a vote at a later date, as was most legislation discussed during the committee hearing.

## Education ...

Continued from page 1  
**What supporters say:** School district representatives and teachers largely supported the bill, saying it “reduces unnecessary burdens” and “streamlines” administrative processes.  
**What critics say:** Democrats continued to express concerns Wednesday about the bill’s removal of existing qualification requirements for a person to be appointed as the state’s education secretary. Questions were also raised about a provision to allow districts to selectively dissolve and convert themselves into charter schools.

Athletic Association, said “it’s time” for the IHSAA to review its transfer rules, adding that Criswell’s bill “does not inhibit our ability to effectively implement a transfer system moving forward.” Neidig noted that the legislation does not address the number of times a student can transfer. “It would still be our rules that would govern the number of times that you can transfer, and what we are simply looking at is a single time transfer within the first three years of school, of a parent’s choice,” he continued.  
**What critics say:** Democrats on the education committee generally opposed the bill, with some saying it unfairly forces schools to accept a particular form of payment — at a time when Republicans are pushing for fewer rules — and others suggesting that the athletic transfer component was an “inappropriate add” in this particular legislation.

“a bold move in the right direction to increase teacher compensation.”  
**What critics say:** Democrats generally supported but the bill but made unsuccessful attempts on Wednesday to increase base teacher pay even more.

allows for only up to 120 minutes a week.)  
**What supporters say:** Purdue University’s provost applauded the STEM licensure change, saying it would help with ongoing teacher shortages. Representatives from the Indiana Association of School Principals and Project Lead The Way, and several parents, were among those who also spoke in favor of the bill.  
**What critics say:** Jerrell Blakeley, representing ISTA, said the union largely supported the bill but had questions “around the amount of pedagogy training” required for STEM professionals wanting to teach. Other groups opposed “any increases to mandates” for religious instruction releases, citing “situations” across the state where some students are missing critical lessons in exchange for out-of-school religious activities.

## House Bill 1201 Chronic absenteeism

**Bill author:** Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis  
**What it does:** The bill tasks the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) with creating a report to detail common reasons behind absenteeism and student discipline, along with recommendations for improving student attendance. It also bars schools from suspending or expelling students solely for being chronically absent or habitually truant. Students are considered truant if they miss 10 or more days of school without an excuse; they’re labeled as chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year, regardless of whether it is excused.

**What supporters say:** The state’s largest teachers unions, along with multiple education groups, said the bill helps clarify excused and unexcused absences, and applauded the bill for providing more services and parental supports for absent students — rather than increasing “punishments” for missed school.  
**What critics say:** The proposal faced some opposition, including from Cindy Long with the Indiana Association of School Principals, who said that suspension or expulsion may be appropriate in some circumstances.

## Senate Bill 255 Educator licenses

**Bill author:** Sen. Spencer Deery, R-West Lafayette  
**What it does:** Reduces requirements for STEM professionals to earn teaching licenses, and requires school districts make a “reasonable effort” to notify parents by the end of a calendar day if their child is the subject of a bullying investigation — up from five days in current law. The bill additionally requires a principal to allow public high schoolers to receive religious instruction for up to a period of time “that is equivalent to attending one elective course” at the school. (Current law

allows for only up to 120 minutes a week.)  
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## Senate Bill 146 Teacher pay

**Bill author:** Sen. Linda Rogers, R-Granger  
**What it does:** Raises minimum salaries for teachers from \$40,000 to \$45,000; provides 20 days of parental leave to teachers who have worked for a school district for at least six months; increases the portion of state funding that must be spent on educator salaries; and requires schools to offer state employees a health coverage plan if it’s less expensive than the district plan.  
**What supporters say:** Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner said even though this year’s state budget will be tight, the bill is a necessary boost for teacher attraction and retention. Officials from education organizations across the state mostly voiced their support for the bill, too. A representative for the Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA), the state’s largest teacher’s union, called the measure

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## SERVICES

**Today**  
**Horn, George:** 10:30 a.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.

**Saturday**  
**Thomas, William:** 10 a.m., Williamson-Spencer and Penrod Funeral Home, 208 N. Commerce St., Portland.  
**Bricker, Fred:** 11 a.m., Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, 221 N. Meridian St., Portland.

**Monday**  
**Hiser, Paul:** 3 p.m., Salamonia Cemetery.

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# Use coping strategies for 'winter blues'

By MORAYO OGUNBAYO

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
Tribune News Service

Often called the "winter blues," the period in January after all the holiday festivities are over is hard for a lot of people to get through. For young children, the added confusion of the sharp change in their emotions make for an especially fraught season.

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Jody Baumstein, a Strong4Life licensed therapist, says parents should be proactive in supporting their kids' mental health, especially during the month of January.

"What we know is that behavior is communication," Baumstein told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "So [kids are] trying to communicate something."

Urging parents to look out for low energy levels, particularly sluggishness

or "a little bit of irritability," Baumstein advises parents to not make assumptions about their kids' mental health.

Many mental health issues can be weather related, but "it might not have anything to do with the fact that it's the winter time," and "maybe there's something that they haven't shared with you that's affecting them," said Baumstein.

"The main message here is that we have to be curious about what they're trying to communicate and not make assumptions," Baumstein said.

Families can work together to maintain everyone's general well-being through "proactive maintenance strategies," Baumstein said.

Families should make sure everyone is getting good quality nutrition, plenty of physical activity and good sleep.

"It's going to help us keep our emotions in check. We're going to be more regulated. We're going to be less stressed," Baumstein told the AJC.

Parents should also try to be cognizant of how much screen time their children have, Baumstein warns, because they're likely not getting the quality sleep we really need because of "looking at screens so close to bedtime."

Some mental health issues need to be dealt with outside of the home, Baumstein acknowledges, and believes parents should trust their instincts on such matters.

"Somebody else might disagree with you. That is OK," Baumstein said. "You have to trust your instincts here, and if something feels off, trust that."

"We all will have ups and downs, but we're

starting to be concerned about something if it's impacting a child's ability to function," Baumstein said.

Baumstein recommends starting by addressing the issue with your child's pediatrician, if "you have a great relationship and trust them." If you don't have that relationship with your child's pediatrician, start with a consultation with a licensed mental health professional.

Whether your family seems to be moving smoothly in the face of "winter blues" or really starting to struggle, it is never too early to implement effective strategies to help everyone regulate their moods no matter the season.

Maintain simple routines

Make sure the members of your family all feel they have a routine they know how to follow, as this will

be better for their emotional regulation.

"This creates a sense of predictability and allows the whole family, kids and grown-ups alike, to feel comforted and secure," Children's said in a statement about this season. "Maintaining routines can be as simple as having consistent mealtimes, wake times and bedtimes."

Regularly check in and talk openly about feelings

You should be a safe space for your children to talk about whatever is bothering them. Whether it truly is weather related, or stems from something else, all emotions must be open for discussion.

"We're showing them that we can handle it and that nothing is too big and overwhelming and scary for us," Baumstein told the AJC.

She went on to describe

the added benefit of actually having "a chance to understand what's happening."

Teach and practice healthy coping strategies

Before the emotions truly feel out-of-hand, it is good to teach and practice healthy coping strategies for your family.

"When we're heightened emotionally, we can't learn something," Baumstein advised. "Practice this stuff when you're completely calm."

Not every coping strategy will work for every emotion, however.

"For example," Baumstein explained, "sometimes if we're feeling down, we need to do something that's up-regulating. Deep breaths are probably not going to be super helpful in that moment."

She instead recommends a coping strategy that is energizing, like going for a walk.

# Thankless weddings wearing on relative

DEAR ABBY: A few years ago, we were invited to my cousin's eldest daughter's wedding. Although my cousin and I are close, I barely know the daughter. We were invited only because my cousin wanted me there. The wedding was out of town, which necessitated a motel stay, meals and gas, in addition to a generous cash gift. The cash gift was what the couple had requested, since they had been living together and didn't need household items.

Our check was cashed two days after the wedding, but we never got a thank-you. Three months later, I ran into the bride's mother and asked how the happy couple was doing. I also mentioned that we never received an

Dear Abby



acknowledgment of our gift. She responded that her daughter had been busy and "apparently she didn't have the time" to send thank-yous.

Two years later, the same scenario unfolded when daughter No. 2 got married, and the mother offered the same exact excuse for her daughter's poor manners. We have now received a "save the

date" card for daughter No. 3. I'm curious — what would you do? — UNTHANKED IN INDIANA

DEAR UNTHANKED: If I felt close to the daughter, I would attend the wedding. I would give her a gift, recognizing that it probably would not be acknowledged because the girls were never taught the social graces. But I wouldn't preemptively penalize daughter No. 3 for the sin of omission committed by her sisters.

DEAR ABBY: My first marriage lasted 31 years. He was a nice man but a lousy husband. He died after a long illness. A year later, I started dating, met

another man and fell in love. We dated for a year before he proposed marriage. Two months before the wedding, I called it off because he lacked communication skills and was pretty selfish. His comment was, "We talk at the dinner table. What more do you want?" The next day, I told him it was over.

Other than that one issue, we got along well. He spoiled me. We traveled together, and he bought me beautiful jewelry. But he would send endless texts and never reply to mine. He didn't return voicemails I left for him either. When I returned the engagement rings and some jewelry to him, he told me to keep it. I have asked him to leave me

alone and stop contacting me. He still texts me about how much he misses me, but he does nothing to fix this. I'm trying to move on, but every time I hear from him, it's painful. I miss him. How can I let go of the hope that he will one day change? — UNENGAGED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR UNENGAGED: You and this man may have enjoyed each other, but you don't seem to speak the same language. It's time you accepted that he isn't going to change. If you can't accept him and his flaws, assuage the pain of hearing from him by blocking his texts while you look for a better communicator.

# Community Calendar

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

## Today

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

## Saturday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

## Sunday

A BETTER LIFE — BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-

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

## Monday

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

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

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

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. New members welcome.

For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER — Free pregnancy testing with ongoing support during and after pregnancy. The center is located at 216 S. Meridian St., Portland. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (260) 726-8636. Walk-ins accepted.

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

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

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Monday at A Second Chance At Life Ministries, 228 S. Meridian St. in Portland. For more information, call Brenda Eads at (260) 726-9625 or Dave Keen at (260) 251-8792.

## Tuesday

JAY COUNTY PASTORS AND CHAPLAINS — Meet at 8 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Richard's Restaurant. COMPASSIONATE CON-

NECTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP — A group for anyone with a substance use disorder that helps individuals find connections as they develop long-term recovery meets at noon each Tuesday in the IU Health Jay Outpatient Behavioral Health Center, Entrance C, 510 W. Votaw St., Portland.

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER EUCHRE — Will be played at 1 p.m. each Tuesday. The public is welcome.

JAY COUNTY CANCER SUPPORT GROUP — Will meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in conference room C at Indiana University Health Jay Hospital. Open discussion for cancer patients, survivors, family members or anyone interested in helping with the group. For more information, contact Linda Metzger at (260) 726-1844.

A BETTER LIFE — BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for substance abuse. Meal starts at 6 p.m. and the meeting is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at the Nazarene Fellowship Building across from the Nazarene church, 249 E. Center St., Dunkirk. For more information, call Amanda Price at (765) 283-2107.

# Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

## Thursday's Solution

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

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



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# Contradictory Trumps on display

By DAVID MASTIO

McClatchy Washington Bureau  
Tribune News Service

If Donald Trump has a natural environment, it is cognitive dissonance. Nowhere was that on display more than the moment in his inauguration speech when he said, "I want to be a peacemaker and a unifier." No American politician for 50 years has thrived more on strife and division than Trump.

But the dissonance in that first breath could not do justice to the dissonance in the words he uttered next. "We're taking the Panama Canal back." Of course, we are — peacefully and in total unity.

Trump's speech was a lagging indicator of the divergence between what Trump is and what America imagines him to be. In the moment he took the presidential oath, half of America saw a God-touched savior about to return America to its rightful

David Mastio



"manifest destiny" and proper ambition. The other half feared a nation on the verge of fascism and, in now former president Joe Biden's telling, a tech billionaire oligarchy.

I don't think Trump himself knows which is right — hence the cognitive dissonance of a man who today embraced the Rev. Martin Luther King's "dream" and promised to deliver it at the peak of a popularity that started to rise with the declaration that America's first Black president was born in Africa.

This disparity between today's symbolism and the reality and

rhetoric behind it was on display all day. America's least godly president went to church surrounded by his most ardent supporters, still unrepentant for ghastly sins against our Republic, most notably his inspiration of the January 6th insurrection that attempted to overthrow an election in 2020. Serially bankrupt and unfaithful, Trump sought prayers from both Catholic and protestant religious dignitaries who condemn such things among their faithful and wink at them from Trump.

The MAGA movement embodies this dissonance. A populist movement led by billionaires. An enemy of China who wants TikTok to turn into a 50/50 venture between the avatar of capitalism and the tech bros of Communism. A party of traditional and rural Americans that takes power as its leader gathers \$50 billion in new paper wealth creat-

ed by a digital memecoin many of his followers don't comprehend. A legion of cabinet nominees more controversial than any that come before but which appear set to sail to confirmation rubber-stamped by allies.

And the jarring contradictions of Trumpism spur his opponents into their own. Donald Trump had tea in the White House and then rode to the Capitol in a limo with a man who, by all accounts, sees Trump as an authoritarian threat to Constitutional ideals. Democrats came out in force to uphold the norm of a peaceful and united transfer of power after saying nothing when their president just days earlier shattered constitutional norms with an effort to push the rejected Equal Rights Amendment into the Constitution via a tweet.

When Trump steps into the White House set to unleash a torrent of executive orders, he

will do so using many powers so carefully amassed and centralized by the political opponents who see no threat to Democracy in the kingly office they have created, but rather think the threat comes from Trump.

To listen to Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric, only months ago America was on the ropes in its darkest hour for generations. Today, in his inauguration speech, Trump announced that "the Golden Age of America begins right now."

We all hope it does. That despite the dissonance, the better Trump imagined by his supporters wins out.

Today America is already "proud, prosperous and free." Let us hope that we stay that way as Trump Makes America Great Again. Let this truly be the "start of a thrilling new era of national success," and not something far, far worse.

## Indiana's stunt doesn't have legs

Chicago Tribune

Tribune News Service

Seven Illinois counties voted in November 2024 to explore seceding from the state of Illinois. Now, Indiana lawmakers want to capitalize on their dissatisfaction.

Indiana's House speaker, Republican Todd Huston, wants to adopt those counties and others whose residents are unhappy with Illinois politics, a move that would mean redrawing state lines.

To say this is a stretch is an understatement. Border disputes among states are extremely rare, and any changes to state lines would require not only approval from the Indiana legislature, but also the Illinois legislature and Congress, per Supreme Court precedent.

Perhaps we should settle this dispute on the basketball court, where the Illini just crushed the Hoosiers, 94-69. Obviously not, but that's the level of seriousness we're dealing with here. Sensible people in Indiana see this for what it is — far-fetched.

"It's unclear what the political appetite for that would be," Indianapolis Star reporters wrote of the Republican-led bill. Both House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch and Gov. JB Pritzker are a "no," meaning this is going absolutely nowhere.

But cracks in Illinois' foundation are what led Hoosier lawmakers to make their play. Indiana Republicans were no doubt encouraged by results from the November 2024 election, and the counties that overwhelmingly supported nonbinding referendums to explore seceding from the state of Illinois to form a new state of their own.

In six of those counties, nearly three-fourths of voters supported secession. Those counties were Iroquois (73% yes); Calhoun (77% yes); Clinton (73% yes); Green (74% yes); Jersey (76% yes); Madison (57% yes); and Perry (72% yes), according to reports from NBC 5 Chicago. Not all of these counties are along the Indiana border — Madison County, for example, is in the Metro East, next door to St. Louis.

Laughing off Indiana's preposterous proposition is one thing, but forgetting this recent display of downstate dissatisfaction

### Guest Editorial

*Laughing off Indiana's preposterous proposition is one thing, but forgetting this recent display of downstate dissatisfaction would be a disservice to Illinoisans who clearly feel forgotten by those in power. Many downstaters feel frustrated that the Chicago metro area, as Illinois' population and economic powerhouse, dominates state politics.*

would be a disservice to Illinoisans who clearly feel forgotten by those in power. Many downstaters feel frustrated that the Chicago metro area, as Illinois' population and economic powerhouse, dominates state politics.

While the relationship between Chicago and downstate is often tense, we need each other, and can't forget our neighbors to the south. The threat of secession is far-flung, but the concerns underlying those threats are real and should be considered.

All of Illinois would be better served by working together.



## Grid reforms are needed

By JAMES HASSETT

Progressive Perspectives  
Tribune News Service

The biggest obstacle to the expansion of renewable energy is not Donald Trump. It's the need for improvements to the U.S. electric grid.

Connecting renewable energy sources to the grid is a lengthy and expensive process. Right now, a whopping 2,600 gigawatts of energy projects — twice the nation's total generation capacity — sit in the "interconnection queue," where applicants await approval to hook up to the grid.

Almost all of these projects are solar, wind or battery storage. Delivering all that clean electricity to our homes will require modernizing and expanding the nation's aging grid infrastructure.

Building this new infrastructure is more important than ever. After years of flat growth, the United States is experiencing a surge in electricity demand. The International Energy Agency estimates that U.S. electricity demand will increase by 25% from 2023-2035. Data center electricity demand for AI could triple by 2028.

Democrats in Congress have enacted reforms to streamline the process of connecting to the grid. But with climate change denier Trump in office, Republicans will likely seek to rewrite grid reforms in favor of fossil fuels.

Last May, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved Order 1920, which mandates long-term regional planning to create cost-effective transmission solutions. But in November, under fire from Republican states, FERC amended the order to expand the role of state regulators in the planning and cost allocation process.

Even this concession was not

James Hassett



enough to satisfy Republicans. Just a few weeks after amendment to Order 1920, Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee lambasted FERC's reform for "socializing" the costs of the Democrats' "environmental agenda." Falsely claiming that renewables reduce reliability, Republicans ignore the benefits of expanding transmission, including reduced likelihood of power loss, increased capacity and lower production costs.

The GOP vision for the nation's energy future is laid out in Project 2025, a conservative blueprint for Trump's second term. Written by the Trump-appointed former FERC commissioner Bernard McNamee, the energy-related section of the document proposes radical measures that would revalue power markets in favor of fossil fuels.

In December, Republicans in Congress helped kill the Energy Permitting Reform Act and with it the chance to implement interregional grid planning. To the chagrin of climate and environmental groups, the act contained a plethora of handouts to fossil fuel companies, but Republicans tanked the negotiations anyway, believing they can secure a sweeter deal next year. The recent party divisiveness over budget funding shows that might not be so easy.

Ironically, more solar and wind power means lower rates for consumers — exactly what Republicans

claim they want. The volatility of oil and gas markets, the uncompetitiveness of coal and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events driven by emissions from fossil fuels have been the leading cause of rising energy prices. And by expanding transmission capacity, greater access to greater geographic and resource diversity in the grid enables operators to draw on a wider array of sources to keep the lights on.

Moreover, when Republicans rail against Democrats for pursuing clean energy alternatives, they are opposing the politically preferred generation of the American people who widely support renewable energy. Agencies like FERC are responding to voter preference and prevailing market trends — and to the irritation of Republican lawmakers and regulators, those trends are (and have been) blowing in the direction of renewables.

Knocked from the driver's seat, Democrats will have to defend existing transmission reforms, which will take some time to produce results, and be wary of Republican attempts to expand the grid in the name of fossil fuels. So long as the current FERC chair Willie Phillips does not retire, the Democrats will carry a 3-2 majority on the commission until the end of his term in 2026, hopefully protecting the commission from the Trump administration's worst excesses.

For at least the next two years, Democrats won't be able to shepherd the nation through the clean energy transition. But by defending the steps towards grid reform already taken, they can continue to accelerate that transition.

Hassett is a doctoral student in the history department at Northwestern University.

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—Thomas Jefferson

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# Rule could protect producers

## Change bans reducing base pay in a farmer's contract

By **GAVIN OFF**  
The Charlotte Observer  
Tribune News Service

Craig Watts, who once made a career of raising hundreds of thousands of chickens, knows the torment and the crushing financial stress that can come with the job.

In the 1990s, he needed \$400,000 in loans to build four chicken houses on his Robeson County, North Carolina, farm. A decade later, Watts spent \$100,000 to upgrade the houses, upgrades required by the company he was growing chickens for.

Meanwhile, Watts' income fluctuated — \$60,000 one year, \$3,000 another.

"I put my psychiatrist in therapy telling him stories," Watts said. "It was awful. When you talk about levels of stress, financial stress is up there."

Large poultry companies, such as Perdue Farms, pay growers based on a "tournament system."

Farmers who fatten their chickens most efficiently are paid the best. Those who struggle to fatten their birds have their pay docked.

But a federal rule finalized this month will provide some financial stability and transparency to thousands of farmers who raise broiler chickens across, said Melanie Canales, a project manager for RAFI-USA, a North Carolina-based nonprofit that advocates for farmers.

What's not clear is whether the new rule, which sets a base pay for poultry growers, will stick. It is scheduled to go into effect in July 2026.

Before then, President Donald Trump and his new administration could eliminate the rule, said Steve Etka, policy director for Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, a national advocate for farmers and ranchers.

Etka said advocates will have to make their case to the new administration on why poultry growers need the protections.

In doing so, they'll battle groups like the National Chicken Council, which represents



Tribune News Service/Lexington Herald-Leader/Alex Slitz

This aerial view shows some of the many poultry barns that have been built in southern Anson County, North Carolina, in recent years. A new federal rule says poultry companies cannot reduce the base pay stated in a farmer's contract.

the broiler industry and has lobbied against the change.

"This rule — which Congress never asked for — will lead to rigid, one-size-fits-all requirements on chicken growing contracts that would stifle innovation, lead to higher costs for consumers, decrease competition, and cost jobs by driving some of the best farmers out of the chicken business," officials with the council wrote during a public comment period last year.

### In the driver's seat

This finalized "Poultry Grower Payment Systems and Capital Improvement Systems" rule says poultry companies, which supply farmers with chicks and feed, cannot reduce the base pay stated in a farmer's contract.

"The worst aspect of the tournament system is how it pays some growers less money than the base price stated in their contract in order to pay other growers more," Canales wrote

in an email to The Charlotte Observer. "The new rule still allows companies to provide bonuses based on performance but no longer allows them to deduct money below a fixed base price, and this makes grower income more reliable and predictable."

The rule also requires that poultry companies provide farmers with research that shows how improvement projects, such as upgrades to chicken houses, would benefit them.

In a 2022 investigation called "Big Poultry," The Charlotte Observer and the News & Observer of Raleigh found many farmers were surprised when poultry companies required them to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for equipment upgrades if they wanted to stay in business.

The rule change will help farmers decide if the project is financially in their best interest, Etka said.

"They haven't really had that

before," Etka said. "It puts the farmers back in the driver's seat of their own business."

The rule is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's third regulatory reform under the Packers and Stockyards Act in recent years. The act, formed in 1921, protects farmers and ranchers from unfair and discriminatory practices.

Last year, a USDA rule required that poultry companies be more transparent with farmers, telling farmers in their contracts how many flocks and chicks they'll receive each year. The information gives farmers insight into how much income they might earn, growers said.

### System benefits some

Some poultry growers are publicly critical of the tournament system, which pays farmers on how they grow the birds.

Farmers interviewed by the Observer in 2022 complained that the system can punish

them for things they can't control, such as the quality of the chicks, feed they receive from the company or the time that it takes the company to pick up one flock and deliver another.

"They say it is a reward system ... but really it's a way to penalize farmers unfairly," Watts said.

Under the new USDA rule, poultry companies will have to consider factors they control, such as the quality of the birds and feed, when determining how much growers are paid.

In 2015, Watts filed a federal whistleblower complaint alleging that Perdue Farms retaliated against him after he publicly said Perdue sent him sick birds that the company refused to help.

He left the industry in 2016.

Last year, Perdue sued Watts and the U.S. Department of Labor. The lawsuit challenges the constitutionality of Watts' case and seeks to stop it from going forward.

# Manage high '25 input costs

By **LINDA GEIST**  
University of Missouri

University of Missouri Extension agronomist Wayne Flanary says 2025 likely will be a year when corn producers need to batten down the hatches to offset low sale prices and high input costs.

MU Extension ag business economist Ben Brown and others predict that corn prices will fall below the \$4.30 mark by the end of 2025, a marked drop from \$6.54 per bushel in 2023.

For those raising soybeans, the picture is even more dismal, with economists predicting \$10.29 per bushel for soybean, compared to \$12.40 in 2023.

That means that producers must closely scrutinize input costs and decisions, says Flanary.

Here are his 10 suggestions:

1. Simplify. Streamline your operation to allow timely planting and management of your corn crop.
2. Identify profitable field areas. Profitable areas should be fertilized to maximize returns. Unprofitable areas should receive reduced nutrient application and seeding rates.
3. Soil test. Plan a nutrient application strategy. Closely examine routine applications and schedules. Use soil test results and cost analysis to guide decisions on nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.
4. Choose hybrids carefully. Select hybrids with

proven track records of high yields across different environments. Choose ones with good resistance to diseases that typically require fungicide treatment. Choose and plant early-maturing hybrids first.

5. Plant timely. Plant when soil conditions are right and allow good soil-to-seed contact. Planting conditions are more important than calendar dates.

6. Use technology. Use technology to variably apply crop nutrients where they are needed and at the right rate. Sensor technology can fine-tune supplemental nitrogen rates.

7. Apply herbicides wisely. Do not cut herbicide application rates, and apply in a timely manner. If weeds escape, apply post-emergence products at labeled heights.

8. Avoid micro-fixes. In season, avoid applying small amounts of foliar fertilizers which may not be beneficial.

9. Scout for pests correctly. Use your skill set to identify common corn insect and disease pests. Many pests do not approach an economic threshold requiring control. Hybrids may have transgenic events, which also provide protection.

10. Rely on unbiased research. Use research conducted by universities. Land-grant universities support their recommendations with data.

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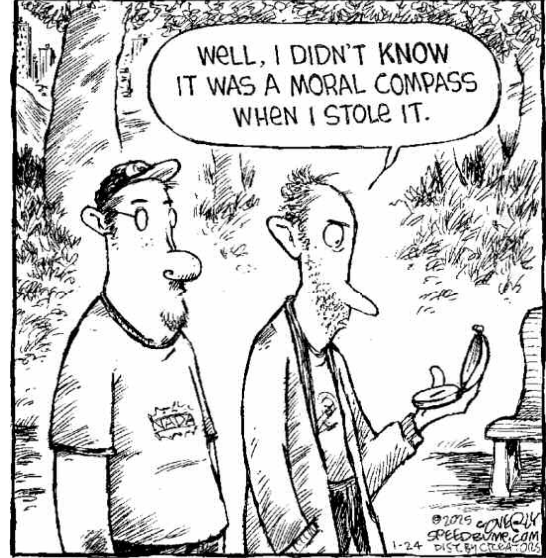
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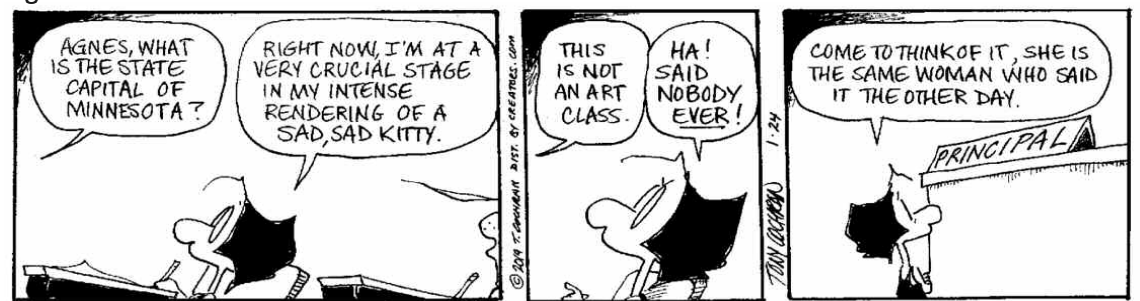
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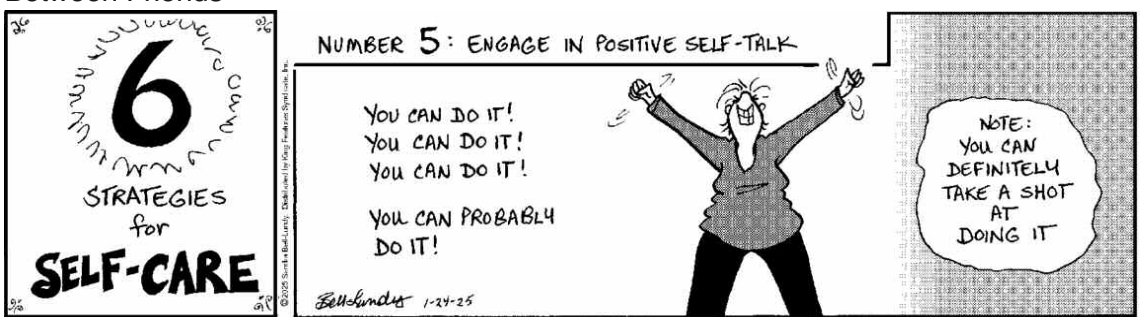
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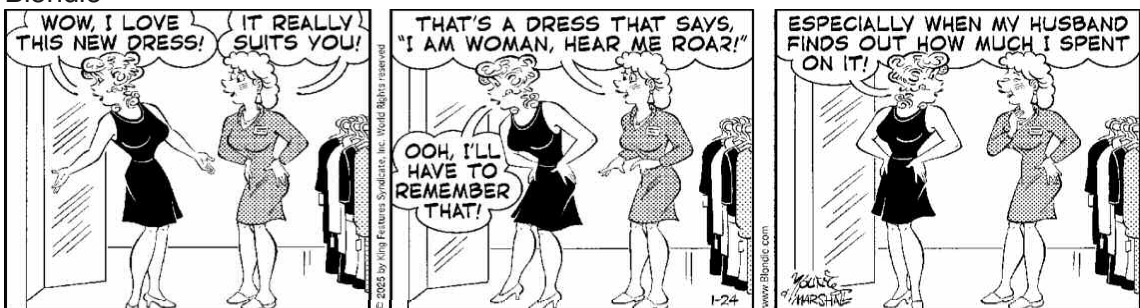
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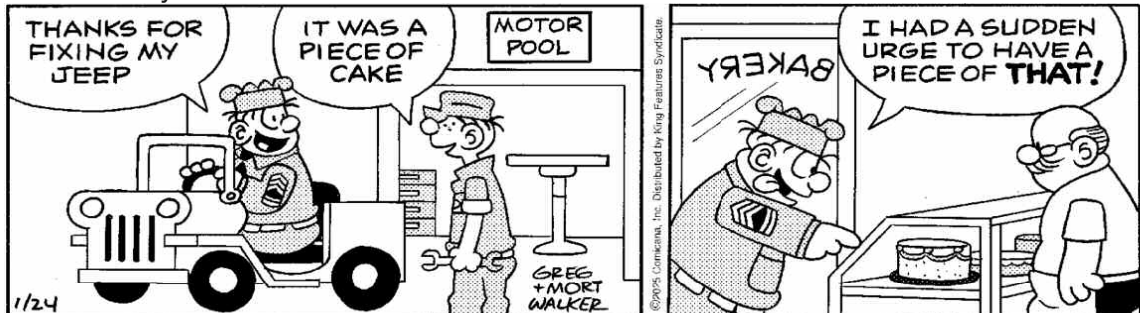
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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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# First ...

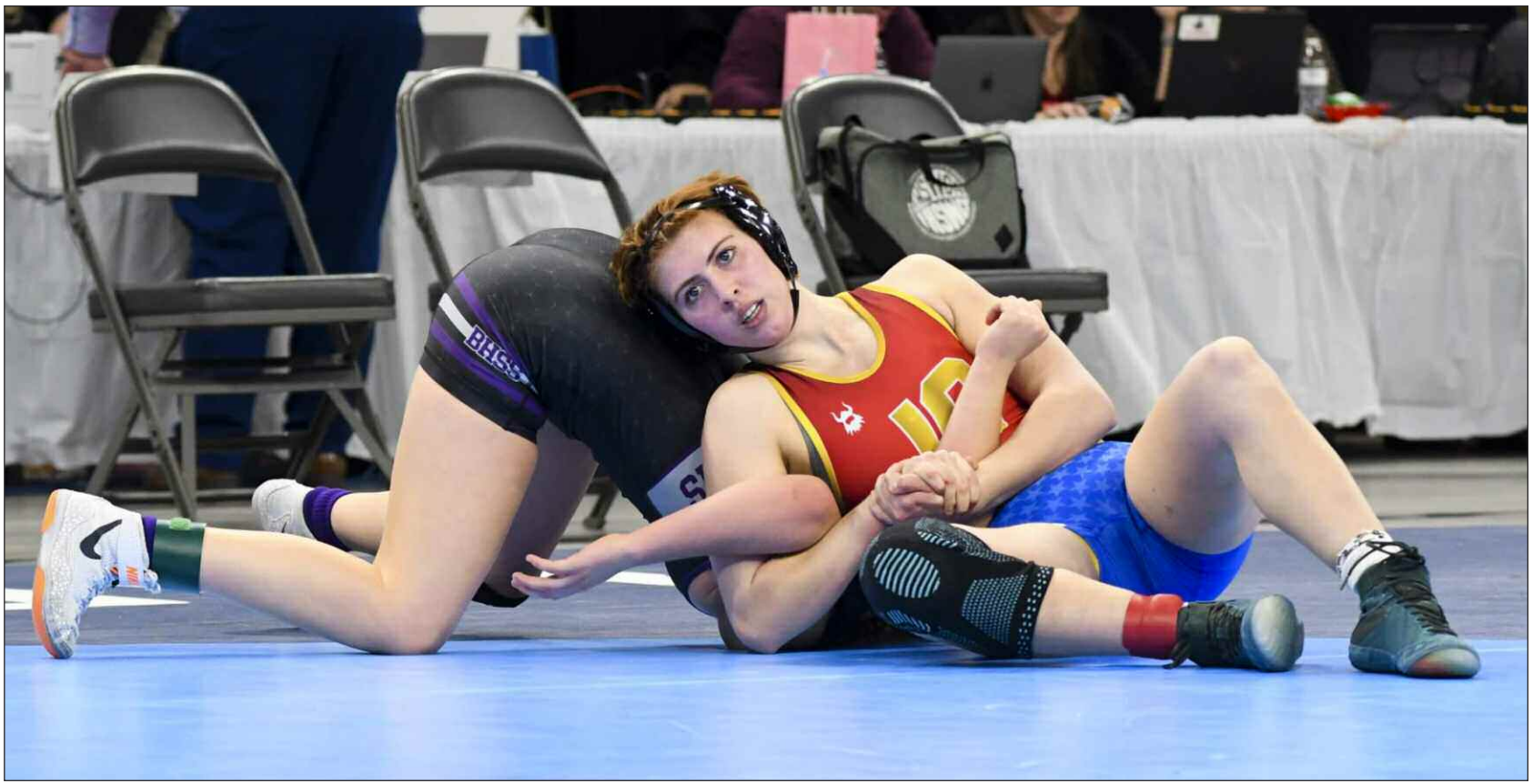
Continued from page 8

The Pioneers tout six state qualifiers — the same number as Jay County, but only two of those wrestlers placed — the Patriots had five placers in Katie Rowles (33-7, fourth in 100), Brenna Ruble (34-10, eighth in 120), Lina Lingo (31-11, eighth in 135) and Winner (37-0, champion of 170). No. 9 Bridget Martin (26-10, 100), No. 14 Cadence Williams (30-8, 120), No. 13 Neveah Hultgren (21-7, 140) and No. 9 Brylee Blackwell (26-12, 190) all got bounced in the opening round of the state finals. It was Mooresville's 115-pounder No. 4 Khloe Nedelsky (34-6) and 130-pounder Maddison Whitted (35-5) that made the podium, each of them finishing sixth.

All seven of Mooresville's wrestlers that didn't make it to state advanced to the regional, while it couldn't fill out the 235 weight class.

While Jay County sees a path for them to get past the Pioneers, the coaching staff emphasized the importance of pinning the girls who only qualified for regional and avoiding getting pinned by the state competitors, even if it means taking a technical fall.

"You want to be stingy with points if you can save one anywhere throughout the dual," Myers said. "Then at the end, some of your tiebreakers deal with those pins and those tech falls. So, whenever you're



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County's No. 6 Lina Lingo runs a double-chicken wing on No. 13 Abigail Goodwin of Bloomington South during the 135-pound opener at the IHSAA state finals at Cortiva Coliseum on Jan. 17. "I'm really excited for this weekend," Lingo said of wrestling at the team state duals. "I think if everyone does their part and works hard the rest of the week, then we'll be set to win."

out there, if you can get that pin or can stay off your back, either one has a significant outcome on the match."

A potential semifinal match would likely be against No. 8 Merrillville, which would have to go through Mount Vernon and the winner of Jennings County and Hobart.

The Merrillville Pirates

also feature six state qualifiers, with three making the podium. Their top threats are No. 1 Joy Cantu (37-0), who won the 110 title, 130-pound runner-up No. 3 Julianne Cantu (31-6) and No. 4 Charisma Lawrence (33-5), who beat Lingo on her way to fifth place in the 135 bracket.

The Pirates also didn't

have a 235-pounder, while filling out the rest of their lineup with four regional qualifiers and three girls who fell in the sectional.

On the other side of the bracket awaits a handful of threats including No. 1 Franklin Central, No. 5 Penn and No. 6 Whiteland. Those schools had seven, two and six state qualifiers, respectively.

While the Patriots will have to beat some of the best teams in Indiana to win the inaugural team state duals, they have confidence in themselves and are aiming to secure one final first in an already historic year for the sport.

"Girls have never had a team state, so this being the first one and being able to wrestle at it is

amazing for me because I'm a senior and it's going to be my only one," said Emily Manor, one of four Patriot seniors. "I have confidence in winning with our lineup because we've been working hard all season to be able to win this tournament. ... We want to put our name out there and make a statement."

## Sports on tap

### Local schedule

**Today**  
Jay County — Swim ACAC Invite — 5:30 p.m.; Boys wrestling ACAC individual tournament at Adams Central — 6 p.m.; Boys basketball at South Adams — 6 p.m.; Freshman boys basketball at South Adams — 5 p.m.  
Fort Recovery — Boys basketball at Coldwater — 6 p.m.

**Saturday**  
Jay County — Girls wrestling team state duals at Fishers — 10 a.m.; Girls basketball (varsity only) at Southern Wells — 7:30 p.m.; Junior high boys basketball at Adams Central — 9 a.m.  
Fort Recovery — Boys bowling vs. Minster at Coldwater — 9:15 a.m.; Girls bowling vs. Minster at Coldwater — 1:15 p.m.; Girls basketball at Franklin Monroe (varsity only) — 10 a.m.; Swim MAC meet at Jay County — 1 p.m.; Boys basketball vs. Mississinawa Valley — 4:30 p.m.

### TV sports

**Today**  
3:30 a.m. — Grand Slam tennis: Australian Open (ESPN)  
2 p.m. — Grand Slam tennis: Australian Open (ESPN2)  
5 p.m. — PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open (CBS)  
6 p.m. — College wrestling: Michigan at Nebraska (BTN)  
6 p.m. — U.S. Figure Skating Championships (USA)  
7 p.m. — College basketball: Villanova at Marquette (FS1)  
7 p.m. — Unrivaled basketball: Mist BC at Phantom BC (TNT)  
7:30 p.m. — College basketball: Saint Joseph's at Dayton (ESPN2)  
8 p.m. — College basketball: Michigan at Purdue (FOX)  
8 p.m. — College wrestling: Rutgers at Penn State (BTN)

8 p.m. — U.S. Figure Skating Championships (NBC)  
8:15 p.m. — Unrivaled basketball: Vinyl BC at Laces BC (TNT)  
9 p.m. — College basketball: Penn State at Iowa (FS1)  
9:30 p.m. — College gymnastics: Oregon State at Auburn (ESPN2)  
11 p.m. — College basketball: UCLA at Washington (FS1)

**Saturday**  
3 a.m. — Grand Slam tennis: Australian Open (ESPN)  
10 a.m. — Premier League soccer: AFC Bournemouth at Nottingham Forest (USA)  
12 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at San Antonio Spurs (ESPN)  
12 p.m. — Women's college basketball: Michigan State at Michigan (BTN)  
12:30 p.m. — College basketball: Pitt at Syracuse (ESPN2); Georgetown at Providence (FOX)  
1:30 p.m. — College basketball: Seton Hall at

Creighton (FS1); Michigan State at Rutgers (CBS)  
2 p.m. — College wrestling: Iowa at Ohio State (BTN)  
2:30 p.m. — College basketball: Kentucky at Vanderbilt (ESPN); Texas A&M at Texas (ESPN2)  
2:30 p.m. — IMSA SportsCar Championship: Rolex 24 at Daytona (USA)  
3 p.m. — NBA: Denver Nuggets at Minnesota Timberwolves (ABC)  
3 p.m. — College basketball: New Mexico at UNLV (FOX)  
4 p.m. — College basketball: Oregon at Minnesota (BTN)  
4 p.m. — PGA Tour: Farmers Insurance Open (CBS)  
4:30 p.m. — College basketball: Duke at Wake Forest (ESPN); Baylor at Utah (ESPN2)  
4:30 p.m. — Horse racing: Pegasus World Cup (NBC)  
5:30 p.m. — NBA: Boston Celtics at Dallas Mavericks (ABC)  
5:30 p.m. — Women's college basketball: UConn at Creighton (FOX)

6 p.m. — College hockey: Minnesota at Michigan State (BTN)  
6:30 p.m. — College basketball: Houston at Kansas (ESPN); Notre Dame at Virginia (ESPN2)  
8 p.m. — College basketball: UConn at Xavier (FOX)  
8 p.m. — U.S. Figure Skating Championships (USA)  
8 p.m. — Wrestling: AEW Collision (NBC)  
8:30 p.m. — NBA: Los Angeles Lakers at Golden State Warriors (ABC)  
8:30 p.m. — College basketball: Tennessee at Auburn (ESPN); Oklahoma at Arkansas (ESPN2)  
10 p.m. — College basketball: Cincinnati at BYU (ESPN2)  
10 p.m. — NHL: Nashville Predators at Anaheim Ducks (FOX)  
11 p.m. — College gymnastics: Washington at Michigan (BTN)

To have an event listed in "Sports on tap," email details to sports@theocr.com.

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### 250 PUBLIC NOTICE

## Public Notice

Jay County, with funding from the Federal Highway Administration, has developed preliminary plans for a replacement of Bridge No. 93 on County Road (CR) 350 West over Sipe Ditch (also known as Wehrly Ditch), approximately 0.90 mile north of State Road (SR) 26, in Greene Township, Jay County, Indiana.

The project proposes replacing the existing bridge with a three-span continuous reinforced concrete slab bridge. The new bridge will have a total length of 75 feet with a 28-foot clear roadway width and no weight or height restrictions. The new structure will be built with no skew to match the channel. The new roadway will provide two 10-foot travel lanes, one in each direction, bordered by 4-foot paved shoulders adjacent to the guardrail and 2-foot aggregate shoulders in sections without guardrail. The majority of the roadway improvements will involve widening the shoulder for guardrail placement and accommodating the 0.7-foot grade change for the new structure. Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) Guardrail with Type OS End Treatments will be installed, except at the northeast corner, which will have a curved guardrail terminal system. Outside the limits of the project, the road cross section will taper back to the existing roadway. The posted speed limit will remain at 55 miles per hour (mph). The approach roadway reconstruction will extend 295 feet from each end of the bridge's approach slab. Full-depth pavement replacement will be necessary. One field entrance at the northeast corner of the bridge will be reconstructed. The pipe underneath the field entrance will be replaced with a 55-foot-long, 15-inch diameter Type 3 pipe that aligns with the new ditch on each side of the drive; as a result, grading to the side slopes will occur. Grading will be done to side ditches of all documented stream features, resulting in flat bottom ditches with 2:1 or 3:1 side slopes. Riprap will be placed for 85 linear feet along the abutments for scour protection. The project limits are approximately 355 feet north (will be corrected in the final environmental document) and 355 feet south of the centerline of the bridge, and approximately 80 feet east and 85 feet west of the center of the bridge.

The Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan will require a full road closure on CR 350 West with a detour utilizing State Road (SR) 26, CR 400 West, and CR 200 North. The detour will be one mile long and last approximately 6 months. Anticipated construction is in Fall 2026. The project is approximately 0.1 mile in length. Land use surrounding the project area is agricultural fields. Construction of the project will require approximately 0.95 acre of permanent right-of-way (ROW) and 0.20 acre of temporary ROW. Both federal and local funds are to be utilized for the construction of this project. The construction cost is \$1,837,000.

The Federal Highway Administration and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) have agreed that this project is within the guidelines of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Level 2 environmental document with no significant impacts to wetlands. Permanent impacts to Sipe Ditch are approximately 30 linear feet and 0.020 acre due to channel grading and interior bent construction. In addition, approximately 100 linear feet and 0.020 acre of Sipe Ditch will be temporarily impacted due to cofferdam placement. Approximately 53 linear feet and 0.002 acre of Unnamed Tributary (UNT) 1 to Sipe Ditch will be permanently impacted by channel grading. Approximately 333 linear feet and 0.040 acre of UNT 2 to Sipe Ditch will be permanently impacted by channel grading. There will be no temporary impacts to UNT 2 to Sipe Ditch. Approximately 46 linear feet and 0.004 acre of UNT 3 will be permanently impacted by channel grading and pipe replacement under the field entrance driveway. No temporary impacts to UNT 3 will be necessary. In addition, approximately 0.08 acre of tree clearing will occur. Proposed impacts have been minimized to the extent practicable.

Preliminary design plans, along with the CE document, are available for review at the following locations:  
1. Egis BLN USA, Inc. (Egis), 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250  
2. Jay County Public Library, 315 North Ship Street, Portland, Indiana 47371  
3. Jay County Highway Department, 1035 E 200 N, Portland, Indiana 47371  
4. Online at: <https://tinyurl.com/Des-No-2101729>

All interested persons may request a public hearing be held and/or submit comments to the attention of Grace Gjerde by email at [grace.gjerde@egis-group.com](mailto:grace.gjerde@egis-group.com), by phone at 317-806-3029, or by mail at 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, IN 46250 on or before January 31, 2025. In addition, a hard copy of the project information, including the environmental document, may be mailed to interested persons upon request. Persons with limited internet access may request project information be mailed, please contact Grace Gjerde by email at [grace.gjerde@egis-group.com](mailto:grace.gjerde@egis-group.com), by phone at 317-806-3029, or by mail at 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, IN 46250.

In accordance with the "Americans with Disabilities Act," with advance notice, INDOT will provide accommodation for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearings process, including arranging auxiliary aids, interpretation services for the hearing impaired, services for the sight-impaired and other services as needed. In addition, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requiring auxiliary aids, including language interpretation services and document conversion. Should accommodation be required, please contact Grace Gjerde at 317-806-3029 or [grace.gjerde@egis-group.com](mailto:grace.gjerde@egis-group.com) or Taylor Darrah at 317-467-3915 or [tdarrah@indot.in.gov](mailto:tdarrah@indot.in.gov) for information.

This notice is published in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1)) stating, "Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program."; 23 CFR 450.212(a)(7) stating, "Public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process, as necessary."; approved by the Federal Highway Administration U.S. Department of Transportation on July 7, 2021. CR 1-16-24-2025-HSPAXLP

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# Sports

## First time for everything

*Patriots aim to win inaugural girls state wrestling duals on Saturday*

By ANDREW BALKO

The Commercial Review

It's been a year of firsts for girls wrestling.

It was the first year that the Indiana High School Athletic Association sanctioned girls wrestling.

It was the first year that a Patriot — Mallory Winner — won a state title under the IHSAA banner in girls wrestling.

It was the first year the Patriot girls won a sectional title as an IHSAA sport.

As a result, they will be competing in the inaugural team state tournament.

But the Patriots aren't satisfied with just making the team state tournament, but rather are looking for another first in the form of the title.

The Jay County High School's fourth-ranked girls wrestling team will travel to Fishers on Saturday to compete in the inaugural IHSWCA Girls Team State Duals, and are aiming to bring the first title back home to Portland.

To qualify for the team state duals, schools had to win their sectional during the individual state series. (Wawasee finished third behind Garrett and East Noble at the Goshen sectional and Rochester Community claimed third after New Haven and Columbia City but both moved in as replacements.)

"Well, our goal is to win it, but just like the girls individual tournament, you've got to take it one match at a time," said coach Eric Myers. "I think the real test is when we get there and see the weigh-in sheets to see if any girls have changed weights or if they're not in the lineup. Then you can start breaking down your matchups.

"Then once you have those weigh-in sheets, then you start looking at your coin flip and whether you have to report first and



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Jay County High School's No. 5 Katie Rowles tries to gain control of No. 2 Claire May of Roncalli during the 100-pound third place match at the IHSAA state finals on Jan. 17 at Cortiva Coliseum. "I'm really excited for Team state," Rowles said. "Not very many girls throughout the state get the opportunity to compete again after the state series, so this is really exciting, especially as the first team state tournament. And I think we've got a really good shot at doing well, maybe even taking on the title."

what kind of adjustments you can make after that. It's pretty fun whenever you get into those high-level duals and you can juggle your lineup a little bit. It's fun to play that chess match."

The Patriots will open with Lafayette Jefferson. Bronchos feature three state qualifiers in the 100, 105 and 190-pound weight classes. No. 13 Alexis Baumgartner (21-14, 100)

and No. 12 Liberty Quesada (24-10, 190) did not place at the state finals on Jan. 17 at Cortiva Coliseum, but No. 11 Senniah Henderson (23-8) finished fourth in the 105 bracket.

Four more Bronchos made the regional meet at Rochester, while six fell in the sectional they hosted.

LJHS filled all but the 130 weight class during the state series, which was one of the three weight classes

Jay County had open. While the Patriots didn't have wrestlers compete in the 105, 130 or 235 weight classes during the individual state series, they have a few potential plans to juggle their lineup to fill as many spots as they can on Saturday.

One of those potential plans would include Haley Ridenour, who has had to sit behind four-time state champion Mallory Winner

throughout the regular season.

"I'm a little nervous," said Ridenour of breaking the lineup after having to sit out the individual tournament. "I'm a little nervous but at the end of the day, if I win, I win. I just hope I get the points that my team needs to help us proceed to get at least second place, but hopefully shooting for first."

Jay County's lineup will

be subject to the results of the weigh-ins for itself and its opponents, and can change from dual to dual depending on if they won the coin flip.

Should JCHS get past Lafayette Jefferson, it would get the winner of No. 3 Moorsville and North Montgomery in the quarterfinals. As of Wednesday, the Patriots were preparing to face the former.

See First page 7

## Mariano Rivera accused of covering up child sex abuse

By DAVID MATTHEWS

New York Daily News

Tribune News Service

NEW YORK — Yankees Hall of Fame closer Mariano Rivera and his wife, Clara, are accused of covering up the sexual abuse of a minor at their church and in their home, according to a lawsuit filed in New York.

The complaint claims the couple hid the abuse of a young girl associated with their church, Refuge of Hope in New Rochelle, where 55-year-old Rivera is the lead pastor.

### *Yankee Hall of Famer and his wife allegedly intimidated minor to stay silent about abuse*

The suit, filed in the Supreme Court of Westchester County, alleges the Riveras were negligent and did not act upon learning the girl was being sexually abused.

The young victim was allegedly abused by an older minor girl,

identified only as "MG," during a 2018 summer internship at the Ignite Life Center in Gainesville, Florida, that was supported by the Riveras' church.

Clara Rivera, who's said to be in charge of Refuge of Hope's day-to-day operations, allegedly

convinced the girl's family to let her attend the internship in Florida. According to the suit, the Riveras then covered up the abuse upon traveling to the summer camp themselves.

"Rather than take sufficient action to end the sexual abuse of Jane Doe, the Riveras each separately isolated and intimidated Jane Doe to remain silent about her abuse by MG to avoid causing trouble for Refuge of Hope and the Ignite Life Summer Internship," the complaint states.

According to the lawsuit, the

abuse continued at a barbecue hosted at the couple's former home in Rye, New York, after the girl returned home from the internship.

Ruben Tavarez Jr., the adult son of Refuge of Hope Associate Pastor Ruben Tavarez Sr., is also accused of abusing the girl in August 2021.

The complaint also points to separate instances of abuse at Ignite Life Center, where two sons of pastors and a former volunteer have been arrested for child sex crimes.



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Contact Lindsey at [L.Cochran@theocr.com](mailto:L.Cochran@theocr.com) or (260) 726-8141