

The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

www.thecr.com

\$1

Bentz gets a 3-year sentence

Former jail officer pleaded guilty to three felonies

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

A former Jay County Jail correction officer will spend time on home detention and probation for engaging in sexual relations with an inmate.

William Brandon Bentz, 36, Portland, was sentenced to one year of house arrest and two years of probation Thursday.

His sentence comes a month after he pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual misconduct in which a service provider engages in fondling or touching with a person who is subject to lawful detention or supervision with the intent to arouse or satisfy sexual desires, all three Level 6 felonies.

As part of his plea agreement, a Level 5 felony for sexual misconduct when the service provider engages in sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct with the person subject to lawful detention or supervision was dismissed.

According to the probable cause affidavit filed in connection with the case, Bentz engaged in sexual acts with an inmate, identified as J.G., in March and April 2024. Bentz allegedly fondled the inmate's breasts and vagina on several occasions, allowed her to touch his penis and took her into an exam room at the jail, where she allegedly performed oral sex on him April 28.

Bentz apologized to the court and to his wife.

"It was out of character, I don't have any excuse," he said.

Alexa Bentz, William Bentz's wife, said she wouldn't be able to care for her children in her current job without her husband's help. She said he is an active part of their children's lives.

"I just feel like this incident was an out of character incident," she said.

See **Sentence** page 2



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Filter fire

A Portland firefighter sprays water onto a pallet of filters Thursday morning at Fort Recovery Industries. Firefighters were called to the facility at 710 E. 100 North, Portland, about 10:30 a.m. after pallets of the filters caught on fire. The situation was under control shortly before 11 a.m. For additional details, see Saturday's edition of The Commercial Review.

Additional funding approved

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

The county will be looking into switching to the statewide radio system as well as implementing a stand-alone radio system.

Jay County Council on a split 3-2 vote agreed to pay an additional \$39,600 for public safety firm Ritter Strategic Services to look into costs and other information regarding joining the Integrated Public Safety Commission's system or purchasing a stand-alone system.

Council president Matt Minnich noted the nearly

\$40,000 amendment to the county's original \$178,500 contract with Ritter Strategic Services — it was approved by Jay County Commissioners in February — includes looking into

a system that would work for non-public safety entities, such as Jay County Highway Department.

Ritter Strategic Services completed a study on the county's emergency

responder radios previously and recommended Jay County shift to the statewide system. Commissioners in July approved a contract with the company to move forward with planning, procurement, engineering, project management and other work related to switching to the Integrated Public Safety Commission's statewide radio system.

Council member Michael Brewster — he works as an officer at Portland Police Department — and council member Bryan Alexander both pointed out represen-

tatives from local public safety entities have voiced a desire to move to the statewide system.

"I may use the system because the city police do, but is anybody else going to be using the radio system on this county council?" said Brewster. "No. I mean, (Sheriff Ray Newton), you're going to be using this system, right? The sheriff's department is. The fire departments are going to be using this system. So again, it goes back to what system does our local agency want to use?"

See **Funding** page 2

Firm will look at state system versus stand-alone option



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Jay County Council member Bryan Alexander asks questions Wednesday during a joint session between council and Jay County Commissioners. County officials learned about financing options for capital projects from Jason Semler of Baker Tilly.

Officials get primer on options

By BAILEY CLINE

The Commercial Review

Bonds, build-operate-transfer agreements and property taxes.

Jay County officials learned about various options for project financing during a joint session Wednesday.

Jason Semler of consulting firm Baker Tilly explained different avenues of funding available to Jay County Commissioners and Jay County Council.

Breaking down property taxes at the base level, Semler explained a few key terms. Gross assessed value of the tax base is defined as the value before any deductions of real and personal property. Net assessed value of the tax base, in contrast, is the net value after deductions and abatements of real and personal property.

Property tax levies, he added, are funds generated by applying the tax rate to each \$100 of the net assessed value.

Semler talked about the maximum property tax levy — the

Baker Tilly representative shares details with commissioners, council

maximum amount of property tax dollars that may be levied in a budget year — and the maximum levy growth quotient, which is an annual levy growth factor used statewide and based on a six-year average of non-farm personal income.

He explained circuit breaker tax credits, which limit a taxpayer's total property tax liability to a fixed percentage of the gross assessed value of the taxable property before deductions.

Looking at Jay County's 2024 budget, the county had \$7.72 million in certified property tax levies. Its circuit breaker "losses" — dollars not paid by taxpayers because of the limits set in

circuit breaker tax credits — came in \$184,714, which Semler noted is a low amount comparatively.

Municipal bonds — a debt security issued by governmental units to raise funding — are used to finance capital projects, such as road work, wastewater or water systems, schools, jails or emergency responder stations.

Semler noted there are four types of bonds — property tax bonds, lease bonds, bond anticipation notes and revenue bonds.

Property tax bonds involve adding a debt service property tax levy onto tax rolls to cover bond payments.

See **Primer** page 2

Correction

The time listed in Thursday's newspaper for the legislative update Saturday was incorrect. The event with State Reps. J.D. Prescott (R-Union City) and Matt Lehman (R-Berne), and State Sen. Travis Holdman (R-Markle) will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 15, at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

Weather

The high was in the 60s for the third consecutive day Wednesday, topping out at 65 degrees. The low was 34.

Rain is expected tonight, with thunderstorms possible. The low will be in the upper 50s. Expect more rain and stormy conditions Saturday.

See page 2 for an extended outlook.

In review

Jay County Solid Waste Management District will have recycling trailers from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday across from Pennville Fire Station and 9 a.m. to noon in the parking lot at 220 Lincoln St., Portland.

Coming up

Saturday — Photos from the Jay County junior high swim team.

Tuesday — Coverage of Saturday's legislative update in Dunkirk.

Wednesday — Details from next week's Jay School Board meeting.



Sentence ...

Continued from page 1
Jay County chief deputy prosecutor Zech Landers questioned which incident Alexa Bentz was referring to, pointing out the defendant pleaded guilty to three different charges. He noted Alexa Bentz was working at Jay County Jail when the crimes occurred. Alexa Bentz confirmed she and her husband have not told their children about the incident. "(Is it) because it's shameful, reprehensible behavior?" asked Jay Circuit Court Judge Brian Hutchison. Alexa Bentz agreed but also pointed to their ages — they are 11, 8 and 6 years old — and said

the younger children may not be able to understand. Diane Bentz Cooper, William Bentz's aunt, talked about how her nephew has been helping care for her father, who has stage 4 cancer and goes through treatments five days a week. When Bentz has a day off, she said, he's there to help. "It's a blessing," she said, to have her nephew around. Landers pushed for William Bentz to receive 4.5 years in jail, suggesting 18 months for each count and for the sentences to be served consecutively. Pointing to the probable cause affidavit, Landers said the woman who

William Bentz engaged in sexual relations with was fearful of him. He also argued the fact that William Bentz has dependents had no bearing on the crimes he committed, saying he didn't care about how it would impact his children. "He cared about satisfying his own sexual desires," Landers said. Bentz's lawyer Gary Lee Colasessano asked for the court to grant William Bentz a suspended sentence, with charges to be served concurrently. He also pointed to William Bentz's lack of a criminal record before the incident and shared his belief

that William Bentz would be receptive to probation. "He's never going to work in law enforcement again, (it's) never going to happen again," Colasessano said. Hutchison agreed with Colasessano, saying he also thinks William Bentz will be receptive to probation. Hutchison said he believed the case had one aggravating circumstance — William Bentz's position of power in the incident. "You were in a position of control," he said. "Even if you think she was a willing participant, she wasn't. You were in control." He noted offenders' families

commonly see hardships because of the offender's actions. He said he wasn't sure this case resulted in an undue hardship in which the court needed to take it into account. Hutchison said he didn't think the aggravating circumstances outweigh the mitigating circumstances or vice versa. He sentenced William Bentz to three years in jail, with one count to be served on home detention and the other two counts to be served on probation. William Bentz was given two days credit and ordered to start home detention no later than Tuesday.

CR almanac

Saturday 3/15	Sunday 3/16	Monday 3/17	Tuesday 3/18	Wednesday 3/19
70/45	49/29	54/44	72/55	68/40
Rain is expected Saturday. Winds may gust up to 45 mph.	There's a 50% chance of rain Sunday with mostly cloudy skies. Thunderstorms possible.	Mostly sunny skies are expected Monday when the high will be around 51 degrees.	Tuesday's forecast shows mostly sunny skies with highs in the mid 60s.	Wednesday's forecast is mostly cloudy with a 30% chance of showers.

Lotteries

Powerball 11-13-28-51-58 Power Ball: 1 Power Play: 2 Estimated jackpot: \$378 million	Daily Four: 0-9-5-8 Quick Draw: 9-11-12-13-18-19-21-28-36-38-42-45-47-54-55-57-64-69-78-80 Cash 5: 1-6-14-26-35 Estimated jackpot: \$105,000
Mega Millions Estimated jackpot: \$277 million	Ohio Wednesday Midday Pick 3: 0-5-1 Pick 4: 3-1-0-9 Pick 5: 2-3-7-2-7 Evening Pick 3: 4-6-9 Pick 4: 0-1-8-0 Pick 5: 7-8-7-3-9 Rolling Cash: 1-10-18-28-38 Estimated jackpot: \$130,000
Hoosier Wednesday Midday Daily Three: 6-0-4 Daily Four: 0-3-7-5 Quick Draw: 5-9-11-16-17-19-25-26-31-38-46-48-50-59-62-65-68-70-76-80 Evening Daily Three: 3-1-0	

Markets

Cooper Farms Fort Recovery Corn.....4.51 April corn.....4.61 May corn.....4.67	March beans10.17 Wheat 5.17
POET Biorefining Portland Corn.....4.83 April corn4.80 May corn.....4.83	ADM Montpelier Corn.....4.62 April corn4.66 Beans.....9.97 April beans10.01 Wheat5.21
The Andersons Richland Township Corn4.72 March corn4.72 Beans10.14	Heartland St. Anthony Corn.....4.57 April corn4.62 Beans.....9.84 April beans10.89 Wheat5.17

Today in history

In 1794, Eli Whitney received a patent for the cotton gin. The invention was revolutionary for its ability to remove seeds from cotton, eliminating the need to accomplish that task by hand.
In 1826, the first Pan-American Conference was held in Panama. The meetings between representatives from independent states of the Western Hemisphere were designed to discuss defense and legal matters.
In 1879, Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Württemberg, Germany. He developed the special and general theories of relativity and won the Noble Prize for Physics in 1921 for his explanation of the photoelectric effect.
In 2018, Jay County High School held a school safety forum in the wake of the school shooting a month earlier that left 17 dead at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.
In 2022, Jay County Humane Society reported to Jay County Commissioners that it had turned its focus to the former Fastenal building on the west side of Portland as the site for its planned new animal shelter. —The CR

Citizen's calendar

Today 9:30 a.m. — Redkey Town Council special session, park cabin, 50 Mooney St.	Country Living Advisory Board, dining hall, living facility, 1194 E. 200 North, Portland. 6:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery School Board, community room, high school, 400 Butler St. 7:30 p.m. — Fort Recovery Village Council, village hall, 201 S. Main St.
Monday 5 p.m. — Jay School Board, General Shanks, 414 E. Floral Ave., Portland. 5:30 p.m. — Portland City Council, council chambers, fire station, 1616 N. Meridian St. 6 p.m. — Jay County	Wednesday 4 p.m. — Portland Board of Aviation, airport, 661 W. 100 North.

Funding ...

Continued from page 1
Council president Matt Minnich noted the \$39,600 factors in the cost to research into radio systems that may be used by non-emergency personnel. Brewster recalled the Integrated Public Safety Commission is looking into adjusting its policy, which previously didn't allow non-emergency responders on the statewide system for day-to-day business. Integrated Public Safety Commission statewide interoperability coordinator Andrea Baughn told commissioners in February the commission is considering allowing county highway departments to use the system. Minnich said the option the commission is proposing for non-emergency personnel may not be as in-depth as the county needs. "I think \$40,000 is a pretty small price to pay for a \$1 million-ish project that has the potential to give you multiple bids that, even if all it does is bring the IPSC system down in cost, it was worth that," he said. He added the county needs to look into a new radio system for non-emergency personnel and said it makes sense to pursue information now while radio discussions are happening. Alexander pointed to the decision to move forward with the contract in July without adjusting the

scope in services to look into a second option. "It just was, maybe, I don't know if it was haste, if it was enlightenment through the process, but looking back we wish we would've put it in," he said. "It was a mistake not to. Not to blame anyone, because maybe it was an awareness thing..." He agreed with Minnich's perspective but said despite his vote he supports the implementation of the system desired by public safety officials. Council agreed, with Brewster and Harold Towell opposing and Cindy Bracy absent, to pay for the amendment to the contract. Also Wednesday, council approved a resolution to allow council members to attend meetings virtually. The new policy lays out stipulations for virtual attendance, which lines up with rules set forth in Indiana Code. At least 50% of the governing body to be present in person to allow for electronic participation. Council members may not attend more than 50% of their meetings remotely in a calendar year, and they also may not attend more than two meetings in a row virtually — exceptions to that rule include situations caused by military service, illness or medical conditions, death of a relative or an emergency involving actual or threatened injury to people or property. Council members must

give at least five days notice to the Jay County auditor and council president in advance of the meeting to participate virtually. Per the policy, council members may not participate in a meeting remotely if final action is being taken to adopt a budget, initiate a referendum, establish or increase a fee or penalty, use eminent domain authority, reduce personnel or establish or raise or renew a tax. Also, executive meetings must remain-in person. In other business, council members Faron Parr, Randy May, Alexander, Brewster, Minnich and Towell: •Made \$63,000 in additional appropriations (Towell dissenting) for economic development income tax (EDIT) dollars approved by commissioners to be awarded to local entities. They include \$35,000 for John Jay Center for Learning's High School Equivalency classes, \$15,000 for Arts Place's Arts in the Parks program, \$10,000 for Fourth of July events and \$3,000 for East Central Indiana Small Business Development Center. •Made the following other additional appropriations: \$75,000 for building, liability and vehicle insurance; \$28,830 (Towell dissenting) for renovations to the men's downstairs restroom at Jay County Country Living; \$13,150 National Opioid Settle-

ment dollars for planning related to renovating a house at 422 W. Votaw St. into The Vision on Votaw recovery home; \$5,000 for training at Jay County Sheriff's Office; \$5,000 for transcripts in Jay Circuit Court; \$1,600 for Jay County Community Corrections executive director wages, \$1,500 for deputy director wages, \$347.33 for employer Public Employees' Retirement Fund and \$164.51 for employer Social Security; and \$1,100.03 (Towell opposed) for design, planning and architectural firm Rundell, Ernstberger and Associates' professional services in planning development of the county's 68 acres on the west side of Portland. •Heard Towell volunteered to represent council along with Alexander in meetings with Portland representatives and other county officials regarding the 68 acres and its development. •Appointed Alexander and Reda Theurer-Miller to Jay County Visitors & Tourism Bureau Board. •Transferred \$647, \$359 and \$261 from Jay County Health Department's equipment maintenance contract fund to the medical supplies, office supplies and office equipment funds, respectively. Health department administrator and environmentalist Heath Butz noted the money comes from an annual state grant and

Primer ...

Continued from page 1
However, they are subject to debt limits. (In Indiana, counties' constitutional debt limit is one-third of 2% of the unit's certified net assessed value.) The county has an ongoing property tax bond for construction work completed on Jay County Jail several years ago, added Semler. Lease rental bonds are issued by a separate entity such as a building corporation or redevelopment commission that pays for the capital project. It's then leased to the governmental unit when ready for use, with the governmental agency making "lease rental payments" to repay bonds. Those funds may be pulled from property taxes, income taxes or other available dollars.

Bond anticipation notes are short-term debts issued while waiting for longer-term financing. Revenue bonds are payable from a select number of revenues, including local income taxes, tax increment financing and other taxes as well as user fees, such as fees for wastewater, water or parking. Semler also mentioned different procurement methods when looking into building projects. One of those methods includes public-private "build-operate-transfer" agreements, which are used for construction, operation or maintenance of a public facility. Build-operate-transfer agreements allow more control in choosing an offer, allow an opportunity

to negotiate offers and keep project responsibilities within one entity, he explained. Guaranteed maximum prices established in those agreements also help to prevent unexpected increases in cost. Semler shared an illustrative version of what property tax bonds could look like for projects discussed in recent years, estimating at \$13.815 million total if pursued. "If we were to do that bond, that \$13 million bond, and fund it all from property taxes, I'm showing the tax rate would go up from 5 cents as it is now to almost 10 cents in 2026," he explained. That tax rate would decrease to about 8 cents after other outstanding bonds are paid off in 2028.

Capsule Reports

Insurance discussed
Jay County Commissioners met with representatives from Understand, Service and Innovate (USI) Insurance Services on Wednesday afternoon. Tom Schweisthal of USI Insurance Services broke down concerns brought forward into the following categories: open enrollment concerns, billing and carrier concerns, service concerns and employee issues or concerns. Schweisthal agreed to set up a weekly phone call, including a meeting to be held soon involving Jay County auditor Emily Franks, USI representatives and a representative from insurance company Physicians Health Plan, to hash out various insurance questions. The county switched to USI Insurance Services from its previous broker, OneDigital, in November.

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50th anniversary



Randy and Jackie Smith - 2025

Randy and Jackie Smith

The Smiths are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary today.

Jackie Belle and Randy Smith wed March 14, 1975, at Asbury United Methodist Church in Portland.

Randy Smith has been the pastor at New Beginnings Holiness Church for 15 years.

The rural Portland couple have three children, Mandi Glassford (husband Nathan) of Portland, Charity Rodgers (husband Robbie) of Rodgers, Minnesota, and Makayla Smith of Portland. They also have four grandchildren.



Jackie and Randy Smith - 1975

Sip, stretch next week

Sip, stretch and unwind at the fairgrounds next Saturday.

Jay County Fairgrounds is hosting a wine and yoga event at 11 a.m. March 22 in the women's building. Participants will be offered mimosas before and after moving through poses with Zokawa Yoga of Muncie. Yoga mats are available for participants if needed.

Tickets are \$10. They're available at bit.ly/sipandstretch2025 or by visiting Jay County Fair's website.

Deadline is today

Today is the last day to submit a nomination for the Jack Cole Award for Volunteerism.

The award was established by The Portland Foundation's board of trustees to

Taking Note

honor Cole's work as its first executive director.

Nominations should be by letter of recommendation and include the nominee's name, address and a brief background describing why the nominee deserves the award.

The winner will receive a commemorative plaque and a nominal cash award to be presented to the volunteer's charity of choice. The award will be presented at the Foundation's annual meeting on May 28.

Habits drive spouse crazy

DEAR ABBY: I am married with two children, 6 and 4. I love them and my wife. When I met her, I knew she was a little messy. I am neat, tidy and generally organized. Over time, her behavior (specifically, cleanliness and tidiness) has grown worse. It's reached the point where she leaves her chewed-off fingernails where our children play barefoot. She refuses to help with household chores or to be a functional part of the household. I don't want a divorce because I know it would wreck the children's lives. I have been holding out while politely begging for some of the cleanliness issues to resolve, but it's had zero impact. I'm ready to lose my mind, and my hair is visibly thinning from the stress. It's like having a third child. What do I do? — FRAZZLED IN FLORIDA

DEAR FRAZZLED: A wife and mother whose behavior and general cleanliness have worsened to the point that she leaves her chewed-off finger-

Dear Abby



nails on the floor where her children play may be experiencing mental problems. Withdrawing as you have described isn't normal behavior and could be a cry for help.

Contact your health insurance company and your doctor so your wife can be evaluated physically and neurologically. After that, you will have a better idea of what to do. While this could simply be the behavior of a disorganized and harried housewife, I'm concerned it could be more.

DEAR ABBY: We all meet acquaintances and say, "Let's

grab dinner." We intend to follow through but forget. A while back, my wife and I made a list of 10 other couples we would like to get to know better and organized a group dinner. On the third Saturday of each month, a couple hosts the group at a restaurant.

We don't meet in homes or in December; and, yes, sometimes only six couples attend, but it's often all of us. This is our 25th year, and we have not missed a month. During COVID we gathered by Zoom. It's not about the food — it's about a caring group of friends sharing with each other. Abby, I thought you might want to print this to inspire others. — ONE HOST IN INDIANA

DEAR HOST: I think the lesson here is that someone has to be proactive and actually make plans rather than settle for good intentions. You did everyone, including yourself, a tremendous favor. Loneliness and isolation are serious problems for many.

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.

DUNKIRK HISTORICAL SOCIETY — Is open

from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month in the former W.E. Gaunt Jewelry building, 113 S. Main St., Dunkirk.

MUSEUM OF THE SOLDIER — Is open from noon to 5 p.m. the first and third Saturday and Sunday of the month. It is located at 510 E. Arch St., Portland. The website is museumofthesoldier.com.

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 BREAK-

FAST 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.

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.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUICIDE GRIEF — Meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. the third Monday of each month. The support group serves to help individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. To register, contact Stephanie Patterson at (260) 251-3259.

Tuesday

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

COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS 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.

Sudoku

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

Level: Advanced

Thursday's Solution

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

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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Confirmation means less freedom

The Orange County Register
Tribune News Service

On Monday, the United States Senate confirmed former Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer as U.S. labor secretary.

As such, Chavez-DeRemer will oversee the U.S. Labor Department and have considerable power over labor regulations and matters such as unionization.

Ordinarily, a former Republican congressman being appointed labor secretary wouldn't be of particular significance. But these are not ordinary times. Chavez-DeRemer's

Guest Editorial

nomination was backed by unions because of her record as a pro-union Republican. She also had the support of Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

As a member of Congress, Chavez-DeRemer co-sponsored the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act) which

would have made it much easier for unions to gain members and ban right to work laws which protect workers from being forced into a union.

She also backed the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2024. As described by Reason Magazine: "If adopted, the PSFNA would set 'minimum standards' for how states negotiate with government unions. However, these standards are anything but minimal, mandating unionization rights for nearly all government employees, requiring unelected arbitrators or outside decision-makers,

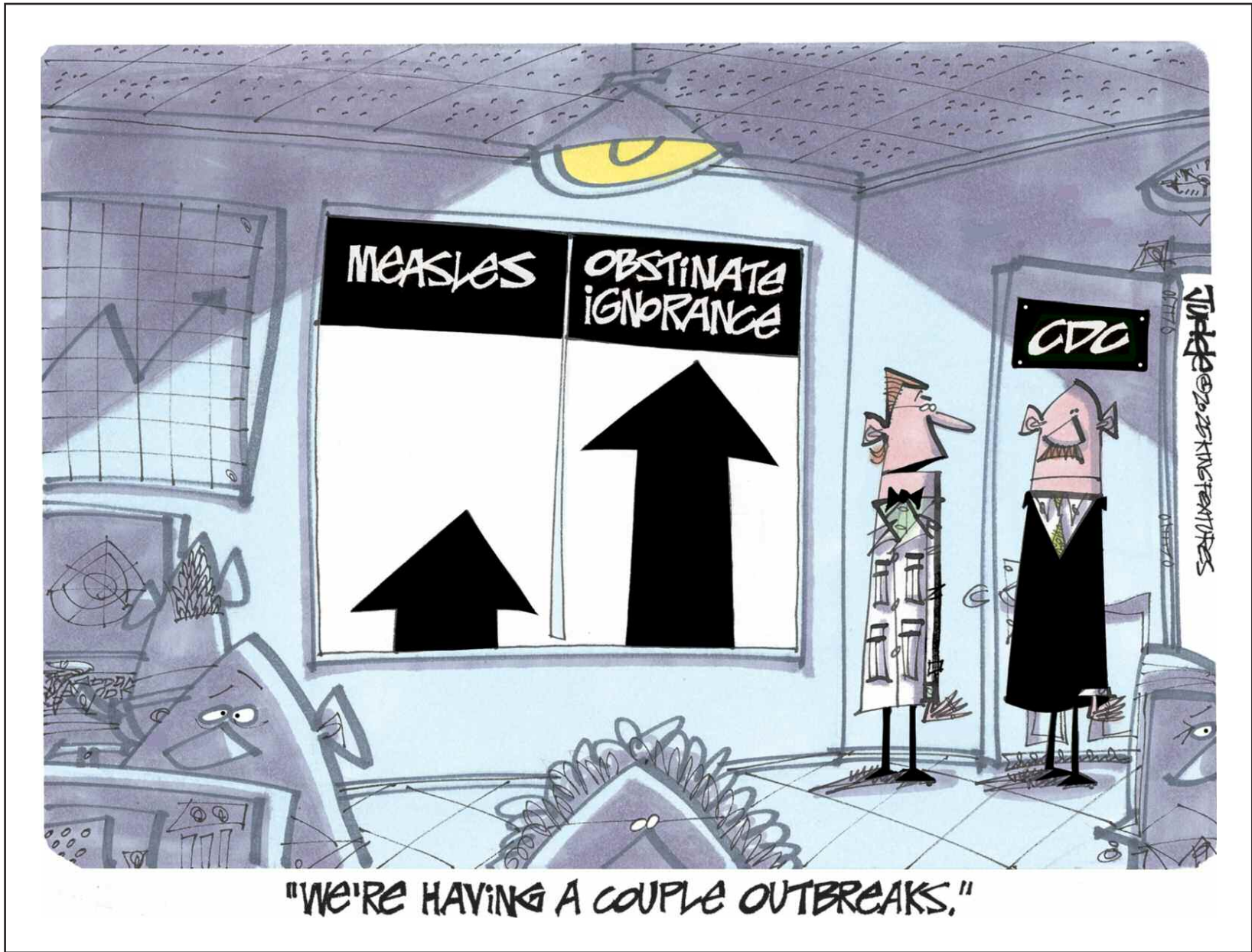
and allowing automatic payroll deduction of union dues."

Yes, this was the person who President Donald Trump thought was best suited to oversee the Labor Department. Unfortunately, only three Republican senators opposed Chavez-DeRemer's confirmation: Sens. Tedd Budd, North Carolina, and Kentucky's Rand Paul and Mitch McConnell.

"The American people demand and deserve change after four years of economic heartache under the 'most pro-union administration in Ameri-

can history," said McConnell. "Unfortunately, Lori Chavez-DeRemer's record pushing policies that force hardworking Americans into union membership suggests more of the same."

That's all true, but it also speaks to the ongoing dismantling of the GOP's commitment to free markets and personal freedom under Trump's influence. As with his confused thinking about tariffs, Trump's foolish pandering to unions might yield short-term political wins but it's not in the long-term interest of the nation.



Schools, downtowns are key factors

By MICHAEL J. HICKS

The Braun administration has published a rural economic development plan for Indiana. It looks a lot like plans offered by GOP and Democratic governors over the past 75 years.

Indeed, the only element distinguishable from such a plan in the 1960s is broadband. Back then, we were worrying about better phone service.

Braun's plan discusses improvements in public services to farms and an increased focus on attracting manufacturing jobs. It calls for reducing taxes. Puzzlingly, the document mentions climate when talking about farms—not something one expects from the GOP. It also mentions protecting Hoosier farmland from China—a statement meant to placate voters with, it must be said, mediocre intellectual gifts.

To be fair, the plan might be a good political document that reflects longstanding concerns from stakeholders in the agricultural and manufacturing communities. It should make many of those special interest groups happy.

The one thing this plan won't do is help grow rural communities. In fact, if its main ideas—tax cuts and an increased focus on business attraction—are implemented, economic conditions will worsen for most of Indiana's already beleaguered rural communities.

The main problem with rural economic development plans is a shortage of honesty. I get it. It is hard to engage in truth-telling about the difficult future of Indi-

Michael J. Hicks



ana's rural economy. It is even harder to admit that any potential remedies will take decades of hard, expensive efforts before they bear fruit. It's far easier to double down on ineffective 1960s policies and claim victory against those darned Chinese.

Here's some truth. First, there will be fewer agriculture-related jobs in Indiana over the next two decades—and maybe forever. This will happen even as food production continues to grow, though it'll never be more than about 1.5 percent of the state's economy.

Tax policies won't change that. Indeed, when counting taxes and subsidies, the farm industry in Indiana actually pays a negative tax. That's right, industry-wide, farms already receive more subsidies than taxes.

If you are a farmer who is paying more taxes than the subsidies you receive, you don't need a tax cut; you need a better accountant.

The big risk to the agricultural industry today is the decline of rural communities and loss of working-age adults. The plain fact is that the agricultural industry needs rural communities a heck of a lot more than those rural communities need farming or agricultural jobs.

Second, Indiana has been working hard to attract manufacturing jobs since the late 1960s. But we now have fewer factory jobs than in 1973, and fewer factory jobs than last year.

There is no manufacturing employment renaissance. Indiana will have fewer factory jobs next year than we have today, fewer in 2030 than we have today, and fewer in 2040 than we will have in 2030.

Manufacturing jobs aren't coming back, even as we hit new industry production records. Nothing is going to reverse that trend, and anyone who tells you differently is either stupendously ignorant or lying to you. Though, to be fair, some could be both.

No tariff, no onshoring trend and certainly no state tax policy will change this. When counting both taxes and subsidies, Hoosier manufacturers pay the third-lowest total taxes of any manufacturing firms in the country, and about a quarter of the tax rate paid by the average business in Indiana. More tax cuts won't boost jobs. If they could, Indiana would be growing factory jobs, not losing them. We are losing them.

Now, even with fewer total factory jobs over the coming decades, a few counties might see more jobs, though the vast majority will see losses. The pie is shrinking, and yesterday's policies focus on getting a bigger slice of a shrinking pie rather than growing the pie.

The truth is that rural Indiana manufacturing is hampered by a declining pool of well-educated workers. Counties that get good-

paying factory work will mostly be on the fringe of large urban areas (think Shelby or Boone counties). There, they can access a large labor market in the nearby metropolitan area.

Any manufacturing job growth that occurs in most rural counties will mostly be low-wage, lower-skilled jobs. That has certainly been the trend of the 21st century.

The real limit on rural economic success is, and has long been, a lack of people. Rural communities suffer a lack of people who have the skills to work in the growing occupations of the late 20th and 21st centuries.

Ironically, Indiana's rural areas should be doing well. We are a compact state, with 85 percent of the population living 20 minutes from a metropolitan county. We also have many small towns that are pleasant places to live. Our climate appeals to many—Hoosier summers are spectacular. We have lots of rivers and lakes, and among the best state park systems I've encountered.

Also, the post-COVID increase in remote work should really benefit Indiana. In fact, Indiana has had some population growth in recent years, but all of it is clustered in just a few counties, primarily in the Indianapolis suburbs. And that reveals some of the challenges of Indiana's rural counties.

The plain, and frankly uncomfortable, fact is that for every nice downtown, there are several struggling places with little choice of restaurants or recreation. And, for every high-per-

forming rural school system—think Batesville or Jay County—there are several small, tired, underfunded school corporations.

The best example of this is Advanced Placement STEM classes. Roughly 60 Indiana school corporations—almost 1 in 5—offer no AP STEM courses in chemistry, biology or calculus. Nearly all of these are rural schools. Even the top graduates of these high schools face deep disadvantages in pursuing a college degree.

It has to be said that the types of families rural Indiana desperately needs to keep and attract are precisely those folks who are reluctant to send their kids to a tired, underfunded school. But it is to these people that the administration's rural plan says, "I don't care about your interest in well-funded schools."

Not every rural Hoosier community is going to survive the 21st century. Those that do will have made themselves attractive to young families. They'll have good schools, not just claims about good schools. They'll have downtowns that offer recreation and more.

State government cannot save most places. Perhaps the best thing it can do is get out of their way.

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The Commercial Review



US PS 125820

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VOLUME 151—NUMBER 227
FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025

www.thecr.com

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

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

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Beefed up profits

Cattle producers are finally seeing improved prices

By **CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK**
The Minnesota Star Tribune
Tribune News Service

BLACKDUCK, Minnesota — In Minnesota's north country, a former kindergarten teacher-turned-rancher carefully walks forward on muddy, thawing ground toward a knot of dark heifers. They stare with curious white faces. One high-ended cow trots away awkwardly, a classic signal that she'll soon be calving.

"That one shaking its tail? That one's probably calving, too," said Rachel Gray, fourth-generation northern Minnesota farmer. She starts counting. "One, two, three, there's probably four in here calving."

The remote woods north of Bemidji is beef country. And for the first time in a decade, the ranchers raising the livestock that get turned into hamburgers and steaks like their profit margins.

"Right now," Gray said, walking through her barns on a mild February day, "cattle producers are finally feeling like we can breathe."

Across America, high food prices — from eggs to Big Macs — dominate the conversation. But farmers will tell you high grocery store prices don't translate to their bank accounts.

For more than a year, manufacturers of beef — slaughterhouses — have struggled. And economic trends are not necessarily getting better.

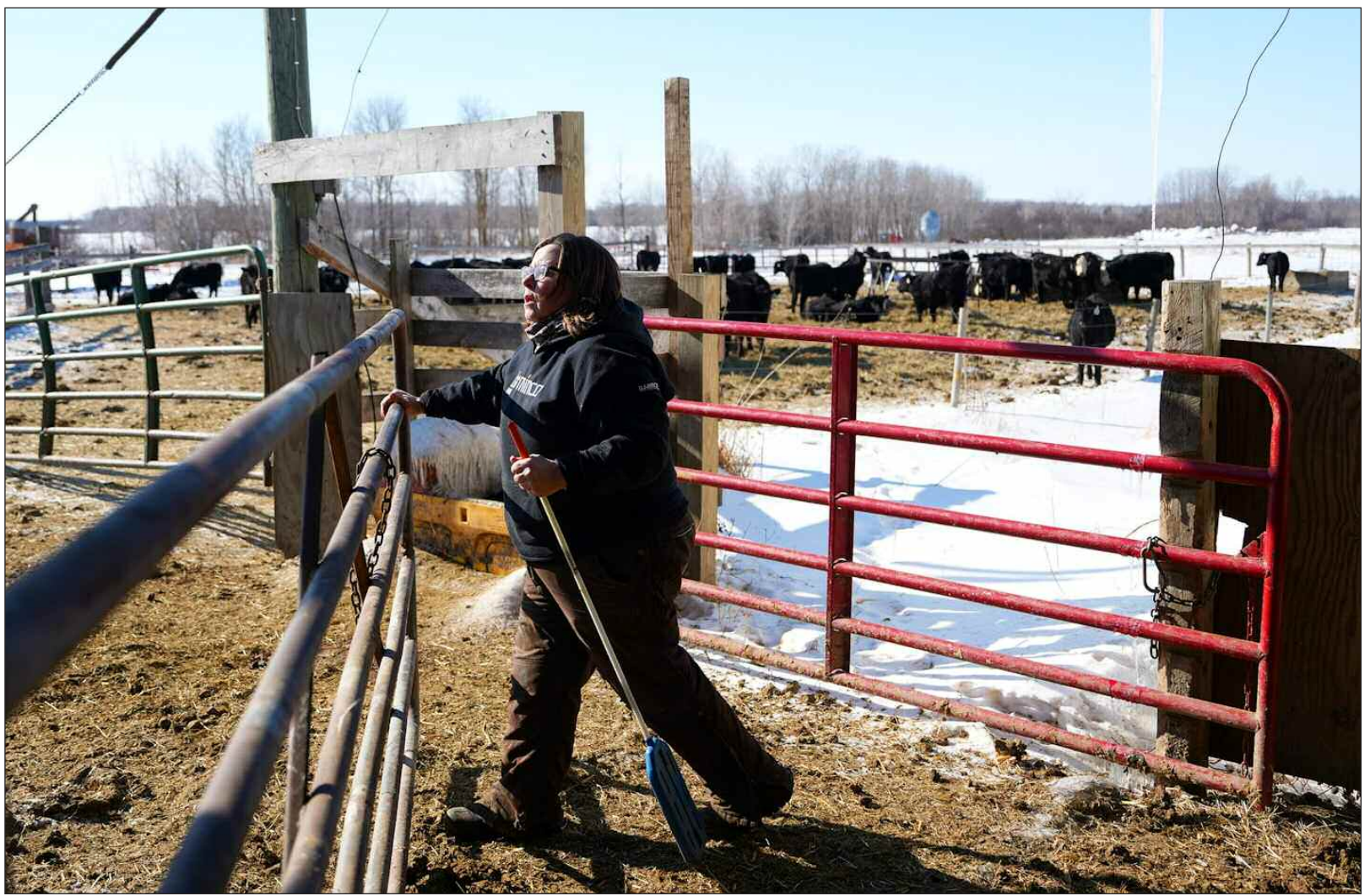
Recently, Beef Magazine predicted a "perfect storm" for producers this year, blaming drought, potential tariffs and a smaller national herd.

In December, Minnetonka-based Cargill, one of the nation's Big 4 beef packers, laid off 8,000 workers or about 5% of its global employees, citing low commodity prices. The same week, another giant — Tyson Foods — announced the closure of a Kansas packing plant.

But in cattle country, from the grasslands out West to the feedlots near Iowa where animals fatten up on cornmeal, the prices are finally better.

In 2020, the price bottomed out close to \$80 per 100 pounds. This week, live cattle were trading on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange around \$200 per 100 pounds.

"People in the cattle business today are probably feeling a little bit better than they have the past couple of years," said Jay Debertin, CEO of Inver Grove Heights-based CHS Inc., the



Tribune News Service/The Minnesota Star Tribune/Anthony Souffle

Rancher Rachel Gray moves cattle between pens for calving at her family's Little Timber Farm in Blackduck, Minnesota, on Feb. 21. In 2020, the price bottomed out close to \$80 per 100 pounds. This week, live cattle were trading on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange around \$200 per 100 pounds.

nation's largest farmer cooperative, while speaking in January with Neel Kashkari at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve.

Eric Mousel, beef specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension in Grand Rapids, said the heady prices, counterintuitively, began with a drought in 2019 that swept across southern plains, decimating cattle herds.

Today, the national herd is roughly 20% smaller than five years ago, Mousel said. Those still left in the game have reaped benefits of increased demand.

"The price is always really cyclical, based on how many calves are available," Mousel said. "Nobody was really paying attention to [the drop] because they were distracted by the pandemic, and then all of a sudden, there's not enough cattle to go around."

And the price relief couldn't come soon enough.

Since 2002, Minnesota has lost roughly 25% of its beef cattle farms, dropping to around

11,700 farms in the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture census.

The lineage of Gray's Beltrami County ranch starts with the lumber companies that clear-cut the region more than a century ago.

Early farmers were "cow, plow and a sow," Gray said.

More crops followed. So did a proper dairy. But getting milk down to the processors in central Minnesota grew costly.

Around two decades ago, Gray's parents traded in the dairy for beef cattle. They put up miles of fence, turned fields into paddocks. Soon cattle grazed on Little Timber Farms.

"We had really good markets in 2014 and then everything crashed," said Gray, who does custom calving and raises heifers that are shipped around the country. "What we're seeing now is a little bit different. The markets seem to have held longer."

Life can be rugged in rural northern Minnesota. Gray's husband travels much of the

year working in the mining industry. A son has joined her on the farm, but finding day care for her grandchildren can be a chore.

Other than a trip to Texas earlier in February for Gray to accept a national award for environmental stewardship, vacations are few.

But she knows cattle, and she loves her job. And February is go-time.

For two weeks, in subzero temperatures, Gray lives in a bunkhouse in the barn. She layers up. On the off-chance there's no calving, she's catching a wink of sleep, maybe watching a little television, or checking her email. But usually, she's calving — at midnight or 4 a.m., the baby cows can come at any time.

Gray's business draws interest from as far away as West Virginia. The cattle on her pastures arrived from the western Dakotas.

Cattle country continues to change as conditions change. Some producers got out of the

business during the down cycle. Now again, some producers are selling off herds, "getting out while the getting is good," Gray said.

They also know that the good times might not last. Beef producers know not to trumpet their success. Farther south, crop farmers are struggling with low prices.

Plus, there are factors they cannot control. Tariff talks in Washington could rattle trade for an industry that sends cattle hooves, tongue, organs overseas.

But for the moment, Gray is focused close to home.

Monday morning, she visited the butcher shop in Nevis. In the afternoon, she turned back to the calving.

Another cow tottered around, confused. She was looking for her calf — but she hadn't even delivered it yet.

"I'll need to separate her later" from the other calves, Gray said, adding to her ever-growing list of afternoon chores.

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Farm programs in jeopardy after cuts

By **AARON DORMAN**
The Times (Munster)
Tribune News Service

HEBRON — It was supposed to be an exciting launch of a new program to bring fresh local produce to residents in Northwest Indiana.

But the NWI Food Council announced that even as its Farm Club initiative goes live, other cherished programs are threatened by the ongoing federal grant slashing by the administration of President Donald Trump.

The NWI Food Council does not believe its Farm to School program will continue past this spring.

"A lot of funding that made this happen is in jeopardy," NWI Food Council co-executive director Anne Massie said at the organization's annual Farm Fest event Monday night.

Since coming into office in January, the Trump Administration has made it a priority to cut federal spending.

The USDA announced Monday it would be halting roughly \$1 billion in funding for schools and food banks to purchase local produce.

Although federal judges are now acting to block the efforts, at least temporarily, the situation has left many on the receiving end, including the NWI Food Council, confused and blindsided.

The council's Farm to

School program, run through its Region Roots Food Hub, helps deliver locally grown produce to schools throughout Northwest Indiana; the program also provides ag and nutrition education and staff helps students build a school garden.

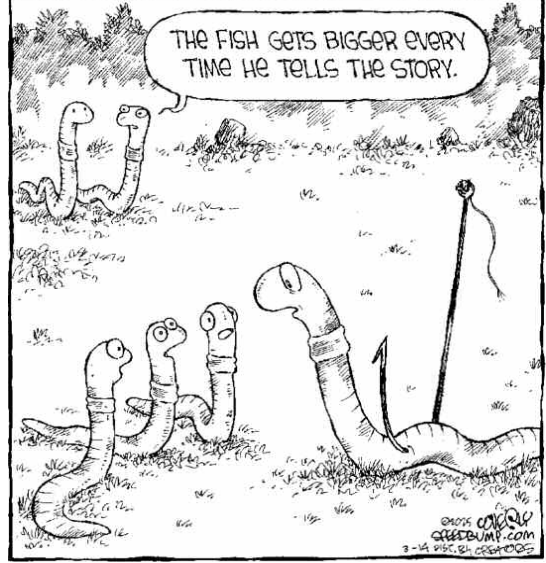
Massie said her concern for the program was at the level of "10 out of 10" and she believes it will likely have to be shuttered when the school year ends this spring.

"The kids are always excited about being able to grow their own food, bring home their seeds," said Becca Koetz, NWI Food Council's farmer support specialist who has taught grade school students how to garden as part of the program.

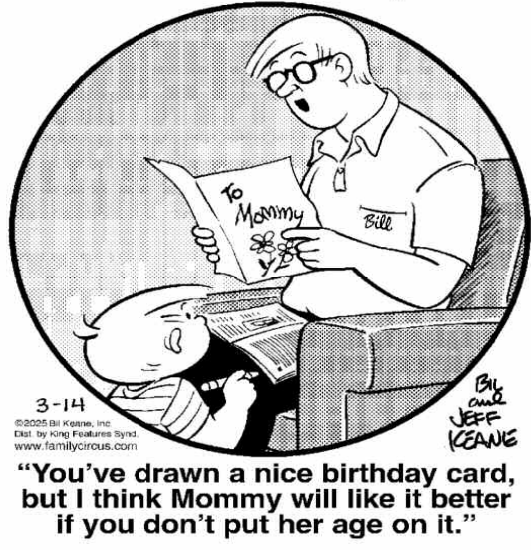
"Kids want to share what they learned with their families," Koetz said. "Families don't always have gardens. It's great to teach them you don't need to have an acre of land: you can have a container, a pot, a kiddie pool. No specialty equipment. You can grow something for your family even if it's just herbs."

The loss of grant funding doesn't just impact the programs themselves; the downstream effects hurt farmers' and local growers' viability as well, Massie warned, since NWI Food Council was acting as a middleman for them to sell to schools.

SPEED BUMP Dave Coverly



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



Peanuts



Rose is Rose



Agnes



Hi and Lois



Between Friends



Blondie



Snuffy Smith



Beetle Bailey



Contract Bridge By Steve Becker

Bidding quiz

You have the following hand:
♠AKQ4 ♥102 ♦J73 ♣AQ85

- 1. You are the dealer.** What would you bid?
- 2. Your partner deals and bids One Diamond.** What would you respond?
- 3. Your left-hand opponent bids One Diamond, and your right-hand opponent responds One Heart.** What would you bid?
- 4. Your partner bids One Heart, and the next player doubles.** What would you bid?
- 5. Your partner bids One Heart, you respond One Spade, and partner rebids Three Diamonds.** What would you bid now?
- 6. Your left-hand opponent bids One Club, and your right-hand opponent responds One Spade.** What would you bid?

that. Change one of your hearts into a spade and you'd then have a proper two-spade response. One spade is, of course, 100% forcing.

- 3. Double.** This indicates the values for an opening bid and support for both unbid suits. It would be wrong to overcall with one spade, which would imply greater spade length and fewer high cards.
- 4. Redouble.** This guarantees 10 or more points in high cards. You plan either to get to game eventually or to double the opponents for penalties.
- 5. Four clubs.** A small slam is already certain since partner's jump shift promises at least 19 points; in fact, you're on the verge of a grand slam. Four clubs is merely a waiting bid allowing partner to further describe his hand. He may have something like: ♠J93 ♥AKJ74 ♦AKQ8 ♣6, or ♠10 ♥AKJ763 ♦AKQ95 ♣7, or other similar holdings. You'll have to wait to see what partner bids over four clubs.
- 6. Pass.** The value of a hand changes as the bidding progresses, and with the opponents bidding both clubs and spades, your hand has greatly diminished in offensive strength. Before the bidding started, you had reason to hope that partner might have length in one (or both) of your suits. That hope is now largely dissipated. The best policy is to keep quiet and hope the opponents get too high.

Tomorrow: A magical performance.
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3-14 CRYPTOQUIP

SFZAB LQN IKEL TPNF RQE
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TL NASLGAX XEZSGSNJK.
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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals G

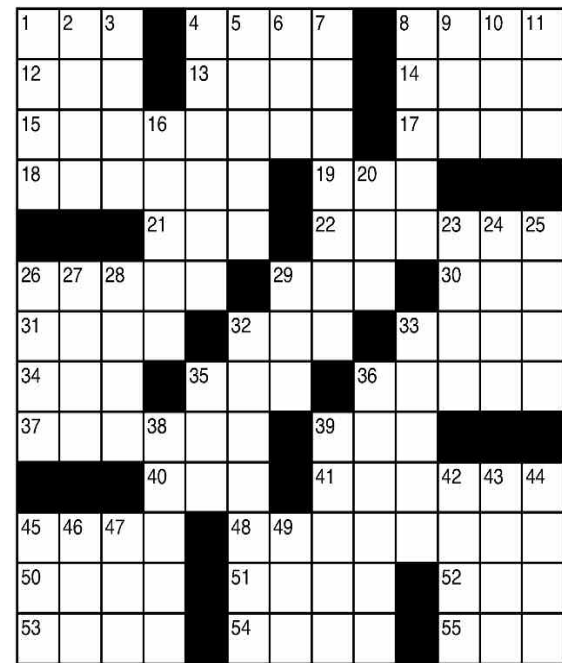
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Newt | 1 Online |
| 4 "Ray Donovan" star | 2 Abbr. on a pay stub |
| 8 Court panel | 3 School session |
| 12 Dead heat | 4 Jacket flaps |
| 13 Land measure | 5 Cake finishers |
| 14 La Scala solo | 6 Goof up |
| 15 Ice-removing tools | 7 Evening prayers |
| 17 Nullify | 8 Quick trip |
| 18 Whine | 9 Coffee vessel |
| 19 Bit of wit | 10 Free (of) |
| 21 Gore and Green | 11 NBA great |
| 22 Main dish | 16 Ritzy violin |
| 26 Takes five | 20 Numerical prefix |
| 29 Lanka lead-in | |
| 30 Scull need | |
| 31 Prefix meaning "all" | |
| 32 Prefix with gender | |
| 33 Activist Parks org. | |
| 35 Harry Potter pal | |
| 36 Defeats | |
| 37 OutKast, for one | 23 Aussie hoppers |
| 39 Rotating part | 24 Sunrise direction |
| 40 Rock concert booster | 25 Historic periods |
| 41 Showy shrub | 26 Den noise |
| 45 Citatrix | 27 Thompson of "Love Actually" |
| 48 Ones making a getaway | 28 Ginger cookie |
| 50 Bank statement no. | 29 Fall from grace |
| 51 Broadway star | 32 Barrel makers |
| 52 Quibble | 33 Chart anew |
| 53 Genie's offering | 35 Eggnog ingredient |
| 54 Com-motion | 36 Market-place |
| 55 High school subj. | 38 Vader's title |
| | 39 Desert flora |
| | 42 Camera part |
| | 43 Guitarist Clapton |
| | 44 Wine region |
| | 45 Cutting tool |
| | 46 201, in old Rome |
| | 47 Rm. coolers |
| | 49 "Get comfy" |

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Portland.
Front Office Hours:
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10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Circulation Department
Hours:
10:00 am - 4:00 p.m.

Irish bounced by North Carolina

By SHANE CONNUCK

The Charlotte Observer
Tribune News Service

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — One of North Carolina men's basketball's best defensive performances came in the ACC Tournament.

The Tar Heels, whose biggest lead was 24 points in their 76-56 victory to reach the quarterfinals at 2:30 p.m. Thursday against Wake Forest, significantly limited its opponent's strong offense.

The Tar Heels recorded their second-best defensive efficiency rating against an ACC opponent this season, according to Kenpom.com, holding Notre Dame to just 0.862 points per possession in their blowout win Wednesday afternoon at Spectrum Center in uptown Charlotte.

"We were very active on defense in the way we communicated," Ven-Allen Lubin, who scored 17 points in the win Wednesday afternoon at Spectrum Center in Charlotte, said in the Tar Heels' locker room. "Our talking and activity level has definitely increased, and has been very remarkable. Getting stops on defense just gets us going on the offensive end."

UNC focuses on defense as it chases the NCAA Tournament

Notre Dame's offense totaled just six assists against UNC.

The Tar Heels held Markus Burton, the ACC's leading scorer with 21.3 points per game, to just 11 points on 3 of 11 shots.

Slowing down its opponent early on was critical. UNC built a 20-point lead during the first half, and while the Irish used an 8-0 run and tried to fight back, the Tar Heels remained several steps ahead throughout the afternoon.

UNC looks to make an NCAA Tournament bid, and that potential path continues Thursday against the Demon Deacons.

A key for the Tar Heels? Another strong defensive performance, says fifth-year standout RJ Davis.

"We just want to set the tone," Davis said. "When we pressure other teams, we're really good defensively. It gets teams a little bit radical, so it's just putting that together for a whole 40 minutes and using it to our advantage. I think we did a good job of doing that in the first half and second half, priding our mentality and tone on defense, that's really allowing us to be great. Offense is gonna care of itself. From the start of the year, it's really about defense."

"Notre Dame is a great team, it was a one-point game and we pulled off the game-winner earlier in the year. We really want to just shut down (Markus) Burton, because he's a terrific player, he makes them go, him and (Tae) Davis. Just playing team defense. Defense wins championships. And I think we're taking a step forward and understanding as a team, which early on, we didn't really."

Tiger Woods likely to be out until 2026

PA Media/dpa
Tribune News Service

London — Tiger Woods could be sidelined until 2026 after undergoing surgery for a ruptured Achilles tendon, according to a leading physiotherapist.

Woods revealed on Tuesday that he suffered the latest in a long line of injuries while training at home ahead of a possible return to competitive action in next month's Masters at Augusta National.

The 15-time major winner has not played in an official event since last year's Open Championship at Royal Troon, although he did feature in a number of matches in the TGL indoor competition he co-founded with Rory McIlroy.

Dr Charlton Stucken, who operated on Woods, said the surgery went "smoothly" and the former world number one is expected to make a full recovery, although no timescale was given.

Consultant chartered physiotherapist Sammy Margo told the PA news agency:

"The immediate post-

surgery phase is up to two weeks, when you're not mobilising and you're not weight-bearing. Then the early rehab is about two to six weeks when you're gradually taking some load, and then you move up to a bit more weight-bearing in a protective boot from about six to 12 weeks and then you start to move on from about three to six months.

"Typically, for a professional athlete like Tiger Woods, the recovery timeline would be four to six months basic recovery, six to nine months for a return to professional competition and probably around about 12 months for full recovery and optimal performance.

"I'm not a betting woman but it's likely he's not going to return to competitive golf until 2026. This isn't a minor sprain, this is a serious breakage."

Woods has defied the odds in returning from numerous injuries throughout his career, including returning to action after coming close to losing his right leg in a car accident four years ago.

However, he has struggled

to fulfil even a limited schedule in recent years and completed 72 holes in just one of the five official events he started in 2024.

"He's obviously going to dedicate himself to his recovery and I'm sure he's doing all that he can do," Margo added. "You can optimise the conditions for healing, but you cannot defy nature."

"There are natural timeframes for recovery at a given age, even if you are a professional athlete. The rate of healing at the age of 49 is substantially slower than at the age of 23.

"You have to also consider that Tiger has had a fair amount of other injuries on the lead-up to this, so no matter how good you are, nature does take its course."

Woods had been due to play in last month's Genesis Invitational — a tournament he hosts — but took time off following the death of his mother.

He turns 50 in December and will be eligible to play on the senior tour, where he will be allowed to use a buggy if required.

Track athlete who struck opponent charged with assault

By JAMI FRANKENBERRY

The Virginian-Pilot
Tribune News Service

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — A Portsmouth runner who struck an opponent with a baton during a high school relay race has been charged with assault, the Lynchburg commonwealth's attorney told multiple media outlets Wednesday.

Alaila Everett, a senior at Norcom High, was competing in the Virginia High School League Class 3 championships last week when she struck Brookville High's Kaelen Tucker in the head during the second leg of the

4x200-meter relay race at Liberty University in Lynchburg.

Everett and her relay team were immediately disqualified by meet officials. Video of the incident went viral on multiple social media platforms and was featured on national news, including "Good Morning America" and "CBS Mornings."

Tucker and her mother told a Lynchburg TV station she was being treated for a concussion.

Genoa Everett, Alaila's father, told The Pilot earlier this week the hit was inadvertent, adding that

she had received death threats. He said his daughter attempted to contact Tucker on social media to apologize but was blocked.

On Wednesday, WSET in Lynchburg, along with local TV stations WVEC, WTKR and WAVY, reported that Lynchburg Commonwealth's Attorney Bethany Harrison confirmed the charge against Everett.

Meanwhile, the Portsmouth NAACP released a statement expressing "thoughts and prayers" for both the Tucker and Everett fami-

lies and addressing the death threats and comments Alaila has received after the video went viral.

"Our review of the situation has been focused not only on the events that happened on Tuesday during the track and field competition but also on the response in which racial slurs and death threats have been leveled towards Alaila and her family," the NAACP wrote. "These matters have been brought to our attention as well as the possibility of pending criminal charges, which

we view with deep concerns."

The Portsmouth NAACP's statement was issued before the assault charge was reported, but the organization wrote that charges were not warranted.

"We have been in communication with our Lynchburg NAACP branch leaders as well as our Virginia State Conference representative concerning this possibility," the statement read. "We are committed collectively to ensuring that the criminal justice system, which we feel is not warranted in

this situation, is executed fairly and based on due process. We encourage Liberty University authorities and the Commonwealth to exercise caution and restraint in this situation, as the individuals involved are minors.

"We will continue to advocate for Alaila's record to remain void of any criminal proceedings."

The NAACP also wrote, using all capital letters that, "Alaila is NOT AN ATTACKER and media headlines that allude towards that in any way is shameful."

Sports on tap

Local schedule

Today
Jay County — Junior high swim in ACAC meet at Jay County — 5 p.m.

Saturday
Jay County — Track at New Haven Bulldog Invite — 3 p.m.
Fort Recovery — Baseball scrimmage vs. Van Wert — 12 p.m.; Softball scrimmage at Brookville — 12 p.m.

TV sports

Today
12 a.m. — LIV Golf: Singapore (FS1)
1 a.m. — Formula 1: Australian Grand Prix (ESPN2)
11:30 A.M. — College basketball: Atlantic 10 tournament (USA)
12 p.m. — College basketball: Big Ten tournament (BTN)
1 p.m. — College basketball: SEC tournament

(ESPN); American Athletic tournament (ESPN2)
2 p.m. — College basketball: Atlantic 10 tournament (USA)
2:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big Ten tournament (BTN)
3 p.m. — College basketball: American Athletic tournament (ESPN2)
3:30 p.m. — College basketball: SEC tournament (ESPN)
5 p.m. — College basketball: Atlantic 10 tournament (USA)
6:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big Ten tournament (BTN); Big East tournament (FOX)
7 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Philadelphia 76ers (FDSN Indiana)
7 p.m. — College basketball: ACC tournament (ESPN)
9 p.m. — College basketball: Big Ten tournament (BTN)
9 p.m. — LIV Golf: Singapore (FS1)
9:30 p.m. — College basketball: ACC tournament (ESPN)
10 p.m. — NHL: Utah Hockey Club at Seattle Kraken (NBC)

11:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big West tournament (ESPN2)

Saturday
12 a.m. — College hockey: Notre Dame vs. Michigan State (BTN)
11 a.m. — College basketball: Maine vs. Bryant (ESPN2)
11 a.m. — Premier League soccer: Everton at West Ham United (USA)
12:45 p.m. — NWSL soccer: Kansas City Current at Portland Thorns (ABC)
1 p.m. — College basketball: SEC tournament (BTN); MEAC tournament (ESPN2); Big Ten tournament (CBS)
1 p.m. — College lacrosse: Michigan vs. Notre Dame (BTN)
1:30 p.m. — Premier League soccer: AFC Bournemouth at Brentford (USA)
2 p.m. — PGA Tour golf: The Players Championship (NBC)
2 p.m. — MotoGP: Grand Prix of Argentina (FS1)
3 p.m. — College basketball: American Athlet-

ic tournament (ESPN2)
3 p.m. — NHL: New Jersey Devils at Pittsburgh Penguins (ABC)
3:30 p.m. — College basketball: SEC tournament (ESPN); Big Ten tournament (CBS)
3:45 p.m. — MLS soccer: Los Angeles FC at Austin (FOX)
5 p.m. — College basketball: American Athletic tournament (ESPN2)
6 p.m. — College basketball: Mountain West tournament (CBS); Big 12 tournament (ESPN)
6:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big East tournament (FOX)
7:30 p.m. — College basketball: MAC tournament (ESPN2)
8 p.m. — NBA: Indiana Pacers at Milwaukee Bucks (FDSN Indiana)
8 p.m. — NHL: Nashville Predators at Los Angeles Kings (CBS)
8 p.m. — Ladies European Tour golf: Australian Women's Classic (FS1)
8:15 p.m. — MLS soccer: Sporting Kansas City at Minnesota United (FS1)
8:30 p.m. — College basketball: ACC tourna-

ment (ESPN)
9 p.m. — College hockey: Penn State vs. Ohio State (BTN)
9:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big West tournament (ESPN2)
10 p.m. — USL Champions soccer: Monterey Bay at Oakland Roots (FOX)
10:30 p.m. — NBA: New York Knicks at Golden State Warriors (ABC)
11:30 p.m. — College basketball: Big West tournament (ESPN2)

Local notes

Registration open
Registration for the 35th annual Flat 50 Plus bicycle ride in Adams County is now open. To register, visit RunSignUp.com.
There are rides ranging from 20 to 100 miles long.
The event will be held at 7 a.m. Saturday, June 21. It will start at Bellmont high school and will have stops in Wilshire, Geneva and Monroe with refreshments.

90 SALE CALENDAR

PUBLIC AUCTION
Saturday March 15th, 2025

TIME 10:00 A.M.
LOCATED: 783 S 600E
Portland, IN.

REAL ESTATE
30 Acres in Section 21, Noble Twp., Jay County. Sold in parcels and combinations.

Tract 1: 2 Acres with 3 bedroom farmhouse containing 2272 sq. ft. finished living area and 30 x 48' pole barn/garage. Partial basement.

Tract 2: 28 Acres with approx.. 20 tillable, balance being wooded and road frontage on CR 600 E.

COINS-ANTIQUES-COLLECTIBLES
1921 Peace Dollar, (4)
1922 Peace Dollars, 1894 & 1921 Morgan Dollars, Several Walking Liberty halves. 1oz. Silver bar. (2)1991 Portland Forge silver rounds. Gold Cameo Necklace, Pocket watches, Baseball & collector cards, Old metal toys & much more not listed.

VEHICLES-SKID LOADER-SHOPP TOOLS-MISC
2008 Ford Edge, 2001 Chrysler minivan, Mustang 40hp (gas) skid loader, 500 gallon LP tank, Stihl MS192 chain-

90 SALE CALENDAR

saw, Craftsman garden tractor, Diamond Plate toolbox, Generac 5000 watt generator, Fishing poles and supplies, Whirlpool upright freezer, Dust Collector.

Large Auction several items not mentioned. OWNER: LARRY BICKEL ESTATE By Kent Bickel, PR.

Note: Check Auctionsoft and AuctionZip for more photos.

SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE
AC31800004
AUCTIONEERS
Zane Shawver
Lic. #AU10500168
260-729-2229

Pete D. Shawver
Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587

PUBLIC AUCTION
SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH, 2025
9:00 A.M.

LOCATED: 3430 W State Road 67, Portland, IN or 3 1/2 miles west of Portland at the corner of Hwy 67 and County Road 200 South.

NOW ACCEPTING CONSIGNMENTS UNTIL
NOON. THURSDAY, MARCH 27TH, 2025.

Farm Tractors-Farm Equip.-Construction Equip.-Trucks-Trailers-Vehicles-Riding Mowers-

90 SALE CALENDAR

ATVis-Attachments-Misc TERMS: CASH OR GOOD CHECK NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR NO SHOWS

AUCTIONEERS NOTE: Indiana Sales Tax will be collected at this auction. AREA CONTRACTORS & FARMERS OWNERS

AUCTIONEERS
Zane Shawver
Lic. #AU10500168
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Pete D. Shawver
Lic. #AU19700040
260-726-5587

www.auctionzip.com
Auctioneer ID #4243

REAL ESTATE PUBLIC AUCTION
Located: 722 E Main St, Portland, IN
Friday Afternoon
April 11th, 2025
5:00 P. M.

REAL ESTATE
This home sets on a 30' x 157' lot with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom and 792 sq. ft. of living area.

This home is heated with a Warm Morning stove and has gas water heater. There is a detached garage and a utility shed. This home has a cement driveway, a covered back porch and a nice size yard.

For more information or private showing contact
Loy Real Estate 260-

90 SALE CALENDAR

726-2700 or Gary Loy Auctioneer at 260-726-5160.

Personal property to sell immediately following real estate.

JANICE STUCKY ESTATE
by Herb Hummel Personal Rep.
Josh Atkinson Attorney
Loy Auction
AC#31600027
Auctioneers
Gary Loy AU01031608

100 JOBS WANTED

AMISH CREW LOOKING FOR any work. No job is too big or small. Pole barns, roofing, remodeling. 260-849-2489.

110 HELP WANTED

HIRING PART-TIME INSERTER Hours vary each week. Apply at The Graphic Printing Company i The Commercial Review 309 West Main Street i Portland, IN 47371 Office Hours: 10 am - 4 pm, Tuesday - Friday NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE. Equal opportunity employer.

130 MISC. FOR SALE

SCRATCH PADS ARE BACK various bundles sizes and XL pads. \$1.25 plus tax. Pick up at The

130 MISC. FOR SALE

Commercial Review Tuesday thru Friday 10am to 4pm.

PAPER END ROLLS FOR SALE Various sizes and prices. Call The Commercial Review at 260-726-8141 for more information.

ALUMINUM SHEETS 23"x30", .007 thick. Clean and shiny on one side. 35 cents each or four for \$1.40, plus tax. The Commercial Review, 309 W Main, Portland 260-726-8141.

190 FARMERS COLUMN

AG RENTAL Spreaders: BBI, Artsway Vertical. New Holland 228 skid loaders w/full cab, heat/ac. Fort Recovery 419-852-3099

200 FOR RENT

LEASE SPACE available, Coldwater, OH. Manufacturing, warehousing, assembly, distribution, offices, inside and outdoor storage. Easy access to major highways and railroad access with loading docks and overhead cranes available. Contact Sycamore Group, 419-678-5318, www.sycamorespace.com

230 AUTOS, TRUCKS

WE PAY CASH for junk autos. We pick up at your location. 1-765-546-2642 or 1-765-857-1071. Slocumis Salvage

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice
LEGAL NOTICE OF BIDS Notice is hereby given that sealed bids will be received in the office of the Jay County Auditor, at the Courthouse in Portland, Indiana, 47371, March 28th, 2025 until the hour of 4:00 PM with opening at 9:15 AM on March 31st, 2025 for cash rental of approximately 68 acres of farm ground owned by Jay County located in Section 18, Wayne Township, Jay County, Indiana. The term of the lease agreement shall be for the 2025 crop year only. The Board of Jay County Commissioners shall select the highest and most responsive bid. The Board of Commissioners reserve the right to reject any and/or all bids, or to accept the one which, in their judgment will be in the best interest of Jay County, being the best and/or lowest response and responsible bidder.

The property may not be leased to a person who is ineligible under I.C. 36-1-11-16. Emily Franks, Jay County Auditor.

CR 3-7-14-2025 - HSPAXLP

Out The CR
Classifieds
www.thecr.com

250 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice
STATE OF INDIANA COUNTY OF JAY, SS: IN THE JAY CIRCUIT COURT

2025 TERM
No. 38C01-2503-EU-000006
In the Matter of the Unsupervised Administration of the Estate of Anna Mae Sutton, Deceased

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION
Notice is hereby given that Douglas K. Sutton was, on the 7th day of March, 2025, appointed Personal Representative of the estate of Anna Mae Sutton deceased, who died on November 26, 2024.

All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the claim in the office of the Clerk of this Court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be forever barred. Dated at Portland, Indiana, this 10th day of March, 2025.

Melissa Elliott
Clerk of the Circuit Court, For Jay County, Indiana
HINKLE, RACSTER & SCHEMENAUR
121 W. High Street
Portland, IN 47371
Attorney
CR 3-14-21-2025-HSPAXLP

CR 3-14-21-2025-HSPAXLP

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CR 3-14-21-2025-HSPAXLP

Sports



Staff vs. Students

Jay County Junior-Senior High School staff and students participated in a staff vs. student game night on Thursday, that included cornhole, euchre and volleyball tournaments. At left, athletics director Alex Griffin attacks a ball at the net. At right, sophomore Benson Barnett follows through on a hit from a simultaneous match at a different court.



The Commercial Review/Andrew Balko

Swimmers make seven state cuts

NOBELSVILLE — With the regular season over, 27 tankers packed up from Jay County to head to Noblesville High School. After a strong showing, four more swimmers extended their seasons for another two weeks.

The Jay County Winter Swim team competed in the divisional meet over the weekend with four tankers hitting state times to make seven state cuts.

Cooper Glentzer led the way by hitting state times in three events.

He made his first cut for the 14-and-younger division on Saturday, finishing the 200-yard backstroke in 2 minutes, 9.63 seconds, which is a 4.93 second improvement from his previous times.

On Sunday, the high school freshman clinched a spot at the Natatorium on IUI's campus in Indianapolis — state will start on March 21 and go through 23 — in the 100 freestyle and 100 backstroke. He swam a 52.36 in the former and a 1:00.07 in the latter.

Carsyn Guggenbiller also made a pair of state cuts. She opened the weekend by earning a

Glentzer makes three new cuts, Guggenbiller completes full set of 10

berth in the 200 freestyle with a time of 2:27.94 (an 8.79 second time drop). On Sunday, she completed the 10th and final state cut that girls in the 10-and-younger division can get with a 30.22 in the 50 freestyle. (She will have to narrow down to six events for the state meet.)

Addisyn Champ and Grady Warvel both made a state cut as well. Champ, who swims in the 12-and-younger division, put out a 28.86 time in the 50 freestyle for her state berth. Warvel dropped 7.91 seconds to top the 14-and-older field in the 200 butterfly with a time of 2:16.42.

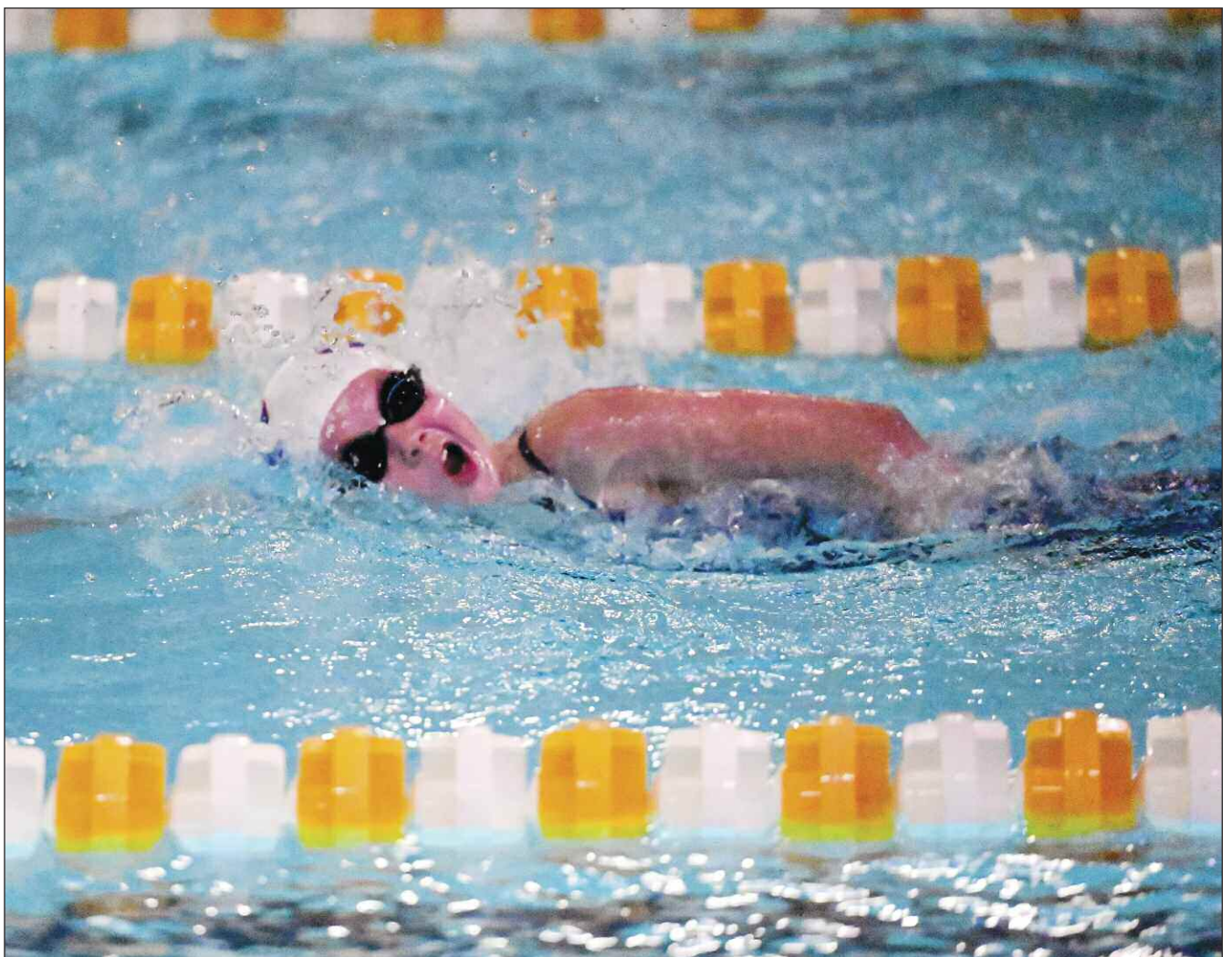


Photo provided

Addisyn Champ of the Jay County Winter Swim team competes in the 50-yard freestyle during the divisional meet at Noblesville High School on March 7. Champ dropped 0.08 seconds from her time to make the state cut at 28.86 seconds in the 12-and-younger girls division.

Our third annual motorsports special section will be distributed in:

The Commercial Review (Portland),
The News-Gazette (Winchester)
and The News Times (Hartford City)



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Contact Lindsey at
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Space for color ads is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Deadline for ads is Monday, March 17.