

# The Commercial Review

Portland, Indiana 47371

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\$1

## Choir kick-off



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Members of Jay County High School's Patriot Edition show choir perform Saturday in exhibition while hosting the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular. Patriot Edition and Just Treble open their 2022 competition season Saturday as they travel to the Pendleton Heights Arabian Spectacular.

### Jay County's Patriot Edition and Just Treble get started Saturday at Pendleton Heights

By RAY COONEY  
The Commercial Review

The 2020 season was shut down before it was over.

A year later, it was show-and-go.

As the Jay County High School show choirs prepare to open the 2022 competition season — they start Saturday at the Pendleton Heights Arabian Spectacular — the format is getting back to normal and choirs are continuing to adjust to the world of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The key?

Flexibility.

That point was driven home last week as the hosts of the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular saw Bishop Luers drop out

in the final days because of illnesses.

"Our new norm is rehearsing regardless of how many are on stage," said JCHS choir director Susan Denney last week. "Because that could be us. We could be faced with that decision. Do we have enough that we feel like we have enough integrity in the show to do it? Or do we have to make a call? And no director wants to make the call to not go because of all the hard work and time and money and energy that goes into it."

Jay County's shows this year, designed and choreographed by Damon Brown, have inspirational themes.

Just Treble, the school's all-

girl group, has a show focused on Mother Nature. It opens with an original piece by Brown, followed by "Mama Will Provide" from the musical "Once on this Island," "The Weather," "Mr. Blue Skies" and a mash-up of another Brown original and "I Can See Clearly Now" by Jimmy Cliff.

The co-ed Patriot Edition's show is focused on the journey of aspiring to become someone's hero. It begins with another Brown original, features "Creep" by Radiohead, a medley of "Everyday Superhero" by Smash Mouth and the theme from "Kim Possible," and closes with a mash-up that includes Mariah Carey's "Hero."

Soloists featured in the shows

include Ellie Goodman, Abby Gillum, Taryn Caldwell, Caleb Darnell, Hunter Young, Laila Waddell and Haleigh Clayton.

"The one thing that Damon does really well is Damon always tells a story in the show," Denney said. "In Damon's head when he writes the show, it is a theatrical story. ... There's a lot of show choirs that are going that direction."

Last season, show choir competitions across the state changed their format.

Rather than having a semifinal and final, each school's choir groups arrived, performed back-to-back and then departed. Awards were presented virtually.

See Choir page 5

## Fate of tax cut plan is unclear

*Governor, Senate leaders have raised their doubts*

By TOM DAVIES  
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Republicans pushed a plan for broad cuts to Indiana's business and individual income taxes through the state House on Thursday, sending it to an uncertain fate in the GOP-dominated Senate.

House members voted 68-25 mostly along party lines in favor of the proposal potentially cutting more than \$1 billion a year in various taxes.

Republican supporters called the plan a responsible way of returning money to taxpayers following a big jump in tax collections helped by federal COVID-19 relief funding that is projected to boost state government's cash reserves to a highest-ever level of \$5.1 billion, or 29% of state spending, by the end of next June.

Democrats criticized the proposal for mostly benefiting corporations and the wealthy rather than using the money to reduce college tuitions, help pay child care expenses and cover high prescription drug bills.

Key parts of the House plan would cut Indiana's current individual income tax rate of 3.23% over the next four years to 3.0%. That would ultimately reduce state tax collections by an estimated \$500 million per year when fully implemented in 2026.

The plan also proposes cuts to several business taxes, potentially reducing those revenues by \$700 million to \$850 million per year.

"This is extra money we're taking from taxpayers," said House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Tim Brown of Crawfordsville. "Our job is to give it back if we don't need it."

See Tax page 2

## Lowering temperature

By MATTHEW LEE and JAMEY KEATEN  
Associated Press

GENEVA — The United States and Russia sought to lower the temperature in a heated standoff over Ukraine, even as they reported no breakthroughs in high-stakes talks today aimed at preventing a feared Russian invasion.

Armed with seemingly intractable and diametrically opposed demands, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met in Geneva for roughly 90 minutes at what the American said was a "critical moment."

But there was no apparent movement on either side. Blinken said the U.S. and its allies remain resolute in rejecting Russia's most important demands, which were laid out in writing in two proposals last month, and reiterated on Friday. Moscow wants NATO to prom-

### U.S., Russia seek to calm tensions despite lack of breakthrough

ise that Ukraine will never be added as a member, that no alliance weapons will be deployed near Russian borders, and that it pull back its forces from Central and Eastern Europe.

Blinken told Lavrov the U.S. would give Russia written responses to Moscow's proposals next week and suggested the two would likely meet again shortly after that — possibly delaying any invasion for at least a few more days.

Despite that, there was no

indication the U.S. responses would be any different from the flat-out rejections already expressed publicly by Washington and its allies, clouding future diplomatic efforts.

With an estimated 100,000 Russian troops massed near Ukraine, many fear Moscow is preparing an invasion although Russia denies that. The U.S. and its allies are scrambling to present a united front to prevent that or coordinate a tough response if they can't.

See Lowering page 5



Bloomberg/Nathan Laine

### Exiting emergency

A souvenir store vendor wearing a protective mask on a near empty street near the Sacre Coeur church in Paris on Jan. 12. Europe is moving fast to exit the emergency coronavirus measures that have disrupted all aspects of life for the past two years, a recognition that the measures have been largely futile against the omicron variant.

#### Deaths

- Lou Ann Knoth, 88, Coldwater, Ohio
  - Chuck Hein, 68, Fort Recovery
  - Janet Schindler, 82, Decatur
  - Judy Mallers, 83, Greenwood
- Details on page 2.

#### Weather

Thursday was chilly in Jay County with a high of 23 degrees and a low of 18. It's going to get colder tonight, with the low expected to drop to 11. Skies will be partly sunny Saturday with a high of 29 and winds gusting to 25 miles per hour. See page 2 for an extended forecast.

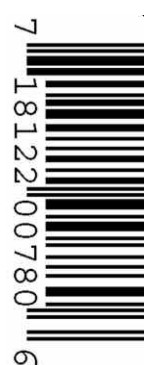
#### In review

Three new candidates have filed to run for office. New candidates include Democrats Gary Glogas and David Champ for Richland Township Trustee and Republican Dennis Rodgers for Knox Township Advisory Board.

#### Coming up

**Saturday** — Results from tonight's ACAC wrestling and swim meets.

**Tuesday** — Coverage of Monday's Jay School Board meeting.









# Choir ...

Continued from page 1  
All of the contests Jay County is involved in this year will be back to a preliminary and finals format.

Saturday's schedule at Pendleton Heights — masks are "strongly suggested" for everyone when they are not performing — features Patriot Edition at 9 a.m. with Just Treble to follow at 2:30 p.m. Finals will be in the evening.

Patriot Edition, Jay County's co-ed choir, will be competing against groups from Anderson Prep, New Castle, Roncalli, Teays Valley and Garrett. Just Treble will be in women's division — tier II against only Glamorous Edition of Teays Valley, located in Ashville, Ohio, south of Columbus.

The rest of the JCHS schedule this year includes visits to both the Carroll Classic and the Homestead Classic Showcase on Feb. 12, the Churubusco Show Choir Invitational on March 4 and the Garrett Railroader Rush Invitational on March 11.

Jay County's Patriot Edition and Just Treble groups already got their first taste of being on stage this year, performing in exhibition last weekend as they hosted the Jay County Show Choir Spectacular. (Noblesville's NHS Singers won the event.)

"It's really, really great experience for the kids," said Denney. "Because they know what they want from the experience of going to another school, and they want to provide that for the kids (from other schools). So, I love that."

"I love the camaraderie the kids get to have with other schools."

"And I love being able to get judges' feedback



The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

Members of Jay County High School's Just Treble show choir, including Maddy Wenk (pictured) perform during their fall concert. Just Treble's top finishes last season were third place in competitions at DeKalb and Garrett.

before we literally go on the road and do it for real."

Jay County is coming off of a 2021 season in which Patriot Edition placed third at each of its first three competitions. It closed strong, earning grand champion honors

at the Garrett Railroader Rush Invitational while also winning the award for best vocals.

Just Treble's top efforts in 2021 were third-place finishes at DeKalb and Garrett.

At Bluffton Street Fair in the fall, Patriot Edition

took second place while Just Treble came in third.

"Both groups desperately want to be their best," said Denney. "They want to be very successful. They're not afraid to do whatever it takes, with hard work, to reach their dreams and their goals."

# Japan widens its restrictions

By MARI YAMAGUCHI  
Associated Press

TOKYO — Restaurants and bars will close early in Tokyo and a dozen other areas across Japan beginning Friday as the country widens COVID-19 restrictions due to the omicron variant, which has caused cases to surge to new highs in metropolitan areas.

The restraint, which is something of a pre-state of emergency, is the first since September and is scheduled to last through Feb. 13. With three other prefectures — Okinawa, Hiroshima and Yamaguchi — under similar measures since early January, the state of restraint now covers 16 areas, or one-third of the country.

While many Japanese adults are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, few have gotten a booster shot, which has been a vital protection from the highly contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The Health Ministry on Friday approved Pfizer vaccinations for children aged 5-11, who are increasingly vulnerable to infection.

Throughout the pandemic, Japan has resisted the use of lockdowns to limit the spread of the virus and has focused on requiring eateries to close early and not serve alcohol, and on urging the public to wear masks and practice social distancing, as the government seeks to minimize damage to the economy.

Under the latest measures, most eateries are asked to close by 8 or 9 p.m., while large events can allow full capacity if they have anti-virus plans. In Tokyo, certified eateries that stop serving alcohol can stay open until 9 p.m. while those serving alcohol must close an hour earlier.

Restaurants that close at

9 p.m. and don't serve alcohol receive 30,000 yen (\$263) per day in government compensation, while those that close at 8 p.m. get 25,000 yen (\$220) per day.

Critics say the measures, which almost exclusively target bars and restaurants, make little sense and are unfair.

Mitsuru Saga, the manager of a Japanese-style "izakaya" restaurant in downtown Tokyo, said he chose to serve alcohol and close at 8 p.m. despite receiving less compensation from the government.

"We cannot make business without serving alcohol," Saga said in an interview with Nippon Television. "It seems only eateries are targeted for restraints."

Some experts question the effectiveness of placing restraints only on eateries, noting that infections show no signs of slowing in the three prefectures that have already been subjected to the measures for nearly two weeks.

After more than two years of repeated restraints and social distancing requests, Japanese are increasingly becoming less cooperative to such measures. People are back to commuting on packed trains and shopping at crowded stores.

Tokyo's main train station of Shinjuku was packed as usual with commuters rushing to work Friday morning.

Japan briefly eased border controls in November but quickly reversed them to ban most foreign entrants when the omicron variant began spreading in other countries. Japan says it will stick to the stringent border policy through the end of February as the country tries to reinforce medical systems and treatment.

# Lowering ...

Continued from page 1

"We didn't expect any major breakthroughs to happen today, but I believe we are now on a clearer path to understanding each other's positions," Blinken said after the meeting.

Blinken said Lavrov repeated Russia's insistence that it has no plans to invade Ukraine, but the U.S. and its allies were not convinced.

"We're looking at what is visible to all, and it is deeds and actions and not words that make all the difference," he said, adding that Russia should remove its troops from the Ukrainian border if it wanted to prove its point.

Lavrov, meanwhile, called the talks "constructive and useful" but declined to characterize the U.S. pledge.

"I can't say whether we are on the right track or not," he told reporters. "We will understand that when we receive the U.S. written response to all of our proposals."

Blinken suggested there was no leeway on Russia's demands, saying firmly: "There is no trade space there: None."

The U.S. and its allies say Russian President Vladimir Putin knows the demands are nonstarters, adding that they're open to less-dramatic moves.

Blinken said the U.S. would be open to a meeting between Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden, if it would be "useful and productive." The two have met once in person in Geneva and have had several virtual conversations on Ukraine that have proven largely inconclusive.

Washington and its allies have repeatedly promised consequences such as biting economic sanctions against Russia — though not military action — if it invades. Blinken repeated that Friday, saying the U.S. and its allies were committed to diplomacy but also committed "if that proves impossible, and Russia decides to pursue aggres-

sion against Ukraine, to a united, swift and severe response."

But he said he also wanted to use the opportunity to share directly with Lavrov some "concrete ideas to address some of the concerns that you have raised, as well as the deep con-

cerns that many of us have about Russia's actions."

Amid the diplomacy, more Russian troops were moving into the neighborhood for training exercises with neighboring Belarus, while Western allies were supplying weaponry and equipment to Ukraine.

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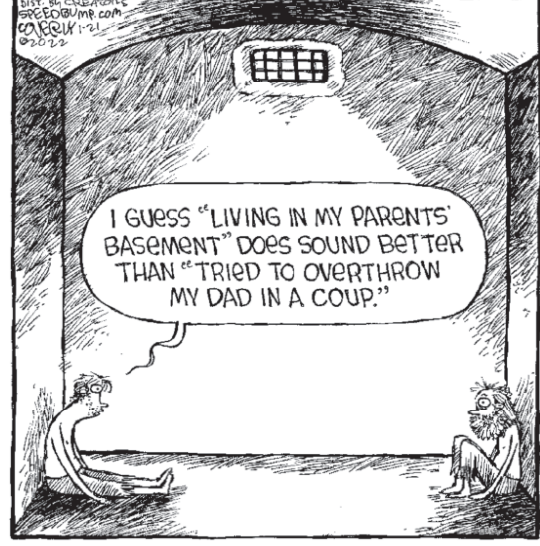
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Dave Coverly



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By Bil Keane



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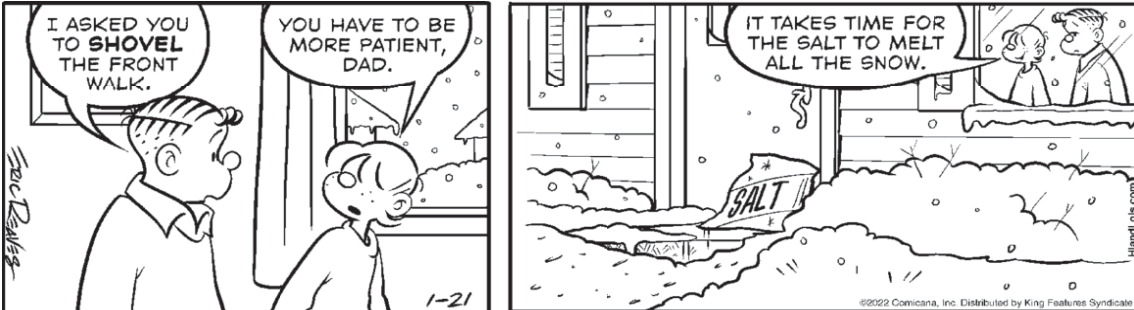
Rose is Rose



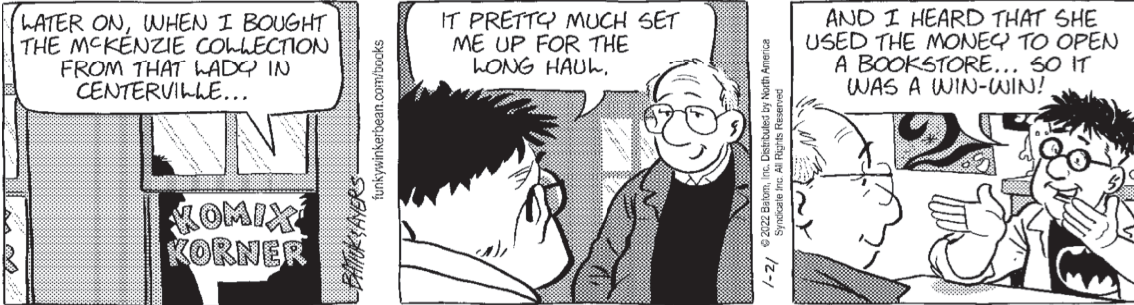
Agnes



Hi and Lois



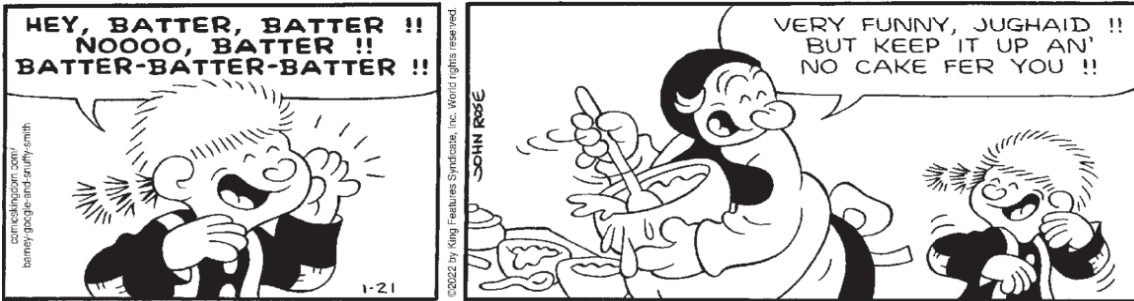
Funky Winkerbean



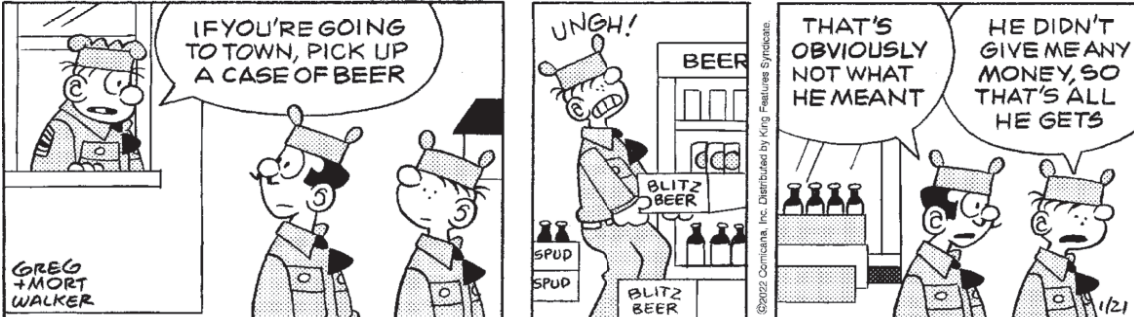
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90 SALE CALENDAR

LAND AUCTION Saturday, January 29th, 2022 TIME 10:00 A.M. AUCTION LOCATION: Bryant Community Center (107 South Malin Street, Bryant, IN) REAL ESTATE

This auction consists of two land offerings; one offering in Adams County, and the other within Jay County. Both offerings are a part of the WRP Program and are excellent hunting and recreational areas! All land will be auctioned from the Bryant Community Building at the address above, but for inquiries or to see the land, contact the auctioneers! JAY COUNTY OFFERING

This offering consists of 43 +/- acres, located within Section 3 of Wabash Township in Jay County, Indiana. OWNER(S): William & Janet Knapke, and Martin Collins ADAMS COUNTY OFFERING

128 total acreage located within Section 17 of Wabash Township in Adams County, Indiana. The land is non-tillable and will be offered as one of three tracts: OWNER(S): William & Janet Knapke SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE

PUBLIC AUCTION Saturday, January 22nd, 2022 TIME 10:00 A. M. LOCATED: Sapphire's Reception Center - 1100 West Votaw Street, Portland, IN ANTIQUES

Oak 12-ft bar-back from Cromer Brother's store in Portland, Oak double-drawer drop-front secretary, Large cherry double glass-door display cabinet, ornate Victorian love-seat & sofa, Oil lamps, Book collection. HOUSEHOLD - MISCELLANEOUS LG 50-in Flatscreen TV, Fishing poles & supplies, Several items not mentioned. \*\*NOTE: The Joy's were avid antique collectors - This is a truly outstanding high-quality auction! Check out the photos online at either Auctionsoft, or AuctionZip, to see this wonderful collection!\*\*

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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## Bouncing back

**No. 5 Jay clobbers the Eagles after loss Tuesday**

By **DAVID VANTRESS**  
The Commercial, Review

MUNCIE — One good way to get over having a winning streak snapped is to start a new one.

That's exactly what the Class 3A No. 5 Jay County High School girls basketball team did Tuesday night on the road against the Delta Eagles, rolling to a 67-17 victory.

The Patriots were coming off of a 58-53 loss Tuesday at Class 3A No. 7 Norwell, their first defeat since Nov. 20. It marked the end of a 13-game winning streak.

With the regular season winding down, Jay County got what it hopes will be a new winning streak started as it exploded for 22 second-quarter points en route to the 50-point victory.

It took almost the whole first quarter for the Patriots (16-3) to get in gear in this one: They led just 11-5 at the first stop. But once they started with the big second



The Commercial Review/David Vantress

Jay County High School senior Izzy Rodgers looks to make a move to the basket as host Delta's Abby Rouse defends Thursday night. The Patriots won, 67-17.

quarter, they were pretty much unstoppable.

Jay County led 33-11 at halftime and 48-12 after three, triggering the

running clock for the remainder of the game. Renna Schwieterman led Jay County with 18 points. Madison Dirksen added 10 and Breanna

Dirksen chipped in with nine. Abby Rouse led Delta with nine points. Hannah Carter added six.

Jay County coach Kirk Comer liked the way his team was able to shake off Tuesday night's tough loss at Norwell.

See **Bouncing** page 7

See **Bouncing** page 7

See **Bouncing** page 7

## Youth powers Tribe to 3rd victory

ST. HENRY, Ohio — It's been a difficult year for the Indians.

Some promise showed through Thursday as a couple of underclassman powered them to their third win.

Sophomore Mara Pearson and freshman Kennedy Muhlenkamp combined for 21 second-half

points to carry the Fort Recovery High School girls basketball team to a 37-30 victory over St. Henry.

The teams were tied at four after the first quarter and 11 at halftime before Pearson exploded in the third quarter. Her nine points in the quarter, combined with four from Muhlenkamp and a Cali Wendel 3-pointer, gave the Tribe (3-12, 2-5 Midwest Athletic Conference) the lead for good.

Pearson (16 points) and Muhlenkamp (12 points) then combined to hit sixth fourth-quarter free throws in the win.

The FRHS junior varsity team lost 24-22. Eva Kahlig had the team-high of six points.

### Jay eighth rolls

The Jay County Junior High School eighth grade girls basketball team dominated the first quarter Thursday night against South Adams and cruised to a 32-24 victory.

The first quarter was all about the Patriots, who shut out South Adams 16-0. The lead was 22-8 at halftime and 32-16 heading into the final period.

Alexis Sibray powered Jay County to the victory with 16 points. Mya Kunkler and Rinah Cross added six points apiece.



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## IU edges Purdue

By **MICHAEL MAROT**  
AP Sports Writer

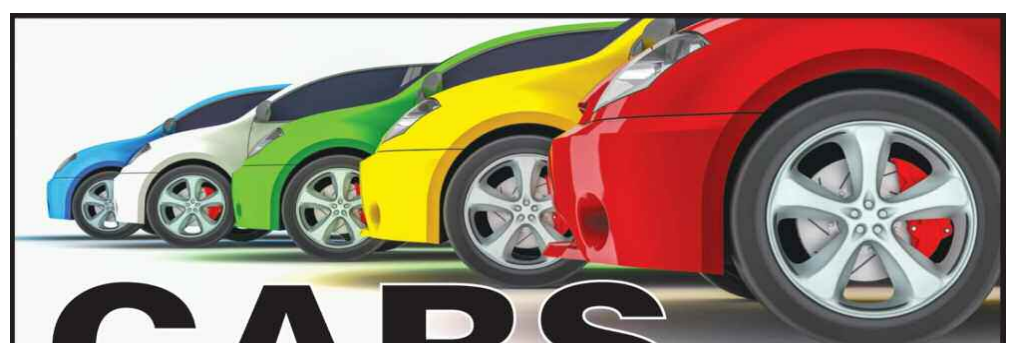
BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Rob Phinisee spent four seasons waiting for a moment like the one he celebrated Thursday night.

It even took him two chances to cash in.

The junior guard

scored 17 points in the first half and then closed out a career-high 20-point game by making the go-ahead 3-pointer with 16.5 seconds left to send Indiana past No. 4 Purdue 68-65 for Phinisee's first win over his hometown school.

See **Edges** page 7



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