

The Commercial Review's

PEOPLES

CHOICE

Your votes, your favorites – 2023

Thank
you

To all of our loyal customers,
who continue to support our
small town dream! We are proud
to serve you from the heart of
downtown Portland! As always,
thank you for shopping local!

- Jennay
& The Loft
Team

301 N. Meridian st.,
Portland
260-726-5839



THE LOFT
ON MERIDIAN

A new venture

People's Choice will be back in 2024 thanks to your overwhelming response

Dear readers,

We tried something new.

In mid-January, we announced some changes coming to our special section schedule. One of those — People's Choice — is in your hands as you read these words.

The idea was relatively simple:

- You vote for your favorites
- We tally the votes
- We recognize the winners in various categories in the "People's Choice" special section
- We highlight the No. 1 overall vote-getter in that same special section

That's exactly what we've done.

In this section, you'll find the winners as well as other top vote-getters (in alphabetical order) in the 39 categories that were part of this year's "People's Choice" balloting.

And, you'll find a feature on the top overall vote-getter, Ja-Mar TV, Appliance & Bedding.

As is always the case with something new, we learned a lot.

First, we learned there was plenty of community enthusiasm. Surveys can be hit and miss. You never know if folks are going to take the time to fill them out.

You did.

We received hundreds of responses, many online but a good number via paper balloting as well.

When we put this idea together — it's not new, other papers have done it before — we wanted to have enough categories to make it worthwhile but not so many that it was unmanageable. (We've seen some publications with more than 100 categories to vote in, which, to us, seemed extreme.)

So we settled on the 39 you'll see featured in this section.

Next year, those categories may change or grow.

That's because we were able to glean some information from the voting and received suggestions from some voters.

The first was that we simply overlooked the "antique shop" category. Based on your voting, that category definitely should have been on the list. It will be next year.

We also received suggestions to include categories for coffee shops, internet service providers, plumbers and hotel/motel. (Some businesses that would fit in those categories got votes in our "other" category this year. It was our intention that "other" would be a catch-all and maybe give us some ideas going forward, so it worked out well.)

The advertiser response to this section has been overwhelming. When we discussed the idea, we didn't know if we'd end up with an 8-page section or maybe a 12. What we ended up with was 28 pages, made possible by advertisers getting involved to promote their businesses.

We thank you.

So, what happens next?

Our new offerings of special sections will continue throughout the year. The next one on our list is Teacher Appreciation, which is scheduled for April. Keep an eye out for information regarding how to nominate your favorite teacher.

As a result of People's Choice, we have created a badge that all of your winners can use in their advertising throughout the year.

And we plan to be back next year with a slightly tweaked format based on what we learn this year.

Mostly, though, we hope this publication calls some attention to local businesses, organizations, events and attractions that help to keep our community thriving.

And for you, our readers, we hope you might try the winners or other top vote-getters that you have not considered before. Maybe you'll find a new favorite clothing store, community event or pizza based on the suggestions of those who voted this year.

Thank you for your support in this new venture, and we look forward to People's Choice 2024.

Ray Cooney

Editor and publisher

The Commercial Review



Additional top vote-getters
Liggett TV and Appliance
Strohl Appliance and Electronics



Additional top vote-getters

Arm's Auto Body	First Choice Auto	Shawn's Auto
Best One Tire & Auto Care	Rich's Auto Repair	Scott Hopkins



Additional top vote-getters
AutoZone
O'Reilly Auto Parts

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Ja-Mar TV, Appliance & Bedding would like to thank everyone who voted for us on the People's Choice Awards. WE APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS!



Now carrying Tempur-pedic and Sealy Mattresses!

Ja-mar TV, Appliance & Bedding

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BRAND SOURCE
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Expert



'We try our best'

Ja-Mar is under third generation of family leadership

By LOUISE RONALD
The Commercial Review

Shauna Runkle responded modestly when she heard Ja-Mar TV, Appliance & Bedding, the business she co-owns with her husband, Jim, received the most overall votes in The Commercial Review's People's Choice balloting.

"We try our best," she said with a smile.

That's something her family has been doing for three generations.

Her maternal grandparents, Jack and Mariana Payne, opened the business in 1970 on Meridian Street. ("Ja-Mar" comes from the first letters of each of their names.) In 1983, Runkle's parents, Troy and Kris Rose, took over and moved the store to its current location on Votaw Street. The Runkles' full-time involvement in the business began in 2000.

If that sounds like smooth sailing, it wasn't.

The company — and the family — underwent a number of challenges over that time. They made it through with the help of each other and the community. And with hard work and a strong foundation.

When they started Ja-Mar, the Paynes already had years of business experience. A 1986 retrospective of their careers in The Commercial Review described how at the age of 12 Jack began working at Mariana's parents' company, Willman's Bakery. The Redkey bakery once em-



The Commercial Review/Louise Ronald

Two generations from the family business, Shauna Runkle and her dad, Troy Rose, stand in the Ja-Mar TV, Appliance & Bedding showroom earlier this week. Shauna's grandparents and Troy's parents, Jack and Mariana Payne, started Ja-Mar in 1970. The name is a mix of the first letters of the first names of Jack and Mariana.

ployed as many as 135 people and delivered bread throughout the region. Jack became manager in 1942, always working alongside Mariana. They married in 1937. In 1952, they joined with Dick

Norman to open D&J Appliances in Portland. When it closed, Jack was a traveling salesman for a few years before he and Mariana opened Ja-Mar.

Jack was in charge of sales

and Mariana took care of the books. Granddaughter Shauna was just a year old.

Then in 1971, one year after Ja-Mar opened, fire broke out at the nearby Beals Restaurant. Water and smoke

damage forced the Paynes to relocate the store overnight.

"Because we had a lot of good help, we were able to open up the very next day," Jack said in the 1986 article.

See **Try** page 25

We appreciate your support and loyalty throughout the years, Jay County. Thank you!

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9:00 AM

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APRIL 8, 2023**

10:00 AM

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BLACKFORD CO.

**SATURDAY
APRIL 1, 2023**

10:00 AM

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REDKEY, IN

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APRIL 29, 2023**

9:00 AM

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Additional top vote-getters

- Bizy Dips
- Cuervos Tacos II
- Glass Capital Grill
- Richards Restaurant
- The Greazy Pickle
- Wings and Rings



Additional top vote-getters

- Greek's Pizzeria
- Miracle Lanes
- Payless Pizza
- Pizza Hut
- Pizza King (Dunkirk)
- Pizza King (Portland)
- Thobe's Carry Out



Additional top vote-getters

- Bricker Auction Company
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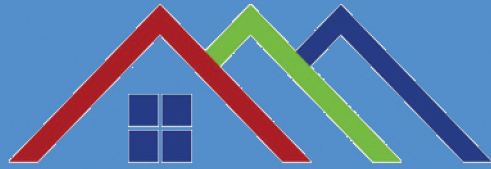
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Additional top vote-getters

Carr Chiropractic
Schmit Chiropractic



Additional top vote-getters

Cruis'n the HoliJay Lights at the Fairgrounds
Dunkirk Farmer's Market
Jay County WALK Against Cancer
Parade of Lights
Tri-State Antique Engine and Tractor Show
Winterfest



Additional top vote-getters

Ace of Trades
Dan Schwartz
Jesse Walter Construction
Mark Pearson Construction
Mike Leonhard
Muhlenkamp Building Corporation
Mustard Seed Remodeling

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APPLIANCE & ELECTRONICS

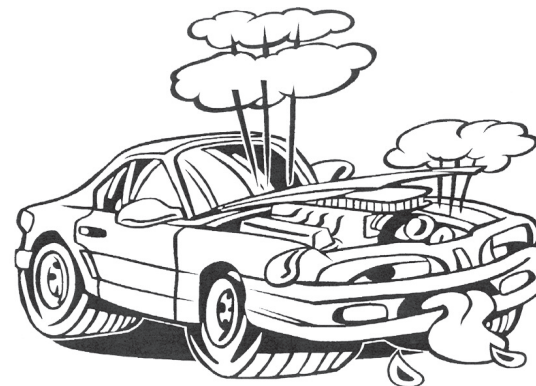
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www.strohlappliance.com

**We owe our success to your loyal support.
Thanks for being the best customers!**

Matt's Garage



Hours:

Mon-Fri: 8:00am-5:30pm
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People's Choice
Convenience store

Circle K

Additional top vote-getters

Dollar General

Dollar Tree

Pak-A-Sak

Village Pantry

Walmart



People's Choice
Daycare

**A Place
to Grow**

Additional top vote-getters

Head Start

Megan Jeffers

Praises and Pathways

Vicki's Playhouse



People's Choice
Dentist's office

**George Family
Dentistry**

Additional top vote-getters

Cascio Family Dental Care

Dr. Thomas Banta

Dunn Family Dental Care

Geneva Dental



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People's Choice
Bank or
credit union
CrossRoads

Additional top vote-getters

Farmers and Merchants State Bank
First Bank of Berne
First Financial Bank
First Merchants Bank



People's Choice
Boutique/clothing
**The Loft
on Meridian**

Additional top vote-getters

Closet Update
Deer Park Boutique
Living in Joy
Sunshine Boutique
The Pink Barn



People's Choice
Car dealer
**Moser
Motors**

Additional top vote-getters

Boelman's Auto Sales
Glass Capital Motors (Fuqua)

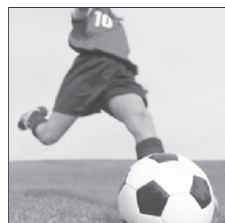
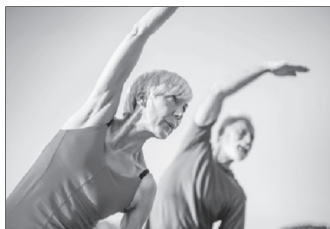


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This week's specials

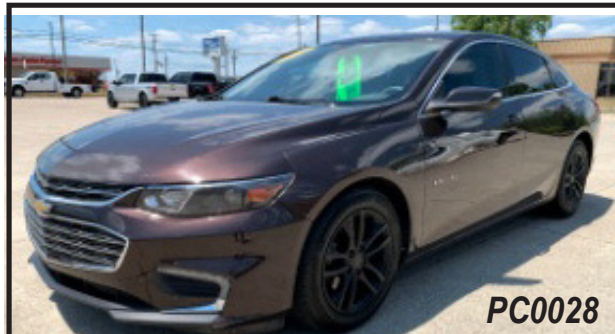


PC0032

2020 Ford Fusion SE

P/W P/S P/B T/W C/C AM/FM Alloy
Wheels Sun Roof Nice Car

\$22,495



PC0028

2016 Chevrolet Malibu LT

1.5 Turbo P/S P/B P/W T/W C/C
Rear view Camera

\$15,495



PT0112

2015 Ford Escape SE

AWD / P/S P/B T/W C/C T
win Panel Sun Roof Low Miles

\$17,995



PC0031

2018 Chevrolet Cruze LS

Low miles, Awesome gas mileage

\$16,995

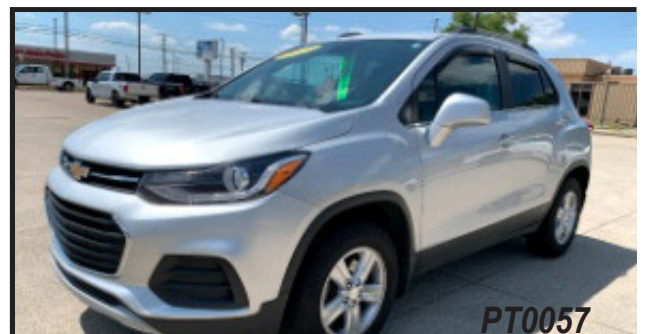


PC0049

2017 Ford Mustang Fast Back

300 H/P 6 Speed Manual P/S P/B T/W C/C
ONLY 27212 Miles Very Nice Car

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PT0057

2019 Chevrolet Trax LT AD

P/S P/B C/C Rear View Camera Must GO

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- Boarding & Grooming



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Christian Bader DVM



Additional top vote-getters

Family Practice
of Jay County

Fort Family Health
West Jay Clinic



Additional top vote-getters

Crown City Lanes
Portland Rockets

Rollin' J Lanes
Valhalla Axe Hall



Additional top vote-getters

K&L Tractor Sales
Valentine Feed and Supply



People's Choice
Financial advisor

**Compass
Wealth
Solutions**

Additional top vote-getters

Edward Jones (Drew Houck)
Edward Jones (Scott Benter)
Jack's and Associates
Raymond James



People's Choice
Florist

**The Flower
Nook**

Additional top vote-getters

Be You Floral
Bricker's Flowers and More
Reni's Heaven Scent



People's Choice
Funeral home

**Williamson
Spencer
and Penrod**

Additional top vote-getters

Baird-Freeman Funeral Home
Brockman Boeckman Funeral Home
MJS Mortuaries
Walker and Glancy Funeral Home



People's Choice
Furniture

**Medler's
Furniture**

Additional top vote-getters

Brockman Furniture
Fred's Custom Furniture
Mainstream Furniture
Wheel and Spoke Antique Mall

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People's Choice
Gas station

**Murphy
USA**

Additional top vote-getters

Ag Best
Circle K
Pak-a-Sak
Pennville Pantry
Village Pantry



People's Choice
Greenhouse

**Cook's
Nursery**

Additional top vote-getters

Bricker's Greenhouse & Floral
Eichers' Greenhouse
Jay County FFA
MW Sales Greenhouse & Garden Center



People's Choice
Gym

**Patriot
Fitness**

Additional top vote-getters

Jay Community Center
Sculpt Fitness



People's Choice
*Hair Salon
or barber*

**The Loft on
Meridian**

Additional top vote-getters

Dunkirk Barber Shop
Hair Studio
Salon Karma
Shear Perfection
Shine Salon
Upperkut Salon and Spa
Wildflower Beauty Lounge

Thanks for all of your support!

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cherished memory
of your
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Additional top vote-getters

True Value
Wangler Ace



Additional top vote-getters

Ace of Trades
Hometown Hardware
Mustard Seed Remodeling
True Value



Additional top vote-getters

Fort Recovery Industries
J&R Manufacturing
MSSL
Tyson



Additional top vote-getters

Barnum and Brown Insurance

Corle Pond Insurance

Farm Bureau Insurance

Inman Insurance

Karmen Ward (State Farm)

Masters Insurance Agency



hair • nails • tanning • Gift Shop

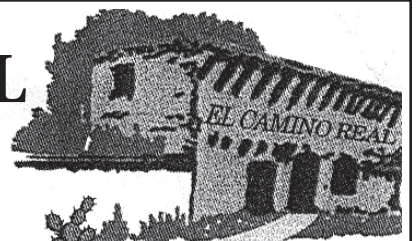
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**Thanks for voting us #1 restaurant in Jay County!
We appreciate all the support you have
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People's Choice
Landscaping

Cook's
Nursery

Additional top vote-getters

Brian & Sons Mowing & Snow Removal
Jutte's Fruit Farm and Landscaping

Miles Mowing & Lawn Care
Schlosser and Sons Landscaping



People's Choice
Law office

Sprunger and
Sprunger

Additional top vote-getters

Gail Siegrist Dues Law Offices
Greg LeMaster

Hinkle, Racster
and Schemenaur



People's Choice
Nail salon

The Loft on
Meridian

Additional top vote-getters

Beauty Bar
Wildflower Salon

***Sports on TV
Cold Beer on Draft
Great Food on the Grill***



**Stop in for a burger, a beer and a game,
and let us put a smile on your face!**

**Thank you for all your
votes, support and patronage!
We really appreciate it!**

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(260) 726-9647



People's Choice
New business

**The Loft
on Meridian**

Additional top vote-getters

Living in Joy
Mt. Pleasant Service
The Pink Barn
Tractor Supply



People's Choice
Park

**Hudson Family
Park**

Additional top vote-getters

Dunkirk City Park
Haynes Park
Pennville Park
Redkey Morgan Park
Webster-Depot Park



People's Choice
Photographer

Pride Inman

Additional top vote-getters

Blessings Photography
Devon Jones
Rebecca Wendel
Todd Skirvin



People's Choice
Non-profit

**Jay County
Cancer Society**

Additional top vote-getters

Arts Place
Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
Jay County Humane Society
Jay-Randolph Developmental Service
Portland Rockets
Pregnancy Care Center
The Portland Foundation
Youth Service Bureau



**First Bank
of Berne**

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We Believe in the power of community



Congratulations to all
People's Choice nominees
including the IU Health
Jay healthcare providers!

Thank you to everyone who voted!



Jay

iuhealth.org

Try ...

Continued from page 5

Fire struck the business again in 2000, causing considerable damage. Then in 2018, high winds accompanying the tornado that hit Jay County ripped the roof from Ja-Mar's warehouse next door to the store.

Runkle remembered that day in a February 2019 article in Your Source, the trade magazine for BrandSource buying group. She and a part-time employee were in the store when they got a call about the roof. They stepped out the front door to see it spread over the grass and covering three cars in the parking lot.

Then it started to rain.

Runkle and the employee began moving inventory from the warehouse into the showroom on handcarts. After a few minutes, they had help.

"People just showed up," she told the magazine. "I bet I ended up with 30 people — people who just stopped by and helped us move stuff."

It took just two hours to get everything into the showroom.

The single biggest

Ja-Mar TV, Appliance & Bedding first opened on Meridian Street in Portland before moving to its current Votaw Street site on the west side of the city in 1983.

challenge the business has faced over its 52 years was the sudden death of the Payne's daughter and Runkle's mother, Kris Rose.

"She just went into the bathroom and never came out," Runkle said.

It was an aneurysm.

Runkle and her husband had moved from Indianapolis in 1998. She was working part-time at the store and had two young children at home when her mother died. Although she had grown up in the business and helped her grandmother keep the books since she was in junior high, Runkle had never imagined taking over.

Her father's reaction to his wife's death changed her mind.



The Commercial Review/Louise Ronald

"My dad literally looked at me and said, 'If you don't come back in here full-time, I'm closing shop. I can't do this by myself,'" she said last week.

That job still fills Runkle's days, though she has taken some time off over the past few weeks to recover from rotator cuff surgery. Cindy Denney, one of the store's three part-time employees, has been filling in. Jim Runkle also works full-time with delivery and installation duties. Troy Rose, now remarried and living in Union City, stops by one or two days a week.

"He enjoys coming back and talking to people he hasn't seen in a while," Runkle said.

It seems to be a satis-

factory arrangement for all involved.

"There was a time about 10 years ago when it was tough to be a small business in the appliance industry," Runkle said.

Big box stores seemed poised to take over. But that is changing, she said, because the big stores offer very little in terms of service.

Ja-Mar will do repairs on appliances purchased from big box stores, but serves its own customers first.

"We have to prioritize," she said, not only in terms of where the appliance was purchased but also in terms of the urgency of the required repair. "You're not going to get that from (a big box store)."

Runkle considers those stores to be Ja-Mar's competition, not other local stores like Strohl Appliance & Electronics or Liggett TV & Maytag Home Appliance Center.

"I want all of us to stay in business," she said.

If a customer comes in looking for a brand Ja-Mar doesn't carry but another local store does, she will happily

refer them to the other store.

"I don't want (the customer) to go to Muncie," she said. "If we can keep them here, keep them local and keep them buying from any of us, that's better. It's better for everybody."

That's one way the Ja-Mar family supports the community that has supported them through the years.

They also established the Kris Rose Memorial Wonder Woman Scholarship through The Portland Foundation in 2001.

"My mom just did so much," Runkle said. "We always called her Wonder Woman."

The scholarship supports female Jay County High School graduates planning to study business.

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