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## A welcome to remember

Vietnam-era veterans were part of a "Welcome Home" event at Bluffton's American Legion Post 111

By SYDNEY KENT

Wells County Vietnam-era veterans received a long overdue "welcome home" Wednesday, May 17, at American Legion Post 111 in Bluffton.

The event was sponsored by a partnership between the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans organization, the Captain William Wells chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Wells County, and American Legion Post 111.

"Vietnam veterans deserve to hear that they are welcomed home, that their community is grateful for their sacrifice during the war, and that they matter," Jill Fewell, executive director of WHVV, said at the event Wednesday.

"Each veteran receives a sincere thank you, a brief presentation, and then we pin a lapel on them to welcome them home and take their photo," Fewell said. "We eventually want to create a book of photos of every Vietnam-era veteran. We also gift them a

book."

The book given out at the event, "A Time To Honor," is a compilation of first-hand experiences about the war offered by those who served in the Southeast Asia Theater.

Fewell said the book is a "very special piece of patriotism and history," WHVV hopes to one day include in multiple libraries.

"We have a goal to get the book into the Library of Congress," Fewell said. "We're also giving a copy to every public library and every high school in the state of Indiana. It truly is the preservation of history."

Fewell said WHVV hosted approximately 151 events. In addition to being welcomed home, veterans also have the option to access local resources.

"About 50 percent of Vietnam veterans are not receiving the benefits they have earned," Fewell said. "Dewey Randall, the Wells County Veterans Service Offi-

(Continued on Page 2)



Jonathan Wyatt, Vietnam-era veteran, holding "A Time To Honor" after receiving a warm welcome home. (Photo by Sydney Kent)

## Road conversion project is stalled by a 1-acre property

By HOLLY GASKILL

Another stalled road conversion project has become a point of discussion among the Wells County Commissioners.

The mile gravel road, located on CR 700S from 300W to 400W in Poneto, is the highest-ranked project of those with only one petition holdout. County Engineer Nate Rumschlag said. The hold-out is a one-acre property housing only an old schoolhouse.

The owners of the remaining three properties along the area were present during the commissioners' meeting to voice their frustration.

Tom McElhaney, resident of

6998S 300W in Poneto, stated he's petitioned for road conversion for 30 years, even offering to purchase the property. According to McElhaney, the owner rejected his request. "He lives on two paved roads," McElhaney noted.

McElhaney added the ditch has been eating away at the current road. "It's getting pretty dangerous — something has got to be done before long because of the ditch."

Petitions for road conversion are due June 1. Rumschlag will provide an update regarding the petitions and conversions at the beginning of July. He also added the commissioners begin thinking about the processes and proce-

dures for addressing holdouts.

"I'm not in the business of taking people's rights away," Commissioner Jeff Stringer said. "But we need to factor in safety — blind corners, Meridian Road with school buses going up and down it — at some point, we've got to get to that decision."

Later, Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar stated the county has had recent issues with dumpsters in the right-of-way, sometimes only a few feet from the road. The commissioners approved sending a letter asking these properties to move the dumpsters, which present a safety hazard for travel.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Construction will begin on Ind. 116

By HOLLY GASKILL

Construction on Ind. 116 will begin in the near future.

The Indiana Department of Transportation stated construction is expected to start on or after May 24 and will be completed by Sept. 1.

INDOT will shift a portion of the roadway — a half-mile located approximately 4 miles east of Ind. 1 — 75 feet south of its current path. The outlined area was the site of a fatal car accident in 2017.

Preparation for the construction began earlier this year when crews cleared trees and moved utility poles to account for the new pathway.

During this closure, a detour will take travelers around construction via CR 600E, CR 350S, CR 300E and Church Road, adding roughly 10 miles to travel.

holly@news-banner.com

## Markle considers future in comprehensive plan discussion

By DAVE SCHULTZ

Representatives of the Region 3A community development organization spoke to the Markle Town Council Wednesday night about the town's good points and bad points, even as they asked for more input.

Region 3A, which includes Huntington County as a member, is working on a comprehensive plan for the town. Markle straddles the Huntington/Wells county line and uses the Huntington County

Department of Community Development for planning and zoning purposes.

Matt Brinkman, Region 3A's executive director, and Patrick Rorick, the agency's community development planner, were at the meeting and Brinkman had an interesting take on the community of 1,071 people.

"The thing about Markle is that it's 10 miles from everything," he said. "That's a good thing. It's also a bad thing."

What he meant by that is that it's easy to get goods and services, such as a large grocery store, because it's only a short drive away. It also means that those goods and services are not likely to be present in the town. Getting a Meijer or a Kroger in Markle will not happen, he said.

He led the group attending the Markle council meeting through a survey — "This is about the last chance to get additional feedback from the community," he said —

and spoke about the points in the survey and what's been observed thus far.

"People like the small-town feel," he said. However, when they've been asked what the community needs, people have mentioned three primary things — broadband internet access, downtown revitalization, and sidewalks.

The survey covered several different areas, even though he said the biggest factor in a comprehensive plan is land use. In terms

of the overall zoning in the town, Brinkman said, Markle's residents "are in really good shape here."

The areas the survey particularly asked about were:

- Growth and annexation. The remarks on the survey indicated that the town was seeking voluntary annexation. The goal, Brinkman said later in the meeting, was to "maintain the small-town feel of the town while embracing growth and development."

(Continued on Page 2)

## Rule targets college programs leaving grads with high debt

By COLLIN BINKLEY  
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — College programs that leave graduates underpaid or buried in loans would be cut off from federal money under a proposal issued Wednesday by the Biden administration, but the rules would apply only to for-profit colleges and a tiny fraction of programs at traditional universities.

The Education Department is calling it a significant step toward accountability for the nation's colleges. With more students questioning the value of

a degree, the measure aims to weed out low-performing programs and assure students the cost of tuition will pay off in the long run.

"Investing in a college degree or career certificate is supposed to pay off — instead, too many students are getting ripped off every single year," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a call with reporters.

Opponents, however, say the scope is too narrow to help most students.

Known as gainful employment, it

(Continued on Page 2)

## Russia agrees to extend grain deal for global food security

By SUZAN FRASER  
and COURTNEY BONNELL  
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Russia agreed to a two-month extension of a deal that has allowed Ukraine to ship grain through the Black Sea to parts of the world struggling with hunger, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Wednesday, a boost to global food security after the war drove up prices.

Turkey and the U.N. brokered the breakthrough accord with the warring sides last summer, which came with a separate agreement to facilitate shipments of Russian food and fertilizer that Moscow insists hasn't

been applied.

Russia had threatened to bow out if its concerns were not ironed out by Thursday. Such brinkmanship isn't new: With a similar extension in the balance in March, Russia unilaterally decided to renew the deal for 60 days instead of the 120 days outlined in the agreement.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Wednesday that problems would need to be resolved "at the technical level." Neither she nor Erdogan mentioned any concessions Moscow may have received.

"We will continue our efforts to ensure

(Continued on Page 2)

### Inside

#### Local/Area

Obituaries . . . . . 3  
Court Docket . . . . . 3

#### Opinion

Angelkeep . . . . . 4

#### Also...

Sports . . . . . 6-7  
Classifieds . . . . . 9  
Diversions . . . . . 8

### Outside



Sunny and warm today,  
showers tomorrow

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 77	High 79	High 67
Low 51	Low 49	Low 47

More Weather on Page 2

### Online

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Vol. 94 No. 168

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# Montana: 1st-in-nation TikTok ban protects; TikTok says it violates rights

By AMY BETH HANSON and HALELUYA HADERO

**Associated Press**  
HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Montana became the first state in the U.S. to enact a complete ban on TikTok on Wednesday when Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed a measure that's more sweeping than any other state's attempts to curtail the social media app, which is owned by a Chinese tech company.

The measure, scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2024, is expected to be challenged legally and will serve as a testing ground for the TikTok-free America that many national lawmakers have envisioned. Cybersecurity experts say it could be difficult to enforce the ban.

"Today, Montana takes the most decisive action of any state to protect Montanans' private data and sensitive personal information from being harvested by the Chinese Communist Party," Gianforte said in a statement.

TikTok spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter argued that the law infringes on people's First Amendment rights and is unlawful. She declined to say whether the

company will file a lawsuit. "We want to reassure Montanans that they can continue using TikTok to express themselves, earn a living, and find community as we continue working to defend the rights of our users inside and outside of Montana," Oberwetter said in a statement.

The American Civil Liberties of Montana and NetChoice, a trade group that counts Google and TikTok as its members, also called the law unconstitutional. Keegan Medrano, policy director for the ACLU of Montana, said the Legislature "trampled on the free speech of hundreds of thousands of Montanans who use the app to express themselves, gather information and run their small business, in the name of anti-Chinese sentiment."

Some lawmakers, the FBI and officials at other agencies are concerned the video-sharing app, owned by ByteDance, could be used to allow the Chinese government to access information on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public. TikTok says none of this has ever happened.

A former executive at ByteDance alleges the tech giant has served as a "propaganda tool" for the Chinese government, a claim ByteDance says is baseless.

When Montana banned the app on government-owned devices in late December, Gianforte said TikTok posed a "significant risk" to sensitive state data. More than half of U.S. states and the federal government have a similar ban.

On Wednesday, Gianforte also announced he was prohibiting the use of all social media applications tied to foreign adversaries on state equipment and for state businesses in Montana effective on June 1. Among the apps he listed are WeChat, whose parent company is headquartered in China; and Telegram Messenger, which was founded in Russia.

The legislation, drafted by the attorney general's office, easily passed through Montana's GOP-controlled Legislature.

Gianforte had wanted to expand the TikTok bill to include apps tied to foreign adversaries, but lawmakers did not send him the bill until after the session ended this

month, preventing him from offering any amendments.

Montana's new law prohibits downloads of TikTok in the state and would fine any "entity" — an app store or TikTok — \$10,000 per day for each time someone "is offered the ability" to access the social media platform or download the app. The penalties would not apply to users.

Opponents say Montana residents could easily circumvent the ban by using a virtual private network, a service that shields internet users by encrypting their data traffic, preventing others from observing their web browsing. Montana state officials say geofencing technology is used with online sports gambling apps, which are deactivated in states where online gambling is illegal.

Though many lawmakers in Montana have been enthusiastic about a ban, experts who followed the bill closely said the state will likely have to defend the legislation in court.

Officials are also bound to receive criticism from advocacy groups and TikTok users who don't want their favorite app to be taken

away. The app's fun, goofy videos and ease of use has made it immensely popular, and U.S. tech giants like Snapchat and Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, see it as a competitive threat.

TikTok has been recruiting so-called influencers and small businesses who use the platform to push back on a ban. But others who haven't been part of an official campaign coordinated by the company are also worried about what lawmakers are doing.

Chatter about a TikTok ban has been around since 2020, when then-

President Donald Trump attempted to bar the company from operating in the U.S. through an executive order that was halted in federal courts. President Joe Biden's administration initially shelved those plans, but more recently threatened to ban the app if the company's Chinese owners don't sell their stakes.

TikTok doesn't want either option and has been clamoring to prove it's free of any Chinese government interference. It's also touting a data safety plan it calls "Project Texas" to assuage bipartisan concerns in Washington.



**BIDDING STARTS CLOSING MAY 21 AT 6 P.M. EST - Joy A. Bauman estate owner.** Online only! Real estate 6 p.m. 1,112 SF, 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath home, 2-car attached garage, .38 acre cul-de-sac lot, North Adams Community Schools. Personal property 6:30 p.m. Lifetime collection of Joy Bauman! Large collection 100's of pieces of Carnival, Fenton, Opalescent glassware, appliances, household & more! Pick up May 22, 3-6 p.m., 139 Riverside Ct., Decatur. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, 260-724-7402, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com).

**BIDDING ENDS MAY 21 - (Online Only Auction) - Multiple consignors, seller.** Outstanding antiques and collectables including rare neon Coke Cola clock, Coca Cola advertising, antique and vintage furniture, vintage toys, Longaberger basket collection, glassware, military items, collectibles. Preview: May 18 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian (Steffen Group Auction Gallery). *The Steffen Group Inc.*, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com), 260-824-3006.

**MAY 21-MAY 28 - (Online Only Auction) - Life estate of Dorothea Teagle, seller.** Clean modern furniture, electric fireplace, Samsung flat screen TV, 1973 Gibson guitar, glassware, Craftsman riding lawn mower, tools, modern appliances, household, Trek tandem bicycle, much more. Preview: May 18 and 25 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 401 N. Meadow Lane, Hartford City, IN. Pat Carter, estate manager, 260-273-8294, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, <http://www.steffengrp.com>.

**MAY 27-JUNE 3 - (Online Only Auction) - Schwartz, seller.** Great collection of vintage car parts, Ford tractor, dump trailer, Bobcat backhoe & tracts, tools, mower parts, collectibles, construction equipment, much more. Preview: May 31 from 4 p.m.-7 p.m., 1055 US Hwy. 27, Berne. Sale manager, Isaac Stoller, *The Steffen Group Inc.*, 260-824-3006.

**MAY 28-JUNE 4 - (Online Only) - Leffers Family, seller's.** Huge complete estate closeout. 2008 Ford F250 Lariat super duty pickup w/35,711 original miles, 2011 Kubota L5240 tractor w/cab, 2018 Diamond C tandem axel dump trailer, tandem axel implement trailer, 2014 Kubota RTV-X utility vehicle, small farm equipment, farm, mechanics and construction tools, Ottawa hit and miss engine, complete windmill, lawn and garden furniture and equipment. Preview: May 30, 4-6pm and June 1, 5-7pm, 12910 Tonkel Road, Fort Wayne. *The Steffen Group Inc.*, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com), 260-824-3006.

**JUNE 6 - 7 p.m. EST - Estate of Ida Hilty, Phillip Hilty, owner.** 2499 S US Hwy. 27, Berne. Real estate auction! Modern Amish home with electricity, 3,056 sq. feet building, 1,200 sq. retail shop space w/bath, 1,800 sq. feet living area, 2 bedroom, 1 bath living space, 2+/- acres, 6" walls, beautiful hickory kitchen, built in 2019. Items selling following real estate: 10'x16' shed, propane heater, road sign, stove, refrigerator. Open house May 22, 5-6 p.m. *Krueckeberg Auction & Realty LLC*, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com), 260-724-7402.

## Effort to expel Santos referred to Ethics board

By KEVIN FREKING  
**Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A resolution to expel Rep. George Santos, R-N.Y., from Congress was referred to the House Ethics Committee on Wednesday as Republicans successfully sidestepped an effort to force them into a vote that could have narrowed their already slim four-seat majority.

The House voted along party lines, 221-204, to refer the matter to the ethics panel, with Santos himself joining his GOP colleagues in voting to do so.

The freshman congressman has been charged with embezzling money from his campaign, falsely receiving unemployment funds and

lying to Congress about his finances. He has denied the charges and has pleaded not guilty.

Rep. Robert Garcia, D-Calif., introduced a resolution in February to expel Santos, something the House has only done twice in recent decades. He sought to force a vote on that resolution under a process that left three options for Republicans: a vote on the resolution, a move to table, or a referral to committee.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy chose the third option, much to the chagrin of Democrats who described it as a "complete copout." They noted that the ethics panel is already investigating Santos and that it was

time for Republican House members who have called for Santos to resign to back their words with action.

"It is simply an effort for the Republicans to avoid having to take an up-or-down vote on whether or not George Santos belongs here," said Rep. Dan Goldman, D-N.Y.

Santos made clear to reporters after the vote he has no intention of resigning. As he spoke on the Capitol steps, he was heckled by Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Jamaal Bowman. Bowman yelled, "Resign, save yourself, have some dignity."

"I understand that politics is complicated, but the reality is there is a proce-

sure," Santos said. "You can't be judge, jury and executioner. I have a right, a constitutional right, to defend myself and I will do that. And I look forward to doing that. I look forward to seeing the process play out."

Democrats appealed to Republican lawmakers from New York for support. Many have been highly critical of Santos, and face the prospect of Democrats trying to link them to Santos in next year's general election.

"I say to you, if you vote for this motion to refer it to the Ethics Committee, you are complicit in George Santos' fraud and you are voting to make sure that he continues to be a member of Congress," Goldman said.



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