

The News - Banner

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THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Visitors commission celebrates county eclipse tourism

By HOLLY GASKILL
 On the tail end of the total solar eclipse, the Wells County Convention and Visitors Commission celebrated the opportunity for tourism and outreach.
 The eclipse, as well as many local eclipse-watching events, brought visitors from across the country and globe, as well as those throughout Indiana.
 "We should do this every other year," quipped board member Steve Higgins.
 Jay Esparza, representing Ossian Parks, reported roughly 800 people were at Ossian's event at Archbold-Wilson Park. Most were from Allen County, which fell just outside of the path of totality. Bluffton Parks Superintendent Brandy Fiechter said the parking lot of Lancaster Park was full and then some. Vehicles also parked along both sides of the Rivergreenway, many of which were from Allen County and Michigan.
 Tourism Coordinator Audry Dudley had heard several businesses in the county were overflowing with visitors. Board member Zane Herr of Dash-90 Wines said the day was very fruitful for the business, which sold a special "total blackout berry" wine slushie.
 The Wells County Commerce and Visitors Centre had a "very busy day," Dudley said, directing visitors and selling eclipse glasses.
 Higgins said he was out helping at Ouabache State Park and spoke with someone who lived in Huntington County. "She said before she started researching about the
 (Continued on Page 2)

Norwell schools partner 'character building' curriculum with LifeWise

By HOLLY GASKILL
 Norwell Community Schools are continuing to adapt its schedule and curriculum as it continues its partnership with LifeWise Academy.
 LifeWise Academy is a Christian faith-based program that utilizes federally protected "release time" for elective religious instruction off-campus. The district began allowing release time at Ossian Elementary School last spring and has since expanded to multiple grades at both OES and Lancaster Elementary School. The release time occurs once weekly during the time typically used for "specials," like gym or art.
 Superintendent Mike Springer said a community member had previously criticized that this program pulls students away from learning in their special classes. However, he told the board Tuesday that the district is implementing a similar "character building skills" curriculum for those who do not attend LifeWise.
 The curriculum, "SecondStep," encourages social and emotional learning, including goal setting,

emotional management, empathy, kindness and problem solving. The LifeWise curriculum does so similarly but through the chronological study of the Bible. For example, students discussed compassion through the story of baby Moses.
 Multiple school administrators and school board members emphasized the importance of these skills, regardless of which curriculum students receive.
 "If you can start 'soft skills' as early as possible, I mean, that's the biggest thing that seems to be getting lost," said board member Chad Kline. "On the employer side of things, that's the No. 1 thing they say (as an impediment)."
 The implementation of SecondStep differs slightly between OES and LES, which vary in their student participation in LifeWise. LES Principal Ginger Butcher said students who do not attend LifeWise solely work on SecondStep, whereas OES Principal Theresa Casto said the SecondStep curriculum is integrated with specials.
 "So either kids will go to Life-
 (Continued on Page 2)



Saluting the scholars
 Wednesday night was the 25th annual Wells County Scholars Dinner hosted by the Wells County Foundation and the Bluffton Rotary Club. Students from the three county schools were honored for their achievements and volunteer work. Pictured at top, Seth Whicker introduces juniors and their achievements. (Photo by Carrie Penrod) Above, the crowd enjoys their dinner before the award ceremony. **More photos on Page 3.** (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)



Open house
 Above, Chad Kline talks with guests during an open house to celebrate his years at the Wells County Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday. His last day is Friday. (Photos by Sydney Kent)



FSSA enacts waitlist for Aged and Disabled Waiver services

By WHITNEY DOWNARD
Indiana Capital Chronicle
 The Family and Social Services Administration last week announced a waitlist for the Aged and Disabled Waiver, meaning that Hoosiers in need of skilled nursing care and other services will be forced to wait.
 In January, the agency warned that a waitlist could be imminent as it sought to reconcile a nearly \$1 billion shortfall in Medicaid.
 Previously, the agency said it maintained waiver slots at "approximately" 50,000 and would expand to 55,000 in 2025. However, those numbers weren't included in the April 4 release.
 "The Aged and Disabled Waiver has a maximum capacity each year for individuals to receive services through the Aged and Disabled Waiver. This number is determined in the state's Aged
 (Continued on Page 2)

RediMed changes locations

By JONATHAN SNYDER
 Local urgent care facility RediMed has moved from 1980 North Main St. to Bluffton Regional Medical Center's Emergency Department.
 According to Director of Community and Media Relations Joy Lohse, this move allows RediMed to quickly give patients access to a higher level of care if needed. The site will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
 Lohse noted that RediMed patients who need prescription refills and other non-urgent attention are encouraged to see their primary care providers, but the Emergency Department can provide care at any time if there are more serious issues.
 Lohse did not comment on why the decision was made, but repeatedly issued the same statement via email: "We continually evaluate ways to best serve the community. Our recent consolidation of urgent care services from the former Bluffton RediMed into Bluffton Regional Medical Center's Emergency Department also offers patients the benefit of on-site access to a higher level of care if needed — and is available 24/7/365."
 jonathan@news-banner.com

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Outside

More showers and storms today and tonight

Today	Friday	Saturday
High 65	High 54	High 65
Low 44	Low 40	Low 52

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Visitors commission

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eclipse she never knew Ouabache State Park existed — “No, really,” he said. “It’s like, wow, we need a light in the sky or something.”
“That’s the point of this, right?” smiled Executive Director of Economic Development Chad Kline, referring to the commission.

The commission expressed hope that the event had promoted local attractions to neighboring counties, bringing a long-lasting benefit to northeast Indiana tourism.

Additionally, they emphasized that events took place generally without a hitch. Higgins noted that even clean-up at Ouabache, which was full by noon, was fairly minimal.

The commission will

have more concrete data regarding the tourism impact in several months when they receive a collection of the innkeeper’s tax, a 5% tax on temporary overnight stays in Wells County. Many area overnight accommodations were booked through the weekend before the eclipse, Dudley said.

Looking forward, the board discussed what tourism assets seemed missing among the visitors. Several board members stated it would be helpful to have postcard advertisements of local attractions or a QR code for the tourism website. Michelle Blount, who operates a local Airbnb, said the items would be helpful to leave for her guests as well.

The group said a billboard on a main highway

in Allen County would increase organizational awareness. Dudley also said the updated visitor guide would soon be completed; the magazine was set back after the designer lost her home in a tornado.

With Kline’s last day with the organization on Friday, he also affirmed that the commission’s work would continue. He said some projects and priorities under Economic Development could be picked up by the visitors commission, like including talent attraction in visitor attraction. He also stated that marketing materials contracted with LC Media through Economic Development would be delivered to the visitors commission.

Kline also anticipated the visitors commission work-

ing more with northeast Indiana economic development. Dudley added, “A thought we usually have to reframe for people is that visitors and residents don’t usually care about county lines ... they’re looking at the region and what that benefit is to their families.”

They also noted that Dudley’s email address would soon change but that her Economic Development email would remain active during the transition.

Board members present were Esparza, Fiechter, Higgins, Herr, Blount and Scott Elzey; Jon Winne, Jeff Reed and Justin Osborne were absent.

The board’s next meeting is 8 a.m. May 8 at the Wells County Commerce and Visitors Centre.

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Weather

Thursday, April 11, 2024

(24-hour observations at 9:51 p.m. Wednesday)
High: 65; **Low:** 49; **Precipitation:** 0.30 inches of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 4.04 feet at 9:45 p.m. Wednesday

Wells County forecast

Today: Showers and possibly a thunderstorm. Some of the storms could produce heavy rain. High near 65. East wind 10 to 15 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 90%. New rainfall amounts between three quarters and one inch possible.

Tonight: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Some of the storms could produce heavy rain. Cloudy, with a low around 44. West wind around 20 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Friday: Showers likely, mainly before 2 p.m. Cloudy, with a high near 54. Breezy, with a west wind 20 to 25 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Friday Night: A 30% chance of showers before 8 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 40. West wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 65.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 74. Breezy.

Sunday Night: A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 56.

‘Character building’ curriculum

(Continued from Page 1)

Wise during that time or go to a special area teacher — ours will be divided because we have more kids that don’t go,” Casto explained. “And then our teachers are going to kind of take those second step lessons and kind of filter it through either library, music, art or P.E., and those kids will kind of be doing an activity through those mediums related to those (SecondStep) concepts.”

Springer stressed that the Second-Step curriculum “wasn’t anti-Life-Wise,” but provided another avenue to learn those skills. “It’s still the same conversations that you’re talking about in terms of how we want to treat one another and how we want to approach life,” he stated.

Springer continued, “There have been some frustrations with implementing LifeWise, as there probably are going to be when you’re pulling something out of school to do something separate. So do we just give up on that possibility there for kids to make connections beyond what we’re doing academically in class, within something that our community is really supporting and wanting to see happen? Or do we think a little bit more about how can we be a little bit more intentional about how we structure our day to be a more seamless thing?”

Board member Corey Krug also pushed back on the criticism that students might be “missing out” on their specials. “To me, that’s a great time as a parent to have a discussion with your child, ‘Hey we’re prioritizing ‘x’ as opposed to ‘y’ ... At some point, as a community, we have to sit back and take responsibility and say, ‘Look,

there are things that you might miss out on sometimes, and that’s OK. Because you’re getting something else,’” he said.

Krug and the rest of the board gave enthusiastic support for the Second-Step curriculum.

Also during the meeting, the board recognized recent accomplishments for the high school girls’ basketball team and show choirs.

Girls’ basketball head coach Eric Thornton was recently honored as District 1 Indiana Basketball Coaching Association Coach of the Year, and each board member took a moment to compliment his leadership, initiative and humbleness in leading the girls’ team. They also recognized players Kennedy Fuelling, selected to play in the Hoosier Gym All Star Classic, Mackenzie Fuess, selected to play in the Nancy Rehm All Star game, and Vanessa Rosswurm, selected to the Indiana Futures Game.

The board also:

- Expressed their condolences for long-time bus driver Connie Clark, whose husband, Richard, passed in an accident this weekend.

- Heard a Quarter 1 financial update from Springer. He advised the district was in a fiscally strong position and making headway in building up its Rainy Day Fund.

- Recognized the retirements of technology director Jeff Miller, effective July 19; transportation director Stephanie Rohr, effective July 5; 7th grade social studies teacher Karrie Hamilton; and bus driver Sue Hupp, effective at the end of the school year.

- Accepted the resignations of LES 3rd grade teacher Allyson Schwartz

and OES 2nd grade teacher Carey Behne, both effective at the end of the school year, high school assistant soccer coach Amanda May, middle school yearbook teacher Holly Kimball, bus driver Dave Myers, OES teaching assistant Mallannie Brandon and NHS freshman basketball coach Drew Federspiel.

- Approved the employment recommendations of Rachel McBride as LES teacher, Kurt Gray as NHS spring sports supervisor, Alex Murray as NMS volunteer assistant boys’ soccer coach, Elise Boomershine as LES Bobcat Care assistant, Joy Groat as bus driver, Davis Miller as NHS assistant boys’ golf coach, Rob Fuess as NHS assistant boys’ soccer coach, Abbey Boyer as varsity assistant volleyball coach, Lanette Mason as OES special education part-time nurse, Debra Long and Melissa Stech for NHS food service, and Lisa Bates as a food service substitute.

- Accepted anonymous donations of \$4,000 and \$400 for NHS girls’ basketball state rings, a \$100 donation from Rube Goldberg for student activities, and a \$300 donation from Psi Iota Xi to the LES music department.

- Approved an overnight trip request to Indianapolis for the SkillsUSA competition for NHS auto service technology April 19-20.

The board will meet next on Tuesday, April 23, first for a tour of the middle school construction site at 4:15 p.m., then for their regular meeting in the high school. A strategic planning meeting will follow the regular agenda.

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FSSA enacts waitlist

(Continued from Page 1)

and Disabled Waiver application, which is approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. FSSA has reached the currently allowed limit and must implement a waiting list for individuals seeking to access services through the Aged and Disabled Waiver,” an FSSA website read.

The five-page document included 21 “frequently asked questions” for impacted Hoosiers and emphasized that currently enrolled Hoosiers weren’t affected. FSSA advised those placed on the waitlist that it didn’t have estimates for the wait, which it said depended on waiver capacity and eligibility category.

To get on the list, FSSA directed Hoosiers to their local Area Agency on Aging — institutions who warned that state insertion into rate setting could jeopardize their futures earlier this month.

What is an Aged and Disabled Waiver?

As the state agency tasked with administering Medicaid and its services, FSSA assists Hoosiers in need of services whether they’re elderly, impoverished or disabled. The Arc of Indiana, which advocates for disabled Hoosiers and their families, offers a

guide to the bevy of waivers FSSA offers, from community integration to traumatic brain injuries.

The Aged and Disabled Waiver, often shortened to A&D, serves Hoosiers over the age of 65 or people with substantial disabilities that would otherwise require care at a nursing facility with home- and community-based services. To qualify, one must have an income below \$2,349 a month (equal to 300% of Social Security Income) and be in need of direct assistance for certain daily tasks, like eating or bathing.

Services can include attendant care, home-delivered meals, transportation and more — depending on the individual.

According to Arc, FSSA currently has waiting lists for both the Family Supports Waiver and the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver. Individuals can track their application status with FSSA.

Still, the agency didn’t deny the possibility that some individuals may need to seek institutional care without access to the Aged and Disabled Waiver Service, though it encouraged Hoosiers to speak to their AAA to explore options.

“Your placement on the Aged and Disabled Waiver waiting list will be main-

tained while you are in a nursing facility,” the agency said.

Stakeholders have long acknowledged it is more expensive to care for someone in a nursing home than at home with supports.

Those on the waitlist who aren’t yet enrolled in Medicaid will still be able to apply. A rejection from Medicaid also doesn’t impact one’s spot on the waiting list. Hoosiers can be on multiple waiting lists but may only receive services from one waiver at a time.

In addition to AAAs, Hoosiers may reach out to local Aging and Disability Resource Centers through the INconnect Alliance. FSSA additionally has a resource list of several other programs Hoosiers can utilize while waiting.

Ties to the \$1B shortfall

Though FSSA says the waitlist is due to its maximum capacity under approval from the federal government, the January warning was part of a multi-pronged approach to mitigating a nearly \$1 billion “variance” from the December Medicaid forecast.

The agency said the package of moves could save roughly \$300 million over the two-year budget.

Much of the growth came from spending on the Aged

and Disabled Waiver, the agency said previously, specifically in attendant care services for parents of disabled children.

While the decision to curb the use of that program for families was met with outcry repeatedly during the legislative session, other changes haven’t attracted the same attention, including a pause on a 2% indexing — or increase — for certain Medicaid services, including dental. Due to the “interdependent” nature of the changes, FSSA has said it can’t break down costs by each category.

Arc, in an email broadcasting the waitlist to its stakeholders, vowed to continue its advocacy and assist Hoosiers in need of services.

“The Arc of Indiana will monitor the waiting list closely as we are always concerned when people are not getting the supports and services they need to live as independently as they can and wish to. We realize that the state needs to make some difficult financial decisions due to the December Medicaid Forecast, but we hope that Indiana will continue to prioritize home and community-based supports for our most vulnerable Hoosiers,” Kim Dodson, the organization’s CEO, said in a statement.

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WELLS COUNTY SCHOLARS DINNER



Freshmen

Back row, left to right: Joshua Aulbach, Heath Johnson, Sophie Eisenhut, Alexandria Koby, Michael Baker, Adam Mahnensmith and Isabella Swineford. Front row, left to right: Sophia Meeks, Elliott Brown, Addison Yates, Kylee Hannie, Bria Reinhard and Ashlyn Bertsch (Photos by Carrie Penrod)

Not pictured: Stella Butcher, Lillia Paxson and Haley Williamson.



Sophomores

Back row, left to right: Christian Werling, Hayden Alfeld, Aaron Jessup and Owen Lesh. Front row, left to right: Lexie Fiechter, Addison Gaskill, Samantha Evans, Aubrey Meyer, Libby Arnett and Alyssa Hartman.

Not pictured: K. Zane Borne, Emily Davis, Cohen Garrett, Campbell Sloan, Lora Smith and Braden Yencer.



Juniors

Back row, left to right: Hayden Joloff, Benjamin Maggard, Grant Reifsteck, Griffin Linderwell, Ryan Ewing, Owen King, Hannah Rusu and Karrigan Melcher. Front row, left to right: Elise Boomershine, Ali Mygrant, Amarah Robles, Avery Gaskill, Colby Winkler and Madison Mashuda.

Not pictured: Jasper Kreigh and Dominic Ramirez.



Seniors

Back row, left to right: Caleb Gerber, Zoey Schmidt, Jordyn Xayyachack, Perrin Gates, Clayton Straub, Isaiah San Juan and Jaden Payne. Front row, left to right: Emma Dodane, Case Boxell, Bree Ulfing, Lauren Mann, Lillian Norris, Riley Dettmer and Kabyn Peterson.

Not pictured: Grace Gerber and Evan Pennington.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:
Monday, 12:13 p.m., S.R. 201 and South 450 East, Bluffton. Office requested to assist with traffic control.

Monday, 12:33 p.m., East 100 North and North 100 East, Bluffton. Officer advised driver on side of roadway to move to a parking lot to view the eclipse for safety.

Monday, 1:37 p.m., S.R. 116 and North Meridian Road, Bluffton. Officer observed multiple vehicle parked along roadway, causing cars to cross the entire roadway to avoid hitting them. Officer located as many of the drivers as possible and told them of alternative parking.

Monday, 3:44 p.m., 6300 South 600 West, Warren. Woman reported a man was hitting her car with a shovel.

Monday, 7:16 p.m., West 100 South and South 400 West, Liberty Center. Report of animal manure all over the roadway.

Tuesday, 12:41 p.m., North 700 East and East 300 North, Craigville. Report of a rock that hit windshield and shattered it.

Tuesday, 4:05 p.m., West Washington and South Midway streets. Driver cited for driving with suspended license. Driver walked home.

Tuesday, 4:33 p.m., Silo Farms. Driver reported a man threatened her granddaughter.

Tuesday, 5:59 p.m., South 1100 West and West 900 South, Marion. Report of a semi driving in a no truck route area.

ACCIDENTS

County:
Tuesday, April 2, 6:33 a.m., I-69, Zanesville. A 2016 Freightliner Cascadia driven by Eric J. Cicotte, 53, Hale, Michigan, rear ended a 2013 GMC Yukon driven by Thomas D. Boris, 47, Fort Wayne. Cicotte advised the Yukon had slammed on its brakes suddenly and he was unable to avoid hitting the bumper; he also had dashcam footage of the accident. Boris initially claimed he had slowed because he saw a deer; however, when the deputy asked if that's what the dashcam footage would show, Boris said no. Boris' vehicle was towed from the scene. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.

Saturday, 4:25 a.m., CR 100W, Uniondale. Benjamin E. Frantz, 22, Decatur, struck a deer with his 2018 Chevrolet Malibu. The vehicle was towed from the scene. Damage did not exceed \$10,000.

FIRES

Saturday, 8:38 a.m., Ossian Elementary School. Fire alarm. Dust from construction triggered alarm.

ARRESTS

Maria De Los Angeles Aguilera, 39, Fort Wayne; operating a vehicle without ever receiving a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Rosanna Alane Wright, 36, Bluffton; perjury, a Level 6 felony, false reporting and unlawful use of 911, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$5,000. Bonded.

Robert Andrew Dasilva, 25, Bluffton; possession of stolen property, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Andrew Lee Culy, 18, Geneva; reckless driving, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Jordan Dwan Jackson, 27, Benton Harbour, Michigan; pickpocketing, valued more than \$750 and less than \$50,000, a Level 6 felony.

Jose Carlos Martinez-Tapia, 23, Fort Wayne; operating a vehicle without ever receiving a license, a Class C misdemeanor.

Dontrell Lamar Anderson, 46, Bluffton; probation violation and invasion of privacy, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond not set.

Ryan Michael Budde, 37, Bluffton; domestic battery, a Level 6 felony, intimidation with a deadly weapon, a Level 5 felony, and possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor. Bond not set.

Benjamin Tyler Haines, 36, New Haven; resisting law enforcement using a vehicle and possession of marijuana, both Level 6 felonies, and reckless driving and leaving the scene of a crash — property damage, both Class B misdemeanors. Bond set at \$12,000.

Randall Jay Foy, 58, Montpelier; possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor.

Johan Rafael Bracho Romero, 28, Bluffton; theft, a Class A misdemeanor.

Justin Michael Adams, 42, Bluffton; operating a vehicle while intoxicated — prior, a Level 6 felony, operating while intoxicated and operating with an ACE of .15 or more, both Class A misdemeanors. Bond set at \$5,000.

Javier Panzo Tlehuactle, 23, Indianapolis; operating without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor.

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements.

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge.

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

Thomas "Tom" E. Woodard

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The world has changed and so should high school

Indiana high school students today are experiencing high school in much the same way their peers did a century ago — despite decades of attempts by policymakers to move diploma requirements forward.

The high school experience has languished and become less rigorous despite major changes in our workforce, with a rise in jobs that require higher-level social and analytical skills and greater preparation. These skills can come through education, experience or other forms of training.

It's little surprise that when asked in a recent Gallup survey, nearly a third of Indiana parents of high school seniors said their child is still not prepared for their next step.

Our education policymakers are trying to solve this challenge with a high school redesign that will reshape how young adults experience the last years of their K12 educational journey and set them up for real success as they transition into college or the workforce.

The Indiana State Board of Education recently heard a proposal that breaks down the high school redesign into three focus areas: diploma requirements that are more relevant to what students need in the real world; access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities; and an increase in the completion of high-value postsecondary credentials in high school.

Our current diploma requirements were designed four decades ago for a workforce from another era. They are rigid and focused on course-based instruction instead of ensuring students are mastering concepts they need to succeed beyond graduation.

Those requirements must be more flexible, but this does not mean our high schools should lower their standards or make coursework less rigorous. We must keep expectations high while providing more opportunities for students to engage in purposeful learning that aligns with jobs that are available today and well into the future.

The two remaining components of the state's high school redesign are critical to that goal because they focus on bridging the gap between K12 and what comes after.

What do we do once a student has the foundational math, science, social studies and English they need in middle and early high school?

Traditionally, we've offered them more of the same — in the exact same classroom setting.

Under Indiana's new approach, a student's last two years of high school will look very different, focusing on high-quality work-based learning opportunities and credentials of value.

What do those terms mean?

Often, work-based learning only is associated with internships completed by high school juniors and seniors, and there is a common misconception that work-based learning opportunities only lead into manufacturing and skilled trades roles.

In reality, all students can benefit from high-quality work-based learning programs, which are implemented along a continuum of progressive experiences across K12 and postsecondary, allowing students to engage with employers and industries throughout a strategic career exploration and planning process.

Similarly, there's a difference between credentials and credentials of value. Indiana policymakers are focused on the latter, making sure students will be earning industry-recognized or postsecondary credentials that validate the knowledge and skills required for success in a specific occupation or industry.

Right now, only 53.3% of Hoosiers between the ages of 25 and 65 have a postsecondary credential or high-value industry certification beyond high school.

The best news: Indiana has case studies to build on as we look toward the future of high school.

A partnership between Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and global packaging leader Berry Global brings juniors and seniors on-site, culminating in a year-long, paid work-based learning program.

In Gibson County, a partnership between multiple school corporations and Toyota is exposing students to on-the-job training and hands-on learning in advanced manufacturing production during their junior and senior years. Seniors spend two hours a day, four days a week at the Toyota Manufacturing facility and are paid for their training hours.

This is no small task we are undertaking. Indiana is on track to be the first state in the nation to significantly redesign our high school diploma and experience. It will take time and collaboration to ensure Hoosiers — especially parents and students — understand why we need a new path forward.

Aligning our K12 system with in-demand jobs and postsecondary opportunities is an exciting prospect. This is our moment to lead as a state and show by example that we can work together to ensure success for our students for decades to come.

Hubbard serves on the ExceInEd Board of Directors. He is co-founder and chairman of E&A Companies. He has served on the boards of Hoosiers for Quality Education, The Indiana Commission on Higher Education and The Lumina Foundation.



Alan Hubbard

Hoosier Opinions



Trump gets it right on abortion

Donald Trump is under fire from some in the pro-life movement for his decision to oppose a federal abortion limit, declaring instead that abortion should be left to states. We "took [abortion] out of the federal hands and brought it into the hearts, minds and vote of the people in each state," Trump said Monday in a Truth Social video. "Now it's up to the states to do the right thing."

As a pro-life conservative, I get the disappointment. But Trump is right.

Let's start with the reason we can restrict abortion at all today: Trump is the only pro-life president in six decades with a perfect record in Supreme Court appointments. The decisive 6-to-3 conservative majority he created overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the seemingly impossible goal of the antiabortion movement for nearly half a century. As president, he defunded the U.N. Population Fund over its support for abortion in China, allowed states to withhold federal funds from Planned Parenthood, implemented the Protect Life Rule prohibiting Title X family-planning funds from going to clinics that perform abortions, and defended the religious liberty of the Little Sisters of the Poor. And Trump was the first president to speak in person at the annual March for Life. No president more openly embraced the pro-life movement, or delivered it more victories, than Donald Trump.

Second, he is being honest with pro-life voters: Passing a 15-week federal abortion ban is not possible in Congress anytime soon. That's because doing so requires 60 votes to overcome a Senate filibuster, and there is zero chance Republicans will win that kind of majority in the next four years. So campaigning on a federal abortion limit would be an empty promise to pro-life Americans — one that Trump would be powerless to fulfill.

That has not stopped Democrats from demagoguing the issue. President Biden has warned that "Trump will ban abortion nationwide." Biden served for decades in the Senate, so he knows that is a lie. By leaving abortion to the states, Trump takes this dishonest argument away from Democrats.

Indeed, by taking a federal abortion ban off the table, Trump is turning the tables and positioning Republicans to make clear that Democrats are the abortion extremists. The Democratic Party used to treat abortion as a necessary evil that should be "safe, legal and rare," but today it is something to be celebrated (as when Kamala D. Harris became the first vice president to visit an abortion clinic). The new Democratic consensus that taxpayer-funded abortion should be permitted up to the moment of birth is a position supported by less than one-third of Americans. Republicans can now go on offense on abortion and focus the debate on the Democrats' radical posi-

tion.

Finally, Trump is setting the pro-life movement up for victory in the long-term battle for hearts and minds. For decades, conservatives assured the American people that overturning *Roe* would not ban abortion but simply send the issue back to the states. Voters now see many of those same conservatives saying they want to federalize the issue after all. They understandably feel misled.

The pro-life movement needs to meet Americans where they are — not where we wish they were — on abortion. Polls show that most want to keep abortion legal. But 66 percent support placing limits on abortion, according to a Knights of Columbus-Marist poll in January. What should those limits be? The good news is that 58 percent support limiting abortions to the first three months of pregnancy or less. The bad news is that is down from 69 percent a year earlier. Support for restricting abortion has slipped as Americans have grown concerned about Republican overreach.

The best way to bring those numbers back up is keeping the debate in the states, our laboratories of democracy. When abortion is decided at the state level, far more Americans end up with the abortion policy they want. Red states will get stricter abortion policies, blue states will have the opposite, and voters in purple states will demand a middle ground. And even at the state level, the pro-life movement should focus on incremental change as it seeks to convince more Americans over time of the sanctity of unborn human life. If pro-lifers push too far too fast, they will end up electing more pro-abortion Democrats who will take our country in the opposite direction.

Indeed, if Democrats succeed in using the threat of a federal abortion ban to keep control of the Senate in November, then the pro-life cause could suffer an irreparable blow. With Sens. Joe Manchin III (D-W. Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.) both retiring, Democrats likely would finally have the votes to eliminate the legislative filibuster — allowing them to codify *Roe* with a simple majority if they flip the House and Biden is reelected. That would unleash chaos: From that point on, abortion policy would swing from one extreme to another depending on who controlled Congress and the presidency, with every election representing an existential threat to either side.

"At the end of the day, this is all about the will of the people," Trump correctly said. And the best way to persuade more people to support the cause of life is to leave abortion decisions where conservatives once promised they would be decided: in the states.

Follow Marc A. Thiessen @marcthiessen on X



Marc Thiessen

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones

Somewhere back in time the words of a song were forever implanted in this writer's brain. The origin had long been forgotten. Perhaps Lancaster Central High School Choir. Maybe it was a vinyl recording played over and over until the words were eternally brain-inscribed.

Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians recorded it on a 78 rpm exactly one score days short of a full year prior to this writer's birth. Grandma Wolf had a console player and many 78s that were joyfully played repeatedly. Also ingrained in memory from her platters was "Santa Got Stuck in the Chimney."

Research proved "Dem Bones" was a spiritual song inspired by Ezekiel 37:1-14 well before any Pennsylvanian sing-songed. And remember, Pennsylvania's brought us Punxsutawney Phil. Duh.

Holy scripture ended with, "And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

A resurrection of deer from bones could not be fathomed when a box 6x12x24" became filled to overflowing with dem dry bones.

Approximately a year ago three deer perished in a collision with a Norfolk Southern engine. Two of the deceased cast aside during the impact landed in Angelkeep territory. The News-Banner's Mark Miller was contacted at the time with the question as to appropriateness of the disaster being covered in an Angelkeep Journals' column. Was it too gruesome for print, newspapers

Angelkeep Journals

being a bit more discriminatory today than a century prior? As a result, it became front page News-Banner coverage. At the same time Norfolk Southern was struggling to contain an Ohio derailment that threatened an entire town.

So... Angelkeep labored at cleaning up the bones entangled in the grass after having been stripped by buzzards and flies and bleached by the sun. Dem bones, dem bones, dem thigh bones could destroy a lawn mower blade. The tune could not be erased during the harvesting of all of the bones scattered due to the buzzards pulling the carcasses to and from for days on end. Weeks!

Scrimshaw. The idea became as mentally attached as Dem Bones' tune and lyrics. Free scrimshaw lessons were found on U-Tube. Loss of life from 12 months past could become memorial pieces with images of Angelkeep roses, dragonflies, birds, a large mouth bass, a bygone snowflake, or even a pin oak leaf. Perhaps a Deam Oak leaf would be more historical.

Thigh bones could be cut, halved, and turned into pendants as a forever memory of all of the deer that found Angelkeep over the decades past. Key rings? Earrings? Dem bones dem boggle dem potentialities.

The two deer ricocheted eastward



Alan Daugherty

to Angelkeep's land proved to be male and female, one of each. That fact was not known at the time. It became apparent only when pulling the skulls from the tall dried grass that had grown around and through them over the past year.

One, a doe, had a smooth forehead. Fortunately these two deer were hit from the rear, still an instant death, but no damage done to the skulls. The second deer landing on Angelkeep's side of the railroad tracks had the start of inch-long tines on the brow just atop the two eye sockets.

Brow tines appeared first on young bucks. The full antlers came later, after the yearling had time to grow, thus saving it from the risk of the harvesting of hunters for a season or two.

It proved a huge surprise to realize how small some of the bones of a deer look without the muscle and hide attached. For instance the blade of the shoulder barely covered the palm of a hand. This would make a fine scrimshaw amulet. Tiny bones at the joint near a deer's hoof, discovered through research to be identified as "phalanges of lateral digit" were so small and light they could have been guessed to be molars. But deer's teeth are unlike human molars.

Scrimshawed with miniature black roses and adding jewelry wire would make a unique set of earrings. Sh-h-h-h, don't tell Gwen. This will be a huge surprise. Mother's day is just around the corner.

Dem bones, dem bones, dem scrimshawed bones, may they rest in "peace-s."

Mr. Daugherty is a Wells County resident who, along with his wife Gwen, enjoy their backyard and have named it "Angelkeep."

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, April 11, the 102nd day of 2024. There are 264 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

On this date: In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd outside the White House, saying, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." (It was the last public address Lincoln would deliver.)

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Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily represent the views of this newspaper.

WELLS COUNTY TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 2024 SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Pictured is the Bummies Staff. (Photo submitted by Sara Baumgartner)



Attending the eclipse party at the First Presbyterian Church in Bluffton were Mario and Patricia Cester from Turin, Italy, pictured at left. They were guests of Jim and Julie Nixon, formerly of Bluffton, pictured at right. (Photo submitted by Elizabeth Oakes)



Pictured left to right is Caven Brown and Ryker Brown. (Photo submitted by Katie Hinshaw)



Pictured left to right are Camdyn Gerber, Everly Daugherty, Delaney Gerber, Beckett Gerber, and Owen Keller watching the eclipse in Ossian. (Photo submitted by Brittany Gerber)

A Talk with Tego



T.J. is a two-year-old, Torbie female.



Marley is a litter of six Lab/Border Collie mixes.



Levi is an eight-month-old, Border Collie mix male.



Tego

Tego's Tips: Some dogs knead an object with their paws before falling asleep.

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.

LSM hosts 'An evening with Dr. Gary Chapman'

Loving Shepherd Ministries will be hosting "An Evening with Dr. Gary Chapman" on Tuesday, June 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the LSM Event Center at 1935 North Main St. in Bluffton.

Chapman is the author of more than 50 books, including "The 5 Love Languages," that sold more than a million copies and is on the New York Times best seller list. He has been a family counselor for more than

40 years and recently retired after being a senior associate for 50 years.

His talk here will be about how to strengthen families and vulnerable children through the Gospel. A freewill offering will be taken to further LSM's impact around the world.

Tickets are now available for purchase at \$50 per individual (\$350 for table for 8) by calling 260-824-9000.

Parks Department Earth Day 5K registration

Registration is open for the Bluffton Parks Department's annual Earth Day 5K. Join Bluffton Parks & Recreation for our minimal footprint 5K to celebrate Earth Day.

Saturday, April 20th at 9 a.m. at the Bluffton City Gym.

The race is designed with a minimal footprint which includes no new shirts, bibs, or plastic. Previously unused event shirts and

bibs are being recycled in addition to live plants and trees for awards and prizes.

Cost is \$10 and includes event registration, all the free past event t-shirts and swag you can hold, and overall and age group awards. Runners and Walkers are welcome.

Sign up now at <https://raceroster.com/events/2024/86614/earth-day-5k>.

For more information visit blufftonindiana.net.

FWMA features Dellosso retrospective

Work by the artist Gabriela Gonzalez Dellosso will be featured at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art from April 20 through July 14.

The retrospective, the first for the artist, will feature over 60 works from every stage

of her 30-year career.

On Friday, April 19, the Mastranglo Lecture Series will feature artist Dellosso. Admission is \$20 for non museum members (\$8 for students with ID.) RSVP to 260-422-6467.

Community Harvest Farm Wagon

The Community Harvest Farm Wagon visits Life Community Church every Tuesday at 9 a.m. to give fresh food to needy families. The church address is 428 S. Oak St. in Bluffton. Enter the parking lot at the south entrance off of Oak Street.

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Creative Arts Council of Wells County honored as the Chamber April Member of the Month

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce staff and Ambassadors are thrilled to announce Janiece Lipsey, Executive Director of the Creative Arts Council of Wells County, as the April Member of the Month. The Creative Arts Council of Wells County, located at 428 S Oak Street in Bluffton, is being honored for its outstanding contributions to the community.

Established in 1974, the Creative Arts Council of Wells County is set to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. The council's journey began when local doctors and executives from Franklin Electric sought to enrich Wells County with arts and culture, sparing residents the need to travel to Fort Wayne. Initially, the council started with an art gallery and simple music concerts featuring ensembles like string quartets and the Philharmonic.

In 1976, Beth Lampton introduced the ballet program, expanding the council's artistic offerings. From humble beginnings with small ballet classes, the council's arts initiatives blossomed. In 2011, a partnership with the community theater further enhanced the council's offerings. Despite relocating programs to the Arts, Commerce & Visitors Centre on Water Street in 2004, the council outgrew its space due to exponential growth. Consequently, in 2022, the council moved to Life Community Church on Oak Street to accommodate expanding dance and music programs.

Janiece Lipsey, Executive Director since

2019, has been an integral part of the council's evolution. Lipsey's tenure began during her college years at Huntington University, where she began teaching programs and eventually assumed office duties. Upon receiving her graduate degree, Lipsey became Executive Director, steering the council's growth trajectory. Under her leadership, the council introduced new programs such as the Children's Choir and expanded theater productions.

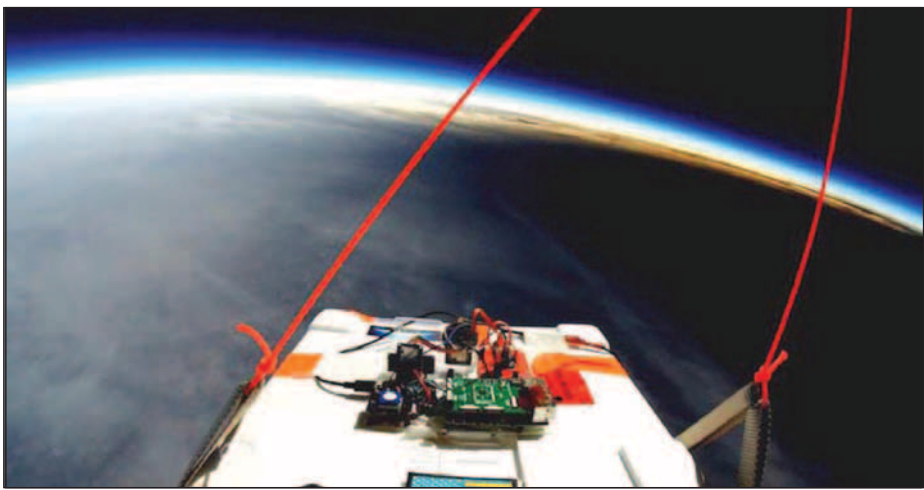
Today, the Creative Arts Council of Wells County offers diverse dance programs, including modern, tap, and conditioning, alongside classical ballet. With programs offered in spring, summer, and fall, individuals of all ages have the opportunity to participate in classes or performances. Notably, the council held a school matinee performance of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," providing local middle school students with a unique arts experience.

Looking ahead, the council aims for continued growth, seeking to expand programming and increase community involvement. With aspirations for a performing arts center featuring an auditorium, black box theater, and rehearsal spaces, the council envisions a hub of artistic opportunities accessible to all Wells County residents.

To learn more about the Creative Arts Council of Wells County and its programs, visit wellscocreativearts.com, follow them on Facebook, or contact them at (260) 824-5222.



Pictured in the photo from left are Ben Rekenberger of United Way of Wells County, Hattie Wondercheck of the Wells County Chamber of Commerce, Kevin Sills of Farm Bureau Insurance, Rachel Reinhard of the Wells County Chamber of Commerce, Doug Brown of The News-Banner, Alyssa Brown of Archbold & Lewis, Elizabeth Seder of Creative Arts of Wells County, Kevin Pritchard of Ruoff Mortgage, Mike Downey, Janiece Lipsey and Ted Smith of Creative Arts of Wells County, Nick Huffman of Steffen Group, Tammy Ray of Creative Arts of Wells County, Erica Lehman of Lehman Appraisals, Erin Daugherty of State Farm Insurance, Casey Robbins of F&M Bank and Wells County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Erin Prible. (Photo submitted)



Edge of totality

The image above was captured by the weather balloon launched from Bluffton High School during the solar eclipse Monday. The balloon followed and photographed the shadow cast on the Earth by the eclipse. (Photo provided)

WELLS COUNTY TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 2024



Colleen and Paul Henry (back row, far left and center) and their daughter Aubrey (at right, front row) traveled all the way from Las Vegas to view the eclipse. They flew into Fort Wayne and stayed with Colleen's brother, Kevin Bolger (back row at right) and his wife Colleen (front left), and then drove down to Bluffton to attend the watch party at the YMCA. Colleen also made the t-shirts for the group. This is the third solar eclipse the Henry couple has witnessed. Also with them is the Bolgers' granddaughter, Gabby (front center) who just recently earned a first prize award at her elementary school's science fair. Her subject: the eclipse. (Photo by Mark Miller)



Pictured is Broderick Esparza at Archbold-Wilson Park in Ossian. (Photo submitted by Jay Esparza)



Eye safety required all paws on deck for the solar eclipse. (Photo submitted by Megan Smith)

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