

# The News - Banner

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BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection

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## Fire territory, district discussion draws disdain

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
An informational meeting about the potential consolidation of fire services was met with a pointed stance against the matter by a group of firefighters, residents and elected officials Thursday night. The overarching sentiment of the group was that the county shouldn't meddle in townships' fire coverage.

The Wells County Council President Seth Whicker announced the information meeting during the council's meeting last month. On Thursday, he and Commissioner President Jeff Stringer said they had wanted to provide the opportunity to learn and discuss consolidation with the fire departments, township trustees and boards, and concerned residents. Paige Sanson and Susan Cowen

from Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors presented the basic information about fire territories and fire districts, which are methods to consolidate the finances and tax revenue of fire departments. Territories and districts vary in how they can be created, their function and potential dissolution, but ultimately both create an avenue to increase taxes to support fire departments and EMS services.

According to Sanson and Cowen, neither territories nor districts require changes in the staff, equipment, or structure of a fire department — they only affect the funding. "It's an increase in taxes, let's not lie about it," Commissioner President Jeff Stringer summarized. "It's an increase in taxes." A group expressed they were under the impression that the

county was moving forward with this consolidation — with or without each township's permission. Multiple individuals alleged this consolidation would lead to the closure of departments or a shift away from volunteer fire departments. Both claims were refuted by Whicker and Stringer, who explained they merely wanted to (Continued on Page 2)

## Turning pages, tassels

Wheeler prepares for next chapter after graduation

**By SYDNEY KENT**  
"Candy kisses and peppermints"  
"BHEs announces Grade 4 honor roll"  
"2017 Wells Community Swim Team"



Ella Wheeler (pictured) as she poses for her senior photos. (Photo provided)

"4 named ambassadors"  
"Knights defeat Tigers in girls' tennis opener"  
"Wheeler wins top honor at art show"  
"The E.L.L.A Project"  
Ella Wheeler has been making headlines in Wells County since her first dance recital at three years old. As she prepares to say goodbye to the community that has helped shape her, she said she is treasuring every moment.

One of the bigger moments is quickly approaching — graduation. She erupted into laughter thinking about the event slated for Friday night. "Oh my gosh," Wheeler said, her eyes wide. "I just want to keep soaking in the smaller moments while I can." Another big moment Wheeler is looking forward to is the Wells County 4-H Fair, which takes place every year in July. Wheeler has been a very active 10-year member of the 4-H. Throughout her time, she has participated in showing many animals, entomology, arts and crafts, photography, sewing, fashion, beekeeping, archery, and much more. She has consistently won impressive awards in all areas of her work. "I'm so excited for it," Wheeler said. "I



Ella Wheeler stands for recognition of her Lilly Endowment scholarship during Wednesday's senior awards ceremony. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

know it's going to be the last year. I just don't think it's going to hit me until after that week comes. Like, 'Oh, it's really over.'" Though it may be ending for this dedicated member, much of her time spent in 4-H has built a solid foundation for Wheeler's future career goals. She hopes to become a

veterinarian who specializes in the care of farm animals. Wheeler intends to attend the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine as a secondary degree following her undergraduate degree from Butler University. Wheeler has won awards at the Tri (Continued on Page 2)



**Time for summer**  
Bluffton-Harrison Elementary School sent off students for the summer with hugs, cheers and laughter Thursday afternoon. Above, teacher Stacy Lehman walks out with her sons, Hunter (left) and Colson (right). At right, staff waves goodbye to kids as the school buses pull away. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

## Wells County to pass local ordinance on contracts

**By HOLLY GASKILL**  
In light of House Enrolled Act 1158, the Wells County Commissioners have decided to draft a local ordinance regarding contracts with and approved by county officials. The act, authored by State Rep. Matt Lehman, allows counties to add stipulations for contracts with county officials, like that provision that any potential litigation must occur within the county. It also permits county commissioners oversight on contracts signed by county officials. On Monday, the County Commissioners instructed County Attorney Ted Storer to begin drafting an ordinance for the county, which would be effective with the act on

July 1. Sheriff Scott Holliday had first discussed the act with the board during its May 6 meeting, saying that contracts without costs to the county did not have to be under the purview of the commissioners. Storer disagreed at the time, but revised his statements Monday — "The sheriff's comments from last meeting and today's are all very astute," he clarified. During his regular report, Holliday advised 82 inmates were in the Wells County Jail on Monday — 44 were pre-trial holds for the Circuit Court, 24 for the Superior Court, 10 from the Department of Correction and one Level 6 felon. holly@news-banner.com

## Medicaid meeting considers program concerns, progress

**By WHITNEY DOWNARD**  
**Indiana Capital Chronicle**  
A handful of lawmakers on Wednesday questioned the state's administration of Medicaid plans that will undergo a transformational change this summer, with topics ranging from a program waitlist, elder care and services for families with disabled children. The Family and Social Services Administration, which oversees Medicaid, hosted a meeting highlighting the near-completion of the Medicaid unwinding process along with the switch to managed care for aging beneficiaries — moves impacting hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers.

The unwinding process encompasses the way in which the state redetermined Medicaid eligibility for 2.2 million enrollees after federal protections protecting members expired in early 2023. The yearlong review culled at least 241,000 Hoosiers from the rolls. And while Sen. Shelli Yoder had high praise for the state's handling of the unwinding of COVID-19 Medicaid protections, she had sharper criticism for other actions. "We can see the amount of effort that it has taken to get it right in the unwinding but we do not take that same care with our fami- (Continued on Page 2)

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**Outside**  
  
Sunny and warm again today, showers tonight  

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 84	High 79	High 79
Low 64	Low 55	Low 62

  
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# Fire territory

(Continued from Page 1)

discuss options as some fire departments have encountered issues with staffing and funding. However, they recognized they may have not communicated well with every party about the purpose of the meeting.

Sanson also stressed that a township cannot be forced into a contract for a district or territory, nor is it common for a countywide district or

territory.

While there was some disagreement on whether or not the fire departments needed the assistance, Whicker stressed that Wells County EMS has been at a deficit for many years. Whicker reported that the fund that supports EMS operations, established through the sale of the Wells County Hospital, has roughly four to five before it com-

pletely dwindles.

Given the resistance to consolidation from the fire departments, it was suggested that the county could establish a district or territory only for EMS services. However, Sanson said the Indiana Code currently requires a fire department to be in a district or territory.

Moving forward, Stringer said he wanted to investigate

all of the county's options to fund emergency services. He and Whicker also tasked the audience with continued involvement in discussions.

"I'm not sure what the solution is — I'm not even sure what the problem is yet," Stringer said. "That's why we wanted to hold this meeting ... But collectively, we've got to get on the same page."

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# Weather

Friday, May 24, 2024

(24-hour observations at 9:38 p.m. Thursday)  
**High:** 84; **Low:** 55; **Precipitation:** None  
**Wabash River Level** (at the Main Street bridge): 1.92 feet at 8:45 p.m. Thursday

## Wells County forecast

**Today:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 84. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

**Tonight:** Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 64. South wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

**Saturday:** A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 2 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 79. West wind around 10 mph.

**Saturday Night:** A 10% chance of showers before 8 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 55. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

**Sunday:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 2 p.m., then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., then showers and thunderstorms likely after 5 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 79. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

**Sunday Night:** Showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 2 a.m. Low around 62. Chance of precipitation is 80%.

**Memorial Day:** A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 74. Breezy.

**Monday Night:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

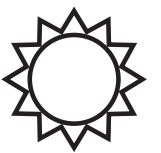
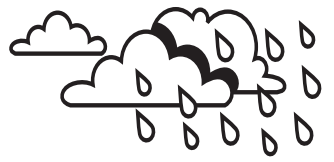
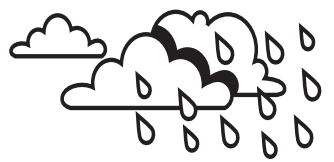
**Tuesday:** A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 71. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

**Tuesday Night:** A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 51.

**Wednesday:** A 20% chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 68.

**Wednesday Night:** A slight chance of showers. Mostly clear, with a low around 48.

**Thursday:** Sunny, with a high near 74.



# Turning pages, tassels

(Continued from Page 1)

Kappa Art Show, played multiple sports and managed junior varsity and varsity boys' basketball teams, and participated in Youth As Resources, Campus Life, Students for Christ, and the Beekeepers Association of Indiana — to name a few. Though she has been a part of many organizations and causes, Wheeler has had the longest tenure in dance.

She first began to practice the art at three years old. She has participated in the Creative Arts Council School of Ballet ever since, earning numerous awards. Wheeler accredits the art form for her level of poise and discipline — and great posture.

It was during a break at a recent dance performance Wheeler received a letter she said moved her to tears.

"We got the letter the day of my Nutcracker performance," Wheeler recalled. "I had two shows that day — did you get the letter before the first one?" Wheeler paused to clarify with her mom, Abbey Wheeler. Abbey smiled and nodded her head to confirm.

"So, she opened up the letter because she saw it was from the foundation," Wheeler continued. "So they knew before me."

Wheeler recounted the details as she said hello to her family and friends during the break. Her dad handed her

a card that said, "We are so proud of you. And I have something else for you."

"He hands me this letter," Wheeler paused. "I opened it up after I saw the Wells County Foundation seal on it. My eyes got huge, and I just — I closed it. Then I looked back and started reading it."

Abbey Wheeler described the look of realization on her daughter's face as she realized she was not simply a finalist, but the winner.

"Oh, I lost it," Ella Wheeler laughed. "Then everyone lost it."

With the Lilly Endowment Scholarship, Wheeler will receive full tuition to any eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit college or university and up to a \$900 per year stipend for required books and equipment.

Wheeler said the accumulation of the things she has dedicated her time, talent, and heart to have prepared her well for this next chapter.

"Each thing I have been a part of has definitely taught me something," Wheeler explained. "They are things I will bring with me throughout my entire life. With dance, there is a lot of dedication, structure, discipline, and confidence. 4-H is definitely a lot of hard work. It taught me to get up early in the morning to get my work done and to see how my hard work has paid off. It's a common

thread."

"It really is hard work," Abbey Wheeler affirmed. "All of it is a lot of really hard work, and you get to see the results."

"Before the results, it's kind of hard — with ballet especially," Wheeler explained. "You go months and months and months preparing for things. It's not that it gets stagnant, but it's hard to do the same things over and over. But then it comes to exams and performances, and you see how you've improved. It's sort of like, 'Oh — that's why I did these things. It has transferred in all parts of my life.'"

Wheeler laughed as she joked about her two younger brothers, nearly taller than her already, taking over her bedroom when she moves to college. Though she will dearly miss their antics, she is excited to plan her new space and join her friends as they venture on similar journeys.

Her parents, James and Abbey Wheeler, have a few final words for their not-so-little girl on the day before her high school graduation: "I think our advice is to keep being true to yourself and continue to lean on the Lord's wisdom. We love you and are so proud of the outstanding young woman of God you are becoming."

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# Medicaid meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

lies and people with long-term disabilities in Indiana when we made the decision to change the (Aged and Disabled) waiver," said the Bloomington Democrat. "So many families ... they don't know what's going on. They haven't had clear communication. And I think it's just strictly because you're moving too fast."

FSSA changes to attendant care under the Aged and Disabled waiver curbed state payments to parents with severely disabled children, who were getting paid a living wage to provide unskilled care at home. However, after program costs ballooned, the agency abruptly halted the program earlier this year and families will transition to a lower-paying system in the coming weeks — pending an ongoing lawsuit.

Yoder, along with Indianapolis Democrat Sen. Fady Qaddoura, West Lafayette Democrat Rep. Chris Campbell and New Albany Republican Rep. Ed Clere, pointedly asked the state agency to account for several perceived shortcomings.

## Aged and Disabled waitlist

Medicaid Director Cora Steinmetz juggled several concerns from the lawmakers, all of whom are members of the Medicaid Advisory Committee.

The April implementation of a waitlist for certain services for aged and disabled Hoosiers caused concern for Qaddoura, the state senator from Indianapolis. The state maintains just over 50,500 waiver slots and anticipates expanding to 55,000 in the 2025 fiscal year, which starts on July 1.

"No one was receiving services on the A&D waiver and then added to a waitlist. The waitlist is for new entrants," Steinmetz said, noting that several eligibility factors determined one's waitlist placement. "... we will be transparent as we move forward with that ... once we have some clarity around the number of individuals."

Steinmetz didn't give Qaddoura, who is a former FSSA employee, a firm figure on the number of people on the waitlist, citing the complicating eligibility factors.

Qaddoura shared the story of a constituent who "spent down" their assets in order to qualify for Medicaid, which covers long-term services

like nursing homes and home health aids while Medicare does not. Medicaid is a government health coverage program for the poor while Medicare is designed to serve the elderly — though many senior Hoosiers rely on both programs to meet their health care needs.

Even after spending their assets, this person was placed on the waitlist even though they don't have the financial footing to pay for long-term care themselves, Qaddoura said.

"These individuals are now being put in a very difficult position," he said, describing someone trying to plan for their long-term health care needs. "There are real life implications for citizens and providers."

## Managed Care and AAAs

On top of the waitlist concerns, the state is transitioning its current long-term supports and services offerings to managed care, meaning it'll pay Managed Care Entities (MCEs) a flat rate to cover member health benefits rather than individually paying for claims.

Steinmetz and others insist the PathWays for Aging program will roll out on July 1, as planned, after contracting with some individual Area Agencies on Aging as service coordinators.

AAAs protested the agency-suggested rate for service coordination, which at \$112 was 41% lower than current rates for different but overlapping duties, but MCEs stuck by the proposal.

Qualifying members had until May 1 to make a deci-

sion about which managed care plan they'd like to join. Those who failed to make a decision were auto-enrolled but can change their plans within 90 days of starting coverage. Members can change their plans at any time for just cause, such as poor quality of care or if they encounter significant barriers.

Roughly half of the state's 16 AAAs, longtime senior care organizations that perform case management for FSSA, opted to negotiate with the MCEs, which includes insurance giants like Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Humana Health Horizons in Indiana and United Healthcare Community Plan.

Clere, an advocate for AAAs who has repeatedly expressed his concerns about MCEs, said he didn't see how the system could be ready for a July launch with so few AAAs serving as service coordinators — a vital component of the managed care rollout.

Steinmetz and others seemed to be more confident.

"Although the contractual negotiations are still ongoing ... we've made it clear that since the (joint AAA negotiating organization) opted not to participate in the network, that ... (MCEs) must make a good faith effort to contract individually with as many AAAs as possible," she said, noting that MCEs could also employ some internal service coordinators. "... we are monitoring very, very closely their staff levels, their hiring levels for service

coordinators."

Clere also said he'd heard that Anthem, in particular, was requiring AAAs sign expansive non-disclosure agreements — something he felt shouldn't be allowed.

"It flies in the face of transparency," Clere said. "If an NDA is allowed, it will leave the AAA that agrees to an NDA isolated and helpless and unable to talk with peers or stakeholders about their experience or problems."

FSSA leaders indicated that NDAs might be to protect "proprietary information," to which Clere said NDAs would then need to be narrowed.

"A broad NDA only benefits the MCE at the expense of — not only the AAA, but consumers the AAA is serving," Clere concluded.

In response to questions from Rep. Campbell, Steinmetz reassured committee members that any NDA would not impact the state's claims processing review and auditing.

"That's Medicaid data and that is our data," Steinmetz said, acknowledging that Wednesday's meeting was the first time she'd heard about potential NDAs. "We're going to take that back and do some more investigation and talk with our Anthem colleagues to get a better understanding of that."

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OBITUARIES

James L. Roberts, 89

James L. Roberts, 89, of Bluffton, passed away on Thursday morning, May 23, 2024, at Markle Health & Rehab Center.

Jim was born on May 6, 1935 in Wells County to Joe and Bernice (Jackson) Roberts. He was a lifelong resident of Wells County and attended Bluffton High School. He was a custodian at Bluffton Elementary School for 24 years, retiring in 1997. He was a member of Epworth United Methodist Church.

On April 20, 1957, Jim and Edruan Porter were married in Liberty Center. They shared 60 years of marriage before her passing in 2017.

Jim is survived by two sons, Jerome Roberts of Markle and Mark (Shellie Coons) Roberts of Albany, Ind., and a grandson Rhett Roberts.



Jim is preceded in death by his parents Joe and Bernice, his wife Edruan, and a brother Richard Roberts.

A service to celebrate Jim's life will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at the Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Tony Garton will officiate.

Calling hours will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., prior to the service on Tuesday at the funeral home. Burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery in Bluffton.

Memorials may be made to Epworth United Methodist Church or Bi-County Services.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends can send online condolences to the family at www.thomarich.com.

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

**County:**  
Wednesday, 4:02 p.m., 3600 East Market Street, Petroleum. Welfare check requested for diabetic subject.

Wednesday, 8:12 p.m., 2500W 300S, Liberty Center. Report of a motorcycle parked improperly.

Wednesday, 8:27 p.m., 4400W 900S, Poneto. Caller reported white car driving slowly by cemetery. Unable to locate, possibly a ghost car.

Wednesday, 10:31 p.m., North 450E and East 500N, Craigville. Caller reported dog yelping near the area, could not see a dog. No dog found.

Thursday, 12:57 a.m.,

7600S 1000W, Warren. Report of a vehicle slide off.

Thursday, 4:37 a.m., 9700N 200W, Markle. Report of suspicious man looking in windows. No one found.

Thursday, 7:42 a.m., 100E 100S, Bluffton. Deputy requested to stand by for property exchange.

Thursday, 8:07 a.m., 3800N 100E, Bluffton. Caller reported someone stole their truck

**Ossian:**  
Thursday, 6:47 a.m., S.R. 1 and East 1200N, Ossian. Report of a vehicle that drove off the roadway with a passed out driver. After it was determined the accident was in Allen County officer

responded to different emergency call.

ARRESTS

Jeremy Joe Turner, 50, Bluffton; provide false information on drivers license application, a Class A misdemeanor.

Chelsea Kay Patton, 34, Bluffton; contempt of court — civil.

Marline Denisse Hernandez, 19, Bluffton; possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor, and operating without ever receiving a license, a Class C misdemeanor.

Shane Allen Kieler, 35, Bluffton; theft — vehicle, a Level 6 felony, and operating a vehicle while intoxicated, a Class C misdemeanor. Bond set at \$5,500.



Mark Stover and Ken Dearing of Perma-Column are pictured with their employees and Chamber ambassadors at the ribbon cutting. (Photo submitted)

Chamber celebrates expansion of Perma-Column LLC in Ossian

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the expansion of Perma-Column LLC in Ossian. The Chamber staff and ambassadors joined Perma-Column in celebrating this milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at their facility located at 400 Carol Ann Lane, Ossian, IN, 46777.

Mark Stover, president of Perma-Column LLC, shared the inspiring journey of the company, which began in 2003. "Bob Meyer, a pole barn builder, sought an innovative solution to prevent wood posts from rotting in the ground. He developed and patented the original Perma-Column, a five-foot precast concrete column reinforced with rebar and topped with a U-bracket. This design ensures that wooden posts stay above ground level, protecting them from water-related decay," explained Stover.

In 2017, Morton Buildings, a leading company in the post-frame construction industry, acquired Perma-Column. This acquisition was a significant step as Morton committed to using precast concrete foundations for all its buildings, revolutionizing the industry by eliminating the use of wood in the ground.

John Russell, then CEO of Morton Buildings, reached out to Stover, who had a history of successful collaboration with him, to lead Perma-Column. Stover, alongside Ken Dearing, director of operations, and key employees, focused on elevating the industry by producing high-quality products and achieving ICC certification. This third-party certification confirmed the superior quality of Perma-Column products, building trust with distributors and customers alike.

Reflecting on the company's growth, Stover added, "There was this core group of eight to ten people. Office lights would go

on at 7:30 in the morning and turn off at 4 p.m. in the afternoon, running the paint line maybe once or twice a week. Today, we have almost 50 employees." Perma-Column's growth, highlighted by a new break room and a 20,000-square-foot warehouse, underscores the strong market demand for their products. The acquisition of adjacent property further supports future expansion and ongoing investments in advanced equipment and the employee development sector.

Stover also emphasized the unique culture at Perma-Column as an employee-owned company. "Every dollar we make is ours. It comes to us through stock, profit sharing, pay-for-learning programs, and investments in new technologies and facilities. Our low turnover rate and the dedication of our team highlight that we are a great place to work. We care about our employees and prioritize safety. The rewards are significant for those who show up, work hard, care for others, and do it safely."

As an employee-owned company, Perma-Column emphasizes creating a thriving work environment and maintaining its commitment to innovation and excellence. "We are excited about the future and the continuous growth of Perma-Column," said Stover. "Our vision is to build better, build stronger, and build to last. With the new property, we are well-positioned for future expansion and to remain leaders in the industry."

The Wells County Chamber of Commerce congratulates Perma-Column on its success and expansion, which signifies economic growth and job creation for the community. The ribbon-cutting ceremony marks not just the physical growth of Perma-Column, but also their commitment to excellence and innovation in the construction industry.

Indiana tax changes drive General Fund expectation miss

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Tax revenue to Indiana's General Fund tumbled more than 12% below projections last month, according to the latest state revenue report.

The fund took in about \$2.7 billion during April, or \$393 million less than expected in a December state revenue forecast.

But the fund is still keeping pace year-to-date, with collections \$23 million or 0.1% greater than forecasted.

A decline in individual income tax collections contributed to the monthly miss. The state received \$1.5 billion instead of \$1.8 billion, falling \$300 million — or 17% — short of predictions.

In commentary, the State Budget Agency noted that taxpayers have for the last year been adjusting to 2023 legal changes, resulting in "unusual payment timing."

"Various timing factors impact this month's withholdings and other individual income tax collections. The below-mentioned performance in withholdings and other individual income tax collections should be interpreted within the perspective

of total individual income tax collections and within the fiscal year-to-date trend," the agency wrote. "These factors are projected to fully normalize over the coming months and month-to-month variations may still occur."

The state is still \$87 million, or 1%, ahead of individual income tax projections year-to-date.

Lower corporate tax collections also played a role. The state took in about \$201 million, or about 33%, less than anticipated.

"Differences relative to monthly estimates are likely as various factors may impact monthly revenue activity including payment and refund timing, late payments, and more," the agency wrote. "Corporate tax collections should be interpreted within the fiscal year-to-date trend."

But year-to-date, they're still down nearly 12% from expectations.

April is a key month for both individual income and corporate taxes because it's one of four quarterly deadline months. Year-over-year comparisons in both are complicated by a variety of legal changes, per the agency.

Wells County Briefs

Library sees jump in winter reading participation

Participation in the Winter Reading Program at the Wells County Public Library increased by 34%, reported board member John Stauffer.

Clocking in at 818,255 pages read total, this also superseded the library's goal of 500,000 pages read for the winter. Stauffer and Matt Yergler, who serve as the commissioners' appointees to the board, provided this information in a quarterly update of library activities on Monday.

The library is now preparing for its Summer Reading Program, which will begin May 28 and finish July 31. Stauffer said adults and teens need to read just 500 pages to participate in prizes. The grand prize for adults is a pizza-of-the-month gift card from Pizza Hut and \$200 in Chamber Bucks; the grand prize for teens is a \$100 gift card.

The children's summer reading program counts in minutes, which vary by age group to earn prizes. The Jim Barron Magic Show will kick off summer reading from 4-6 p.m. on June 4.

Stauffer also reported that 330 people

participated in the Friends of the Library mini-golf fundraiser, which raised \$3,000 for program costs.

HazMay Day is June 15

The Solid Waste District board will host county-wide HazMay Day from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 15, at Bluffton-Harrison Middle School. Collected hazardous materials include household items like old gasoline and pesticides, pharmaceuticals, appliances and electronics.

Up to four tires, truck or standard, can also be disposed of for free. Twelve additional standard tires cost \$2 each, and a limit of six truck tires for \$5 each. Tractor tire disposal costs \$75 each. Tires on rims are accepted but cost an additional \$1. Standard television disposal will cost \$20; large or console televisions will cost \$25.

During the district's board meeting Monday, Auditor Lisa McCormick reported 8,250 lbs. of paper were collected during the county's Shred Day — up from roughly 6,000 lbs. last year despite being held for one hour less time.

— Compiled by Holly Gaskill

Indiana lottery expected to send \$370 million surplus to state

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ  
Indiana Capital Chronicle

The Hoosier Lottery projects it'll send more than \$368 million in surplus revenue to the state of Indiana, an increase from last year, according to presentations given at a Wednesday meeting.

That's 10%, or \$32 million, more than the lottery originally budgeted to deliver.

"(Fiscal year) 2024 was another outstanding year in performance and operation. It showed us that we remain healthy and that the Hoosier Lottery continues to be well positioned for success," said Donald Redic, who spoke on behalf of the lottery's contract operator, IGT Indiana. The company handles product development, marketing, sales and distribution services.

The lottery expects to have earned an eye-popping \$1.7 billion in revenue by July, which marks the end of its fiscal year. It'll have paid out \$1.1 billion in prize expenses by then, according to the preliminary and unaudited data.

And, because the lottery surpassed its financial goals, it's expected to pay IGT Indiana an incentive payment of \$20 million. If it had come up short, the performance-based contract would've required the operator to hand over a shortfall payment.

"Our commitment remains the same: to maximize revenue for the state of Indiana in a socially responsible manner," Redic said. He is IGT Indiana's chief operating officer and general manager.

In its business plan for the upcoming fis-

cal year, IGT Indiana pitched a \$1.692 billion sales goal, slightly lower than 2024's \$1.697 billion goal.

"Over the past six years, we have experienced 36% growth. We recognize the challenge to the industry that the industry is facing to sustain this growth," Redic said. "But our focus remains on continuous optimization across the entire portfolio."

That included a 1% increase in the revenue goal for scratch-offs, the lottery's largest revenue source. But sales have flattened.

"We have seen a more national change with scratch sales — softening a little bit — but we usually bounce back pretty quickly," the lottery's Executive Director Sarah Taylor told reporters. "So we hope to have that happen, and that's why we're planning the way we are for this coming fiscal year."

She and Redic said the lottery would add more higher-priced games to reflect player preferences, keep using licensed properties consumers know and love in games and continue exploring special printing with neon colors, foils and more.

To avoid paying the lottery a shortfall in the next fiscal year, IGT Indiana must ensure the lottery nets at least \$322 million for the state. To earn a bonus, the lottery must net at least \$342 million.

Surplus money returned to the state goes toward retirement and pension funds for police, firefighters and teachers, as well as to lower the motor vehicle excise tax by as much as 50%.

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## Other Opinions

### Can a state stop abortion travel?

Two years after the Supreme Court reversed *Roe v. Wade*, some states have moved to limit abortions while others become sanctuaries. The figures tell the story: In 2023, according to the Guttmacher Institute, patients traveling across state lines accounted for 41% of abortions in Illinois, 69% in Kansas, and 71% in New Mexico. Each of those states borders tighter jurisdictions.

The political fallout still isn't clear, but a legal question now percolating is whether restrictive states can make it a crime to help a woman obtain an abortion elsewhere. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall has argued yes, but the answer from a federal court last week is no. "The Attorney General cannot constitutionally prosecute people for acts taken within the State meant to facilitate lawful out of state conduct, including obtaining an abortion," writes Judge Myron Thompson.

Alabama has a law punishing any "conspiracy formed in this state to do an act beyond the state, which, if done in this state, would be a criminal offense." The state was sued by the nonprofit Yellowhammer Fund, the Alabama Women's Center and other plaintiffs. Collectively, the judge says, they "receive as many as 95 weekly inquiries from clients about the availability of out-of-state abortions." Before responding, they want a declaratory judgment that they can't be prosecuted.

In a motion to dismiss, Mr. Marshall argued Alabama's law "does not forbid a woman from leaving the state to obtain an abortion," but instead merely "regulates certain assistance," and in any case it's "supported by strong, legitimate interests including preserving unborn life." So far Judge Thompson has merely denied the motion to dismiss, although in a way that suggests his view of the law and the Constitution.

The core of his ruling is on the right to travel. The judge says it goes back at least to the Magna Carta in 1215, which promised "all merchants may enter or leave England unharmed and without fear."

After U.S. independence, the Articles of Confederation guaranteed citizens "free ingress and regress to and from any other State," with "all the privileges of trade and commerce." This was the backdrop for the Constitution, which entitles Americans today "to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States."

Justice Brett Kavanaugh went a similar route in a concurrence to *Dobbs*, the ruling overturning *Roe*. "As I see it," he said, "some of the other abortion-related legal questions raised by today's decision are not especially difficult as a constitutional matter. For example, may a State bar a resident of that State from traveling to another State to obtain an abortion? In my view, the answer is no based on the constitutional right to interstate travel."

Judge Thompson's small extension is to say that if a state can't directly stop women from leaving for abortions, "it cannot accomplish the same end indirectly by prosecuting those who assist them." If Alabama held such power, it's hard to see the limiting principle. Other states could try to enforce their values by punishing anyone who helps their citizens fly to Las Vegas to gamble, to Colorado to smoke marijuana, or to Alaska to hunt majestic grizzly bears.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Felons have rights, too

Voting is not a privilege. It's a right. But one group of citizens has been long denied that right in parts of the country.

In half the states, including California, people convicted of felonies who have served their time in prison re-enter their communities with the right to vote automatically and immediately restored. In Vermont, Maine and the District of Columbia, people retain their right to vote even when incarcerated.

But the other 25 states have at least some temporary voting restrictions on people formerly incarcerated on felony convictions. In 10 of those states, people convicted of certain crimes, such as murder and rape, are prohibited from voting permanently, unless in most cases the governor pardons them.

Forbidding people who finished prison sentences to vote is profoundly unjust — and unwise. It's difficult enough for people convicted of a serious crime to make their way back into their communities, find jobs and reestablish relationships with family and friends. Disenfranchising them only stifles their efforts to re-engage not just in society but in our democracy. It's even more outrageous when you consider that people returning from prison are counted in the U.S. census for purposes of representation in Congress and for the electoral college. (Even in prison, they get counted.)

So, it's encouraging that Sen. Laphonza Butler (D-Calif.) has introduced a bill, the Next Step Home Act, that would restore voting rights in elections for federal offices, such as members of Congress, to some who were convicted of a felony and sentenced to federal prison when they return to their communities and finish out their parole (or probation in some cases). It would not apply to state elections.

So why would she seek to help only this particular segment of the former prison felon population? Because, it seems, that is what has a chance of passing both houses of Congress. This would need 60 votes to overcome a filibuster in the Senate, and according to a spokesperson for Butler, anchoring it to the First Step Act could help it garner the bipartisan goodwill of that previous bill.

In fact, there are at least three other Senate bills — the Democracy Restoration Act by Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.), the Freedom to Vote Act by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and the Inclusive Democracy Act by Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) — that would restore the right to vote in federal elections to all formerly convicted felons. Butler is co-sponsor of all three.

The bigger question is why is there such resistance to restoring the rights of people who were convicted of a felony. There is no valid reason or public safety concern that would argue against it. Giving back voting rights to a person released from prison is not the same as giving them a right to own a gun.

Of course, we hope that Butler's bill passes — even if it just chips away at the disenfranchisement of one group of people who were formerly convicted. But if Congress were really acting fairly and smartly, it would pass one of the bills that restores federal voting rights to all people convicted of felonies who have served their time. To ignore them is a transgression of justice and a violation of their constitutional rights.

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES



"WE APOLOGIZE, YOUR HONOR, WE DIDN'T REALIZE HE'D BRING ALL HIS BAGGAGE."

## The Trump trial and 2016 election truthers

Former President Donald Trump and some Republicans famously rejected the results of the 2020 election. Trump called the election rigged. He encouraged the Jan. 6 protest at the Capitol that turned into a riot. And he and his supporters filed dozens of lawsuits to challenge Joe Biden's narrow victories in some key states. Trump lost them all; in the end, his legal effort to change the 2020 result was a resounding failure.

But Trump's work was amateur hour compared to the lawfare practiced by Democrats seeking to undermine the results of the 2016 election, the one that made Donald Trump president of the United States. What is perhaps most remarkable is that eight years later, it's still going on.

The leading edge of 2016 denialism was, of course, the Russia investigation, which Trump calls the Russia hoax. Turbocharged by the Hillary Clinton/DNC-financed Steele dossier — which was an actual hoax — the widespread political and media clamor for a criminal investigation of Trump overwhelmed the first months of his presidency and led to the appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller in May 2017. Mueller's search for Trump-Russia "collusion" ended two years later when Mueller admitted he could not establish that any conspiracy or coordination ever happened. Although a number of figures around Trump were charged with unrelated or process crimes, Mueller never charged Trump or anyone associated with him with scheming with Russia to fix the 2016 election.

After all the hysteria, speculation, media talk, and dark accusations, "collusion" was ... nothing. Nevertheless, collusion die-hards still maintain that Trump conspired with Russia and that Russian attempts to interfere with the 2016 election might have tipped the vote to Trump over Clinton. One of those die-hards is Hillary Clinton herself, who in 2019 said, "You can run the best campaign, you can even become the nominee, and you can have the election stolen from you."

All that might seem like ancient history except for *The People of the State of New York v. Donald J. Trump*. Last year, Alvin Bragg, the elected Democratic district attorney of Manhattan — he was elected on a platform that included going after Trump — filed 34 felony counts against the former president, all based on allegedly false bookkeeping. Normally, those charges, even if warranted, are a misdemeanor, and these were long past the statute of limitations. But Bragg found a way to turn them into felonies.

What Bragg did was to charge Trump with falsifying business records "with intent to commit another crime." The problem was, Bragg did not specify that other crime, although his prosecutors gave the judge "theories" about what they called Trump's 2016 "election interference." By the time of opening statements last month, prosecutors still had not settled on a specific secondary crime, but they had developed a full-blown conspiracy theory about the 2016 election. And it's not some sort of narrative that critics characterize as a conspiracy theory — it's a real conspiracy theory.

"This case is about a criminal conspiracy and a cover-up," prosecutor Michael Colangelo said at the

beginning of the prosecution's opening statement. (You may know Colangelo's name because he is the high-ranking Biden Justice Department official who joined Bragg's team for the purpose of prosecuting Trump.) Colangelo continued: "The defendant, Donald Trump, orchestrated a criminal scheme to corrupt the 2016 election; then he covered up that criminal conspiracy by lying in his New York business records over and over and over again."

Colangelo went on to weave a tale in which Trump, then-National Enquirer chief David Pecker and Trump lawyer Michael Cohen "formed a conspiracy ... to influence the presidential election by concealing negative information about Mr. Trump in order to help him get elected."

"You had three parts of this conspiracy," Colangelo told the jury. "You had the agreement to run positive coverage; you had the agreement to attack his opponents; and then the core of the conspiracy was David Pecker's agreement to act as the eyes and ears for the campaign in an effort to locate damaging information about the defendant and then take steps to try to bury it to help Trump get elected."

Reading this, you might notice one thing about this conspiracy: Nothing that Colangelo described was illegal. Maybe it was shady, maybe it was ethically challenged, but it was not illegal. And yet Trump is now facing 34 felony charges and a maximum sentence of 136 years in prison. This Democratic conspiracy theory has turned into something very, very serious.

"It was election fraud, pure and simple," Colangelo said. And then he added something heard from conspiracy enthusiasts everywhere: "We will never know, and it doesn't matter, if this conspiracy was the difference-maker in a close election." That of course, implies that it might have been the difference-maker, thereby surely warming the hearts of Clinton and her dead-end followers everywhere.

It's worth noting that for all Colangelo's talk, Trump is not charged with conspiracy. He is not charged with corrupting the election, whatever that might mean. As the former federal prosecutor Andrew McCarthy wrote: "In point of fact, there is no such information-suppression conspiracy crime in the law, and the indictment against Trump does not charge a conspiracy." And yet that phantom accusation is the basis for elevating Trump's alleged misdemeanors into a charge that could imprison him for the rest of his life.

In casual conversations recently, it has become clear that some Republicans have had a difficult time wrapping their head around what Bragg and Colangelo are doing. A 2016 election conspiracy? Didn't that sort of thing end with Mueller? How could Democrats focus so feverishly on Trump's 2020 election denial while doing some of the same stuff themselves, only on the much more serious level of trying to send Trump to prison? It might be hard to believe, but it is happening.



Byron York

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, May 24, the 145th day of 2024. There are 221 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 24, 1935, the first Major League Baseball game to be played at night took place at Cincinnati's Crosley Field as the Reds beat the Philadelphia Phillies, 2-1.

On this date:

In 1844, Samuel F.B. Morse transmitted the message "What hath God wrought" from Washington to Baltimore as he formally opened America's first telegraph line.

In 1937, in a set of rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Social Security Act of 1935.

In 1941, the German battleship *Bismarck* sank the British battle cruiser *HMS Hood* in the North Atlantic, killing all but three of the 1,418 men

on board.

In 1961, a group of Freedom Riders was arrested after arriving at a bus terminal in Jackson, Mississippi, charged with breaching the peace for entering white-designated areas. (They ended up serving 60 days in jail.)

In 1962, astronaut Scott Carpenter became the second American to orbit the Earth as he flew aboard *Aurora 7*.

In 1974, American jazz composer and bandleader Duke Ellington, 75, died in New York.

In 1976, Britain and France opened trans-Atlantic Concorde supersonic transport service to Washington.

In 1980, Iran rejected a call by the World Court in The Hague to release the American hostages.

In 1994, four Islamic fundamentalists convicted of bombing New York's World Trade Center in 1993 were each sentenced to 240 years in prison.

In 1995, former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson died in London at age 79.

In 2006, "An Inconvenient Truth," a documentary about former Vice President Al Gore's campaign against global warming, went into limited release.

In 2011, Oprah Winfrey taped the final episode of her long-running talk show.

2018, Jerry Maren, the last surviving Munchkin from the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz," died at a San Diego nursing home; he was 99.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian-impressionist Stanley Baxter is 98. Jazz musician Archie Shepp is 87. Comedian Tommy Chong is 86. Singer Bob Dylan is 83. Actor Gary Burghoff is 81. Singer Patti LaBelle is 80. Actor Priscilla Presley is 79. Country singer Mike Reid is 77. Actor Jim Broadbent is 75.

## The News-Banner

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Story of son's recovery to inspire families of addicts

Dear Annie: My son survived heroin addiction 18 years ago. He was quite young and only used the drug for around two years, but they were a terrifying two years. During that time, I helped enroll him in a methadone program, a live-in program (three times) and other programs.

People around me were critical and told me no program would help him until he wanted to get better. I explained that my goal was to keep him alive until he decided he wanted to get better. He eventually decided he was tired of stealing and feeling sick all the time. He admitted that he had thought about suicide but knew that it would ruin my life forever and he didn't want that. He enrolled in a local live-in program for the third time — his idea, not mine. This program was free of charge to people without health insurance. A wonderful counselor took my son under his wing and took him seriously when my son said he wanted to get better.

Things worked out, and he has not gone back on opiates. He also quit drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. My son thanks me for saving his life. He did all the work, though, and is now a wonderful father of a young boy and partner to his son's mother. He is the oldest of three children, and everyone in my family is proud of him (his dad is out of the picture).

I know I was lucky. Plenty of parents with addicted children do everything right and their children still die. I hope my letter inspires the parents of addicts to not give up on their children. I know some addicts aren't going to get better, and I would never criticize family members who gave up on someone after doing all the right things and seeing no results. This letter is meant to encourage people who feel helpless in the face of a family member who is addicted. Thank you. — Blessed Mom

Dear Blessed: Thank you for sharing this moving story. I hope it inspires any struggling parents out there to never lose

hope. Dear Annie: Can you help me get over my irritation with things that I find, well, irritating? Things like people who look up into space while they talk, as if pontificating great wisdom for the masses. I just want to snap my fingers in their faces and say, "Hey! I'm down here!" Or people who talk with their hands, even while driving! I've noticed more and more talking heads on TV with this habit. I wish the cameras would only shoot them from the neck up!

And speaking of TV, is there some sort of contest among women as to who can have the longest hair cascading down their right shoulders? And what's with their high-pitched little girl voices?

I find myself seeing these mannerisms more and more, and becoming more and more irritated with them. I don't believe I'm an intolerant or judgmental person ordinarily (you can spot one a mile away, after all!), but I guess I am. Help, please. — Intolerant

Dear Intolerant: It's normal to have pet peeves, but persistent irritation with things of this nature is not. Ultimately, getting yourself so worked up over things you can't control only hurts you more than it does anything else.

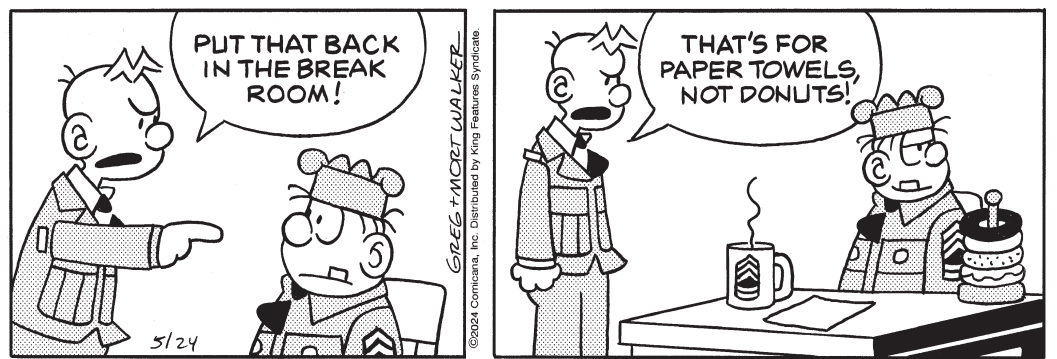
Reflect on what these annoyances might really be about for you. When you notice yourself feeling annoyed, try redirecting your focus to something positive or use humor to lighten your perspective on these human quirks. Make an active effort to show grace for others. Life is far better lived with empathy, understanding and compassion than criticism and judgment.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. © 2024 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie by Annie Lane



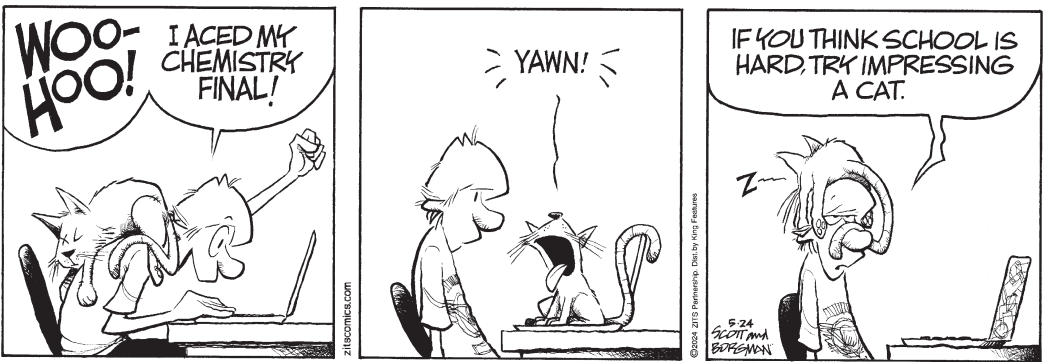
BEETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



ZITS



CRANKSHAFT



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

The LOCKHORNS



My Answer

By Dr. Billy Graham



Roots of our educational institutions were based on faith in God

Question: My son was highly honored to be awarded a full scholarship to one of our nation's most prestigious universities. He's been shocked to see firsthand the diabolical agenda of many of the professors — preventing students from disagreeing and standing on the fact that America was founded on godly principles. What has happened to our education system in America? No wonder our country's education rankings are falling behind the rest of the world. This is shameful! — E.A.

Answer: The roots of our educational institutions were based on faith in God. Harvard University, as an example, was founded in

1636. In John Harvard's bequest to the school, he left several rules and precepts that were to be observed by the college bearing his name. The second rule states:

"Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of [his/her] life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life."

Mr. Harvard wanted higher education to be a place where people would come to study the Bible, and he was not alone. Dartmouth College was founded by an ordained clergyman with a desire to establish a school where [students] could be trained in the truth of the Gospel. Yale and Columbia (King's

College) Universities had similar foundations. What happened? People grew complacent and thought they did not need God anymore. This is the story of the human race. We want God to bless us, but we don't want to honor Him.

Much of the world in search of knowledge ignores God. Young people graduate with more knowledge than ever before, but in spite of it, they are confused and bewildered. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7, NKJV).

(This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.)

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Solution time: 25 mins.

Table with 11 columns and 11 rows for crossword puzzle grid.

Large TV schedule table with columns for date, time, and channel, listing various programs.

# Knights crush Braves to win sectional championship

By RICK SPRUNGER

CONVERSE — Norwell needed a total team effort to win the Class 3A softball sectional Thursday night.

And a total team effort is what coach Kevin Baird got as Norwell breezed to a surprisingly easy 12-4 win over a good Belmont team that had already beaten it once by a 12-2 score.

"First of all, Belmont is a really great team," said Baird after the game, tipping his cap to the other side. "We just really wanted this one. We have a young team, and I told them before the game that you just gotta believe. Good teams are going to punch you," he continued, referring to that earlier one-sided loss to the Braves. "You've gotta punch back. And we had a lot of girls really step up tonight."

Start with the offense.

Norwell banged out 13 hits off two Belmont pitchers, including three each by Nevada Lenwell and Reese Frauhiger and a home run by Makayla Young.

Lenwell's two-run single in the second inning staked the Knights to an early 2-0 lead. Another two-run base knock in the third gave her team the lead for good at 4-3, and she led off the fifth with another base

hit to start a four-run inning that put the game away.

"She has been really hot," said Baird of his senior first baseman. "She's had five hits in her last two games. She's got really good discipline at the plate, and she takes a lot of pitches."

Frauhiger singled and scored in Norwell's three-run third-inning uprising and drove in one run with a hit in the fourth and two more with a big two-out single an inning later.

"That last hit gave us the two insurance runs we needed," said Baird.

And then there was Young, who came to bat with a runner on base in the fifth and promptly smacked the first pitch she saw from Bella Ashley well over the fence in straightaway center field.

"She's a sophomore, and this is her first year on the varsity," said Baird, "and this was her second career home run. Her first was last night."

Meanwhile, Sami Lemler was handcuffing the Belmont offense.

She scattered six Belmont hits while striking out seven batters and stranding eight baserunners.

Two of Belmont's four runs were



Norwell's softball team proudly holds the sectional championship trophy with the 12-4 score shining in the background Thursday night at Oak Hill. The Knights defeated NE8 foe Belmont in the title game and will advance to the regional final. (Photo by Paul Yoder)

unearned.

"She really wanted the ball tonight," said Baird. "She pitched the first game against Belmont, and it wasn't her best game. But she said, 'I want this game.' That's just great senior leadership."

But, as if Lemler's pitching wasn't enough to get the job done, she got great support from the defense behind her.

Particularly noteworthy were a sparkling double play turned by the infield on a sacrifice bunt in the fifth and two run-

ning catches in center field by Jordan Markey.

The double play came with Norwell leading, 8-3, and Belmont trying to get something started.

Taylor Bauer led off the inning with a single, and Ashley sacrificed her to second.

Bauer tried to steal an extra base on the throw to first, but Lenwell gunned her down with a bullet throw to Leah Werling at third base.

(Continued on Page 7)

# Starfires end Tigers' softball season in sectional semis

By RYAN WALKER

BERNE — Bluffton's softball season ended in the hands of South Adams for the second season in a row.

The Tigers (10-14) dropped 9-3 this time in the sectional semifinal to the fourth-ranked Starfires (25-4) as polled by the SCAI. South Adams will host the sectional championship against Bishop Luers on Saturday morning.

The run total was cut in half from the first meeting back in April at Bluffton, and the Tigers certainly had more of an answer too. But it was the star-studded Starfire lineup that packs a punch with power with dazzling speed and too much to overcome.

Shea Alberson alone stole three bases and Macy Pries had one, all while the team pounded 14 hits together. A few hits came from bunt-for hits, some slap hits and one over the fence by seven-hole hitting Kenzie Neuenschwander.

All of that came together in the bottom of the first inning, where Alberson reached on an infield single, and Bekah Patterson put-runners on second and third with a double. The catcher, Sofia Schwartz, stepped up to the plate and drilled a double to drive both of them. She later scored on a single by Avery Brown.

"One through nine they can put the ball in play," Bluffton head coach Tyler Son-

nigsen said after the game. "Schwartz behind the plate, every time she came up, it was we can't give her anything good to hit and if we walk her, we walk her."

But the Tigers did respond in the third inning that brought them back down by one run. Tressa Renner reached base via an error, and the next batter, Tyrah Shaw, smoked a double to drive her home. Marly Drayer followed that up with a sacrifice fly to get within reach 3-2.

It was a fight the Tigers might not have had a month ago, but after watching South Adams play Tuesday night in the sectional against Adams Central, Sonnigsen and his team thought they could get it done.

"My initial thought was, we were gonna come in here and shock the world," Sonnigsen said. "We were going to beat them ... "Why can't we go in the sectional and surprise everybody?"

But like Bluffton did, South Adams responded well.

Over the next three innings, the Starfires got the bulk of their runs, scoring two, one and three in the third through fifth frames of the game.

A few of the runs were aided by a bases-loaded walk and an error, but Neuenschwander's leadoff solo home run and putting the ball in play cleaned up the rest.

(Continued on Page 7)



Bluffton's Tyrah Shaw (left) reaches over to tag South Adams' base runner Lindsey LeFever during the bottom of the third inning of the sectional semifinal at South Adams. The Starfires used speed, power and solid defense to defeat the Tigers 9-3, ending their season. (Photo by Ryan Walker)



Norwell's Devin Dale (right) spreads his arms out as he crosses the finish line, knowing the 4x100m relay team has won and is qualified for the state meet next week at Indiana University, Bloomington. Dale will also be going in the 200m, in which he finished third. (Photos provided)



At left, Norwell's Trevon Stoppenhagen smiles as he crosses the finish line in second place of the 100m dash. His time of 10.63 reached second place in the regional, topping his time last season of 11.17 in the state meet one year ago. At right, Bluffton's Johnny Cruz throws during the shot put, finishing fourth in the event with a throw of 55-5, a personal record, and qualified for the state meet as a callback.



# Knights place 3rd at regional, sends 3 events to state

*Tigers' Johnny Cruz advances in the shot put as a callback*

Norwell had a successful day at the track and field regional championship meet Thursday night at Carroll.

The team finished in third place overall, scoring 36.50 team points. They were behind Homestead (72) and Northrop (65.50) for the top spot.

The Knights will be sending one relay team and three events to the state meet next week at Indiana University Bloomington on Saturday, June 1.

The 4x100m relay team was the regional champion with a time of 42.49. The team was Devin Dale, Trevon Stoppenhagen, Ryan Smith and Jase Harmon. Stoppenhagen and Dale finished second and third in the 200m with times of 21.76 and 21.88.

Finally, Stoppenhagen made it in the 100m with a time of 10.63.

Dale also got seventh in the 100m with a time of 10.99 and scored two points for the team.

Bluffton's Johnny Cruz finished fourth in the shot put, which would miss his shot at the state meet. However, Cruz got a callback and is now heading to state.

Jude Baumgartner nearly made the cut to the state meet as both finished fourth in the 400m with a time of 50.56. His time was a personal best.

Austin Geimer also competed in the high jump and got a personal record at 6-0 and finished in ninth place.

The state finals meet will start at 3 p.m. for field events.

## High School Calendar

FRIDAY, MAY 24

BASEBALL: (Sectional) Southern Wells vs. Liberty Christian at Wes-Del, 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 25

BASEBALL: Belmont at Norwell, 11 a.m.; Bluffton at South Adams, 1 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 27

BOYS GOLF: Bluffton, Southern Wells at Southwood Knights Invitational, 10 a.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 28

BOYS GOLF: Adams Central at Norwell, 4:30 p.m.; Southern Wells at Bluffton, 4:30 p.m.

SOFTBALL: (Regional) Norwell at TBD, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

No events scheduled.

THURSDAY, MAY 30

No events scheduled.

FRIDAY, MAY 31

BOYS GOLF: (Sectional) Bluffton, Norwell and Southern Wells at Timber Ridge, 9 a.m.

TRACK & FIELD: (Girls state) Norwell at Robert C. Haugh Track & Field Complex, Indiana University, 3 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

TRACK & FIELD: (Boys state) Norwell at Robert C. Haugh Track & Field Complex, Indiana University, 3 p.m.



Tigers' third baseman Tressa Renner fires to first to record an out during the third inning. (Photo by Ryan Walker)

## Knights win sectional

(Continued from Page 6)

The play proved to be pivotal when the next batter, Sami Christen, socked a home run over the center field fence that counted for one run, not two.

"We work on that play every day," beamed Baird later of the first-to-third relay on a bunt. "It's not going to come up that often, but we work on it every single day. This is the second time we've used it this year."

Markley's two great grabs in center field were both off the bat of Belmont leadoff hitter Emily Bleke, who homered over Markley's head in the third inning.

The first of Markley's two catches came with Bleke leading off the fourth and saw the speedy center fielder range far to her left in the right-center field gap.

The second found her

racing even farther to her right to rob Bleke of extra bases leading off the sixth.

"I don't think I've ever seen a kid as fast as she is," praised her coach. "She must have covered seventy or eighty feet on that second one. You just don't see someone that fast very often."

After Norwell jumped out to that early 2-0 lead, Belmont came right back with three runs in the top of the third on Bleke's leadoff home run, a walk, an error, and back-to-back singles by Ashley and Christen to take a short-lived 3-2 lead.

But after that, it was all Norwell.

The first of Lenwell's three hits came in the bottom of the frame with the bases loaded.

She was credited with two runs batted in on the play. But all three runners scored when the ball scooted between the legs of the left

fielder and rolled all the way to the fence on the turf.

Markley then started the Belmont fourth with the first of her two big catches, and Lemler fanned the next two hitters to slam the door.

Norwell plated three more in the fourth on singles by Young and Frauhiger sandwiched around a walk to Addison Keller and followed by a sacrifice fly to deep right field by Kaydance Clark.

The Knights got their last four runs in the fifth on Lenwell's third hit of the game, Young's homer, and then Markley's second hit of the contest, a double by Kara Brown, and Frauhiger's two-run single.

Norwell improved to 17-7 with the win and will advance to regional play next week.

Belmont wrapped up its season at 15-8.

sports@news-banner.com

## Knights beat Tigers in golf match

Bluffton and Norwell had some fun on the golf course Thursday night at Timber Ridge.

The two teams played a match play format similar to tennis. Both teams were tied 2.5-2.5 in regulation, and in a sudden-death playoff hole, Derek Smith of Norwell got a par to keep the match going. In the second sudden-death playoff hole, Chase Hulvey sunk a birdie to win the hole and the Knights won.

In the junior varsity match played in a similar style, the Knights won 6-0.

### Winners were:

- Connoer Klopfenstein (B) over Chase

Hulvey.

- Kade Abbett (B) over Cooper Sloan.
- Phil Gaier (N) over Anthony Hartman.
- Bodie Zimmer (N) over Kyler Potter.
- Grant Mishler (N) over Max White.
- Cavin Smithley (N) over Chris Castaneda.
- Owen Wallis (N) over Will Ault.
- Zack Herrrell (N) over Hutch Craighead.
- Josh Adam (N) over Connor Collins.
- Isaac Harkless (N) over Landon Crist.

Bluffton will be at the Southwood Knights Invitational at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 27.

Norwell will host Adams Central at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 28.

## Brown matches career playoff high with 40 points, Celtics beat Pacers to take 2-0 lead in East

By JIMMY GOLEN  
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Jaylen Brown matched his career playoff high with 40 points, 10 of them to help Boston run off 20 points in a row in the first half to take the lead for good, and the Celtics beat the Indiana Pacers 126-110 on Thursday night to open a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference Finals.

Following up on Game 1s, when his 3-pointer with 5.7 seconds left in regulation forced overtime, Brown helped Boston turn a five-point first-quarter deficit into a 15-point second-quarter lead.

Jayson Tatum and Derrick White scored 23 points apiece and Jrue Holiday had 15 points and 10 assists for the top-seeded Celtics, who lost Game 2 in both of their previous series this postseason.

Pascal Siakam scored 28 for Indiana, which returns home for Games 3 and 4 on Saturday and Monday night. Tyrese Haliburton, who had 25 points and 10 assists in the series opener, had 10 points and eight assists Thursday before leaving the game in the third quarter because of a sore left leg.

One game after the Celtics jumped to a 12-0 lead and Indiana spent the rest of the first half clawing its way back, the lead changed hands 10 times in the opening quarter, with the Pacers holding a 27-22 edge with 1:14 left.

Then Boston scored the next 20 points.

Indiana missed nine straight shots and committed four turnovers during the drought that lasted more than six minutes. Brown scored 10 on his own during the run and had 24 at the half; he opened the third quarter with two quick baskets to give the Celtics a 61-52 lead.

But Siakam also came out hot in the second half, hitting four baskets in the first four minutes — a pair of 2s and a pair of 3s — to make it a two-point game. Boston pulled away again — this time for good, scoring 16 of the next 21 points.

Indiana never got within single digits again.

Brown scored 26 points Tuesday night, when the Celtics won thanks to some unforced errors by the Pacers — especially Haliburton — down the stretch. On Wednesday, Brown was left off the All-NBA teams; last year's selection to the second team qualified him for a five-year supermax extension that made him the highest-paid player in the NBA.

Asked if he needed to talk to Brown about focusing on the team, instead of an individual snub, Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said before the game, "He's a very mature guy, so I don't have to."

"He has a great outlook on life. He knows what's important and what's not," Mazzulla said before the game. "He works really hard, and he knows who he is as a person and a player. That's the most important thing."

## Tyrese Haliburton leaves Game 2 with hamstring, chest injuries

BOSTON (AP) — The Pacers left the opener of their Eastern Conference finals matchup with the Celtics lamenting a rash of late turnovers that spoiled one of their best performances this postseason.

Indiana walked off the court following a 126-110 Game 2 loss Thursday night with its top star banged up, and the Pacers

looking back on a six-minute stretch that left with a second straight 2-0 series deficit.

All-Star Tyrese Haliburton scored 10 points and played just eight minutes in the second half before leaving the game because of a sore left hamstring. He sat out the entire fourth quarter.

## Starfires top Tigers

(Continued from Page 6)

"We just fell short tonight," Sonnigsen said. "I mean, errors creep in here and there. They make a few plays. Just sneaky, very good baserunning, but they played well and I don't think we played terrible."

Perhaps the biggest surprise was who was on the mound for South Adams. Addie Baker threw the previous game against Bluffton, tossing four scoreless innings and struck out seven. She's posted a 17-1 record with a 1.17 ERA.

Instead, they went with Gracie Bixler, who allowed two runs over the two innings in relief in the win over Bluffton previously.

"We totally expected Addie Baker to pitch and that kind of threw us off but, to be honest, I think Bixler threw really well," Sonnigsen said. "And I think she was throwing as hard if not harder than Baker was tonight."

Baker did come into the seventh and slammed the door shut, retiring the Tigers' side in order.

Bixler allowed the three

runs in six innings of work.

Bluffton's 10-14 record under first-year head coach Sonnigsen was the most wins the program has had since the 2017 season.

This group will graduate six seniors — Madison Smith, Claire Craighead, Cayah King, Shaw, Kayla Kiefer and Owen Laisure. Sonnigsen says there will be holes to fill with the team, especially within leadership, but he's excited for the returning cast and some of the eighth grade ranks as well.

ryan@news-banner.com



### Johnson and Felger win doubles sectional

Norwell's doubles team of Annabelle Johnson (left) and Macy Felger hold up their sectional championship ribbons Thursday at Bluffton. The two defeated Maconaquah's team of Josie Callane and Kiera Rosenow 6-2, 6-0. Both will await their next opponent, but the next match will be at Kokomo for the state tournament on June 1. (Photo provided)



## Kyle Larson carefully watching weather as Indy 500 draws closer

By JENNA FRYER  
AP Auto Racing Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Kyle Larson eyeballed his assigned teammates and plotted a strategy to try to score his first win of Indianapolis 500 week.

He was at Wheeler Elementary School early Wednesday in Speedway for annual "Community Day" and alongside Scott Dixon, Scott McLaughlin and Will Power, Larson was there to entertain the students ahead of "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing."

He grinned and cheered through the series of games played with selected students — many of whom were taller than the 5-foot-6 NASCAR star. And if it hadn't been his first ever time participating in the event with local students, Larson might have won a few rounds racing scooters around cones, the relay race to collect messages in a bottle or any of the other games.

But the other IndyCar drivers present are "Community Day" veterans and already knew all the hacks on how to win. Larson didn't mind and after heading back to Indianapolis Motor Speedway, he and wife, Katelyn, enjoyed a photo shoot in the midway using the iconic NDY sign in which Larson raised his arms in the air to be the "I" and complete the word.

His only complaint eight days into Indy 500 prep is the forecast for Sunday, which is calling for rain. Larson is trying to become the fifth driver to run the Indy 500 and the Coca-Cola 600 on the same day, and he doesn't want weather spoiling a year's worth of preparation.

"If it's going to rain here Sunday, then I just want it to rain all day and the (Indy 500) to be on Monday," Larson said. "I don't even want to think about what could happen if we're sitting in the rain Sunday."

That's because his real job is in NASCAR and he's not supposed to miss the race Sunday night at Charlotte Motor Speedway. So Larson grew a bit excited Wednesday when he learned of NASCAR team owner Rick Hendrick's indecisiveness a day earlier over how to handle the weather forecast.

Larson is scheduled to start fifth in the Indy 500 in a joint entry between Arrow McLaren Racing and Hendrick Motorsports.

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## EMPLOYMENT

### Help Wanted

**THE CITY OF Bluffton** is accepting applications for Paid-On-Call Firefighters and Part Time Firefighters. Both positions require a high school diploma or equivalent and a Driver's License. The City utilizes E-Verify and follows EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk-Treasurer's Office, 128 E. Market St, Bluffton, Mon-Fri from 8a-4:30p or online at [www.blufftonindiana.net](http://www.blufftonindiana.net). Applications due June 14th.

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### Miscellaneous

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## NOTICE

### Notices

**ITALY TOUR PRESENTATION** Thurs, June 6, 6:15pm. Bluffton Wells Library. Discover highlights/facts of this 2025 trip. All Welcome! Terri Worden [grouptoursite.com/tours/migworden](http://grouptoursite.com/tours/migworden)

(Using WCPL meeting facility does not constitute WCPL's endorsement/sponsorship of the program or organizer's policies/beliefs.) [saratworden@gmail.com](mailto:saratworden@gmail.com)

## RENTALS

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## SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

### King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★

5/24

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## This Week's Garage Sales

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**HUGE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY BARN SALE!** Almost everything is antique, vintage, unique, rusty, dusty or interesting. We'll also have beautiful Amish grown hanging flower baskets. Friday, May 24, and Saturday, May 25, 8a-5p, Sunday, May 26, 8a-2p, 50 W US Hwy. 224, Uniondale.

**MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE** Ossian, 2046 E 1050 N, Thursday-Saturday, May 23-25, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Homeschooling materials, children's books, toys, home decor, vintage items, name brand clothing, bedroom set, computer desk and hutch, tools.

**ANNUAL BARN SALE** Thurs., Fri., Sat. (May 23, 24, 25), 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 2750 N. State Rd. 1. Kitchen, electronics, patio and other furniture, air conditioner, name brand clothes (children to adult), puzzles, books, Christmas, curtains, bedding, toys.

Receive a free garage sale kit when placing a three day, line classified ad.

## Lottery Numbers

### Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY

**Cash 5** — 03-15-19-37-44  
**Cash4Life** — 10-14-30-37-56, Cash Ball: 01  
**Quick Draw Midday** — 09-10-15-17-19-22-28-42-44-46-51-52-53-55-60-72-73-74-77-79, BE: 19  
**Daily Three-Midday** — 03-06-00, SB:05  
**Daily Three-Evening** — 02-09-08, SB:05  
**Daily Four-Midday** — 07-05-03-02, SB:05  
**Daily Four-Evening** — 04-07-04-05, SB:05  
**Quick Draw Evening** — 08-17-21-23-32-35-36-40-41-44-46-54-56-60-62-63-65-67-69-77, BE: 17  
**Hoosier Lotto** — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$13 million

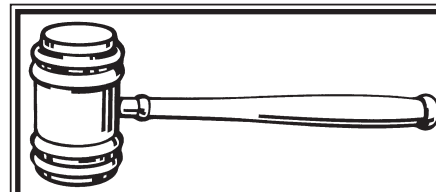
### MEGA MILLIONS

Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$453 million

### POWERBALL

Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$120 million

## Public Sale Calendar



**MAY 26-JUNE 2** - (Online Only Auction) - **The Estate of John F. Holbrook, seller.** 200+ pcs. Roseville, Rookwood, Hull, McCoy, VanBriggle, antique & modern furniture, 1950 Ford Sedan, Coca Cola vintage signs & collectibles, antique tools, 2-pc. Oak kitchen cabinet, JFK political buttons and advertising, vintage toys. Auction preview: May 30 from 3-6 p.m., 10421 W. Yoder Rd., Roanoke, IN. Patrick Carter, sale manager, [TheSteffenGroupInc.com](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), 260-824-3006.

**JUNE 1 - 8:30 a.m.** - **E & M Blacksmith Shop.** 2404 W 350 S, Berne, IN. 13th annual consignment auction. Horses, ponies, horse-drawn machinery, produce equipment, buggies, harness, carts, new tack, saddles, shop tools, lawn & garden tools, sausage grinders & stuffers, new & used furniture, washing machines, hay, straw & firewood. Accepting consignments every evening that week from 4-8 p.m., all day May 30, and May 31 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. [Troyer Auctions, LLC](http://TroyerAuctions,LLC), 260-768-7246, ext. 3.

**JUNE 1 - 11:30 a.m.** - **Ardith Smith estate, Cheryl Heral estate & Sonja Bartlett, sellers.** 320 Sparks St., Markle, IN. Live on-site. One story, two bedroom home on 1.6 acres, 1,144 sq. ft., 10x18 detached garage. Steve Ness, auction manager, 260-417-6556, [SteveNess@NessBros.com](mailto:SteveNess@NessBros.com), [Ness Bros. Realtors & Auctioneers](http://NessBros.com), [www.NessBros.com](http://www.NessBros.com).

**JUNE 4** - (Online Only Auction) - **Bidding Opens at 9 a.m. and will close at 6 p.m.** - **Holbrook estate, seller.** 300 W, Markle, IN. Explore the potential of this property! 6.79+/- acre tract of land in Northern Wells, Union Township, easy access to I-69, 435' of road frontage on Wells County Road, rare opportunity for homesite or mini-farm. Inspection: Feel free to walk the property at any time. Patrick Carter, sale manager, 260-273-8294, [TheSteffenGroupInc.com](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), 260-824-3006.

**JUNE 5-JUNE 12** - (Online Only Auction) - **Huston Waters, seller.** Well cared for modern furniture, wood working tools, household, 2003 Chevy Impala, lawn and garden equipment, outdoor furniture. Open House June 10 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., 1338 Manor Dr., Bluffton, IN. [TheSteffenGroupInc.com](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com). **BIDDING STARTS CLOSING JUNE 9 - 6 p.m. EST - Berry estate, owner.** Online only real

estate & personal property! 6 p.m. real estate: 1 1/2 story craftsman style home w/covered porch, 1,700+/- square ft. w/ornate woodwork throughout, partial basement, 3-4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 bath, detached 24x24 two-car garage, several older outbuildings all sitting on 6+/- acres, Adams Central School District. 6:30 p.m. personal property: Antique tractors, farm machinery, tools, antiques, primitives, vehicles, furniture, household items, more! Preview May 30, 5-6 p.m., 4854 N 400 W, Decatur. Pick up June 10, 2-6 p.m. [Krueckberg Auction & Realty LLC](http://KrueckbergAuction&RealtyLLC), 260-724-7402, [kjauction.com](http://kjauction.com).

**JUNE 15-JUNE 22** - (Online Only Auction) - **The Estate of Glen Bowen, seller.** Clean 2005 Buick Lesabre Custom with 77,000 miles, 2004 Toyota Sienna mini van, 1987 Riviera Cruiser 24' pontoon, 2004 Yamaha XLT jet ski, floating WaveRunner dock, modern furniture, tools. Open House: June 9 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and June 22 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 500 Lane 101 Jimmerson Lake, Angola, IN. [The Steffen Group Inc.](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).

**JUNE 16-JUNE 23** - (Online Only Auction) - **The Estate of Marilyn McQueary, seller.** 2023 GMC Terrain Denali, AWD Edition with 2,130 miles (like new), clean like new modern furniture, antiques, collectibles, tools, jewelry, designer purses, much more. Open Houses: June 18 and June 20 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 102 S. Jefferson St., Ossian, IN. [The Steffen Group Inc.](http://TheSteffenGroupInc.com), 260-824-3006, [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).

### SUDOKU ANSWER

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

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### LEGAL NOTICE INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER COMPANY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Public notice is hereby given to affected property owners pursuant to 170 IAC 4-9-4(f) that within two (2) to four (4) weeks of the date of this notice, weather permitting, vegetation management is to be performed by qualified utility line clearance tree workers on behalf of Indiana Michigan Power Company (I&M). This work is being performed in order to maintain and provide safe and reliable electric service. Vegetation management will be performed along all or portions of the following circuit: Ossian Baker.

This circuit is located within or near Ossian, IN, and in the county of Wells. The work area is roughly bounded by these major roads: North: W Mill Street East: Diane Drive South: Industrial Pkwy West: Country Side Drive I&M customers served by this circuit have been issued a letter and brochure from I&M regarding vegetation management work. Property owners have been contacted by a forestry planner, either in person or through a door card that explains the nature of work to be performed. Specifics regarding vegetation management work on the property may be discussed at that time.

Work will begin on or about May 28, 2024. Customers or property owners with questions about vegetation management in this area may contact I&M by calling 1-800-311-4634 within two weeks of this notice. The date this notice is published initiates the two (2) week period for calculating implied consent by an affected property owner under 170 IAC 4-9. Please be sure to mention this legal notice and the circuit name referenced above.

nb 5/24 hspaxlp

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