

The News - Banner

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FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024 BLUFFTON, INDIANA • Wells County's Hometown Connection \$1.00

Vehicle pulled from Bluffton pond after crash

By HOLLY GASKILL
 The Department of Natural Resources retrieved a vehicle from a personal



Freeman's Towing pulls the vehicle, which was completely submerged, from the pond on C.R. 450E in Bluffton. At left, an officer from the Department of Natural Resources was called to dive into the pond and attach it to the tow truck. **More Photos on Page 3.** (Photos by Holly Gaskill)

pond on County Road 450 East in Bluffton late Thursday night after its driver reportedly experienced a medical emergency.

The driver and the two children in the vehicle were OK at the scene.

At approximately 8:30 p.m., police were dispatched to 1210N 450E on the report of a vehicle wrecked in a pond behind a residence. A deputy on scene told The News-Banner that the driver was believed to have experienced a medical emergency around the railroad track down the road.

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Freeman's Towing pulls the vehicle, which was completely submerged, from the pond on C.R. 450E in Bluffton. At left, an officer from the Department of Natural Resources was called to dive into the pond and attach it to the tow truck. **More Photos on Page 3.** (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



Pictured are this year's 4-H Parade Marshals Darlene Fiedler, Cindy Meyer, Rhonda Flesch and Helen Witte. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

Decades of service honored: 4-H Grand Marshals named

By HOLLY GASKILL
 For decades, four women from Jefferson Township have served kids and customers meals during the all-day auction blitz of the Wells County 4-H Fair.

In recognition of their service, Darlene Fiedler, Rhonda Flesch, Cindy Meyer and Helen Witte will jointly serve as this year's 4-H Parade Grand Marshals.

Each of the women got involved in the hospitality committee at different points. Witte has helped since the meal was first offered in 1985 by Jefferson Township's 4-H club leaders. Each of the other women stepped in as a predecessor needed to step down. Their children were all in 4-H, so it felt like "the right thing to do," Flesch said.

Besides Witte, Meyer holds the longest

involvement, roughly 30 years on the committee. Fiedler and Meyer, who are sisters, estimate they have each been involved for over 20 years.

While it's no small task to serve nearly 200 people in the oftentimes sweltering summer heat, the four women say they've got the whole process down to a science. They go to the grocery store the day before the auction, and the rest is all down to rhythm and a few kids wrangled to help along the way.

And, of course, Witte has the dessert handled. She normally makes eight to 10 of her famous pies, and says she plans to incorporate some brownies into the mix this year.

"We pretty much know what the drill is," Flesch said. "As you walk in, it's like,

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IDOH tackles Health First, Wells health 'scorecard'

By HOLLY GASKILL
 Having now joined Health First Indiana, Wells County has numerous decisions to make in the coming months — including which health-related causes are considered priorities, how to address them, and which local groups to partner with to do so.

On Thursday, the county hosted representatives from the Indiana Department of Health, including state Health Commissioner Dr. Lindsay Weaver, for an informational session for Wells County Health Department employees, members of the local health board, elected officials and community members. Weaver said the stop was No. 72 on their tour through Indiana.

By voting to join HFI earlier this year, the local health department will increase its legacy funding from the state from \$51,777.15 to \$549,510 in



Representatives from the Indiana Department of Health discussed state health concerns and the Health First Indiana funding program at the Carnegie Annex on Thursday morning. Pictured is Indiana Health Commissioner Dr. Lindsay Weaver, left, Deputy Health Commissioner Pam Pontones, middle, and Deputy Director of Legislative and External Affairs Jake Torrie. (Photo by Holly Gaskill)

2025. These funds are prescribed to tackle Indiana health concerns, identified as key performance indicators. KPIs include chronic disease prevention, immunizations, fatality review and infant mortality.

Pam Pontones, deputy health commissioner, stated Thursday that the IDOH

recommends that a portion of these funds be prioritized for community partnerships. Rather than create programs from the ground up, local health departments can identify existing organizations and programs and grant funds toward new equipment, events and

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Police look for man who failed to register as a sex offender

By SYDNEY KENT
 Police are searching for a homeless man who they say repeatedly failed to register as a sex offender in Bluffton.

Christopher Mark Ballard, 41, is wanted for failure to register as a sex offender, a Level 6 felony. According to a Facebook post from the Wells County Sheriff's Office, anyone who sees Ballard should call the local authorities and not approach him.

Ballard first interacted with local police on June 21 after multiple callers reported a homeless man in the area. Ballard advised that he had moved to Bluffton with his girlfriend hoping to find employment.

According to a police report from the

WCSD, Ballard is a sex offender out of Michigan for sexually abusive material of children and criminal sexual conduct. He was convicted in 2009.

As a registered sex offender, Ballard is required to report to the local Sheriff's office within 72 hours of arrival in the county.

He is also required to carry a form of iden-

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Christopher Mark Ballard

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Outside

Chance of showers, storms today and tonight

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 83	High 86	High 90
Low 66	Low 69	Low 73

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Online

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FRIDAY
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IDOH tackles Health First

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expansion.

The Wells County Health Department has not approved a budget proposal for HFI but has extensively discussed these community partnerships and a grant application process. Leadership from Family Centered Services, the Council on Aging and the Bluffton Parks Department were present on Thursday.

Public Health Nurse Lynn Blevins previously indicated that Wells County anticipates distributing over \$250,000 in grants through HFI funding.

Health Scorecard

The IDOH group heavily discussed Indiana's health data Thursday, which is conglomerated online with county "scorecards." Weaver stated that while this data is becoming more precise, there is still more to learn. "The more information that you gather, the path (toward health solutions) becomes clearer," she stated.

According to HFI data, Wells County ranked poorest in suicide rates, 78th in the state, opioid overdoses, 47th, and rates of mothers smoking during pregnancy, 47th. Wells County ranked best in its infant mortality rate, third in the state.

However, Weaver noted that it's easy for smaller counties to rise and fall quickly in yearly data and that the state hopes to identify year-to-year trends. She also stressed that overall, Indiana falls among some of the least healthy states in the U.S.

Wells County also ranked 39th in adult obesity with 46.3% of the adult population considered obese, 36th in smoking rates with 21% of the adult population smoking cigarettes, 24th in vaccinations of children younger than three years old with 68.7%, and 23rd in years of life lost due to injury. Overall, Wells ranked 27th in life expectancy at 76.5 years.

Local Concerns

In a grant application approved by the Board of

Health in June, the Wells County Health Department denoted its prioritized KPIs as tobacco prevention and cessation, student health, fatality review and prevention programs, maternal and child health, access and linkage, chronic disease prevention and reduction, and trauma and injury prevention and education.

On Thursday, Northeast Indiana Director Sheila Paul encouraged focusing in on key areas of need. Weaver added, "You don't have to boil the ocean. I would just start slow — what are the top three things we really want to work on? And do that, and do that well."

Blevins reiterated concerns particularly about infant mortalities and maternal health in light of the recent closure of Bluffton Regional Medical Center and Meridian Health's labor and delivery unit and OB-GYN services.

While local HFI funds will not re-open these units, Blevins said the department has discussed expanding to offer STD and pregnancy testing. Additionally, Blevins said it was in the works to host a "community baby shower" with free resources available to expectant mothers.

County Council member Brandon Harnish also emphasized concerns about addressing obesity rates. Weaver advised that counties have taken different approaches, but the issue often originates with a lack of education about nutrition and cooking, as well as the inaccessibility of healthy food and fresh produce.

To target these areas, Weaver said Allen County worked with Fort Wayne Community Schools for a nutrition education program for seventh grade students. "I think some of us forget — we don't take home economic classes anymore ... that is a missing component in our education," Weaver advised. However, she also noted the schools had initiated and asked for that part-

nership.

In Vermillion County, ranked the worst in adult obesity at 51%, Weaver said the local sheriff suggested obesity was a local issue because people were only able to buy food from the gas station or convenience stores. Their health department initiated farmers markets in their area to make healthier foods more accessible.

Progress & the Future

Approved by the Indiana state legislature in 2023, Health First Indiana pumps \$75 million statewide into health departments in hopes of helping Hoosiers get healthier. But being in its infancy, it's difficult to determine the HFI's efficacy or longevity.

Blevins asked if Weaver is at all concerned about HFI's future with a new governor in 2025. Weaver did not address the gubernatorial change but focused on the value she believes HFI has brought.

"I will say that we have 100% seen a difference this money has made in Indiana," Weaver responded. "And we had a lot of people who were hesitant about it, even state legislators who voted no, that have come to these meetings or started working with their community ... have seen where differences have been made already. It's only been going on for six months, right? That funding just went out the door in January. But yet, strides have been made. Lives have been saved. People have kind of improved opportunities and access. The legislators had a lot of input and made changes to the accounting legislation, and I truly believe where we landed is a model for how (the) funding of legislation should be done in this state because of that flexibility that allows you guys, who know what Wells County better than anything else, to use it (funding) the way it needs to be done."

Wells County was one

of six counties that chose against joining HFI in its flagship year, with the county commissioners citing concerns about the untested new program and the instability of the local health department itself.

"There was a time, 10 months ago, there was one full-time employee — and that was me," Blevins said Thursday. "It was scary. I'm glad it didn't hit the fan, but we're in a great spot now ... We didn't take Health First funding last year, which — thank you — it would've been not nice, over (what we could do.) It was hard to turn that money away, but with that, comes a lot of responsibility."

Commissioner Blake Gerber added, "We were in a bad spot," and expressed his hopes the funding will allow the county to serve the community. "Maybe we won't see the benefits right now, but we can measure the success over the next few years."

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Weather

Friday, July 12, 2024

(24-hour observations at 10:27 p.m. Thursday)
High: 85; **Low:** 61; **Precipitation:** 0.14 inches of rain
Wabash River Level (at the Main Street bridge): 2.52 feet at 9:45 p.m. Thursday

Wells County forecast

Today: A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 11 a.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 83. East wind around 5 mph becoming south in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Tonight: A chance of thunderstorms, mainly before 7 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 66. Calm wind. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 86. Calm wind becoming west around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Saturday Night: A 20% chance of showers after 2 a.m. Mostly clear, with a low around 69. Calm wind becoming southwest around 5 mph.

Sunday: A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 8 a.m. Mostly sunny and hot, with a high near 90.

Sunday Night: A chance of thunderstorms before 8 p.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 a.m. Mostly clear, with a low around 73. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Monday: A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms before 8 a.m., then a slight chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. Mostly sunny and hot, with a high near 90. Chance of precipitation is 20%.



WELLS COUNTY 4-H FAIR

JULY 13-18

Look for 4-H Schedule in the Bluffton News-Banner.
Line up at 9:30 am at Bluffton Regional South Parking Lot.

Parade - July 13 • 10am

Music:

Keystones Youth Rock Band
Sunday, July 14
Starting at 5pm

Hubie Ashcraft
Tuesday, July 16
Starting at 7pm

Trevor Hunt
Wednesday, July 17
Starting at 7pm

Truck Pull
Come Join the Fun!
Friday, July 19 at 7pm

5K Run/Walk
"Let the Games Begin"
Saturday, July 13 at 7:30am

Full Schedule: www.extension.purdue.edu/wells

4-H Grand Marshals

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'Where are we? Oh, we're on this (part).' And then you get to work."

Their children have all aged out of 4-H by now, but they don't anticipate leaving the hospitality committee any time soon.

"We'll keep doing it until they kick us out, probably," Fiedler joked. Flesch laughed, "Til we burn the bacon."

"The big joke is, every year, we're like, 'So, do you think we're supposed to do this again?' Because no one ever officially asks us to

do it — it's just kind of an assumption that we're going to be back every year and do it," Meyer chuckled.

But on a sentimental note, they've each loved being part of the 4-H community.

"It's the people — it's always the people," Flesch said. "The people that you meet and that you spend the week with ... It builds families. You see families working together. You know, nobody really wants to clean the pig pen, but they all do it together. And it is good to see families really doing

things as families."

The 4-H parade begins at a new time this year — leaving at 10 a.m. from Bluffton Regional Medical Center. Parade awards will follow at 10:30 a.m. at the fairgrounds stage area.

After their excursion for the parade, Meyer and Flesch will be back announcing the dairy feeder show, and soon enough, the women will be headed to the store to cook up Thursday's meal. The premier auction begins at 2 p.m. Thursday; the livestock auction follows at 3:30 p.m.

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Meyer Renovation

(Continued from Page 1)

are possible, but Hahn urged caution with the fencing. Hahn stated that Ossian's desire to build a sewer line near that area could force the city to remove the fence temporarily to complete construction. Lautzenheiser advised that the current easement is a blanket easement until the line is installed.

"It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to put up a fence next week if it's going to get torn out a month later," Hahn said.

"It seems like every time something gets asked or suggested to be done on this project it just doesn't happen," APC Member Geoff Lance said. "So far, I can't think of any one thing that's been said that would happen (that) has happened, aside from starting the development process. I think the purpose of going this route and approving the rezone was so that the development process could force fixes to some of these issues."

The APC decided to continue the matter but laid out four "good faith" fixes that Meyer

should act upon. Namely, the problematic lighting to be turned off, a meeting between the contractor and Ossian about the fencing and construction timeline, construction of a two-stage ditch for stormwater detention to begin and the state design release to be approved before the August meeting.

Also during the meeting, Lautzenheiser reported that the Wells County Vision 2035 project will mainly look toward other communities and search for ideas that the county can implement to improve. Information about basic community meetings will come out after the third steering committee meeting, according to Lautzenheiser.

Lautzenheiser also stated that Isch Excavating ordered all the necessary materials to start construction on the Vera Cruz kayak launch point. The Interurban trail is also halfway completed, according to Lautzenheiser, with paving scheduled to begin in a couple of days, weather permitting.

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Police searching for man

(Continued from Page 1)

tification at all times and to register with the WCSD every seven days as a homeless person.

During the interaction in June, Ballard did not possess an ID. He also told police that he and his girlfriend slept on blankets

along the river.

Ballard was charged with failure to possess ID as a sex offender, a Class A misdemeanor, and sex offender registration violation, a Level 6 Felony. His bond was set at \$6,500. Ballard posted bail several days later on June 27.

An additional police report dated July 2 stated that it was apparent that Ballard is still homeless and staying within the community and has not registered. An additional Level 6 felony charge for failing to register is pending.

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WELLS COUNTY 4-H FAIR

JULY 13-19

The Wells County 4-H Parade Committee invites you and your organization to participate in the 2024 4-H Parade on Saturday, July 13. Parade line up will begin at 9:30 AM at the Bluffton Regional south parking lot and northeast parking lot. At 10:00 AM the parade leaves the downtown area and at 10:30 AM the parade arrives at the 4-H Park. Parade participants are encouraged NOT to throw items from the parade units due to danger from moving vehicles.

Let the Games Begin!

Forms not accepted unless accompanied by a printed or typed description narrative.

4-H PARADE ENTRY FORM

Check entry:

- 4-H Float ONLY
- 4-H Attendance Entry ONLY
- 4-H Float AND Attendance Entry
- Marching Band (Band/Baton)
- Other (please specify)

Due ASAP

- Car
- Emergency/ Fire Unit
- Industrial Unit(s)
- Type and number of entries:

NAME OF GROUP, INDIVIDUAL, BUSINESS: _____
NAME OF PERSON IN CHARGE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE # OF PERSON IN CHARGE: _____
E-MAIL: _____ CITY: _____
COMMENTS/SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

Attach narrative description. Return to Wells County Extension Office, 1240 4-H Park, Bluffton, IN 46714 • ASAP

Full Schedule: www.extension.purdue.edu/wells

July 13 15th Annual 4-H 5k Run/Walk, Fast & Furriest 1 Mile Dog Run/Walk July 13

Where: Wells County 4-H Fairgrounds located on the south side of Bluffton, IN off of State Road 1.

When: Saturday, July 13, 2024 5K Run/Walk Starts at 7:30 AM

Entry Fee:
Dog & Owner- \$30 Race Day
Individual- \$25 Race Day
Family Special- \$60 Race Day

(4 entries in same envelope, separate forms, same immediate family) Please don't abuse

Make Checks Payable to: Wells County 4-H Foundation (Shirts will be available to race-day registrants as supplies last)

Registration: **Race Day registration will begin at 6:45 AM**

Events-----5K (3.1 Miles)-----Age Groups
Boys 14 & Under • Boys 15-18 • Men 19-29 • Men 30-39 • Men 40-49 • Men 50 & Over
Girls 14 & Under • Girls 15-18 • Women 19-29 • Women 30-39 • Women 40-49 • Women 50 & Over

Dog Awards- Fastest, Furriest and Cutest Duo
Awards will be present to the 1st Male and Female Overall Winners.
Award will also be given to the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd places in each age group.
Drinks will be available for participants on the course and after the race.
Information Email: monica.edgeman@gmail.com or vanderkolkmj@gmail.com

15th Annual 4-H 5k Run/Walk, Fast & Furriest 1 Mile Dog Run/Walk

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____
Birthday: ____/____/____ Male or Female
Shirt Size: YM YL S M L XL XXL

Dog Breed: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____
Parent Signature: _____ (Signature of parent or Guardian REQUIRED if Participant is 17 or under 18 years of age.)

Release Form for 4-H 5K Fun Run/Walk

In signing this entry, attest and verify that I have full knowledge of the risks involved in participation of this event and that I am physically fit and sufficiently trained to participate in this event. I understand that my signature signifies that in acceptance of my entry, I for myself, my executor, administrators, and assignees do hereby release and discharge the Wells County 4-H Foundation, all sponsors, their representatives, and successors, from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising from my participation in running/walking the event. I grant my permission to all of the foregoing to any photographs, motion pictures, recordings, or any other records or this event for legitimate purpose. I understand that bikes, skates, scooters or dogs are not allowed.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

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Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

City:
 Wednesday, 2:15 p.m., Walmart. Hit skip.
 Wednesday, 3:47 p.m., Pak-A-Sak North. Complaint of vehicle in handicap parking spot. Officer spoke with driver.
 Wednesday, 8 p.m., Main Street and S.R. 124. Driver cited for distracted driving.
 Thursday, 1:10 a.m., Bluffton Police Department. Indiana State Police requested assistance with Flock cameras in reference to suspect considered armed and dangerous.
 Thursday, 4:01 a.m., 524 W Wiley Ave. Report of three subjects who got into truck parked in the alley and took off on foot after triggering a motion light. Unable to locate.
 Thursday, 6:36 a.m., 450E and 200N. Citation issued for 60 in a 45 mph zone.
 Thursday, 7:44 a.m., 1100 block of West South Street. Dispute between neighbors involving threats.
 Thursday, 9:31 a.m., Main Street and Madison Avenue. Found bike leaning against the tree. Had been there for approximately one week.
 Thursday, 10:07 a.m., S.R. 124 and Elm Grove Avenue. Report of a man possibly living in a tent in this area.
 Thursday, 11:58 a.m., 800 block of Parkview Drive. Caller locked out of residence while homeowner is inside, homeowner asking for the other party to leave. When officer arrived, the issue had been resolved and noted that "Once again, love seems to have found a way ... at least for now."
 Thursday, 12:35 p.m., 600 block of South Jersey Street. Vehicle egged. The parents of the juveniles involved agreed to pay for a carwash.
 Thursday, 12:58 p.m., 1100 block of Elm Drive. Property damage accident.
County:
 Wednesday, 12:52 p.m., West 1200 North and North 400 West, Roanoke. Report of tree limbs in the middle of the road.
 Wednesday, 3:29 p.m.,

2600 South Main Street, Liberty Center. Caller reported receiving vulgar messages on the phone.
 Wednesday, 4:05 p.m., Ginger Fresh Market. Caller reported dog in vehicle that was turned off outside, dog appeared to be struggling. Owner came out and turned on the car.
 Wednesday, 5:44 p.m., Wells County Jail. Subject asked officer about traffic stop incident with stolen plate. Officer explained that the plate matched a plate to a vehicle that was stolen out of Pennsylvania, and that the state made a mistake.
 Wednesday, 6:45 p.m., Wells County Jail. Protective order served to Jordan Pettit.
 Wednesday, 6:45 p.m., Wells County Jail. Protective order served to Kyle Davis.
 Wednesday, 11:26 p.m., Airplane Express. Driver cited for driving while suspended.
 Thursday, North 500 West and West Oak Road, Markle. Report of cows in the middle of the road.
Ossian:
 Thursday, 10:21 a.m., 2900 East U.S. 224, Ossian. Report of issue of dogs running at large.
ACCIDENTS
City:
 Thursday, June 27, 3:07 p.m., Kroger. Owner of a 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe SUV parked at Kroger and went inside, and found damage along the driver side when he returned. The responsible driver was found to be Howard R. Hull, 79, Bluffton, who said he did hit the vehicle with his 2011 Ford F150, but had not seen any damage. Damages did not exceed \$1,000.
 Thursday, July 4, 10:30 p.m., S.R. 1 at the intersection of 4-H Road. Austin L. Dedrick, 29, Bluffton, was driving his 2003 Toyota Highlander northbound on S.R. and did not see the stopped vehicle in front of him, a 2009 Nissan Cube driven by Larry C. Hadaway, 35, Bluffton. Damages did not exceed \$2,500.
 Saturday, 2:24 p.m., Kroger. Amy Davis, 35, Bluffton, was backing a 2012 Chrysler Town and Coun-

try out of a parking spot and did not see a 2022 Ford Edge SUV driven by Sue A. Moser, 82, Bluffton. Damages did not exceed \$2,500.
 Saturday, 4:19 p.m., S.R. 1 at the intersection of Lamar Street. Jocelyn Tryon, 31, Bluffton, drove into S.R. 1 from Lamar Street with her 2022 Jeep Compass, and did not see oncoming traffic. Joshua Brown, 36, Bluffton, said he was unable to avoid colliding his 2004 Mercury Sable into the Jeep's driver side. Damages did not exceed \$10,000.
 Saturday, 7:26 p.m., S.R. 1 at the intersection of South Street. Parker Nash, 16, Bluffton, did not see oncoming traffic when entering S.R. 1 in a 2015 Chevrolet Silverado, and struck a 2016 Chrysler 200 driven by Nicole Fritz, 44, Bluffton. Damages did not exceed \$25,000.
 Sunday, 11:43 a.m., S.R. 1 and Charles Diem. Edna Schwartz, 32, Bluffton, was operating a buggy northbound on S.R. 1 when the horse became spooked and turned into the other lane of traffic. Cheryl Cris, 77, Bluffton, sideswiped the buggy in her 2013 Chevy Impala. Damages did not exceed \$1,000.
 Thursday, 12:58 p.m., Elm Drive near Spring St. Lisa A. Mann, 61, Bluffton, was backing a 2017 Honda Accord out of the driveway and did not see a parked and unattended 2023 Toyota Sienna along the roadway. Damages did not exceed \$1,000.
FIRES
 Wednesday, 2:20 p.m., Wabash Village. Fire alarm. Overcooked food in the microwave triggered the alarm.
ARRESTS
 Adolfo Luna Carmona, 52, Bluffton; operating a vehicle without ever obtaining a license, a Class C misdemeanor. Booked and released.
 Jeremy Vincent Turner, 46, Huber Heights, Ohio; possession of cocaine, a Level 6 felony. No bond set.
 Ashley Nicole Palicki, 27, Fort Wayne; driving while suspended, a Class A misdemeanor. Booked and released.

Wells County 4-H Fair schedule

The Wells County 4-H program has announced their 2024 fair schedule, Saturday, July 13 through Thursday, July 18 at the fairgrounds, 1240 4-H Park Rd. in Bluffton. The fair is open to the public and free.

Saturday, July 13
 7:30 a.m. 4-H 5K run, stage area
 8:30 a.m. Awards for the 4-H 5K run, stage area
 10 a.m. 4-H parade begins
 Noon Expo Hall opens
 Noon TRSS Drum Corp, Midway
 Noon-8 p.m. Craft bazaar, Quonset Hut
 2:30 p.m. Goat Olympics, Livestock Arena
 3 p.m. Fashion Review, Community Center Building
 1 p.m. Horse and Pony Versatility, Grandstand
 4:30-6:30 p.m. Back Porch Beef BBQ, food pavilion
 5 p.m. Presentation of 4-H 10-year and Caley Memorial Awards, stage area
 6-8 p.m. Log Cabin open
 8 p.m. 4-H Spirit Night, Grandstand

Sunday, July 14
 7-11 a.m. Pancake and sausage breakfast, food pavilion
 9 a.m. Alpaca and Llama Show, Livestock Arena
 9 a.m. Horse and Pony Show Western Performance, Grandstand
 10 a.m. Praise in the Park
 Noon-8 p.m. Mini golf and corn hole toss
 Noon-8 p.m. Craft Bazaar, Quonset Hut
 1 p.m. Mini 4-H Rabbit, Rabbit and Poultry Barn
 1 p.m. Horse and Pony Western, English Show, Grandstand
 2 p.m. 4-H Rabbit Ambassador Showmanship Contest, Rabbit and Poultry Barn
 2-8 p.m. Log Cabin open
 3-5 p.m. Pioneer Crafters and Dulcimer Music, Log Cabin
 4 p.m. Sheep Show, Livestock Arena
 5-7 p.m. The keystones, stage area
 6 p.m. Mini 4-H Horse and Pony Show, Grandstand
 6:30 p.m. Dairy Cattle Show, Livestock Arena
 Monday, July 15
 7-11 a.m. Biscuits and gravy breakfast, food pavilion
 9 a.m. Swine Show, Livestock Arena
 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Mini golf and cornhole toss
 2 p.m. Photo session for 4-H champions, Community Center Expo Hall stage
 4-8 p.m. Log Cabin opens
 4-5 p.m. Wells County Public Library storytime, playground near Log Cabin
 4:30-7:30 p.m. Chick-fil-A sandwiches, food pavilion

5-8 p.m. Craft Show, Quonset Hut
 5 p.m. Dairy goat show, Livestock Arena
 6:30 p.m. Raptors and Eagles, Log Cabin
 7:30 p.m. Miss Wells County Teen and Queen pageant, Stage Area

Tuesday, July 16
 8 a.m. Rabbit Show, Rabbit and Poultry Barn
 9 a.m. Meat Goat Show, Livestock Arena
 11-8 p.m. Mini golf and cornhole toss
 4 p.m. Dairy Beef Show, Livestock Arena
 4-7 p.m. Pork chop BBQ support, food pavilion
 4-8 p.m. Log Cabin open
 6 p.m. Horse and Pony Show, Contesting
 6 p.m. Dairy Feeder Calf Show, Livestock Arena
 6:30 p.m. State Park Nature Program, Log Cabin
 7-9 p.m. Hubie Ashcraft, stage area

Wednesday, July 17
 9 a.m. Poultry Show, Rabbit and Poultry Barn
 10 a.m. Beef Show, Livestock Arena
 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Mini golf and cornhole toss
 4-7 p.m. Pulled pork dinner, food pavilion
 4-8 p.m. Log Cabin open
 6 p.m. Grand Champion Award Presentation, Community Center Expo Hall stage
 6 p.m. Horse and Pony - Senior Ride, Club Awards, Fun Show, Grandstand
 6:30 p.m. Native American Way of Life presented by Ashley Anderson, Log Cabin
 6:30-8:30 p.m. Robotics Club demonstration, Community Center Expo Hall
 6:30 p.m. Photo Sessions for 4-H Champions, Community Center Expo Hall stage
 7 p.m. 4-H Livestock Royal Showmanship Contest, Livestock Arena
 7-9 p.m. Trevor Hunt band, stage area
 7:30 p.m. Kids pedal pull, food pavilion patio

Thursday, July 18
 9 a.m. Dog Club Show, Quonset Hut
 2 p.m. Premier Auction, Livestock Arena
 3-7 p.m. Auction Buyers Hospitality Tent near Livestock Arena
 3:30 p.m. 4-H Livestock Auction, Livestock Arena
 4-8 p.m. Log Cabin open
 6:30 p.m. State Park Nature Program, Log Cabin area

Friday, July 19
 6 p.m. Truck pull gates open, \$5 (ages 5-12) and \$10 (13+)
 7 p.m. Truck Pull Starts

At right, the Department of Natural Resources officer prepares to dive for the vehicle. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



Vehicle pulled from pond

(Continued from Page 1)
 The vehicle, a Chevrolet Equinox, appeared to have veered off the roadway and struck a utility pole before continuing for several hundred feet. It then crossed the driveway of 1158N 450E and continued east alongside the driveway before veering north toward the backyard pond of 1210N 450E and entering the pond.
 All passengers were able to get out of the vehicle before it sank.
 An officer from the Department of Natural Resources later dove to locate the vehicle, which had settled on the far side of the pond. Freeman's Towing then pulled the vehicle from the pond.
 An official accident report is pending.
 holly@news-banner.com



The Chevrolet Equinox involved in the crash also struck a utility pole down the road before it eventually entered the pond.

Man gets 14 months after guilty plea to threatening Michigan election official

DETROIT (AP) — An Indiana man has been sentenced to 14 months in prison after pleading guilty to making a violent threat against a local election official in Michigan soon after the 2020 election.
 A federal judge sentenced Andrew Nickels, 38, of Carmel, Indiana, on Tuesday for threatening to kill a suburban Detroit clerk, The Detroit News reported. He had pleaded guilty in February to transmitting threats in interstate commerce.
 In a voicemail left on Nov. 10, 2020, Nickels threatened to kill Tina Barton, a Republican who at the time was the clerk in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Investigators said he accused her of fraud and said she deserved a "throat to the knife" for saying there were no irregularities in the 2020 election.
 Then-President Donald Trump had claimed there were election irregularities in Michigan and elsewhere following his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Michigan Republican lawmakers investigated the 2020 presidential election for months and found no widespread or systemic fraud, concluding that Biden had won the state.
 Barton said in a victim impact statement, "No one should have to live in fear for their life or endure the trauma that has been inflicted upon me — especially those dedicated to ensuring our elections are administered fairly and accurately."
 She is now vice chair of the Committee for Safe and Secure Elections, a national group. That group's chair, former Maricopa County (Arizona) Sheriff Paul Penzone, said Tuesday in a statement that Nickels' sentence sends a "signal to election officials across the country that threats against them will be taken seriously and those who engage in such behavior will be held accountable."

Senior Citizen's Lunch
Thursday, July 18th • 11:30am
New Hope Lutheran Church
 8824 N. State Road 1 • Ossian, IN 46777
Performance by: Senior Saints
 The Senior Saints, an energetic group of 71 retirees from 31 churches in the greater Fort Wayne area, will present Way to Go! A musical about methods of travel through the ages. The program includes songs and narration. Songs include Wait for the Wagon, Cruising Down the River, The Wabash Cannon Ball, Bicycle Built for Two, and In My Merry Oldsmobile. Songs of faith include Life's Railway to Heaven, Walking with the King, Just a Closer Walk, Precious Lord Take My Hand, Jesus Led me All the Way and I'll Fly Away.
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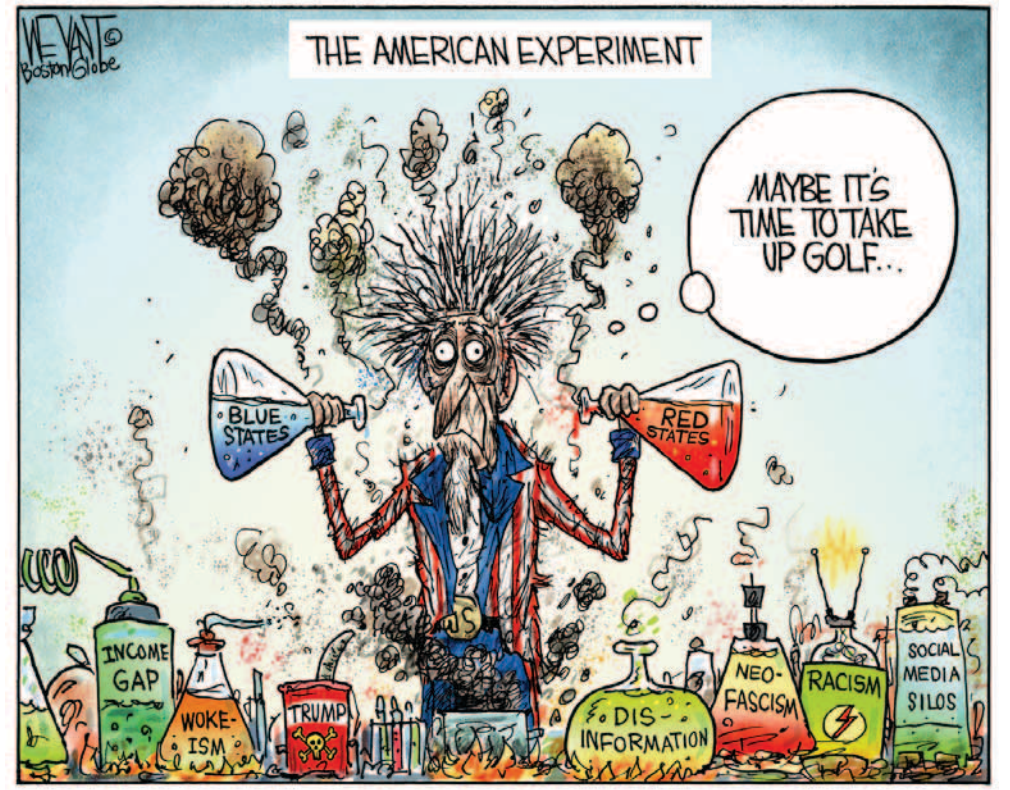
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The 2024 Election Cometh - a look through cartoonists' eyes...



Other Opinions
Two big victories for liberty

June 28 was a good day, make that a great day, for liberty and the Constitution at the Supreme Court. The Justices delivered an overdue rebuke to overreaching regulators in a ruling that abolishes Chevron deference, while they also reined in prosecutors who stretched the law in pursuit of Jan. 6 cases.

In arguably the most significant decision of the year, a 6-3 majority (Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo) overturned the Court's 40-year-old Chevron doctrine that told judges to defer to agency interpretations of vague laws as long as they are "reasonable." Now regulators will have a harder time bending laws, and Congress will have to legislate more clearly. Imagine that.

Chevron arose when judges were willy-nilly legislating from the bench, but its flaws were "apparent from the start," as Chief Justice John Roberts explains for the majority. The doctrine lacked a constitutional basis and clashed with the Administrative Procedure Act's command that courts "decide all relevant questions of law, interpret constitutional and statutory provisions." From the start, he says, Chevron was "a 'rule in search of a justification,' if it was ever coherent enough to be called a rule at all."

The doctrine spawned confusion and conflict in lower courts, including whether a given law was ambiguous in the first place. As Justice Antonin Scalia put it five years after Chevron was decided: "How clear is clear?" The Chief says deference to regulators became "an impediment, rather than an aid, to accomplishing the basic judicial task."

The High Court hasn't invoked Chevron since 2016, relying instead on basic statutory interpretive tools and its major questions doctrine, such as in West Virginia v. EPA. "At this point, all that remains of Chevron is a decaying husk with bold pretensions," the Chief writes.

The problem is that lower courts still rely on Chevron and cite it repeatedly to rubber stamp even the most dubious rules. See the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Court's considerations about when to revere precedents also support its decision. Not only has Chevron proven unworkable, it "has undermined the very 'rule of law'; values that stare decisis exists to secure," the Chief stresses. As Justice Neil Gorsuch notes in a powerful concurrence, "these antireliance harms" aren't "distributed equally." While "sophisticated entities and their lawyers may be able to keep pace with rule changes affecting their rights and responsibilities," others may not.

Chevron's defenestration will require judges to determine the best reading of statutes. The Chief demonstrates how to do this in Fischer v. U.S. Prosecutors charged a Jan. 6 rioter with violating the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, of all unlikely statutes.

The financial securities law makes it a crime to "corruptly" shred or conceal documents "with the intent to impair the object's integrity or availability for use in an official proceeding." This provision is followed by another one punishing anyone who "otherwise obstructs, influences, or impedes" such a proceeding.

The government argued this catchall applied to the rioter's obstruction. Six Justices disagreed. The catchall "was designed by Congress to capture other forms of evidence and other means of impairing its integrity or availability," the Chief writes. He was joined by Justices Gorsuch, Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Brett Kavanaugh and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

It would be "peculiar to conclude that in closing the Enron gap, Congress created a catch-all provision that reaches beyond the scenarios that prompted the legislation," the Chief adds. The government's "novel interpretation would criminalize a broad swath of prosaic conduct, exposing activists and lobbyists alike to decades in prison."

The Court's Friday decisions safeguard individual liberty against overreaching government. Isn't that why the Founders fought the Revolution?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Distributed by The Associated Press

How the media sleepwalked into Biden's debate disaster

In my 20 years of writing right-leaning columns at mainstream publications, I've made two arguments over and over. First, I've tried to convince my fellow journalists that liberal media bias is real. And second, I've tried to convince conservatives that, though it's real, it's not the conspiracy they imagine.

This is a hard moment to make that latter point. Frankly, if the media had been colluding to cover up the decline of a Democratic president, who then undid all those efforts by going on national television and breaking the story himself... well, how much different would our coverage have looked? And if he hadn't self-immolated at the debate, wouldn't our readers still be in the dark?

That said, it really wasn't a conspiracy. For one thing, mainstream outlets did report on the president's age, even if too gently. Why were we so gentle? Well, there's a broad journalistic norm against picking on physical characteristics (which is why even certified Donald Trump-hating columnists have made remarkably few cracks about his comb-over).

Obviously, it was a mistake to treat age, which affects job performance, like hairstyling, which doesn't. But that error was bipartisan — over the years, I've heard a lot of people talking about Trump's senior moments without ever putting those thoughts on the page.

If Trump had slipped as visibly and publicly as President Biden, it's possible we would have covered

that more aggressively. But there was a paradox — the reporters watching him most closely were seeing tiny, incremental changes, without necessarily being struck, as were people who infrequently tuned in, with the cumulative magnitude of the decline. Also, Biden's White House was simply more skilled at deflecting journalists who did notice: masters of killing stories with kindness and punishing reporters who wrote things they didn't like.

I'm told that journalists who starting asking about Biden's age would suddenly be given access to normally unavailable senior staffers for denials, then deluged by allies insisting he was at the top of his game in private. It was genuinely hard to know how to balance those testimonials against reports of possibly isolated lapses.

"But the videos!" my conservative readers are sputtering, and fair enough — yet video clips can mislead unless you know the context. (Remember the Covington Catholic fiasco?) The White House made it hard to get that context; staff rarely leaked, and anyway, few people outside Biden's inner circle saw him enough to form a complete picture of his condition. The inner circle, meanwhile, is dominated by people who have been with the president for years.

A few phenomenally dogged reporters persisted

anyway. But they weren't rewarded for it because there seemed to be no audience for coverage of Biden. Articles languished unread, and Biden books weren't selling.

Not good enough, I can hear my conservative readers saying. Okay, the White House made it difficult to get the story — but if Trump were president, reporters would have been more skeptical of White House spin, more motivated to crack the wall of silence to meet audience demand. And all I can say to that is: Yeah, you're right.

The media's treatment of Biden wasn't a conspiracy to protect a Democratic president, but it looks like one because that was its practical effect. None of our decisions were entirely driven by partisanship. But if we're honest, many of them were unduly influenced by it.

Because there are 10 times as many Democrats as Republicans in mainstream newsrooms, journalists tended, with a few noble exceptions, to give a Democratic administration trust it didn't deserve. The president's invisibility was a giant red flag; they treated it as a restful break from having to monitor Trump's ravings 24/7. As Biden's decline grew more visible, people kept respectfully airing the administration's insultingly implausible claims: that there was a secretly brilliant president flitting around the back corridors

of the White House like Batman, while the videos of that same president acting befuddled on world stages were "cheap fakes."

And when journalists did cover the issue, many outlets that had been pitilessly clear about Trump's defects apparently couldn't bring themselves to be quite so blunt about a president they liked — in part because that would make their friends mad, as well as

the White House. A lot of articles about Biden's age ended up so couched in ethereally vague language about "questions" and "concerns," so defensively swaddled in equivocal context that the necessary SOS didn't get through.

As a result, viewers of Fox News understood the president's condition better than our audiences, which ought to be a huge wake-up call for us. We don't have the exact problem conservatives imagine, but we do have a problem. And the only way to fix it is to add more viewpoint diversity to our newsrooms.

We should do this not for the benefit of conservative journalists, or politicians, but for the benefit of our readers. When our newsrooms lopsidedly support one party, our readers miss much of the story — in this case, nearly all of it. We need conservatives inside the building, helping us overcome our natural biases, instead of outside, complaining about them. We owe our readers, and our country, nothing less.

Follow Megan McArdle @asymmetricinfo on X



Megan McArdle



NCAA approves Indianapolis to host all 3 men's finals, NIT in 2026, adds metrics for 2025

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indianapolis will host championships for all three NCAA divisions and the NIT in 2026, and the governing body's men's basketball committee has also approved including the Torvik and Wins Against Bubble rankings among metrics in evaluating teams for next year's tournament.

The Indiana capital and NCAA home was previously chosen in 2018 to host the men's Division I Final Four for the ninth time from April 4-6, 2026, at Lucas Oil Stadium. Finals for Divisions II and III have been added for the Sunday before the top-level title game at nearby Gainbridge Fieldhouse, with the NIT championship site to be determined. The NIT will hold its semifinals on April 2, 2026, at Butler's Hinkle Fieldhouse.

It will mark the second time one city has held all three men's championships, the first since Atlanta in 2013. Indianapolis and Dallas hosted all three women's championships in 2016 and 2023, respectively.

NCAA senior vice president of basketball Dan Gavitt said 2026 will be a celebration of basketball in Indiana and cited attendance of nearly 8,000 for DII and DIII champion-

ships in Atlanta in 2013 and sellout crowds for the NIT semifinals and finals last spring at Hinkle.

"It will be an awesome opportunity for student-athletes at the participating schools," Gavitt said in a release, "as well as a showcase for the legendary college basketball fans in Indiana."

In evaluating the 68 tournament teams — which will feature 31 conference-champion automatic qualifiers along with 37 at-large squads — Gavitt noted that members have increasingly referenced the Torvik and WAB rankings, along with other metrics such as KenPom, BPI and NET.

Torvik rankings feature projections that rank every team for the upcoming season. WAB measures how many more wins a team earns against its schedule than an average bubble team.

"Adding them to the team sheet ensures that all 12 (committee) members easily have access to this data," Gavitt said.

The committee also named Sun Belt Conference commissioner Keith Gill as vice chair for the 2024-25 season during its summer meeting. Gill will serve as chair the following season.

U.S. women's basketball team looks to continue Olympic dominance, seeking 8th straight gold in Paris

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

The U.S. women's basketball team is on a historic run, winning seven straight Olympic gold medals. While no one has come close to ending that streak, the rest of the world is getting better.

The Americans, who haven't lost an Olympic contest since 1992, won by an average of 16 points in the Tokyo Games. That was their smallest margin of victory since the streak started at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

The biggest challenge for the U.S. will once again be the limited prep time to practice as unit. The complete team will be together for the first time right before the Paris Games.

"The rest of the world is definitely improving," six-time Olympic participant Diana Taurasi said. "It's not as easy as it's looked over the years."

The 42-year-old Taurasi would know; she has been a part of the last five U.S. Olympic teams. She will be going for a record sixth gold medal in Paris.

The U.S. is trying to break a tie with the American men's basketball team for most consecutive gold medals. The men won seven straight from 1936-68. The two basketball teams hold the longest streak for golds in a traditional team sport in Olympic history.

The Americans understand what's ahead and are focused on the present and not their past. The goal is just to win in Paris and not look at the bigger picture of continuing the dynasty.

"That can't be your every day thought and then you lose sight of what it takes to get there," U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve said. "That's the biggest thing you have to block out. There's a huge narrative we can't escape with this being one of the greatest sports dynasties ever. It's our first experience together with this group and this is our special journey, it's about one gold medal."

It's definitely a special time for Brittney Griner, who is returning to the team for the Olympics. She missed the 2022 World Cup when she was wrongfully detained in Russia for 10 months. She has said that she'll only

play overseas with USA Basketball.

"We were all thinking of BG when she was away and we didn't know if this moment would be possible," Reeve said. "I'm thrilled for her personally and thrilled for our basketball team."

The Americans are in a pool with Japan, Belgium and Germany. The Japanese team were silver medalists at the 2021 Tokyo Games. Group A features Serbia, Spain, China, and Puerto Rico. Group B is comprised of Canada, France, Australia and Nigeria.

Play begins on Sunday, July 28 and ends with the gold medal game on the final day of the Olympics.

Here are some other things to watch for: Welcome back Lauren

Australia will receive a huge lift with the return of Lauren Jackson. The four-time WNBA MVP won three Olympic silver medals and one bronze with the Opals before retiring from playing in 2016 after knee injuries derailed her career. She returned for the 2022 World Cup in Australia and led the team to a bronze medal. Now the 43-year-old forward will be playing in her fifth Olympics.

"What Lauren has done is simply amazing," Australia coach Sandy Brondello said. "She has a great basketball IQ and certainly will help us."

Newcomers

Germany is making its first Olympic appearance led by the Sabally sisters — Nyara and Satou (who plays with the Dallas Wings). The Germans will host the 2026 World Cup and hope to have a strong showing in Paris where they are in a tough pool with the U.S., Belgium and Japan.

"We're just there to have fun," Nyara Sabally said. "It's basketball, you never know what's going to happen. I'm really confident in our team and I think we have a really good team."

Looking for a win

African nations haven't fared well at the Olympics, going 1-36 with Nigeria getting the lone victory in the 2004 Athens Games when they topped Korea in the 11th place contest. Nigeria will look to end that drought as the country plays in its third Olympics.

Greene drives in 3 runs, Tigers beat Guardians and win series

By LARRY LAGE
AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Riley Greene drove in three runs on three hits and Jack Flaherty pitched six strong innings, helping the Detroit Tigers beat the AL Central-leading Cleveland Guardians 10-1 on Thursday to win their four-game series.

Cleveland's Bo Naylor homered in the third and Carson Kelly countered with his seventh of the season in the bottom of the inning, restoring Detroit's three-run lead before the game turned into a rout.

Greene's two-run double in the fourth put the Tigers ahead 6-1, and Gio Urshela's three-run double gave them a 10-1 lead in the sixth inning.

Detroit is 6-1 in its last seven for its best stretch since winning six of its first seven games this season. But it is still four games below .500 and trails the Guardians by 13 games in the division.

"The production has picked up and the pitching has stabilized," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said. "Our guys like winning, and winning series, and we hadn't done that in a while."

The fourth-place Tigers will face Cleveland six more times this month, giving them an opportunity to make up some ground in the standings.

"At this point in the season, teams are hungry to beat us," said Guardians catcher Austin Hedges, who pitched two scoreless innings in his season debut on the mound and fifth career game as a pitcher. "Teams show up with their A game with an A energy and I think they prepare for us more

now.

"You have to do some serious game-planning to beat us and it's up to us to respond to that."

Flaherty (6-5) allowed two hits, struck out four and walked two in his return from a back injury. Facing a team with an AL-high five All-Stars, including four in the lineup, the 28-year-old right-hander lowered his ERA to 3.13.

Flaherty could be an attractive option should Detroit decide to sell ahead of this month's trade deadline. He signed a \$14 million, one-year deal with the Tigers in December.

Cleveland just made a recent move to bolster its banged-up rotation, and the early return wasn't favorable.

Spencer Howard (1-2) gave up four runs and seven hits over three innings. The 27-year-old right-hander, who was acquired from San Francisco last week, had a 5.63 ERA in two starts and five relief appearances this season with the Giants.

"A lot of work to do," he said.

Guardians right-hander Pedro Avila also was roughed up, allowing five runs, four earned, and three hits in 2 1/3 innings.

The Tigers scored in each of the first four innings and then added four more in the sixth.

Cleveland outfielder Will Brennan went 0 for 3 with a strikeout in his first game since returning from a rib injury. Infielder Gabriel Arias was optioned to Triple-A Columbus to clear a roster spot for Brennan before the series finale in Detroit.

Steele baffles Orioles as Cubs complete sweep with rout

By DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Justin Steele pitched seven innings of three-hit ball, Seiya Suzuki had three extra-base hits and three RBIs, and the Chicago Cubs blanked the Baltimore Orioles 8-0 Thursday night for a three-game sweep.

Dansby Swanson homered for the Cubs, who outscored the AL East leaders 21-2 in becoming the first team to sweep the Orioles in Baltimore since Tampa Bay in August 2021. Chicago came to town in last place in the NL Central, but they have won four in a row and six of seven to move within a half-game of third place.

"It's huge. It's the kind of thing you need to be doing, especially the spot we're in," Steele said. "The boys are rolling right now."

Chicago completed the sweep with a pair of shutouts, marking the first time the Orioles were blanked in successive games since June 23-24, 2021, during a season in which Baltimore finished 52-110.

"You hold that lineup to two runs in three days, you're pitching really well," Cubs manager Craig Counsell said.

Steele (2-3) celebrated his 29th birthday with a dominant performance. He retired his first 11 batters, didn't allow a runner past second base and struck out four without issuing a walk.

"Had some good sinkers and change-ups today, moving the fastball around," Steele said. "Just been feeling really good lately."

The only hits against the lefty were doubles by Ryan Mountcastle, Jorge



Mateo and Anthony Santander.

"I thought Justin was great," Counsell said. "Efficient, just on the attack, tons of strikes. They couldn't get the barrel to it. (The ball) was kind of in on their hands most of the night."

Steele's effort was a suitable encore to his previous outing, when he fired a two-hitter against the Angels for his first win of the season and first career complete game.

Suzuki hit RBI doubles in both the third and fifth innings before driving in a run with a triple in the seventh. His performance was part of a 13-hit attack in which Swanson contributed a solo homer, along with an RBI single in a three-run seventh.

"We did a lot of good things offensively," Counsell said. "Some big hits, kind of moving the line kind of night. Up and down the lineup it was a nice job."

Orioles starter Albert Suárez (5-3) gave up four runs and six hits in five innings. It was the 34-year-old's first start against the Cubs since 2016, when he was a rookie with the San Francisco Giants.

Baltimore has lost five of seven with the second-place New York Yankees coming to town for a three-game series prior to the All-Star break.

UP NEXT

Cubs: It's on to St. Louis for Chicago, which opens a four-game series against the Cardinals on Friday night.

Orioles: Rookie Cade Povich (1-3, 6.51 ERA) faces Gerrit Cole (1-1, 6.75 ERA) and the Yankees on Friday night to launch a three-game set.

Cubs place OF Cody Bellinger on injured list with broken finger

BALTIMORE (AP) — The Chicago Cubs have placed outfielder Cody Bellinger on the 10-day injured list with a left middle finger fracture.

Bellinger was hit by a pitch thrown by Cionel Pérez in the seventh inning of Wednesday night's 4-0 victory over the Orioles. Bellinger initially stayed in the game but left shortly thereafter.

There's no telling how long the injury will keep him sidelined.

"He's basically going to be shut down through the All-Star break, and when we come back we'll kind of start the range of

motion rehab with the finger," manager Craig Counsell said Thursday. "We'll see where that takes us."

Bellinger is batting .269 with nine homers and 37 RBIs.

It's a tough blow for the Cubs, who came into Thursday's series finale in Baltimore having won five of six.

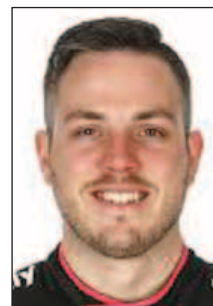
"We're losing the guy who hits third in the lineup, so that hurts," Counsell said. "You don't replace that, necessarily. We'll have to circle the wagons while he's out and do our best to continue what's been a pretty decent offensive stretch here."



Bubba Wallace fined \$50,000 by NASCAR for retaliatory contact against Alex Bowman



Bubba Wallace



Alex Bowman

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — NASCAR fined Bubba Wallace \$50,000 on Wednesday for retaliatory contact against race winner Alex Bowman on the cooldown lap of the Chicago Street Race.

Wallace door-slammed Bowman's car and sent it into the wall. Bowman said after the race he had spun Wallace during Sunday's event and the retaliation was warranted.

Bowman also advocated for Wallace not to be punished. Bowman said Wallace "has every right be mad."

"I'd be mad, too," Bowman said of Wallace. "I ruined his day. The restart was chaotic. I just made every wrong decision that I possibly could. I was fighting with my windshield wiper switch trying to get it working and I couldn't get it working. I was focused on that, missed the corner."

"I locked all four tires and just slid right into him. I just messed up and absolutely ruined his day. I'm pretty hard on myself when I make mistakes like that and I've been embarrassed about it since it happened. The rain delay was a lot of me just sitting there being embarrassed and being mad at myself."

Wallace's window net was down when he slammed into Bowman after the race, and the camera inside Bowman's car showed the driver was jostled by the hit.

NASCAR also plans to speak to Chase Elliott for his contact with Daniel Suarez after Sunday's race.

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News-Banner Scoreboard

BASKETBALL

WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
W	L	Pct	GB	
New York	19	4	.826	—
Connecticut	17	5	.773	1½
Chicago	9	13	.409	9½
Indiana	9	14	.391	10
Atlanta	7	14	.333	11
Washington	6	17	.261	13
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	16	6	.727	—
Las Vegas	14	7	.667	1½
Seattle	14	8	.636	2
Phoenix	12	10	.545	4
Los Angeles	5	17	.227	11
Dallas	5	18	.217	11½

Wednesday's Games
 New York 71, Connecticut 68
 Chicago 78, Atlanta 69
 Washington 89, Indiana 84
 Las Vegas 84, Seattle 79
 Phoenix 100, Dallas 84

Thursday's Games
 New York 91, Chicago 76

Friday's Games
 Las Vegas at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
 Phoenix at Indiana, 7:30 p.m.
 Minnesota at Seattle, 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games
 New York at Chicago, 1 p.m.
 Los Angeles at Dallas, 3:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games
 Phoenix at Connecticut, 1 p.m.
 Las Vegas at Washington, 3 p.m.
 Indiana at Minnesota, 4 p.m.
 Atlanta at Seattle, 6 p.m.

Baltimore	57	36	.613	—
New York	56	39	.589	2
Boston	51	41	.554	5½
Tampa Bay	46	47	.495	11
Toronto	43	50	.462	14
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Cleveland	57	35	.620	—
Minnesota	53	40	.570	4½
Kansas City	51	43	.543	7
Detroit	45	49	.479	13
Chicago	27	68	.284	31½
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Seattle	51	43	.543	—
Houston	48	44	.522	2
Texas	44	49	.473	6½
Los Angeles	38	54	.413	12
Oakland	35	60	.368	16½

Wednesday's Games
 Kansas City 6, St. Louis 4, 1st game
 Chicago White Sox 3, Minnesota 1, 1st game
 Minnesota 3, Chicago White Sox 2, 2nd game

Seattle 2, San Diego 0
 Detroit 5, Cleveland 4
 Chicago Cubs 4, Baltimore 0
 N.Y. Yankees 2, Tampa Bay 1
 Oakland 5, Boston 2
 Kansas City 8, St. Louis 5, 2nd game
 Houston 9, Miami 1
 L.A. Angels 7, Texas 2
 Toronto 10, San Francisco 6

Thursday's Games
 Detroit 10, Cleveland 1
 Toronto 10, San Francisco 3
 Chicago Cubs 8, Baltimore 0
 Boston 7, Oakland 0
 Tampa Bay 5, N.Y. Yankees 4
 Miami at Houston, late
 Seattle at L.A. Angels, late

Friday's Games
 L.A. Dodgers (Paxton 7-2) at Detroit (Skubal 10-3), 6:40 p.m.
 Oakland (Harris 1-3) at Philadelphia (Suárez 10-3), 6:40 p.m.
 Cleveland (Carrasco 3-6) at Tampa Bay (Bradley 3-4), 6:50 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Philadelphia	61	32	.656	—
Atlanta	51	40	.560	9
New York	47	45	.511	13½
Washington	42	52	.447	19½
Miami	32	60	.348	28½
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Milwaukee	54	40	.574	—
St. Louis	48	44	.522	5
Pittsburgh	45	48	.484	8½
Chicago	45	49	.479	9
Cincinnati	45	49	.479	9
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Los Angeles	55	39	.585	—
San Diego	49	47	.510	7
Arizona	46	47	.495	8½
San Francisco	45	49	.479	10

N.Y. Yankees (Cole 1-1) at Baltimore (Povich 1-3), 7:05 p.m.
 Kansas City (Ragans 5-6) at Boston (TBD), 7:10 p.m.
 Pittsburgh (TBD) at Chicago White Sox (Crocket 6-6), 8:10 p.m.
 Texas (Heaney 3-9) at Houston (Brown 6-6), 8:10 p.m.
 Seattle (Woo 3-1) at L.A. Angels (Anderson 8-8), 9:38 p.m.
 Toronto (Rodriguez 1-3) at Arizona (Nelson 6-6), 9:40 p.m.
 Minnesota (Ryan 6-5) at San Francisco (Harrison 4-4), 10:15 p.m.

Saturday's Games
 L.A. Dodgers at Detroit, 1:10 p.m.
 Pittsburgh at Chicago White Sox, 2:10 p.m.
 N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore, 4:05 p.m.
 Oakland at Philadelphia, 4:05 p.m.
 Cleveland at Tampa Bay, 4:10 p.m.
 Kansas City at Boston, 4:10 p.m.
 Texas at Houston, 4:10 p.m.
 Minnesota at San Francisco, 7:15 p.m.
 Seattle at L.A. Angels, 9:38 p.m.
 Toronto at Arizona, 10:10 p.m.

Colorado	33	61	.351	22
Wednesday's Games				
Kansas City 6, St. Louis 4, 1st game				
Seattle 2, San Diego 0				
Chicago Cubs 4, Baltimore 0				
N.Y. Mets 6, Washington 2				
Philadelphia 4, L.A. Dodgers 3				
Colorado 6, Cincinnati 5				
Kansas City 8, St. Louis 5, 2nd game				
Houston 9, Miami 1				
Milwaukee 9, Pittsburgh 0				
Arizona 7, Atlanta 5				
Toronto 10, San Francisco 6				
Thursday's Games				
Cincinnati 8, Colorado 1				
N.Y. Mets 7, Washington 0				
Pittsburgh 1, Milwaukee 0				
Toronto 5, San Francisco 3				
Chicago Cubs 8, Baltimore 0				
Philadelphia 5, L.A. Dodgers 1				
Miami at Houston, late				
Atlanta at Arizona, late				
Friday's Games				
L.A. Dodgers (Paxton 7-2) at Detroit (Skubal 10-3), 6:40 p.m.				
Oakland (Harris 1-3) at Philadelphia (Suárez 10-3), 6:40 p.m.				
Colorado (Gordon 0-1) at N.Y. Mets (Manaea 5-3), 7:10 p.m.				
Miami (Chirinos 0-0) at Cincinnati (Spies 2-2), 7:10 p.m.				
Pittsburgh (TBD) at Chicago White Sox (Crocket 6-6), 8:10 p.m.				
Washington (Rutledge 0-0) at Milwaukee (Peralta 6-4), 8:10 p.m.				
Chicago Cubs (Hendricks 1-7) at St. Louis (Gray 9-5), 8:15 p.m.				
Atlanta (Schwellenbach 2-4) at San Diego (Vásquez 2-4), 9:40 p.m.				
Toronto (Rodriguez 1-3) at Arizona (Nelson 6-6), 9:40 p.m.				
Minnesota (Ryan 6-5) at San Francisco (Harrison 4-4), 10:15 p.m.				
Saturday's Games				
L.A. Dodgers at Detroit, 1:10 p.m.				
Pittsburgh at Chicago White Sox, 2:10 p.m.				
Chicago Cubs at St. Louis, 2:15 p.m., 1st game				

Oakland at Philadelphia, 4:05 p.m.
 Colorado at N.Y. Mets, 4:10 p.m.
 Miami at Cincinnati, 4:10 p.m.
 Washington at Milwaukee, 4:10 p.m.
 Atlanta at San Diego, 7:15 p.m.
 Minnesota at San Francisco, 7:15 p.m.
 Chicago Cubs at St. Louis, 8:15 p.m., 2nd game
 Toronto at Arizona, 10:10 p.m.

Midwest League
High-A Midwest League
Tuesday's Games
 Fort Wayne 7, Great Lakes 0
Wednesday's Games
 Fort Wayne at Great Lakes, p.p.d.
 Fort Wayne at Great Lakes, p.p.d.
Thursday's Games
 (GM 1) Great Lakes 4, Fort Wayne 1
 (GM 2) late
Friday's Games
 Fort Wayne at Great Lakes, 7:05 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS
Thursday's Transactions
BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
 BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Selected the contract of RHP Burch Smith from Norfolk (IL). Optioned RHP Dillon Tate to Norfolk. Acquired RHP Colin Selby from Kansas City in exchange for cash considerations and optioned him to Norfolk. Transferred RHP Kyle Bradish to the 60-day IL from the 15-day IL.
 CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Reinstated CB Dominic Fletcher from the 10-day IL and optioned him to Charlotte (IL). Reassigned LHP Jake Eder to Birmingham (AL).
 CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Reinstated CF Will Brennan from the 10-day IL. Optioned SS Gabriel Arias

to Columbus (IL). Released RHP Wells Parsons.
 HOUSTON ASTROS — Reinstated RHP Jake Bloss from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Caleb Ort to Sugar Land (PCL).
 KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Optioned LHP Walter Pennington to Omaha (IL).
 LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Optioned RHP Jose Marte to Salt Lake (PCL). Recalled RHP Jack Kochanowicz from Rocket City (SL).
 MINNESOTA TWINS — Optioned RHP David Festa to St. Paul (IL).
 OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Placed C Tyler Soderstrom on the 10-day IL, retroactive to July 10. Selected the contract of RF Seth Brown from Las Vegas (PCL).
 TAMPA BAY RAYS — Sent LHP Richard Lovelady to Durham (IL) on a rehab assignment.
National League
 CHICAGO CUBS — Recalled OF Alexander Canario from Iowa (IL). Placed OF Cody Bellinger on the 10-day IL.
 MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Sent SS Joey Ortiz to Wisconsin (ML) on a rehab assignment.
 ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Optioned RHP Gordon Graceffo to Memphis (IL).
 WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Released OF Nick Senzel.
BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
 DETROIT PISTONS — Signed G Malik Beasley.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
 TENNESSEE TITANS — Agreed to terms with S Jamal Adams.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
 UTAH HC — Signed RW Jarome Iginla to a three-year, entry-level contract.

BASEBALL

MLB				
AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 7/12

FOR SALE

Miscellaneous

EVEREST VX3 ICE & WATER VENDING MACHINE This Everest VX3 water/ice vending machine is the perfect addition to any business looking to boost their profits. With the ability to dispense both water and ice, this unit is sure to be a hit with customers. The machine is in great working condition and has been slightly used, making it a cost-effective option for those looking to invest in a vending machine. This unit is made in the United States and comes with a unit quantity of 1. Included is an all season insulation package, ice shield ozone disinfection, and cold fusion energy recovery. It is perfect for placement in other beverage and snack vending locations, as well as in restaurant and food service settings. Don't miss out on the opportunity to make extra money with this Everest VX3 vending machine. \$45,000.00 260-273-7020 glacierpure@outlook.com

Pets



FOR SALE MINI DACHSHUNDS Looking for loving homes for mini male and female dachshund puppies they are very playful and loving they have good personalities. I will be giving them their first shots and deworming and vet check. Asking \$750.00 260 701 0666 andyryan121@hotmail.com

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

THE CITY OF Bluffton Street Department is accepting applications for a Laborer/Truck Driver. The minimum educational requirement is a high school diploma or equivalent. Applicants must possess and maintain a CDL License or obtain one within the time limit. The City utilizes E-Verify and follows EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk Treasurer's office, 128 East Market St, Bluffton, IN between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday or at www.blufftonindiana.net.

THE CITY OF Bluffton Clerk Treasurer's Office is accepting applications for a Deputy Clerk Treasurer. The minimum educational requirement is a high school diploma or equivalent. The City utilizes E-Verify and follows EEOC guidelines. Applications may be obtained from the Clerk Treasurer's office, 128 East Market St, Bluffton, IN between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday or at www.blufftonindiana.net. Application deadline is July 19, 2024.

Help Wanted

WELLS COUNTY COMMUNITY Corrections is seeking an exceptional Administrative Assistant to manage the administration of client files, front desk, and general fiscal accounting operations. Responsibilities include providing executive assistance to the Director and Administration Operations Coordinator and management of the day-to-day office operations. This position is ideal for a well-organized self-motivated individual who possesses outstanding administrative and clerical skills who wants a stable long-term position within a small operation. Our ideal candidate is a detailed oriented self-starter with the ability to take the initiative and work with minimal supervision in a team environment. Candidates applying must be dependable, a team player with a flexible attitude, and have the ability to prioritize the workload under pressure and multiple tasks in a fast-paced changeable environment and show Integrity and be sensitive to confidential information. The ideal candidate is professional and has excellent communication and technical skills. Candidate must have previous experience with small office or team operations and proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office professional software. The position requires detailed data entry as well as acuity working with numbers and budgets and the use of financial software as part of daily operations. Beginning Salary \$39,921 with benefits. Send resume to Attn. Executive Director Poindexter, Wells County Community Corrections, Suite 107, 102 West Market Street, Bluffton, IN. 46714 or blake.poindexter@wellsindiana.org.

VEHICLES

Campers/RV's

2018 THOR HURRICANE, Model 31Z, Class A RV, \$79,000, 260-307-3225.

Lottery Numbers

Thursday's Drawings HOOSIER LOTTERY
 Cash 5 — 12-15-16-24-42
Cash4Life — 05-14-31-42-52, Cash Ball: 02
Quick Draw Midday — 01-03-13-15-22-27-30-35-47-48-52-55-59-63-66-68-73-74-76-77, BE: 30
Daily Three-Midday — 09-06-04, SB: 00
Daily Three-Evening — 02-08-02, SB: 07
Daily Four-Midday — 00-00-05-04, SB: 00
Daily Four-Evening — 01-01-05-01, SB: 07
Quick Draw Evening — 05-12-18-19-21-22-32-33-34-37-39-42-45-54-57-63-67-71-72-75, BE: 05
Hoosier Lotto — Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$17 million
MEGA MILLIONS
 Estimated jackpot (for Friday): \$203 million
POWERBALL
 Estimated jackpot (for Saturday): \$54 million

SERVICES

Services

HANDYMAN SERVICES, NO job too big or too small, 260-353-9339.



BIDDING ENDS JULY 14 - Online Only - Various consignors, seller. Advertising, furniture, antiques, primitives, artifacts, band instruments, Bluffton American Legion helmets, stereo equipment, electronics, collectibles, sports memorabilia, retail video games, tools, lawn & garden, household. Sale manager Rod Fetters, 260-557-8451, TheSteffenGroup.com, 260-426-0633, steffengrp.com.
JULY 14-JULY 21 - (Online Only Auction) - Dave and Brenda Double, seller. 40 Year collection of trains, 2 realistic model train railway layouts, professionally milled lumber, downsizing custom craft store, shop tools, porcelain & other dolls, antiques, furniture, McCoy cookie jars, Hull pottery, Sure-Trac utility trailer, Commercial Cyclone Rake. Preview: July 18 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 540 W US 224, Uniondale. Pat Carter, sale manager, 260-273-8294, SteffenGroup.com, 260-273-8294, SteffenGroup.com, 824-3006.
JULY 16 - 2-6 p.m. ET - (Online) - Farm: William C. Lee Trust. Property Location: 6 miles south of Angola, IN, along E 700 S in Pleasant Lake, IN. 156+/- total acres, tillable farmland, timber, recreational, pole barn, chicken barn, Steuben Twp., Steuben Co. Tract 1: 101+/- acres. Tract 2: 50+/- acres. Tract 3: 5+/- acres. Open House by appointment: Rick Johnloz, 260-827-8181, Neal Wolther, 260-336-2219, Jason Johnloz, 260-273-9177. HaldermanRealEstate.com, FarmManagement.com, 800-424-2324.
JULY 20 - 9 a.m. Real Estate, 9:30 Personal Property - Charles (Chuck) Bertsch Estate, owner. 3898E 400N, Bluffton, 1 1/2 story, 2-bed-room home, 36x56 pole barn, 1 acre, Lancaster Township. Hit & Miss engines (Fairbanks Morse 5 hp, Fairbanks Morse 1 1/2 or 2 hp, more), oil well display, 25-30 long guns and pistols, ammo, drill press, mill, snowblowers, trailer, M80 Military hot water heater, chain saws, welders, industrial 3 phase motors, tandem bike, yard tools, hand tools, Dixon ZTR zero turn mower, garden tractors, rear tire tiller, more. MizLehmanRealtors.com, Auctioneers.com, www.mizlehman.com, 260-589-2903.
JULY 27- 10 a.m. - Elmer J. Jr. & Delia Mae Graber, owners. 8350 E 85W, South Whitley. Productive, tillable land, home, outbuildings, Whitley County. Offered in 4 Tracts, 38±A. Tract 1: 12.5±A farm-land, soils: Pawamo, Blount loam, Glynwood loam. Tract 2: 5.5±A, 7 bedroom home, outbuildings. Tract 3: 2±A, 40'x90' pole building. Tract 4: 18±A farmland, soils: Pawamo, Glynwood loam, Blount loam. Purchase individually or combination. Inspection: July 20, 10 a.m.-noon. Sale manager,

Services

MARV'S CONSTRUCTION

Room additions, fix old saggy floors, all types remodeling. Redo bathrooms, old foundation repairs. Marv Schwartz: 260-525-8877.



Ritter Cox, 260-609-3306, SchraderRealEstate.com and AuctionCompany.com, 800-451-2709, SchraderAuction.com.
JULY 28 - 4 p.m. - Online Only - Multiple consignors, owners. 1,000+ lots! 50+ firearms, long guns & hand guns, large selection of ammo, gun safe, Honda generator, hand tools, household items, lawn & garden, 300 lots of collectible vintage dollhouses, mini dollhouse furniture sets with accessories and much more! Preview July 25, 3-5 p.m., 812 Elm Street, Decatur. Pick up July 29, 1-6 p.m., July 30, 9 a.m.-noon. KruckebergAuction.com & RealtyLLC.com, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.
BIDDING STARTS CLOSING AUGUST 11 - 6 p.m. EST - Jeanette Furhman & Robert Furhman estate, owner. 6 p.m.: Cape Cod style, 3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath, 3,093 sf, full basement w/Hitzer stove, Geothermal w/backup LP furnace, Generac generator, pole barns, 2 car attached garage, all sitting on 10+/- wooded acres! 6:30: Gator, Track loader, mower, 2012 Chevy Silverado, tractor, 3 point attachments, tilt bed trailer, outdoor items, hand & power tools, long & hand guns, antiques, primitives, furniture, household items, more! Preview July 29, 5-7 p.m., 4182 W 900 N, Decatur. Pick up Aug. 12, 2-6 p.m. KruckebergAuction.com & RealtyLLC.com, 260-724-7402, kjauction.com.

Public Notices

NOTICE
 In accordance with Indiana Code 5-15-6-3 requiring prior notification to individuals when records will be destroyed:
 Notice to any individuals born in the year 2002, who received special education services in Adams and/or Wells Counties. Please contact Adams Wells Special Services no later than August 9, 2024 if you wish to receive copies of your special education records. All records requested for pick-up and not picked up and non-requested records for persons born in the year 2002 will be permanently destroyed after August 16, 2024. If you wish to request records, you must call (260)824-5880 to do so. Records must be picked up by the person who received services unless otherwise legally designated.
 nb 6/18 through 8/7 hspaxlp

SUDOKU ANSWER

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

Marathon Oil reaches settlement with EPA for environmental violations

By STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press

The federal government announced a \$241.5 million settlement with Marathon Oil on Thursday for alleged air quality violations at the company's oil and gas operations on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Justice said the settlement requires Marathon to reduce climate- and health-harming emissions from those facilities and will result in over 2.3 millions tons worth of pollution reduction.

"This historic settlement — the largest ever civil penalty for violations of the Clean Air Act at stationary sources — will ensure cleaner air for the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and other communities in North Dakota, while holding Marathon accountable for its illegal pollution," said Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Marathon officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Houston-based Marathon operates 169 well pads in North Dakota, where the company extracts oil and natural gas

A proposed consent decree for implementing the settlement says the company does not admit any liability over the allegations, but that the two sides agree it will avoid litigation and serve the public interest.

A spokesperson for the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation based at the Fort Berthold Reservation did not immediately respond to a request for comment either.

While Marathon is the country's 22nd-largest oil producer based on 2022 data, the federal agencies said, it's also the seventh-largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas industry. Much of its emissions come from flaring, the industry practice of burning waste gases, including methane, which the EPA says is 25 times more potent of a contributor to climate change than carbon dioxide. While flaring burns off methane and other pollutants, it's not completely efficient, so significant quantities still get released into the atmosphere, which the agencies said can have health impacts on nearby communities.

The settlement is part of an EPA climate change enforcement

initiative that focuses in part on reducing methane emissions from oil and gas production and from landfills.

It calls for Marathon to eliminate the equivalent of over 2.25 million tons of carbon-dioxide emissions over the next five years, which the agencies said was tantamount to taking 487,000 cars off the road for one year, and will also eliminate nearly 110,000 tons of volatile organic compound emissions, which contribute to asthma and other respiratory diseases.

"This settlement is a major win for the health and future of our Tribal communities, including people and families who are often overburdened by pollution," said KC Becker, the EPA's regional administrator. "As a result of the agreement, Marathon has and will continue to take comprehensive measures to come into compliance and reduce harmful emissions across hundreds of production sources. These investments will improve air quality and reduce respiratory illnesses across the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and western North Dakota."

The agencies said the case is the first of its kind against an oil

and gas producer for "violations of major source emissions permitting requirements under the Clean Air Act's Prevention of Significant Deterioration program." They also said the \$64.5 million civil penalty Marathon must pay is the largest-ever penalty imposed for "stationary source violations," which include facilities such as oil and gas tank systems.

The settlement is the largest of 12 similar efforts by the Biden administration to target emissions from the oil and gas industry, with a penalty that's more than double the 11 previous settlements combined, according to David Uhlmann, EPA assistant administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

Marathon also agreed to invest \$177 million in extensive compliance measures, much of it by the end of the year, that the agencies said will "significantly reduce" harmful emissions from 169 existing facilities on state land and on the reservation, as well as at new facilities built in North Dakota.

The settlement is part of a complaint and proposed consent decree officially filed Thursday in federal court in North Dakota. The

complaint alleges that Clean Air Act violations at nearly 90 Marathon facilities resulted in thousands of tons of illegal pollution. And it alleges that Marathon submitted artificially low estimates of its emissions to avoid permitting requirements.

The consent decree is subject to a 30-day public comment period, but the settlement was welcomed by environmental watchdogs.

"It's encouraging to see EPA holding Marathon accountable for flagrant violations of the Clean Air Act," Jen Duggan, executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project, said in a statement. "Failing to obtain permits for dozens of oil and gas operations, and releasing thousands of tons of illegal air pollution as a result, is irresponsible and endangers air quality, public health and the global climate. These penalties, along with requirements to reduce pollution, should send a warning signal to other oil companies that don't follow the rules."

In its latest financial report, Marathon said it earned \$297 million in the three-month period that ended March 31, posting revenue of \$1.55 billion.

Biden says he's going to 'complete the job' despite calls to bow out

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden used his highly anticipated news conference Thursday to deliver a forceful defense of his foreign and domestic policies, and batted away questions about his ability to serve another four years even as he flubbed a reference to Donald Trump in one of his first answers.

"I'm not in this for my legacy. I'm in this to complete the job I started," Biden said as he insisted his support among the electorate was strong and he would stay in the race and would win.

Fumbles notwithstanding, the president pushed back at every suggestion that was slowing down or showing noticeable signs of decline, or that he was not in command of the job. But he was facing a growing chorus of calls from lawmakers, celebrities and other prominent Democrats to step aside from the 2024 race.

"My schedule has been full bore," he declared. "So if I slow down and I can't get the job done, that's a sign that I shouldn't be doing it. But there's no indication of that yet — none."

Democrats are facing an intractable problem. Top donors, supporters and key lawmakers are doubtful of Biden's abilities to carry on his reelection bid after his disastrous June 27 debate performance, but the hard-fighting 81-year-old president refuses to give up as he prepares to take on Trump in a rematch.

"I'm determined on running but I think it's important that I allay fears — let them see me out there," he said.

The first questioner of Biden's press conference asked about him losing support among many of his fellow Democrats and unionists, and asked about Vice President Kamala Harris. Biden was at first defiant, saying the "UAW endorsed me, but go ahead," meaning the United Auto Workers. But then he mixed up Harris and Trump, saying, "I wouldn't have picked Vice President Trump to be Vice President if she wasn't qualified."

Trump weighed in live on Biden's news conference with a post on his social media network of a video clip of the president saying "Vice President Trump."

Trump added sarcastically, "Great job, Joe!"

Most of the hourlong press conference was vintage Biden: He gave long answers on foreign policy and told well-worn anecdotes. He used teleprompters for his opening remarks on NATO, which ran about eight minutes. Then the teleprompters lowered and he took a wide range of questions from 10 journalists about his mental acuity, foreign and domestic policy and — mostly — the future of his campaign.

"I believe I'm the best qualified to govern. I believe I'm the best qualified to win," Biden said, adding that he will stay in the race until his staff says, "There's no way you can win."

"No one's saying that," he said. "No poll says that."

Earlier, Biden's campaign laid out what it sees as its path to keeping the White House in a new memo, saying that winning the "blue wall" states of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan is the "clearest pathway" to victory. And it declared no other Democrat would do better against Trump.

"There is also no indication that anyone else would outperform the president vs. Trump," said the memo from campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon and cam-

paign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez that was obtained by The Associated Press.

The memo sought to brush back "hypothetical polling of alternative nomi-

nees " as unreliable and it said such surveys "do not take into account the negative media environment that any Democratic nominee will encounter."

Online Directory

Check out these websites of local & area companies and businesses.

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STEFFEN Financial Group stefffinancial.com	JC'S GARAGE DOOR SALES & SERVICE jcsгарagedoor.com	Daniel's JEWELERS daniels-jewelers.net
INDIANA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE Bluffton Office (260) 824-2234 infarmbureau.com	3 RIVERS 3riversfcu.org	Myers FUNERAL HOMES myersfuneralhomes.com
WELLS COUNTY 4-H GROWS HERE extension.purdue.edu/wells	RiverStone DENTAL riverstonedental.net	Bluffton Tire blufftontire.com
Frederick Cole & Harmsid MEMORIAL CHAPEL thegmcfamily.com	HIDAY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP hidaymotors.com	Edward Jones EdwardJones.com
INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS icav.us	Jerry Flack & Associates jerryflackinsuranceandinvestments.com	La Fontaine Center lafontainecenter.org
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