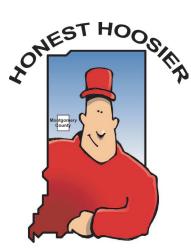
#### ■TODAY'S VERSE

**Philippians 1:21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (KJV)

#### ■ **AWL** SHASTA



Shasta is a 3 year old female black domestic shorthair cat available for adoption from AWL (The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County) since 11/21/24. Shasta is friendly, playful, and loves to cuddle!! Shasta is ready for her furrever home! AWL is open Monday - Friday from 12:15p-5p and Saturday's from 9:30a-3p.



Went to buy a birthday card the other day for a friend and realized the price of the card is about what I was going to spend on the present!

# WEDNESDAY | JUNE 18, 2025 PROPERTY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper

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# Historic Elston Homestead Next on Tour

Nestled in the heart of Crawfordsville, Wabash College's historic Elston Homestead is surrounded by a landscape that blends natural beauty with rich local heritage. The meticulously maintained grounds serve as a living testament to the property's storied past, where each towering tree and carefully placed shrub tells a silent story of generations past.

While comprehensive records of the original gardens remain limited, dedicated preservation efforts have ensured that the landscape continues to honor its historical roots. A 1973 tree assessment provides a fascinating glimpse into this ongoing stewardship, noting the care required for majestic specimens like the tulip tree damaged in a storm, the pin oak suffering from a cankered wound, and the hard maple near the formal garden, which required specialized treatment to preserve its health. This thoughtful attention to the landscape has allowed the grounds to thrive, providing shade, beauty, and a connection to Crawfordsville's natural history.

The Elston Homestead itself has seen many changes since its construction in the 1830s, yet it remains a vibrant hub of hospitality. For nearly 80 years, the home hosted gatherings that brought together the leading figures of both Wabash College and the town. Following the passing of Isaac "Ike"

See Elston Page 3





Nestled in the heart of Crawfordsville is Wabash College's historic Elston Homestead. The home continues to be a welcoming space where "town and gown" connect. Photos courtesy Flower Lovers Garden Club

#### Join the party

Who: Flower Lovers Garden

Club

What: 17th Annual Garden &

Arts Tour

When: Sunday June 29 11-5

(Rain or Shine)

Where: There are 8 different gardens on the tour and the addresses are listed on the tickets along with a map

Cost: This is a ticketed event and tickets are \$12, 12 and under free – tickets available NOW at following locations and would be a great Mother's Day gift.

- ProGreen Garden CenterDavidson's Greenhouse
- Ryan's Flowers
- Country Hearts & Flowers
- Just BecauseMilligan's Flowers
- Milligan's FlowersCrawfordsville Library
- Tickets will also be available the day of the tour at Pike Place from 11-2

#### ■THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

A new study found Indiana is the No. 18
Most Dangerous State for 'Aging in Place.'
A record 4.2 million Americans are expected to turn 65 this year – and nearly 75 percent want to remain home as they age, increasing the risk of medical complications and social isolation. Seniorly released a study on the Safest and Most Dangerous States for Aging in Place after analyzing data from the CDC, CMS, Census Bureau, and HUD. Ten key factors were analyzed in all 50 states and D.C. including home health aides, ER wait times, weather safety, smart homes, fatal car crashes, and financial security.

Despite its reputation as a retirement destination, Florida is the No. 1 most dangerous ■ state for 'Aging in Place' and Utah is the No. 1 safest. The 10 safest states were largely in the West and Midwest. The 10 most dangerous states were largely in the Southeast. Which U.S. counties are most in harm's way this hurricane season? Our friends at LawnStarter ranked 2025's Most (& Least) Affected Counties by Hurricanes, analyzing 318 FEMA-designated counties across 4 categories and 10 metrics tied to storm history, financial exposure, and disaster recovery capacity. Some findings? A staggering \$5.8 billion in expected annual hurricane damages is concentrated in just 10 counties, nearly one-third of the projected nationwide loss. In addition, 215 of 318 ranked counties (68%) experienced a majority, 50% or more, of their hurricanes as Category 3-5 over the past decade.

The Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library, in proud collaboration with the Crispus Attucks

Museum, Indiana University Bloomington,
Madam CJ Walker Legacy Center and Indiana
Landmarks, announces a powerful multi-day commemoration of Juneteenth. From music to journalism, from global revolutions to local heroes, this celebration offers a profound reflection on freedom, resistance, and the enduring strength of the Black experience in America, and specifically, in Indianapolis. It all begins on Thursday, June 19 at Noon. Tickets and more info at: https://www.vonnegutlibrary.org/events/.

#### **Montgomery Minute**

Looking for your creative outlet? Then consider the Craft Collective. a crafting club for adults. It meets the third Thursday of the month at the Crawfordsville District Public Library at 5:30 p.m. Come on along and create a new project every month. Supplies and instruction will be provided. However, be sure to register in advance. You can go to https://crawfordsvillelibrary. in.gov/ for more information and to register.

#### ■INSIDE, PAGE 5 STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL



#### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In the age of noise, clarity is rebellion."

— George Orwell

#### JOKE OF THE DAY

Why'd Little Johnny throw a stick of butter out the window?
He wanted to see a butter-fly!

# Butch Recalls Old Wooden Benches

Like many small towns in days past, Darlington

had several wooden benches located on the sidewalks in front of the businesses on Main



Dale
Columnist

Street. Just about any time of day, and late into the evening, there were always local residents sitting on the benches, talking to their friends, discussing the latest news and watching the world go by. Several years ago I wrote a poem entitled "The Old Wooden Bench."

"On Main Street by the old cafe there rests a common sight--A wooden bench, so wobbily now, and lonesome in the night. They claim the bench is only junk, An eyesore many say; But childhood days and faces dim, Cannot be tossed away.

Ol' Doozy Dane and Harley Cain, they passed

See Butch Page 3



127 E. Main St. 103 P.O. Box 272 Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933 Main 765-361-0100 www.thepaper24-7.com

#### BUTCH'S FLASHBACK TRIVIA



Do You Recognize This 1964 Linden **Graduate?** 

HINT: He became a race car driver and actually drove in the Indy 500. Answer on Page 5

#### CRAWFORDSVILLE LIBRARY 1,000 BOOKS





Lynnette Kolota, age 4, Lionel Kolota, age 3, have completed the Crawfordsville District Public Library program 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. Lynnette and Lionel are the children of Danny and Ari Kolota. Lynnette's favorite book is Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina. Lionel's favorite book is Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak. Mom said, "We LOVE the library!! Our kids always look forward to our weekly trips and the programs!"

## The Paper

of Montgomery County An Independent Newspaper founded in 2004

Vol. 21 | Issue 69

Sen. Phil Boots, President USPS Publication Number: O22-679 **Annual Print Subscription: \$89 Annual Online Subscription: \$42** To subscribe: circulation@ thepaper24-7.com

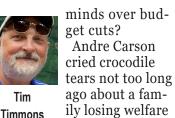
To contact news: news@thepaper24-7.com To submit legal notices: Legals@thepaper24-7.com For billing: business@thepaper24-7.com

## Why Are We Opposed to Cutting Government?

How did we get this far off track? It's been almost a month and the grumbling is still going on over cuts in the budget.

Let me see if I have this straight? The one thing that pretty much everyone could agree on . . . say over the last millennia or so . . . is government waste. Democrat, Republican, conservative, liberal, independent, left, right, gay straight, somewhere in the middle . . . didn't seem to matter. We all knew the government wasted money like the Colts waste chances to win games.

Right? Are we in agreement on that point at least? So how come now folks are losing their



Timmons Columnist

benefits. Of course Andre never met a government handout he didn't want to pay for with your tax dollars, so I guess that wasn't a huge surprise.

Thing is, that's not how it's supposed to work. Wasn't the idea of government handouts to help those in need on a temporary basis? Heavy emphasis on temporary.

Like a lot of you, I remember a time when most people had a different outlook. "I'd rather dig ditches than be on welfare." My Grandpa said it. I'll bet many of yours did, too,

Later, that morphed to flipping burgers instead of digging ditches. Hey, I worked at McDonald's briefly in high school. Think I'd rather dig ditches.

For those who can't stand Trump, you'll get no argument from me. The man is as hard to like as a page full of algebraic problems on a timed test. And sorry Trump fans, this big beautiful bill that ADDS to the deficit is going the wrong way.

That said, there is also the point that real cuts are being made. Some government jobs and departments are being eliminated. Hooray for us!

It was painful to get to where we are today and that dear friends is a pain that our grandchildren will feel economically. It's going to be a

pain to fix it, but isn't that worth it?

Here's hoping that's at least some folks can get past the Trump hatred, that they can get on board with the idea that we have to change course. Let's stress "some folks." There will always be those who want the current state of government to remain unchanged – for the free handouts to continue, for a nation that is more socialistic than democratic. Yup, I'd rather dig ditches.

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically on Wednesdays in The Paper. Timmons is the publisher of The Paper and can be contacted at ttimmons@ thepaper24-7.com.

# HHSB's Caryn Heisel Celebrates 10 Years

Caryn Heisel, Business Development Officer, is celebrating 10 years with Hoosier Heartland State Bank.

Caryn joined the HHSB team in 2015, working as an Assistant Branch Manager and Branch Manager before becoming a Business Development Officer. As a Business Development Officer, she works with HHSB's commercial customers to customize business solutions that fit their unique needs - from cash management and remote deposit capture, to IntraFi, Merchant Services, and more.

Caryn is active in the community, serving as Caryn Heisel a Chamber Ambassa-

dor, a Board Member for Kiwanis and Kids Closet, an Associate Board Member for Durham Home, Inc., and a member of Crawfordsville Main Street's Organization Committee. She

is also a co-founder of Waynetown Police Department's Blue Gives Back Program.

"Caryn Heisel has been a tremendous asset to HHSB over the past 10 years," said Cody Hargis, HHSB's Assistant Vice President of Retail and Business Development. "Her commitment to building strong relationships and serving our communities is evident in everything she does. We're proud to celebrate this milestone and grateful for her continued contributions!

Caryn is a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. She attended North Montgomery High School and Indiana State University. She and her husband, Bob, have 3 children: Bella, Alex, and Jackson. When she isn't working or attending community events, she likes to attend North Montgomery sporting events.

Contact Caryn Heisel today at cheisel@myhhsb.com or (765) 364-



The Paper Visit us online:



# thenaner24-7.co

## TO THE OWNERS OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE

DECEDENT

**PUBLIC NOTICES** 

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE of a decree to me di Montgomery Superior Court of Montgomery County, Indiana, in Cause No.: 54D02-2407-MF-000816, wherein EverBank,N.A., was Plaintiff, and Estate of Patricia A. Conkright, was/were Defendant(s), requiring me to make the sum as provided for in said Decree with interest and cost, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, on the 9th day of July, 2025, at the hour of 10am or as soon thereafter as is possible, at 600 Memorial Drive, Crawfordsville, IN 47933, the fee simple of the simple of the whole body of Real Estate in Montgomery County

AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Part of Section 31, Township 19 north, Range 4 West, described as follows Begining 916 feet West and 28 feet South of the center of said Section and unning thence West 138 feet; thence North 100 feet, thence East 138 feet, thence South 100 feet to the place of begining, in Montgomery County, Indiana.

More Commonly Known As: 509 Wayne Avenue, Crawgfordsville, IN
17933 54-07-31-331-025.000-030

Together with rents, issues, income, and profits thereof, said sale will be e made without relief from valuation or appraisement laws.

Rvan Needham Jennifer L Snook Sheriff of Montgomery County MARINOSCI LAW GROUP, P.C. 2804 Boilermake Court, Ste. A Valparaiso, IN 46383

Telephone: (219) 386-4700 509 Wayne Avenue, Crawfordsville, IN 479333 The Sheriff's Department does not warrant the accuracy of the street address published herein

SERVICE DIRECTED TO: Estate of Patricia A. Conkright 509 Wayne Avenue Crawfordsville, IN 47933

PL5112 6/4 6/11 6/18 3t hspaxlp

IN THE MONTGOMERY SUPERIOR COURT STATE OF INDIANA

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY CAUSE NO. 54D02-2505-MF-000525 UNIVERSITY LENDING GROUP

UNKNOWN HEIRS-AT-LAW, BENEFICIARIES, LEGATEES, DEVISEES AND DONEES OF MARY A. LARGENT UNKNOWN HEIRS-AT-LAW, BENEFICIARIES, LEGATEES, DEVISEES AND DONEES OF RUTH M. HOLT UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS

Defendants.
NOTICE OF SUIT SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION TO: Unknown Heirs-at-Law, Beneficiaries, Legatees, Devisees and Donees of Mary A. Largent and Unknown Heirs-at-Law, Beneficiaries, Legatees, Devisees and Donees of Ruth M. Holt

Plaintiff, by counsel, hereby gives Notice of the Complaint filed in the tgomery Superior Court against the above-named Defendants. Plaintiff also filed an Affidavit of a competent person showing that the residence and whereabouts of Defendants, Unknown Heirs-at-Law, Beneficiaries, Legatees, Devisees and Donees of Mary A. Largent and Unknown Heirs-at-Law, Beneficiaries, Legatees, Devisees and Donees of Ruth M. Holt upon diligent inquiry are unknown. The cause of action is for default on a promissory note and foreclosure upon a mortgage on the following descried real estate: LEGAL DESCRIPTION

PART OF THE WEST HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION FIVE (5), TOWNSHIP EIGHTEEN (18) NORTH, RANGE FOUR (4) WEST, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SOUTH MARGIN OF TUTTLE AVENUE IN THE CITY OF CRAWFORDSVILLE, 383 FEET WEST OF THE EAST LINE OF SAID WEST HALF OF SAID NORTHEAST QUARTER SECTION AND RUNNING THENCE EAST 70 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 210 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A POINT 150 FEET NORTH OF THE NORTH MARGIN OF CHESTNUT STREET IN SAID CITY OF CRAWFORDSVILLE, THENCE WEST 70 FEET; THENCE NORTH 210 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF

State Parcel #: 54-10-05-113-050.000-030

Address: 801 Tuttle Avenue, Crawfordsville, IN 47933 Therefore, said Defendants are hereby notified of the filing and pendency of said Complaint and that unless Defendants file an answer within (30) days of the last publication of this notice, default judgment may be entered against said Defendants for the relief sought in the Complaint.

LOGS Legal Group LLP C. Wesley Pagles (37185-49) Nathan R. Duvelius (35520-15) 4805 Montgomery Road, Suite 320 Norwood, OH 45212 Phone: (513) 396-8100 Fax: (847) 627-8805 Email: logsoik@logs.com Counsel for Plaintiff 6/3/2025 Dated Montgomery Superior Clerk, Court

PL5119 6/11 6/18 6/25 3t hspaxlp

MONTGOMERY SUPERIOR COURT In Re the Estate of:

NOTICE OF ESTATE ADMINISTRATION- PUBLICATION

Notice is given that on this date, Niel Kluszczynski and Julie Brioli were

appointed co-personal representatives of the Estate of Debra Kay Kluszczynski, who died on April 22, 202 5. All persons who have claims against this estate, whether or not now due, nust file their claims in the office of the Clerk of this Court within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or within nine (9) months after the decedent's death, whichever is earlier, or the claims will be

Dated and signed in Montgomery, Indiana, on May 22, 2025. Sondra K Sixberry

Janet G. Horvath (24238-53) Athora Law Group, LLC 1251 N Eddy Street, Suite 203 South Bend, IN 4661 Telephone: (574) 575-4147 E-mail: janet@athoralaw.com PL5118 6/11 6/18 2t hspaxlp

City of Crawfordsville, Indiana

Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Annaxation Ordinance Notice is hereby given that on July 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., the Crawfordsville Common Council will hold a public hearing on a proposed ordinance to annex property into the City of Crawfordsville. The public hearing will be held in the City Building's Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, 300 East Pike Street, Crawfordsville, Indiana. Interested persons will be allowed to testify and be heard at the hearing.

The property proposed to be annexed is comprised of approximately 25.28 The property proposed to be annexed is comprised of approximatery 2.3.26 acres located in the southern part of the City near Purple Heart Parkway and US Highway 231 South: near the New Hope Christian Church. Property addressed as: 2520 S US Highway 231, also commonly known as: Parcel 54-10-17-300-005.000-025 and the associated right-of-way. A fiscal plan relating to the proposed annexation, descriptions and maps identifying the property, and the proposed annexation ordinance are available for inspection and copying at the office of the City's Director of Planning and Building Services, on the second floor of the City Building, address above

If accommodations are required to attend or participate in this meeting, please call 765-364-5160.

PL5121 6/18 1t hspaxlp

#### TO THE OWNERS OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE By virtue of a certified copy of a decree to me directed from the Clerk

of Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Indiana, in Cause No. 54D01-2501-MF-000062 wherein Nationstar Mortgage LLC was Plaintiff, and Jakob Brown and Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC were Defendants, requiring me to make the sum as provided for in said Decree with interest and cost, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, on the 9th day of July, 2025, at the hour of 10:00 A.M. or as soon thereafter as is possible, at 600 Memorial Drive, Crawfordsville, IN 47933, the fee simple of the whole body of Real Estate in Montgomery County, Indiana.

LOT NUMBERED TWO (2), AS THE SAME IS KNOWN AND

DESIGNATED ON THE RECORD PLAT OF FISHERO AND FISHERO'S FIRST ADDITION TO THE CITY OF CRAWFORDSVILLE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, INDIANA, AS THE SAME APPEARS OF RECORD IN DEED RECORD 159, PAGES 511, 512 AND 513, IN THE RECORDERS OFFICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, INDIANA.

More commonly known as: 209 Louise Ave, Crawfordsville, IN 47933 Parcel No.: 07-33-333-038.000-030

Together with rents, issues, income, and profits thereof, said sale will be made without relief from valuation or appraisement laws.

Ryan Needham
Sheriff of Montgomery County Alan W. McEwan 24051-49 Doyle & Foutty, P.C. 41 E Washington Street

Suite 400

209 Louise Ave

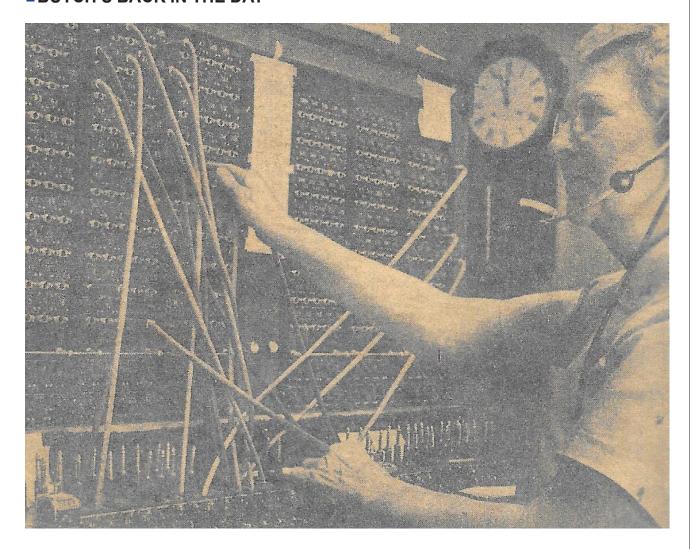
Union Township 209 Louise Ave, Crawfordsville, IN 47933 Indianapolis, IN 46204

Street Address SHERIFF FILE NO: The Sheriff's Department does not warrant the accuracy of the street

addressed published hereir SERVICE DIRECTED TO: Jakob Brown

Crawfordsville, IN 47933 MANNER OF SERVICE: Sheriff NOTICE DOYLE & FOUTTY, P.C. IS A DEBT COLLECTOR PL5116 6/4 6/11 6/18 3t hspaxlp

#### ■BUTCH'S BACK IN THE DAY



Back in the day, almost every small town in Montgomery County had their own telephone office with an operator manning the office to connect people when they run the line on the oak wall phone. Shown above is Lena Carroll, one of Darlington's four operators in 1956. Two years later, the residents had modern dial phones and the local operator became a thing of the past.

## Get Your Entry Ready for Sound & Silence Art Show

The Carnegie Museum of Montgomery County is currently seeking artwork for the 2025 Community Art Show, Sound & Silence, highlighting places and the people of Montgomery County. Submissions are due by July 19, 2025.

The theme asks the community to present artwork of any variety that captures sound, silence, or both for its annual Community Art Show Sound & Silence.

From the thump, thump, thump of the big bass drum in a parade to the whisper of dragonfly wings to a seemingly quiet sunrise, sound and silence are all around us.

Professional and amateur artists are welcome to submit work for consideration. Children's art is welcome too! Art will be returned to the artist at the conclusion of the exhibit.

exhibit. Artists should send im-

ages of their art to Janna Bennett at jbennett@ carnegiemuseum.in.gov or call (765) 362-4622 to make an appointment to show the work or to make other arrangements to view potential art work. Submission deadline is July 19. A decision will be made by the curatorial team by July 25 on the selection of art to be included.

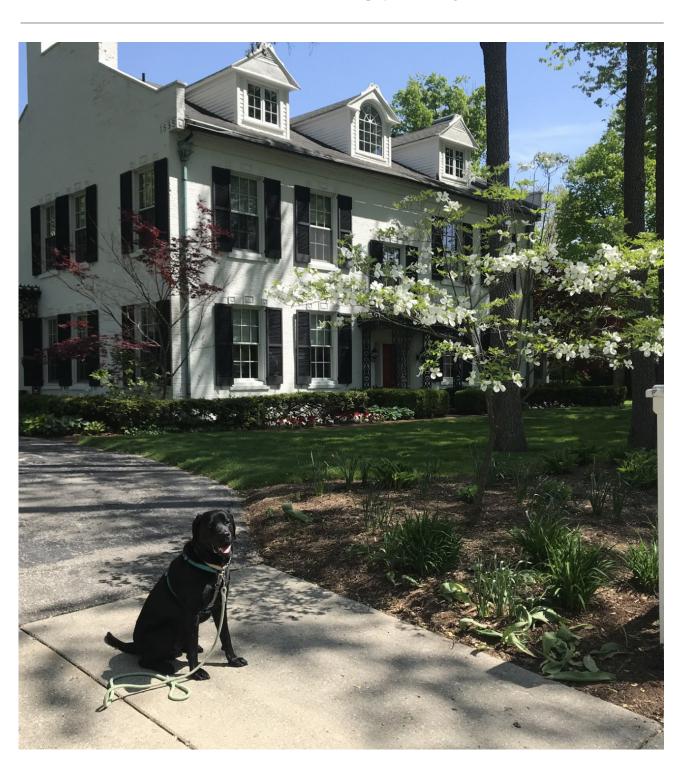
The exhibit will be on display from Aug. 9 to

During the months of June and July, the Carnegie Museum will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and other times by appointment. In August, we will return to our normal public hours of Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the Carnegie Museum is free, and the building

is wheelchair and stroller

accessible.

Oct. 25.



Elston Homestead is one of 8 different gardens on the tour and tickets are on sale now for \$12. Courtesy Flower Lovers Garden Club

#### **Elston**

Continued from Page 1

Elston in the 1960s, the Homestead was willed to Wabash College, and for decades, it served as the residence of Wabash's presidents. Today, it continues to be a welcoming space where

"town and gown" connect for celebrations, receptions, and moments of reflection.

Visitors to the Homestead grounds will discover a landscape that is not just a backdrop to history but an integral part of it. The grounds reflect a delicate balance between

preservation and gentle evolution, ensuring that this remarkable property remains as inviting and inspiring as ever. Whether seeking a peaceful retreat or a deeper connection to Wabash College's legacy, a walk through these environs is a journey through time, where nature and

history intertwine in enduring harmony.

Bonus: Watercolor artist, Ellie Jeffries, will be on hand creating a unique painting. Her art primarily depicts nature, with her paintings characterized by whimsical, magical, and lighthearted themes.

#### ■FOR THE RECORD

For The Record is a public service and regular feature in The Paper of Montgomery County. It is designed to tell you what is scheduled to happen and what actually does happen in meetings paid for with your tax dollars. The Paper encourages all citizens to take an active role in being involved in local government. Board of Zoning Appeals City of Crawfordsville June 18, 2025 at 7:00 PM Common Council Chambers Agenda I. Call to Order & Roll Call II. Presentation of Minutes A. May 21, 2025 III. Old Business A. (WITHDRAWN) UV 0100 & DSV 0144 Leonardo Espinosa Morales requests a use variance from the schedule of uses

of the City Zoning Ordinance to allow a three unit multi-family dwelling and a development standard variance from the square footage requirements of the City Zoning Ordinance in an R-2, residential zoning district at 700 Tuttle Avenue (Parcel No. 54-10-05-113-032.000-030) IV. New Business A. SE 0069 Jamie Selby requests a special exception from the schedule of uses of the City Zoning ordinance for a clinical mental health therapy office in an R-2, residential zoning district at 1003 Shady Lane (Parcel No. 54-10-04-113-050.000-030) V. Miscellaneous A. Informational Up-

V. Miscellaneous
A. Informational Update by City Administration
B. Next regularly scheduled meeting:
July 16, 2025 at

7:00 PM VI. Adjournment



## **Butch**Continued from Page 1

their hours by; Harry, Bill, and Alvie too, Spun jokes to make you cry. Rufus Remington sat and chewed, And cussed kids on their bikes; Glenn Pickering jabbed his hickory cane--I'd never

see the likes!
Elmer Chambers
claimed his seat, While
Lulu strained to hear;
Hal Royer cranked out
facts and scores, From
games of yesteryear.
Penson and Deac, Roy
and Jack, Spent many
an afternoon, Talkin'
horses and teasing
kids, Before heading to
Med's back room.

Med's back room.

Kids would stop
and rest a bit, Trade
cards and lick their
cones; But Ruby's seat
was permanent--To
her that bench was
home. Though carved
and splintered from
years gone by, I think
that you will find, The
lonely bench has spirit
still...Ingrained in
wood...and time."

I sat on those benches hundreds of times when I was a youngster. Many times, after visiting the drug store, I sat out front...ice cream in one hand and Topps baseball cards in the other. On the bench by Warren's Hardware and Slim's barbershop, I sat with Alvie Warren, and watched him roll his cigarettes by hand. My Grandpa Dale would often join us, and they would talk about the old days when they were young. I learned a lot of things from the people who sat on the benches through the

years...life in the past, stories about people, town history, and of course...I heard many jokes. Some of those people were lonely, and just enjoyed sitting there and talking for hours at a time.

After the school closed in 1988, the businesses on Main Street began to close one by one. By that time, many of the oldtimers who had occupied the benches had passed away. Eventually the town removed the benches from in front of the buildings, all of which now are apartments. But as I sit in the library today and look across the street, I can still see those "bench people" smiling and conversing and watching the world go by... And there I am, too, sipping on a Green River phosphate and munching on a sawdust sundae from Harmon's drug store. John "Butch" Dale

John "Butch" Dale is a retired teacher and County Sheriff. He has also been the librarian at Darlington the past 36 years, and is a well-known artist and author of local history.



# League of Women Voters Talks With South Schools

The Indiana state government didn't hand out any favors to local schools this legislative season. It moved Indiana away from generating revenue based on property taxes toward sales tax income. The cuts affect the funding of Montgomery County's three school corporations. Then, in a double whammy, the legislature passed another bill that diverts almost half of the state's general fund for schools toward school vouchers – these are now available to any family regardless of household income.

While Montgomery County has no brick-andmortar charter schools competing for per-pupil funds, a small portion of students may qualify for funds diverted to charter and private schools. What is the effect of this, really, on local school districts? Over the next few weeks, we'll chat with superintendents about the funding (and other) changes that will affect their staffing, resources and policies.

This week, we feature perspectives from Southmont Superintendent Stephanie Hofer EdD, who is in her first year at the helm of the district. The picture that emerges from our conversation with her is one of cautious stability, careful planning and a steadfast commitment to protecting the classroom.

Hofer began with the basics, explaining that Southmont's funding is a mosaic of federal grants (such as Title I and special education funds), the state's basic grant (tied to student enrollment), property taxes, miscellaneous revenue and proceeds from debt issuance. Of these,



local property taxes have consistently accounted for about 40 percent of the district's total budget—39.93 percent in 2023, 41.52 percent in 2024 and a projected 41.12 percent in 2025. This relative stability masks deeper currents of change, particularly as state-level property tax reforms take effect.

According to the Indiana Legislative Services Agency tables, published by WFYI, Southmont funding decreases will be close to \$370,000, or about 33 percent, in 2026; a little under \$400,000, about 3.4 percent, in 2027; and over \$577,000, or 4.9 percent, in 2028. While Hofer says that the district has been well managed, the average teacher's salary is just under \$52,000. The funding decreases would be equivalent to the salaries of about seven teachers the next year, eight the following year and 11 teachers in 2028. The good news is that with funding streams as they are, and with Southmont's fiscally responsible planning, the impacts will be cushioned. Staffing and student services stand to be protected. It will be building and grounds funds that bear the brunt of the impact.

Indiana's new property tax credit, which caps losses at 10 percent or \$300, and reductions



Helen Hudson was the recipient of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County' annual Making Democracy Work award. Hudson has been a member of the League for 37 years, serving in numerous positions, including president / co-president for six years. LWV

in farm ground assessments, will directly impact district revenues. The new deduction, starting at 6 percent and rising to 33.3 percent by 2031, is expected to erode the property tax base further. These changes will make it more challenging across local governments, including school districts. Southmont's challenge will be maintaining the district's buildings and grounds, especially as the Debt Service Fund will also lose property tax revenue. Even if the district holds its tax levy steady, a shrinking assessed valuation will force the debt service rate higher in the coming years.

Hofer is clear-eyed about the practical impacts. With multiple funds and some leeway, the district may need to transfer the maximum allowable 15 percent from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund each month to offset property tax losses. While the Operations Fund levy will rise by 4 percent in 2026, this will not fully compensate for the anticipated revenue decline. The upshot: long-term upkeep of facilities, transportation and technology will require even more careful management.

For a rural district like Southmont, transportation is a perennial concern. Long bus routes sometimes up to an hour for students—mean that maintaining a reliable, up-to-date fleet is essential. Hofer emphasizes the importance of not consolidating routes or extending ride times, both for student well-being and educational equity. The district's bus replacement plan is under pressure, but maintaining current service levels remains a priority.

Much of Southmont's budget planning hinges on enrollment. While the district has seen some growth in assessed valuation—14.18 percent in 2023 and 9.17 percent

in 2024—the projected increase for 2025 is a modest 1.23 percent. The tax rate, meanwhile, has held steady at .96 percent since 2022. New housing developments could eventually boost enrollment and, by extension, state funding, but these gains are likely to be incremental rather than transformative in the short term.

Despite these fiscal headwinds, Hofer is adamant that classroom instruction will be shielded from cuts. "Protecting the classroom is always going to be my number one priority," she said.

As noted, Hofer expects staffing levels to remain stable, with reductions considered only as a last resort. The district does not anticipate changes to student nutrition, wraparound services, library resources, technology access or extracurricular programs like music and athletics. Federal nutrition funding and other support programs remain intact for now, which is important because about 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch—a reminder of the district's vital social role.

To date, the expansion of Indiana's school voucher program and the presence of virtual charter schools have had only a minor impact on Southmont. While a handful of students have left for virtual options, most eventually return, Hofer noted. The absence of brick-and-mortar charters in the county has helped insulate the district from more significant enrollment losses. Hofer's message to families is clear: Southmont is committed to offering a comprehensive, supportive educational environment that meets the needs of all students, something that many charter and private schools cannot and do not offer.

Southmont's financial outlook is best described as steady but vigilant. Years of prudent fiscal planning have given the district a cushion to absorb current shocks, but continued vigilance is required. The district's long-range financial plan is a "living, breathing document," subject to regular review as legislative and economic conditions evolve. While some Indiana districts may face more acute challenges, Southmont's approach is to adapt, prioritize the classroom and avoid drastic measures like staff reductions or program cuts.

Hofer and her team are navigating a complex financial environment with transparency and resolve. The community can take comfort in the district's commitment to stability, educational quality and the well-being of every student. As state and local conditions continue to shift, Southmont's watchwords remain adaptability and student-centered stewardship—a model for rural school finance in uncertain times.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, multi-issue political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government. For information about the *League*, *visit the website* www.lwvmontcoin.org; or, visit the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Indiana Facebook page.

# INDOT Removing Flashers Throughout West Central Indiana

The Indiana Department of Transportation announces the ongoing removal of amber-red overhead flashers throughout

West Central Indiana.

Amber red overhead flashers can cause confusion for motorists. Drivers often perceive the overhead flasher as an implication of an all-way stop. INDOT is aiming to enhance safety by doing this throughout the district, as this misperception can result in right-angle crashes because of failing to yield to traffic on the free flow approaches.

District traffic op- County erations will be installing LED-flashing ground-mounted signs prior to the overhead flasher removal in several rural locations. Traffic will be maintained with temporary stoppages during the work, which is taking place at the following intersections:

#### In other Subdistricts:

Cloverdale: U.S. 40 at County Road 200 W., Hendricks

County

U.S. 231 at State Road

- Frankfort Subdistrict:
- S.R. 29 at 2nd Streeet in Michigantown, Clinton
- County
- S.R. 32 at S.R. 75 in Dover, Boone County
- U.S. 52 at Stockwell Road in Tippecanoe County

#### Terre Haute:

- S.R. 46 at Canal Street in Riley, Vigo County
- S.R. 159 at C.R. 1350 S., Coalmont, Clay Coun-
- U.S. 40 at C.R. 100 E., Knightsville, Clay County
- U.S. 40 at C.R. 425 W., Clay County
- 42 in Cloverdale, Putnam U.S. 41 at S.R. 246,

#### **Crawfordsville Subdistrict:**

- U.S. 136 at S.R. 25 east junction in Waynetown, Montgomery County ■ U.S. 136 at S.R. 25 west junction in Waynetown, Montgomery County
- S.R. 63 at C.R. 1650 N., Vermillion County
- S.R. 63 at First Street in Fairview Park, Vermillion County ■ S.R. 63 at Market Street near Newport, Vermillion County
- U.S. 36 at Old S.R. 63/C.R. 360 E., Hillsdale, Vermillion County
- U.S. 36 at Washington Street, Montezuma, Parke County
- U.S. 136 at S.R. 341 west junction in Hillsboro, Fountain County

Vigo County

■ U.S. 150 at Hollingsworth Place in Shirkieville, Vigo County

#### **West Lafayette:**

- S.R. 18 at S.R. 43 north junction in Brookston, White County
- S.R. 43 at Seventh Street in Brookston, White County
- U.S. 52 at S.R. 55 south junction in Atkinson, Benton County

Work is anticipated to be complete by early July but is weather dependent and subject to change. INDOT encourages drivers to be mindful of potential ongoing traffic impacts at these locations and to use caution while driving around maintenance and construction crews.

#### Pair of Local **Students Earn IU Kokomo Degrees**

Indiana University Kokomo congratulates the 275 students who earned degrees in May 2025. The graduates represent 36 Indiana counties, five states, and three countries.

Those who earned degrees from Montgomery County are: Christina Lynn Pritchett of Crawfordsville, Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging Technology; and Makayla DeLayne Hughes of Linden, Bachelor of Science in Education

# Indiana offers new energy saver program

The Indiana Office of **Energy Development is** launching the Indiana



Glenda

Saver Program. The program is aimed at providing Hoosiers

utility bill

with

Energy

savings while increasing home comfort and energy savings in Indiana.

Hoosiers can apply now through the program's online portal to begin the eligibility review process. Those eligible will receive a no-cost home energy audit to identify potential improvements. Homeowners, tenants

and landlords are encouraged to apply. Audits are expected to begin this summer.

Improvements could include air sealing, insulation and equipment

replacements such as space heating and cooling systems and water heaters. The program also includes discounts on eligible products that are installed by quali-

fied contractors. These measures aim to reduce energy consumption and lower costs for Hoosiers.

To learn more about the program and apply, please visit IndianaEnergySaver.

com.

Rep. Mark Genda represents House District 41 which includes portions of Montgomery, Clinton, Boone and Tippecanoe counties.

Freepik.com

# A Taste of Spring

Another Strawberry Festival has come and gone and we'll join everyone in missing it until the next one. Photographer and historian Andy Chandler was kind enough to share some photos he took. The young lady on stage is Lindsay Lowe. The weather put a damper on everything, but never fear, folks still had a good time and we're already looking forward to 2026. Photos courtesy Andy Chandler









#### **■EL MICHO APPLIANCES**



The Crawfordsville | Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for El Micho Appliances, a family owned and operated appliance business in Crawfordsville. El Micho provides high-quality appliances, expert service and a personal shopping experience. El Micho Appliances offers a range of appliances, including refrigerators, ovens, washers, dryers and dishwashers. It is located at 301 E. College St. and is open M-F 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The business is closed on Sundays. Visit the Chamber website at crawfordsvillechamber. com or email Stacy Sommer at ssommer@crawfordsvillechamber.com.

### ■BUTCH'S FLASHBACK TRIVIA



Answer: Larry Rice



Catch Kenny every Friday in The Times!

straight from the hip on what's happening today, no one

has a better take on Purdue and sports than Kenny!

# **Deery supports** housing act

Wherever I travel in the state, I hear the same concerns about the need to grow our housing

supply, especially for affordable homes.



have been working hard on this issue for years, and I am always looking for ways the state can assist. This year, I supported a bill that builds on previous efforts to construct new housing developments.

#### Face to face

Join Me for Open Office Hours or Speak with Me at a Community Event Last year, I launched open office hours throughout Senate District 23 to give you the opportunity to meet me and share what's on your mind. This year I will continue that practice, but I also want to do a better job making sure you know in advance which public events I will attend over the summer so you can also catch me there as well.

More opportunities will be announced soon, but for now, here are

House Enrolled Act 1005 will:

■ Bolster the Residential Housing Infrastructure Assistance Program (RIF), a revolving loan fund that helps local governments work on infrastructure projects that support housing projects;

Give participants in the RIF program priority if they also support affordable, pro-housing policies; and

Streamline the permitting process by allowing qualified third-party inspectors to perform plan reviews or inspections.

four June events I'll be attending in four different counties:

■ 5 to 6 p.m. on Monday, June 16, at the Vermillion County Fair 4-H Community Building

■ 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, at the Warren County Fair 4-H Community Build-

■ 12:45 to 2 p.m. on Monday, June 23, at Faith West Community Center Study Lounge. To reserve a time slot, click here.

6:30 p.m. on Friday June 27 at the opening night of the Covington Fourth of July Celebration

# Indiana National Guard Marks Army's 250th Birthday

Hoosier National Guard soldiers, airmen and civilians gathered at Camp Atterbury, the southern Indiana post near Edinburgh, to celebrate the U.S. Army's 250th birthday.

Since the Army's inception on June 14, 1775, millions of soldiers from all walks of life have served with pride, dedication and distinction.

"On this celebration, we not only look back on the last 250 years, but we are reminded of the responsibility we have to carry forward to remain the most lethal, ready and adaptable force on the planet," said Brig. Gen.

Justin Mann, the Indiana National Guard director of joint staff.

In addition to Mann, who gave the keynote speech, the 38th Infantry Division Band played a birthday song and the Army Song, and Hoosier Guardsmen fired ceremonial cannons. Additionally, Mann joined the oldest soldier and youngest soldier at Camp Atterbury to help cut the birthday cake.

"For two and a half centuries, American soldiers like yourselves, brave men and women of every background, have answered the uncommon call to serve. You have done so to honor your deep love for country," said Mann in his speech.

"To every soldier, past and present, thank you. You are the strength of this organization. You are the legacy we celebrate today and are part of the future."

The commitment to serve continues for all soldiers. Approximately 10,000 soldiers serve in the Indiana National Guard, and they serve to help defend their nation in overseas missions yet also help civil authorities in times of crises.

Currently, mately 600 Hoosier National Guard soldiers are deployed overseas, and this year, approximately 750 Guard soldiers answered the governor's call to help with winter storm and flood relief missions.

For the soldiers' hard work and dedication, Indiana Gov. Braun, who serves as the commander-in-chief for Hoosier Guardsmen, issued a statewide proclamation honoring not only his Army National Guard soldiers but also soldiers worldwide and the U.S. Army.

#### ■ LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### **ETA Encourages** Going Vegan

Dear Editor.

My phone recently lit up with an alert I'd never seen before: "Warning: Dust Storm." I've lived in Northwest Indiana my entire life, and this was a first-a strange, surreal kind of weather I'd only ever heard about in faroff places, not here, not home.

Dust storms are doubling across the U.S., driven by the changing climate and industrial agriculture that strips the land bare. Last month, winds hit 60 mph in Illinois, coating highways in dust. These storms don't just erode



soil—they carry pesticide residue into rivers, lungs, and crops, threatening the environment and public health. The best way to address these storms? Go vegan. Animal agriculture plays a

massive role in these dust storms.

mals exploited for food demands vast monoculture fields—corn and soy-planted and harvested in ways that leave the soil exposed and lifeless. Trees are cleared, land is destroyed, and climate catastrophe accelerates.

Growing feed for billions of ani-

That's why going vegan is one of the most effective ways to fight back. Going vegan shrinks demand for these feed crops, slashes greenhouse gas emissions, and saves countless animals from a life of misery. Every vegan meal helps. Please visit PETA.org for simple steps to go vegan today.

> Rebecca Libauskas The PETA Foundation

