

Sagamore News Media presents

Tropical Costa Rica

HOSTED BY DICK WOLFSIE | FEBRUARY 6 - 14, 2026



For more information contact Collette 800-581-8942
Refer to booking #1344002



Want to know more at no risk?
Join Dick and the Collette folks on a Zoom call.
It's scheduled for Aug. 13 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Meeting URL: <https://collette.zoom.us/j/89717890584>

■ TODAY'S VERSE

Psalm 37:1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

■ AWL RYAH



Ryah is a gorgeous 11 year old (senior) female brindle American Pit Bull Terrier available for adoption from The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWL) since 5/1/25. Ryah is a total sweetheart and staff favorite! Shelter life is stressful, especially for seniors! Ryah loves going out for walks and has excellent leash manners. Ryah enjoys the finer things in life, like a nice comfy bed, rolling around in grass, and being showered with endless love! No senior dog wants to spend their remaining precious years of life inside a shelter! Ryah is no exception! Ryah is dog friendly, spayed, dewormed, and up to date on her shots. Ryah is ready to find her forever home! RYAH IS SO DESERVING OF LOVE!! Let's find Ryah a home to retire too! Could that be with you?! RYAH'S ADOPTION FEE IS WAIVED!



The pharmacy ran out of anti-diarrhea pills.

Wouldn't you think that's one prescription they'd not make people wait for?

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Mayor Holding 146th Forum

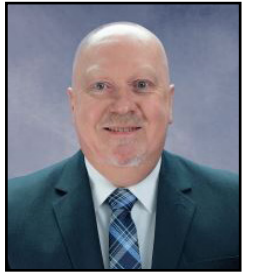
Crawfordsville Mayor Todd Barton has scheduled his monthly Community Forum for Wednesday, from noon to 1 p.m. at Lincoln Park.

This will be Barton's 146th Community Forum since taking office. Holding a monthly

community forum was something Barton pledged to do during his first campaign for mayor and he has continued to do so every month – except during the COVID pandemic. This event is designed to allow the public to come ask questions, discuss

concerns, interact with the mayor and learn more about anything regarding the city.

Lincoln Park is located at 950 E. Wabash Ave. The Forum will be held in the shelter there.



Mayor Todd Barton

■ BOOMER BITS RETIREMENT

I'm Turning 70. When Should I Apply for Social Security?



ASK RUSTY
Social Security
Advisor

Dear Rusty: I have a very simple question: I will turn 70 on September 20th and want to start

my Social Security benefits in September. What month should I file my claim? Have there been delays with the reductions in SSA staff? Thank you for your help.
Signed: Ready to Claim

Dear Ready to Claim: Social Security allows you to submit your application for benefits up to 4 months prior to the month you wish benefits to start (you will specify your desired benefit-start-month on the application). Thus, to have your benefits begin in September (the month you turn 70), you can submit your application as early as May 2025. That will give SS plenty of time to

See RUSTY Page 2

■ BOOMER BITS MONEY

- **FTC data shows that over one-quarter (27.9%) of targeted residents aged 60 to 69 in Indiana have lost funds due to scams this year so far.**
- **The age group has filed 961 fraud reports in Q1 of 2025, resulting in a per-person loss of \$500.**
- **The most prevalent scam categories affecting seniors in the state are business imposters, government imposters, and online shopping.**

Indiana Seniors Robbed of \$3.5 Million

Elderly Americans in Indiana aged 60 to 69 have lost a huge \$3,578,669 to fraud this year so far - resulting in a per-person loss of \$500.

Investment experts at cryptocurrency exchange Chicks studied data from the Federal Trade Commission to reveal

how many elderly residents (aged 60 to 69) have fallen victim to fraud in each state in 2025 so far.

Nationally, in Q1 of this year, there were 60,379 reports of all types of fraud among those

See ROBBERED Page 3

■ BOOMER BITS HEALTH

State Health Insurance Program Has Answers

Q: I don't feel like my current Medicare Advantage Plan is the best one for me. I would like to change it. I was told I can't do this until the Medicare Open Enrollment Period. When is that?

A: The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period is October

15 – December 7. During this time, you can make changes to various aspects of your Medicare Advantage and Part D drug coverage.

These changes include switching from traditional Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan (or vice versa),

switching between Medicare Advantage plans, and electing or switching between Medicare Part D prescription drug plans. Changes made during the Open Enrollment Period will start the following January.

One of the best tools to help

you during the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period is the Planfinder Tool located at medicare.gov/find-a-plan. It takes you step-by-step through available Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans while taking your pre-

See MEDICARE Page 5

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1 Indiana's commonsense pro-life laws are consistent with provisions of the Indiana Constitution, the Indiana Court of Appeals ruled this week, handing yet another legal victory to Attorney General Todd Rokita and his team of litigators as they fight for unborn children and women's health. Indiana law currently permits abortion in three circumstances: (1) when an abortion is necessary either to save the woman's life or to prevent a serious health risk to her; (2) when there is a lethal fetal anomaly; or (3) when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. In cases where an abortion is permitted, the law states, it must be performed in a hospital or ambulatory surgical center. The appeals court decision therefore means Planned Parenthood may not resume performing the procedure in its clinics.

2. It was a busy week at the AG's office. Rokita also launched Operation Robocall Roundup, a multistate effort by the Anti-Robocall Litigation Task Force, which his office co-leads, to crack down on robocalls nationwide. The task force is sending warning letters to 37 voice providers demanding that they act now to stop illegal robocalls from being routed through their networks.

The targeted providers haven't complied with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules about responding to government traceback requests, haven't registered in the FCC's Robocall Mitigation Databases, or haven't filed a plan that describes how they will reduce illegal robocalls on their network. The task force is also sending the letters to over 100 downstream providers that accept call traffic from the 37 companies – so that they know they're doing business with bad actors that are not willing to follow the rules that apply to everyone equally.

3. Indiana State Comptroller Elise Nieshalla applauded the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) for recommending Indiana Senate Resolution 51, that sounds the alarm on the national debt, serve as a model for state legislatures to pass across the country. "This recommendation from ALEC shows how Indiana's leadership is playing a critical role in the effort to build widespread support to urge President Trump and Congress to balance our country's budget and tackle the massive \$36 trillion debt problem for the states and for America," Nieshalla said. Senate Resolution 51, introduced during Indiana's 2025 legislative session, is modeled after Senate Resolution 600 – authored by Governor and former U.S. Senator Mike Braun – which passed unanimously and raised awareness of the consequences of federal overspending and the rapidly growing debt. Senate Resolution 51 was co-authored by State Senators Daryl Schmitt (R-Jasper) and Brett Clark (R-Avon) and received overwhelming bi-partisan support.

■ MONTGOMERY MINUTE

What do you know about your digital footprint? If you don't know enough, then head over to your friendly Crawfordsville Library on Aug. 25 for a class on Discovering Your Digital Footprint. There is no registration required and you can learn how to track your digital presence across social media, websites and other online platforms – thus enabling yourself to stay safer online. It begins at 2 p.m. in Room D.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's hard to beat a person who never gives up."

- Babe Ruth

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

What's black and white and red all over?

A Dalmatian with a suburn.

ROBBED

Continued from Page 1

aged 60 to 69, with 29% of these resulting in a financial loss. The stolen sum exceeded \$354.9 million, equating to a median loss of \$597 per report.

In Indiana, seniors see a per-report loss that's 16.2% below the national average, but that's still substantial, with 961 reports made by those aged 60-69.

The most prevalent scam in the state across the age group this year so far is business imposters. Many scammers target elderly people because they're more likely to trust official-sounding calls and emails, and may be pressured to act quickly if they think the correspondence is coming from a reputable organization.

The top fraud subcategories for those aged 60-69 in Indiana Fraud Subcategory Number of Reports (60-69)

1. Business imposters: 266
2. Government imposters: 190
3. Online shopping: 93
4. Tech support scams: 41
5. Miscellaneous investments & investments advice: 31

Nationally, fraud risk drops slightly as age increases, but those who are affected still see substantial loss. Those aged 70 to 79 have seen 45,076 reports of fraud so far this year, with 26%

resulting in stolen funds. Per consumer, this works out to \$994.

All U.S. consumers aged 80 and over made 12,823 reports of fraud in the first quarter of 2025, with 23% seeing funds stolen. This equates to \$1,900 per attack.

In Indiana, those aged 70 to 79 made 716 reports, with over one-quarter (29.1%) resulting in a financial impact. This worked out to a per-person loss of \$968.

Those aged 80 and over made just 214 reports in 2025 so far, with 20.1% seeing some sort of financial loss. However, those who did lose money lost a notable amount, at a \$1,200 median value.

Al Aloh, CEO of ChicksX, issued a warning for elderly residents in the state:

"Fraudsters know that seniors may be more trusting, less familiar with online platforms or purchases, or unaware of how sophisticated modern scam attempts have become. It's essential that families and communities talk openly about these risks and the warning signs to prevent vulnerable individuals from falling victim.

"Summer also carries an elevated risk, with Fourth of July sales and an uptick in travel and home improvement projects, especially among those who are retired. Scam-

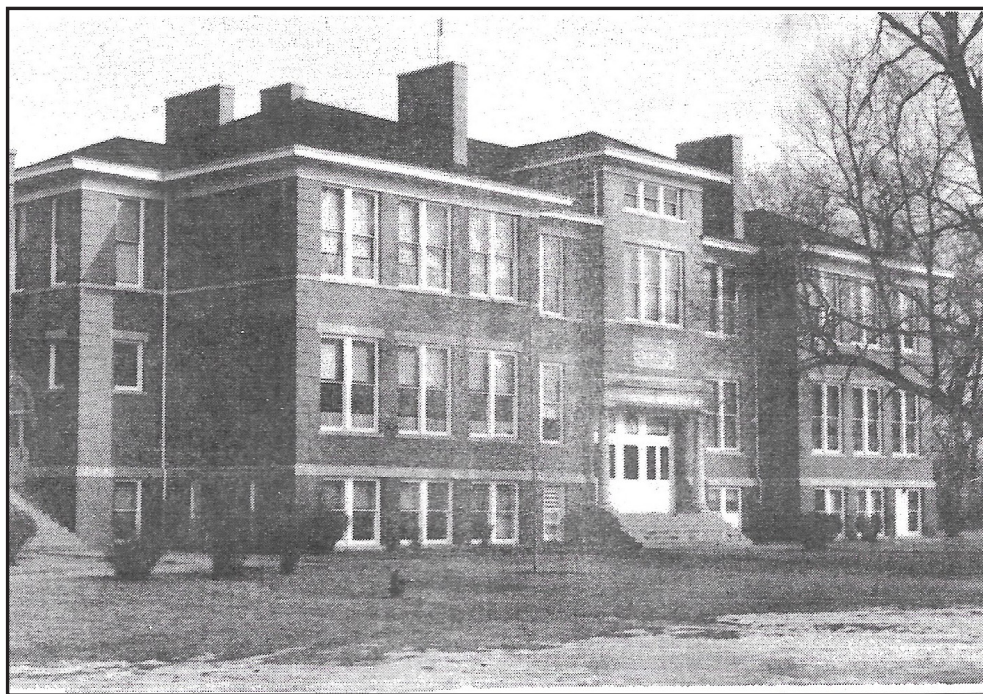
mers may impersonate well-known retailers and take advantage of elderly residents' trusted family members being preoccupied with their own summer plans.

"We don't want to take independence away from our elderly family members, but please encourage them to run any suspicious contact past you before responding. Just talking about the latest scam tactics or reviewing questionable emails/texts together can stop fraud before it happens."

The expert shares three key tips to help the elderly avoid falling victim to fraud this summer:

1. Be suspicious of 'too good to be true' deals. Scammers may offer fake discounts or sweepstakes to elderly consumers. Always verify companies through the Better Business Bureau (BBB) before agreeing to anything.
2. Don't answer unfamiliar robocalls. Elderly people are often targeted by phone scams pretending to be Social Security or Medicare. Use call-blocking apps to limit spam calls, and never share personal details over the phone.
3. Ask a trusted family member for help. Scammers ramp up phishing emails and fake charity requests in the summer. Check emails or messages with a trusted family member to double-check the authenticity before clicking anything.

■ BUTCH DALE'S SCHOOL FROM BACK IN THE DAY



Do You Recognize This School Building?

Answer on Page 6

WANTING TO BUY

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RIFLES, SHOTGUNS,
AND HANDGUNS
THAT ARE 50 YEARS OLD
OR OLDER
IN DECENT CONDITION**

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AIC and SRI, Inc. presented the scholarship to Abigail Allen recently at the Montgomery County Government Center.

North Graduate Receives Scholarship

North Montgomery High School graduate Abigail Allen was the recipient of a \$500 scholarship presented by the Association of Indiana Counties and sponsored by SRI, Inc.

AIC and SRI, Inc. presented the scholarship to her recently at the Montgomery County Government Center.

Allen is a recent graduate of North Montgomery High School. She is the daughter of Justin and Courtney Garrett. Her father, Justin Garrett, is a truck driver for Montgomery County. Allen is attending Ivy Tech Community College to study Dental Assisting.

Four students from across the state were awarded \$500 schol-

arships. Scholarship recipients are spring 2025 graduates from Indiana high schools who planned to attend a school of higher education in Indiana in the fall of 2025. Eligibility required applicants to be an employee of or the custodial child of an Indiana county employee of an AIC affiliate office.

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Picture: Daughter, Ava Dale
Barrel Racing

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Witham Gets DG Donation



Photo Courtesy Witham Health Services

The Lebanon Dairy Queen recently donated \$1,000 to the Witham Volunteer Organization in support of their annual community fundraiser and “dine to donate” day, held on June 10. Amy Mitchell, Director of the Witham Volunteer Organization stated “All proceeds from the fundraiser are given right back to the community and to Witham Hospital. Proceeds from this fundraiser support three \$1,000 scholarships that we provide to Boone County High School students each year who are pursuing a continuing education or degree program in a health-related field, as well as to support various fund-the-need initiatives at Witham.” For more information about volunteering at Witham, contact Amy Mitchell, Director of Volunteers at (765) 485-8175 or by email at: amitchell@witham.org.

Under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Micah Beckwith, who serves as Indiana’s Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs’ mission is to work with local, state and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to assist communities in shaping and achieving their vision for community and economic development. For more information, visit ocra.in.gov.

Lt. Gov. Micah Beckwith Names Finalist Communities

The Office of Lt. Governor Micah Beckwith and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs announced the finalist communities for the PreservING Main Street program as North Vernon and Pendleton.

they need to preserve Hoosier history and keep main streets growing and thriving.”

The community selected will be eligible for implementation funds of up to \$2 million through OCRA’s Community Development Block Grant program, along with multiple capacity-building opportunities through a partnership with Indiana Humanities and Indiana Landmarks.

“Congratulations to North Vernon and Pendleton on being named PreservING Main Street finalist!” OCRA Executive Director Fred Glynn said. “Both communities showed a strong commitment to historic preservation and downtown revitalization in their applications. I look forward to learning

In partnership with Indiana Landmarks and Indiana Humanities, PreservING Main Street is designed to build a sustainable historic preservation ethic while building local capacity and a comprehensive downtown revitalization model.

“The downtown area is really what makes our cities and towns unique,” Lieutenant Governor Beckwith said. “PreservING Main Street gives our local leaders the support and resources



Indiana Lt. Gov. Micah Beckwith

more about their communities and vision for their downtowns during the site visits.”

The two finalist communities will receive an in-person site visit this September from a selection team made up of OCRA, Indiana Humanities and Indiana Landmarks staff. The community selected for the PreservING Main Street designation will be announced on Sept. 22.

Visit in.gov/ocra/preserving-main-street/ to learn more.

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Photo courtesy Wabash College

Outstanding professors and a strong classroom experience are the hallmarks of a Wabash College education.

Wabash Rates Highly in Princeton Review

Wabash College continues to receive strong rankings from The Princeton Review in its 2026 college guide, which features 391 highly rated colleges and universities.

The College received mentions in 18 categories, including top-10 citations in 11 categories: Most Accessible Professors (No. 2), Students Love Their School Teams (No. 2), Best Health Services (No. 3), Best Career Services (No. 4), Most Active Student Government (No. 5), Lots of Greek Life (No. 7), Professors Get High Marks (No. 8), Best Classroom Experience (No. 8), and Best College Newspaper (No. 10). The Princeton Review previously rated Wabash second nationally in Best Schools for Internships, fifth for Best Alumni Network, and No. 40 in Best Value Colleges for private schools in July.

Inclusion in The Princeton Review's "Best 391 Colleges" indicates that Wabash stands among the top 15% of more than 2,500 U.S.-based four-year colleges.

The review includes detailed accounts of the best schools with rating scores in eight general categories, including quality of life, campus life, extracurriculars, social

scene, and town life. Wabash received scores of 96 and 99 (out of 99) in the categories associated with teaching, interesting faculty, and accessibility. Further, the institution received a 94 rating for financial aid, 92 for return on investment, and an 87 for admissions.

"There are many college guides published each year, but few present institutions from the perspective of the students who attend them," said Wabash President Scott Feller. The Princeton Review uses the voices of actual students in describing their experiences, so we're obviously thrilled to be ranked for everything from the classroom experience to internships. If families are looking for a student-centered college, they should look no further than Wabash."

Now in its 34th year of recognizing outstanding colleges and universities, The Princeton Review offers 50 ranking lists, each identifying the top 25 colleges nationally (of the 391 profiled) in those specific categories. The colleges included on these lists are those with a track record of student satisfaction since The Princeton Review surveys more than 170,000 students who rate and report on their own campus

experiences through an 85-question survey.

"The Princeton Review's rankings recognize the hard work, dedication, and care Wabash faculty have for their students with outstanding evaluations for professor accessibility and quality, as well as educational experience," said Todd McDorman, Dean of the College and professor of rhetoric. "The rankings support what we already knew: Wabash provides an excellent education, led by the outstanding work of our faculty, and I am grateful that they are being recognized for their collective excellence."

The surveys address a range of topics that prospective students might find interesting or ask about on a campus visit, from academics and administration to amenities, and politics. Each ranking is based solely on student survey responses.

On average, The Princeton Review surveys more than 400 students per campus in an online format. Surveying is a continuous process where students submit surveys online from all schools included in the book. Those surveys can be completed at any time, though the system only accepts

one survey from a student per academic year per school.

Wabash appeared in 36% of the 50 lists and earned 11 top-10 mentions nationally, including these highlights:

- #2 Most Accessible Professors
- #2 Top 20 Best Schools for Internships (Private Schools)
- #2 Students Love Their School Teams
- #3 Best Health Services
- #4 Best Career Services
- #5 Top 20 Best Alumni Networks (Private Schools)
- #5 Most Active Student Government
- #7 Lots of Greek Life
- #8 Professors Get High Marks
- #8 Best Classroom Experience
- #10 Best College Newspaper
- #11 Best Run Colleges
- #12 Everyone Plays Intramural Sports
- #13 Great Financial Aid
- #19 Best Athletic Facilities
- #40 Top 50 Best Value Colleges (Private Schools)

Wabash has been featured in every edition of The Princeton Review's college guide since the service was established in 1992.

MEDICARE

Continued from Page 1

scription drug costs into consideration.

If you want to get an early start, you can set up a MyMedicare.gov account. You can register for online access to your preventive health information and track your preventive services, get a calendar of the Medicare-covered tests and screenings you are eligible for, and print a report to take to your health care provider.

If you have already created an account on MyMedicare.gov, you will use that same username and password to log into the new Plan Finder – there is no need to create another account.

Another great resource for Medicare beneficiaries is SHIP! The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) provides free, impartial assistance with Medicare questions.

SHIP Counselors are thoroughly trained and are located throughout Indiana.

You can meet with a SHIP Counselor by phone, virtually with an online meeting, and in many areas, in person. You can see a list of our Indiana loca-

tions at www.in.gov/ship/find-an-indiana-ship-location.

SHIP Counselors can help walk you through the online Planfinder Tool. SHIP also offers events throughout Indiana. You can find a current list of events at www.in.gov/ship/ship-presentations-and-events.

Find SHIP on Facebook at [Facebook.com/Indiana.SHIP](https://www.facebook.com/Indiana.SHIP). SHIP often hosts Live Educational events on Facebook that assist Medicare beneficiaries. You can also find these videos on our YouTube channel.

If you or someone you know have questions about the Annual Enrollment Period, the Planfinder Tool, MyMedicare.gov, or any other Medicare related topic, contact SHIP at (800) 452-4800, or online at www.medicare.in.gov.

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a free and impartial counseling program for people with Medicare. SHIP is provided by the Administration for Community Living and the Indiana Department of Insurance.

Deery: Redistricting Would Create New Culture

State Sen. Spencer Deery, a Republican from West Lafayette, represents Indiana Senate District 23, which includes portions of Montgomery and Tippecanoe counties as well as Fountain, Parke, Vermillion and Warren counties. He recently released a statement in regard to the potential of Indiana redistricting.

The Paper presents that statement in its entirety.

"When I was a candidate for the position I now hold, I promised voters I would always tell them the truth, even if it wasn't what they wanted to hear. While I am hopeful we will not incur the taxpayer expense of a special session, I want to be clear in advance about where I stand and the truth as I see it. I took an oath before God to support the Constitution. There is no constitutional principle more basic than popular sovereignty and the idea that voters choose their leaders and shape their own destiny.

"While any gerrymandering can arguably violate that principle,

what we are being asked to do goes far beyond the partisan map fights that happen every 10 years across the country. Rationalizing a mid-cycle redistricting by saying, 'Democrats gerrymander too' is an empty and irrelevant excuse.

"Instead, we are being asked to create a new culture in which it would be normal for a political party to select new voters, not once a decade — but any time it fears the consequences of an approaching election. That would clearly violate the concept of popular sovereignty by making it harder for the people to hold their elected officials accountable and the country would be an uglier place for it.

"If a special session is called, I will stay true to my oath of office by standing up for the principle that candidates should win on the strength of their ideas and not on their ability to choose new voters."



State Sen. Spencer Deery

■ BUTCH'S FLASHBACK TRIVIA



ANSWER: Janet Glascock

■ BUTCH DALE'S SCHOOLS FROM BACK WHEN

ANSWER: Waveland High School

Next week: How Purdue sold Odom on the head coaching job and convincing a pessimistic fan base that the Boilermakers can win again.

A Sit Down With New Purdue Football Coach Barry Odom



Ken Thompson
Columnist

Barry Odom was born to be a football player.

Coaching became his destiny. In Oklahoma, there's two things that matter. Oil and football. Growing up in Maysville, Odom watched the Sooners win a national championship in 1985.

"The Oklahoma Sooners were in the heyday of (Barry) Switzer winning national championships or competing every year," the 48-year-old Odom said during an in-person interview in June at Purdue's Kozuch Football Performance Complex. "Where I grew up, it was about an hour away from their campus. I was able to see them first-hand at a very early age."

The seeds of coaching were planted during Odom's youth.

"I was lucky. Starting in Pee Wee baseball all the way up through my senior year in high school in baseball, basketball, track and football I had very influential coaches," Odom said. "I was fortunate to be in communities that supported extra-curricular activities. It was something I enjoyed, seeing how my coaches put teams together, the things it took to have a chance to be successful. It's something I've always wanted to be a part of."

Odom's latest reconstruction project is the Purdue football program, which he took over on Dec. 8, 2024. In the months since then, Odom has added a major college football-high of 54 transfers and 82 newcomers in all. Rebuilding in the transfer portal is nothing new for Odom, who added 50 during his first season at UNLV in 2023. Fifty-five more came the following year. Those newcomers helped the Runnin' Rebels record the school's winningest season in 40 years, going 10-3 in 2024 after a 9-5 mark in

2023. UNLV has never had a more successful two-year stretch since becoming an NCAA Division I program in 1978.

In the five seasons prior to his arrival (2017-22), UNLV won a combined 20 games.

Like it or not, the transfer portal has helped college teams rebuild immediately and made five-year plans obsolete.

"There's good and bad with everything. I choose to look at the good side of things," Odom said. "The positive side of having an opportunity to recruit young men to Purdue. We're a high school recruiting team as well as very aggressive in the transfer portal market. I think there's opportunities that you can provide some depth and experience on your team through that way of recruiting. Also, building a foundation with strong high school recruiting is also important. We've had a blend of both of those that I think will help our 2025 team."

It didn't take long for one of Odom's legendary high school feats to make the rounds inside the Purdue locker room. As a high school senior, Odom ran for 39 touchdowns. On a torn ACL.

Odom went on to be a four-year letterwinner at linebacker for Missouri from 1996-99, helping the Tigers make two bowl trips and serving as captain his senior year. He left Missouri as one of the program's top 10 tacklers with 362.

Odom hopes his toughness and competitive spirit rub off on a program that showed neither trait after a 66-7 loss to Notre Dame in Week 2 of the 2024 season. The Boilermakers hit rock bottom in Bloomington a couple of months later, watching Indiana wrap up a College Football Playoff berth with a 66-0 victory.

The next day, second-year head coach Ryan Walters was fired with Purdue eating the remaining \$9 million on his contract. A week later, Odom agreed to a six-year contract worth at least \$39

million. That's by far the richest coaching contract in Purdue history.

"The thing that I looked at here was No. 1, leadership from Mike Bobinski and (university president) Mung Chiang," Odom said. "The alignment, the vision, the support, the fan base, the passion, the energy, the conference, geographic location. All of those things went into it. Every job or new beginning there's going to be challenges. I would choose to look at it as more opportunities than challenges."

Odom is Bobinski's third head football coaching hire. The first, Jeff Brohm, eventually led Purdue to its first Big Ten Championship Game appearance in 2022 before returning home to the University of Louisville. Walters went 5-19, a slightly lower winning percentage (.208) to Darrell Hazell's .214 from 2013-16.

Whether Odom is a success or a failure, he's likely the last football head coaching hire for the 67-year-old Bobinski. "During our interactions with coach Odom, it became clear he possesses the belief, tenacity and competitive drive necessary to return Purdue football to the standard of excellence we all expect," Bobinski said during Odom's introductory press conference.

History states Purdue football wins with offensive innovation and talented quarterbacks. Jack Mollenkopf and Bob Griese/Mike Phipps. Jim Young and Mark Herrmann. Joe Tiller and Drew Brees/Kyle Orton. What kind of coaching style will fans see this fall?

"They're going to see a team that is prepared, that is excited to play with energy and enthusiasm, a disciplined football team that plays extremely hard and creates an exciting atmosphere to watch winning football," Odom said.

"Offensively, the most important stat is we win. The blending of our team's physical attributes, how you



Photo Courtesy of Purdue Athletics

Barry Odom said the monotony of doing things over and over is tiring but the ones who have success can do it every single day.

piece that together into a playbook. There will be a balance. You have to be able to run the football to win games. You have to be explosive in creating plays in the run and pass game. You've got to have some sort of element of linear passing game. You have to be good on the perimeter. You have to protect the quarterback. There's going to be run/pass options built into schematically what you call. I think the right word would be multiple. Taking care of the football. Playing smart. Playing together."

Luckily for Odom, one of the few Boilermakers who didn't abandon the program for greener (as in money) pastures is fifth-year senior running back Devin Mockobee. Obtaining his mechanical engineering degree is more important to Mockobee.

If Mockobee can average 100 rushing yards over the 12-game season, he will surpass Mike Alstott as Purdue's career leader. Barring injury, Mockobee appears likely to at least become the Boilermakers' fourth 3,000-yard rusher (Alstott, Kory Sheets, Otis Armstrong). Mockobee enters the season opener Aug. 30 against Ball State with 2,466 yards.

"I'm excited about having the chance to coach him," Odom said. "Academically, socially and athletically – he checks the boxes. He's all in. He gives great effort. Guys look to him as a leader, and we expect him to have a tremendous senior year."

Time will tell if Purdue has enough Mocko-

bee-type players to overachieve the predictions of another last-place finish in the Big Ten.

"Fortunately, we get to play the games," Odom said. "We don't have to live on history or tradition. For us, the opportunity for us to compete because we prepare the right way.

"Last year, I had nothing to do with. I also didn't have anything to do with three years ago. All that we can look at is what have we done from the first day on the job together up to this point. Tomorrow is a new day. Are we going to be able to pour into the process of preparation, of habits, of determination, of accountability, of openness, of honesty, of love, of building and galvanizing a team to get ready to be our best for the next day?"

"I know it's a very, very boring process. The monotony of doing it over and over and over is tiring but the ones that have success can do it every single day. If we can do that, then from Game 1 to Game 2 we'll play even better ... where in November we'll be playing meaningful games competing for a championship. If you prepare the right way, if you recruit the right way, if you coach the right way and a little luck falls in your favor it doesn't matter the logo of your opponent. Your opponent is yourself. We're going to get into a numbing state of what preparation looks like. If we do it the right way, when we run out of Tiller Tunnel it won't matter who is on the sideline. We'll be ready to go play our best ball."

To help speed up the transition, Odom brought eight players and six high school recruits from UNLV. Four of the veterans appear likely to earn starting jobs against Ball State on Aug. 30: cornerback Tony Grimes, linebackers Mani Powell and Charles Correa plus offensive lineman Jalen St. John.

Also making the move from Las Vegas are defensive coordinator Mike Scherer, special teams coordinator James Shibest, offensive line coach Vance Vince and assistant head coach/wide receivers Cornell Ford. "I think we're going to have an exciting roster," Odom said.

"There will be a group of people who will have no idea when we take the field on Aug. 30 who one or two or maybe 15 specific guys are but they are going to appreciate the brand of football they play. They're going to become a household name. It's a blank sheet of paper and we get to write our script.

"It's our job to play winning football, and I know at the end of the year I will be judged on 12 opportunities, turning that into 13 and plus from there. If you do it the right way, we will turn Ross-Ade into one of the greatest environments there is in college football."

Kenny Thompson is the former sports editor for the Lafayette Journal & Courier and an award-winning journalist. He has covered Purdue athletics for many years.

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