

Sagamore News Media presents

Tropical Costa Rica

HOSTED BY DICK WOLFSIE | FEBRUARY 6 - 14, 2026



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>

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

■ TODAY'S VERSE

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

■ AWL BAYOU



Bayou is a 1 year old female Catahoula leopard dog available for adoption from The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWL) since 7/12/25. Bayou is a working gal that's eager to please!! Bayou loves going out for walks, playing fetch, and will gladly sit for treats. AWL is open Monday - Friday from 2p-5p and Saturday's from 12-3p. Come say hi! Bayou's adoption fee is waived with approved adoption application!



I hate to see August wrapping up. That means September. That means fall. That means chilly. That then means cold. See where I'm going with this?

■ MONTGOMERY MINUTE

A Suicide Prevention Walk is scheduled at Milligan Park on Saturday, Sept. 27. The event is free of charge, and the first 100 individuals to arrive for 8:30 check-in will receive a free commemorative T-shirt. Suicide prevention materials, memory beads, water and snacks are also provided free to participants. Local mental health agencies will be present to make information available as well. The walk will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude with a butterfly release, poignantly entwining loss and hope as the butterflies rise in the sky. To learn further details and register for the walk, one should visit the YSB website: <https://mcysb47933.wixsite.com/mcysb> and click on the Suicide Prevention Walk Registration link.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done."

- Thomas Jefferson

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

What does a house wear?

An ad-dress!

The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper www.thepaper24-7.com | 50¢

Butch Remembers Local Businessmen...Part II



John 'Butch' Dale
Columnist

In my last column I told about a few of the business owners on Main Street of my hometown when I was a youngster. Here are some others...

At the corner of Main and Franklin streets was the cigar store, better known as "the pool room." Damon "Skeet" Wray owned it for many years, but Rufus "Med" Mullen and his son Bob owned it after Skeet's death in the mid-'50s. Haskell Renick also owned it at one time. The store sold tobacco products, candy, ice cream and other odds and ends.

There were two billiard tables in the middle, and poker tables in the back. I usually bought an ice cream cone and then watched my Dad play pool against others to win "pool chips," each of which was worth 5 cents in trade. Rufus was kind of quiet, but always friendly. Boys had to be 13 years old to play pool, but he let me play if no one else was in there.

The Farmers and Merchants Bank was located on the south side of West Main. Penson "Pense" Larriker was the head cashier as long as I could remember. The two long-time tellers I remember were Marirovene Thompson and Elizabeth Love, although there

were others who worked there through the years. I never had an account at the bank, but sometimes Dad would send me there to get change or make a deposit. Pense usually called me "knucklehead" in a kidding way. During the noon hour, he walked to the pool room, had a Coke (possibly with a smidgen of whiskey added), and played poker. In 1970, a bank robber locked Pense and the other employees in the vault. My cousin, Mike Cohee, entered the bank, saw no one around, and heard pounding on the vault door. Pense yelled instructions to Mike, and he was able to open the door! And

See BUTCH Page 3

As Usual, Media Not Reporting Whole Story



Tim Timmons
Columnist

I've written a time or three about the national deficit, the absolute evilness that it has become. Pardon me for

dragging my soapbox out again, but our politicians (and yes, whether we want to claim them or not, they are ours!) have shamelessly and recklessly spent more than they bring in year after year after year after year . . .

Why? Greed. Corruption. Laziness. Inability. Indifference. The reasons are almost endless and not one - not nairy a single one - is a good look for any current or past U.S.

Representative or Senator. Not. One.

Shame on them all.

OK, soapbox scooted back under the desk . . .

Let's talk about a recent report that says these new tariffs the national media likes to tout as the greatest thing since sliced bread or a sign of the coming apocalypse (depending on which station you tune in) may actually be making a positive difference with our \$37 trillion national deficit.

Brief aside - let's leave Donald J. and any other hired hands out of it for the time being. It seems

we can't have a substantive discussion once this side or that is tossed in the mix?

This is not about them. It's about dollars and our grandchildren.

According to a report from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, the revenue from the controversial tariffs is more than \$100 billion in the last five months. Sure, that's a long way from \$37 trillion, but remember what the late great Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen said: "A billion here and a billion there and pretty soon you're talking real money."

See TIM Page 3

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. Gen. Steve Nordhaus and Brig. Gen. Larry Muennich signed a partnership with the Indiana National Guard and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the Department of Defense's State Partnership Program. The partnership includes the Indiana National Guard, the Oklahoma National Guard and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Defense Department's enduring program pairs American states and foreign nations to enhance mutual relationships and promote defense and security cooperation objectives established by the United States and its partners. The Indiana National Guard's experience in disaster relief, domestic operations and overseas missions will support the U.S. government's ongoing diplomatic, development and security efforts to achieve shared goals. The program is designed to develop military interoperability and foster greater trust and cooperation with partner nations.

2. The historic Paramount Theatre, alongside Presenting Sponsor Community Hospital Anderson, is proud to announce Vicki Lawrence & Mama: "A Two-Woman Show" on Friday, January 16, 2026. Tickets are on sale at AndersonParamount.org. Lawrence is one of the most beloved television personalities of her generation. Lawrence was part of the legendary cast of the *Carol Burnett Show*, where she created her most endearing character to date, Thelma Harper, better known as "Mama." With some mature content material, expect the unexpected from Vicki and Mama.

3. A new study conducted by personal injury attorneys Injured In Florida reveals which states are most likely to experience fatal crashes involving multiple vehicles. Indiana ranks third, with almost half (46.85%) of fatal crashes involving multiple vehicles, while Montana ranks lowest, with only 28.09% of fatal crashes involving multiple vehicles. Nationwide, 43.17% of fatal crashes involved multiple vehicles between 2018 and 2022. After Nebraska, the top five are Delaware, Indiana, Michigan and Oklahoma.

Event Details:

Title: *Lessons in History, Native American Lithographs*

Date: Thursday, August 28th

Time: 10 - 11 a.m.

Location: Lane Place, 212 S. Water St., Crawfordsville

RSVP: <https://www.lane-mchs.org/event-info/lessons-in-history-native-american-lithographs>

Historical Society's Lessons in History Tomorrow

The Montgomery County Historical Society will have its second *Lessons in History* presentation on Native American Lithographs. The event will take place Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. at historic Lane Place in Crawfordsville.

This exciting presentation series invites the local community to explore some of the unique and historically significant items in the MCHS collection. Guests

See LESSONS Page 4

Child Care Cuts Leave County Families Waiting

Montgomery County's newest child care facility, a bright and carefully designed center operated by KinderCare, was completed with optimism - 124 seats, an emphasis on hard-to-find infant and toddler care, and an experienced new director ready to meet community needs.

Although only half the seats are full, the center is on target with its expected goals for a facility of its size. However, with state-level cuts to Child Care and Development Fund vouchers and On My Way Pre-K funds, its goal to serve low-income families - those most in need of child care in order to provide for their households - has been throttled.

One barrier, according to

See LWV Page 4

BUTCH

Continued from Page 1



Photo courtesy Butch Dale

Conrad and Gilliatt Shell Station on West Main Street.

yes, the robbers were caught later.

The Cox Standard station was located at the intersection of Main and Madison streets. The owner was Alexander "Alec" Cox, who had been a teacher and coach at Darlington and Linden. He was a brother to Byron Cox, the first Montgomery County soldier killed in WWI. In addition to selling gas, petroleum products and small car parts, he also sold tobacco products, candy, chips, etc. He also sold used cars in the garage section. This was a prime meeting place for men in the community, especially local farmers. Alec had hundreds of jokes and stories, and was quite the entertainer. If a fellow was having a bad day, Alec could cheer him up in short time! Larry Binford purchased the station in 1964, sold Citgo gas, and did car repairs. He also carried on Alec's tradition of friendly service, jokes and stories!

Louis "Joker" Conrad owned the Shell service on West Main for over 30 years. Joker was an excellent mechanic, and he was assisted by his son-in-law Alva "Alvie" Gilliatt. Whenever Dad needed a flat tire repaired, he always headed to Joker's and Alvie's place. I knew for sure they were going to tease me and joke with me, but I actually enjoyed it. When Joker passed away, Alvie purchased the station and ran it by himself. Alvie could diagnose a problem with a car in seconds. Dad told me that Alvie never charged enough because he was just too nice!

Next time....some more recollections... Part II

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.

TIM

Continued from Page 1

The Committee, by the way, is about as non-partisan as it gets. It was created in 1981 by former U.S. Rep. Robert Giaimo, a Democrat from Connecticut and former U.S. Sen. Henry Bellmon, a Republican from Oklahoma. The board of directors consists of business people and House and Senate budget committee members and some folks tossed in from the Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget and the Government Accountability Office for good measure. It's a 501(c) (3). Initially, it fought against an excise tax on the tobacco industry, but a little more than a decade ago started paying attention to our "red ink rising" crisis.

Before you buy whole hog into the notion that these tariffs are going to be the ruin of us all – raising prices and unfairly penalizing the rest of the world – consider:

- There were countries paying a lower tariff fee to the U.S. than

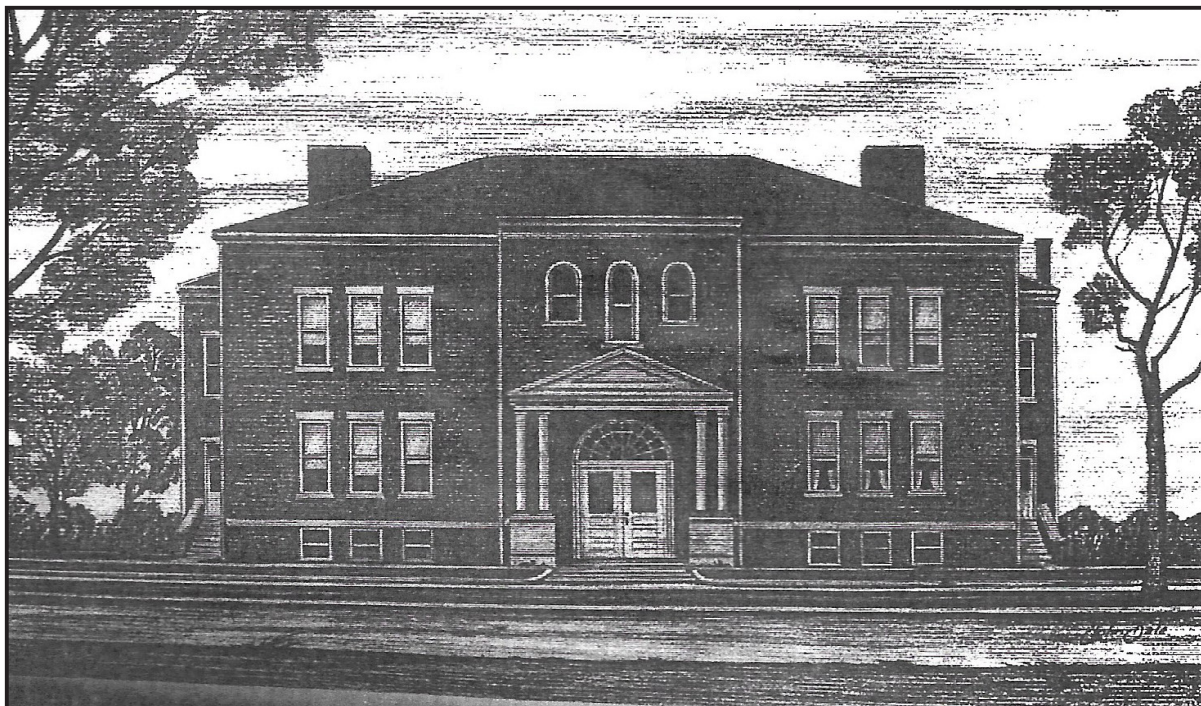
we were charging them, creating a trade imbalance.

- If prices on imports go up, that opens the door in a free economy for someone (in the U.S. hopefully) to build a better mousetrap.
- And most importantly, as the report says, the tariffs might actually slow and eventually reduce the federal deficit.

Is it the end all, be all answer for solving the national debt crisis. Nope. But maybe it's a start. All I know for sure is that the insanity of piling up million, billions and trillions in debt must stop. If it does not, to paraphrase Dirksen, pretty soon we'll be talking real money. Ours.

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 timmons@thepaper24-7.com.

■ **BUTCH DALE'S SCHOOLS FROM BACK WHEN**



Do You Recognize This School Building?

Answer on Page 4

Sen. Deery Shares Update



State Sen. Spencer Deery
Guest Columnist

It's often said that students first learn to read, and then read to learn.

Because that transition typically occurs around third grade, our state has tested third graders since 2013 for reading proficiency to identify those at risk of falling behind.

With that in mind, I'm thrilled to share that Indiana's third graders just achieved the largest increase in reading proficiency our state has ever seen.

The 2024-2025 IREAD assessment scores show a nearly 5% increase in literacy rates for third graders across the state. Additionally, 87.3% of third graders are now proficient in foundational reading skills, an increase of 6,000 more students than last year.

This is a big deal and worthy of celebration. Please join me in congratulating Indiana's teachers, parents, students, administrators and state leaders like Indiana's Secretary of Education Dr. Katie Jenner for making this happen.

As your State Senator, I have supported these efforts through several bills I was proud to back including legislation to implement Science of Reading curriculum in our classrooms, increase financial investments in literacy initiatives and provide targeted support for students who are falling behind.

But the real celebration should be for our educators who work with our students every

3rd Grade IREAD Pass Rates by School Corporation

Corporation Name	# Passing	# Tested	IREAD Pass %
Attica Consolidated School Corp	36	37	97.3%
Benton Community School Corp	92	112	82.1%
Clay Community Schools	289	307	94.1%
Covington Community School Corp	60	70	85.7%
Lafayette School Corporation	546	608	89.8%
MSD Warren County	87	97	89.7%
North Montgomery Com Sch Corp	133	144	92.4%
North Vermillion Com Sch Corp	34	41	82.9%
South Montgomery Com Sch Corp	99	112	88.4%
South Vermillion Com Sch Corp	102	113	90.3%
Southeast Fountain School Corp	70	77	90.9%
Southwest Parke Com Sch Corp	62	69	89.9%
Tippecanoe School Corp	1,031	1,132	91.1%
West Lafayette Com School Corp	166	181	91.7%
Entire State	73,500	84,163	87.3%

day to help them grow. We could not have achieved this level of improvement without their focus, dedication and care for the students they instruct and mentor.

Now, we must not let up until every child is proficient.

SUPPORTING the Cities that Border District 23

Although my district doesn't include Lafayette, Crawfordsville or Terre Haute, my constituents often work there and benefit when those cities thrive, so I feel connected with each.

This week, I joined Senate leadership in Terre Haute for a day of meetings in the area. Highlights included learning about Indiana State University's aviation program from ISU President Godard, meeting with Indiana Guardsmen who keep our country safe as members of the 181st Intelligence Wing, and seeing a Vermillion Co., company Brookes Candy from Dana, and a Parke County Company, Rusted Root Co., represented in the Chamber's array of local, small-business products coming out of the region.

Since becoming your Senator, I have enjoyed learning more about these cities and how their success and

prosperity benefits my constituents.

HONORING Hoosier Farmers

Indiana has had a proud agricultural tradition for more than 200 years, and today, the agriculture industry contributes more than \$35 billion to Indiana's economy each year.

That's why the Indiana State Department of Agriculture recently honored farms that have been owned by the same family for 100, 150 and 200 years with Hoosier Homestead Awards.

In Senate District 23:

- The Byers farm in Tippecanoe County received Sesquicentennial and Centennial awards;
- The Fink farm in Warren County received a Centennial Award;
- The Lachmund farm in Tippecanoe County received a Centennial Award;
- The Munson farm in Fountain County received a Centennial Award;
- Robert D. Hayes & Bernice B. Hayes Farms in Montgomery County received a Sesquicentennial Award;
- The Runyon farm in Montgomery County received Sesquicentennial

- and Centennial awards;
- The Runyon farm in Montgomery County received a Centennial Award;
- The Runyon farm in Montgomery County received Bicentennial, Sesquicentennial and Centennial awards;
- The Runyon farm in Montgomery County received Sesquicentennial and Centennial awards; and
- TEH Farms LLC in Vermillion County received a Centennial Award.

Congratulations to these family farms for earning these honors, and thank you for your continued dedication to Indiana's agricultural heritage.

PAID INTERNSHIPS Available

The Indiana Senate Republican Caucus is offering paid spring-semester internships in our communications, information technology, legal, legislative, page and policy offices during the 2026 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

Qualified candidates may be of any major and must be at least a college sophomore. Recent college graduates, as well as graduate and law school students, are also encouraged to apply by Oct. 31.

State Sen. Spencer Deery (R-West Lafayette) represents Senate District 23, which includes Fountain, Parke, Vermillion and Warren counties, and portions of Montgomery and Tippecanoe counties.

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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?
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It's scheduled for Aug. 13 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Meeting URL: <https://collette.zoom.us/j/89717890584>

CO collette

LWV

Continued from Page 1

Montgomery County Community Foundation Early Learning Director Lisa Walter, is a staffing shortage, which might be addressed had the state not cut funding to train and support early child care providers. The second barrier is a funding crisis in Indiana's child care voucher system that is rippling through every program in the county.

It all hit just when the county and city were on track to make huge strides in providing high-quality child care — the kind that creates enriching play and brain development activities that support children in social and emotional skills and readies them for kindergarten.

Statewide Crisis, Local Consequences

Vouchers are critical for numerous reasons. The Washington Post reports that states supporting increasing birth rates have prioritized high-quality child care as a key pro-family initiative. Why? Because child care can price a wage earner out of the job market. In a thread on Facebook, locals report costs, at the cheapest, around \$175/week, which averages about \$753 a month. For a low-income earner making \$16 an hour, that leaves just under \$2,000 for rent, utilities, car insurance, groceries, phone, clothes, medical expenses and emergencies. Needless to say, vouchers have been a critical lifeline for families.

Indiana's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning reported in August 2025 that there were 55,846 active child care vouchers statewide, down from almost 70,000 at the end of 2024. That's a loss of roughly 14,000 vouchers in just six months, mostly due to an enrollment freeze that began last December.

The state now has 25,149 children on the waitlist for vouchers, most for the CCDF program. Many will age out before a slot opens, conceded Adam Alson, the director of the

state's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, during the August FSSA Quarterly Financial Meeting.

The numbers highlight why Montgomery County is feeling the pinch:

- 94 percent of voucher families statewide are working parents, and
- 88 percent are single-parent households.
- Almost two-thirds live below the federal poverty line — about \$32,000 for a family of four.

Eligibility was recently cut from 150 percent to 135 percent of FPL, meaning some families who formerly qualified are now ineligible altogether.

Walter said Montgomery County providers are experiencing steep CCDF declines. One rural ministry program that used to have half its seats filled by voucher families now has only a fraction of that number. Her estimate is sobering — the county could serve up to 1,200 children with CCDF vouchers, with about 100 children holding active vouchers, mostly for On My Way Pre-K. Meanwhile, there are at least 125 local children on the waitlist, and one family has already been waiting 224 days — nearly a year — for help.

“When families come for a tour and the program director or administrator tells them there's a waitlist for CCDF, they turn around and never come back,” Walter said. “Those vouchers are critical for families — without them, parents either can't work or must choose less safe, unregulated care.”

The KinderCare Challenge

The new KinderCare center is a case study in how funding losses and workforce shortages combine to limit access. The building has three open infant rooms — a rarity in the child care world — but the ability to open more classrooms depends

on hiring two qualified teachers per room. KinderCare is recruiting aggressively, but in a rural county, Walter says, “there's just not a big talent base to pull from.”

As a result, the center is “at the halfway mark” in enrollment. While tuition is comparable to other local programs and the center accepts vouchers, it currently has just one CCDF-funded child enrolled. The original plan had been for 30–40 percent of seats to be filled by voucher families.

“The need is there,” Walter said. “But until voucher funding comes back, those children can't enroll here or anywhere else — and programs lose revenue they count on.”

Pre-K Setback

The state's On My Way Pre-K voucher, which funds one year of high-quality preschool for eligible four-year-olds, is also shrinking. Walter says that in 2024, Montgomery County had 60 children enrolled with Pre-K vouchers. This fall, there are only 15. That's 45 children missing out on kindergarten readiness support.

Those missing early learning experiences can have lifelong consequences. Research consistently shows that children who attend high-quality early education programs are more likely to succeed in school and less likely to require costly interventions later.

“We are literally pulling out a proven tool for future success,” Walter warned.

Cuts Beyond the Classroom

To keep funding flowing to current voucher holders, the state is slashing other child care supports: ending contracts for Spark Learning Lab (the state's technical assistance and quality coaching provider) and all regional Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. Both support systems will close Sep-

Montgomery County

- 124 seats at new KinderCare center
 - Only 62 enrolled (half full)
 - Just 1 child using CCDF voucher
- 100+ local children on CCDF waitlist
 - Families have waited up to 224 days
- One rural ministry program:
 - CCDF usage dropped from 50 percent to “just a few”
- About 50 children have CCDF vouchers countywide
 - Could serve up to 1,200 with full funding
- On My Way Pre-K:
 - 60 local children last year; only 15 this fall

Indiana (Statewide)

- 55,846 active vouchers (June 2025)
 - Down from 70,000 in Dec 2024
- 25,149 on state voucher waitlist
 - No new enrollments since Dec 2024
- Voucher family profile:
 - 94 percent working parents
 - 88 percent single-parent households
 - 64 percent under \$32,000/year (poverty line for family of 4)
- CCDF eligibility cut:
 - Was 150 percent of FPL, now 135 percent

tember 30, 2025.

For providers, this means losing:

- Free, on-site coaching for classrooms with behavioral challenges.
- Help navigating CCDF compliance and quality rating improvements.
- Free or low-cost professional development hours required to maintain their licenses.

Walter says the Montgomery County Early Childhood Coalition will try to fill the gap with a local workshop series, but grant funding for that ends next year. Providers still need twice as many training hours as the coalition can offer.

“We were making solid progress,” she said. The cuts to vouchers make it feel like the situation is going backwards for some families.

The Workforce Trap

The funding freeze creates a vicious cycle. Without vouchers, many low-income parents leave the workforce or reduce hours because child care is unaffordable. That, in turn, reduces the labor pool for employers across industries — from manufacturing to health care — at a time when Indiana employers are already struggling to fill jobs.

In Montgomery County, Walter adds, the shortage of trained early childhood educators compounds the crisis.

“You can't open a classroom without the staff ratios. And without CCDF families, there's less revenue to hire staff. It's Catch-22.”

Families Squeezed

Some parents manage by piecing together unpaid care from relatives or friends; others turn to informal, unlicensed providers. Those settings aren't always unsafe, Walter stressed, but “they're not regulated learning environments, and kids miss out on early development opportunities.”

The worst-case scenario is parents leaving children in unsafe conditions — a risk that grows when affordable, licensed care is out of reach.

Advocacy Ahead

Walter and her colleagues are planning advocacy events this fall, including hosting the No Small Matter documentary in November and participating in the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children's Statehouse Day in February.

Her message to legislators will be simple: the first five years are critical, child care is

foundational to workforce participation, and rural communities can't “do more with less” when less is already threadbare.

“At the very least,” she said, “let us send these kids to preschool.”

While the funding picture endangers the budgets of low-income wage earners, Montgomery County has worked hard to alleviate the lack of options altogether. Whereas the county once had seats for only 5% of the children, its hardworking childcare providers and supporters make it possible to serve over 50% of the child-care-aged population. Want to understand the issue more fully? Join MCCF and partners for a No Small Matter documentary screening and panel discussion at 6 p.m., November 5, 2025, at Crawfordsville High School. The event is open to community members and will cover the importance of high-quality early childhood education.

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.

LESSONS

Continued from Page 1

will gain a deeper understanding of the unique Native American lithographs in our collection, why we have them and their historical significance.

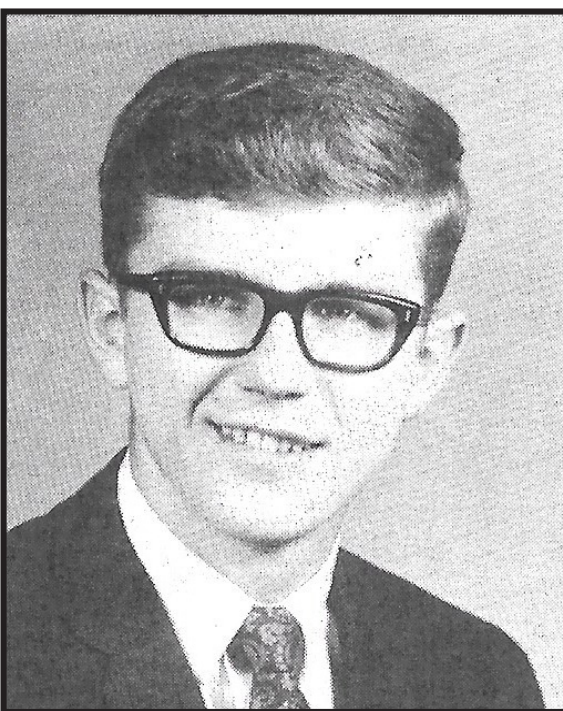
Owen Bennett, Assistant Director, will provide historical insights and highlight the fascinating stories behind the artifacts. Topics covered will include local and national Native American relations and more.

This event is part of the *Lessons in History* series, aimed at edu-

cating the public about Montgomery County's rich history through engaging, in-depth presentations. Keep an eye out for additional presentations in the future!

Space is limited, so attendees are encouraged to RSVP in advance to secure their spot for this FREE event. To reserve a seat or for more information, please contact the Montgomery County Historical Society at (765) 362-3416 or email jcoates@lane-mchs.org.

■ BUTCH'S FLASHBACK TRIVIA



ANSWER: Charles “Rex” Wilkinson

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
 IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
 JAMES GUILFORD MOSS,
 DECEASED
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT 2 PROBATE
 Notice is hereby given that Joshua Christopher Billett, on this day was appointed personal representative of the Estate James Guilford Moss, deceased, who died on May 18, 2025, and is authorized to administer this estate without court supervision.
 All persons having claims against this estate, whether or not now due, must file the same 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 forever barred.
 DATED at Indianapolis, Indiana, this 11th day of August, 2025.
 Clerk of the Montgomery County Superior Court,
 Probate Division
 PL5147 8/20 8/27 2t hspaxlp

Public Notices Deadline: 11:00 a.m.
 2 Business Days Prior to Publication:
legals@thepaper24-7.com

Private Party Notices Submitted After Deadline
 May Be Subject To \$25.00 Fee In Addition To The
 Cost Of The Advertisement

**BUTCH DALE'S SCHOOLS
 FROM BACK WHEN**

ANSWER:

New Richmond High School



Photo courtesy Indiana State Police

Indiana Gov. Mike Braun flew to, from Jasper 11 times in six months.

Braun Used ISP Helicopter 11 Times for Jasper Trips

By **Whitney Downard**
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Sunday, May 26 was a pretty special day for Indiana Gov. Mike Braun. The state's top executive spent his time at "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing," punctuated by an appearance on Fox and Friends to recap his first legislative session as governor.

But rather than returning to the Governor's Residence in Indianapolis, just a 20-minute drive from the track, Braun apparently drove to his Jasper family home two-and-a-half hours away.

And the next day, he took a helicopter ride to get back to the state capital.

The trip was one of 11 flights between March 13 and August 1 chronicled in response to a public records request submitted by the Indiana Capital Chronicle, totaling \$23,880. The state said that it would have "incurred" those costs whether or not Braun had used the Indiana State Police helicopter, because those flight hours were necessary "to satisfy (the Federal Aviation Administration's) mandated hours requirements."

Though the FAA has established standards for pilots to maintain their licenses, the Indiana State Police has its own requirements for pilots to regularly travel on top of that.

"The Indiana State Police expects 1-3 hours of flight time per week per helicopter pilot," said Griffin Reid, a spokesperson for Braun's office. "Transportation decisions are made based on a number of factors."

Eight of those trips ended at Braun's southern Indiana home in Jasper, where the state paid \$1,745.55 to install a 20-foot-by-20-foot gravel pad earlier this year. The remaining three flights transported the governor from Jasper to Indianapolis.

A member of his security detail accom-

panied him on every trip while his wife, Maureen, joined on only one trip.

Though Braun never flew on Sundays, he used the transit option at least once on every other day of the week. Each flight hour cost approximately \$1,200. A helicopter flight between Jasper and Indianapolis takes roughly 45 minutes, according to the office.

Braun is the first governor to reside outside of central Indiana as governor in recent history. Former Govs. Eric Holcomb and Mike Pence made the governor's residence in Indianapolis their primary home — with Pence selling his Columbus home after becoming governor — while former Gov. Mitch Daniels split his time between that building and his home in Carmel.

But where did he go?

Braun first flew from Indianapolis to Jasper on March 13, one day before the Indiana Capital Chronicle publicized the taxpayer-funded helipad at his Jasper home. Two weeks later, also on a Thursday, he again used a helicopter to get from Indianapolis to Jasper.

His April 16 flight to Jasper was preceded by several public appearances the day before, including a press event with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., signing the state's effort to reform property taxes into law and the Perry Township Lincoln Day Dinner.

But neither his public releases nor his social media indicates his plans for April 16, the day he flew. The next day, a Thursday, he met with the Borden High School girls' basketball team, the 2025 state champions, and attended another Lincoln Day Dinner in New Albany.

He flew two more times in April, starting both trips in Jasper and ending in Indianapolis. The first was Monday, April 21 — the day after Easter

— while the next, on Tuesday, April 29, occurred one day before he celebrated 100 days in office.

None of Braun's social media accounts indicated why he went to Angola in northern Indiana on Saturday, May 3. However, Trine University reports that Braun delivered the keynote address during commencement that day at 10 a.m. He opted to fly back to Jasper, bypassing the four-plus hour drive.

Two weeks later, Braun attended the Brickyard Breakfast in Indianapolis with the First Lady before flying back to Jasper on May 17. His next trip, on Monday, May 26, came one day after the Indianapolis 500.

Braun only flew once each of the following three months: Thursday, June 26; Friday, July 11; and Friday, Aug. 1.

Braun posted about his June visit with Israeli Consul General Yinam Cohen "to explore ways we can deepen collaboration and strengthen ties between Indiana and Israel," flying back to Jasper later that day.

July 11 was one of the rare trips that didn't originate in either Jasper or Indianapolis, but rather in the township of Culver. The northwestern township is roughly 64 miles, or just under 90 minutes, where he had a ceremonial bill signing earlier that day in Lake County.

His last trip, on Aug. 1, went from Indianapolis to Jasper with his wife, Maureen, after the governor delivered opening remarks at the Indiana Pork Ham Breakfast and Indiana State Fair Opening Ceremonies.



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GOP

Continued from Page 2

eral declining to speak to the Indiana Capital Chronicle following the meeting — but members of Indiana's GOP congressional delegation all jumped on board within hours.

"Democrats have proven they will use every tool available to them to gain and keep power. For years, Republicans have idly stood by while the Left has weaponized government against us," U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman wrote Monday on X. "It's time for us to drop the gloves. At this moment, our state has the opportunity to give conservative Hoosiers the representation in DC they deserve. I stand with President Trump, it's time to redraw Indiana's congressional map!"

Stutzman's northeastern seat is probably the most isolated from any redistricting threats, though some worry that cracking deep-blue Indianapolis into several districts — rather than packing all the voters into one — could erode the safe margins Republicans currently have in other seats.

Of Indiana's nine congressional districts, seven are held by the GOP. Outside of Indianapolis, Democrats hold the northwestern Indiana district.

U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz — whose 5th District in central Indiana grew redder in the last map process — also came out in support. She pinned her statement to a post from California Gov. Gavin Newsom calling "to meet fire with fire."

"This fall, Indiana will have the chance to respond to Democrats' gerrymandering and stand with President Trump and the state of Texas to stand up for our REPUBLIC! Given developments across the country, I fully support mid-cycle redistricting," Spartz said.

And U.S. Rep. Mark Messmer, R-8th, posted this statement: "I am proud to support Hoosier State Legislators and our great @GovBraun in fighting the long history of weaponized voter manipulation in CA, NY, and IL. Redistricting in Indiana will accurately reflect the will of Hoosier voices."

Messmer was in state Senate leadership when the current congressional map was drawn in 2021 by Indiana Republicans.

As the day wore on, four more Hoosier Republican U.S. representatives announced their support — 2nd District Rep. Rudy Yakym; 9th District Rep. Erin Houchin, 4th District Rep. Jim Baird and 6th District Rep. Jefferson Shreve.

Democrat U.S. Reps. Frank Mrvan and André Carson oppose the move. Their seats will be target-

ed under new maps.

The push comes after national Republicans, including President Donald Trump, have pressured red states to reconfigure their maps ahead of 2026 to maximize GOP control in the U.S. House. Indiana was launched to the forefront of that conversation following recent meetings between Vice President JD Vance and top state leaders.

Indiana GOP legislators are headed to the White House next week for a visit that was previously scheduled, but now redistricting will be a topic.

Gov. Mike Braun reiterated that he remains noncommittal on whether to call a special session for redistricting, saying the decision will depend on consensus within the General Assembly.

"I'm not going to call one unless there is going to be general agreement that we need to," Braun told reporters, noting a session could cost taxpayers roughly \$150,000. A special session in Indiana in 2022 cost about \$240,000.

Braun acknowledged the national political pressure but emphasized that Indiana is already solidly Republican.

"Yes, there will be political pressure put on, and it will be cranked up, probably closer you get to the finish line of when they'd like to get it done."

He added that Republicans "run 88% of the local government offices," he said. "When southern Indiana, where I'm from, flipped 20 years ago, [it] started into become solidly red congressional districts. It changed, and it's going to change until something else will flip the other way."

Still, he left the door open to GOP lawmakers' demands.

"We could create nine Republican districts," Braun said. "But ... many things that should evolve (should) not be done out of context."

But not all Republicans are on board.

Rep. Ed Clere, R-New Albany, blasted the idea of an emergency session to redraw congressional lines.

"Under no circumstances will I vote for a new map," Clere said in a written statement provided to the Capital Chronicle. "Special sessions should be reserved for emergencies. The president's desperation to maintain a U.S. House majority by stacking the deck in favor of Republicans does not constitute an emergency."

Clere, speaking before Monday's caucus, warned that rushing the process without public hearings could open the state to legal challenges

and set a dangerous precedent.

"It would be another step toward a full-time legislature, and that's the last thing Indiana needs," he continued. "There is nothing that can't wait until the next regular session."

He added that redistricting could even backfire on Republicans: "Be careful what you ask for — a new congressional map could have the effect of making some Republican-held congressional districts more competitive."

Meanwhile, GOP activists have ramped up pressure on lawmakers through telephone calls to Hoosier constituents.

Longtime Republican Jewell DeBonis told the Capital Chronicle she received multiple automated "robocalls" urging her to contact local legislators, though several initially targeted the wrong representatives. She has since filed a complaint with the attorney general's office.

"Braun said wait and see what Texas does. I'm offended by that," DeBonis said. "It shouldn't matter to us in Indiana what people in Texas or California or Illinois do. We're better than that. We should stand up for what's right for Indiana, regardless of what other states are doing. If we go down this path of redistricting every time we get concerned about what the outcomes of the next election might be that's just perilous. It's just wrong. ... The Republican Party is better than this."

Josh DeFonce, the communications director for Attorney General Todd Rokita, confirmed that the office had received calls to investigate the legality of Forward America's robocalls.

"We rely primarily on complaints to investigate consumer related matters including robocalls," DeFonce said. "... we now have multiple to review. Only just receiving them today and as you can understand, it will take some time to review those appropriately and fully."

Conservative activist Charlie Kirk, a co-founder and the executive director of Turning Point USA, also took to social media to threaten Indiana's GOP incumbents.

"We will support primary opponents for Republicans in the Indiana State Legislature who refuse to support the team and redraw the maps. I've heard from grassroots across the country and they want elected Republicans to stand up and fight for them. It's time for Republicans to be TOUGH Don't let California steal the 2026 house from us."

Indiana Capital Chronicle Editor-in-Chief Niki Kelly contributed to this story.

HHSB President, CEO Brad Monts Marks 35 Years



Brad Monts

Hoosier Heartland State Bank is proud to

recognize President & CEO Brad Monts for 35 years at the bank.

“Brad Monts exemplifies what it means to be a community banker. He is at his core a leader, mentor, and collaborator who encourages everyone around him to improve continuously,” says HHSB’s Vice-Chairman of the Board, Patricia Sosbe. “By example, he has built a true team at HHSB that transforms the lives of our customers and the communities we serve.”

Monts began his banking career at HHSB (then Farmer’s State Bank) in 1990, after graduating from Franklin College. He later graduated from the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1994. He has served in many capacities, from Branch Manager to Loan Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and is currently the President and CEO of Hoosier Heartland State Bank. He has also served on the board of directors since 1993, and he is the current Chairman of the Board.

Throughout his 35 years with HHSB, Monts has been highly active in the community. Today, he serves as Treasurer of the Mont-

gomery County Educational Foundation and President of Indiana West Advantage, and he is a member of the Montgomery Redevelopment Commission and the Montgomery County Health & Wellness Center Board.

Monts is also on the board of the Indiana Bankers Association and a member of the Data & Cybersecurity Committee for the Independent Community Bankers Association.

Monts and his wife Karen reside in Ladoga and have two children, Brooke and Taylor. In his spare time, he enjoys golfing, boating, traveling and spending time with his family. He can be reached at bmonts@myhhsb.com.

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Sesquicentennial Celebration Event

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Saturday, September 6, 2025

- 8 - 10 AM Breakfast at New Ross Christian Church
- 8 AM - 2 PM Yard Sales open all over town
- 8 - 11 AM Corn Hole Tournament - Registration 8-8:45
Tournament 9-11
- 9:00 AM Opening Ceremonies and the Welcome Center opens
- 9 AM - 6 PM Arts & Crafts Vendors Open
- 9 AM - 6 PM Historical Displays Open
- 9 AM - ?? Tree Giveaway at the Community Club Building
- 9 AM - 9 PM Reunion Tent area to rest and visit
- 9 AM - 9 PM Food & Drink options will be available by multiple vendors
- 10 AM - 3 PM Car Show Registration at 10 AM, Judging at 2:30, awards to follow
- 10 AM - 6 PM Kids FUN ZONE area open
- 11 AM - 2 PM Lunch Served by the He Men
- 12 - 1 PM Southmont "Sudden Impulse" choir
- 12 - 3 PM Color Run by the Walnut Elementary PTO at the Leland Cornett Park
- 12 - 9 PM Walking Tacos served by Walnut Township Volunteer Fire Department
- 1:00 PM Sesquicentennial Queen and Princess introduction and crowning
- 1 - 2:00 PM Pie Contest registration at 1, judging at 1:30, auction at 2
- 1:30 - 3:30 PM GG the Strolling Magician
- 2 - 9 PM Beer Garden open - Served by the New Ross Steak House
- 3:30 PM Parade "150 Years of Community" Line up at 2:30
- 5 - 6:30 PM Back Road Revival Band (no seating provided)
- 7 - 9 PM Steve Trent & Small Town Band (no seating provided)
- 9 PM 50/50 Drawing at conclusion of the entertainment

Sunday, September 7, 2025

- 10 AM Community Worship Service with Light Lunch to follow at New Ross United Methodist Church

Hosted by 150th Celebration Committee of the Walnut Township Community Organization

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