SERVING ARCADIA ▣ ATLANTA ▣ CARMEL ▣ CICERO ▣ FISHERS ▣
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THURSDAY
February 2, 2023

TODAY'S VERSE

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Diane Reed smile? "About everything," said the 82-year-old Noblesville resident."I like to see the glass half full, when I see people in a way, when they say something, I usually take it as an uplifting thing and more often than not I smile especially when something is really silly, then I really smile. I'm probably one of those old-fashioned people who smiles as the silliest things." She was found this weekend performing as a caterer onstage in The Belfry Theatre's current production, "Rehearsal for Murder," through Sunday at The Ivy Tech Auditorium in Noblesville. She has been acting since she started on "this very stage," (The Ivy Tech Auditorium, which is the former Noblesville High School) almost 50 years ago, in 1973, when she and her husband moved to Noblesville and they both acted in "Guys and Dolls," directed by Betty Foland and John Foland. "My husband was cast as Sky Masterson, and they put me in as a Hot Box Dancer. Then years later, they reprised the ("Guys and Dolls") show at The Belfry, then I played a Mission Worker. Diane was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pa. What brought her to Hamilton County? "My husband's job," she said. "When I moved here (to Noblesville), people were so friendly." What else? "I had the record (at one time) of being the oldest mother at Riverview Hospital to have a baby ... I was 43."

And **Another Thing...**

1. Legislative Coffee

Join the Westfield Chamber of Commerce at the Bridgewater Club on Friday as they partner with the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce for their Legislative Coffee with County & City Council Members.

The three panelists Mike Johns, Westfield City Council President, Darren Peterson, Noblesville Common Council Vice President and Ken Alexander, Hamilton County Council President, will give insight and updates about the Legislative Priorities of Hamilton County, Noblesville and Westfield. There will be time for open networking 7:30-8 a.m., with the panel to begin at 8 a.m.

There is a $10 fee to attend, and coffee, tea, and juice will be served. Register online at business.westfieldchamberindy.com/event-calendar/Details/noblesville-westfield-legislate-series-county-city-councils-813492

2. Teacher Honored

Congratulations to Noblesville Schools' Nathaniel Truitt, a 3rd grade teacher at Hinkle Creek Elementary, who, earlier this week, took home WISH-TV's Golden Apple teacher award. Visit tinyurl.com/5d7ch25f to watch his reaction to the surprise and hear from his students and parents about what makes him a special teacher.

3. Spartz Town Hall

Congresswoman Spartz will host a town hall in Howard County at 11 a.m. this Saturday in the Cardinal and Peony rooms at Kokomo-Howard County Public Library South Branch, 1755 E Center Rd., Kokomo. For any questions, contact Rep. Spartz Carmel office at (317) 848-0201

4. DNR at Boat Show

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources wants to see you at the Indianapolis Boat, Sport and Travel Show on Feb. 17-19 and 22-26. The show takes place at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. The DNR and State Park Inns will have an information booth in Tackle Town in the Blue Ribbon Pavilion. The booth is a convenient one-stop shopping opportunity for licenses, state park passes, lake-use permits and Outdoor Indiana magazine subscriptions. DNR biologists and State Parks interpretive naturalists will be on hand to share program information and resources, as well as answer fish and wildlife and parks questions.

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The Times photo courtesy of Betsy Reason

The Miller Man signage greets students, teachers and visitors at the NHS main entrance.

Noblesville Schools is Our School Choice

BETSY REASON
The Times Editor

When I was a kid, I rarely heard of any students attending classes other than at public schools.

But today, my Noblesville High School junior daughter finds that several of her friends outside of NHS are choosing alternative education, and many are being homeschooled.

Last week was National School Choice Week.

It was created to inform, inspire and empower parents to discover the K-12 education options for children.

Ind. Gov. Eric Holcolmb issued a proclamation recognizing the week, during which I was on vacation from The Times.

While this isn't a column about the home school choices, it is a column about why we made Noblesville Schools public school system our school choice.

It started at age 5, when it was time to enroll her in school, and we didn't think twice about enrolling her at Noblesville Schools' North Elementary, and we have been mostly happy with

➲See BETSY Page A7

Longest-Serving Noblesville Council Member Retires

Councilman Brian Ayer

Noblesville Common Council Brian Ayer has decided not to run for another term on the Noblesville City Council after 20 years of service to the citizens of Noblesville.

"I am proud of the progress our City has made since I began serving on council in 2003," Brian Ayer said.

"We have worked together as a city to maintain our identity as an unmatched historic community while moving forward on

➲See RETIRES Page A7

New Program Trains Inmates for Hospitality Industry Work

Hamilton County Tourism President & CEO Brenda Myers

Multiple Hamilton County community organizations and governmental partners have launched an innovative Hospitality Training Program in the Hamilton County Jail. The ten-week program provides

➲See PROGRAM Page A7

Bicentennial Committee Announces Noblesville Trailblazers

As the City of Noblesville celebrates its 200th birthday, the Noblesville Bicentennial Committee has partnered with Hamilton County Historian David Heighway to share information about our community. Each month, we will highlight "Noblesville Trailblazers" – individuals and groups that made an impact to our history.

Salmon Oliver "Sol" Levinson (1865-1941)

Known as "Sol" when he lived here, Levinson was the eldest son of his family. He excelled in the local schools, graduating at the age of 16, and was a leading member of

➲See TRAILBLAZERS Page A7

Hamilton County Commercial Courts Make Court More Business Friendly

If you ask Hamilton County Superior Court 2 Judge Jon Brown about the benefits of commercial court, you'll get an earful. As a former bankruptcy/commercial litigation attorney, Judge Brown understands how drawn-out and cumbersome complex litigation can be.

"Commercial courts help improve court efficiency and allow business and commercial disputes to be resolved quicker with more predictability," said

➲See BUSINESS Page A7

The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 7:51 a.m.
SET: 6:04 p.m.

High/Low Temperatures
HIGH: 42 °F
LOW: 21 °F

Today is....
- Candlemas
- Groundhog Day
- Tater Tot Day

What Happened On This Day
- **1709** Alexander Selkirk is rescued after being shipwrecked on a desert island, inspiring Daniel Defoe's book *Robinson Crusoe*
- **1887** In Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, the first Groundhog Day is observed
- **1943** The Battle of Stalingrad comes to an end when Soviet troops accept the surrender of the last organized German troops in the city

Births On This Day
- **1882** James Joyce Irish author
- **1977** Shakira Colombian singer-songwriter, producer and actress

Deaths On This Day
- **1979** Sid Vicious English singer and bass player
- **1996** Gene Kelly American dancer and actor

INSIDE TODAY

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OBITUARIES

None

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Keep high calorie snack foods out of sight – you'll eat fewer of them. Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Times and online atthetimes24-7.com

HONEST HOOSIER

Welcome to Groundhog Day – the dumbest holiday we celebrate (yes, I know there are some really stupid holidays out there . . . "we" just don't celebrate most of them.

The Times appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank ***YVONNE CATHCART*** *for subscribing!*

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Pitiful, a thousand people freezing their butts off waiting to worship a rat."

Phil Connors, Groundhog Day

TODAY'S JOKE

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Pun.
Pun who?
Punxsutawney Phil.

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Where Are We With Taxes? Let's Ask

TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

I'd like to think that my talent with the written word is responsible for the landslide of response the last two weeks. But I suspect the topics – politics as usual and the insanity of our massive national debt – has far more to do with it. Whatever the reason, I'll take it. The more of us who get involved the better. The more unwilling to accept the embarrassing load of debt we're handing our childr-, uh, grandchil-, er, great-grandchildren . . . the better.

Let's recap. The discussion began when our country reached its debt limit . . . and the hired hands in Washington appear to be going down the same ol' path of not addressing the real problem (let alone cutting spending and actually starting to fix it). Nope, they're going to play politics for a while and then, one-two-presto . . . they're going to "solve" everything by kicking the can down the road and raising the debt limit.

However, there's a little good news. In addition to an awful lot of you talking about this, Sen. Mike Braun – yes, the same one running for governor in the great Hoosier State, and 23 of his Republican buddies sent a letter to President Joe Biden about the growing debt. Was it a political stunt? Oh, probably. But at least they said something.

"Americans are keenly aware that their government is not only failing to work for them – but actively working against them," the letter said in part. "We do not intend to vote for a debt-ceiling increase without structural reforms to address current and future fiscal realities and manage out-of-control government policies."

It stops short of saying they'll find ways to reduce spending.

Hey, it's a start.

How did we get here?

Well, part of it is greed and corruption. If anyone out there thinks that Joe Biden and his pals all over D.C. (past and present) didn't get fat and happy in their government jobs, well, I've got a couple of daily newspapers I want to sell you! Besides, let's not forget the wise words from one of the last honest guys to sit in the Oval Office, Harry S. Truman. "Show me a man who gets rich by being a politician, and I will show you a crook."

Amen, Harry . . . amen!

Look, a lot of us grew up the same way. My wife and I will celebrate 40 years of marriage in a few months – assuming she doesn't kill me first. And we've done OK for ourselves. I say that not to brag. We worked our asses off for what we have. The thing is, we – like many of you – started out with little. We lived in Mrs. Schroeder's upstairs for a while on West Main Street because we couldn't afford our own place. When we finally could, that first abode was a house trailer. Hey, the newspaper I worked at was paying me $190 a week and all the newsprint I could eat. It's what we could afford.

Did I suggest the government was to blame? Did I expect someone to improve things for me?

My Dad and his Dad would have kicked me in the posterior if I had.

Instead, I got more jobs. I worked at the Park & Rec Department running a summer league. I got my referee's license and started ref'ing games. As a writer, I freelanced. Later on, I coached three sports at a high school.

How many of you worked more than one job back in the day? I'll bet a lot.

We had to, right? The idea that the government would step in and either give us a free handout, or force our employers to double the wages they were paying would have resulted in a whole lot of politicians finding out just how angry voters react at the ballot box.

• Times have changed.
• Our taxes are out of control.
• Government spending is out of control.
• Government growth is out of control.

I'll ask again – how did we get here? It sure didn't happen overnight. It's kind of like that old story about the camel's nose. The thought is that if a camel sticks its nose under the tent and you don't shoo it away, then little by little the camel will soon follow. Tell you what friends, the camel and his buddies are in our tent.

So we're going to be like that camel. Over some time, we're going to take a closer look at the details of where our money goes in the government and pass what we learn along. We've already started by reaching out earlier this week and asking for some "big picture" data. Simply put, we asked four things: 1.) How much money does the county bring in each year 2.) What are the sources of that money (income tax, property taxes, etc.) 3.) What local taxes have been passed over the years (dates and what it was for) And 4.) How much does the county spend year by year?

However, let me be crystal clear. The intention here is to not be critical of the county. It's just a place to start to figure things out. Let me say it again:

• Times have changed.
• Our taxes are out of control.
• Government spending is out of control.
• Government growth is out of control.

So we're asking questions. We'll report the answers – good, bad or indifferent – and we'll see what we learn. Truth to tell, I hate to start here. The best, and I truly do mean that, the best people in government are those on the local level. For the most part, these are friends and neighbors and folks who just want to do their part. Government at the local level is usually as good as government gets.

The bigger issues, 97.5 percent of the problems, are in Indianapolis and Washington. But if we're going to get things to change, we have to start somewhere.

Want to join in? Send your questions, comments and concerns my way. We'll see where this goes.

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically on Thursdays in The Times. Timmons is the chief executive officer of Sagamore News Media, the company that owns The Noblesville Times. He is also a proud Noblesville High School graduate and can be contacted at ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com.

Fishers' Disability Awareness Month Celebration Set to Make March Return

The annual celebration of National Disability Awareness Month in Fishers returns in March to bring awareness of what life is like for those with physical and intellectual disabilities.

The month-long celebration, hosted by the Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability and presented by Old National Bank, will feature a series of special events and initiatives throughout the city. This year's theme, Building Our Future Together, includes partners from around Hamilton County who champion disability inclusion in Fishers and beyond.

The 2023 lineup features events hosted by the Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability and community partners such as Hamilton East Public Library, Conner Prairie, OneZone Chamber of Commerce, Fishers Parks, Fishers Arts Council and more.

"The Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability is creating a more inclusive community through its work with disability stakeholders and community partners," said Cecilia Coble, co-chair of the Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability.

"This March, our community will celebrate the achievements from previous years and continue to build our future together, creating a place where individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities can live and thrive without limits."

The celebration will include the return of the Ally campaign, which invites residents to become advocates for disability inclusion. Free Ally toolkits will be available for community members to showcase their advocacy, educate themselves and others, and further the discussion on disability inclusion.

Toolkits including a t-shirt, yard sign, stickers, and other materials and will be available for pick up at the March Disability Awareness Month Kickoff on March 1 at Launch Fishers (12175 Visionary Way) or at the Fishers City Services Building (3 Municipal Dr.), beginning March 2. Virtual toolkits, now available at fishers.in.us/DisabilityAwareness, include information on how to be an Ally; a language guide and FAQ; social media graphics; Zoom backgrounds; and an Ally pledge.

The 2023 event lineup includes:

• **2023 Disability Awareness Month Kick-off & Awards: Building Our Future Together on March 1 from 8:30–10 a.m.**

Launch Fishers Huston Theater (12175 Visionary Way, Fishers)

Kick off the month-long celebration with keynote speaker Kelly Hartman, Co-Chair of the Fishers Advisory Council on Disability, Vice President at ViaQuest Community Solutions, Co-Founder and Board Member of Outside the Box, Inc. and Fishers resident. The annual Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Awards will also be presented. Registration is not required for this free event.

• **Fishers Parks' Storywalk: We Move Together daily from March 1–31**

Brooks School Park (11780 Brooks School Rd., Fishers)

This month's book, We Move Together is a joyful new book about the disability community and culture. Take a self-guided hike as you enjoy this children's book by Kelly Fritsch. Registration is not required for this free event.

• **OneZone March Disability Awareness Breakfast: Finding Your Next Great Hire on March 2 from 8:30–10 a.m.**

Hotel Carmichael (1 Carmichael Square, Carmel)

Hear from a diverse panel on debunking disability myths, what resources are available to businesses, how to create an inclusive work environment, and finding your next great hire. Registration is required; head to web.onezonecommerce.com/events/March-Disability-Awareness-Breakfast-5830/details to complete your registration.

• **2023 Disability Awareness Month Artist Reception on March 3 from 6–9 p.m.**

Conner Prairie (13400 Allisonville Rd., Fishers)

Conner Prairie, in collaboration with the Fishers Arts Council, hosts the 2023 Disability Awareness Month Artist Reception on Friday, March 3 in the museum's Welcome Center. This free event is open to the public and highlights the creative skills of both visual and performing artists. Light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be provided.

• **Fishers Arts Council's Second Friday Gallery Reception on March 10 from 6–8 p.m.**

Collaboration Hub at the Hamilton County Community Foundation (11810 Technology Dr., Fishers)

Fishers Arts Council presents March Disability Awareness: Building Our Future Together. This free reception is open to the public and all ages are welcome. Meet the artists, enjoy all their works, meet local comic book creator Jason Funk, and partake in light refreshments. Some artworks will be available for purchase. No registration is required for this free event, but registration is welcome; visit fishersartscouncil.org/event-info/second-friday-mar23/ form to register.

• **Hamilton County Transition Fair on March 23 from 6–7 p.m.**

Carmel High School Main Cafeteria (520 E. Main Street, Carmel)

Get local resources for life's transitions from service providers around Hamilton County and surrounding areas. Registration is not required for this free event.

• **Hamilton East Public Library Workshops throughout March at Hamilton East Public Library**

Check out free workshops in honor of Disability Awareness Month hosted by the Hamilton East Public Library. Workshops include:

• **Neurodivergent Teen Hangout on March 2 from 6-7 p.m.**
• **Drop-In Activity: Klee Scratch Art from March 6-19 (while supplies last)**
• **Paper Basket Class for Adults with IDD with Teaching Artist Yuki Darrow on March 11 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.**
• **Calming Collage Class on March 25 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**
• **Virtual Autism Family Support Waiver Workshop on March 27 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

To register for events, download the Ally Toolkit, and learn more about the work of the Fishers Advisory Committee on Disability, visit fishers.in.us/DisabilityAwareness. Follow along on social media at #FishersDisabilityAwareness.

Letters

Carmel Councilman Urges Legislature to Pump Brakes

Dear Editor,

I'm writing today to urge the Indiana State Legislature to pump the brakes on Senate Bill 134 and House Bill 1121. Both pieces of legislation -- written by out-of-state business interests focused on profits over the well-being of living creatures -- would undermine local ordinances regarding the responsible breeding of cats and dogs and the commercial sale of pets in stores.

I serve on the Carmel City Council and I believe one of my duties as an elected public servant is to protect those without a voice. Cats and dogs cannot speak for themselves and I believe it's morally wrong to abuse, neglect or mistreat these animal companions.

In response to weak and vague state laws, I led the charge on a local level to strengthen Carmel's animal cruelty laws, creating new penalties for owners who leave pets outside in extreme heat or cold. We also cracked down on irresponsible breeders within our city limits. These are breeders who breed too many animals in a small residential space or keep animals in unacceptable conditions.

I knew this was a moral issue. Back when I was a newspaper reporter, I personally visited a puppy mill as police seized dozens of malnourished dogs. They had matted fur and the stench was horrible. No living creature deserves to live in such cramped, unclean facilities.

But this was also a neighborhood issue and a financial issue. In Carmel, residents don't want to live 10 feet away from a home with up to 20 breeding females and perhaps up to 100 dogs (when you consider males and puppies). That's a business and does not belong in a home.

Furthermore, excess breeding of cats and dogs contributes to more strays on the street and overcrowding at the local animal shelter. And every cat and dog that's picked up or brought to the shelter costs the taxpayer. The taxpayer pays for the initial housing, feeding and care of these animals. The taxpayers are the one who take on the significant financial burden of irresponsible breeding, not the breeders.

The proposed state laws would undo more than a dozen local ordinance that prohibit commercial cat/dog sales in pet stores. By undoing these laws, you'd be taking away local control. Local issues should be decided by local politicians. More importantly, you'd be causing harm to these communities by not understanding why a these bans are put into place.

Here in Carmel, we do not have a single pet store that sells cats and dogs in our city limits. Major retail chains like Petco or PetSmart offer pet adoption instead, and, I'd add, they do quite well financially selling food, medications, supplies and toys. Previously, we had an ordinance on the books that any pet store that sells cats or dogs can only purchase them from breeders that comply with our local breeding laws. While that sounds good on paper, it would be nearly impossible to enforce. Pet stores source their animals from numerous breeders, many of which are located hours away or across state lines. Paperwork from each breeder can be inaccurate and it would create an undue burden on our local animal control officers or code enforcement to travel and inspect these facilities. Inevitably, we'd end up looking the other way. Since we had no pet stores selling cats or dogs, we took the preemptive action and outlawed the practice before a problem could occur. The vast majority of our Republican-controlled city council voted in support of the ordinance.

I want to be clear: I'm not anti-breeder. In fact, I purchased my 11-year-old Shiba Inu from a reputable breeder. Breeders have a place but they should follow local laws. They shouldn't be jamming an insane number of animals into a small space. That's no life for an animal and it creates a supply of animals that the public can't support, leading to overflowing shelters and, in some cases, euthanasia.

There was no summer study committee on this topic and it feels like this legislation has been rushed before the issue can truly be studied and understood by our state legislators. In fact, there was a lot of confusion by committee members about what the law would actually do. Some laws take years to pass. Why does this law need to be fast tracked?

Whether you personally agree with it or not, cities are well within their right to regulate local businesses. This is no different from a local smoking ban at bars and restaurants. We do not need state laws to undo our local ordinances.

My ask is this: Let local governments continue to make local decisions that affect local budgets and local communities. Please respect home rule.

For some Indiana communities, residents would not support laws regarding cats and dogs similar to Carmel's. That's perfectly fine. Let each county or city make their own rules based on the wishes, desires and needs of their community.

There's no need to rush this legislation. Please consider shelving this matter this session so it can be discussed further. Thank you for your time.

Adam Aasen
Carmel City Council

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Thanks for reading The Times!

Photo courtesy of NFD

Carbon, a therapy dog serving with NFD, takes time to visit with and comfort some of the children from White River Elementary on Tuesday.

NFD Responds to Fire at White River Elementary

This past Tuesday, the Noblesville Fire Department responded to an after-school emergency call around 3:30 p.m.

The first units on the scene were met with light smoke. quickly locating the source in one of the classrooms. The sprinkler system activated, stopping the fire from spreading and limiting damage to the room. The small fire, contained by both the sprinkler system, was swiftly extinguished by NFD personnel.

The staff and after-school-care children were able to safely evacuate the building without any danger or injuries. Shortly after NFD arrived, staff and students were able to re-enter the gymnasium and wait there until they were picked up.

During their short wait, the children were introduced to NFD therapy dog Carbon, who visited the children until the scene was released to fire investigators.

NFD was assisted by Noblesville Police Department.

Nickel Plate Arts to Feature Artist Jerry Mannell in February

Nickel Plate Arts will be featuring Jerry Mannell's exhibit, "Transtangentialism" during the month of February. Mannell's art is open to interpretation by the viewer—and that's just the way he likes it.

In Mannell's work, the composition, color and line are often tangential to each other. They relate, but not in a direct way; the overall mood or message in the canvas is transitional as the elements form into something that engages the viewer.

"I use modeled shapes—I try to relate color instead of using the natural world as a basis," Mannell explained.

"It's all out of my head, representing the world around me. My work is made up of plastic shapes and mechanical gadgets and is created out of context. No one knows what they are, but they are all around us."

Mannell was a fine arts major, but he found a home in advertising and graphic design.

"Graphic design work has pushed me in a certain direction—creating a logo, you don't want it to be literal, it's something abstract," he said.

In his work, everything is self-contained as a stand-alone shape or group of shapes, and he incorporates a lot of movement as well.

"You want the eye to move in a Z shape in advertising," Mannell said.

"You can make the eye move from one side of the canvas to the other and relate that to color on the lower right-hand side. The eye keeps on moving in terms of shapes and color, and that's all in the composition."

The artist has his own repertoire of shapes; for example, anything that is triangular and green is reminiscent of nature and growth. Whether or not people see that shape as a representation of nature, there is still something they will connect with. Mannell maintains ambiguity so these interpretations allow viewers to engage with the art instead of just admiring it.

Jerry Mannell

See Mannell's full exhibit in the Stephenson House Wednesday through Friday from 12-5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Meet Mannell in person at his free public reception on Feb. 21 from 6-9 p.m. on the Nickel Plate Arts campus.

You can also meet artist Caroline Hays, whose "Read Between the Layers" exhibit is featured in Four Day Ray Brewing though March 28, at her free public reception on Feb. 20 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at Four Day Ray.

Artwork can be purchased by contacting Nickel Plate Arts or at from NickelPlateArts.org/exhibits.

Dates:

Transtangentialism (Mannell): Feb. 3-25

Read Between the Layers (Hays): Jan. 1 to March 28

Rep. Jeter's Bill Increasing Nonprofit Oversight Passes State House, Heads Over to Senate

The Indiana House of Representatives recently voted in support of State Rep. Chris Jeter's (R-Fishers) bill to hold irresponsible nonprofits accountable and better protect Hoosiers.

"Several recent high-profile cases have highlighted the gaps in the oversight of nonprofits in our state," Jeter said.

"The goal of this legislation is to make sure Hoosiers have a seat at the table when going after these bad actors, and ensure we can protect consumers."

According to Jeter, the Office of the Indiana Attorney General is limited in the actions it can take to hold irresponsible nonprofits accountable. Under current law, the attorney general can only seek injunctive relief, dissolution or permanent removal. Jeter's legislation would help ensure the attorney general's office has the necessary tools to fine bad actors and provide restitution.

Representative Chris Jeter

Most recently, this issue was highlighted in the inability of the attorney general to take action against JPC Affordable Housing.

JPC, a nonprofit housing provider, was accused of neglecting its Indianapolis tenants and pocketing their utility payments, which prompted Citizens Energy Company to shut off service to 900 units due to a $1.3 million unpaid bill. But because of Indiana's nonprofit laws, a judge ruled the attorney general's office did not have the authority to intervene in the situation.

Under House Bill 1075, the reasons a nonprofit organization could be dissolved would expand to include one that fails to use property or assets for their intended purpose, commits gross mismanagement of assets, fails to maintain certain records, or does not respond in a good faith manner to a written inquiry. According to Jeter, these changes would align with many of the nonprofit laws nationwide.

Jeter said having additional pathways to hold mismanaged nonprofits accountable would have helped the attorney general's office seek civil penalties against USA Gymnastics and take action against Wildlife in Need. After the sexual assault scandal involving former team doctor Larry Nasser, USA Gymnastics filed for bankruptcy and the attorney general could not pursue financial penalties against the nonprofit.

Wildlife in Need, which was a roadside zoo registered as a nonprofit in southern Indiana and run by Tim Stark, who was featured in the Netflix show "Tiger King," was found to have misused corporation funds for personal use, but the attorney general did not have the authority to inspect the organization's financial records.

House Bill 1075 now heads to the Indiana Senate for further consideration. For more information, or to watch session and committees live, visit iga.in.gov.

Meeting Notice

Noblesville Common Council

The Noblesville Common Council will meet in special session on Monday, Feb. 6, 2023 at 6 p.m. in room A214 at City Hall, 16 South 10th St.

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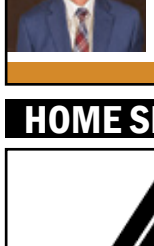

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Coaching Records Don't Back Up What Media is Telling You

TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

Are you following the coaching search with the Indianapolis Colts?

If so, you have probably heard that if the team hires Jeff Saturday it will mean the following:

- The Colts are an absolute joke in the NFL
- Owner Jim Irsay is running the team, and not GM Chris Ballard
- The Colts are doomed because Saturday has no NFL coaching experience
- The Colts are doomed because they didn't hire an offensive guru
- The earth will stop spinning on its axis and the apocalypse will ensue

Yeah, OK, I kind of made up that last one. But seriously, how many sports pundits are losing their minds over the idea that Saturday might end up being the coach?

Let's review. Saturday was hired as the interim coach in mid-season, inheriting a team with no good quarterback, an injured running back who only played in 10 games (and basically none after Dec. 4) and an offensive line with more holes than a truckload of Swiss cheese. Yeah, it was an awful last half of the season with Saturday on the sideline. But wasn't it going to be awful no matter who was there? Wait, let me answer that. You bet your sweet bippy it was.

Before we bow to the sports media icons, let's get a few things on the record regarding Irsay, GM Chris Ballard and of course Saturday.

To begin with, the idea that Saturday has no experience doesn't bother me even a little. I'm pretty tired of the oft-repeated notion that it's a requirement for success. The stats don't bear that out (read on) and the thing is, we're not building a space shuttle here. This is football. Maybe it's football at the highest level, but it's still football. An NFL coach is like the CEO of the team (not the franchise, mind you – the players). Do you think Lee Iacocca knew how to build a Chrysler? I doubt it, but he surely knew how to lead a company.

Ballard, on the other hand, is the CEO of the franchise. Let's not forget that it wasn't too long ago people were calling for his head. Maybe with some justification. After all, his job is to give the coach the tools to win. So far, the Colts haven't done that much with Ballard at the helm.

And lastly, Irsay is getting harpooned. Yet, using my little CEO analogies, he's the chairman of the board for the entire entity. Should he let his coach coach? His GM manage? Of course. And he has for an awful long time. Did we ever hear Tony Dungy or Bill Polian say otherwise? But when things go off the rails – as they have ever since Andrew Luck left the team high and dry when he quit 20 days before the season opener in 2019 – isn't it the owner's job to do something? Since the Luck debacle, the Colts have failed to win the AFC South, the worst division in pro football. Reich and Ballard were equally blamed.

Say it again . . . Isn't it the job of the owner to step in at some point? Wouldn't you?

And let's not forget the fact that Irsay grew up in this franchise. He's worked a ton of different jobs, including GM. For those who don't know, Irsay played college football (a little) at SMU. After graduation in 1982, he went to work for his Dad, Robert Irsay – owner of the then-Baltimore Colts. Two years later young Jim was named VP and GM. A decade later his father suffered a stroke and Jim took over the day-to-day work. By my count, that means he has worked for the organization in all kinds of different jobs for, oh, 41 years! Funny, he's been on the job longer than some of his critics have been alive, much less covering sports.

And no one is claiming he didn't get breaks because his Dad owned the team. But still, if you worked in an organization for 41 years don't you think you might have at least some idea of how things work? He must have because he was the one signing checks while the team enjoyed an awfully long streak of success.

We never hear that though. We hear about him being an eccentric. The sports media seems to be happy to forget facts and simply focus on whatever furthers their argument.

Ultimately, Saturday may or may not be the best coach for the Colts. We'll see. And in the meantime could we hold up on the happy horse hockey about him being a joke if he's hired? Could we pump the brakes on the idea that we have to hire some offensive genius? Last I heard, Josh McDaniels qualified as exactly that when he was calling plays in New England as the offensive coordinator. Of course Tom Brady was the guy executing those plays, but never mind that. McDaniels has been a head coach in this league for a total of three years and his teams – the Denver Broncos and Los Vegas Raiders – have never had a winning record. His overall mark is 17-28, including 6-11 this last year.

Maybe he is a genius. But watch and listen to him in press conferences or video of him talking to his team. No one, and I mean noooooobody, is lining up to run through a wall for him. He appears to have the leadership skills of a buck private on KP.

But hey, he's an offensive-minded coach.

What might be more preferable is a coach who understands how to lead – and Saturday certainly seems to fit that just fine. Let's not forget he was credited with being a main force in the NFL lockout in 2011. To recap, ownership and the union looked to be digging in for a long work stoppage. But Saturday, by many accounts, was the guy who got both sides to find common ground. And he stayed at it until a new contract was signed.

What experience did he have at contract negotiations? I don't think any. But he made it work.

Look up Saturday on the internet and you will see example after example of him being an overachiever. From high school to college and to the pros. At almost every stop, he was judged as not being good enough, or of being too small. The powerhouse SEC schools didn't want him even though he grew up in Georgia. No NFL team drafted him. Yet he had a stellar playing career. Does that mean he'll be a top-notch coach? No, but between the successes on the field and in the NFL boardroom, what is there not to like? When it comes to football, what hasn't he been successful at?

Let's take a look at the stats mentioned above. A quick check shows that seven NFL teams parted ways with their head coaches after the 2020-21 season. Of those seven, only two had winning records the next year.

Two. As in one-two.

(Oh, and just for the record – the two had identical records of 9-8. Winning seasons, but not quite Hall of Fame levels.)

Maybe it was a bad year. Let's move forward. After the 2021-22 season, eight teams fired their coach. Only four of those teams had winning records last year.

Four.

(Back to the record, three of the four were two at 9-8 and one at 9-7-1.)

If I'm using my fingers and toes correctly, that means out of 15 NFL coaches being hired – all guys with previous NFL coaching experience that is so vital (according to the media), only six had winning seasons, five barely.

Huh! Imagine that. Fifteen coaches hired. Forty percent win right away. Yet hiring a coach with NFL experience is indispensably important?

Here's hoping Saturday gets the job. Why? First, because I'm a Colts fan and think he'll turn things around. But also because if he keeps doing what he has done at every step of his football life, it'll be fun to listen to all those pundits tell you what a great idea hiring Saturday was.

Two cents, which is about how much Timmons said his columns are worth, appears periodically in The Times. Timmons is the chief executive officer of Sagamore News Media, the company that owns The Noblesville Times. He is also a proud Noblesville High School graduate and can be contacted at ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com.

Former Gov. Daniels Opts Out of Senate Run

By Whitney Downard

After much speculation, former Gov. Mitch Daniels announced Tuesday he will not run for a soon-to-be-open seat in Congress after sitting U.S. Sen. Mike Braun launched his own 2024 bid for governor.

"With full credit and respect for the institution and those serving in it, I conclude that it's just not the job for me, not the town for me, and not the life I want to live at this point," Daniels said in a lengthy statement.

Daniels visited Washington D.C. earlier this month, publicly weighing a run in what could be a highly competitive Republican primary against Rep. Jim Banks of the Third Congressional District, who announced his candidacy on January 17.

No other candidates have filed to run for Indiana's open Senate seat – though Indiana's open gubernatorial position has already attracted three Republicans, including Braun, and promises to be an expensive race.

Even before Banks' formal announcement, a conservative super PAC with ties to Banks released an ad attacking Daniels, calling him "out of date."

Immediately after Daniels' announcement not to run, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the fundraising arm of the party, threw its considerable support behind Banks.

"I have the utmost respect for the years of service Governor Daniels has given to Indiana and wish him well in the future," NRSC Chair Steve Daines said in a statement. "I'm looking forward to working with one of our top recruits this cycle, Jim Banks, to keep Indiana red in 2024."

Banks released a statement saying "I respect Governor Daniels and I learned a lot from him when I served in the Statehouse. I'm excited about the early momentum and support for our campaign but we've got a long way to go. Over the next two years, I'm going to work hard every day to make my case to Hoosier voters that I'm best prepared to be their conservative Senator in Washington."

Daniels speculation

After serving two terms as governor from 2005 to 2013, Daniels spent the last near-decade as the president of Purdue University, stepping down in December and fueling rumors that he would re-enter politics.

Daniels, in his 500-word statement, said he would have only spent one term in the U.S. Senate "given (his) age," and dedicated himself to long-term issues involving the country's safety net programs.

"… So that we can keep promises we have made to older and vulnerable Americans and avoid a terrible national crisis of confidence and betrayal," Daniels said. "… To avoid crushing our economy and today's younger citizens with the unpayable debts we are on course to leave them."

Though he didn't name Club For Growth, which sponsored the attack ad against him, Daniels said he would have worked to soften the "harshness and personal vitriol that have infected our public square, rendering it not only repulsive to millions of Americans but also less capable of effective action to meet our threats and seize our opportunities."

Daniels didn't rule out future contributions to the public sphere outside of elected office but didn't outline his plans for the immediate future.

What does this signal for the party's future?

National politicos have openly wondered how Daniels' style of governance, with a focus on fiscal conservatism over social issues, would fare against Banks, who frequently uses Twitter in a divisive manner and closely aligns himself with former President Donald Trump.

Banks has attracted a slew of endorsements from congressional colleagues, including Sen. Tom Cotton, Sen. J.D. Vance and former Trump administrative official Stephen Miller.

To Indiana Democrats, the support for Banks demonstrated how right-wing his campaign would be, conforming with the politics of Trump.

"Daniel's 'no social issues' mantra would have had a tough time winning a GOP primary in Indiana and the knives were already drawn from groups saying that Daniels was a relic of the past," Democratic Party Chair Mike Schmuhl said in a statement, referencing the Club for Growth ad.

Schmuhl placed the blame for Indiana's quality of life issues on Daniels, saying Hoosiers deserved honest leadership without extremist politics.

"Mitch Daniels can finally ride his motorcycle into the sunset and leave us alone," Schmuhl concluded.

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Photos courtesy of Noblesville Schools

Local Guest Readers Visit Noblesville Schools

Noblesville Schools celebrated World Read Aloud Day Wednesday with special guest readers that included Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen, Deputy Mayor Matt Light and Superintendent Dr. Dan Hile.

Photo courtesy of Noblesville Schools

NHS Yearbook Staff Wins Top State Award

The NHS Shadow yearbook staff was recently awarded the prestigious Hoosier Star award, a journalism honor reserved for the top yearbook programs in the state!

License Plate Readers Throw Wrench in Data Privacy Crack Down

By Casey Smith

State lawmakers are prioritizing multiple bills in the current legislative session that seek to increase data privacy and give Hoosiers more say over how their personal information is stored. But Republican legislators remain reluctant to enact policy around increasingly common surveillance technology like license plate readers used by law enforcement.

The Indiana State Police (ISP) have been using such technology for more than decade — scanning a million plates a month — to find habitual traffic violators, stolen vehicles, missing persons and people driving with suspended licenses.

Lawmakers have previously commended the state agency for its policy surrounding automatic license plate readers. But currently, Indiana has no laws on the books regulating the technology or requiring the dozens of other Hoosier law enforcement agencies that use the cameras to follow the same rules.

A previous attempt to establish statewide standards for the readers didn't advance in the legislature. And it doesn't appear that lawmakers have an appetite to join the other 16 states with regulations on the books now.

At the same time, GOP legislators have continually resisted efforts to use camera technology for highway speed violations or passing of school buses.

Although police contend that the license plate readers are a valuable tool for investigators, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Indiana raised concerns that the information collected can be stored indefinitely in databases and shared without restrictions.

There also aren't laws in place to prevent data from being used in ways that could infringe on Hoosiers' privacy.

"This is technology that collects data about all of us, and there's very little transparency, there's very little accountability, and that has concerns for us in multiple ways," said Jane Henegar, executive director of the ACLU of Indiana. "This information can be collected, it can be pulled across wide swaths, geographically. It can be stored and kept for long periods of time. It can be used for reasons beyond its initial justification."

How the readers work

The high-speed cameras used by ISP take pictures of license plates and turn them into searchable data.

While the agency previously used vehicle-mounted cameras, ISP Maj. Bryan Harper, who commands the Special Investigations Division, said state police stopped using those more than a year ago.

"It's easier for us to have five cameras placed strategically than to have five cameras on vehicles that might have the day off, or might be down for maintenance," he said. "It's much more efficient to put those in areas where they can be employed the full day, the full week, rather than being down for some type of maintenance or other reasons."

State police now contract with California-based Vigilant Solutions, a subsidiary of Motorola Solutions. The new system — up and running since August — has so far cost upwards of $250,000, according to the Indiana Department of Administration.

Currently, state police have 47 cameras employed, Harper said. Most of those are in or around Indianapolis, but others are located elsewhere in the state, too.

Harper emphasized that the license plate readers "are really nothing more than cameras" that are set up to scan license plates, not individuals.

Cameras are set up in public domains along roadways and affixed to traffic poles.

"We don't really have anything to hide when it comes to this. This technology is out there. It's not a secret," Harper told the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

Officers also cannot review live camera footage, he said. State police internal rules require an officer to have "reasonable suspicion" that a crime has occurred before an investigator can log into the license plate system with a plate query.

Harper said the cloud-based storage system is "strongly" encrypted to prevent information breaches. Data can be shared with other law enforcement agencies, though, "as long as they're providing us reasonable suspicion of a crime."

There were more than 1.1 million license plate reads from Dec. 13 to Jan. 11, according to state police. During that time, plate hits led to 44 "apprehensions" — almost all of which were for stolen vehicles or warrant arrests.

In the last three months, ISP has additionally made three "large" seizures of money or drugs, thanks in part to the license plate readers system, Harper said.

Police generally check the license plate information against a "hot list" of people wanted on criminal arrest warrants or those with suspended licenses. Harper said they also look for people reported kidnapped or missing.

The lists are compiled by cross-referencing records from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicle with criminal databases.

Indiana lacks statewide guidelines

Other law enforcement agencies around the state are adopting the technology, too, including in Columbus, Gary, Jeffersonville, Muncie, West Lafayette and more than a dozen jurisdictions in central Indiana.

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) has in recent years purchased dozens of license plate cameras from Atlanta-based Flock Safety, for example. Those are now installed around the metro area.

Still, each agency crafts its own policies for license plate readers. Harper said the ISP policy — which dates back to 2015 — is similar to most others around Indiana.

Specifically, ISP's operating procedure requires license plate image data to be retained for 30 days before being purged from the system.

That "extremely short window" can be prohibitive to investigators, Harper said, "but the Indiana State Police want to make sure that we are covering both ends — we understand people's civil liberties, and we also understand the need to mitigate or apprehend suspects."

The policy differs somewhat from what's previously been in place at IMPD, which still uses mobile license plate readers that are attached to marked police vehicles. The police department said data is now stored for up to 30 days — a change from up to six months in years prior.

After adding 200 new license plate readers last fall as part of a high-tech plan to help cutdown on crime, IMPD now has more than 250 readers in operation, including more than 200 stationary cameras inside and outside of downtown Indianapolis, and more than a dozen mobile license plate readers attached to patrol cars.

Harper maintained that local law enforcement agencies across Indiana are actively meeting to discuss policy. ISP is also in the process of updating its own guidelines, he noted.

"For the most part, everybody's pretty much in agreement that we've got to make sure we're handling this the right way, or it will go away as fast as it came," Harper said, referring to the license plate reader technology. "That would be a complete disservice to our victims and our role as law enforcement, to mitigate crime."

Previous legislative effort was unsuccessful

Lawmakers commended the ISP policy but have been hesitant to make it a statewide standard for all Indiana law enforcement agencies.

Citing privacy concerns and a desire to get all law enforcement agencies across the state on the same page, a former Indiana senator introduced a bill that would have set parameters for license plate reader use and limited the timeframe for stored camera information.

Former Sen. Jim Smith, R-Clarksville, sought to require that records be purged after 30 days unless police have a warrant or can cite an ongoing investigation, mirroring the ISP policy that was already in place.

Smith argued that internal policies aren't enough, though. He called for "standardization" in Indiana to address what should be done with "this accumulation of unwanted license plate tracking" and to ensure that law enforcement agencies can't share data or "track" Hoosiers.

"There are no rules in Indiana, it's simply the policy of the individual department. This bill puts guard rails on this equipment, on a statewide basis. If there are no guidelines, how do we know it is not being abused?" Smith said in 2015 while discussing the bill in committee.

"The good guys today – the people that use this system and say, 'Trust me on this' — those people eventually leave office, and there will be somebody else," he continued.

But the proposal was met with opposition from prosecutors and the state chiefs of police association.

The Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council (IPAC) testified that statutory time limits on license plate reader data could prohibit law enforcement efforts — leading to fewer crimes being solved and prosecuted. IPAC instead proposed restrictions on non-law enforcement access to license plate information.

The bill was never voted on and died in committee. Smith opined to have "more support from liberal Democrats on this than from those in my own party."

State police said they could not comment on current or potential legislation in 2023. An IPAC representative said the group could not speak to license plate reader legislation unless relevant language is written into an active bill.

Policies in other states

At least 16 states have passed laws regulating the use of license plate readers or the use of data collected by the devices, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Several of those laws place restrictions on how long data can be stored. Timelines range from 21 days to three years before information has to be deleted. Other states' provisions ban the license plate readers completely with few exceptions, while other statutes establish strict guidelines for secure data sharing.

Other law enforcement departments across the country — including in states without specific laws — keep the information in storage for varying amounts of time, from a couple days to five years.

Model policy from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) National Law Enforcement Policy Center recommends that collected license plate data only be "shared for legitimate law enforcement purposes" and under certain circumstances.

The IACP also suggests that rules be put in place to address access, collection, storage and retention of license plate reader data. The organization doesn't make a specific recommendation on timelines for storage or purging, citing benefits to both shorter and longer retention times, but it does advocate for some sort of window to be established, regardless.

Critics of license plate readers hold that Indiana lacks oversight for the technology.

Henegar, with the ACLU of Indiana, said that without proper guidelines, "inevitably, despite everybody's best intentions, this can and does get misused." She pointed to data breaches, for example, that could put information about "where we are over time and our habits" into the wrong hands.

Henegar also cited concern about smaller law enforcement agencies using the license plate readers: "If they don't have the infrastructure or the fiscal ability to maintain that data security, then that puts everybody's data at risk of getting hacked or being used for other purposes."

She also condemned local Indiana law enforcement agencies for using license plate reader data to "to profile drivers … and violate their rights through unreasonable searches," as well as for sharing data with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials to affect deportation efforts.

"We're being tracked by our government," she said. "Government should be a guiding light about privacy and physical liberty. Not this."

Future data privacy legislation on the horizon?

Sen. Mike Crider, R-Greenfield, who chairs the senate Homeland Security and Transportation committee, said the issue of license plate readers "[is] not a topic that concerns me personally."

Crider, who sat on the same committee in 2015 when Smith attempted to move legislation, said that bill failed because it "had no support from the committee – and that included me."

"The reason some of those bills didn't advance is the systems would be run by third parties who were not necessarily a law enforcement agency," Crider said. "I personally support cameras for law enforcement use and have supported them for work zone enforcement and other legitimate uses. I'm not sure why anyone cares other than criminals but I was a law enforcement officer for 30 years so perhaps I trust them more than some."

He told the Indiana Capital Chronicle that a study on the topic "might be an idea worth discussing," but no such proposals have been introduced at the statehouse.

Multiple bills under consideration in the General Assembly do address other data privacy concerns, however.

Sen. Liz Brown, R-Fort Wayne, filed Senate Bill 5, which creates a "bill of rights" for Hoosier data privacy that would allow consumers to monitor how their data is being used and have it deleted if they wish. The proposal is among the Senate GOP caucus' top priorities for the 2023 session.

The measure also includes a requirement for businesses to have annual data protection assessments and security checks.

Businesses collecting sensitive data — like medical and biometric information or details about religious beliefs, race and ethnicity — would have a heightened requirement for receiving prior consent from the consumer before they process any of that information.

The bill unanimously advanced from committee on Monday and is now up for consideration by the full Senate.

Harper, with the state police, said having a policy for license plate readers, too, helps maintain internal standards, but also ensures privacy for data being collected about Hoosiers.

"We understand that it does cause some concern, especially in this day and age, on maybe how law enforcement is utilizing it. I think there are also some misconceptions about what it actually can do and what it does," Harper said. "Having a policy in place just ensures that we're meeting those expectations of the public, both privacy concerns, as well as those victims of crimes who want to see justice. And this is one tool we're able to bring them."

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IDOE Presents Key Findings of Statewide Parent Survey

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) yesterday presented results from a statewide survey aimed at better understanding parents' perceptions in order to continue improving K-12 education in the state of Indiana.

The results show high levels of parent satisfaction with the quality of their child's school as well as the subjects/topics being taught. Most parents also reported that their high school student plans to pursue additional educational opportunities beyond high school.

"We know that student achievement is at its highest when our schools and educators, as well as our parents and families, are working together to provide comprehensive support," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education.

"As our team has visited schools throughout the state, we have seen evidence of positive working relationships between educators and families, and the results of this survey confirm that. This data also provides key insight into areas where we must continue to raise awareness, particularly in terms of the educational opportunities that exist during high school and beyond."

The survey – conducted in partnership with Gallup – was administered by mail using randomly selected addresses to survey 3,042 Indiana parents of school-aged children. This address-based sampling methodology resulted in a representative sample that provides a statistically accurate picture of the opinions of Indiana parents.

Parents provided information about their child's experiences at school as well as their own attitudes and opinions about the school. The total sample is weighted based on major subpopulations (age, sex, education-level and race and ethnicity) so that estimates reflect the overall population of Indiana adults who have a school-aged child in the household.

Key findings from the survey are summarized below:

- **The vast majority (88%) of Indiana parents are satisfied with the quality of their child's school.** Satisfaction is even higher among those whose child is enrolled in elementary school (90%) and those in rural and small-town areas throughout the state (96%).
- **Most parents know and approve of the subjects and topics taught at their child's school.** Only 7% of parents say they don't approve of the subjects and topics taught to their child, and of those 7%, about two-thirds acknowledge that they do not know, or are unsure, what subjects and topics are being taught.
- **Concerns about child safety are highest among lower-income parents in micro- and metropolitan areas.** About half (47%) of lower-income parents in micro- and metropolitan areas say they worry about their child's safety at school, compared with 33% of all parents.
- **Parents see post-high school education as available in Indiana but not affordable.** Most (72%) parents say education after high school is available in the state to those who need it. However, only 27% say that post-high school education is affordable.
- **Awareness of the Indiana 21st Century Scholars program is inconsistent across parents of students who might benefit the most.** About six in 10 parents of middle school students (64%) are aware of the Indiana 21st Century Scholars program.
- **Awareness of the Indiana 21st Century Scholars program is not related to perception of higher education affordability.** Even among parents who are aware of the Indiana 21st Century Scholars program, only 27% agree that education beyond high school is affordable to anyone in the state of Indiana who needs it.
- **About one-third of parents of seniors say their child is not prepared for life after high school.** Among parents of freshmen, roughly half say their child is not prepared for life after high school.
- **According to parents, seven in 10 high school students plan to pursue further education or training after high school.** This includes the six in 10 who plan to attend a four-year university or two-year college and the one in 10 who say they will pursue training to learn a skill or trade.

"Hoosiers with education or training beyond high school are more likely to experience greater social and economic mobility," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Chris Lowery. "We are heartened to see that many high school students plan on pursuing higher education and parents are aware of Indiana's available options."

"However," Lowery went on to say, "many opportunities remain for the Commission to increase awareness of the state's generous financial aid programs, including the 21st Century Scholarship. Indiana ranks first in the Midwest and fifth in the nation in providing need-based financial aid. Our public institutions have held the line on tuition and fee increases for over a decade – we have to continue spreading these messages."

The information collected from this survey will help to inform IDOE's ongoing work to continue making improvements for Indiana students. To view survey results, visit media.doe.in.gov/news/idoe-gallup-final-designed-report-all-schools-12.8.22.pdf.

Indiana Wins $66.5M Settlement Following Overcharging Allegations

Indiana received a $66,496,758 settlement to resolve allegations against Centene Corp., a major healthcare-services company.

The allegations include claims that Centene, in the course of providing pharmacy services, overcharged Indiana's Medicaid program for pharmaceutical costs. Centene made no admission of liability and maintains that its business practices were lawful.

"Companies must be held accountable for their actions," Indiana Attorney General Rokita said. "On Hoosiers' behalf, my team and I are committed to making sure that happens."

Attorney General Todd Rokita

Rokita thanked the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration for its significant contributions to investigating Centene's practices. He also thanked his staff and the Liston & Deas law firm for their critical expertise.

While functioning as a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), Centene allegedly failed to disclose true pharmacy benefits and services costs. Among other functions, PBMs contract with pharmacies and reimburse them for filling prescriptions on behalf of insurance plans — in this case, on behalf of the State of Indiana.

As a result of Centene's failure to disclose true costs, Centene allegedly inflated dispensing fees causing an added cost to the Medicaid program.

Indiana is one of at least 18 states to investigate Centene's alleged overcharges. The agreement requires Centene to pay the State of Indiana the total amount of the settlement in two installments over 12 months.

Sen. Braun Leads Bipartisan Challenge to Biden Rule Politicizing Americans' 401(k)s

Senator Mike Braun and 49 Senators will be introducing their bipartisan challenge to President Biden's ESG rule which politicizes millions of Americans' retirement investments to favor Biden's ideological preferences rather than getting the best returns for Americans.

The Senators joining Senator Braun include every Republican Senator: Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell and Senators Thune, Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Budd, Britt, Cassidy, Capito, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Cramer, Crapo, Cruz, Daines, Ernst, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hagerty, Hawley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Romney, Rubio, Rounds, Schmitt, Rick Scott, Tim Scott, Sullivan, Tillis, Tuberville, Vance, Wicker, Young. Senator Joe Manchin joins on the Democratic side.

Representative Andy Barr is leading the House version of the legislation.

In November, President Biden instituted a rule that explicitly permits ERISA retirement plan fiduciaries to consider environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) factors when selecting investments and exercising shareholder rights.

Senator Mike Braun

This Biden rule replaces a previous rule which mandated fiduciary decisions be made solely on getting the best returns for the 152 million American workers that depend upon ERISA for their retirement. Because ERISA covers most employer-sponsored retirement plans, that encompasses close to $11.7 trillion in assets.

Under Biden's rule, retirement fund managers can prioritize ESG factors instead of financial returns in their investment decisions for workers' hard-earned savings. Plan participants could unknowingly be enrolled in ESG funds, which may not align with their political views.

In the most recent survey, most Americans think it's a bad idea for companies to use their financial influence to advance a political or social agenda, as is the case in ESG investing.

A number of studies have shown that ESG investing policies have worse rates of return. For example, a study by UCLA and NYU found that over the past five years ESG funds underperformed the broader market, averaging a 6.3% return compared to 8.9% return respectively.

Additionally in comparison to other investment plans, ESG investors generally end up paying higher costs for worse performance.

This disapproval resolution will receive a vote on the Senate and House floor. Under House and Senate rules, Senator Braun and Representative Barr will be able to force a vote on this resolution to nullify the rule.

Additionally, the resolution only requires a simple majority vote threshold to pass and be sent to the President.

Senator Mike Braun previously led a challenge to President Biden's vaccine mandate for private businesses, which passed the Senate on a bipartisan vote. When the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Biden's mandate for being unconstitutional, the majority decision cited Senator Braun's challenge under the Congressional Review Act as a significant reason for their decision.

Classifieds

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Lawmakers Move Lost Farmland Bill - But Say It's Not Anti-Development

By Leslie Bonilla Muñiz

Lawmakers on Monday unanimously advanced a proposal tasking the Indiana State Department of Agriculture with creation of an inventory of farmland lost in the last decade — whether to industry, housing, renewable energy or otherwise.

Bill author Rep. Kendall Culp, R-Rensselaer, said the detailed data would serve as a foundation for future efforts to preserve farmland, even floating an incentive program for those wishing to sell.

"The goal here in Indiana should [be to] keep farmers on the farm producing food," Culp told the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

Culp himself is a full-time farmer, raising corn, soybeans and beef cattle with his family, according to his caucus biography.

House Bill 1557 would require the agriculture department to inventory Hoosier farmland lost from 2010 to 2022, identify what use that land was turned toward and submit a report to the legislative council in 2024 with findings and recommendations.

Speaking before the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, Culp called agriculture a "stabilizing force" for small, rural Hoosier economies and emphasized its importance for consumers across the world.

"The overarching part of this bill, in my mind, is food security," Culp said.

Economic development

Culp said no specific development project inspired the bill. But several witnesses said they'd heard complaints about an in-progress innovation district in Boone County — in which the state snapped up thousands of acres of land — as well as large solar energy projects.

"This certainly is not a bill to say that we want to stop any kind of development," Culp said after the meeting. "… As the landowner, you still have your private property rights. If you want to sell … you have that right."

But the information compiled through his bill, he said, could inform future efforts to conserve farmland.

"That data is going to be really important to know where to know who you're competing against, what you're competing against," Culp said. Incentives on land going for $50,000 an acre would likely be infeasible, for example, as opposed to land selling for $15,000 an acre.

Efforts underway

The agriculture department has already begun working with the Department of Local Government Finance on data sources and timelines, said Katie Nelson, legislative director for the state agriculture department. It could also pull data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency and National Agricultural Statistics Service, according to Culp.

"We believe this bill is a positive first step in understanding the past decade and the current agricultural landscape across the state," Nelson told lawmakers.

Some lawmakers expressed interest in tracking foreign farmland ownership — Rep. Bob Cherry, R-Greenfield, said he was concerned about Chinese state ownership — but Culp said the current version of the bill didn't include that.

The bill looks to have plenty of support: multiple Democrats commented in support of the bill and asked to be added to it after the unanimous vote. Committee chair Mike Aylesworth, R-Hebron, is also a co-author.

"I've farmed for a good share of my life, and I know that food security is paramount," Aylesworth said. "[The Midwest] has been known … as the breadbasket of the United States. And we're the breadbasket of the world. It's very important that we get some data."

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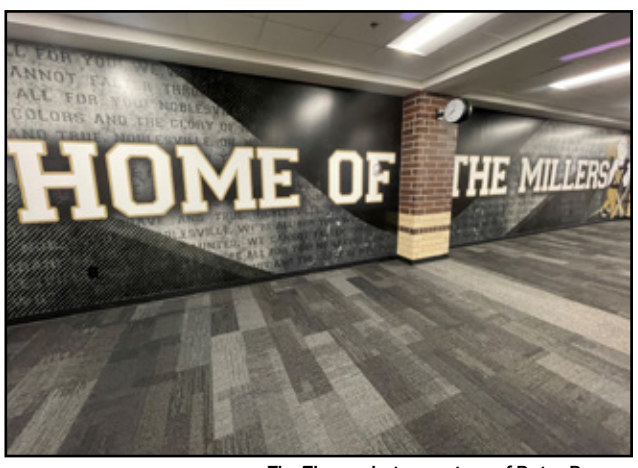
BETSY From Page A1

our choice ever since.

In first grade, with teacher Karen Duvall, our daughter did earn a writing award and was invited to represent her class in the Hamilton County Reading Council's Youth Author's Conference.

In first grade, our daughter was redistricted to Stony Creek Elementary, where she spent first and second grades and enjoyed the wonderful school carnivals, then returned to North Elementary for third grade, due to more redistricting.

In fourth grade, our daughter was among 11 selected from 86 fourth-graders who auditioned to be a part of the North hand-chimes choir led by North Elementary music teacher Janine Krent, who we still keep in touch with. In fifth grade, our daughter had teacher David Kimmel, who won the District's Teacher of the Year and who co-taught with Melissa Jones, a Learning Lab class of 49 students, and they did all kinds of cool out-of-the-box learning. Plus our daughter gained broadcast experience as a news anchor and videographer for North's daily morning news broadcast. (By the way, since we moved on from North Elementary, a new Noblesville Schools Education Foundation fundraiser, Savor Noblesville, a 21-and-older food event that's grown in popularity, will take place from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. today, with VIP tickets at 5 p.m., at The Mill Top Banquet & Conference Center in Noblesville, with tickets still available at press time. Funds from the fourth annual event will be donated to North Elementary PTO to support



The Times photo courtesy of Betsy Reason

"Home of the Millers" signage greets students and families in the hallway of Noblesville High School's main entrance.

students at North.)

Now, back to my column. Those of you who know our family may have followed my daughter in her more than a dozen local theater productions, including Annie in Noblesville East Middle School's musical, "Annie Jr.," Jane Banks in NEMS's "Mary Poppins Jr." or Lieutenant Brannigan in "Guys & Dolls." She also sang in NEMS's Vocal Revolution show choir and sold trash bags for NEMS band where she played the clarinet. And she played on the school girls basketball team.

Sadly, Covid 19 happened and we missed the remainder of eighth grade second semester, and the band trip to Kings Island was canceled. And our freshman year was only memorable because it was so disappointing, so stressful with Zoom classes and so loaded down with busy homework and wearing masks to school.

Her sophomore year, she auditioned and was cast in NHS's fall musical, Disney's "High School Musical," furthered her private piano lessons with piano class at school, and her junior year, this school year, danced and sang in NHS's fall musical, "Chicago: Teen Edition." She's also enjoyed singing in New Dimension unisex show choir her sophomore year and NHS Singers mixed show choir, in which she sings a lead duet in the competition set, this school year.

It's hard to believe we're already in the second semester of her junior year, then there is only one more school year until graduation. Right now, she's trying to decide on elective classes for her senior year.

Overall, we've been pretty happy with Noblesville Schools and glad that we made this school choice.

Contact Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com.

***Save the date:** Noblesville Schools Education Foundation's Miller-Palooza is 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. March 10 at the Embassy Suite in Noblesville, with $125 tickets, sponsorships available, dress casual Noblesville school spirit, and featuring Dueling Pianos from Felix and Fingers. To donate to silent auction, email adriann_young@nobl.k12.in.us*

TRAILBLAZERS From Page A1

the local baseball team in the 1880's. He graduated from Yale in 1888, received his LLB from Lake Forest University in 1891, and was admitted to the Illinois Bar that same year where he practiced law in Chicago.

Sol continued his family's involvement in charitable work in Noblesville. He began giving an annual award to the Ladies Aid Society in memory of his mother who had been an important member of the group. He and his brother Harry also contributed money in memory of their father to construct the Noblesville Masonic Lodge in 1915.

Sol's most generous gift to the city was in 1917, when he gave $10,000 toward the construction of a new high school gymnasium which was most recently part of the Boys & Girls Club. For many years after this, the high school newspaper was called the "Levin Sun." Another of his gifts still in use today is the Forest Park Golf Course, which he gave $1,000 for its construction in 1927.

Levinson was famous nationally for his work in the concept of outlawing war. He had written most of the text of the document known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact or Pact of Paris. For this, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929 and received the Rosenberger Medal from the University of Chicago in 1931 and the French Legion of Honor in 1934.

Pete Smith

**Pete Smith left no records himself and the information Hamilton County Historian David Heighway has found during his research is based on reminiscences written down 60 years or more after the fact. Nevertheless, Heighway says Smith's story illustrates some important facts about the early settlement of the area and should be told if we are to understand how this community was created.*

Salmon Oliver "Sol" Levinson

Smith was a Black man and was the first non-Native American to live in the Noblesville area. It was through his efforts that the first white settlers were able to survive.

In 1819, settlers came to the area to stake claim on land. Smith attracted attention as no one expected to see a Black man already in this area. He told them nothing about where he had come from or why he was there, but instead offered to help them. He became a trusted friend of the settlers and provided assistance in their times of need and helped prevent a possible confrontation with the Delaware Indians over a pair of missing shoes. When the settlement was ravaged by malaria during the summer, Smith helped families raise corn.

In 1820, Smith was working for William Conner, raising a field of corn and doing some trapping on his own. In all probability, Smith was helping the settlers and working for Conner because he planned to stay with the settlement and establish his own home and farm.

By 1821, land buyers were coming in from all over to speculate in these newly-available western lands. That year, a man came up from Kentucky to purchase land to resell. According to later accounts, he saw Smith, returned to Kentucky, and soon reappeared in this area with a group of men and papers saying that Pete Smith was an enslaved individual who had escaped from his farm. Smith denied that he knew the man and the settlers confronted the Kentuckian.

Conner, an influential man at that time, was asked by the settlers to intervene and free Smith. He examined the Kentuckian's papers and then announced to the settlers that they were legally correct. Conner warned them that if the settlers attempted to stop the Kentuckian, they would be guilty of breaking the law. Without this support, they could do nothing. The Kentuckian then took Smith away and he was never heard from again. However, his story of significant local impact was passed down by others.

**Information on monthly Trailblazers is written by Hamilton County Historian David Heighway. To read more about each Noblesville Trailblazers, visit cityofnoblesville.org/trailblazers.*

RETIRES From Page A1

projects that honor our heritage and make necessary investments to support our residents and businesses."

Ayer has been a Noblesville resident since 1964 and graduated from Noblesville High School in 1976. He and his family started Ayer's Real Estate in 1978, which serves Noblesville and Hamilton County.

Ayer has served as Council President twice and has been the Chair of the Council's Roads, Building & Land Acquisition, and Wastewater Committees. He has also been a member of the Noblesville Architecture Review Board.

As an At Large official, Ayer represents all of Noblesville and its voters in city limits and Noblesville Township. A tireless advocate for the best interests of the city and its residents, Ayer's vision and diligence has been instrumental in many impactful city projects, including Hamilton Town Center, the Pleasant Street east-west corridor, expansion of the city's trail network, acquisition of Finch Creek Park, the Levinson mixed-used development, construction of a new eastside fire station, and partnership with the county for construction of the 146th Street corridor. Since he began serving on the Council, Noblesville's population has more than doubled. Ayer has been a prominent voice for preserving the hometown charm of the community while funding necessary infrastructure and public safety enhancements.

"I am looking forward to spending more time with my wife, children and grandchildren and concentrating on my real estate business," Ayer said. "We are looking forward to staying a part of the community and enjoying everything Noblesville has to offer. I always say, if you can't find something to do in Noblesville, you're not looking hard enough."

In the community, Ayer is a member of the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce and served on the board and as a past president; member and past board member of Noblesville Main Street; and past board member of Habitat for Humanity of Hamilton County. He also is a member of First United Methodist Church, Noblesville Elks Lodge and Noblesville Moose Lodge.

Ayer's term will end on Dec. 31.

PROGRAM From Page A1

participants with valuable communication, problem-solving, and customer service skills to pursue careers in the hospitality industry.

The training was made possible through funding from Hamilton County's ARPA Committee and is operated through a partnership between the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Hamilton County Tourism, and Invest Hamilton County. So far two cohorts of men have passed their certifications with a 100% pass rate. A women's cohort begins Feb. 6.

"We know that giving individuals a second chance is the right thing to do," said Hamilton County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt.

"Programs like this that attach that second chance to economic opportunity are another example of forward-thinking, innovation, and collaboration in our community."

Hamilton County's hospitality industry was among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting labor shortage. The ARPA grant is meant to support the industry's rebound.

Invest Hamilton County President & CEO Mike Thibideau

"When knew workforce shortages were a barrier for our local lodging partners so the support provided by the Hamilton County Council and Commissioners and the talents of Invest enabled us to take action," said Brenda Myers, President/CEO of Hamilton County Tourism.

"Our local hospitality industry includes quality workplaces that care about their people and the community. In meeting the men in this program, I believe many of them will find great success in this industry."

All participants earn nationally recognized Guest Service Gold and most of the Certified Front Desk Representative credential from the American Hotel and Lodging Education Institute. "We are exploring the skill and credential needs of our ecosystem on a consistent basis," said Mike Thibideau, President & CEO of Invest Hamilton County.

"Customer service and the other skills attached to this program prepare individuals for multiple pathways of opportunity."

The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office and its jail, through their TOWER and Launch HOPE programs, provide therapeutic environments focused on reducing recidivism and helping individuals find long-term recovery for substance use and mental health struggles.

"We are proud of the program and the hard work that the program participants put in, not only to better themselves but to lay the foundation for a good future," said Hamilton County Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush.

The partnership has a goal to continue trainings into the foreseeable future. Any employers interested in participating may contact Mike Thibideau at mthibideau@investhamiltoncounty.com.

BUSINESS From Page A1

Judge Brown.

"Plus, the e-filing, e-discovery, and video conferencing technologies help us come to resolutions faster. It's really like playing open-hand euchre."

Attorney Sean Clapp with Fishers-based Clapp Ferrucci Attorneys at Law was part of the original committee that helped the Indiana Supreme Court create commercial courts.

"The courts were too busy with non-business-related cases to leave sufficient time to properly review and analyze complex business cases," Clapp said.

"These cases are much more document intensive, so commercial court requires mandatory disclosures at the beginning of the case. It's similar to the federal court system."

Once a commercial case has been filed, parties must confer to discuss case management and create a plan to expedite the exchange of evidence between the parties. The case management conference with the Court must occur within 45 days.

"This process really helps cut to the chase and forces efficiency right out of the gate," Judge Brown said. "I've presided over 25 commercial cases so far and have yet to have one proceed to trial because both sides were able to resolve the conflict before it made it that far."

"Given the choice, I use commercial courts any time I can," Clapp added.

"Businesses don't want their litigation languishing in the system. It's timely and expensive. Plus, commercial court is administered by judges trained in business law which helps set consistent precedent that can be used to advise business clients and maybe prevent future litigation."

Hamilton County is one of ten Indiana counties with a commercial court. Businesses can file their complaints in any of the commercial courts, but both sides must agree to participate. Common cases include shareholder disputes, breach of contract, trade secrets, non-compete agreements, indemnification issues, unfair competition, securities, insurance disputes, environmental claims, and antitrust cases.

Indiana F&F acts un

17 DeKalb

Did You Know?

• DeKalb County was formed in 1837. It was named for the heroic General Johann de Kalb, a Continental Army officer from Bavaria.

• DeKalb County, is inhabited by approximately 43,226 residents as of the 2018 census.

• DeKalb is home to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum that has the most extensive collection of Auburn Cord and Duesenberg automobile in the world.

• The county contains 5 high schools, 2 middle schools and 8 elementary schools

• The county's cities consist of Altona, Ashley, Auburn, Butler, Garrett, Corunna, Garrett, Hamilton, St. Joe, Spencerville, Waterloo

Got Words?

A courthouse for the county was built in 1829, and was located in the center of the square. On Jan. 9, 1842, the building caught fire, destroying nearly all the county's records. Although the cause of the fire remains mysterious, many believe it was intentionally started. In your opinion do you think rumors such as this add to the county's history, or diminish it?

Number Stumpers

1. How many total schools are there in DeKalb?

2. How old is DeKalb County?

3. What median age of people live in DeKalb?

4. What is the poverty rate of the county?

Answers: 1. 15 Schools 2. 183 Years 3. Around 39 4. 12.5%

Word Scrambler

Unscramble the words below!

1. NEERLGA
2. BLKAED
3. EIRF
4. MOTOELIBUA
5. CHSLOOS

Answers: 1. General 2. DeKalb 3. Fire 4. Automobile 5. Schools

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Purdue Research Buzzing About Construction Lessons From Bees and Honeycombs

Purdue University engineers and entomologists are making some sweet discoveries about how honeybees build and structure their honeycombs, which could lead to new fabrication techniques taken from the buzzing builders.

Nikhilesh Chawla, the Ransburg Professor of Materials Engineering at Purdue, is one of the first to utilize four-dimensional (4D) imaging to delve further into the complexities of the honeycomb. The imaging allows a time-lapse view of the bees' work without cutting into their home.

The innovative view of the bees' construction found techniques that could eventually translate into new concepts for structural materials or additive manufacturing for the construction industry. Chawla said some of the junctions between the honeycomb cells were created using less material, with the resulting porous connections resembling Swiss cheese.

"It's a lesson in materials utilization that could lend itself to new ideas and practices in structures," Chawla said. "Their honeycombs are still perfectly fine. From that perspective, humans may not actually need as much material in some areas that are not quite as important from a structural point of view."

Honeycombs are the self-built, multifunctional homes for honeybees, providing a place to store food and serving as a nursery for eggs and larvae in addition to shelter. Made from wax produced by the bees, the hexagonal cells are easily recognized.

Chawla's work shows how humans can draw important lessons from the plant and animal world in a discipline called biomimicry, which investigates naturally occurring materials and behaviors and draws inspiration to design new products, systems and buildings. Chawla said there are aspects of honeycombs already used in several applications, from construction and structural materials to shoes.

The Purdue research team is made up of Chawla; Brock Harpur, assistant professor of entomology in the College of Agriculture; and Rahul Franklin, a graduate research assistant in materials engineering. Their work was published in the journal Advanced Materials.

Chawla said people don't truly understand how bees make the honeycombs. For example, most theorize the honeycomb chambers start as cylinders and then are molded by the bees into the well-known hexagonal shape.

But a sophisticated three-dimensional (3D) X-ray microscopy technique combined with a time lapse provided an unprecedented means of studying and quantifying the honeycomb's microstructure.

The resulting 4D imaging showed chambers are built with panels. Research also found bees go to great lengths to strengthen the honeycomb structure by first creating a vertical spine for support and then building the hexagon cells out horizontally.

"Over time, they continue to make the spine thicker because they understand there is more weight from the wax on it, and they need that backbone to be strong and rigid before they can add more and more of these cells growing outwardly," Chawla said.

Chawla's overall research focuses on four-dimensional materials science. The approach – called tomography – uses nondestructive X-rays to add time as a fourth dimension to 3D measurements and analyses. The 4D approach is important in examining structural evolution, including deformation and corrosion that take place over time.

Learning from honeybees is just the first step in the Purdue team's biomimicry research. Successfully applying those lessons with tools like 3D printing is next. Chawla said there are plans to build honeycombs of different sizes and even different shapes and evaluate their durability with compression tests.

In addition to honeybees, Chawla's biomimicry research involves looking at the porous cellular structure of cacti and how fluids are moved up and down throughout the plant.

"It's just a lot of fun to work with these kinds of natural materials because you just never know what you're going to find," he said.

Find Your Pie-oneer Spirit IN Indiana

The Indiana Destination Development Corporation (IDDC) and the Indiana Foodways Alliance are inviting pie lovers to get a slice of the action with the annual "Pie Day-to-Pi Day" celebration and contest.

From Jan. 23, 2020 (National Pie Day) through February (National Pie Month) to March 14, 2023 (Pi Day), anyone who checks in at three restaurants on the Hoosier Pie Trail using the free Indiana Culinary Trails Passport will earn custom "I Only Have Pies For You" socks. Anyone who visits Mrs. Wick's Cafe in Winchester will be entered to win free pie for a year (one per month) from Mrs. Wick's Pie, lunch, as well as a VIP tour of their factory.

"There's something for every palate on the Hoosier Pie Trail with 24 restaurants from the Indiana Foodways Alliance," said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch. "From the local favorite sugar cream pie to chocolate pie, the varieties are endless, so keep your eye on the pie!"

Indiana Foodways Alliance has 21 culinary trails, including the Hoosier Pie Trail, which can be found on the Indiana Culinary Trails Passport, an exclusive mobile app. All you need to do is sign up online and check in with your smartphone. [Note: In January 2023, the Indiana Culinary Trails Passport reset and upgrade to a new and improved system. With that change, all existing passport accounts will expire, and previous users will need to sign up again.]

"This passport was designed to encourage people to eat at locally-owned restaurants and establishments," said Elaine Bedel, Secretary and CEO of IDDC. "The Indiana Culinary Trails Passport is a great way to explore our destination's rich culinary scene."

"Mrs. Wick's Pie has served as the gold standard for Indiana baked goods for decades, so they are perfect for our 'Pie Day-to-Pi Day' promotion," said Lindsey Skeen, Indiana Foodways Alliance Executive Director.

For more information about the Indiana Culinary Trails Passport and the pie promotion, go to VisitIndiana.com/Pie or scan the QR code to sign up. Follow us on social media, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available up to $7.5 million for grants through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until 11:59 p.m. on March 27.

Planning Projects:

Planning Projects initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers and the development of plans related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

For example, the Texas Coalition of Rural Landowners used 2022 awarded funds to conduct a feasibility study and develop a business plan to establish a cooperative for small-scale agricultural producers serving low food access markets in Harris County, Texas.

Implementation Projects:

Implementation Projects accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve farmers and communities. Projects may improve local food access, include collaboration with partner organizations, and support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, and educational endeavors.

For example, the Moka Urban Agriculture Initiative used 2022 awarded funds for a project to increase local food access and provide culturally relevant options that create economic opportunities for urban farmers. The project will help to reduce food insecurity, improve health and establish outdoor spaces for food production in Missouri.

Webinar:

A pre-recorded webinar on Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants | USDA provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application.

More Information:

OUAIP was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture and innovative production. The grants are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. Other efforts include:

• Creating and managing a Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production to advise the Secretary on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban agriculture.

• Reopening the People's Garden Initiative. People's Gardens across the country grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using sustainable practices; and nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and greenspace for neighbors.

• Providing cooperative agreements that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.

• Providing technical and financial assistance through conservation programs offered by NRCS.

• Organizing 17 Farm Service Agency urban county committees.

Historic Preservation Month Photo Contest

Get out your cameras and find your favorite historic destination because the DNR Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology's annual preservation photo contest has begun.

The contest has been held since 2005 to promote Indiana's historic resources. It is open to photographers of any age and skill level. All subjects of photos must be at least 50 years old and in Indiana. They do not have to be fully restored. Photos of exclusively natural elements will not be accepted.

Photos can be black and white or color and must have been taken within the last two years. Each photographer may enter up to three images, and an entry form is required for each photo. Images should be emailed to aborland@dnr.IN.gov and must be JPEG files that are 10 MB or smaller. Participants will only be able to send one photo and one entry form per email.

For complete rules and guidelines and for the required entry form, see on.IN.gov/preservationmonth. The contest deadline is April 7.

Follow the DNR Instagram account (@indianadnr) in May. The DNR Division of Historic Preservation & Archeology will be taking over the account for a week and featuring selected photos along with contest winners to celebrate National Historic Preservation Month.

The TIMES
Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper

THURSDAY

Indiana the Strong

Stratolaunch Creates Advanced Office at Discovery Park District, Collaborates with Purdue on Hypersonic Design, Test

Stratolaunch LLC and Purdue University are pleased to announce they have established a partnership dedicated to accelerating the time required to design, build, test and fly hypersonic vehicles.

Stratolaunch will establish the Stratolaunch Advanced Programs Office at the Convergence Center in Purdue's Discovery Park District in West Lafayette, Indiana, to ensure the goals of their collaboration will be rapidly achieved. The office will be led by an experienced advanced design director with support staff that will offer opportunities for student internships.

Through their collaboration, Stratolaunch and Purdue will leverage the university's world-class multidisciplinary hypersonic design methods, ground test facilities, faculty, staff, and students to anchor ground simulations. By combining this capability with Stratolaunch's rapid prototyping fabrication, flight test service, as well as hypersonic flight test data from the Talon-A, the integrated team will develop methodologies to accelerate the design to fly time of hypersonic systems.

Stratolaunch recently funded a one-year collaborative research project with four Purdue faculty experts and their graduate students to explore and establish a foundation of best-in-class computational and experimental capabilities, which can be used to create the most comprehensive suite of flight-validated air vehicle design optimization tools.

Photo courtesy of Purdue University

From left are Stratolaunch CEO and president Zachary Krevor, U.S. Rep. Jim Baird of Indiana and Purdue's Dan DeLaurentis and President Mung Chiang.

"I'm excited for our partnership with Purdue because of the positive implications it has for streamlining our nation's hypersonic design capabilities," said Dr. Zachary Krevor, CEO and president at Stratolaunch. "Reducing development and test timelines of hypersonic vehicles is paramount to achieving critical leap-ahead technologies."

"Stratolaunch's unique capacities to provide access to flight data in long-duration hypersonic conditions complements Purdue's advanced hypersonics laboratories and the cutting-edge research by our faculty to advance these technologies while providing our students with real-world learning experiences," Purdue President Mung Chiang said. "Stratolaunch' s office at Discovery Park District further strengthens Purdue as an epicenter of hypersonic research and testing in the country."

"Any effort to increase the speed of 'continuous learning' in hypersonic systems design and deployment is a major win for our nation's defense," said Dan DeLaurentis, vice president for Discovery Park District institutes. "The world-class Purdue computational and ground test research capabilities, combined with a the premier hypersonics flight test capability of Stratolaunch, is exactly such an effort, and yet another new avenue for developing and retaining the best talent so desperately needed in this domain."

Purdue, Ambassador Health to Benefit from Strategic Partnership

Purdue Global and Ambassador Health have formed a strategic partnership that will provide essential experience for School of Nursing students and offer first-rate educational opportunities to Ambassador Health staff and their family members through tuition reduction. The alliance is another step in achieving Purdue Global's new vision for health care expansion.

"The Purdue Global School of Nursing is thrilled to partner with Ambassador Health and is excited to support its mission around continuing education and the pursuit of academic achievement," said Melissa Burdi, Purdue Global vice president and dean of the School of Nursing.

The Purdue Global School of Nursing offers an associate degree program, an RN-BSN program, six Master of Science in Nursing specialties and a Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Additional Purdue Global offerings include business, criminal justice, human services and psychology, among others. The partnership does not include Concord Law School, aviation or ExcelTrack programs.

Ambassador Health staff and immediate family members (spouse, domestic partner, children, siblings and parents) will be afforded 20% tuition reduction for undergraduate programs, 14% reduction for graduate programs and 10% reduction for doctoral programs.

"We at Ambassador Health are very excited by the new educational partnership between Ambassador Health and Purdue Global," said Laura Ernesti, corporate regional nurse. "The educational partnership not only allows us to welcome Purdue Global nursing students into our facilities to gain exceptional nursing experiences and foster compassionate care that will prepare them for their career as a nurse, but it also allows our employees, their spouses, significant others and their children the opportunity to receive discounted and quality-driven education while being an employer of Ambassador Health."

Purdue Global has similar strategic partnerships with Continuum Pediatric Nursing Services, York (Nebraska) General, Columbus (Nebraska) Community Hospital, UnityPoint Health – Cedar Rapids, the Wellness Council of Arizona, Quality Living Inc., Kearney Regional Medical Center, Stewart Memorial Community Hospital and Story County Medical Center.

Monon South Trail to Cross Five Counties, Eight Communities in Southern Indiana

Gov. Eric J. Holcomb announced tonight in his 2023 State of the State address that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will award $29.5 million to acquire and begin development of the 62.3-mile Monon South Trail spanning five counties in Southern Indiana. Once fully constructed, the trail will be the longest contiguous recreational trail in Indiana.

"Indiana is continuing to blaze new trails in conservation and outdoor recreation – and today, we're excited to announce we're blazing our longest trail yet, connecting communities across Southern Indiana," said Gov. Holcomb. "The Monon South Trail will preserve a piece of our Hoosier history while promoting quality of place in our rural communities."

The Monon South Trail will follow the route of the historic Monon Railroad beginning in New Albany and running through the communities of Borden, New Pekin, Salem, Campbellsburg, Saltillo, Orleans and Mitchell. This route includes portions of Floyd, Clark, Washington, Orange and Lawrence counties.

As part of the state's Next Level Trails initiative, the DNR led acquisition negotiations with CSX Transportation (CSXT), working in cooperation with New Albany and Radius Indiana. Next Level Trails will fund the purchase of the corridor on behalf of New Albany and Radius Indiana for the combined sum of $5.5 million. New Albany will own and manage the portion of the trail in Floyd County. Radius Indiana will be responsible for the trail in Clark, Washington, Orange and Lawrence counties.

To jumpstart the trail's development, the DNR will grant the partners an additional $24 million in Next Level Trails funding to begin design, engineering and construction of portions of the trail.

Approximately 440,000 people live within 10 miles of the trail's path.

"Across the region, our community leaders see how quality of place translates to economic opportunity for our residents and our businesses," said Jeff Quyle, president and CEO of Radius Indiana, an economic development partnership representing eight counties in Southwest Central Indiana. "Through the development of the Monon South Trail, we are transforming the historic economic engine of rail into a future-focused economic engine of a trail that will help us attract new talent and business to the state. We're thankful for the state's partnership and dedication to make this happen for Southern Indiana."

"It continues to be an exciting time to live in New Albany. The new Monon South Trail brings fresh connections to our river city and for our neighbors throughout the region," said New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan. "When our state, regional and local partners join together, great things can happen. We appreciate Governor Holcomb, his staff, and Radius Indiana for bringing this historic project home to Southern Indiana."

The corridor follows a road survey commissioned by the Indiana Internal Improvements Act of 1836. In 1847, the Indiana General Assembly authorized a private railroad to build upon the route, and Governor James Whitcomb signed a proclamation chartering the New Albany and Salem Railroad. By 1854, the railroad was complete from New Albany to Michigan City. In 1956, the railroad officially adopted the iconic Monon Railroad name.

CSXT, a successor to the Monon Railroad, last operated trains on this section of the line in 2008 and abandoned the rail line in 2018. Under a process known as railbanking, New Albany and Radius petitioned to negotiate with CSXT to acquire the out-of-service rail corridor for use as a recreational trail.

As part of the governor's Next Level Connections initiative, Next Level Trails is the largest infusion of trails funding in state history. The $150 million program is administered by the DNR and enables much needed trail connections within and between Hoosier communities.

In addition to the Monon South Trail, Next Level Trails has awarded nearly $120 million in grants to 73 projects across the state. To date, 15 projects are complete totaling 50 miles of new trail open to the public. As part of his 2023 Next Level Agenda, the governor has proposed an additional $50 million in the state budget to be directed to Next Level Trails.

"The Monon South Trail represents Indiana's history and our future," said DNR director Dan Bortner. "I'm thankful for our partners with the City of New Albany and Radius Indiana for helping chart this path forward for these communities across Southern Indiana."

View progress on other Next Level Trails projects at on.IN.gov/NextLevelTrails

Registration Opens for Ag Women Engage Conference

The 2023 Ag Women Engage Conference (formerly known as the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference) begins on Feb. 22 at the new Terre Haute Convention Center. The conference includes two days of guest speakers, networking opportunities and breakout sessions addressing personal, family and farm issues affecting women, families and farm businesses.

Brenda Mack, a fourth-generation small crop producer and associate professor in the Department of Social Work at Bemidji State University, will present a keynote session on building and strengthening resiliency for those in agriculture.

Educational sessions throughout the two days will cover farm succession planning, marketing, new technologies, financial strategies, mental health resources, home food vendor guidelines and more.

"The Ag Women Engage Conference continues the networking and professional development tradition set by the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference. It's a new name, but the same fantastic education and conversations will be taking place," said Elysia Rodgers, Purdue Extension – Dekalb County director, agriculture and natural resources educator, and conference organizer.

Youth in grades eight through 12 and undergraduates are invited to attend the Young Ladies in Agriculture Forum, taking place in tandem with the AWE Conference on Feb. 22 from 1-8 p.m. Topics include financial strategies, building a strong resume and networking in the agriculture industry.

A pre-conference session, "Becoming the Employer of Choice," is scheduled for Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The human resource management curriculum is geared for farm managers and owners looking to improve their human resource management skills.

The cost for the pre-conference session is $50. Conference registration is $125. Register by Feb. 10 online. The Young Ladies in Agriculture Forum cost is $20, with registration online. For accommodation or more information, contact Rodgers at (260) 925-2562 or eberry@purdue.edu.

Obituary deadline
The Times publishes obituaries daily at www.thetimes24-7.com, and in its print product every day with the exception of Sundays and Tuesdays.
All obituaries must come from a funeral home.
A photo may be included and should be sent as a high-resolution JPEG.
Daily obituary deadline is 4 p.m. for the following day's print publication.
To read more obituaries, visit www.thetimes24-7.com.

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