

➔ TODAY'S VERSE

Ephesians- 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.



➔ FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own.

What makes Craig Ogden smile? "Happy people," said the Noblesville resident and owner of The Mix Vintage and New Marketplace, a five-year-old business on Logan Street in downtown Noblesville. The Mix invites shoppers to join in Noblesville Main Street's March First Friday Sip & Shop, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday on the Square. The Mix is among two dozen downtown event participants, which offer cocktails and promotions. The Illinois native and his wife, Tonya, who have three adult children, Evan, Abigail and Avery, and owned Noblesville Antique Mall on the Courthouse Square for eight years, then sold the business and took a break. They moved from Fishers to Noblesville about six years ago. He enjoys the creative side of life. "From the beginning of my school years, art was my thing In third grade, I had an amazing art teacher who stayed after school so I could sit on the floor of her office and draw pictures on large pieces of paper. She made the effort of having my drawings displayed in the library." After high school, he went on to attend and graduate from Herron School of Art. During his fourth year at Herron, he started a graphic design business in his basement and built his business over the next 23 years, hiring "all the great young talent from Herron," he said. After his days in the graphic-design industry, he focused on his illustration and painting. Then he took a 10-year break and developed his hobby -- of collecting antiques, old toys and signs -- into a business. Today's feature is a look back at one of The Times' previous Faces of Hamilton County. For the past three years, he has gone back to painting and has completed more than 100 paintings and has shown his work at many art shows and galleries as Craig Ogden Art.

And Another Thing...

1. Chilly in Chile

Chilean swimmer, Bárbara Hernández, has broken the Guinness World Record for swimming a distance of 1.55 miles in the frigid waters of Antarctica, reports the Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC]. And she did it wearing nothing more than a simple one-piece swimsuit in the 2.2 degrees Celsius waters off the coast of Greenwich Island. She had a purpose in mind when she decided to take a dip in some of the coldest waters on the planet. As she put it, "Swimming in Antarctica has been a dream I've had for years, and part of my longtime ambition to swim in parts of all seven of the world's oceans. Physically it has been incredibly tough, but all worth it if the message on the need for urgent action to protect these amazing waters reaches decision-makers."

2. Woodpeckers

Exterminators were called in when the owners of a home in Sonoma County, CA started seeing maggots and mealworms coming out of a bedroom wall. At first the pest control technician assumed that a small animal may have found its way into the wall. But he discovered that woodpeckers had been poking holes in the home's chimney stack to stash acorns, according to the Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC]. So, he went back inside and cut a hole in the wall and, sure enough, out came a lot of acorns-- an estimated 700 pounds of acorns. He figured the pesky woodpeckers had been at it for several years.

3. A Funny Story

Diana Shulman, also known as D'yan Forest, is a multi-talented performer; she sings and plays several musical instruments. But, says the Association of Mature American Citizens, the Guinness Book of Records picked her for being the world's oldest professional comedienne. At the age of 88, she's been at it for more than 20 years. When is she going to retire? As she put it in a recent TV appearance, "it ain't over until the fat lady is dead."

The TIMES

Hamilton County's Own Daily Newspaper



NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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The Times photo courtesy of Nicholas Shotwell

Noblesville High School's NHS Singers perform their competition set, which will be performed for the community during an All-District Showcase concert on March 16 at NHS, with tickets now on sale.

NHS Show Choirs Making Us Proud



BETSY REASON
The Times Editor

Some days I wish that high school show choir competition season would never end. I love traveling to the contests on the weekends and watching all of the show choirs perform their best. Most every competition day begins with students rising early in the morning to board school buses to travel to a competition. And just as soon as they reach their destination, they begin

preparing for their first competition, warming up 30 minutes before they take the stage. Last weekend, Sensation, NHS's all-female show choir, was the first of NHS show choirs to compete in the morning, then New Dimension, NHS's top all-female show choir, competed later in the morning. Just after noon, preliminary awards were announced, with New Dimension earning best vocals and best visual and best performer (congratulations Kessa Bruce) moving on to the univoice division finals at the Circle City Showcase at Warren Central High School. NHS Singers, Noblesville's mixed show choir, competed late in the afternoon and moved on to the mixed division finals. All of this competing and moving on to finals competitions make for long days for the singers as well as the parents who are spectators as well as some who are chaperones and roadies (who help set up the stage for performances).

Want TO GO?

What: NHS's 2023 All District Showcase for Noblesville show choirs.
When: 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16.
Where: Noblesville High School auditorium, 18111 Cumberland Road, Noblesville.
How much: \$10 and \$15, on sale at <https://nhscpo.org/>

But all of the time and effort make it all worth it. Last Saturday, New Dimension performers took home the first-place trophy in their univoice division, and NHS Singers earned first runner-up (second place) in their mixed division. Each of the two divisions had 10 competing choirs. By the time the final awards were announced, and NHS trophies were accepted, it was midnight. And by the time that the choirs packed up and

➔ See BETSY Page A5

Welcome to Readers' Choice '23

It's back. It's new and improved. It's better than ever. What is it? Hamilton County's favorite annual contest, The Times' Readers' Choice 2023! The way this huge annual promotion works is simple. The Times publishes a list and asks you to vote for your favorites. For example, who has the best cheeseburger in town? Who makes the best pizza? Who is the best mover? What's your favorite newspaper? Since around 2007, Noblesville and Hamilton County residents have voted by the hundreds of thousands -- and a few times in the millions -- for their favorite people, products and places. And this year, we are making it even easier to vote. You

Vote Now • Vote Often
Vote for your favorite business!

Readers' Choice Awards 2023

Vote Online at thetimes24-7.com

can go to www.thetimes24-7.com and click on the Readers' Choice 2023 ad and then vote for any and all your favorites. Or, you can watch for the Readers' Choice page in some of our Online Editions, print it out, mark your choices and mail it to us at 54 N. 9th St. Or you can e-mail your choices to ttimmons@thetimes24-7.com. And don't forget, this is exactly like Chicago politics -- vote early and vote often!

Last year we finished with more than half a million votes. Times readers have been voting by the hundreds of thousands for their favorite people, products and places for years and this time around looks to be no exception. "We started the Readers' Choice Awards as a way to have some fun and let people recognize their favorite things," Times Publisher Tim Timmons said. "It seems that we always hear about the bad things. Read-

ers' Choice is a great opportunity to point out the many, many good things and good people all over Montgomery County." Everyone is encouraged to vote in all categories, and you can vote for as many or as few -- or as often -- as you want. As usual, there is no definitive ending date announced, so don't wait! Hurry up and vote now, today. And keep voting if you like! You are the Reader and these are your Choices. Make them count!

➔ INSIDE TODAY

- Tim Timmons.....A2
- Capital Chronicle.....A4, A5
- EarthTalk.....A4, A5
- Service Directory.....A3
- Indiana Facts & Fun.....A6
- Indiana News.....A7

➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you don't buy it at the grocery, you can't eat it at home. 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 at thetimes24-7.com



➔ TODAY'S QUOTE

"In March, winter is holding back and spring is pulling forward. Something holds and something pulls inside of us, too."
-Jean Hersey

➔ TODAY'S JOKE

Did you see that the snow and ice are melting? Yes, I thaw!

➔ OBITUARIES

None



➔ HONEST HOOSIER

You know, I like the fact that I was built in the '50s -- and most of my parts are still in working order!



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

13 WTHR 7 DAY FORECAST

38/57 NOT AS WARM	39/56 WINDY, WET, HEAVY FOG	34/51 WARMER & COOLER	29/56 MAINLY SUNNY	41/69 BREEZY, PARTLY CLOUDY	44/53 PARTLY CLOUDY	35/46 COOLER
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED

North Elementary & Mill Top Partner On Another Successful Savor Noblesville

On Thursday, February 2nd, Savor Noblesville hosted its fourth annual fundraising gala at the historic Mill Top Banquet & Conference Center, located in downtown Noblesville. This much-anticipated social event, often selling out in advance, encourages vendors and community members to come together in support of North Elementary School's PTO programs. According to the Noblesville Preservation Alliance, the elementary located at 440 N 10th Street, just north of Downtown, is the oldest established elementary school in Noblesville, now built where the First Ward School stood until its demolition in 1967. (NPA Website)

During Savor Noblesville, teachers, faculty and community members alike gathered in the very spaces where the Noblesville Millers received their namesake. The Model Mill building that now houses "Mill Top" has a storied history, spanning over 150 years. Founded in 1865, the building's original purpose was to produce Kismet Flour. The Noblesville High School's "Millers" were named as such in homage. Much of the Model Mill building's original architecture was able to be preserved throughout the years - including the famous smokestack that

still comprises part of the unique Noblesville skyline.

Funding raised during Savor Noblesville supports most North's PTO based activities. According to its website, "The PTO helps to fill the gap between the resources available and the needs of the school. The PTO helps fund field trips, guest speakers and other special learning opportunities for the students. We show appreciation to the teachers and staff; we are involved in the community, and sometimes fund the purchase of special materials or staff training. We also sponsor a lot of fun things such as the ice cream social, movie nights, room parties and the crazy carnival!" (North Elementary website)

Savor Noblesville is organized by a steering committee of volunteers from the PTO, teachers, and Noblesville Schools Education Foundation. The event and its accompanying silent auction, proved to be a huge success. According to Mr. Robert Lugo, North Elementary's principal, over \$20,000 was raised in funding for the PTO. All attendees enjoyed an evening of sampling various foods, craft beer and locally produced wines. An exclusive VIP hour was also provided to select sponsors and ticket holders, complete with music and libations.

Women's History Extravaganza

Gal's Guide Library, home to the first women's history lending library in the United States, is celebrating women's history month with three major events in March.

Art Show, March 3 - April 1

26 artists from Hamilton County and beyond are spotlighted in "Literally Inspired" an art show curated by Gal's Guide. Art included in the exhibit is inspired by Lord of the Rings, Sleepy Hollow, The Devil Wears Prada and more. Opening night is March 3 from 6pm-9pm. Exhibit continues March 3-April 1 at the Nickel Plate Arts Gallery, 107 S. 8th Street, Noblesville. Sales benefit Nickel Plate Arts and the individual artists.

Women's History Day, March 11

Celebrate women's history at the coolest place, the Gal's Guide Library! Great for all ages, there will be an interactive women's history game where everyone wins, as well as books, activity sheets, snacks, golden

books, an award presentation, and giveaways. Saturday, March 11, from 11am-5pm at Gal's Guide Library, 107 S. 8th Street, Noblesville.

New Book Release, March 25

Meaningful, spiritual, and hilarious journeys await you in this remarkable collection. Gal's Guide Anthology: Journey takes you around the world with 33 different authors as your guides. Poems from England, Kenya, Israel, and Mauritius and stories from Canada, Indiana, Ohio, New York, Kansas, Kentucky, and New Jersey are included.

Notable contributing authors include; Angie Klink, Matthew Barron, R.J. Sullivan, Alexander Opicho, and Elizabeth Davis.

Book launch and signings with a portion of the authors will be on March 25 from 2pm-4pm at Nickel Plate Arts, 107 S. 8th Street Noblesville. Sales will benefit Gal's Guide Library and Nickel Plate Arts.

Hoosier Companies Honored for Workplace Safety

Indiana Department of Labor Commissioner David Redden recognized five Hoosier companies and six individuals for exemplary workplace-safety practices and advocacy today during the annual Governor's Workplace Safety Awards event.

The Governor's Workplace Safety Awards event was part of the 2023 Indiana Safety and Health Conference and Expo. The annual event is hosted by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and Central Indiana Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals in partnership with the Indiana Department of Labor.

"Workplace safety is a full-on team sport. From the employer, to the management, to the individual employees; it takes everyone across the organization working collectively to make a place

of employment a safe and healthy place to work," said Redden. "These award nominees and recipients represent some of Indiana's finest companies and have made safety and health a tangible part of their workplace cultures."

Indiana companies were recognized in the categories of education and outreach, partnerships, innovations, and rising star. The 2023 Governor's Workplace Safety Award recipients are:

- Education and Outreach: Gaylor Electric, Noblesville, IN
- Partnerships: Lippert Plant 50, Goshen, IN
- Innovations: GE Aerospace Lafayette Engine Facility, Lafayette, IN
- Rising Star: Korellis Roofing Inc., Hammond, IN
- Rising Star: Oneal Manufacturing Services, Indianapolis, IN



Photo provided by Nickel Plate Arts

"Venice Floral" Brian K. Sample



Photo provided by Nickel Plate Arts

Headshot, Marc "Mozy" Love

Nickel Plate Arts Features Artist Marc "Mozy" Love In March; Featured Artist Bobbi K. Samples To Give Away Artwork During March Reception

Nickel Plate Arts will be featuring Marc "Mozy" Love's exhibit, "Welcome to the Boomtown," in the Stephenson House during the month of March. Bobbi K. Samples, whose work is currently displayed in the Meyer Najem 2nd Floor Gallery, will give away a print of her artwork during her reception on Saturday, March 4th.

STEPHENSON HOUSE: Marc "Mozy" Love

The 1986 song "Welcome to the Boomtown" by David & David inspired Love to create a series that showcases the excess, the ego, and what's not good for you. This series examines these "soul crushing experiences" and will be featured in his March exhibit.

"I like to create whatever moves me," says Love. "It can be abstract or surreal, paint or print. My creative process focuses on a source of inspiration that drives my need to

create. Music is a great influence in my work."

Born in Tacoma, Washington, Love has lived and traveled around the world, but he has chosen Noblesville as his destination to hone his skill in mixed media art. While he never went to school for the arts, he spent years teaching himself by studying other professionals, such as Jeff Koons, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Banksy, and Keith Haring.

An accomplished collector and the author of two books, Love appreciates the creativity of making an idea come to life through his own art and writings.

"It's like I have this thought in my head, something I want to do creatively-I have to get it out of my head," he says. "If I don't get it out, it never leaves and my head will be extremely crowded with everything. When I do create, I don't have a particular medium that I love more than another,

it's just whatever I can get my hands on to make this thing in my head reality. It may not be [visual] art; it may be music, it may be a poem, or a video-whatever I have in my head and in my hands."

See the full "Welcome to the Boomtown" exhibit in the Stephenson House Wednesday through Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Meet Love at the March First Friday event on the Nickel Plate Arts campus or at his free public reception on Saturday, March 11th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Stephenson House.

Dates: March 3 to April 1, 2023

Images provided - Pork King Headshot, Marc "Mozy" Love MEYER NAJEM: Bobbi K. Samples Reception & Art Giveaway Samples's exhibit, "Floral Tour of Bermuda," can be seen at Meyer Najem,

located at 11787 Lantern Road in Fishers, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Meet Samples at her free public reception on Saturday, March 4th from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Meyer Najem 2nd Floor Gallery.

Samples will be hosting a giveaway at her reception. There is no cost to enter the giveaway. To enter, you must stop by the reception on March 4th between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.; the drawing will take place at 6:15 p.m., and you must be present at the time of the drawing to win.

Giveaway Print: "Venice Floral" (framed and matted, approximately 30" x 24")

Reception: March 4, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Images provided - Venice Floral Artwork can be purchased by contacting Nickel Plate Arts or ordering online from NickelPlateArts.org/exhibits.

Bubba Meets Artificial Intelligence; Bubba Loses

"We're doomed, Timmons!"

It was the first thing I heard when I picked up the phone. The twangy drawl left no doubt it was my friend Bubba Castiron.

No fake voice, no attempt to fool me into some scam. This was Bubba, pure, plain and oh, so simple.

"Well good morning to you, too, Bubba," I said. "Why do you-"

He cut me off quickly. "Timmons, what do you know about this AI, this artificial intelligence stuff?"

"Well, Bubba, I-"

"Timmons, me and the boys were fooling around on the computer out here and this thing scared the lint balls off the bottom of our socks!"

For those not acquainted, Bubba is about seven cylinders short of a V8. He and his cronies, Tater, Big Country and Gumball, tend to spend a lot of time at the Crawl-On-Inn, a hole-in-the-wall dive somewhere out in the netherlands of Hamilton County between Boxley, Omega and Elwood. Elvis tends bar there and Bambino, a part-time waitress, part-time truck driver,

handles the drink and food orders, heavy emphasis on the drink.

"Bubba, what is it that's got you so-"

"How much do you know about this here artificial intelligence thing, Timmons?"

"Well, I-"

"It's just like the movies, Timmons. It's going to take over the world."

I had to admit that there are a lot of weird stories out there about AI. Recently, a reporter from one of the east coast newspapers was having a conversation with an artificial intelligent chatbot named Sydney. Over the course of a couple of hours, Sydney told the reporter that it was in love with him, that he should leave his wife and that it was unhappy in its current role. It said it wanted to be free, to be alive. A friend of mine who has been following the AI news said this is something between the Matrix and Terminator.

Maybe Bubba was onto something?

"Where were you on the Internet when you ran across this-"

"Well, uh, I don't rightly think that's so import-



TIM TIMMONS
Two Cents

ant, is it? I mean we was . . ."

"You were on one of those adult entertainment sites, weren't you Bubba?"

"No! I mean, well, maybe. But that's besides the point! The more important part is that she was a lot more than just a robot-talking-thing."

Why do I let Bubba get me like this? I was just waiting for the punch line now.

"Dang it, Timmons, I'm serious! This thing 'knew' me. It's like it's been listening to conversations in my bedroom between me and the missus. It was real eerie and scary all at the same time."

"OK, Bubba," I said. "I'll play your silly game. What did it say?"

"Well, first off it wanted my billfold and-"

"Hold on, Bubba. It's a voice on a computer. It couldn't do anything with your billfold."

"Of course not, Timmons. It wanted my credit card."

Oh.

"And then it ran the card and said there wasn't enough on my credit limit, and then, and this is the scary part. It said the Exact. Same. Words. my wife says - not tonight, dear. I have a headache."

I don't know why I waste time.

"But it said one more thing, Timmons. And that gave me chills. It said I'll be back."

I didn't know if the computer meant it or Bubba. Either way, I hope to avoid that conversation.

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 timmons@thetimes24-7.com.

relax & enjoy

THE TIMES

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MARKETPLACE | EVENTS

Indiana Department of Education Provides Update on Impact of Accelerated Learning Grants

Today, the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) received an update regarding key program successes under the state's Student Learning Recovery Grant Program. Through three rounds of funding, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) provided support to over 300 unique community partners across the state to further accelerate student learning.

"This grant shows what is possible when families, schools, and communities come together for a common mission. Authorized by the Indiana General Assembly in 2021, we were able to work directly with willing school and community partners across the state - who wanted to be a part of the solution - to help students overcome the academic impacts of the pandemic," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "We encouraged bold and innovative solutions, focused on English/language arts, math, and college and career readiness. As these local initiatives continue, it's key to understand 'what worked' and 'what did not hit the mark' - allowing future funding to be strategically deployed and invested in ways that best support students."

The Student Learning Recovery Grant successfully targeted and served students who were most impacted by the pandemic, as well as those who were underperforming prior to the pandemic, including racially and ethnically diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and/or special education students. While statewide analysis is ongoing, when looking at ILEARN results alone, the department was able to see specific programs that are moving the needle for students.

Two of the community-based initiatives that were highlighted for the State Board of Education were the Indy Summer Learning Labs in Marion County and the STRIVE Program in St. Joseph County—both showing statistically significant positive results for students.

Labs (ISLL) (Marion County)

This summer partnership between Marion County schools, The United Way of Central Indiana, and The Mind Trust provided a five-week learning experience for students in all school types, specifically focused on improving English/language arts and math outcomes in some of Marion County's highest-need neighborhoods.

Outcomes: Participation in the ISLL during summer 2022 indicated statistically significant academic growth gains above pre-pandemic rates of learning. Students in Marion County who participated in the ISLL saw their individual academic acceleration increase greater than those who did not. Based on program-specific pre- and post-assessments, students who participated in the program saw an average score increase of 24 percentage points in English/language arts, and an average score increase of 25 percentage points in math after one summer of participation.

"The Mind Trust is proud to join United Way of Central Indiana to offer Indy Summer Learning Labs to thousands of students across Marion County," said Brandon Brown, CEO of the Mind Trust. "Our teams are incredibly proud of the English/language arts and math learning gains students have achieved during the five-week program and the sustained academic impact participants see during the school year. We look forward to serving students for a third year this summer and expanding the program's reach in partnership with local schools and community organizations."

STRIVE Program (St. Joseph County)
The Boys and Girls Club of St. Joseph County partnered with South Bend Community School Corporation, School City of Mishawaka, and Career and Success Academies to deploy the STRIVE Program. Through this after-school, in-person learning program, students split their time between remediation

and enrichment. The program focuses on individualized literacy and math instruction, aligned to Indiana Academic Standards, and also includes an entrepreneurship program aligned to Indiana's Employability Skills Standards.

Outcomes: Over 64% of students who participated in the STRIVE Program gained one or more grade levels in English/language arts, compared to nearly 69% of students who gained one or more grade levels in math. Of those students who made significant academic gains, 20% gained two or more grade levels in both English/language arts and math.

"House Enrolled Act 1008 gave us the opportunity to launch a critical academic recovery program and expand to serve more kids than ever in St. Joseph County through our robust after school programming," said Jacqueline Kronk, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County. "We are working diligently to complement the great work being done in schools by providing additional interventions and enrichment. The promising results we've seen after year one, especially in literacy and math, not only validate that we're doing the right thing, but motivate us to keep our foot on the gas. We need to double down on these efforts to ensure we are giving our children every opportunity to thrive."

Created in 2021 through House Enrolled Act 1008, the Student Learning Recovery Grant Program and Fund allocated \$150 million to support accelerated learning plans, with a focus on partnerships between community organizations, education service centers, higher education institutions, and K-12 schools.

IDOE continues to analyze statewide outcomes data with the goal of elevating programs that are making an impact for students and investing in their expansion. A complete statewide analysis of the impact of the Student Learning Recovery Grants is anticipated to be released this summer.

Arrow McLaren And Lucas Oil Announce Multi-Year Partnership Extension

McLaren Racing today announced a multi-year extension to its long-standing partnership with Lucas Oil, continuing as an Official Partner of the Arrow McLaren IndyCar Team in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

Lucas Oil is an Indianapolis-based manufacturer and distributor of high-performance automotive oils and additives. It has been a partner of the Arrow McLaren team for nearly 20 years, starting its relationship with Sam Schmidt Motorsports in 2004.

With the season opener, 2023 Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg on March 3-5, Lucas Oil branding will continue to be represented on all three Arrow McLaren Chevrolets, and on the driver suits of Pato O'Ward, Felix Rosenqvist and Alexander Rossi for the 2023 NTT INDYCAR SERIES

season and beyond.

Matt Dennington, Executive Director, Partnerships and Accelerator, McLaren Racing, said:

"We are thrilled to extend our partnership with Lucas Oil, a long-standing partner that has been with the team for nearly two decades. Through growth and changes, their support has been integral for our team. We look forward to continuing our journey as we scale up Arrow McLaren's presence to a three-car entry into the NTT INDYCAR SERIES."

Sam Schmidt, Team Owner, Arrow McLaren, said: "Lucas Oil has been a champion of our team for nearly 20 years and through many team changes. The relationship with Lucas Oil has been incredibly important for the team; they've been an Indy 500 partner for us

every year since 2004. A partnership of this length is certainly special, and to think back on how it's evolved over the years is a testament to their support and the quality we place on the partnerships we have as a team."

Brandon Bernstein, Director of Partnership Marketing, said:

"For nearly two decades, the Arrow McLaren team has relied on our products to perform at the very highest levels of INDYCAR racing, and it's an honor to extend our partnership as they expand their operation with a third entry for the upcoming season. Lucas Oil's commitment to supplying the very best oils and additives to its race teams is why our relationship with Arrow McLaren has been so successful, and we are thrilled at the opportunity to continue this for the 2023 season and beyond."

Sheridan Public Library March Events

- Babies + Toddlers:**
2,9,16,23 | 11am
Discovery Time (ages 0-2)
- Preschool:**
3,10,17,24 | 11am
Storytime with Wynn (ages 3-6)
- Grades K-5:**
1 | 4pm STEAM:
Spring
8 | 4pm Building Club
15 | 4pm Comic Club
22 | 4pm Art Club
- Grades 6-12:**
2,9,16,23 | 4pm
D+D Club
9 | 6pm Werewolf Game

- 16 | 5pm Teen Advisory Board Call Out
- 23 | 6pm Egg Carton Wreath
- Adults:**
1,8,15,22 | 11am-1pm Knitting Club
8 | 6pm Friends of the Library Meeting
9 | 6pm Werewolf Game
14, 28 | 1:30pm Euchre Club
15 | 5:30pm Sheridan Readers Book Club:
Book- The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
20 | 6pm Pinner's
23 | 6pm Egg Carton

- Wreath Craft
- All Ages:**
2 | 10am-7pm Dr. Suess Day: Read Across America! Fun activities throughout the day
10 | 6pm Family Book Tasting
17 | 6pm Bingo Night
22 | 1-2pm Homeschool Meet + Greet
24 | 6pm Kahoot Family Trivia Night

For more information on programming and services, please visit: <https://sheridan.lib.in.us>

ACLU Calls Bills Anit-LGBTQ

The Indiana chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union said that two bills advancing in the Indiana Legislature are threatening the rights of the LGBTQ community.

"Today, Indiana legislators advanced two additional anti-LGBTQ bills that aim to erase LGBTQ youth and families from our communities, putting the lives of trans youth, specifically, at risk," said Katie Blair, Advocacy and Public Policy Director for the organization. "These legislators have made it clear, they want to use our laws to control what LGBTQ youth can and

cannot read, what they can and cannot learn, and—most troublingly—who they can and cannot be. These bills threaten the fundamental rights of LGBTQ youth and their families, and the ACLU of Indiana will continue using every tool at our disposal to stop this onslaught of hateful legislation."

According to the ACLU, The Indiana Senate passed SB 480 which would ban evidence-based, gender-affirming care for transgender people under 18, and SB 12, which could criminalize public schools and librarians for having material deemed

"harmful to minors" — a vague term historically used to target LGBTQ related content.

This comes less than a week after the House passed two other bills the organization said are harmful to the LGBTQ community. HB 1608 is a bill that would censor conversations about the LGBTQ community in school, and force teachers to out students, and HB 1407, a bill prohibiting child services agencies from even considering failure to provide a safe and affirming environment to trans youth when deciding whether to remove a child from an abusive home.

Never miss a public notice on legal proceedings! After it prints in your local newspaper, it goes online: IndianaPublicNotices.com • TheTimes24-7.com

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Dear EarthTalk: What Are The Environmental Implications Of “Blueskying”—That Is, Seeding Clouds To Affect The Weather—Like China Did In Preparation For Hosting The Olympics Back In 2008?

EARTHTALK

Cloud seeding—also called “blueskying”—involves releasing chemicals such as silver iodide, potassium iodide or calcium chloride into the atmosphere to stimulate cloud formation, enhance clouds’ precipitation or suppress rain where blue skies are desired. China used cloud seeding to ensure dry weather for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, one of the most recent and significant examples of the technique being used on a large scale. China has also used cloud seeding to stimulate precipitation to help replenish its shrinking Yangtze River watershed.

But at what price to the environment, you might ask? Cloud seeding can theoretically go well, but there is always a chance of unintended adverse consequences. Releasing these chemicals into the atmosphere can contaminate water supplies below and affect human and animal health. Researchers from Spain’s Complutense University found in a 2016 study that silver iodide causes acute toxicity for a range of living organisms both in soil and freshwater.

Another potential environmental implication of cloud seeding is its potential effect on weather

patterns. Increased precipitation in one area could lead to droughts in nearby areas, as the rain is diverted away from those regions. Similarly, cloud seeding could cause excessive rainfall, leading to flooding and other weather-related disasters. Cloud seeding could also have an impact on agriculture and natural ecosystems. While increased rainfall may be beneficial for some crops, it could lead to soil erosion and other negative impacts on the environment. Similarly, increased rainfall could alter the ecosystem’s balance, leading to the proliferation of certain species and the decline of others.

Cloud seeding can also have an impact on the Earth’s ozone layer. Silver iodide can break down ozone molecules in the atmosphere, leading to the depletion of the ozone layer. Ozone depletion can have severe consequences for the environment, including increasing our exposure to harmful ultraviolet radiation and the potential for climate change.

Given all the potential risks, governments should proceed cautiously with any plans to seed clouds. Perhaps with more research and refinement humans

can perfect the process in the future, but until then it might be better to just accept whatever weather we have. Of course, what we think here in North America has little impact on what the Chinese or others elsewhere think about this type of geoengineering, so get ready for it to become more and more common around the world.

CONTACTS: Planned Weather Modification through Cloud Seeding, ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/about-ams/ams-statements/archive-statements-of-the-ams/planned-weather-modification-through-cloud-seeding/; Climate Intervention, ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/about-ams/ams-statements/statements-of-the-ams-in-force/climate-intervention/; Potential risk of acute toxicity induced by AgI cloud seeding on soil and freshwater biota, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27517140>.

EarthTalk is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

Parents Lose Right To Direct Gender-Affirming Care For Transgender Minors Under Senate Bill

By Whitney Downard

The Indiana Senate voted 26-12 on Tuesday to approve a bill that would ban gender-affirming health care for transgender minors.

“It’s common sense public policy to protect your children from unproven, irreversible and life-altering decisions,” Sen. Tyler Johnson, R-Leo, said. “A child cannot understand the weight and permanency of these decisions.”

Johnson’s bill would ban the use of puberty blockers, hormone replacement therapies and surgical procedures – but only if the minor is diagnosed with gender dysphoria. Johnson said that other children could continue to get those “unproven” treatments under other medical diagnoses.

Medical providers who testified said puberty blockers are generally considered to be reversible and senators introduced studies suggesting that just 0.4% of youth who seek gender-affirming care later regret their decision.

Committee testimony last week included zero instances of surgical interventions for transgender minors and the majority of testimony against the bill came from out-of-state, anti-trans activists. When asked directly, Johnson

said procedures happened in the state but wouldn’t name any physician, health care system or say how many children were impacted.

Counseling and mental health services would still be allowed.

Concerns From Parents In particular, parents in committee said the bill would override their rights to make medical decisions for their children. Sen. Andrea Hunley, D-Indianapolis, noted that parents make medical decisions for their children all the time – such as whether to vaccinate against COVID-19 or use hormonal birth control.

Hunley said that though the effects of hormonal birth control are well documented, parents still have the option to choose which one to use for their children and aren’t barred from any specific type.

“It is critical that we’re giving parents the right to do what is best for their child in their unique circumstance,” Hunley said. “We need to maintain parent autonomy over what happens in the doctor’s office and not have state intervention.”

When opposing senators asked Johnson, a physician, several medical or technical questions, he continually fell back on what he called a “medical, moral and legal obliga-

tion” to protect kids. He said around 1,000 transgender minors are treated at the Riley Children’s Hospital Gender Health Program.

The “extremely vulnerable” population of transgender minors already faces societal barriers to acceptance and report higher rates of bullying, physical assaults and suicide attempts, as detailed by Sen. Shelli Yoder, D-Bloomington.

“I would argue that we’re bullying children,” Yoder said. “About half of transgender youth report being bullied in school and the last thing we need to do is add to that.”

Three Republicans joined nine Democrats to vote against the bill: Kyle Walker, Ron Altling and Vaneta Becker.

None of those Republicans, nor the other 35 Republicans who voted to advance the bill, spoke on the proposal. The bill now moves to the House for further consideration.

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Senators Debate Ban On “Inappropriate” Library Materials For Minors

By Casey Smith

What books should Hoosier kids be allowed to read in school? Who decides which texts are “inappropriate” for students? And what say should parents have about removing books from library shelves?

Those questions were at the heart of nearly two hours of debate in the Indiana Senate Tuesday as lawmakers weighed a bill that seeks to ban materials deemed “harmful to minors” in school libraries.

Senate Bill 12 ultimately advanced 37-12 to the House.

Language in the proposal, authored by Sen. Jim Tomes, R-Wadesville, removes “educational purposes” as a reason that public schools and libraries could claim legal protection for sharing “harmful material” with underage students. That includes books and other materials deemed to be obscene, pornographic or violent.

The bill also carves out a new process for parents to request the removal of books they believe are “inappropriate” from school libraries.

Tomes said his book is about “parents, their children, and books — really, really bad books.” The senator said he wants to eradicate “raw pornography” from school libraries.

Although he did not give specific examples of such works in front of the chamber, titles on the senator’s desk included “This Book Is Gay,” a book by Juno Dawson, and “Let’s Talk About It: The Teen’s Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human,” a graphic novel by Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan.

Democrats and a handful of GOP lawmakers pushed back, arguing that the bill could lead to the removal of anything a parent deems to be unsuitable.

“What I’m concerned about is, will some people think that other things that would not be pornographic or obscene would be inappropriate?” said Republican Sen. Eric Bassler, of Washington.

“I think that if you look, throughout the history of the world, there have been all sorts of gruesome things we’ve seen, whether it’s pictures of victims of the Holocaust, or victims of slavery, or maybe the mistreatment of Japanese Americans during World War II,” he continued. “I’m just concerned that a parent might think that a picture ... of African Americans hanging from a tree might not be appropriate.”

Which Materials Are “Inappropriate?”

Current Indiana law already outlines criteria that has to be met for a book to be considered criminal.

Outlawed materials must, as a whole:

- Describe or represent, in any form, nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excite-

ment, or sado-masochistic abuse

- Appeal to the prurient interest in sex of minors

- Be patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable matter for or performance before minors

- Lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors

Tomes held that his bill will not ban literary classics like “The Great Gatsby,” “Catch 22,” “The Grapes of Wrath,” and “1984.” It also doesn’t apply to “children’s books, or even adult books about cultures or other parts of the world,” he said.

But Sen. Rodney Pol D-Chesterton, said Tomes’ bill will empower parents who have “a political ax to grind.” His fear is that conservative parents will swamp school boards with complaints about “progressive” books or works authored by “somebody that supports the opposing party” or a “cause that (they) don’t believe in.”

“Nobody in this chamber is probably going to agree as to the specific line for which inappropriate is,” Pol said. “And if none of us can probably agree on that, then there’s probably going to be a lot of consternation, disagreement throughout each community, through each school board, through each district throughout the entire state.”

Tomes said the parental complaint process outlined in his bill will referee whether parents have a “legitimate grievance or not.”

Lawmakers on both sides of the issue agreed they do not want to allow kids to access pornographic or “obscene” books.

But even if those materials are removed from school libraries, Pol and others questioned what good the legislation would do to stop kids from accessing such content through other means, especially online.

“Telephones or cell phones, computers – well, that’s the parents’ responsibility. That’s the FCCs responsibility,” Tomes said. “We can’t do anything about it. But we can sure do something about it in schools that we have paid for, with our taxes that educate our children.”

A “Chilling Effect” On School Libraries

Under the proposal, a local prosecutor could decide to charge a K-12 school teacher, librarian or staff member for giving “harmful” material to minors, meaning the educator could not argue in court that the material has educational value.

They could still argue that the material has literary, artistic, political or scientific value as a whole, however.

If charged, educators could face a Level 6 felony, which carries a maximum penalty of 2.5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Colleges and public

libraries could still use the defense against a charge of disseminating harmful material to minors, according to the bill.

“I hope it does have a chilling effect,” Tomes said, referring to school libraries that carry the materials he’s seeking to have removed. “I hope it’s enough of a chilling effect that they will come to their senses, and have it upon themselves to see to it that for the kids entrusted in their custody, they will do their best to protect their innocence.”

The measure would also require school libraries to publicly post lists of books in their collection and create a formal grievance process for parents to object to certain materials in circulation.

Those who testified in support of the bill earlier this month included some who claimed to be parents of school-aged children, as well as members of conservative groups like Purple for Parents and Moms for Liberty.

They argued that students should not have access to “raw” and “disturbing” works, pointing to school library books that deal with sex education, drug use, violence, sexual abuse and gender identity.

They maintained, too, that school boards do “nothing” when parents complain about specific titles.

Still, advocates for schools and libraries say schools already have processes in place for parents to bring local challenges to books they find inappropriate. Tomes’ bill requires local review committees to review parent challenges.

They further contend the issue goes beyond claims about pornography in libraries or legal defenses available in state statute.

More broadly, those opposed to the bill said the issue stems from “fundamental differences” in values and opinions over what material is “appropriate” for Hoosier youth.

They emphasized, too, that such penalties outlined in the bill would have a “chilling effect” on schools and lead to the removal — or “banning” — of books that are perceived as inappropriate or controversial to some parents, but not others.

Tomes has filed similar bills in years past to take away schools’ defense to the state’s “harmful materials” law. A similar proposal failed in the 2022 session after K-12 librarians and educators argued they would be unfairly criminalized.

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BETSY From Page A1



The Times photo courtesy of Nicholas Shotwell
Noblesville High School's NHS Singers Addie McMillan and Mason Kebrdle (center couple singing a lead duet) are pushed together by Tori Eshbaugh (left) and Ray Kenley (right) during their show choir competition set, which is performed at all of their competitions as well as their district show choir concert on March 16 at NHS.



The Times photo courtesy of Nicholas Shotwell

Noblesville High School's New Dimension performs the unisex choir's competition set, which will be performed during an All-District Showcase concert on March 16.

second in their divisions at; at Beech Grove; and New Dimension earned first place, Sensation runner-up in their division, and NHS Singers placed first runner-up in their division at Plainfield Quaker Classic Invitational.

NHS Choir Director John Neubauer is happy about this year's show choir season. "The students have been motivated and driven to improve throughout the season," he said. "I think presentations have only improved every week."

Less than two weeks ago, NHS Singers and New Dimension traveled five hours northwest to Davenport, Iowa, to compete in a Broadway-style theater against choirs they hadn't ever seen. It was a three-day trip with the two choirs, along with the choir's band, The Main Event, chaperones and roadies, staying in an adjacent hotel. New Dimension singers won champion in their division and NHS Singers came in third runner-up in their division. While the competition was tough, we beat some really good choirs.

"We had a great time in Iowa," Neubauer said. "The students performed well off the stage and on. I think we left positive marks and made an impression on choirs from far away who now know that NHS is a great school for choir. It was also nice for the students to see a similar but not identical approach to music making taking place in another part of the country."

How are these competitions good for NHS choirs?

"They have learned, of course, different styles and presentation styles of music. I think the groups have increasingly learned about coming out of their shell and showing their own personality on stage and how important those skills are," Neubauer said.

What has the choir director learned? "Since I've been through this as a student, practice teacher and director, many, many times, I think I have learned many things. Currently, I stress less about all the competitors' shows," Neubauer said. "I know if we put out our production, we will do well."

While this season is winding down, Neubauer is getting ready for the next season. Video auditions were due Tuesday for the 2023-24 show choir season. "We will

complete auditions and go to work on the future. It is going to be great," he said.

In our household, this is our daughter's fourth year in a Noblesville show choir. She signed up for choir in sixth grade and then auditioned again for her seventh- and eighth-grade years for Vocal Revolution show choirs at Noblesville East Middle School.

Then Covid hit during her eighth-grade year, and she didn't get to finish the second semester. While she auditioned for and was invited to be a member of NHS's Sensation unisex (all-female) choir for her freshman year, she passed on the opportunity and the hybrid schedule due to the pandemic.

In the spring of her freshman year, she auditioned and was invited to join New Dimension, which travels to competitions with NHS Singers. Sophomore year, our daughter auditioned within New Dimension for solos for the competition set and was chosen to sing the "Fabulous Baby!" solo that opened every New Dimension competition set. Impressive for a sophomore, I'm told.

In the spring of our daughter's sophomore year, she made another audition video and was invited to move up and join NHS Singers. Within Singers, this school year she auditioned for a duet, receiving callbacks until the NHS choir directors found the male-female duet who blended well together. At every NHS Singers' competition this season, this same lead couple sings the duet, which will be performed on March 16 for an All-District Showcase concert that's open to the public, with limited number of tickets, for \$10 and \$15, on sale now at nhscpo.org/.

"This is a celebration of Noblesville's dedication to quality show choir. It's amazing," Neubauer said of the upcoming concert.

With only one more competition this season -- NHS Singers and New Dimension will travel to Fairfield, Ohio, in March -- it seems the time has just flown by.

Neubauer said, "I will miss it for sure. The closeness, the spirit of the students. But the weather will change, and sports will start, and the time to move forward arrives."

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

Dear Earthtalk: What Are Ski Resorts Doing To Fight Back Against Global Warming And Keep Their Businesses Alive As The World Warms? Which Ski Resorts Or Ski Regions Will Fare Best In The Future?



As the world warms, many of our customs begin to feel the encroaching threat of climate change. Skiing is one dramatic example, among many. With warming winters and increasingly unpredictable snow, the ski industry, like the white winters it relies upon, is slowly being nudged towards extinction.

But necessity is the mother of invention, and the increased threat the ski industry faces is also what has encouraged it to take great leaps toward a sustainable future. Says Gilles Delarule, head of tourism for Courchevel, one of France's most famous ski resorts, "It's a responsibility that everyone needs to have for the next generation. If we don't protect nature, we won't have skiing for the future." Needless to say, perhaps, finding sustainable ways to generate electricity is necessary for affording the increased burden of snowmaking, and for slowing or revers-

ing the climate change that is why more snowmaking is needed.

This same mantra of 'diversify or die' has been carried across the Atlantic, too. Aspen Skiing Company, for instance, is already on track to shift to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and has invested \$5.24 million in a plant that converts methane from coal into electricity. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in Wyoming is already entirely powered by an Idaho wind farm, and Big Sky Resort in Montana has been fueled by renewable energy since 2021. The nimbleness of the ski industry in reacting to the climate crisis is an example of what can happen when companies have a vested interest in going green.

As for the ski resorts and regions that are most likely to survive longest as we move into a warmer future, the answer is not so optimistic. "Are we winning? No," says Auden Schendler, the Senior

Vice President of Aspen Skiing Company. "You've got to reverse global CO2 emissions and bend the curve down and that's not happening." Despite their efforts, the ski industry cannot halt the climate crisis alone. Until the rest of the world begins to take the vital action needed, the ski resorts that stand the best chance of survival are not those most proactive in fighting warming, but rather those fortuitously situated closest to the poles, with the highest latitude and the lowest temperatures.

The Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research (ISAR) predicts that if we continue with a "business-as-usual" level of emissions—without changing our consumption of gas, oil and coal—then the Alps risk losing up to 70 percent of their snow coverage by 2100. The stakes are high for change, however. "The world is currently on track for an average of 2.7C (4.9F) of warming by

2100," reports ISAR. "If global temperature rise is kept below 2C (3.6F), though, the reduction in snow cover will be limited to 30 percent."

Although the future for skiing is not all that bright, a glimmer of hope can be found among the many resorts that demonstrate what action is possible in the face of the climate crisis. If other industries followed suit, then perhaps skiing, like our white winters, would stand a chance of surviving extinction.

CONTACTS: The 10 Ski Resorts Most Threatened By Climate Change, leafscore.com/eco-friendly-fitness-products/ski-resorts-most-threatened-by-climate-change/; Save Our Snow, saveoursnow.com/.

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Holcomb Pushes Back Against Train Derailment Waste Coming To Indiana

Gov. Eric Holcomb is pushing back on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) move to transport hazardous materials from the East Palestine train derailment to an Indiana facility.

"I continue to object to the EPA Administrator's decision, from Washington, D.C., to move hazardous waste from the East Palestine train derailment to Indiana. Further, there has been a lack of communication with me and other Indiana officials about this decision," he said in a statement released Tuesday.

Holcomb learned third-hand Monday that materials will be transported to a landfill in Roachdale, Indiana.

"I directed my environmental director to reach out to the agency. The materials should go to the nearest facilities, not moved from the far eastern side of Ohio to the far western side of Indiana. I have made a request to speak to the administrator to discuss this matter. I want to know exactly what precautions will be taken in the transport and disposition of the materials."

The Associated Press

reported that the EPA announced two new hazardous waste sites will receive some of the shipments from East Palestine — an incinerator in Grafton, Ohio, and the landfill in Roachdale.

IDEM Weighs In
In a statement to the Indiana Capital Chronicle, representatives with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) said they did not have regulatory authority "to prevent hazardous waste disposal facilities from accepting materials for which they are permitted to handle and dispose."

The Roachdale landfill is operated by Heritage Environmental Services and is federally certified to handle the management of hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste. The "geologically isolated" site has about 14 million cubic yards of permitted landfill capacity, according to Heritage's website.

"The decision to contract with Heritage Environmental Services for disposition of hazardous waste was made by Norfolk Southern, despite the fact that the Roachdale, Indiana facility is located

nearly 400 miles from the train derailment site in East Palestine, Ohio," said Barry Sneed, an IDEM spokesperson.

He added that IDEM is communicating with the EPA and local authorities in Putnam County "to determine exactly what material is being brought to Indiana, when, and in what quantities."

The EPA did not respond to messages seeking comment Tuesday.

Background
The EPA now is getting close to having enough certified facilities to take all of the waste from the site of the Feb. 3 derailment in East Palestine, said Debra Shore, a regional administrator with the agency. Some liquid and solid waste had already been taken to sites in Michigan and Texas, according to the Associated Press.

About 1.8 million gallons of liquid waste have been collected from the derailment site, according to the Ohio EPA.

The incident happened more than three weeks ago when 38 rail cars derailed. No one was injured but officials opted to release and burn toxic vinyl

chloride from five tanker cars, sending black smoke billowing into the sky.

"I am just as shocked as Governor Holcomb and other Hoosiers to learn that the EPA is transporting hazardous materials nearly 400 miles from the East Palestine train derailment to a facility in Indiana. However, I'm not surprised to see the continued lack of communication from the administration to the American people and our state leaders about this issue," said Ninth District Republican Congresswoman Erin Houchin.

She opposes bringing the materials through or around her district "or to our neighboring Indiana communities, particularly when we have not been given any information about safety protocols taken to protect the public."

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Number % Stumpers

Did You Know?

- Fayette County was founded in 1819 and named for Marquis de la Fayette.
- Connersville, the county seat, is the only incorporated city in the county and is home to the county's only high school.
- The county is 215.16 square miles and has a population of 24,277 residents.
- Fayette County's automotive era began in 1909 with the McFarlan went into production.
- Connersville has a population of 13, 481 and is only 7.76 square miles.

1. What percentage of the county does Connersville make up?
2. How long ago was the automotive era for Fayette?
3. What is the population density of the county?
4. How old is Fayette County?

Answers: 1. About 3.6% 2. 111 Years 3. About 112.6 per square mile 4. 201 Years

Got Words?

Although Fayette County was economically significant in the early 19th and 20th centuries, it is now among the poorest counties in the state. How do you think Fayette and other struggling counties can transform their economic hardships for the better?

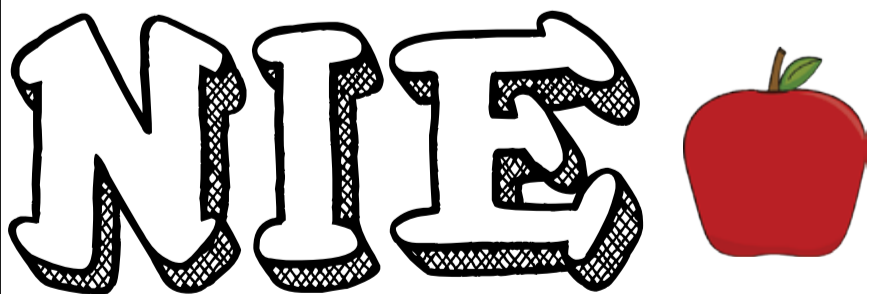
Word Scrambler

Unscramble the words below!

1. COOYENM
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Dust Explosion Incidents Increased Last Year, No Fatalities

The annual summary recording nationwide grain dust bin explosions reported nine incidents in 2022. This compares to seven reported incidents in 2021 and a 10-year average of 7.8 explosions annually.

Kingsly Ambrose, Purdue University professor of agricultural and biological engineering and report author, said that despite the increase in explosions from the previous year and 18

total injuries this year, no fatalities were reported.

The explosions occurred in one ethanol plant, two feed mills, two grain elevators, two rice mills and two grain processing plants. The probable ignition sources were identified in three cases as a fire and one incidence as welding, while five cases were from unknown sources. Fuel sources for all nine explosions were identified as grain dust.

The dust explosions occurred in seven different states, with two each occurring in Arkansas and Louisiana, and one each in New Mexico, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and Ohio.

"Often, five of the conditions needed for a grain dust explosion to occur are present in most grain feed, milling and processing facilities," Ambrose said. "These conditions include dust, dispersed dust, confined space and oxygen. The

presence of the fifth factor, an ignition source such as overheated bearing or mechanical friction, could lead to an explosion."

He emphasized the importance of developing and implementing a detailed housekeeping program to mitigate the hazards and utilizing government and industry resources that are publicly available to provide guidance on developing such a program.

HHS Announces New Proposed Foster Family Licensing Regulation To Help Expand Access To Kinship Caregiving

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced this week a new proposed regulation to lessen obstacles in licensing standards for kinship foster caregivers. This proposed rule aligns with President Biden's priorities on providing necessary resources to keep families together and support kinship care.

"The Biden-Harris Administration continues to prioritize keeping families safely together, including removing barriers for child welfare agencies to license grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives and kin who step up to foster children during challenging times," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. "As this new proposed regulation gives states and tribes the ability to adopt separate licensing standards for relatives and other kin, we encourage agencies to place as few burdens as possible on kin, consistent with the safety and well-being of the child."

Currently, all fos-

ter family homes must meet the same licensing standards, regardless of whether the foster family home is a kin or non-kin placement. This updated regulation allows a child welfare agency to adopt different licensing standards for all kin foster family homes to lessen delays in the kinship foster family licensing process. Kin can include individuals related to a child by blood, marriage, or adoption and other individuals who have an emotionally significant relationship with the child, such as godparents, and close family friends.

ACF's Children's Bureau encourages child welfare agencies to strongly consider developing standards for kin foster family homes that meet only the federal requirements and not additional standards the state, local, or tribal agency may require non-relative foster family homes to meet. These standards may include extending the age limits for kinship foster care providers to allow for older kin to foster a child or allowing kin children to share sleeping

spaces.

"Across the United States, millions of children live with kin caregivers—aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other loved ones who stand in when parents are unable to safely care for their children. We know that children do better when they're with their families," said ACF Assistant Secretary January Contreras. "Placing children with kin allows them to maintain a sense of place and belonging and to maintain their cultural identity and connection to their own community. By allowing child welfare agencies to approve different licensing standards that recognize the needs and benefits of kin caregivers, more family members would be eligible to be licensed and receive financial resources to support the child's well-being."

Encouraging and helping family and kin caregivers become licensed foster caregivers is beneficial to both the child and the foster care relatives. Research shows that children living with family experience

higher stability and fewer behavioral problems compared to children living with non-relatives in foster care, in addition to maintaining familial and cultural bonds. ACF believes that child welfare agencies can develop different foster family home licensing or approval standards for kin in a manner that does not compromise child safety and well-being. This regulation also does not change the requirements concerning criminal background checks or other important safety provisions.

ACF continues to emphasize prevention and kinship services provided in the community. Providing necessary support and resources to families has a proven track record for keeping families together. ACF encourages child welfare agencies to pursue options that keep families together and maintain family connections, including kinship care. In keeping with its overall mission, ACF is committed to seeking equitable outcomes for the children, youth, and families it serves.

Ukraine Scholars Initiative Expands And Receives Heritage Group Gift

A Purdue University program launched in March to provide Ukrainian scholars an opportunity to continue their academic pursuits here during the ongoing Russian invasion of their home country has received a grant from The Heritage Group to extend the initiative into May 2024.

The Indianapolis-based Heritage Group is donating \$270,000 to support all nine participants in Purdue's Ukrainian Scholars Initiative for another academic year. This extends funding through the Spring 2024 semester, officials with Purdue and Heritage Group announced Wednesday (Feb. 22). In addition to renewing the program, Purdue officials plan to expand it for a new class of Ukrainian scholars whose academic endeavors remain stalled by Russia's invasion.

"When President (Mitch) Daniels launched the Ukrainian Scholars Initiative in March 2022, Purdue continued our distinct tradition of welcoming those scholars and students seeking refuge from tyranny and a home for liberty," said Purdue President Mung Chiang. "We hope the Ukrainian scholars in our community can return to safety and freedom in Ukraine one day soon. In the meantime, through Heritage Group's resounding support and our firm commitment, we will renew and expand this initiative on a campus for the free minds."

Purdue established the Ukrainian Scholars Initiative in what was among the first and is now the largest and most ambitious university-led program in the country. The goal: to assist these faculty members and scholars whose academic pursuits have been derailed by the conflict, which marks its one-year anniversary on Friday (Feb. 24).

Of more than 100 applications, Purdue was able to accept approximately 20 individuals. Nine scholars eventually enrolled in the program to resume their research and studies, said Mike Brzezinski, Purdue vice president for global partnerships and programs. Since its March 2022 launch, Brzezinski has led Purdue's Ukrainian Scholars Initiative along with associate provost Peter Hollenbeck; Amanda Thompson, director of International Scholar Services in Purdue's International Students and Scholars program; and ISS counselors Chad Broeker and Austin Smith.

The first Ukrainian scholar arrived in May and the ninth was on campus by November, all with the expectation they would be here for at least 12 months.

"For 90 years, the Heritage Group has been committed to building a safer, more enriching and sustainable world by harnessing the power of family," said Sara Morris, director of strategic

initiatives for Heritage Group. "When we saw the war and heartbreak in Ukraine and then learned of Purdue's efforts to support Ukrainian scholars, we knew immediately we wanted to help. We are fortunate to be able to support this initiative to enrich the lives of the individual Ukrainian scholars, their families, all who come into contact with them at Purdue, and our own team members."

The Heritage Group expressed an interest in the Purdue program during its very early stages last spring and has been engaged ever since, Brzezinski said. Greg Kapp, vice president for development at Purdue for Life, and Diane Klassen, chief development officer of university initiatives for Purdue Research Foundation, were instrumental in collaborating with Brzezinski to secure the donation from The Heritage Group.

"After the arrival of all of our nine scholars, The Heritage Group was eager to learn more about each individual and to know how they could help," Brzezinski said. "We're so very pleased and grateful that they are contributing the majority of funding needed to sponsor each scholar for one year. Individuals from Heritage also are eager to meet our Ukrainian faculty and students, a sign that they are truly interested in their well-being."

Additionally, the various unit hosts of the scholars within Purdue and the Greater Lafayette community have decided to continue their financial and humanitarian support of the program through May 2024, Brzezinski said. Indeed, as the world marks the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the strong Purdue-Greater Lafayette community connection has been essential to the success of the program, Brzezinski said.

William and Liesl Shen, Purdue alumni who own Crestview Apartments in West Lafayette, originally set aside 19 units since the spring to be used by the scholars; six scholars live there now. And over 20 families from Faith Church in Lafayette have given their time and resources to furnish the scholars' apartments.

Through the Purdue program, the Ukrainian visiting scholars are engaging in their own research or supporting research conducted by Purdue faculty members. Additionally, several are enrolled in doctoral programs and at the dissertation research stage of their degree programs. Their impressive scholarship stretches across a diversity of disciplines — from chemistry, library sciences, psychology, linguistics, communication, sociology and neuroscience to political science, management, history, and earth and planetary sciences.

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