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Boomer Bits



Ask Rusty – We're Planning To Claim At 62; What Do We Need To Know?

Dear Rusty: My wife (born May 1962) and I (born April 1963) are retired and will soon be looking to start collecting our Social Security as we each hit 62. As this is new to us, I'm wondering what things we may need to be aware of or consider as we get closer to her 62 birthday in May. Any advice or information will be appreciated! Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning: If you and your wife are both retired from working and have decided to start your (reduced) Social Security as soon as you are eligible at age 62, then there is nothing you need to do in advance of applying. The Social Security retirement benefit amount for each of you will be determined by your individual lifetime earnings record and your age when you claim. If either of you will be eligible for a spousal boost from the other, that will be automatically applied when both of you are collecting.

If your wife plans to claim her Social Security as soon as she is eligible, she should apply for her benefits about 3 months in advance and choose the option on the application which states "I want benefits beginning with the earliest possible month



ASK Rusty
Social Security Advisor

Social Security Matters

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

and will accept an age-related reduction." For information, an applicant must be 62 for an entire month to get benefits, so your wife's first month of eligibility will be June 2024. Social Security deals only in whole months and pays benefits in the month following the month earned; so if your wife's birthday is between the 11th and 20th of the month her first Social Security payment will be received in her bank account on the third Wednesday of July. All subsequent payments will be on that same schedule. Then, when it's time for you to claim, you should follow the same process as your wife and, if either of you is entitled to a higher amount as a spouse, it will be automatically applied when your benefits later start.

Applying for benefits is a relatively simple process if done online at www.ssa.gov/apply.

Note that to apply online your wife will need to first create her personal "my Social Security" account, which is easy to do at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. To prepare for applying later, you can also create your personal online account now (it's required to apply online), at which you will see what your estimated benefit will be at different ages. Of course, your wife first (and later you) can also call Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to request an appointment to apply for SS retirement benefits in person. Applications which are not done online are usually taken over the phone vs. requiring a visit to your local Social Security office, but applying online is, by far, the most efficient method (you can link to the application process from your online account).

➔ See RUSTY Page A5

Getting Healthier In 2024 Starts With Your Feet

(StatePoint) Good foot and ankle health is critical for good overall health, so no matter what your wellness goals are for 2024, be sure to start from the ground up.

"Feet and ankle issues can be signs of overarching health problems like diabetes, arthritis and cardiovascular disease, so paying attention to them is vital for early diagnosis and treatment says Michael Coyer, DPM, FACFAS, a foot and ankle surgeon and Fellow Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS). "Additionally, many common New Year's resolutions related to fitness and weight loss are difficult to tackle if you're experiencing foot and heel pain, making it important to fix these issues first."

Get a jumpstart on your 2024 health resolutions with these foot health facts from ACFAS:

"I want to lose weight": Obesity aggravates foot problems, like heel pain and flat feet, making it hard to exercise. And, without exercise, obesity worsens, potentially increasing the progression of serious health threats. Break the cycle by seeking evaluation and treatment for chronic, activity-limiting foot and ankle problems. Once

cleared to begin exercise, don't do too much too soon. Follow a gradual routine of low-impact exercise until your body adjusts to the stress of regular physical activity.

"I want to build strong bones": Osteoporosis is a bone-thinning disease affecting more than 28 million Americans, and your feet can present clues that there's a problem. Early symptoms can include increased pain with walking accompanied by redness and swelling on the top of the foot, as well as unexplained foot fractures. Don't ignore foot pain. Visit your foot and ankle surgeon who can detect osteoporosis through a bone densitometry test. Once you have a diagnosis you can take steps to prevent stress fractures, such as wearing shoes that provide support and cushioning, and using custom orthotics.

"I want to age gracefully": Taking good care of feet and ankles can improve balance, coordination and stability to reduce a senior's risk of a life-altering fall. Examine your feet regularly. At the sign of bumps, lumps or other changes, or if you're experiencing pain,

➔ See FEET Page A5

State Cracks Down On Fraudsters Targeting Financially Strapped Homeowners

Attorney General Todd Rokita recently announced two separate legal actions against defendants accused of trying to defraud financially distressed Hoosier homeowners.

"We have made it clear through these enforcement actions that our office will do everything in our power to protect vulnerable Hoosier homeowners," Rokita said. "Scammers who seek to use real estate to illegally profit from homeowners in distress should take note that they will be held accountable under the law."

In the first matter, The state is suing a St. Joseph County man and affiliated entities over allegations they swindled a senior citizen out of the title to her home.

➔ See STATE Page A5

The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 7:49 a.m.
SET: 5:24 p.m.



High/Low Temperatures
High: 50 °F
Low: 42 °F



Today is....

- Earmuff Day
- National Fritters Day
- Special Education Day



What Happened On This Day

- 2001 Enron Files for Bankruptcy. The Houston, Texas-based energy company filed for Chapter Eleven bankruptcy after reports of widespread accounting fraud became public. At that time, the company became the largest company in the history of the United States to declare bankruptcy.
- 1982 First artificial heart transplant. Barney Clark became the first person to receive a permanent artificial heart. The surgery occurred at the University of Utah Medical Center. Clark lived for 112 days after the transplant.
- 1804 Napoleon is crowned Emperor of France. Napoleon Bonaparte had risen through the ranks of the French army during the French revolution and became one of the most influential political figures of his era. His self-coronation as Napoleon I took place in Notre Dame in Paris, France.



- Births On This Day**
- 1981 Britney Spears American singer-songwriter, dancer, actress
 - 1760 John Breckinridge American politician, 5th United States Attorney General

- Deaths On This Day**
- 1859 John Brown American activist
 - 1814 Marquis de Sade French author, politician

TODAY'S VERSE

Revelation 22:21 The grace of Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.



FACES OF HAMILTON COUNTY

People who call our community their own. What makes Hannah Partridge smile? "Bad puns, sunny days and good dessert." The Fishers resident was found rehearsing for The Belfry Theatre's holiday play, "The Man Who Came to Dinner," which continues with matinees at 2 p.m. today and Sunday at the Noblesville First United Methodist Church Celebration Hall stage. She plays the role of Lorraine Sheldon. While living in Noblesville, she made her debut on The Belfry stage in "Our Town," directed by Nancy Lafferty, cast in the roles of Professional Willard and People Among the Dead, returning to theater after a four-year break. She's originally from Brown County, where some of her favorite past roles were Marian Paroo in "The Music Man," Marty in "Grease," and Sarah Brown in "Guys and Dolls." Why theater? "I grew up with my dad taking me to shows and always loved it and began performing in high school. It's such a unique creative outlet, creating something with a group that's never quite the same each night and lets you explore situations and personalities drastically different than your own." She graduated from Ball State University. "When I graduated college and moved to a new city, theater is also how I made friends, and meeting, and getting to know new people in casts is still one of my favorite parts of being in a show." Hannah is a search engine optimization specialist for a marketing agency and has a cat, Seymour. "Outside of theater, I love to read and travel. I studied abroad in France in college and went to Thailand last year." For tickets to Hannah's current Belfry show, "The Man Who Came to Dinner," visit www.thebelfrytheatre.com

And Another Thing...

1.NPT Night Lights kicks off!

Head downtown as Fishers Parks lights up the night on the Nickel Plate Trail to celebrate the coming winter and holiday season! Through the month of December, enjoy NPT Night Lights, a light display along the downtown portion of the Nickel Plate Trail, presented by Centier Bank! Come out from 6 to 8 p.m. December 1, 2, or 3 as the trail gets activated with food, music, photo opps, and more! Plan a night downtown with friends or family to start your holiday festivities for free! Access to the Nickel Plate Trail is always free, and no registration or RSVP is required for NPT Night Lights. Lights will turn on dusk nightly through the end of December.

INSIDE TODAY

- Service Directory.....A5
- Home.....A6
- Travel.....A7

TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

Get an eye exam regularly – some eye diseases don't have any symptoms until it's too late.

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 www.thetimes24-7.com



OBITUARIES

None

The Times appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank **KERWIN & CHERYL KAUFMAN** for subscribing!



WTHR 7 DAY FORECAST

51 BARRY	42/50 CLOUDY	37/45 SHOWERS AROUND	33/44 MISTY SHOWERS POSSIBLE	32/48 PARTLY SUNNY	30/42 CLOUDY	31/51 BREEZY, WILD
FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU

Hamilton County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt Announces Re-Election Campaign

Thursday night, surrounded by a crowd of supporters, Mark Heirbrandt, current Hamilton County Commissioner, announced his campaign for re-election.

"Connecting with Hamilton County residents has always been my most valued part of serving. I look forward to doing just that in the coming months to continue understanding the ever-changing needs of our county," said Mark Heirbrandt.

Heirbrandt, who took office as Commissioner in 2013, has consistently spearheaded transformative county projects that have had a profound impact on the constituents and visitors of Hamilton County.

Among these transformative projects, a few notable ones include: State Road 37 improvements; Ivy Tech Community College's collaboration with the City of Noblesville, the State, Noblesville Schools and County to bring Post-Secondary Education to Hamilton County; Lowe's Way; a AAA Bond Rating; Bakers Corner; leadership in the wake of the Noblesville School shooting; and the historic Bell Ford Covered Bridge, the only post-truss constructed covered bridge in the world.

Heirbrandt's passion to serve extends past his duty as commissioner by being an active member of numerous boards and organizations, including the Humane Society, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the City of Westfield Public Safety Merit Board, and the Big Cicero Regional Drainage Board. His contributions to these organizations have earned him accolades such as the Advocate of the Year by the Humane Society for Hamilton County and the Exceptional Leadership and Service Award from the Hamilton County

Leadership Academy. He is also the current President of the Indiana County Commissioners (ICC).

Heirbrandt's list of accomplishments includes being awarded 'County Commissioner of the Year' by both the Indiana County Commissioners (ICC) and the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC).

Just this week, the entire Hamilton County Commissioners team received the Indiana County Commissioners Award for Outstanding Team Effort for their water availability study. In addition, they were honored with the Outstanding Leadership and Impact Award from the Good Samaritan Network of Hamilton County, highlighting their significant contributions to the community. Along with his fellow commissioners, their leadership has earned six statewide awards, reflecting their remarkable achievements in serving the community.

Heirbrandt and his wife, Gina, have called Hamilton County home for over three decades. They are proud parents to Blake and twins Ethan and Evan, and they are active members of the Catholic community, belonging to Saint Maria Goretti Catholic Parish in Westfield.

County Commissioners in Indiana are responsible for a wide range of crucial tasks, including overseeing county budgets, managing county properties, providing essential public services such as roads and bridges, public safety, and social services. Commissioner Heirbrandt's commitment to these responsibilities has made a significant difference in the lives of Hamilton County residents.



MARK HEIRBRANDT

12 Ways This Christmas To Help Others This Season



BETSY REASON
From The Editor's Desk...

Looking to help others in need this season? Enjoy shopping for toys, nonperishables and clothing? Would you rather write a

check? Maybe even volunteer your time?

Check out our list of 12 ways this Christmas to help folks in and around Noblesville.

1. Noblesville Fire Department's 46th annual Food and Toy Drive, to benefit 100 families in Noblesville, is accepting nonperishable food items and new, unwrapped toys now through Dec. 8 at any of the Noblesville Fire Stations -- Station 71, 135 S. Ninth St.; Station 72, 400 S. Harbour Drive; Station 3, 2101 Greenfield Ave.; Station 74, 20777 Hague Road; Station 75, 10170 E. 191st St.; Station 76, 16800 Hazel Dell Road; and Station 77, 15251 Olio Road -- and at Noblesville City Hall, 16 S. 10th St., with deliveries on Dec. 16. NFD is also accepting monetary donations, with checks to be made payable to NFD Hamilton County Community Foundation. NFD has partnered with Kroger for food needs and Meijer for toys. For information, call 317-776-6336.

2. Good Samaritan Network is accepting donations from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 5-9 at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds, 2003 E. Pleasant St., Noblesville, for the Dec. 9 Good Samaritan Christmas basket distribution. Seeking new clothing, hats, gloves, mittens and underwear, plus toys and games and other items for sizes 6 and older. Good Samaritan is also organizing Christmas Eve meals on Dec. 24 for shut-ins with a need for fruit pies, cookies and cakes, and also volunteer help. Items may also be dropped off year-round 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays at Good Samaritan Network, 12933 Parkside Drive, Fishers, IN 46038, or monetary donations may be mailed to Good Samaritan Network, P.O. Box 339, Noblesville, IN 46061. Visit www.gsnlive.org

3. Donate a new, unwrapped toy at the Parker

Christmas Open House & Toy Drive from noon to 5 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Parker Mortgage Team office, 960 Logan St., Noblesville.

4. Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank is seeking nonperishable healthy food items, including canned chicken and tuna, rice, pasta, helper mixes, meat stews, small size peanut butter and jelly, pasta sauce cans, canned peas, canned carrots, canned potatoes (preferably not corn or beans due to already receiving plenty), Chex and Cheerios cereals, pancake mix and syrup, individual mac and cheese, individual fruit cups, granola bars, microwave popcorn, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing. Drop sites: Always in Stitches, 1808 E. Conner St., Noblesville; Hamilton North Public Library, 209 W. Brinton St., Cicero; Carpenter Realtors at 140 S. Cherry St., Westfield, 2270 Greenfield Ave., Noblesville, and 790 City Center Drive, Carmel; and Parker Mortgage, 960 E. Logan St., Noblesville.

5. Donate items to St. Vincent dePaul and those items will be sold at its NobleCause Resale Shop to buy food for pantry clients. Drop off items 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, at 1391 Greenfield Ave., Noblesville. Visit <https://svdpnoblecause.com/>

6. Noblesville Elks Lodge 576 in downtown Noblesville will collect and donate Christmas meals to about 30 families from Noblesville East and West middle schools. Non-perishable food items, such as canned vegetables, boxed mashed potatoes, stuffing, macaroni and cheese, and other holiday food items, will be accepted as well as monetary donations which will be used to purchase food. The drive runs through Dec. 15 with donation boxes for food in the foyer of the Lodge, 35 S. Ninth St., Noblesville, and monetary donations can be dropped off at the bar just inside the foyer. Meals will be delivered Dec. 16 and 17. Mailing address is Noblesville Elks Lodge 576, P.O. Box 306, Noblesville, IN 46061. Lodge: 317-773-4182 or call organizer Jason Snyder at 317-523-0849.

7. Feeding Team is accepting donations of all



Photo courtesy of Noblesville Fire Department

Noblesville Fire Department Station No. 71 A-Crew members – Firefighter Paramedic Nate Smith (from left), Capt. Joe Wilson, Firefighter Travis Lee, Firefighter Patrick Perry, Firefighter Paramedic Alex Casselman and Firefighter Mitchell Elmore – show some of the toy donations they received during the NFD's 2022 Christmas Food & Toy Drive. The 2023 drive continues through Dec. 8.

non-perishable food such as pasta and pasta sauce; cans of beans, vegetables and fruit; peanut butter and jelly; Ramen noodles and cans of tuna or chicken and all of its 43 Feeding Team yellow and black neighborhood pantries through Hamilton County. Monetary donations are also accepted. Visit <https://feedingteam.org/donate>.

8. The 18th annual Noblesville Tri Kappa Red Stocking Fund is accepting monetary donations now through Christmas to raise funds for Noblesville students in need to make sure they have shoes, clothing, school supplies and shelter, as well as medicines and other necessities. Funds will be used by Noblesville Schools and Noblesville Township Trustee at their discretion. Donations are being collected by mailing checks to Noblesville Red Stocking Fund, P.O. Box 162, Noblesville, IN 46061. Please include your name, address, and phone number, and a message or greeting that you would like published with Red Stocking donations in The Times, which is partnering for this fundraising.

9. Noblesville Township Trustee office at 836 Division St., Noblesville, is accepting donations of nonperishable soups, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, breakfast food, taco meals, peanut butter and jelly, canned fruits, as well as toilet paper, shampoo and hygiene items 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays. Holiday meals for entire families are delivered at Christmas, and gifts are

also provided for children. Noblesville Trustee provides food bags 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Tuesday, with various food items available weekdays.

10. The Come to Me Food Pantry is seeking nonperishable food items, such as canned fruits and vegetables, crackers, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, strawberry or grape jelly, cereal, breakfast bars, canned pasta, puddings, Ramen noodles, macaroni and cheese, toaster pastries, oatmeal, canned chicken and dumplings, canned meats, gravy, stuffing mix, corn muffin mix, pasta sauce, beef stew, canned or boxed potatoes, bags of rice, canned beans and soups and pancake mix and syrup, and may be dropped off 8:30-11:30 a.m. weekdays, at 9691 E. 116th St., Fishers, in Fellowship Hall behind Fishers United Methodist Church.

11. Mama's Cupboard, a faith-based organization dedicated to providing food and other services to residents in need in Sheridan, is seeking monetary donations. Visit www.mamascupboard.org.

12. Bring a new unwrapped toy to the WRTV Toy Drive Collection Day from noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 9 at Hamilton Town Center in front of the mall outside of Ford's Garage in Noblesville, or make a monetary donation by texting WRTV to 50155 or use online form at www.wrtv.com.

-Betsy Reason writes about people, places and things in Hamilton County. Reach The Times Editor Betsy Reason at betsy@thetimes24-7.com.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the City of Westfield, Hamilton County, Indiana under Indiana Code 6-11.1-18-5 and Indiana Code 5-3-1-2(b) that the Common Council of the City will meet at City Hall at 130 Penn St., Westfield, IN at 7:00 p.m. on December 11, 2023 to conduct a Public Hearing and consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the budget for the current year:

Fund		
Fund 271 PSAP Special Distribution:	271.012.336	\$579,374.00
Fund 203 Fire Services:	203.012.349	\$42,399.65

Taxpayers appearing at the meeting shall have a right to be heard. The additional appropriations as finally made will be referred to the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). To the extent needed, the DLGF will make written determination as to the sufficiency of funds to support the appropriations made within fifteen days (15) days of receipt of a Certified Copy of the action taken.

Cindy Gossard, IAMC, CMC, CPFA, MMCA
Clerk-Treasurer, City of Westfield

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THE TIMES

NHS State Championship Teams Join Saturday's Holiday In Lights Parade

Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen has announced that three 2023 Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) State Champion teams from Noblesville High School will be honored as part of the inaugural Holiday in Lights Parade.

The girls track and field, unified track and field, and girls soccer teams will be featured in the nighttime parade, which begins at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. The boys soccer team was invited, but is unable to participate in Saturday's event; however, the city is looking at another way to recognize the three-peat state champions.

The girls soccer team won its fourth state title in five years. The IHSAA Class 3A back-to-back state champions finished this season with a 17-1-3 record after a 3-1 victory over Bloomington South at Carroll Stadium in October. An impressive effort in Bloomington in

June helped the girls track and field team win its championship. The team scored 45 points, edging runner-up Warren Central by 1 point for the title.

Unified Sports enables persons with and without intellectual disabilities to participate on the same team for sports training and competition. Noblesville was one of the original 13 schools to have a Unified Track and Field team, which launched in 2012 as a partnership between Special Olympics Indiana and the IHSAA. In June, Noblesville's Unified track team won its first state championship.

"Our student-athletes are great ambassadors of our city. We love to honor our youth's achievements in the community and look forward to celebrating with our state champions on Saturday," Jensen said. "It's going to be a very festive weekend in Noblesville and a great way to kick off the holiday

season."

In addition to the NHS athletes and 50+ participating groups, Santa Claus will be joining the parade as the last entry. Following the parade, Santa will be inside the Green Room at Federal Hill Commons until 9 p.m. to take photos and hear Christmas wishes. Holidays at the Hill will also have restrooms, the walking lights display, and the Ice Plaza skating rink open before and after the parade for guests to enjoy at the park.

The parade route will be different than others. While it will start at 16th and Harrison streets and travel south on 16th Street to Logan Street, the parade will continue west through downtown before ending at State Road 19. Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency will assist the city by providing additional portable light stands to better illuminate the roadway and sidewalks

along the route.

"I'm excited to have the parade downtown this year with a new spin on it being a nighttime event. Our historic downtown will look beautiful lit up along the route while featuring storefronts, our Courthouse Square, and decorated homes. It's truly going to be a magical experience for parade goers and participants," Jensen said.

The Noblesville Fire Department will have donation boxes on the Courthouse Square during the parade for those wanting to make donations to its 46th Annual Food and Toy Drive to help approximately 100 families. The fire department is accepting canned goods, non-perishable food items, and new, unwrapped toys until Friday, Dec. 8. For more information on how you can donate, contact the fire department at 317-776-6336.

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Anne Hathaway Chips Away At Hoosier Gender Barriers



BRIAN HOWEY
POLITICS

Indiana became a state 207 years ago. All of our governors and U.S. senators have been white guys. So

have all our House speakers, Senate presidents, House Ways & Means and Senate Finance and Appropriation committee chairs.

In the 1932 Democrat New Deal election wave, Virginia E. Jenckes of Terre Haute became the first Hoosier woman elected to Congress, serving for three terms. In 1983, Virginia Dill McCarty was the first female to run for governor, six years after she was the first of her gender to serve as a U.S. District Attorney. A year later, Democrat Ann DeLaney became the first woman nominated for lieutenant governor in a race she would lose. Nine years hence, DeLaney became the first female to chair one of our two major political parties.

In 2003, Gov. Joe Kernan named Democrat Kathy Davis as the first female lieutenant governor. In 2008, Democrat Jill Long Thompson was the first woman to win a gubernatorial nomination, ultimately losing to Gov. Mitch Daniels. Six years later, Gov. Mike Pence named Associate Justice Loretta Rush to become the first of her gender to serve as chief justice of the Indiana Supreme Court.

Gradually, the gender barriers are bending and breaking, though Indiana is one of 18 states never to have elected a woman as governor. This means that for more than two centuries, half of our population has been politically fenced away from true power. In next May's gubernatorial primaries, Democrat Jennifer McCormick is expected to be nominated, while Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch is one of five Republicans expected to qualify for the ballot.

Last August, Republican political operative Anne Hathaway's phone lit up with a call from Gov. Eric Holcomb. Nearly a quarter-century before, Hathaway had recruited the future governor to run for an Indiana House seat in the only race he lost.

With the resignation of Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer in hand, Holcomb asked Hathaway to become the first female to lead the GOP. For the past 15 years, Hathaway had led the Lugar Series



Photo courtesy of Brian Howey and State Affairs

Anne Hathaway

of Public Excellence, an organization inspired by U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar and was subsequently created by Teresa Lubbers and Judy Singleton to develop a gender bench for the GOP. Since its inception 34 years ago, more than 85% of Lugar Series' graduates have significantly increased their level of participation in government and politics. Six years ago, Indiana Democrats launched the Hoosier Women Forward organization with the same mission as the Lugar Series.

"I encourage women every day to take a risk, be willing to lose, go out of their comfort zones and run for office or serve on a board or commission," said Hathaway as she recounted the call from Holcomb during an exclusive Howey Politics/State Affairs interview. "I couldn't continue to do that unless I was willing to do that myself, willing to take the risk, willing to lead by example.

"When the call came for me, I jumped," Hathaway said. "Yeah, I'm in. Let's go."

Hathaway's roots are in the tiny Illinois town of Galva just north of Peoria. After graduating from high school (her guidance counselor advised her she couldn't make a career in politics, calling it a "hobby"), and then from the University of Illinois, she decided to spend a year in Washington where she began as a typist at the Department of Treasury.

Following Hathaway's resume is a lesson in stewardship and power. At Treasury, she garnered the attention of a legendary DC operative — Secretary James A. Baker — which led to jobs with Vice President Dan Quayle, and his wife Marilyn. Along the way, she would work with Lugar and U.S. Sen. Dan Coats.

"Sen. Lugar would be more excited about me being state chair than I am just because," Hathaway said toward the end of our 45-minute conversation.

Earlier on the day of this interview, Holcomb had appointed Elise Nieshalla as the new state comptroller. During her first three months as state chair, Hathaway presided over Senate District 36 caucus which elected Cyndi Carrasco to fill the seat of deceased Sen. Jack Sandlin. And there is U.S. Rep. Erin Houchin, all alums of the Lugar Series.

"It's all part of the process and it's a validation that we were doing the right thing," Hathaway said of the Lugar Series.

She now helms the party at (or nearing) its historic apex. The Indiana GOP holds all the state constitutional offices, nine of 11 congressional seats, maintains General Assembly super majorities, more than 90% of county offices, and as of the municipal elections earlier this month, 76 mayors. If a Republican is elected governor in 11 months, it will increase its historic dominance to five consecutive terms.

Hathaway will lead the party through the five-way gubernatorial primary. Following next June's Indiana Republican Convention, she will head to Milwaukee, where Republican National Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel tabbed her to head its Arrangements Committee.

"I push women every day to take risks, understand that they don't need to know everything about everything, and to engage and lead," Hathaway said. "I try to be a good listener and hear what I am listening to. I think I'm a problem solver. I'm a good team builder. I'm focused not on my success, but making success for people, building leaders. This is the same opportunity."

Perhaps there's a young Hoosier girl who will read this, and aspire to lead our great state.

-Brian Howey is senior writer and columnist for Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs. Find Howey on Facebook and Twitter @hwypol.

Rokita Has NO Patience For Indiana Doctors Violating Patients' Rights

The Office of the Attorney General immediately took action to crack down on yet another case of a doctor providing insufficient health care to Hoosiers. After the attorney general's office received a consumer complaint from the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency, the doctor was accused of lacking proper certification and facilitating unsanitary conditions.

"My office prioritizes Hoosier health," Rokita said. "This principle has been demonstrated numerous times in several cases since I was elected as attorney general. Patients deserve better from their doctors, and they should feel comforted knowing their health care facility is sterile and safe."

Dr. Leonard Guyer is an Indiana licensed physician and practices in Marion County, Indiana.

Following an investigation and coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Attor-

ney General filed an Administrative Complaint with the Indiana Board of Pharmacy charging Dr. Guyer with 24 counts regarding unsanitary conditions, adulterated drugs, misbranded drugs, lack of supervision of staff, failure to keep abreast of current professional theory and practice, lack of INSPECT registration, and lack of controlled substance inventories.

Dr. Guyer has been operating in contravention of state and federal law for at least two decades.

Upon hearing evidence presented by the Attorney General's Office, the Indiana Board of Pharmacy voted to sanction the Controlled Substance Registration of Dr. Guyer. A registration is required by all Indiana professionals to be able to dispense, compound and store controlled substances in Indiana.

The Board voted 6-0-1 to put Dr. Guyer's controlled substance registration on probation for no less than

one year. Prior to coming off probation, Dr. Guyer must pay a \$19,500 fine, and his facility must pass two inspections conducted by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency.

Testimony and evidence from federal witnesses of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration was helpful to the Office of the Attorney General's investigation and the presentation at the hearing.

"Our office stood up for Hoosier citizens today by acting to keep Dr. Guyer from distributing drugs that fall well below the expected standards," Rokita said. "Dr. Guyer has chosen to cut corners and put countless lives at risk based on his filthy, inappropriate and even illegal practices. We are not going to stand idly by and allow this."

At this time, an Administrative Complaint remains pending before the Medical Licensing Board of Indiana regarding Dr. Guyer's physician license.

Laura Alerding Announces Run For State Representative For District 29

Laura Alerding of Noblesville, Indiana is announcing that she will run for State Representative for the 29th District which covers Noblesville Township and two precincts in Fishers. Alerding currently serves on the Noblesville School Board. She has also owned a promotional and marketing business since 2004. More about Laura, her campaign and business can be found here: <http://AlerdingForStateRep29.info>

"I am happy to announce my candidacy for Indiana House Representative for the 29th District.

My conservative values make me passionate about protecting children from age-inappropriate material in schools and public libraries, and protecting families, faith and

freedom". I will bring the same tenacity and stamina to the state legislature as I have with my business and with my work on the Noblesville School Board which includes navigating multiple challenges, listening and asking questions to solve problems, promoting transparency, and non-stop discussions for higher academic achievement."

Her focus in the state legislature will be on Health Care Costs with a concentration on mental health issues, Education with a focus on students reaching higher academic achievement, Property tax relief for low and fixed income home owners, and continuing to make Indiana an attractive, low tax state for businesses that will have access to an ample and competent work force. Alerding

says "that achieving greater academic outcomes for students has a direct correlation to the successful economic development of a community."

"As a State Representative, I will accept the legislative challenges with courage and fortitude. As a conservative Republican, it is with profound grit and steadfast determination that I will work on issues facing the Noblesville community and two precincts in Fishers.

Alerding is a native Hoosier. She and her husband Jim have a combined family of six children, eighteen grandchildren and two great-grandsons. They enjoy spending time with family at sporting events, school activities and special occasions.

Groundbreaking Collaboration Brings Civics Education Program To Indianapolis

The Supreme Court Historical Society and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana are excited to launch "The Supreme Court and My Hometown" program for Indianapolis-area high school students. This week-long summer day camp for local high school students will take place at the Birch Bayh Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse June 24 - 28, 2024.

The Supreme Court and my Hometown program engages students in an intensive study of the process and substantive issues of cases decided by the Supreme Court of the United States. It also encourages students to interact with their local government and communities based on what they have learned throughout their study.

A distinguishing feature of Hometown is that students focus on

a Supreme Court case that originated in their hometowns and local courts in a unique and personalized way. The Indianapolis program explores both the Constitutional questions as well as the procedural history of *Hess v. Indiana* (1973). Students will learn about the role of the Supreme Court and its independence in our system of government, as well as the work of the federal court system, in a way that brings the Court "down to earth."

Students will be immersed in an analysis of the facts, trials, and appeals that led to the Supreme Court decision. At the end of the program sessions, students will design an exhibit in the Federal Court Learning Center at the Birch Bayh Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse as a capstone project to further solidify their learning, enhance their creative skills,

and engage with their community.

This groundbreaking program will include a number of notable presenters and mentors, including the Hon. Tanya Walton Pratt, Chief Judge for the Southern District of Indiana; Indiana Supreme Court Justice Geoffrey G. Slaughter; Zachary Myers, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana; Monica Foster, Chief Federal Defender for the Southern District of Indiana; Ken Falk, Legal Director of the ACLU of Indiana; and Ray Haberski, Professor of History at Indiana University Indianapolis. The program is organized by Nicole Carlson Maffei, Director of Civics Education at the Supreme Court Historical Society, with support from Mary Giorgio, Outreach Coordinator at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana.

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With Gambling Legislation On Pause, Some Push For Reform

Others caution against hasty reactions to Eberhart guilty plea

By Leslie Bonilla Muniz
Indiana Capital Chronicle

The leaders of the Statehouse's dual Republican supermajorities have been clear: after recent gambling industry scandals involving former lawmakers, next year's legislative session will include no expansion.

That's prompted a divided response over what to do instead.

It's a chance for reform, some government transparency and ethics advocates say. But others — industry leaders, experts and regulators — have warned against knee-jerk reactions.

The gambling industry and advocates have for several years wanted to legalize i-gaming, but that timeline may now be years longer than previously expected.

Former Rep. Sean Eberhart, a Republican from Shelbyville, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to a federal felony charge: conspiracy to commit honest services fraud.

Federal prosecutors have accused him of pushing Spectacle Entertainment's desire to relocate two casinos through a 2019 bill, in exchange for a job paying upwards of \$350,000 and an equity stake. Eberhart retired in 2022 after 16 years in office, to fanfare.

And last year, a federal judge sentenced former Sen. Brent Waltz and former Rep. John Keeler — a casino executive — to prison for election finance schemes involving Spectacle predecessor New Centaur. Waltz has since filed to overturn his sentence, reports Fox59.

There are additional records of other dubious industry-lawmaker interactions, according to a list from the Indianapolis Star.

GOP Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray said Eberhart's case "taints the Statehouse" and harms public confidence in lawmakers' integrity at a legislative preview this month. He said there'd be no expansion during the

upcoming session, and indicated the case could limit action for several more sessions.

Is it time for damage control? ***

Reforms needed, transparency and ethics advocates say

The recent scandals show Indiana's lobbying and campaign finance regulatory processes are a "complete failure," said Julia Vaughn, leader of government watchdog Common Cause Indiana.

"No state agency even recognized what was going on. ... Thank goodness that the (Federal Bureau of Investigation) was paying attention," Vaughn said — although she said Indiana Election Division and Indiana Lobby Registration Commission (ILRC) staff were "doing the best they can under the very bad structure" in place.

She called those two regulators "giant filing cabinets" because they're under-resourced. IED has nine employees and ILRC has just three, according to the state's online directory.

The Indiana Gaming Commission, which directly regulates the industry, has more than 200 employees. But its duties extend beyond the 13 casinos.

Vaughn also noted that the agencies are led by political appointees rather than independently.

She and former U.S. Rep. Jill Long Thompson, a Democrat from Indiana, observed gaps in the laws that govern lawmakers and lobbyists.

Thompson, who left office in 2015 and has since written a book on ethics in government, recalled how U.S. House members and senior staff must inform the chamber's ethics committee about new jobs within three business days of starting negotiations or accepting an offer.

Laws are generally just a moral minimum. — Journalist and gambling industry expert Ed Feigenbaum

There's no such public

notice required when Hoosier lawmakers change employment, such as former Sen. Jon Ford's — who often carried gambling legislation — sudden departure to coal advocate group Reliable Energy, headed by a prominent casino leader.

Thompson also remembered strict federal limits on lobbyist gifts — something Vaughn also suggested.

In contrast, Indiana puts forth no value limit and permits lobbyists to pay for meals, entertainment and other gifts. Lobbyists must report their activities just twice annually; the second period encompasses the legislative session but is due May 31, well after its conclusion.

Gift and purchase reports are due within 15 business days, according to the ILRC, but filings often don't attribute spending to specific lawmakers or purposes. Lobbyists spent \$1 million on lawmakers over the sixth-month period that includes 2023's legislative session, according to a State Affairs analysis, but three-quarters of it will "remain secret."

Additionally, lawmakers' own statements of economic interest may be incomplete or inaccurate, Vaughn said. The forms ask for information on employers, stocks and more.

In an analysis of all 150 disclosures, the Capital Chronicle found that it's largely an honor system, with little review except by journalists and watchdog groups. And although some lawmakers choose to list clients, they're not required to do so unless a client is a significant income source.

"We need some sort of (review) process. I hate to be the person who says, 'I hope this scandal blows up into the biggest thing ever,' but that's what spurs reform," Vaughn said.

Hold your horses, warn industry experts
The current system

works, said Casino Association President and CEO Matt Bell: Eberhart and others were caught.

"The regulatory and statutory edifice that's in place today met the challenges that it was faced with," said Bell, who also heads Reliable Energy.

Bell said he respected Republican leaders' decision, but called it "disappointing for the industry" nevertheless.

He noted that the scandals all involved one company — Spectacle — or its predecessor, and that no current casino operators have faced accusations of illegal or unethical activities. He called the scandals "an aberration" and "not reflective of the industry at large."

While the association isn't seeking out new ethics legislation, he said it'd "keep an open mind."

Ed Feigenbaum, a longtime journalist and industry expert for Hannah News Service, cautioned against a hasty response for a different reason.

"Typically, when you see legislation enacted in response to some kind of ethics problem, it's very specific, very narrowly tailored and it's not comprehensive in the way that it probably ought to be," Feigenbaum said. "You want to look at campaign finance laws. You want to look at ethics laws, you want to look at lobbying laws, and potentially even (public records access) laws as well."

Ideally, legislators would take that comprehensive look in the absence of a scandal, he added. The system should ensure that lawmakers' financial interests are publicly available, give prosecutors suitable legal tools and offer penalties steep enough to make would-be lawbreakers think twice, he said.

But Hoosiers will always rely on lawmakers to behave morally, Feigenbaum said.

"Just because you have strong laws does not mean that people will not violate those laws. And even if

you don't have any kinds of laws, (some lawmakers could) adhere to principles that would go even beyond what legislation would be on the books," he said. "You're ultimately dependent upon the people that you elect to represent you rather than the laws. The laws are generally just a moral minimum."

The Indiana Gaming Commission, meanwhile, isn't requesting any legislation and has "no insight" into other possible gambling bills, according to Deputy Director Jenny Reske.

In written responses, Reske said the agency regularly reviews its rules but isn't planning any changes for the near future. The agency in 2021 strengthened integrity rules for shareholders, prompting legal action from multiple Spectacle investors that a judge later dismissed, reports the Times of Northwest Indiana.

But, according to Reske, the agency "will continue to examine emerging issues and make rule updates as necessary."

And it'll keep its focus on "ensuring the public's confidence is maintained through the strict regulation of gaming," she said, including taking "appropriate and decisive action when faced with actors who do not meet the high standards of integrity established in statute."

What's next

For former Rep. Charlie Brown, a Democrat from Gary, the recent scandals are a fumble for an industry that's brought sorely needed revenue to struggling local governments and to the state.

"It's regrettable that it makes it appear as though those that were pushing, and eager to get gaming in here, had some morality issues. And I don't think that was widespread," he said. "But I assure you that our intent in Gary, Indiana, was that we needed revenue sources. That was the driver for us pushing so hard."

Brown, who served from 1982 to 2018, was among the biggest advo-

catates of bringing gambling to Indiana. Hoosier voters ditched the constitutional ban on a lottery in 1988, opening the door to further expansions.

But getting there was difficult, according to Brown.

"I hate the fact that you've now got a black eye on this whole issue of gaming in Indiana," he said. "Indiana is notorious for being a very conservative state. So it took a lot of arm-twisting to get (key lawmakers) to finally say, 'Let's take a look.'"

Current lawmakers have kept quiet.

Manning, who chairs the House committee that typically handles gambling legislation, didn't return multiple requests for comment. Neither did his predecessor, Auburn Republican Ben Smaltz.

Bell, the casino association leader, said the industry has work to do, particularly as competition from neighboring states grows.

"If now's not the time to move forward, we will work to ensure that that we can do so as soon as possible," he said, "by ensuring that we rebuild any trust that needs to be rebuilt with the Legislature and that we present ourselves as the great world-class businesses that we are."

The industry plans to highlight its tax, employment and development contributions to Hoosier communities, plus its commitment to "upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity," according to Bell.

"This is not a situation that anyone in the gaming industry ever hoped to encounter," he said. "... We're going to do our best to get through it."

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STATE From Page A1

Under the guise of helping the woman avoid a tax sale, Steven Kollar and others allegedly sought multiple loans using the consumer's home as collateral — receiving more than \$100,000 in loan proceeds while paying nothing to the consumer, who was left homeless.

Kollar allegedly carried out his scheme in part through companies with which he is affiliated, including American Realty Investments LLC.

In the second matter, Rokita and his team are suing two individuals — Leland Baptist of Indianapolis and Silipa Tupuola of Brownsburg — over allegations they and their affiliated companies engaged in a foreclosure rescue scam in which they solicited consumers in financial distress under the promise of helping them to save their homes.

In actuality, Defendant Baptist allegedly engaged in a scheme in which he obtained title to the properties and attempted to rent or re-sell them on contract to other victims.

In one transaction, Baptist allegedly obtained title to a property at 1130 North Bauman Street in Indianapolis from a financially distressed consumer and then "assigned" his rights to defendant Tupuola, who had no titled interest in the property. Tupuola then entered into an agreement

to sell the property to an unsuspecting couple who paid him more than \$30,000 before discovering from an attorney that they had been scammed.

The companies through which Baptist allegedly operated such schemes include Lee-Chandler Enterprises LLC, Lee Chandler LLC and 1130 N. Bauman Land Trust. Defendant Tupuola operated Blitz Investment Group LLC.

In each case, Rokita and his team are seeking consumer restitution for the victims, civil penalties and costs of the investigations to be assessed to the defendants.

Rokita thanked members of his Homeowner Protection Unit in investigating these cases and filing the resultant legal actions.

The mission of the Homeowner Protection Unit is to protect the rights of all individuals involved in the housing market, including tenants, homeowners, and aspiring homeowners, by investigating and redressing deceptive acts in connection with mortgage lending and violations of relevant state and federal laws.

Hoosiers are encouraged to contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about any suspected scams or scam attempts. Consumers can file a complaint by visiting indianaconsumer.com or calling 1-800-382-5516.

FEET From Page A1

make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon. Maintain foot strength and mobility with simple stretching exercises. Your foot and ankle surgeon can recommend appropriate exercises and discuss options for insoles and special footwear for additional protection.

"I want to feel my best": Having persistently cold feet is not just uncomfortable, it could be a sign of a medical condition that causes poor blood flow in the legs or feet, such as peripheral vascular disease, Raynaud's phenomenon and heart disease. It could also be an indication of hypothyroidism, adrenal insufficiency or an autoimmune disorder, such as lupus. If your

feet are persistently cold, follow up on it with your foot and ankle surgeon to determine if there's a greater issue to be addressed.

"I want to manage my diabetes better": Foot care is fundamental to diabetes management. Visit your foot and ankle surgeon for guidelines on diabetic foot care to help prevent problems like ulcers, cracked heels and bone infection that can lead to serious complications, including amputation.

For more information on foot care or to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the patient education website of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

RUSTY From Page A1

One important thing to be aware of: By claiming at age 62, the monthly payment for each of you will be 70% of what it would be at your full retirement age (FRA) and that is a permanent reduction. If you expect at least average longevity - about 84 for you and 87 for your wife - and if it is financially feasible, then waiting longer to claim would yield a higher monthly amount as well as the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. For those with an FRA of 67, SS retirement benefits claimed at FRA are 30% higher than at 62 and, if claimed

at 70 are 75% more than at 62. And, although the decision on when to claim is always personal, a married couple should also evaluate their joint needs when deciding.

One final word of caution: although you and your wife are now retired from working, be aware that if you claim SS benefits before your FRA and return to work, Social Security has an earnings test which limits how much you can earn before some benefits are taken away. The earnings test lasts until you reach your full retirement age.

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WEEKEND

In The Home



THE COST OF RESILIENCY DURING POWER OUTAGES

FAMILY FEATURES

Safeguarding your family, home and finances from disaster starts long before an extreme weather event occurs. When destructive storms challenge the electric grid's reliability and cause loss of power for an extended period, many facets of everyday life are disrupted.

Unexpected power outages can impact vital communications, transportation and access to important businesses. It can also cause food spoilage or water contamination and prevent the use of medical devices. Protecting your loved ones and property starts with a plan.

"My family was without power for three days after a tornado touched down two blocks from our home," said Matt Blashaw, licensed home building contractor, real estate agent and host of various HGTV shows. "I partner with the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) because I realized the importance of not only having an emergency plan but the need for a reliable energy source, like propane, to power a standby generator to keep my family and home resilient. In addition to providing peace of mind, a propane standby generator could lower a homeowner's insurance rate and simultaneously raise the home's property value. It's a win-win-win in my mind."



Matt Blashaw

According to PERC, the average homeowner will experience 3.5 power interruptions in a two-year period. Even short outages lasting less than four hours can cost homeowners an average of \$1,250 in spoiled food, hotels, damaged electronics and more.

To avoid a financial burden caused by power outages, consider a reliable propane standby generator as a key part of resilient design. It allows a house to:

- Resist hazards brought on by electric grid failures, such as spoiled food, loss of heat or air conditioning, hotel costs and more
- Continue providing the primary function of a home – protection
- Reduce the magnitude or duration of a disruptive event to a property and its impact on the homeowners

While no amount of preparation can stop the forces of nature, planning ahead to manage blackouts can have a significant impact on you and your family. Consider these tips from Blashaw and the experts at PERC.

5 TIPS TO STAY PREPARED AHEAD OF STORMS

Make a Plan

Creating a plan that assesses the risks of the region where you live and addresses potential disasters is a key step toward safety in an emergency. Gather your family and discuss how you'll receive emergency alerts, where you'll shelter, how you'll evacuate and how everyone should plan to communicate, if the need arises. Think through needs specific to your household such as ages of residents, critical medications, dietary needs, child care, pet care and more. Putting a plan in place means you and your loved ones can react quickly when time is of the essence.

Prepare Your Propane System

Regardless of what weather may be on the horizon, it's important to ensure your propane tank is ready. Take a few minutes to know where the gas shutoff valve is located on your propane system in case the propane needs to be turned off in the event of an emergency. Call a propane professional to inspect the system before restoring it.

On average, a 500-gallon tank can hold enough propane to meet the annual energy needs of a single-family home. A local propane supplier will come to the home and fill the tank, providing energy for key appliances that use propane even if the fragile electric grid is down.

As the season transitions to winter, mark the tank with brightly colored stakes or flags that are higher than anticipated snow depth; this ensures propane personnel can always locate it during scheduled refills, even during the toughest conditions.

Secure Doors and Windows

When storms and high winds are expected, one easy way to protect your home and family members is to secure all exterior doors and windows. Start by checking seals to keep out wind and water, which can cause damage. Secure outdoor furniture and trim vegetation like bushes and trees to avoid flying debris shattering windows during high winds.

Have a Backup Power Source

When the electric grid is interrupted, the loss of power can impact systems like smoke and fire detection, refrigeration, air conditioning and heating, and other health and safety equipment. When a homeowner purchases a backup standby generator, a licensed technician installs the unit outside the home and wires it to the home's circuit breaker. When a power outage occurs, the



generator automatically senses the disruption of service and starts the generator's engine, which then delivers power to select appliances in the home in as little as 10 seconds after an outage.

Available in a variety of capacities to fit the needs of any size of home, propane backup generators are versatile and can power several major appliances throughout a home including lights, refrigeration, heating and cooling equipment and critical medical equipment. For homes that already operate on propane, consider running important systems and appliances like the furnace, water heater, stove and fireplace on propane. The more appliances powered by propane, the smaller

and less expensive your standby generator can be.

Plus, propane is environmentally friendly and won't degrade over time like other fuel sources, ensuring the backup generator reliably powers your home to give you added peace of mind. As a low-carbon emissions energy source, propane is part of a wide path to achieving a low-carbon future. Its abundance, along with the growth of renewable propane, means propane can be used now and for generations to come.

Pack an Emergency Kit

Regardless of the emergency you're facing, being prepared means stocking up on food,

water and other supplies that can last your family multiple days. Although an emergency kit is largely a collection of basic household items, it's important to have the kit packed, stored and secured ahead of potential disasters to save time and energy. Some basics to pack include gallon jugs of water, non-perishable food, flashlights and extra batteries, smartphone chargers, sanitation supplies like trash bags and moist towelettes, a first-aid kit and basic tools. Also consider items based on individual needs like prescription medications, eyeglasses, essentials for infants and pet food.

Find more resilient storm preparedness solutions at Propane.com.

WEEKEND

Travel *or stay!* and Play

A7

Weekend, December 2-3, 2023

TIM TIMMONS, Publisher @ JOE LARUE, Vice-President of Readership @ MELISSA MEME, Account Executive @ BETH HEDGE, Business Manager

5 TIPS FOR SAFE HOLIDAY TRAVEL

FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season can be stressful enough before adding travel to the mix. Coordinating ground or air travel and planning accommodations, even if you're simply staying with loved ones, is often just the beginning and health and safety concerns can fall by the wayside.

For example, the highest incidence rate of cardiac mortality for the entire year occurs between Christmas and New Year's Day, according to the American Heart Association, and more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur each year in the United States.

If you're among the 62% of Americans who plan to travel this holiday season, according to research conducted by IPX1031, consider these tips to protect your health and safety.

Plan Ahead

Proper planning can help ensure you're prepared to handle any unexpected challenges or delays when you depart. Check the weather before heading out – including at your destination – and travel around any anticipated storms. Leave early to account for potentially heavy traffic and plot your path in advance to ensure you're aware of any road closures or construction, which can allow you to find alternate routes, if necessary, rather than trying to adjust on the fly.

Ensure Your Family is Up to Date on Vaccines

Routine vaccinations can help protect you from infectious diseases that can be easily spread when around a large group of people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the seasonal flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. Other vaccines, such as the COVID-19 vaccine or booster and measles vaccine, can help protect not only your health, but your loved ones as well.



Photos courtesy of Shutterstock

Learn CPR

Only about 40% of people who suffer from cardiac arrest receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, from a bystander, according to the American Heart Association. However, immediate CPR can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival.

Just in time for the holiday season, revamped Hands-Only CPR training kiosks, which provide an overview of Hands-Only CPR followed by a practice session and a 30-second test, are available in airports, hospitals and other locations around the country. With the help of a practice mannequin, the kiosks give feedback about the depth and rate of compression, as well as proper hand placement – factors that influence the effectiveness of CPR – and teaches the two simple steps:

1. Call 911
2. Push hard and fast in the center of the chest of the individual experiencing cardiac arrest until help arrives

Many of the Hands-Only CPR kiosks, as well as the Hands-Only CPR campaign, are supported by Elevance Health Foundation. To find a kiosk along your travel path, visit heart.org/handsonlycpr.

Prepare Your Vehicle

Car trouble is a common culprit during holiday travel. To help avoid potential issues, have your vehicle checked before embarking on an extended trip. Check tires, the battery, headlights, windshield wipers and any other parts that may be adversely impacted by winter weather. Also ensure your vehicle is equipped with essentials like a spare tire or inflation kit, jack, jumper cables, blankets, a first aid kit and a flashlight in case of an emergency.

Pack a Health Kit

If you take prescription or over-the-counter medications, it may be difficult to quickly get a refill at your destination, so be sure to pack enough to last your entire trip, plus extras in case you encounter any travel delays. It may also be helpful to pack other essentials including hand sanitizer, a first-aid kit, cold medicine, aspirin and your health insurance card in case of any unexpected injuries or illnesses while on the road.



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