

■ TODAY'S VERSE

John 8:32

And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you
free.



Wonder if they hadn't re-named it Memorial Day if more folks would head to the cemeteries and put flags on soldiers' graves like a lot of us used to do on Decoration Day?

■ HAMILTON HAPPENINGS

Hamilton County officials are alerting local veterans about a text message scam circulating across the state that falsely claims to be from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Several veterans have reported receiving text messages asking them to "update their information." The messages include a link to what appears to be a legitimate website, prompting recipients to enter sensitive personal information. Officials say the messages are fraudulent. The VA does send text messages related to benefits, resources, and appointment reminders. However, veterans should be extremely cautious of any message requesting personal information, financial details, or immediate payment. Hamilton County veterans who receive suspicious texts or emails are encouraged to block, delete and report suspicious messages. And most importantly, do not click the link. Veterans who have questions or concerns may contact the Hamilton County Veteran Services Office for assistance.

■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

Albert Einstein

■ JOKE OF THE DAY

Remember, there are three kinds of people in this world . . . those who can count and those who can't.

■ ADOPT A PET JASPER



Jasper is a friendly, affectionate fellow with a love for being a lap cat. This 9-year-old male Domestic Shorthair has been available for adoption at the Humane Society for Hamilton County (HSHC) since 12/8/25. Jasper is a diabetic cat looking for a quiet home where he can spend his days lazing about with his chosen people. He may take a while to warm up to a new home, but once he gets to know you, be prepared for endless days of meowed greetings and new adventures. To meet Jasper, please fill out an adoption application at hamiltonhumane.com/adopt, then stop by HSHC anytime 12-5 PM daily (closed Wednesday).

The TIMES

NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA

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BOOMER BITS... Tips and Advice from Boomers to Boomers Should I Collect Now Or At 70?

Dear Rusty: I am 67 and 9 months old, collecting a modest SS survivor benefit with plans to collect my own much larger benefit at age 70. I was confident this plan was a good one; but recent turbulent events make me nervous that cuts could come to Social Security at any time without warning. Would it be prudent to file for my own Social Security as soon as possible so that my benefit might be "grandfathered" in before any sudden and drastic cuts occur? I do not generally panic, but these are unprecedented times. I would be quite comfortable with the benefit listed on my 2024 statement for my current age; I was just hoping to maximize the benefit by waiting.

When I go to the Social Security website to view my 2025 annual statement



ASK RUSTY

Social Security Advisor

to see the personalized monthly retirement benefit estimates for ages 68, 69, and 70, that section no longer shows. This omission makes me uncomfortable. Can I find out what my current benefit estimate would be for ages 68, 69, and 70? Or should I just rely on the 2024 statement?

Signed: Nervous in Portland

Dear Nervous: Please do not be nervous that recent "turbulent events" pose a threat to your future Social Security benefits. Those events do not, in any way, jeopardize your future Social Security benefits, because Social Security is completely separate from all other federal political issues and finances. The primary problem with Social Security became an issue long before the

See Rusty Page 3

Experts: How to Protect Yourself in Tick Season

Ticks are making their return fast and furiously, emphasizing the need for prevention

to protect Americans, their families and pets this season. During Tick Awareness Week, the National Pest Management Association is reminding Americans about the

potential health threats ticks pose and the best ways to keep these parasitic pests away while enjoying the great outdoors.

Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and alpha-gal syndrome are a few of the many diseases that ticks can put humans and animals at risk for. According

to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

are easy to write off as a common cold, which is exactly why awareness

matters. If you've had a run-in with a tick, don't wait. Prompt removal before they have a chance to transmit diseases is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your health."

(CDC), weekly visits to the emergency room for tick bites are at the highest level since 2017 for this time of year.

"Tick bites can lead to serious health consequences, including fever, chills, severe headaches and joint pain," said Dr. Jorge Parada, medical advisor for NPMA. "These are symptoms that

Ticks thrive in areas with dense vegetation, including tall grass, shrubs and even tree branches. To reduce chances of unwanted encounters with ticks:

- Use EPA-approved insect repellent with at least 20% DEET on clothing and exposed skin.
- Wear light-colored,

See Protection Page 2

■ THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. The Indianapolis International Airport is welcoming JetBlue to the city starting Nov. 2, with a once-daily nonstop flight to Fort Lauderdale via Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. This new nonstop will also give travelers multiple connections to Caribbean destinations as well. While the new nonstop flight will give Central Indiana travelers added direct access to Fort Lauderdale's beaches, cruise port and the broader South Florida region, it will also connect them to 10 Caribbean markets across Aruba, the Bahamas, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico and Puerto Rico. JetBlue anticipates it will operate nearly 130 daily departures from Fort Lauderdale this summer to its various destination cities.

2. The NTT INDYCAR SERIES and Indianapolis Motor Speedway recently announced a sponsorship with Sam's Club, a leading membership retail club, that will see the company become the Official Sponsor and Official and Exclusive Warehouse Club Retail Store of the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge. Sam's Club also will be the entitlement sponsor of the Indy 500 Fan Midway. The Sam's Club Fan Midway will feature a premium retail environment with interactive elements and giveaways for fans. Andretti Global recently announced Sam's Club will serve as the primary sponsor for the No. 27 Sam's Club Honda piloted by Kyle Kirkwood for the Month of May and beyond.

3. The Indiana Bond Bank closed its second pooled bond sale under the Community Funding Resource Program, a \$28.835 million issuance that brings affordable, long-term capital to Hoosier communities. The CFR Program bundles loans from multiple local units of government into a single pooled bond issue. Pooling spreads fixed transaction costs across borrowers, simplifies the process for participating units, and keeps the program sustainable as more communities take part. The model has worked well in other states and in Indiana's own State Revolving Fund program. The Bond Bank adapted it to fit the needs of Hoosier communities, particularly smaller and rural units that issue infrequently.



Indiana Fares Better Than Most With Scams

New research has revealed Indiana among the states least at risk of scams; however, experts have warned residents to remain vigilant, as those who do fall victim lose over \$400 on average.

The research, conducted by experts at product comparison platform WhatAreTheBest.com, analyzed data from the Federal Trade Commission on the number of fraud reports in each state during each quarter over a three-year period. They compared these figures to population data to find the average number of quarterly fraud reports per 100,000 residents, revealing the states most at risk of being scammed.

The average number of quarterly fraud reports per 100,000 residents across the US is 141.85.

Indiana findings

Indiana recorded an average of 125.91 quarterly fraud reports per 100,000 residents. This figure is 11% lower than the national average. Over the three-year period analyzed, there were 102,009 fraud reports in the state in total.

Among Indiana residents who did fall victim to scams, the average reported loss to each victim was \$418.22.

While Indiana ranks low among states experiencing the highest rates of fraud, residents should not become complacent. More than 100,000 reports over three years show that scams remain a persistent issue affecting thousands of households across the state, and anybody is at risk of financial loss if they let their guard down.

"Scams are one of the most costly crimes to Americans, with people reporting losses of hundreds of dollars in single reports," Albert Richer, founder of whatarethebest.com, said. "The huge number of reports in each state also goes to show how common this crime is, and how easy it can be to fall victim. Fake retail websites, counterfeit ads on social media, and phishing emails or scam calls disguised as shipping or payment notifications are just a few of the tactics criminals use to target online shoppers, so you must remain cautious," he added.

"It is important to only shop on trusted websites, avoid clicking on suspicious ads or links that seem too good to be true, and only use secure payment methods that offer fraud protection. Criminals may also use bank impersonation scams, phone call scams, text message 'smishing,' tech support-

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The TIMES

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PROTECTION

Continued from Page 1

long-sleeved clothing and closed-toe shoes when outdoors in areas where ticks may be present.

- Trim grass and maintain other vegetation in yard.
- Avoid overgrown areas when participating in outdoor activities like gardening or hiking.

- Thoroughly check yourself, family, pets and clothing for ticks before going indoors.

“As we move into the warmest part of the year, tick activity will only intensify,” said

Dr. Jim Fredericks, senior vice president of public affairs at NPMA. “Knowing where ticks lurk, ways to prevent exposure and how to reduce the number of ticks on your property can make all the difference in staying safe and healthy this season.”

For information on pests and to find a licensed pest control professional near you, visit www.PestWorld.org and for more tick educational resources, head to www.TickTalk.org.

Westfield Bulk Trash Day Saturday

The City of Westfield’s Spring Bulk Trash Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, from 8 a.m. to noon at Westfield City Services (2728 E. 171st Street). Hosted twice each year, the event allows residents to safely dispose of items not accepted through WM’s weekly garbage or recycling pickup.

“Bulk Trash Day is a simple way we can keep our community safe and clean,” said Mayor Scott Willis. “With many residents taking part in spring cleaning, we anticipate there may be long lines. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as our team works to serve everyone as quickly as possible.”

Proof of residency, such as a stormwater bill or valid driver’s

license, is required, and participation is limited to residents of Westfield and Westfield Washington Township.

Most accepted items, including carpet remnants, furniture, laptops, cell phones, and more, can be disposed of free-of-charge. However, a small fee will apply to select items, which can be paid on-site (cash only). A full list of items requiring additional fees can be found on the Bulk Trash Day webpage. Chemicals, paint, prescription drugs, and other hazardous waste items will not be accepted.

To view the full list of accepted and non-accepted items, please visit westfieldin.gov/bulktrashday.

Cone Zone Alert: 281st Street Closing

Please be advised, beginning on or after Monday, May 11, 2026, 281st Street between Lamong Road and Ditch Road will be closed to all thru traffic for a bridge replacement project. The estimated project completion date is Monday, November 9, 2026.

Local traffic will continue to have access to their homes, while thru traffic is asked to utilize the posted detour route of Lamong Road – 276th Street –



Ditch Road. Please use extreme caution while driving thru this area.

State Helping Small Businesses

Governor Mike Braun launched Keep IN, an initiative to provide small business owners with resources and support as they plan their futures. The initiative is spearheaded by the Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, a new state agency created by Gov. Mike Braun to help small businesses and entrepreneurs thrive in Indiana.

Keep IN aims to preserve local jobs and locally rooted businesses by reducing preventable business closures and supporting smoother business ownership transitions.

“Supporting Hoosier businesses has been a cornerstone of my administration from day one – and part of that support must include helping the transition to the next generation of Hoosier entrepreneurs,” Braun said. “As a business owner myself who acquired and grew a business here, and then prepared it for transition, I know firsthand the importance of succession planning for business owners and communities. Thousands of businesses in Indiana face ownership transitions in the coming years. We want to help keep those businesses thriving in the Hoosier State.”

The Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation worked with the Indiana Business Research Center to gain insight to localized data on the need for business owner support – and the results clearly show the need to invest to ensure a key part of Indiana’s economic foundation remains strong:

- Nearly 60 percent of total business revenue in Indiana is generated by businesses owned by people aged 55 or older.
- At least half of the business revenue in 88 out of 92 counties is associated with 55+ owners.

- National data reveals that 92% of small business exits involve closure, rather than sale or transfer of ownership.

“Keep IN is about helping Indiana business owners plan ahead and make informed decisions about the future,” said Brian Schutt, Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Director. “By starting earlier and increasing access to information, we can help support stronger outcomes for business owners, employees and local communities.”

As part of the Keep IN initiative, Gov. Braun is launching a

pilot with SMB.co, a platform that helps small business owners understand their business value and provides educational tools and resources to support early planning and informed decision-making.

Through the pilot, business owners in three economic development regions – Northwest Indiana, South Central Indiana and Southwest Indiana – can access SMB.co tools free of charge, including business valuations, transition readiness assessments and exit planning.

The SMB.co pilot program is a state-led effort implemented at the regional level, ensuring business owners receive support that reflects the realities of their local communities and the industries they serve.

“This initiative is about preparation, legacy and putting the future of Indiana’s small businesses back in the hands of the owners who have served their communities for decades,” said Schutt.

Fundamental to the work of Keep IN is collaboration with organizations around the state that help provide resources and support to Indiana businesses. As part of that, Gov. Braun is

excited to announce that the Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation has partnered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce to offer a series of free workshops for Hoosier business owners who are considering selling their businesses or beginning the process of succession planning.

“As the organization representing more small businesses than any other in the state, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce is pleased to expand business transition resources that help employers continue supporting their communities, workforce and the broader economy,” said Vanessa Green Sanders, Indiana Chamber President and CEO. “Efforts like this underscore why the Indiana Chamber championed the creation of OEI to help Main Street businesses succeed.”

The workshops will cover topics such as determining a business’s value, identifying resources for legal guidance and developing a succession plan. Business owners interested in learning more and to sign up to be notified when registration is available can visit <http://www.indianachamber.com/smallbizsuccession>

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2026 Spring Property Tax Reminder

The County Treasurer’s Office reminds property owners in Hamilton County that the spring due date is Monday, May 11th, 2026

You may make a payment in the Treasurer’s office by cash or check only.

Credit/Debit cards are accepted only on the county’s website with an additional

2.5% fee or by e-check for \$1.00.

<https://secure2.hamilton-county.in.gov/PropertyReports/index.aspx>

The following Hamilton County Banks are accepting payments through Monday, May 11th.

BMO Bank
Community First Bank of

Indiana

Farmers Bank
First Farmers Bank
Horizon Bank
Merchants Bank of Indiana
Star Financial Bank

There is an antique mailbox at the west side door of the Historic Courthouse that payment can be deposited 24/7.

DNR Awards Nearly \$800K in County

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources recently announced recipients of Indiana Trails Program grants, awarding \$1.7 million in trail development assistance to five communities across the state. Almost half of that came to Hamilton County.

Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department received \$386,827.80 to develop 1.65 miles of trails in Bur Oak Bend Trails. And Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation Department got \$400,000 for White River Greenway and 0.5 miles.

With local matching funds included, the

program will support nearly \$3.3 million in total investment resulting in 4.12 miles of new trail construction.

“Outdoor recreation is core to our heritage as Hoosiers, with trails making important connections to health and nature,” said Governor Mike Braun. “These trail projects will be excellent additions to their communities.”

ITP is a biennial grant program dedicated to expanding and enhancing Indiana’s network of trails to support outdoor recreation, community connectivity, economic development, and quality of life. DNR

received 31 applications requesting nearly \$11 million in funding, demonstrating strong statewide demand for new and expanded trail infrastructure. The other three grant recipients are:

City of Fort Wayne – Fishing Line Trail (\$400,000 - 0.72 miles)

Hancock County – NineStar Park Trail (\$376,496 - 0.75 miles)

Town of North Judson – Hidden Field Trail (\$140,000 - 0.5 miles)

“These projects represent the best of what Indiana communities are doing to create accessible outdoor

spaces and strengthen local connections,” said Brandt Baughman, Indiana State Parks director. “The strong interest this year underscores just how important trail development has become across the state.”

Project schedules vary, but construction could begin as early as this summer, with the first trail expected to open in October 2026.

For more information about the Indiana Trails Program and future grant opportunities, visit <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/recreation/grants/indiana-trails-program/>



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PRIMARY WINNER

Congresswoman Victoria Spartz rolled to a victory and was renominated for her seat in the 5th Congressional District in the Primary earlier this week. Afterward, she issued this statement: "I am honored that my fellow Republicans have placed their trust in me for another term. As we approach the 250th anniversary of our Republic, we are reminded of the courage and sacrifice that secured the ideals of liberty and opportunity that so many Americans fought and died for. We cannot let them down by allowing the radical left to prevail. I look forward to a fall campaign focused on real policies that benefit all Americans - and a clear contrast between my professional and legislative record and that of my opponent."

Farmers Bank Changing Name

First Bank Richmond and The Farmers Bank are pleased to announce that, pending shareholder approval, the combined organization will operate under the name First Bank Midwest, pending regulatory approval. The new brand will also encompass Mutual Federal, a division of First Bank Richmond, including its six offices in Ohio.

Alongside the announcement of the new name, the organizations are also publicly unveiling the official logo and brand identity that will represent the future of the combined institution beginning July 1, 2026.

Upon completion of the merger and pending shareholder approval, First Bank Midwest will operate under the parent company Richmond Mutual Bancorporation, Inc., which trades on the NASDAQ under the ticker symbol RMBI. Richmond Mutual Bancorporation, Inc. will remain

headquartered in Richmond, Indiana. First Bank Midwest will be headquartered in Frankfort, Indiana.

This milestone represents an important step forward in the merger process and reflects the shared vision, values, and commitment to community banking that have defined these institutions for generations.

As part of the transition, the organizations will also begin using the phrase:

ROOTED IN TRADITION. GROWING TOWARD THE FUTURE.

The transitional tagline reflects the spirit of the merger itself, honoring the long-standing heritage of each institution while embracing the opportunities and momentum of the future organization being built together.

"This is more than a new name. It represents who we are, what we value, and the future we are building together," said Garry

Kleer, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of First Bank Richmond. "First Bank Midwest reflects the strength of our combined organizations while honoring the deep roots and trusted relationships that have defined our banks for generations. We are building a stronger institution designed to serve our customers and communities for decades to come."

"This announcement marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter," said Christopher Cook, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Farmers Bank. "The Farmers Bank has proudly served communities for 150 years, and it was incredibly important to us that the values, heritage, and identity our customers know, and trust continued forward in a meaningful way. First Bank Midwest accomplishes that. It honors our past while creating a bold vision for the future."

WHS Named Model PLC School

Westfield High School has been recognized as a Model PLC at Work School, a distinction awarded to schools that demonstrate sustained enhancement in student learning over at least three years.

At its core, a Professional Learning Community means educators work together, not in isolation, to analyze student data, align instruction, and respond to student needs in real time.

In this video, you'll hear directly from Westfield High School educators about how this work impacts classrooms every day. From common assess-

ments and data-driven discussions to built-in support like CORE time, teachers are working together to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

"Becoming a Model PLC School is the pinnacle of our school improvement efforts, not because of the recognition, but because of what it represents: sustained impact on student learning and a system where adults are working together to get better every day," said Dr. John Atha, WWS Superintendent.

This recognition reflects years of in-

tentional work and a shared commitment to:

- High levels of learning for every student
- Strong collaboration among educators
- Continuous improvement in teaching and learning

Westfield High School joins Maple Glen Elementary which achieved the Model PLC distinction in 2025.

At Westfield Washington Schools, this work supports our mission of preparing every Shamrock to be Life Ready: equipped with the skills and confidence to succeed beyond graduation.

Carmel Waterpark Opens May 23

Get ready to dive into another season of summer fun – The Waterpark in Carmel reopens Saturday, May 23 at 11 a.m.! Located at 1195 Central Park Dr. W, The Waterpark invites guests to enjoy a full day of play, relaxation and sunshine, with attractions for guests of all ages and abilities.

Start with a relaxing float along the lazy river, take on the AquaClimb® wall or ride the FlowRider® surf simulator. Younger guests can enjoy the kiddie pool, while older kids race down our fast-paced adventure slides. Plus, refuel at the concessions stand by grabbing a quick bite

to eat. The Waterpark will once again offer an

seniors (ages 3-15 and 65+).

Season Passes Make the most of the season with unlimited visits to The Waterpark. Season passes are available online at carmel-clayparks.com or for purchase at the front gate. Cabana Rentals Enhance your visit with a private cabana, ideal for groups of 6-8 guests. Each rental includes a shaded space with a ceiling fan, mini fridge, outlets, a lockable cabinet and comfortable seating.

2026 Waterpark Hours
May 23-Aug. 9
Open Daily:
11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Weekends and Labor Day (August 15-Sept. 7)
Open: Noon-6 p.m

extended season, giving guests even more opportunities to soak up the summer fun all the way through Labor Day.

Day Passes Spend the day at The Waterpark with a day pass! Admission is \$18 for adults (ages 16-64) and \$15 for youth and

Stay connected throughout the season by joining The Waterpark Facebook group for updates, events and more.

RUSTY

Continued from Page 1

current administration took office.

The Trustees of Social Security have been warning Congress for decades that Social Security's finances require Congressional attention. The fact is that Social Security revenue (as predicted decades ago) became insufficient to pay all benefit obligations in about 2021. Since that time, money from Social Security's reserved funds (Trust Funds) has been used to pay full benefits to all. In 2020, there was nearly \$3 trillion in SS reserved funds, but that has now dwindled to about \$2.5 trillion as reserves are used to supplement SS payments. And that problem continues. The Trustees of SS now predict that the reserves will be fully depleted in about 2032, at which time – lacking program reform by Congress – Social Security will be forced to pay out only what it receives in revenue. And that would mean an estimated cut of about 23% to everyone's monthly SS benefit. In the unlikely event that happens, wouldn't a 23% reduction to your larger age 70 benefit be better than a 23% cut to your lower age 68 benefit?

No one wants those cuts to happen – least of all politicians – because it would amount to political suicide (seniors are, after all, a very large voting bloc). Thus, we believe that Congress will act to reform Social

Security to prevent any general benefit cuts from happening. It will, however, require Congressional bipartisanship because the reforms needed for Social Security are likely unsavory to some. Those reforms may include SS tax increases and changes to the basic structure of the SS program to align it with today's demographic reality. The program needs reform, which Congress has, unfortunately, neglected to provide for many years. And this neglect will likely also continue, at least through the forthcoming mid-term elections. It seems the nature of Congress is to wait until the last possible moment to offer corrective legislation.

Here's what to keep in mind: Congress already knows how to reform Social Security to avoid any future benefit cuts – they just lack the bipartisanship to accomplish that reform. For our part, the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) has offered to Congress a common-sense reform plan via its "Social Security Guarantee (SSG)." AMAC's proposal has received a positive reception in Congressional circles, and we are optimistic that the proposal will provide financial stability to the program for generations. AMAC continues to advocate for SS reform in Washington, D.C. on a regular basis, even more intensely as the depletion of the

SS Trust Funds grows closer.

We do not suggest changing your strategy for claiming Social Security benefits based upon fear the program will cut benefits. That's because it's unlikely that all benefits will be cut because we believe Congress will eventually enact reform. And even in the unlikely event that Congress neglects to reform the program by 2032, the percentage of reduction to a higher monthly SS benefit amount would be better than a similar reduction to a lower benefit amount. In other words, your original plan is still a prudent one.

Regarding your question about your estimated benefits, I expect your most recent SS statement didn't include future benefits because you are already collecting SS survivor benefits. You can contact SSA at 1.800.772.1213 to obtain the future SS retirement estimates you seek.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. Russell Gloor is the, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

SCAMS

Continued from Page 1

fraud scams, and even government impersonation schemes to trick victims into giving away money or personal information. These scams often create a sense of urgency, threaten consequences, or ask for sensitive information such as passwords, PINs, or one-time security codes. To avoid falling victim, never share personal or financial information with unsolicited callers or messages, hang up

and contact the organization directly using

fy before responding." Richer said vigilance is key.

"It is crucial to take steps to protect yourself from fraud, no matter which state you are in, and if you think that you may have fallen victim to a scam, contact your bank

immediately, report it to the Federal Trade Commission, and change any passwords that may have been compromised."

• Indiana sees an average of 125.91 average quarterly fraud reports per 100,000 residents.

• This is below the national average, highlighting Indiana as a less risky state for fraud.

• Experts warn that letting your guard down could be a costly mistake, with Indiana residents who do fall victim to scams losing an average of \$418.22.

a verified number, be cautious of requests for payment through gift cards or wire transfers, and take time to pause and veri-

Thank you for reading The Times!

Rick Mount, Joe Barry Carroll chose Purdue; Rest is History



**SPORTS,
SPORTS, &
MORE SPORTS**
with Ken Thompson

There likely would have been no Big Ten Conference title and a berth in the 1969 NCAA men's basketball tournament championship game for Purdue if Rick Mount had decided to follow through on his original commitment in the spring of 1966.

That probably would have meant a 39-year gap between conference titles for a program that prides itself on being the winningest Big Ten school. And that's assuming Lee Rose and Joe Barry Carroll remained in Purdue's timeline to make the 1979 co-Big Ten title possible.

Miami, Florida was becoming a national program under coach Bruce Hale, who was riding the momentum created by his future son-in-law Rick Barry. The Hurricanes averaged 98 points a game, before the 3-point shot, in 1965 with Barry leading the nation at 37.4 points a game.

So it was no wonder that Miami was appealing to Mount, the greatest college shooter I've seen and that includes Stephen Curry.

On May 18, 1966, the headline in the Kokomo Morning Times stated "Miami signs Rick Mount." Accompanying the story was a photo of Hale and Mount inside Lebanon High School's library. The caption quoted Hale as saying: "This is the greatest day of my life. Rick is the best I've ever seen – and I've seen quite a few great players."

Mount was asked why not Purdue or Indiana. Standing with his hands in his back pockets, Mount said "Well, they have just a little bit more to offer."

But Mount also offered a throwaway line that ended up being the difference in his recruitment just a few months later: "I made a decision not to attend UCLA about two weeks ago. It's just too far away."

UCLA, which was coming off consecutive national championships under Purdue legend John Wooden, is located 1,792 miles from Lebanon. Miami, Florida is 1,052 miles away.

Hale understood Mount's decision wasn't a popular one in town. "I've noticed there aren't too many happy people here today. But I think people should be happy with Rick's decision. This seems more like a morgue than a library."

But Purdue didn't give up hope. Head coach George King had three key advantages.

The first was alluded to in the newspaper story. Mount likely felt pressure from the citizens of Lebanon, who wanted to drive a short distance to see one of their own play college basketball. It also didn't hurt that the mayor was an uncle of Purdue assistant coach Bob

King. Nor the fact that Mount's future wife, Donna, was his high school sweetheart.

"There was no way that Rick was ever going to leave the state of Indiana to play basketball," Bob King told GoldandBlack.com publisher Alan Karpick in 2011. "The people of Lebanon wouldn't stand for it."

But most importantly, under NCAA rules at the time there was no national letter of intent. The only binding document was a conference letter. Mount signed a Big Ten letter of intent with Purdue in late May, cutting off Indiana's pursuit. That signature allowed Purdue to contact Mount as frequently as George King and his staff desired.

Mount told The Associated Press on May 27 that he signed the conference letter of intent with Purdue "to protect myself in case I should decide to play Big Ten ball."

"But it would be a pretty long shot that I would go to Purdue."

That long shot cashed in on Aug. 4, when Mount announced he would stay close to home. The Indianapolis Star report stated that Mount changed his mind after competing against several former Big Ten players in summer outdoor tournaments and still scored 30 to 40 points a game without "undue trouble."

The rest of the story everyone knows. Mount would leave Purdue as an All-American and held the school's career scoring record of 2,323 points for 54 years.

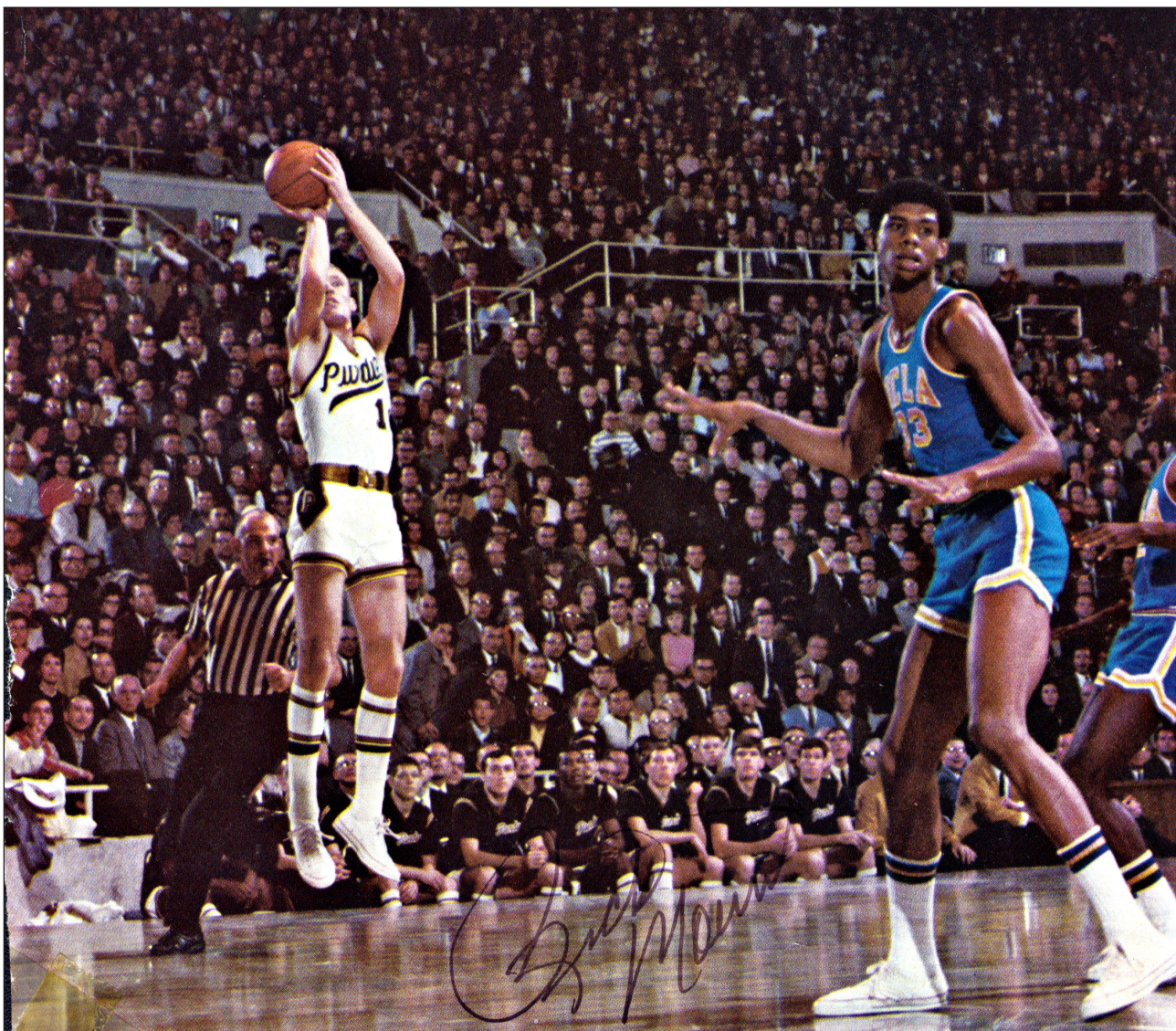
Purdue discovers Joe Barry Carroll

It was late in Fred Schaus' tenure as head coach in 1976, and the Boilermakers needed a big man to eventually replace Tom Scheffler.

An introspective 7-foot center named Joe Barry Carroll was beginning to make a name for himself at Denver East High School. But Purdue assistants Roger Blalock and George weren't in Denver to see Carroll.

In his autobiography "Growing Up in Words and Images," Carroll tells the story.

"They would never admit it publicly, but Lavon Williams, who was the higher valued recruiting choice of



Rick Mount in the 1967 dedication game of Mackey Arena. The UCLA player is Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then known

theirs, was not really interested in Purdue. So while they were in town recruiting him, they approached me. Lavon was truly a star basketball player and worthy of all the attention he received that year. He was the LeBron James of my time. Being their second choice meant nothing to me; what mattered to me was I had been offered a world-class education by a world-class institution."

Carroll arrived in West Lafayette with a cheap Woolworth's trunk, a few belongings "and a whole lot of ambition in my heart."

His shot blocking skills quickly made Carroll a fan favorite, with some clamoring for Carroll to replace Scheffler in the starting lineup.

When Carroll did win the starting center job as a sophomore in 1977, he quickly served notice that he was an All-American in the making. In an 80-78 victory at Arizona on Dec. 10, 1977, Carroll posted the only triple-double in Purdue men's basketball history. His 16 points, 16 rebounds and a single-game record 11 blocked shots led a reporter to call the performance "one of the greatest individual games ever against the Wildcats."

"Failure was not an option," Carroll wrote. "At a minimum, I was going to have to graduate with a diploma, and though I could not see much beyond that, it was clear I had to move forward because there was no place to retreat. It never occurred to

me that if things did not work at Purdue, I could return to my mother's home at 2449 Vine Street. That didn't happen in my mother's house ... There was room for only one adult in my mother's house."

Carroll received his diploma in economics just after leading Purdue to the Final Four in 1980. His career totals included 2,175 points, 1,148 rebounds and 349 blocked shots.

Carroll was the No. 1

overall pick in the 1980 NBA Draft by Golden State, which traded Robert Parish and a draft pick that became Kevin McHale to the Boston Celtics. That trade for two future Hall of Famers did not help Carroll's popularity throughout his NBA career, as if he was the person who orchestrated that swap.

As for Lavon Williams? He played collegiately at Kentucky and was drafted in 1980 too

– 100 picks after Carroll in the fifth round by the Cleveland Cavaliers. Williams never played a regular season NBA game.

Next time: What if Matt Painter had signed with his childhood favorite team, Indiana?

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

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B.E. F.A.S.T. to Save a Life

A stroke can change a life in an instant. In the minutes after symptoms begin, quick action can help protect the brain, reduce long-term disability and save a life, according to the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association.

On average, nearly 2 million brain cells die every minute a stroke goes untreated, making early recognition and treatment critical. During May, American Stroke Month, the Stroke Association is highlighting the importance of recognizing stroke warning signs and understanding how early treatment and prevention can make a meaningful difference when it matters most.

Stroke is the fourth-leading cause of death, according to the American Heart Association's 2026 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistical Update[1], and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States. Each year, approximately 800,000 people in the U.S. experience a stroke. A stroke can happen to anyone, at any age.

3 things you can do to take action against stroke:

Learn B.E. F.A.S.T. to spot a stroke. If you see sudden Balance loss, Eye or vision changes, Face drooping, Arm weakness or Speech difficulty, it's time to call 911. Explore the signs by playing the B.E. F.A.S.T. Experience at Stroke.org/StrokeMonth.

Understand your stroke risk and explore ways to lower it. Identifying personal risk factors — especially high blood pressure, the leading risk factor for stroke — can help you have informed conversations with your health care team about stroke prevention and long-term brain health.

Find support after stroke. Recovery is a journey and connection matters. Explore support services for survivors and care partners, including virtual Stroke Meetups, and sign up for the Stroke Connection e-newsletter at Stroke.org/StrokeMonth.

Recognize Stroke Warning Signs: B.E.



American Stroke Association.
A division of the American Heart Association.

F.A.S.T.

When a stroke happens, blood flow to the brain is interrupted. The longer treatment is delayed, the greater the risk of lasting damage. Calling 911 is the fastest way to get stroke care. EMS can begin treatment immediately and alert the hospital stroke team before you arrive.

B.E. F.A.S.T. is a simple way to remember common stroke warning signs:

Balance Loss – Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of coordination

Eye (Vision) Changes – Sudden vision loss or trouble seeing in one or both eyes

Face Drooping – One side of the face droops or feels numb; a smile may look uneven

Arm Weakness – One arm feels weak or numb or drifts downward when raised

Speech Difficulty – Slurred speech or trouble speaking

Time to Call 911 – If someone shows any of these signs, even if symptoms go away, calling 911 right away can help get lifesaving care started. Noting when symptoms first appeared can also support treatment decisions.

Take steps to prevent stroke

According to the Heart Association and the Stroke Association, approximately 80% of strokes are preventable. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke[2], and uncontrolled blood pressure, diabetes and obesity significantly increase risk.

A large majority of strokes can be prevented by taking steps to:

Manage blood pressure. Lowering and controlling blood pressure reduces the risk of stroke. Regular check-ups, monitoring at home and following a treatment plan can lower risk and support long-term brain health.

Build healthy habits.

Eating well, staying active, not smoking and keeping up with routine health screenings all play an important role in reducing stroke risk. The Heart Association's Life's Essential 8TM outlines key steps for improving and maintaining cardiovascular and brain health.

Reduce the risk of a second stroke. Prevention takes on added importance for people who have had a stroke or a transient ischemic attack (TIA), sometimes called a "warning stroke." Nearly 1 in 4 strokes occur in people who have had a previous stroke[3]. Understanding what caused the first stroke and identifying personal risk factors can help guide next steps and reduce the chance of another one.

Support that meets you where you are

Stroke recovery looks different for everyone, and support can play an important role along the way.

The Stroke Association offers resources designed to help survivors and care partners feel informed, connected and supported, including live, virtual Stroke Meetups where participants can share experiences, ask questions and learn from trusted experts. Stay connected with recovery tools and support by signing up for the Stroke Connection e-newsletter.

Stroke can happen suddenly. Knowing the signs with B.E. F.A.S.T. can help you respond when minutes matter. This American Stroke Month, explore trusted resources, practical tools and support Stroke.org/StrokeMonth.

The HCA Healthcare Foundation is a national sponsor of the American Stroke Association's Together to End Stroke® initiative and American Stroke Month.

[1] L A Palaniappan; et al Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2026 Update: A Report of US and Global Data From the American Heart Association Circulation. 2026; 153:00–00. DOI: 10.1161/

AARP Honors Law Enforcement Leaders

AARP announced its inaugural AARP Guardian Award recipients, honoring members of the law enforcement community who have gone above and beyond to protect millions of older Americans from fraud, scams, and financial exploitation. Fraud is a widespread and growing threat that costs Americans billions of dollars each year, with adults 50-plus bearing a disproportionate share of the losses.

Selected law enforcement professionals demonstrate an unwavering commitment to safeguarding older adults and holding criminals accountable through effective advocacy. As fraud schemes—particularly those involving cryptocurrency ATMs and other emerging payment methods—continue to target older Americans, AARP works closely with trusted law enforcement partners to strengthen prevention efforts nationwide. Cryptocurrency-related scams pose a particularly acute threat. In 2024, U.S. adults reported approximately \$9.3 billion in crypto fraud losses, with those age 60 and older losing about \$2.8 billion.

The inaugural winners of this year's awards are:

Matthew Hogan, Detective, Connecticut State Police: Detective Hogan is being honored for his leadership in advocating for stronger consumer protections, more resources for state and local police officers, and an unwavering



commitment to protecting older Connecticut residents. Detective Hogan has been a powerful voice at the state and federal levels on regulating cryptocurrency ATMs and has worked alongside AARP in Washington, D.C., participating in congressional briefings and meetings to combat fraud targeting older Americans. His dedication has helped elevate the role of frontline law enforcement in shaping effective policy solutions.

Sergeant Nathan VanCleave, Evansville, Indiana Police Department: Sergeant VanCleave is being honored for his instrumental role in advancing groundbreaking protections against fraud in Indiana. Sergeant VanCleave helped establish local consumer safeguards on cryptocurrency ATMs in Evansville and played a key role in achieving a statewide ban, the first in the United States. Additionally, VanCleave has been an advocate in Washington, D.C. to ensure Indiana's new law remains strong. He continues to work closely with AARP Indiana volunteers to help advise older Hoosiers on how to best protect themselves from frauds and scams.

"Each of these officers sets the standard for what our inaugural award represents—vig-

ilance, partnership, and an unwavering commitment to protecting older Americans," said Nancy LeaMond, AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer. "We are deeply grateful for their service and proud to recognize the meaningful impact they have made to protect older Americans in their communities and beyond."

AARP has supported the passage of cryptocurrency ATM consumer protection laws in 27 states across the country, advancing commonsense safeguards to help protect consumers—especially older adults—from these scams. Core protections AARP has championed nationwide include: daily transaction limits, operator licensing and registration requirements, transaction receipts, and greater transparency and accountability in the crypto kiosk marketplace. With cryptocurrency kiosks linked to more than \$389 million in reported losses in 2025, and adults 60 and older accounting for 86 percent of reported losses in cases where a victim's age was known. AARP will continue working with lawmakers, law enforcement, and advocates in every state to balance innovation with strong consumer protections.

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