

## WAYNE TRACE STUDENT COUNCIL COLLECTS 123 TOYS IN HOLIDAY DRIVE FOR LOCAL CHILDREN



The halls of Wayne Trace High School are a little brighter this week after the Student Council announced the collection of 123 toys for its toy drive. The achievement marks one of the school's most successful drives in recent years, bringing joy to local children and pride to the student body.

Over the past few weeks, students, teachers, and staff

contributed new, unwrapped toys ranging from board games and dolls to balls and art kits. Donation boxes placed throughout the school quickly filled up, with some needing to be emptied multiple times.

"We set a goal of 100 toys this year, and our students went above and beyond," said Student Council advisor Maureen Sorensen. "Know-

ing that 123 children in our community will have gifts to open this holiday season means everything to us."

The drive was organized in partnership with the Antwerp Methodist Church, which will distribute the collected toys to families in need. Representatives from the organization thanked the students for their hard work and generosity.

County and honoring their father's legacy through thoughtful giving.

### DPLS HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Defiance Public Library System, including Defiance Public, Sherwood Branch, and Johnson Memorial (Hicksville) libraries, will be closed Dec. 24-26 for the Christmas holiday.

The libraries will close at noon on Dec. 31 and will be closed on Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

### GROVER HILL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

The Grover Hill Community Christmas Eve Service will be December 24, 2025 at 7:30pm at the Zion Community Church. The service is a collaboration of the Middle Creek United Methodist, Roselms Community, and Zion Community churches. Zion Community Church is located at the corner of 1st and Harrison Streets in Grover Hill.

## PAULDING SCHOOL BOARD HONORS JERROD HAWK, APPROVES PROGRAMS & PERSONNEL ACTIONS



Jerrod Hawk (right) was recognized by the PEVS Board of Education for his years of service. He is pictured with PEVS Superintendent Chris Etzler.

The Paulding Exempted Village Schools Board of Education met December 16, 2025, for its regular meeting, addressing routine business, approving several student activity trips, and acting on a number of personnel matters while also recognizing a long-time board member for his service to the district.

During public participation, the board recognized Jerrod Hawk with a gift in appreciation for his years of service on the school board, thanking

him for his dedication to Paulding Exempted Village Schools.

The board approved the minutes from the Nov. 18, 2025, regular meeting along with the November 2025 fi-

(Continued on Page 3)

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Support local Organizations & Businesses making this issue of the West Bend News

## Community Calendar

### TUE & WED

- Antwerp Comm. Food Pantry @ Antwerp GMC, 9a-12p

### December 24

- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Woodburn Missionary Church, 7p
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Riverside Christian Church, Antwerp, 7p
- Christmas Eve Service @ Zion Community Church, Grover Hill, 7:30p

### January 5

- Teen Anger Management Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding, 4-5p

### January 6

- Kinship Caregivers Support Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding, 6-7p

### January 7

- OneOhio Recovery Foundation Regional Grant Cycle 2 Webinar, 10a

### January 12

- Teen Anger Management Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding, 4-5p

### January 13

- PC Democrat Party Meeting @ Paulding Eagles, 7p
- Friends & Fam. Support Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding 6-7p

### January 21

- OneOhio Recovery Foundation Funding Inquiry Webinar, 10a



Add your event to the calendar info@westbendnews.net



## KEITH HUBBARD FAMILY FUND SUPPORTS LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The Defiance Area Foundation is honored to share that the Keith Hubbard Family Fund has granted \$5,000 to support five Defiance County food pantries this holiday season. Established in memory of the late Keith Hubbard, the

fund reflects his family's desire to continue his spirit of generosity and care for the community.

Each of the following food pantries received a \$1,000 grant: Zion's Lutheran, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Sherwood Methodist Church, and the Sherwood Village Food Pantry. These gifts will help local families access food and essential resources during the holidays.

The Defiance Area Foundation is grateful for the Hubbard family's commitment to strengthening Defiance

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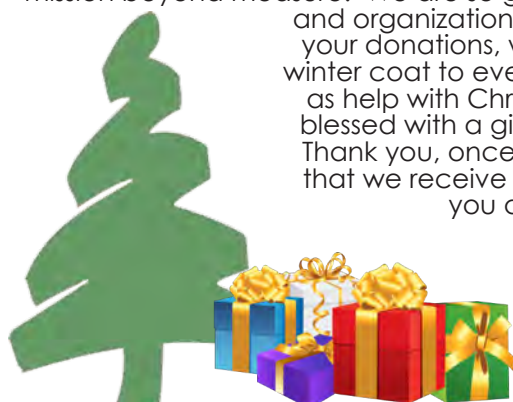
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# Thank You...

On behalf of the 125 families and 300 children in Paulding County who were blessed this Christmas season by your generosity, we say thank you! Paulding and Van Wert Counties supported our **Christmas For Kids** mission beyond measure. We are so grateful for the many individuals and organizations who gave so generously. With your donations, we were able to provide a new winter coat to every child who was in need as well as help with Christmas wishes. Each family was blessed with a gift card from Chief for groceries. Thank you, once again for the amazing support that we receive each and every year. We wish you all a wonderful 2026.



Jennifer Ramsier  
Michelle Dooley,  
Paulding County  
Christmas for Kids Coordinators



# WT GROVER HILL ELEMENTARY ANNOUNCES DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Grover Hill Elementary Student of the Month for December are: pictured from left to right, front row: Lyrik Longstreth, Evangeline Scott, Lincoln Stoller, Charlotte Miller, Kenley Gabrio, Hudson Greear, Michael Priest. Back row: left to right -- Elizabeth Baksa, Dale Clutter, Bentley Wright, Jayde Sinn, Addilyn Noffsinger, Jase Miller, Kollin Reichert, Collin Miller. Not Pictured: Mason Noffsinger and Arsen Herr.

## SECRETARY LAROSE LAUNCHES MULTI-STATE ELECTION INTEGRITY NETWORK CALLED 'ELEXA'



Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose announced today the creation of a new, multi-state election integrity network known as EleXa, a national coalition formed to exchange election records for use in identifying illegal voting activity.

"Election integrity will always be our top priority, and that starts with our duty under the law to maintain accurate voter rolls," said Secretary LaRose. "These data-sharing agreements allow Ohio to work with our colleagues in other states to identify people who try to vote illegally, often by having more than one active voter registration and then casting multiple ballots in the same election."

The name of the project, EleXa, is a nod to "election administration," with a symbolic 'X' representing the removal of illegal or ineligible voters identified through formal cross-state election data sharing agreements.

So far, Ohio has signed

with secretaries of state in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia, and Pennsylvania is finalizing an agreement. The agreements will enable Ohio to maintain more accurate voter rolls by removing out-of-state voters, and better prevent and detect multi-state voting. State law authorizes Secretary LaRose to join "with other states or groups of states, as the secretary of state considers necessary, in order to maintain the statewide voter registration database." The law also requires the Secretary to ensure that confidential voter information "remains confidential," and the agreements mandate that any exchanged data be protected by the most advanced security protocols.

"Ohio has the most aggressive and effective voter list maintenance process in the nation, in part, because of the work we've done to enhance these data-sharing

partnerships," said Secretary LaRose. "I look forward to expanding EleXa to include other states and continuing to build on our partnership with the federal government to prioritize election integrity in our state."

### OHIO HAS OFFICIALLY BECOMES 'OHIO DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH'

The future of behavioral healthcare in Ohio is taking a significant step forward as the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) officially becomes the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH). The change, outlined in Am. Sub. House Bill 96 and signed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, the state's operating budget for fiscal years 2026-27, reflects the agency's ongoing commitment to meeting the evolving needs of Ohioans and aligning with national best practices.

OhioMHAS was established in 2013 following the merger of the former departments of Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services. At the time, the name reflected prevailing industry standards. However, in the 12 years since, the behavioral health field has evolved, emphasizing integrated, person-centered care and language that reduces stigma.

A recent national review revealed that Ohio was among the few remaining states using the term "addiction" in its department title. While widely recognized, the term can carry stigmatizing connotations for individuals seeking help. In contrast, "behavioral health" as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encompasses a broader, more inclusive range of concerns, including mental health conditions, substance use, suicidal ideation, and emotional distress.

"Today, 'behavioral health' is widely acknowledged as the preferred term because it highlights the connection between mental and physical health and reflects a more comprehensive, holistic approach to care," said DBH Director LeeAnne Cornyn. "By embracing this

updated language, we are taking another important step in reducing stigma and encouraging more Ohioans to seek the support they need to be well, get well, and stay well."

While the agency's name is changing, its core services, leadership, and commitment to excellence remain unchanged. As part of the rebrand, the department has also launched a new logo and website domain: DBH.ohio.gov.

"Our mission, vision, and values remain constant, and Ohioans will continue to be at the heart of everything we do," added Director Cornyn.

About the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) works to ensure every Ohioan has access to quality behavioral health care. In partnership with local boards, providers, and communities, DBH is committed to reducing stigma, strengthening supports, and helping people be well, get well, and stay well. The department operates six regional behavioral healthcare hospitals, serving around 3,000 Ohioans annually. In addition, DBH licenses, certifies, and regulates more than 2,400 community behavioral health providers, while also ensuring patients' rights within the system.

### PAULDING COUNTY BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL CELEBRATES PROGRESS, EYES FUTURE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Western Buckeye Educational Service Center and Paulding County Economic Development (PCED) recently convened the Q4 Business Advisory Council (BAC) at the OSU Extension building, highlighting continued collaboration and innovation in workforce development.

The meeting opened with a discussion on the group's identity, exploring potential name changes to better reflect its mission. Suggestions included "Community Workforce Development Committee," "ALIGN Paulding," and "PACE (Paulding County Alliance for Career and Education)." Following good discussion, the committee opted to table the decision for future consideration.

Attendees celebrated the success of the Youth Business Showcase and explored merging it with the Next Gen Youth event to create a unified platform for student entrepreneurship and creativity during Small Business Saturday. A committee will work through the details.

A standout highlight was the STNA training initiative, where four Paulding County students earned certification through Vantage Career Center's Adult Education program. Thanks to a generous contribution from Baughman Tile, a manufacturing facility unrelated to healthcare, all students participated at no cost—an example of cross-sector collaboration driving rural workforce solutions.

PCED Director Tim Copsey elaborated, "It will be this type of collaboration and discussion in future BAC meetings that allow businesses in a rural county like Paulding to sustain and grow. Kudos to Baughman Tile for this investment into our

## Scripture of the Week

"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven."

— Luke 1:76-78

## LOVE



1. **\*\*Anticipation of Love\*\***: Advent invites us to anticipate the coming of Christ, who embodies love. This expectation can remind us of the significance of love in our own lives and in our relationships with others. On some level, we are all longing for love. Though most of the time, we are looking for love in all the wrong places. Reminiscent of the song by Johnny Lee. The love that Christ shares with us can never perish, spoil, or fade. It's true love. Once we learn to appreciate and accept God's love, we learn to share it. When we fail to look deeply into the love of Christ, we are more likely to return the gift. In some cases, we throw the gift back in His face. This occurs when we fail to realize that He didn't have to give it to us. your blessing of love could have been given to someone else. You didn't have to be born under blessed circumstances. You could have been born under an unalterable generational curse, but you weren't. So many people are without the love of Christ, stuck under satan's rule. You, however, have been blessed with the gift of God's love. You've been set free from the curse of the law. One thing that I've learned about the love of Christ is that the more you

use it, the more it grows. Like a spiritual muscle, the more you exercise, the stronger it becomes. This season, express your love through kindness.

2. **\*\*Acts of Kindness\*\***: In preparation for Christmas, many people engage in acts of kindness and charity, which are expressions of love. This season encourages us to reach out to those in need, showing love through our actions.

3. **\*\*Family and Community\*\***: Advent is often a time for families and communities to come together. Although it can be difficult (smile), the love shared in these gatherings—through traditions, meals, and stories—helps strengthen bonds and foster a sense of belonging in the body and love of Christ.

4. **\*\*Reflection on God's Love\*\***: For many, Advent is a time to reflect on God's unconditional love for humanity. This period can inspire individuals to deepen their relationship with God, understanding the significance of love in their faith.

5. **\*\*Love in Waiting\*\***: The theme of waiting during Advent can also relate to love—waiting on God to reveal His promises and learning to trust in His love through uncertainty and anticipation.

Overall, Advent can be a profound time to cultivate love in its many forms—between friends and family, and within ourselves—as we prepare to celebrate the ultimate expression of love: Christmas.

Matthew 1:23 - "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

His love will never leave us or forsake us.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Peace and Love,

—Pastor Dwayne

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## A BRAVE LADY

**Penny For Your Thoughts**

**By: Nancy Whitaker  
September 1887. New York City.**

A 23-year-old woman walked into a boarding house and began to unravel — on purpose. She paced the halls. She whispered to herself. She refused sleep. She stared through walls like her mind had gone missing.

Then the system did what it always did. A judge nodded, a Dr. signed and officials agreed. This woman was insane and there was no hope because she was crazy.

No questions were asked, no investigations were initiated and there was no doubt what they should do to her. They were sending her to Blackwell Island to the Women's Lunatic Asylum.

This was a place where women were sent and some never returned. Rumors of women being mistreated, starved and beaten had been going around the community for years.

But no one knew that this alleged lunatic lady's name was Nelly Bly and every action she had done to act crazy was an act. Why? Did Nelly want to be locked up in this horrific place?

Well, our Nelly Bly was a journalist for The New York World and she wanted to check out these rumors of cruelty behind the doors so she decided to find out the truth. So she became it. Nelly was put in the asylum and this is what she saw:

Inside the asylum the living conditions were plain horror. There was 1600 women crammed into the building with just a few doctors, untrained nurses and treatments were terror. The women patients were immigrants who didn't speak English, poor ladies with no family, and if they were sane when they went in, they went insane by just being in there.

There was ice cold baths, rotten food with maggots in it and beatings. Nelly wanted out as she had seen enough. She started acting normal and behaving rationally. She

requested to be let out, but once she was in there it would be hard to get out.

So she memorized every scream, every inmates name and every cruelty. And she wrote and mailed her findings to The New York City World.

10 days later a lawyer appeared at the asylum as Nelly's article hit the streets. The headline was Behind Asylum Bars. New York readers were outraged, city hall was flooded with people and so a grand jury launched an investigation and it was all confirmed. Changes came in the form of more



dollars, translators, new staff and no more horrid conditions.

Well 7 years later the place shut down, but Nelly did not stop there. She became an investigative journalist exposing child abuse, corruption, factory and workers exploitation. Nelly became one of the best writers in American history by actually living her stories.

Today a monument stands on Roosevelt Island where the asylum once stood honoring the lady who exposed the asylum so the forgotten could be believed.

I had never heard much about Nelly Bly but what a courageous woman she was. There has been a movie honoring her and she also wrote a book.

Have you heard of Nelly Bly? Would you pretend to be nutty to get in an asylum and cover the conditions? Let me know and this writer will give you A Penny For Your Thoughts. I wish all the readers Merry Christmas!

### PATROL INVESTIGATING SERIOUS INJURY CRASH IN DEFIANCE COUNTY

The Defiance Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol is investigating a two-vehicle serious injury crash that occurred on December 14, 2025, at approximately 1:50 a.m. The crash occurred on State Route 66 south of the Defiance-Williams County

## MCDONALD'S OWNER/OPERATORS BRING HOLIDAY CHEER TO RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NE INDIANA



This holiday season, local McDonald's Owner/Operators brought smiles, comfort and holiday cheer to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Northeast Indiana in Fort Wayne.

On December 16, McDonald's Owner/Operators visited families staying at the Ronald McDonald House at Parkview Regional Medical Center, delivering holiday-themed socks and a festive assortment of McDonald's treats. Local McDonald's Owner/Operator Jim Wong and his team provided cookies, pies and apple slices, and families were also surprised by a special visit from Santa Claus.

The visit was designed to create a lighthearted moment for families who are away from home while their children receive medical care — a reminder that even during the busiest season, small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference.

The visit coincided with the launch of Round Up for RMHC in the McDonald's app. In-store, in the drive-thru, or through the McDonald's mobile app, customers are invited to round up their total to the nearest dollar, with the extra change donated directly to Ronald McDonald

House Charities. Nationally, RMHC estimates that \$59.6 million was raised in 2024 through the Round Up initiative.

"We're grateful for the continued support from McDonald's Owner/Operators, especially during the holidays," said Jenifer Veatch, CEO of RMHC of Northeast Indiana. "Their visits bring comfort, smiles, and a sense of togetherness to families who are going through an incredibly difficult time."

"At McDonald's, we believe the holidays are about showing up for our communities," added Jon Lafontant, a local McDonald's Owner/Operator and member of the RMHC of Northeast Indiana Board of Trustees. "Families at the Ronald McDonald House are dealing with so much, and we're honored to share a little joy to help brighten their day."

The event is part of McDonald's ongoing commitment to supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities, which provides families a place to stay and resources to lean on while their children receive care. For more information about RMHC of Northeast Indiana and ways to contribute, visit <https://rmhc-neindiana.org/>

line in Tiffin Township, Defiance County.

Scott Burchfield, age 47, of Montpelier, Ohio was driving 2000 Buick Regal northbound on State Route 66. Burchfield struck the rear of an Ohio Department of Transportation plow truck.

The plow truck was actively treating State Route 66 at the time of the crash with green, amber and white lights flashing. Burchfield's vehicle ran off the right side of the roadway and caught fire.

Burchfield was transported by ambulance to De-

fiance Regional Medical Center. The driver of the plow truck was not injured.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol was assisted on scene by the Defiance County Sheriff's Office, Tiffin Township Fire and Rescue, and K K Collision.

Alcohol is suspected to be a factor in the crash. The Ohio State Highway Patrol reminds all motorists to always wear safety belts, and never drive impaired or distracted.

The crash remains under investigation.

(Continued from Page 1)

nancial reports and bills. Superintendent Chris Etzler presented his administrative report, which included updates on enrollment, HVAC projects, the Paulding County Opportunity Center (PCOC), PPL programming, the senior citizens' breakfast, and the proposed 2026-2027 school calendar. Paulding Elementary Principal Mary Born also provided a building-level report.

Among the recommendations approved, the board set the January 2026 regular and organizational meeting for Jan. 13 at 6 p.m., adopted nutritional guidelines for the 2025-2026 school year, and approved allowing high school student-athletes to participate in indoor track and

field with parental permission. The indoor track program will be coached by volunteers, with transportation provided by the district. The board also approved a girls wrestling trip to Findlay on Dec. 19 and 20 and a boys wrestling trip to Reading on Jan. 9 and 10. In addition, the board adopted a resolution requesting certification of alternative tax rates for an income tax.

Several personnel items were approved, including the resignation of Cindy Kauser, superintendent's secretary and EMIS coordinator, effective July 31, 2026, after 16 years of service; the resignation of second-shift custodian Tony Gonzales, effective Dec. 26, 2025, after nine months; and the resignation of Paulding Elementary intervention spe-

The deadline for the West Bend News is **THURSDAYS** at 5pm for the following issue.

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### MILITARY HISTORY IN PAULDING COUNTY



**By: Mark Holtsberry**

Frederick F. Johnson was born in Antwerp, Ohio in 1883. The son of James L. born December 31, 1858 in Ohio and Carrie S. (Goshorn) Johnson born in 1864 in Ohio. Her father, Andrew Jackson Goshorn, was a Civil War Veteran who served with 147 Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

Anyway, I went down a rabbit hole... James and Carrie were married September 4, 1881 in Paulding. On September 2, 1884 a daughter, Eva M. was born, followed by a son, Thomas W. July 27, 1886, Flossie May, September 14, 1891, and Charles E. March 14, 1892.

By 1900, the Johnson family was living in Antwerp. James was a blacksmith. All the children were in school. On October 24, 1904, Carrie's father, Andrew passed away he was buried in Riverside Cemetery, Antwerp. By 1910, it is unclear where Frederick took off too, but, I believe he went to work for the cement plant quarry.

On May 31, 1917, Frederick signed up for the National Guard unit of Toledo. His occupation was listed as a metal-lurgist.. He stood 5'7" tall, brown hair, brown eyes, light complexion. He was assigned to serve in the 1st Ambulance Company Ohio National Guard and then he was promoted to Corporal, November 5, 1917. Assigned to regular

cialist Stephanie Smith, effective Jan. 2, 2026, after two and a half years with the district. The board also approved a two-year contract for Cindy Kauser as EMIS coordinator beginning Aug. 1, 2026.

The board approved multi-

Army to serve in the 148th Ambulance Company 112th Sanitary Train, 37th Division. Promoted to Sergeant March 21, 1918. On June 28, 1918 Frederick boarded the ship, "Plassy" at Brooklyn, New York and set sail for France. He will serve in the Muese-Argonne. Ypres-Lys defensive sector. Wounded in action November 1, 1918. Honorably Discharged April 12, 1919.

What is very interesting, Frederick's brothers, Thomas and Charles also served overseas in France, and yes, they made it home also. Returning home Frederick got married in Monroe, Michigan May 1, 1919 to a gal named Agnes K. Courtner, born February 26, 1896 in Alabama.

In 1920, Frederick and Agness moved back to Antwerp, living on Main Street. Frederick worked at the stone Quarry as an Engineer. That same year, March 3, 1920, a daughter, Vilhetha Samantha Johnson was born. By 1930, Frederick, Agnes and Vilhetha, were still living in Antwerp. Frederick was working as a manager at the furniture factory in Antwerp.

On May 10, 1933, Frederick's father, James passed away. By 1940, Frederick, Agnes and Vilhetha were living at 413 South Main Street in Antwerp. On June 4, 1940, Frederick passed away. He was buried in Maumee Cemetery in Antwerp. Section A., lot 517, grave 6. On September 23, 1943 in Indiana, Vilhetha married a fella named, George Samuel Jump. They moved to Virginia where George served in World War Two. Rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Agness moved to Arlington, Virginia to be with her daughter. Agnes passed away December 8, 1982 and was brought home to be buried with Frederick in Maumee Cemetery. Vilhetha, a retired nurse, passed away in 2010 and is buried in Arlington, Virginia.

...Until Next Time!

ple one-year limited extracurricular volunteer contracts for the 2025-2026 school year, including positions in barber-shop quartet, indoor track, wrestling, and junior high boys basketball.

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## WOODLAN GIRLS HOLD OFF BLUFFTON IN FRIDAY NIGHT THRILLER



Woodlan's Alyssa Anderson scores 2 points and fouled on the shot! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

Woodlan earned a hard-fought 58-55 victory over Bluffton on last Friday evening, December 12, in a tightly contested girls basketball matchup at Woodlan. The Warriors jumped out to a 12-8 lead after the first quarter and carried a 24-28 deficit into halftime before erupting for 23 points in the third quarter to swing the momentum back in their favor. Woodlan held on down the stretch, outscoring Bluffton 11-16 in the fourth to secure the three-point win.

Score by quarter:  
Woodlan 12 12 23 11 = 58  
Bluffton 8 20 11 16 = 55  
Woodlan was led by a dominant performance from Alyssa Anderson, who recorded a double-double

with 20 points and 17 rebounds. Anderson continues to be a force on the glass, now averaging 8.4 rebounds per game. Lexie Peoples also played a key role in the win, going 6-for-10 from the field and finishing with 16 points. Kaitlyn Sterling added a well-rounded performance with 11 points, five assists, and three steals to help fuel the Warriors' offense and defense.

Bluffton saw its seven-game winning streak come to an end despite a balanced offensive effort. Konley Ault led the Tigers with 20 points, six rebounds, and three steals, marking her third straight game with at least 16 points. Khloe Dick also turned in a strong showing with 13 points and three steals.

## AUDIOBOOKS, PRINT FICTION & "DOG MAN" TOP ACPL'S LIST OF MOST POPULAR ITEMS

The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) is wrapping up 2025 by celebrating the stories, characters, and entertainment our community couldn't get enough of this year. From wildly popular digital audiobooks and eBooks to page-turning novels, family favorites, and hit video games, ACPL's most-checked-

out items reflect a year full of reading, listening, watching, and playing.

Audiobooks and eBooks, continued to grow in popularity in 2025 led by Rebecca Yarros' fantasy follow-up "Onyx Storm," and Abby Jimenez's "Say You'll Remember Me" respectively. Not to be outdone, print books saw their own successes with Allen County readers including the popular "Housemaid" thriller series by Freida McFadden and Kristin Han-

## ARCHERS COME UP SHORT AGAINST EAGLES



Antwerp sophomore Brayden Fuller scores two points for the Archers in this shot! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

North Central took a win back home Tuesday night, December 16, edging Antwerp 50-47 in a hard-fought boys basketball contest at Antwerp High School. The Eagles built an early lead, taking a 7-4 advantage after one quarter, before Antwerp surged ahead with a 22-point second quarter to grab a 26-21 halftime edge. North Central answered in the third and fourth quarters, outscoring the Archers 29-21 over the final 16 minutes to secure the road victory and improve to 4-0 on the season, while Antwerp slipped to 2-3.

Zaine McMichael led all scorers for Antwerp with 20

points, adding three rebounds and three assists in a strong all-around performance. Weston Rhonehouse and Noah Lucas chipped in seven points apiece, while Brayden Fuller added five and Hampton Rogge and Michael Rohrs scored four each. North Central was paced by Tyler Meyers, who poured in 18 points, and Jackson Poynter, who finished with 15 points. Zack Whitley contributed 10 points for the Eagles, while Alex St. John added four and Talen Reinbolt scored three.

In the junior varsity game, Antwerp picked up a 46-41 victory over North Central.

nah's "The Women." For the younger readers, Dav Pilkey's "Dog Man" dominated children's literature while the latest installment of Suzanne Collins' "Hunger Games" saga secured the entire series among the top spots for teens.

Hollywood titles like "Gladiator II," "Sinners" and "Star Wars" topped DVD and video game checkouts rounding out a year of stories influenced by pop culture mainstays, thrillers and mysteries, and romantic encounters.

"These lists show just how much our community values stories in multiple formats and how passionate Allen County is about using all its library has to offer," said ACPL Collection Services Manager Matt Etzel.

A snapshot of the ACPL's top checkouts includes:

**ADULT BOOKS:**  
"The Women" by Kristin Hannah  
"The Housemaid Is Watching" by Freida McFadden

"The Teacher" by Freida McFadden  
"The Housemaid" by Freida McFadden  
"Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt  
**CHILDREN'S BOOKS:**  
"For Whom the Bell Rolls" by Dav Pilkey  
"Brawl of the Wild" by Dav Pilkey  
"Dog Man and Cat Kid" by Dav Pilkey  
"A Tale of Two Kitties" by Dav Pilkey  
"Mothering Heights" by Dav Pilkey  
**TEEN BOOKS:**  
"Sunrise on the Reaping" by Suzanne Collins  
"The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" by Suzanne Collins  
"The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins  
"Catching Fire" by Suzanne Collins  
"Mockingjay" by Suzanne Collins  
**AUDIOBOOKS:**  
"Onyx Storm" by Rebecca Yarros  
"Great Big Beautiful Life" by Emily Henry

## ANTWERP GIRLS ROLL PAST NORTH CENTRAL



Antwerp Senior Raeley Franklin shoots and scores 3 points for the Lady Archers! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

The Antwerp girls basketball team put together a strong all-around performance Monday night, pulling away early and cruising to a 60-28 victory over North Central on December 16.

Antwerp set the tone from the opening tip, jumping out to a 17-6 lead after the first quarter and extending the margin to 39-11 by halftime. The Archers continued to control the tempo in the second half, outscoring the Eagles 14-12 in the third quarter before closing out the win with a solid defensive effort in the fourth.

Briley Bagley led all scorers with 24 points, going 7-for-7

from the free-throw line to anchor Antwerp's offense. Clara Rohrs added 10 points, while Raeley Franklin chipped in nine. Aliyah Friend finished with eight points, and Eliana Hormann and Avery Honigford contributed five and four points, respectively, as Antwerp improved to 3-5 on the season.

North Central was paced by Amalia Lawson with 11 points. Ava Gruber and Addie Burger each scored five, while Cailyn Myers added four. Despite the loss, the Eagles continued to battle throughout, but Antwerp's depth and defensive pressure proved too much on the road.

"Say You'll Remember Me" by Abby Jimenez  
"Beautiful Ugly" by Alice Feeney  
"Deep End" by Ali Hazelwood  
**ADULT DVDS:**  
Gladiator II, Mickey 17, Nosferatu, Sinners, The Substance

**eBOOKS:**  
"Say You'll Remember Me" by Abby Jimenez  
"Great Big Beautiful Life" by Emily Henry  
"Broken Country" by Claire Leslie Hall

"One Golden Summer" by Carley Fortune  
"The Perfect Divorce" by Jeneva Rose

**VIDEO GAMES:**  
Hogwarts Legacy, Spider-Man 2, Star Wars: Outlaws, Indiana Jones and the Great Circle, Marvel Ultimate Alliance 3: The Black Order  
All of these titles – and millions more – are available with a free ACPL library card. To explore the collection or sign up for a card, visit [acpl.info](http://acpl.info).

## The Paulding County Veterans' Service Office

The Paulding County Veteran's Service Office is dedicated to aiding Paulding County veterans and their families in time of need.

**There are two basic services the agency provides:**

- 1 – EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** – Provide short term financial assistance to eligible veterans and their families who demonstrate a need. This includes, but is not limited to, food, gas, mortgage/rent and assistance with utility payments.
- 2 – CLAIMS ASSISTANCE** – Provide services for veterans and other claimants for help with VA claims for any federal, state, or local benefits.

*We also provide reimbursement for the cost of transportation to VA medical facilities in our area, or in the case where the veteran cannot drive himself, we will provide a driver.*

**Our office hours are Tuesday thru Friday, 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**  
**Arrangements can be made for after office hours appointments**  
**Any questions, please call 419-399-8285**

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*Editor's Note: We here at the West Bend News allow "Letters to the Editor" because we believe there is a Constitutional right to freedom of speech. Nevertheless, we do not necessarily concur with the content that has been printed. We are just the messengers. However, any letters that attack a person, or attempt to justify a physical attack that took place will not be considered. Keep your opinion to the discussion only. The name of the person who wrote the letter is placed at the end of each article along with the town of residence. To be considered for publication, you must live in our readership area. Letters must be no longer than 1000 words, and you must provide your legal name along with a phone number and address. You can submit a letter in person at our office, by email, mail or fax. Responses need to be received by Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. for the following publication. We reserve all rights to edit as needed.*

email:  
info@westbendnews.net  
fax: 419-258-1313  
USPS: West Bend News  
PO Box 1008  
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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A few days ago, as I was cleaning out a medical folder my wife left behind, I found some articles I have never seen before or even knew she had. I decided to share a couple of those with you for this season of the year.

I hope you use them to get into the real reason for the season. Finding these articles, after 10 years, caused me to be sad, but then as I read them,

they helped me to find an inner peace and a little bit of joy.

I hope you will read them, think about them, remember someone you've lost and reflect on the good times and the real meaning of Christmas.

I often think on my worse days, I have it so much better than so many others. Christmas and Baby Jesus gives us the light to follow to eventually spend eternity with our Heavenly Father and His son Jesus Christ.

Will you take the Son? If you do, you can get it all.

—Dave Laukhuf  
Paulding, OH

*Below is one submission from Dave Laukhuf the others will follow in the coming weeks, so be sure to look for them.*

## TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME

Twass the night before Jesus came and all through the house

Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.

Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care

In hopes that Jesus would not see them there.

The children had dressed to crawl into bed,

Not one ever kneeling or bowing his head.

And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap

Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter

I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear

But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here!

With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray

I knew in a moment that this was THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head.

It was Jesus! Returning just like He said.

And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,

I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book Of Life which He held in His hand,

Was written the name of every saved man.

He spoke not a word as He searched for my name

When He said, "it's not here," my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love

He gathered to take to His Father above.

With those who were ready He rose without a sound

While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late

I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.

I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight

Oh, if only we all had been ready tonight!

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear

The Second Coming of Jesus is drawing quite near.

We've only one life and when comes the last call

We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

—Author Unknown  
Submitted By:  
Dave Laukhuf  
Paulding, OH



## ANTICIPATING CHRISTMAS

I am not exactly a fan of snow, and I really don't like cold weather. As I contemplate this time of year I think about being in grade school. A time of anticipating a gift that you would like to have. Being out of school, and enjoying the winter.

My fondest memories are shopping in Fort Wayne, GC Murphy's, Wolf and Dessauer's, and perhaps even Planter's Peanuts. As I get off the bus and enter the house, my folks are waiting. They have the chores all done and are ready to leave to go shop-

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ping. First stop is the Family Restaurant for supper. A meal with dessert, (rice pudding,) and a drink was 55¢. Of course my dad always chatted with the owner. This restaurant was across the street from where Coney Island is now.

On to GC Murphys to get a small gift for each person in our family, we even bought gifts for our neighbors. Usually a pair of brown jerseys.

Then on to Wolf and Dessauer's to see Santa and look at all the toys on the toy floor. I still remember two gifts which I received. One was a stationery steam engine which heated by electricity.

The other was the biggest erector set with an electric motor. I made things to run with the steam engine.

I still have the erector set in its metal case. I would let it go to the right person. You can still buy parts online and those tiny bolts.

The steam engine was apparently sold at my folks estate sale. I looked all over for it. It was in the attic, but I must have missed it.

The Christmas play that we had at school and church, was basically the Christmas story. The only difference was who would play Mary and who would play Joseph. These both were anticipated events, and just part of the holiday. As you get older Christmas takes on a completely different meaning. It's a time of contemplation and reminiscing.

We think more of the people that are hurting this time of year. A time of joy, but they have none. A time of peace, but there appears to be no peace. I must end with the words penned Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"For hate is strong, and mocks the song,

Of peace on Earth Goodwill to men"

Then peeled the bells more loud and deep:

"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep,

For Christ is here, his Spirit near

Bringing peace to earth goodwill to men

When men repent and turn from sin,

The Prince of Peace then enters in,

And grace imparts within their hearts

His peace on earth, Goodwill to men."

Merry Christmas!

—James Neuhausner

## TAKE CONTROL: WHY BUDGETING DOESN'T HAVE TO FEEL RESTRICTIVE

Let's be honest: The word "budget" doesn't exactly spark joy for most people. It can feel restrictive or even generate feelings of guilt about past spending choices. But what if budgeting could feel empowering? When done right, it's simply about understanding your money and making sure it aligns with what truly matters to you.

Who needs a budget? While nearly everyone can benefit from budgeting, it's especially helpful if you're just starting out on your own, if your expenses exceed your income or if you're working toward a big goal like buying a home or retiring. Major life changes — marriage, a new baby, a job change or even retirement itself — are also perfect times to take a fresh look at your finances.

If your spending causes you stress or you simply want clarity about where your money goes each month, budgeting can help. Here are a few tips to help get you started:

Dispense with the dread. Often, the hardest part of budgeting is just getting started. Try breaking it down into small, manageable steps, and dedicate 30 minutes a week to tracking your income and expenses. Pair budgeting with something enjoyable — a favorite coffee or a relaxing activity — to make it less of a chore.

If you have no idea how much you spend, start by simply observing your buying habits for a few months. Review your checking and credit card accounts to see money coming in and going out. You can't change the past but you can adjust for your future.

Find your level of detail. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to budgeting. You might start by tracking just total income and expenses or by using the popular 50/30/20 rule: 50% for necessities, 30% for wants and 20% for savings and debt reduction. Some people prefer to build detailed

categories for everything from groceries to entertainment, while others keep broader categories that work better for their lifestyles.

Technology can be your friend here. Budget apps and Ai-enabled spreadsheets can pull information directly from your bank and credit card statements, making the process much easier.

Make it work for you. Once you've tracked your spending, look for areas to adjust. Can you swap brand-name items for generics? Are there subscriptions you're not using? Sometimes the biggest impact comes from examining your largest expenses — housing, utilities, transportation, insurance — to find opportunities to save.

If you can't make room in your budget, you may need to revisit and reprioritize your financial goals. A financial advisor can help you understand your options and any trade-offs.

Stay on track. Check in with your budget monthly, quarterly or annually — whatever works for you. When life changes, your budget should too. Salary increases, bonuses, new expenses or significant life events are all good reasons to review and adjust.

Above all, the goal of a budget isn't perfection. It's progress toward financial confidence and peace of mind. A good budget shouldn't limit you — it should free you to spend guilt-free on what matters while saving intentionally for your future.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Member SIPC

Bryan R Post  
Financial Advisor  
117 E High Street  
Hicksville, OH 43526  
419-542-6260

> edwardjones.com

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## READER PICK-UP LOCATIONS

### OHIO LOCATIONS

**Antwerp:** Antwerp Library, Antwerp Exchange Bank, Antwerp Manor, Dollar General, Family Dollar, G-Mart, Genesis House, H2O Water Store, Pop-N-Brew, Pit-Stop, Small Town Bliss, **Bryan:** 4 Seasons, Bryan Hospital, Chief, CVS, Dollar General, Town & Country, Walmart

**Cecil:** 127 Maramart, Paulding Pancake House

**Continental:** ACE Hardware, Dollar General, Okuley's Pharmacy

**Defiance:** Newman's Marathon Carryout, Smoke Stop, Chief, Dollar General (Clinton St), Senior Center, Advanced Auto, Marathon Main Stop, Rite Aid, Defiance Public Library ... Junction Dollar General, Cabbage Patch

**Edgerton:** USPS, H&W Napa, Kaiser Supermarket, Utilities Dept, Marathon Main Stop, Marathon (East)

**Grover Hill:** N&N Quick Stop, GH Branch Library, Dollar General

**Hicksville:** Sailors, Vancress, Shell Station, Citgo, Marathon, Dollar General, Senior Center, Village offices, Johnson Memorial Library, Red Angel Pizza, McDonalds

**Ney:** Marathon

**Oakwood:** Oakwood Market, The Oakleaf, Dollar General, Cooper Library, Landing Strip

**Paulding:** Ace Hardware, Bargain Bin, Board of Elections, Chief, Corner Market, Courthouse, Dairy Queen, Dollar General, Gardens of Paulding, Gorrell Bros, Holly, Wood & Vine, Integrity Ford, Kwik Mart, Maramart, Napa Do It Best, PC Sheriff's Office, PCH, PC

Carnegie Library, Stykemain, VFW Post 587

**Payne:** Antwerp Exchange Bank, Dollar General, Lichty's Barber Shop, Maramart, Panchos, Payne Library, Puckerbrush Pizza, Village offices, Vancress of Payne

**Sherwood:** Post Office, Sherwood Bank, Sherwood Library, Village Food Emporium

**Scott:** Scott Post Office

**Van Wert:** CVS, Ace Hardware, Chief, Walmart, Orchard Tree

### INDIANA LOCATIONS

**Fort Wayne:** Golden Years Nursing Home, Golden Years Assisted Living, Hahn Systems, Walmart

**Grabill:** Grabill Hardware, Farm Building Supply, Save-A-Lot/Grabill Country Sales

**Harlan:** Marathon, Harlan Donuts, Dollar General, Harlan Cafe, Antwerp Exchange Bank

**Hoagland:** Hoagland Pizza Pub, Mel's Town Market

**Milan Center:** Milan Center Feed & Grain

**Monroeville:** All American Marathon, Adams Heritage Assisted Living, Dollar General, Phillips 66

**New Haven:** ACPL Library, Clips, Chamber of Commerce, CVS, H&K Chevrolet, Ken's Meat Market, McDonalds, NH Bakery, Paterson Hardware, Richard's

**Woodburn:** ACPL Library, Chop Shop, Clip-N-Tan, Country Oasis, Dollar General, Financial Partners, Heckley Automotive, Post Office, Phoenix Manor, S&V Liquors, Woodburn Hardware, Woodburn Xpress

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# RAIDER SPOTLIGHT

## DECEMBER 2025



Grover Hill Elementary Christmas Program



Payne Elementary Christmas Program

### From the Superintendent's Desk ...

As we reach the midpoint of our school year, the Christmas season provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on all we are thankful for. The entire staff at Wayne Trace Local Schools is deeply grateful to serve such a supportive and engaged community. Your strong values are consistently reflected in our students, who frequently earn compliments when representing us in public.

Our winter sports are now in full swing, and both the girls' and boys' basketball teams, along with our wrestling program, are looking forward to a successful season. We are excited to support the vision of our new head coaches in each program, those coaches are committed to continuing the strong tradition of competitive excellence here at Wayne Trace.

We have experienced more significant snowfall this year than in recent memory. As of today, Wayne Trace has utilized three days for weather-related closures, which is a fairly typical count for this point in the academic calendar.

As the semester concludes and we prepare for the upcoming Christmas and New Year's break, I want to wish every member of the Wayne Trace community a **Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

### Grover Hill Building Update...

As we close out the first semester at Grover Hill Elementary, we have much to be thankful for. Our community continues to provide outstanding support; our teachers remain focused on student success, and our PTO supplies countless resources that help our school run smoothly.

Our school's Christmas program, A Guiding Light, brought the holiday spirit to life as our 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students took center stage in a heartwarming celebration of

talent, teamwork, and tradition. The performance showcased not only the students' musical and dramatic abilities but also their dedication and pride in sharing the joy of the season with families and the community.

From beautifully sung carols to thoughtfully delivered narration, each part of the program highlighted the hard work and preparation that went into creating a truly memorable evening. The students shone brightly—just as the program's title promised—reminding everyone in attendance of the hope, warmth, and light at the heart of Christmas.

We are also excited about our upcoming incentives for the third nine weeks—good behavior truly counts! Students are working toward a **movie reward**, and when our school earns **50 Raider Nations**, everyone will enjoy **ice cream or a popsicle**.

Our school community is thriving, and we look forward to more great moments ahead! Please join us:

- February 12th – STEAM Night 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- April 2nd – Spring Program 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
- May 22nd – Kindergarten Celebration

### Payne Building Update...

Payne Elementary wrapped up their first semester on December 19. Students and staff can look forward to a well-deserved Christmas break starting on December 22, with classes resuming on January 5. A big thank you goes out to Deputy Lyons and Miss Posey for their dedication to the 5th Grade DARE program, and congratulations to all the graduates! On December 18, Miss Tomac and the 4th-6th Grade students delivered an outstanding performance that truly impressed everyone. Additionally, our student council organized two fundraisers to support a family in need this holiday season, and we appreciate everyone who contributed to this

cause. **Happy Holidays and Go Raiders!**

### Jr/Sr High School Building Update...

Wayne Trace High School has had a busy and successful December, highlighted by strong student achievement, community events, and holiday activities.

Last month, sophomores, juniors, and seniors participated in the annual Americanism Test sponsored by the Payne American Legion. Class winners were Brock Knowles and Aries Ricker (sophomores), Cole Manz and Anna Manz (juniors), and Sierra Young and Riley Manz (seniors). Each winner will receive a \$25 award and advance to district and state competition for a chance to earn a trip to Washington, D.C. Awards will be presented at the Christmas program on December 18.

We had another successful annual Senior Citizen Dinner on December 10, with support from the Board of Education, music and art departments, staff volunteers, and NHS students. The high school and junior high Christmas concerts were held on December 8 and December 16.

Last month, the Wayne Trace Robotics Club competed at Bowling Green State University, placing 7th overall, along with 3rd in the Notebook Competition and 2nd in Spirit and Sportsmanship.

The STEAM Center continues to produce projects for school and community events and recently hosted educators from Allen East. Students Kenzie Johnson and Eli Johnson presented their work at the Paulding County Economic Development annual dinner, and instructor Angie Miesle Stokes was named one of Northwest Ohio's Outstanding Art Teachers.

The school continues its monthly Food Distribution Program, assisting 103 families (494 Raiders) so far this year. Donations are being accepted to help continue the program.

Student Council is again sponsoring Christmas for Kids, with more than 50 gifts collected for local children.

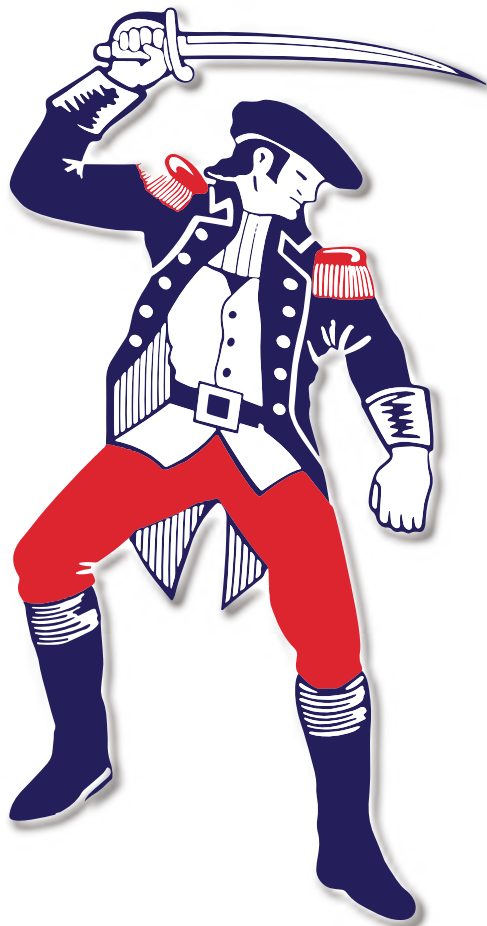
State testing make-ups were run December 8–12, and high school exams will be held December 18–19. Staff also participated in a Christmas Door Decorating Contest with judging on December 4.

Winter sports are underway, and participation remains strong across basketball and wrestling.

**Mr. Myers and Mr. Linder wish all students, families, and staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.**

### Upcoming Events:

- December 16 – JH Band/Choir Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- December 17 – Christmas Program Assembly
- December 18-19 – Exam Days
- December 22 - January 2nd – Christmas Break
- January 5th - Classes resume



### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission of the Wayne Trace Local School District is to prioritize the philosophy of One District-One-Mission-One Vision. Wayne Trace is committed to educational excellence that will help all students achieve at their highest level and to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become thinking, productive citizens in a changing global society, this is accomplished through a system which supports community values and integrates community, technology, and educational resources delivered in a safe environment by a caring staff.*



# WOODLAN GIRLS ROLL PAST SOUTHERN WELLS



Woodlan Junior Lexie Peoples has a great night, adding another two points in this shot! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](#)

The Woodlan girls basketball team turned in a dominant performance Thursday, December 18, pulling away for a 75-42 victory over Southern Wells. Woodlan set the tone early with a 20-17 first-quarter edge and steadily widened the gap, outscoring the Raiders 55-25 over the final three periods. Alyssa Anderson led all scorers with 20 points, while

Lexie Peoples and Kaitlyn Scheumann added 10 points apiece. Woodlan's balanced offense saw contributions throughout the lineup as the Warriors poured in 22 points in both the third and fourth quarters. Southern Wells was paced by Davis with 11 points, but Woodlan's defensive pressure and depth proved too much to overcome.

## SMART TD ENDORSES ALLISON RUSSO FOR OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE

SMART TD (Transportation Division), the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Union endorsed Allison Russo for Ohio Secretary of State. "Throughout the past few years, Allison Russo has shown our organization her commitment to the working people of Ohio and rail safety. Her leadership and integrity are that of the highest standards we have witnessed. We have always appreciated her fairness and transparency throughout her many battles she has endured to fight for the people of Ohio. Again, we appreciate Allson Russo's commitment to railroad labor and her dedication to public ser-

vice," said Clyde Whitaker, SMART TD's Ohio State Safety & Legislative Director. "I'm honored to receive SMART TD's endorsement for Ohio Secretary of State," Russo said. "We need to shift the balance of power back into the hands of everyday working Ohioans who deserve an Ohio Secretary of State who will restore trust, integrity, and transparency in elections, and fight for them so that every voter feels confident their vote matters. That's my promise to SMART members and all Ohioans." SMART TD is based out of Cleveland, Ohio, and coordinates the union's activities on behalf of the membership. SMART is the largest railroad operating union in North America, with more than 500 Trans-

portation Division (TD) locals. The Ohio State Safety & Legislative Board has 19 locals within the state of Ohio. State Rep. Allison Russo has served four terms in the Ohio House of Representatives protecting one person one vote, advocating for reproductive rights, and fighting for labor protections. During her time in the

House of Representatives, Russo served as House Minority Leader for the Ohio House Democratic Caucus-- a position she stepped down from earlier this year--and before that served as Ranking Member on the House Health Committee. Russo lives in Upper Arlington with her husband, their three children and their dog.

## LADY PANTHERS PULL AWAY LATE TO DEFEAT WAYNE TRACE



Senior Addison Pease drives right into the key and adds two points to the Panther side of the ledger. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](#)



Wayne Trace struggled in the first quarter but had help when senior Lexi Moore made her basket from the free throw line. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](#)

PAULDING — A strong second-half surge helped the Paulding Lady Panthers pull away for a 45-24 victory over the Wayne Trace Lady Raiders in GMC girls basketball action at Paulding. After a competitive first half, Paulding used balanced scoring, aggressive defense, and control of the boards to secure the win and improve to 5-1 overall and 2-0 in conference play. Wayne Trace kept the

game close early, trailing just 17-16 at halftime after quarters of 11-5 and 6-11. The Panthers responded with a decisive third quarter, outscoring the Raiders 12-4, then closed the game with a 16-4 run in the fourth to put the contest out of reach.

Kayleigh Dunham led all scorers for Paulding with 16 points, adding eight defensive rebounds and four steals in a strong all-around performance. Tori Schlatter followed with 12 points, four rebounds, four assists, and three steals, while Estie Pease contributed 11 points along with four rebounds and four assists. Kate Manz chipped in six points and six assists, helping fuel the Panthers' offense.

Paulding finished with 25 defensive rebounds and forced 26 turnovers, turning defensive pressure into scoring opportunities. The Panthers also went 11-of-17 from the free-throw line, capitalizing on trips to the stripe down the stretch.

Wayne Trace, now 5-2 overall and 0-2 in the GMC, was led by Lexi Moore with 12 points, nine defensive rebounds, and two steals. Caroline Winans added eight points, six steals, and five assists, while Amber Stoller pulled down five steals to go along with her defensive effort. Despite forcing 22 turnovers, the Raiders struggled offensively in the second half and were limited to just eight points after halftime.

In junior varsity action, Paulding also came away with a 27-9 victory over Wayne Trace.

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# THE LEFT TURN



Johnny Benson Jr. Supermodified driver of the 74 will be a guest speaker at the Gilmore Auto Museum. *Jim Davidson Photo.*

**By: Ron Burt**

It was just announced on December 17th, Abby Hohlbein from Cloverdale Ohio will join fellow racer Marc Dailey as the second MDR entry into the 2026 Chili Bowl Nationals in Tulsa Oklahoma, January 12th- 17th at the Expo Center. Abby will pilot the #22M as a rookie contender. The annual Chili Bowl is one of the biggest races in racing and attracts the best drivers from NASCAR, USAC, World of Outlaws, High Limit and others. Whoever walks away with the famous golden driller trophy, has bragging rights.

Abby has raced with MDR before at the Tulsa Shootout that takes place before the Chili Bowl Nationals. She brings years for experience to the team, even though she's only 19. Many racing fans have seen her at local tracks competing with the USAC Midwest Thunder Midgets. In 2021 Abby had a big win in a USAC Midget at the Kokomo Klash. She also had seat time last summer in a USAC Sprint Car.

Right now, the MDR team consists of Dailey and Hohlbein but there is a possibility they could have one more driver.



## ANTWERP POLICE REPORTS

On December 5, officers were dispatched to an alarm at Antwerp Exchange Bank,

Thursday, December 18th, was a sad day for race fans. Retired NASCAR driver Greg Biffle, his wife Cristina, 14-year-old daughter Emma, and 5-year-old son Ryder were killed in a plane crash in Statesville, NC. The crash also took the lives of Dennis Dutton and his son Jack and Craig Wadsworth, a respected member of the NASCAR community. Biffle was a pilot and used his own helicopter to deliver aid and help rescue people stranded in the mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee after Hurricane Helene last year.

The Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners MI announced the guest speakers for this year's Open Wheel Racing lecture event for February 7th, they include Barry Marlow owns the Great Lakes Super Sprint Series, Jared Owen VP of operations at the historic Anderson Speedway, Terry Dowker, an open wheel legend and Johnny Benson Jr. who currently races ISMA/MSS Supermodifieds but also a former ASA Champion and NASCAR Series Truck Champion will all share the podium. Until next week, keep your wheels down. I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas. Ron Out!

which was determined to be a false alarm.

On December 6, police responded to a call from Antwerp Exchange Bank regarding two suspicious vehicles. The vehicles had left the area before officers arrived.

On December 7, Antwerp Police assisted Antwerp EMS at a residence on Woodland Drive. Officers also conducted a security check of a local business at the request of management and confirmed the building was secure.

On December 8, officers also assisted a resident by unlocking a vehicle upon re-

quest.

On December 9, a Buffalo Street resident reported her ex-boyfriend came to her residence and left after she advised him she was calling police.

On December 12, a Park Avenue Villas resident reported possible damage to a garage door caused by a vehicle backing into it. The incident remains under investigation. Also on December 12, a business owner at Pop & Brew reported several theft incidents. Officers investigated, identified the suspect, prepared a report, and forwarded the case to the prosecutor's office. That same day, a resident reported that her ex-boyfriend allegedly swerved his vehicle toward her while she was driving, believing he was attempting to strike her vehicle. Additionally, the Auglaize County Probation Department contacted Antwerp Police Department regarding a village resident.

On December 13, police responded to an alarm at Antwerp Schools. Upon arrival, officers determined the alarm was accidental.

On December 15, officers responded to a report of a disabled vehicle near the intersection of Main and River streets. The driver was assisted and the vehicle was towed shortly thereafter.

On December 16, officers investigated a report from a Daggett Street resident regarding \$400 worth of gifts from Amazon that had been delivered to the wrong address. The package was located in front of the fire department and returned to the resident. On the same day, police were contacted after an emergency button was activated inside a truck. An officer searched the village but was unable to locate the vehicle. In addition, a village resident reported multiple domestic violence incidents that allegedly occurred on October 31, November 14, November 27 and December 5. A report was prepared and forwarded to the prosecutor's office.

*If you would like to report any suspicious activity or if you have any questions, please contact the Antwerp Police Department, 419-258-2627. They are always ready to serve the residents of the Village of Antwerp!*

## DEFIANCE LIBRARY, SYLVAN LEARNING OFFERING FREE ACT PRACTICE TEST

Students preparing for the ACT test can sign up to take a free practice exam with Sylvan Learning on Jan. 10 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Defiance Public Library, 320 Fort St.

The practice test is open to students in grades 9-12, and registration is required. Register online at [defiancelibrary.org/act](http://defiancelibrary.org/act) or by calling the library at 419-782-1456. The deadline to register is 5 p.m. on Jan. 7.

Full-length, timed practices tests can help teens build confidence, determine which subject areas need more attention, and gain a competitive advantage heading into exam day.

## VENIRE FOR PETIT JURORS

*The State of Ohio, Paulding County, Part I, Term 2026, County/Municipal Court January 1, 2026 through April 30, 2026*

Joshua Adkins, Haviland; Vivian Akom, Scott; Emily Albert, Paulding; Tamara Anderson, Paulding; Kathi Andrist, Cecil; Sue Antoe, Paulding; Karen Arend, Paulding; Pamela Arend, Paulding; Angela Ballard, Cecil; Luis Barajas Jr., Paulding; Stephen Barker, Antwerp; Caleb Baughman, Payne; Deborah Bauman, Paulding; Judy Beck, Haviland; Brandon Bell, Antwerp; Rebecca Bennett, Cecil; Ryan Bennett, Paulding; Eugenia Beutler, Paulding; Melinda Bidlack, Cecil; Tabitha Binkley, Paulding; Andrew Black, Defiance; Susan Black, Payne; Mackenzie Bohner, Oakwood; Timothy Boss, Paulding; Kristina Bowlin, Antwerp; Matthew Bradbury, Antwerp; Sandra Bradford, Oakwood; Jessica Bradford, Oakwood; Julie Bradley, Antwerp; Sue Brown, Oakwood; Meaghan Buffington, Grover Hill; Mary Burdine, Antwerp; Karen Burnett, Paulding; Justin Callahan, Cecil; Garrett Campbell, Defiance; Justin Carnahan, Oakwood; George Carter, Paulding; Mollie Clem, Antwerp; Nila Clementson, Oakwood; Jason Cluts, Payne; Gloria Coffman, Oakwood; Riley Coil, Paulding; Randell Collins, Oakwood; Rylee Collins, Cecil; James Collis, Payne; Guadalupe Contreras, Paulding; Wayne Copsey, Payne; Madison Cox, Paulding; David Cox, Payne; Anastasia Crates, Payne; LaDonna Crawford, Payne; Chelsey Cabbage, Paulding; Mackenzie Dangler, Paulding; John Denherder, Paulding; Katelyn Denny, Paulding; Dorothy Dick, Paulding; Christopher Dilling, Payne; Roger Dix, Antwerp; Angela Dockery, Defiance; Stanley Doctor, Payne; Stormy Doctor, Paulding; Caleb Doctor, Antwerp; Lydia Dunderman, Antwerp; Candace Egnor, Oakwood; Stanley Elick, Grover Hill; Leslie Elston, Oakwood; Tyler Enmark, Paulding; Jo Ann Feehan, Antwerp; Erin Finfrock, Grover Hill; Ashley For, Oakwood; Jean Fowler, Antwerp; Christopher Friend, Antwerp; Billy Geckle, Paulding; David Gerber, Paulding; Mary Gerber, Paulding; Kenneth Gordon, Payne; Robert Goshia II, Defiance; Jacqueline Gremling, Antwerp; Andre Greutman, Scott; Benjamin Gross, Antwerp; Todd Gross, Paulding; Winston Gross, Payne; Christina Hahn, Oakwood; Kristi Hale, Paulding; Nicole Halter, Antwerp; Danny Halter, Oakwood; Amber Hanenkratt, Paulding; Stachie Hankinson, Cecil; Hope Hardt, Paulding; John Hartman, Antwerp; Meagan Hirschy, Paulding; Samantha Holcomb, Antwerp; Matthew Hopkins, Antwerp; Sandra Howell, Paulding; Dan Hulihian, Defiance; Catherine Johnston, Cecil; Zachary Jones, Antwerp; Sonja Jones, Defiance; Richard Keirns, Payne; Kim Kemmer, Antwerp; Andrew Kessler, Grover Hill; Zoey Kirkland, Melrose; Misty Kirtz, Paulding; Margaret Klender, Antwerp; Andrea Klingler, Paulding; Linda Knight, Defiance; Michael Kohart Jr., Paulding; Connie LaBounty, Payne; Betty Lane, Paulding; Walter Lang, Cecil; Dennis Layman, Paulding; Jennifer Leaman, Paulding; Bradley Lee, Grover Hill; Allen Leininger, Antwerp; Shawna Litzenberg, Paulding; Cole Logan, Cecil; Derrick Logan, Melrose; Matthew Luginbill, Paulding; Lesa Mansfield, Oakwood; Carla Manz, Paulding; Carter Manz, Defiance; Stephen Marlin, Antwerp; Rhagan Marshall, Oakwood; Richard McCombs, Antwerp; Cassandra McCord, Payne; Scott McMichael, Antwerp; Michael Mericle, Paulding; Alivia Miller, Paulding; Joanna Miller, Paulding; Amy Miller, Cecil; Scott Miller, Grover Hill; Keith Miller, Grover Hill; Monica Miller, Cecil; Anita Minck, Cecil; Madalyn Moehring, Paulding; Rayna Moore, Payne; Jess Munger, Paulding; Bethany Newsome, Antwerp; Barbara Nichols, Paulding; Janet North, Antwerp; Logan Olin, Oakwood; Dylan Osmun, Antwerp; Amy Pendergrast, Antwerp; Megan Penix, Antwerp; Jamie Philipot, Paulding; Gunner Philipot, Oakwood; Lawrence Plummer, Oakwood; Jessica Potter, Defiance; Mark Price, Payne; G. Robert Price, Paulding; Kristin Raab, Payne; Harold Raub Jr., Cecil; Teresa Reel, Paulding; Courtney Richie, Paulding; Pamela Robinson, Oakwood; Harry Rodriguez, Cecil; Tiffany Romero, Cecil; Robert Schick, Oakwood; Marlene Schlatter, Antwerp; Michael Schmunk, Oakwood; Michael Schnipke, Grover Hill; Blake Schuette, Antwerp; Donald Scott, Paulding; Dawn Scott, Payne; William Smith, Antwerp; Jeffery Smith, Antwerp; William Smith, Paulding; Ashley Snipes, Paulding; Steve Snyder, Payne; Eric Sollman, Antwerp; Angela Speice, Latty; Lorna Stafford, Paulding; Michelle Stevenson, Antwerp; Zachary Straley, Antwerp; Kyle Stucky, Antwerp; Nathan Sunday, Paulding; Jacquelyn Taylor, Hicksville; Taylor Taylor, Antwerp; Jennifer Thomas, Paulding; Michelle Thompson, Paulding; Deborah Thompson, Cecil; Dennis Towne, Defiance; Scott Turner, Oakwood; Natalie Vange, Payne; Ryan Varner, Oakwood; Vern Vogel Jr., Paulding; Noah Waggoner, Payne; Melinda Walters, Antwerp; Richard Wanemacher, Paulding; Jacquelyn Wenzlick, Antwerp; Xavier Westrick, Defiance; Sophia Wheeler, Cecil; Brody White, Cecil; Eileen Whitman, Payne; Felicia Wilson, Antwerp; Lindsey Wollam, Oakwood; Jackie Wyckoff, Antwerp; Theo Yates, Paulding; Merl Yenser, Payne; Paul Zizelman, Paulding

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## VENIRE FOR GRAND JURORS

*The State of Ohio, Paulding County, Part I, Term 2026, Common Pleas Court January 1, 2026 through April 30, 2026*

Larry Adams Jr., Oakwood; Tiffany Anderson, Defiance; Matthew Arellano, Oakwood; Penny Bashore, Paulding; Joshua Baumert, Paulding; Dorothy Bostelman, Haviland; Sherry Branham, Defiance; Sandra Burns, Oakwood; Jill Clemens, Cecil; Janette Cook, Paulding; Corey Davis, Paulding; Cheryl Farley, Paulding; John Geiger, Oakwood; Ryan Goyings, Paulding; Shawn Hull, Cecil; Anita Kerr, Antwerp; Larry Miller, Antwerp; Joseph Munger, Payne; Sarah Noggle, Paulding; Ronnie Philipot, Paulding; Hector Rodriguez, Antwerp; Shelly Roughton, Paulding; Angela Sanderson, Cecil; Paul Sawyer, Cecil; Jacob Schwartz, Antwerp; Gene Seslar, Antwerp; Brett Shepherd, Antwerp; Michael Shidler, Paulding; Betty Smazenko, Antwerp; Renee Smith, Cecil; Sherry Stewart, Defiance; Travis Tumblyn, Payne; Brett Wagner, Oakwood; Reed Zartman, Payne; Michael Zuber, Antwerp

# ODNR COLLECTED POUNDS OF DEER TO SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife helped collect pounds of processed venison during the week-long deer gun season to support local food pantries. Deer donation days were held at select locations across the state and more drop off days are planned to allow hunters to donate deer from the additional gun weekend and muzzleloader season.

ODNR and ODRC collected and processed donated venison during the weeklong deer gun season.

This year, the Division of Wildlife partnered the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's (ODRC) Ohio Penal Industries' (OPI) meat processing facility at the Pickaway Correctional Institution (PCI) for the donation days.

Donated venison has been given to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks for distribution.

There is approximately 2,200 more pounds of venison being prepared for distribution and 20 more deer that will be processed this week. The Division of Wildlife transported a total of 88 deer for processing and packaging. One deer can provide up to 200 meals.

More donation dates and locations that coincide with the additional gun weekend and muzzleloader season are as follows:

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## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Board of County Commissioners of Paulding County, Ohio, is requesting proposals for snow removal at the Paulding County Courthouse, County Parking Lot, Sheriff's Office, and Water Street Facility from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. All inquiries must have a certificate of liability included with their bids. Specifications for county lots may be picked up in the Commissioners' office, 451 McDonald Pike, Suite E, Paulding, OH 45879, or online at [www.pauldingcountycommissioners.com](http://www.pauldingcountycommissioners.com). The proposal shall be marked "2026 Paulding County Snow Removal" and addressed to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners. The proposal must be received at the office of the Board of County Commissioners no later than 9:00 a.m. on the 29th day of December, 2025. The Board of County Commissioners' office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. Should you have any questions, please contact the Paulding County Commissioners' Office at 419-399-8215.

HEATHER BARNHOUSE, CLERK  
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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
PAULDING COUNTY, OHIO  
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# ARCHERS WRESTLERS POST STRONG SHOWING ACROSS MULTIPLE INVATIONALS



ANTWERP — Antwerp wrestlers were busy this past weekend, competing in several invationals across north-west Ohio and turning in strong individual performances at the junior high and high school levels.

The Antwerp junior high boys competed at the Bryan Invitational on Saturday, where Cooper Nestleroad led the Archers with a third-place finish. Nestleroad went 5-1 on the day and recorded three pins, showcasing both

consistency and finishing ability on the mat.

Antwerp's girls program competed Saturday at the Archbold Bluestreak Invitational, with both junior high and high school wrestlers seeing action. In the junior high division, Adelynn Slattman earned a third-place finish after posting a 3-1 record, picking up three pins along the way. At the high school level, Cami McAlexander also placed third, finishing 3-1 with

three pins to lead the Lady Archers. Haylee Lingenfelter, Kaira Jones, and Teagen Eaton each went 0-2, gaining valuable mat experience against strong competition.

The high school boys competed at the Lincolnview Invitational, where multiple Archers reached the podium. Gage Clevinger finished second with a dominant 5-1 record that included five pins, while Zac Salas also placed second, going 4-1 with two pins. Keegan Gray-Wyckoff earned a third-place finish after going 5-1 with five pins. Braxton Peters went 2-2 with two pins, Griffen Kosch finished 2-2, and Brayden Dunderman posted a 1-2 record.

Across all three events, Antwerp wrestlers showed depth, toughness, and the ability to finish matches, continuing to build momentum as the season moves forward.

## PAULDING GIRLS WRESTLING COMPETES AT CLYDE INVATIONAL



On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the girls wrestling program of Paulding High School competed at the Clyde Invitational on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The top-performing lady panthers were Civil Pumphrey in 1st place, Kat Burch in 4th place, and Jezai Seba Fuentes in 8th place.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, Pumphrey walked away with a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish at the Archbold Invitational.

## PAULDING WRESTLERS EARN MULTIPLE TOP FINISHES AT LINCOLNVIEW INVATIONAL

PAULDING — Members of the Paulding boys varsity wrestling team competed Saturday, December 13, at the Lincolnview Invitational, turning in several solid individual performances against a competitive field.

Landon Dasher led the Panthers with a first-place finish, standing atop the podium after a strong day on the mat. Landon Shartzter followed with a fifth-place



Landon Dasher

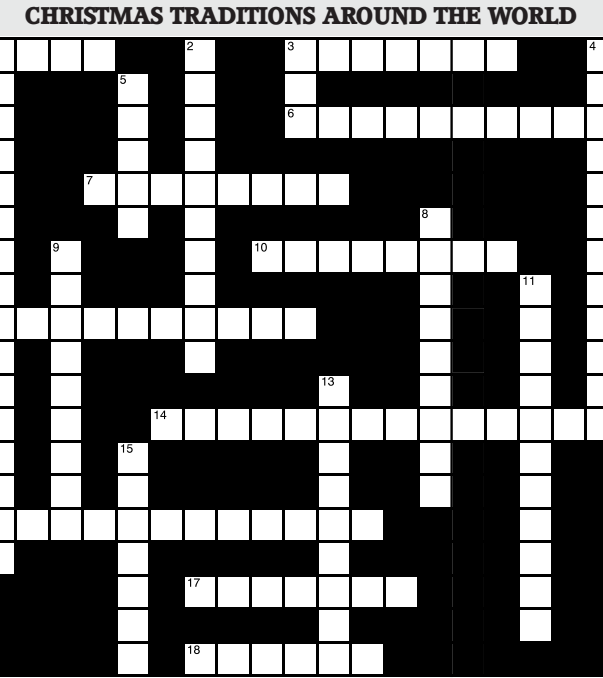
showing, while Avery Cooper earned fourth place in his weight class. Also placing for Paulding were Magdiel Lopez and Hunter Webb, each finishing sixth.

## VENIRE FOR PETIT JURORS

*The State of Ohio, Paulding County, Part 1, Term 2026, Common Pleas Court January 1, 2026 through April 30, 2026*

Paul Adams, Antwerp; Abigail Adams, Paulding; Catherine Aguilar, Grover Hill; Nevaeh Alexander, Paulding; Jessica Anderson, Payne; Lori Ankney, Paulding; Jonathon Ankney, Oakwood; Kelly Ankney, Paulding; Ronald Antoine, Paulding; Cindy Aufrance, Paulding; Matthew Bail, Oakwood; Kirk Baker, Oakwood; Bobby Banks, Antwerp; Tricia Barton, Oakwood; Jennifer Bates, Paulding; Summer Bates, Paulding; Faye Bauer, Antwerp; Carol Belau, Oakwood; Betty Bennett, Defiance; Jane Benschneider, Payne; Matthew Beyer, Paulding; David Blair, Cecil; Joshua Boes, Paulding; Elizabeth Bogart, Paulding; Tonya Botteron, Antwerp; Ricky Branham, Payne; Jerome Brock, Antwerp; Jeanette Brooks, Antwerp; Sandra Brown, Grover Hill; Annette Bryant, Paulding; Matthew Burkard, Payne; Robert Burkley, Payne; Victoria Burch, Paulding; Haley Burtin, Paulding; Shirley Butler, Defiance; Yolanda Cantu, Paulding; Darcie Cash, Hicksville; Jarrod Childs, Payne; Jerry Christo, Paulding; Brandon Clark, Oakwood; Courtnee Coppes, Paulding; Kimberly Craig, Antwerp; Shelli Cramer, Paulding; George Crosby, Payne; Jace Crossland, Paulding; Deon Daugherty, Antwerp; Sandra Davis, Payne; Michelle Davis, Paulding; Arthur Davis, Cecil; Megan Dearth, Defiance; Barry DeLong, Antwerp; Gary Denning, Payne; Jennifer Desote, Oakwood; Marcella Doan, Paulding; Shawn Dooley, Antwerp; Jill Doster, Oakwood; Lindsay Doster, Payne; Paul Edwards, Haviland; Joshua Eitniece, Oakwood; Audrey Feasby, Antwerp; Candace Feehan, Antwerp; Thomas Ferrell, Grover Hill; Donna Figert, Payne; Charles Finnegan, Oakwood; Kathleen Flaugh, Payne; Roger Flemens, Paulding; Natalie Foltz, Paulding; Robert Ford, Oakwood; Charles Fowler, Paulding; Joyce Fuller, Oakwood; Dylan Gamble, Paulding; Roger Gasser, Paulding; Dustin Gee, Defiance; James Gerencser, Antwerp; Amber Gochenour, Paulding; Mary Goings, Paulding; Scott Good, Paulding; Larry Grace, Paulding; Teresa Grant, Paulding; Debra Grimes, Paulding; Leah Gunderman, Paulding; Anna Gurney, Payne; Erica Habern, Paulding; Jeffrey Hahn, Antwerp; Harold Hahn, Oakwood; Shannon Hale, Grover Hill; James Haney, Oakwood; Melanie Harris, Paulding; Robin Harris, Defiance; Tobin Hartzler, Haviland; Justis Harvey, Paulding; Robert Hawley, Antwerp; Toby Heath Jr., Oakwood; Nathan Hedger, Paulding; Kaleb Hernandez, Paulding; Cody Hibbard, Latty; Adison Hindenlang, Antwerp; David Holt, Scott; Kent Hughes, Antwerp; Robert Johanns, Cecil; David Jones, Paulding; Lucas Keegan, Cecil; Diane Keeley, Antwerp; Nicholas Kelble, Antwerp; Devonta Kepney, Paulding; Rebecca Keys, Antwerp; Kenneth Kilgore, Defiance; Heather King, Oakwood; Patrice Kinnie, Paulding; Joshua Koenig, Paulding; Cynthia Koenig, Paulding; Robert Kremer, Payne; Donald Ladd, Oakwood; Shannon Lambert, Oakwood; Dwain Laukhuf, Haviland; Beau Leatherman, Oakwood; Jeanne Lemieux, Paulding; Amelia Levos, Paulding; Zach Litzenberg, Payne; Alexander Lopez, Defiance; Deborah Lucas, Cecil; Blake Lumpkins, Oakwood; Jill Magoulas, Antwerp; Paul Manz, Paulding; Mark Manz, Paulding; Darren Mattocks, Defiance; Darrell Mawik, Cecil; Samantha May, Oakwood; Sydney McCullough, Paulding; Danny McCarvey, Grover Hill; Jennifer McMichael, Cecil; Jeffery Mekus Sr., Paulding; Shelby Merriman, Payne; Jilene Merriman, Payne; Aiden Miller, Oakwood; Brett Miller, Defiance; Kimberly Miller, Haviland; Thomas Mills, Antwerp; Rhonda Mills, Payne; Gerald Mobley Sr., Oakwood; Kyla Mohley, Paulding; John Moon, Grover Hill; Dustin Moser, Haviland; Jacob Mourey, Paulding; Elizabeth Nava, Antwerp; Siera Octaviano, Paulding; Steven Ogletree, Paulding; Randall Ott, Antwerp; Rustin Owen, Antwerp; Rachel Palmeri, Payne; Haydan Parisot, Antwerp; Nevaeh Parks, Defiance; Janae Pease, Oakwood; Gregory Pennington, Grover Hill; Kristy Peters, Antwerp; Brenda Phillips, Cecil; James Philpot, Cecil; Caydan Price, Paulding; Jacqueline Price, Oakwood; Summer Pumphrey, Cecil; Kaylyn Rager, Paulding; Renee Reading, Antwerp; Janice Reeb, Antwerp; Della Regan, Grover Hill; Kim-

# WEST BEND NEWS Crossword Puzzle



## Across

1. Traditional Christmas Eve dish in countries like Poland and the Czech Republic.
3. In Austria, this horned creature punishes misbehaving children during Christmas.
6. In parts of Europe, this angelic figure delivers presents instead of Santa Claus.
7. French version of Santa Claus who brings gifts to well-behaved children.
10. Scandinavian symbol, sometimes made of straw, associated with ancient Norse traditions.
12. Celebrated in Sweden with girls wearing white robes and candle crowns.
14. In Greece, children decorate small ships instead of trees.
16. In Spain, people eat these at each chime of the clock on New Year's Eve.
17. Traditional Swedish Christmas buffet featuring meats, fish, and breads.
18. In Mexico, children break this festive object filled with treats during Las Posadas.

## Down

1. German towns are famous for these festive outdoor shopping experiences.
2. In Catalonia, a "pooping log" is beaten to release candy and gifts.
3. Popular Christmas Eve meal in Japan due to a successful 1970s marketing campaign.
4. Common Christian service held on Christmas Eve in many cultures.
5. In the Netherlands, children leave these out for Sinterklaas to fill with gifts.
8. Celebrated on December 26th in the UK and Canada with sports and shopping.
9. Norwegian Christmas gnome who delivers gifts and is honored with porridge.
11. A Filipino tradition of attending nine dawn masses leading up to Christmas.
13. Giant straw goat erected each year in Sweden, often targeted by pranksters.
15. Popular Christmas dessert in Australia and New Zealand made with meringue and fruit.

solution on page 11

THIS PUZZLE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



The Union Bank Co.

Your Local Bank in Paulding  
103 South Main St. • Paulding, OH 45879  
419.567.1075

berly Richards, Paulding; Jeffrey Riley, Cecil; John Rose Jr., Oakwood; Juan Sanchez Jr., Antwerp; Homer Sanders III, Antwerp; Marian Saylor, Payne; Evelyn Schlegel, Paulding; Kayla Schoenauer, Paulding; Bonnie Schwab, Cecil; Ryan Scott, Grover Hill; Derrick Seibert, Oakwood; Gregory Shelton, Grover Hill; James Sherry, Paulding; Joshua Shirkey, Paulding; Jacob Shock, Paulding; Joseph Sickmiller, Oakwood; Dusty Simpson, Payne; Kara Sinn, Haviland; Angela Slade, Cecil; Natasha Slone, Payne; Jared Smalley, Paulding; Sidney Smalley, Cecil; Sherry Smith, Antwerp; Lonnie Smith, Cecil; Janette Smith, Paulding; Rebekah Smith, Antwerp; Vada Smith, Payne; Courtney Smith, Antwerp; Jennifer Spangler, Oakwood; Julie Sponsler, Melrose; Ronald Stafford, Payne; Theodore Stall-

baum Jr., Paulding; Adam Stalsberg, Paulding; Charles Starry, Antwerp; Rachel Stoller, Haviland; Rustin Stoller, Haviland; Logan Stoller, Paulding; Jacob Stoller, Paulding; Andrew Swicker, Oakwood; Veronica Taylor, Antwerp; Stewart Taylor, Cecil; Ricky Thacker, Oakwood; Christina Timbrook, Antwerp; Tara Todd, Cecil; Joshua Trausch, Paulding; Justin Wagner, Haviland; Brenda Walls, Antwerp; Cathy Warner, Paulding; Erin Webb, Cecil; Zahn Weidenhamer, Defiance; Taylor Wells, Paulding; Russell White, Paulding; Shannon Wilhelm, Defiance; Donald Willitzer, Defiance; Kevin Woodcox, Cecil; Steve Yenser, Defiance; Amy Young, Payne; John Young, Payne; Terrance Zartman, Payne; Andrew Zartman, Payne; Catherine Zeller, Cecil

# LEGAL NOTICE

CI 25 084

The State Bank & Trust Company  
-VS-  
Justice M J Clark, et al.

Justice M. J. Clark and Unknown Spouse, if any, of Justice M. J. Clark, whose last place of residence is 101 W. Canal Street, Antwerp, OH 45813, will take notice that May 19, 2025, a Complaint was filed in the matter of The State Bank & Trust Company v. Justice M J Clark, et al., Case No. CI 25 084, in the Court of Common Pleas of Paulding County, Ohio, 115 N. Williams St., # 201, Paulding, OH 45879, seeking foreclosure and alleging that the Defendants, Justice M. J. Clark and Unknown Spouse, if any, of Justice M. J. Clark is unknown to the Plaintiff and have or may claim to have an interest in the real estate located at 101 W. Canal Street, Antwerp, OH 45813 and known as Parcel Number 12-26S-032-00, 12-26S-034-00 & 12-26S-043-01. A complete legal description of the property may be obtained from the Paulding County Auditor's Office, located at 115 N. Williams St., # 101, Paulding, OH 45879.

You are required to answer the

publication within 28 days after the last publication of this Notice, which will be published once per week for three consecutive weeks, and the last publication will be made on December 29, 2025.

In the case of your failure to answer or respond as permitted by the Ohio Civil Rules within the time stated, a judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

ALBERTSON LAW PARTNERS OHIO, LLC  
BY: Peter Costello, #0076112  
Mark R. Lembright, #0041545  
F. Peter Costello, #0073329  
Matthew I. McKelvey, #0074762  
Counsel for Plaintiff  
4807 Rockside Road, Ste. 200  
Independence, Ohio 44131  
(216) 588-1500  
(216) 771-4334-fax  
Ohcontact@alaw.net  
24-007600

## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Board of County Commissioners of Paulding County, Ohio, is requesting a proposal for mowing, trimming, landscaping, and ground maintenance for the Paulding County Courthouse Square, from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. All inquiries must have a certificate of liability included with their bids. Specifications for county lots may be picked up in the Commissioners' office, 451 McDonald Pike, Suite E, Paulding, OH, or online at [www.pauldingcountycommissioners.com](http://www.pauldingcountycommissioners.com) The proposal shall be marked "2026 Paulding County Courthouse Mowing, Trimming and Ground Maintenance" and addressed to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners. The proposal must be received at the office of the Board of County Commissioners no later than 9:00 a.m. on the 29th day of December, 2025. The Board of County Commissioners' office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. Should you have any questions, please contact the Paulding County Commissioners' Office at 419-399-8215.

HEATHER BARNHOUSE, CLERK  
BY ORDER BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
PAULDING COUNTY, OHIO  
MIKE WEIBLE  
MARK HOLTSBERRY  
LISA MCCLURE

Paulding County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## NOTICE BY PUBLICATION OF DISPOSITION HEARING

IN THE COURT OF  
COMMON PLEAS OF  
PAULDING COUNTY, OHIO  
-Juvenile Division-

Case No. 20253008

IN THE MATTER OF: E.A.  
ALLEGED DEPENDENT/  
NEGLECTED CHILD

To: Unknown father of E.A.,  
DOB: 08/01/2024

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:  
UNKNOWN

Please take notice that a Disposition hearing has been filed in the above-captioned matter. You may attend the Disposition hearing scheduled for January 8, 2026 at 9:00 AM. Said hearing will be held at the Paulding County Juvenile Court located at 115 N. Williams St., Suite 202, Paulding, Ohio 45879.

You have the right to be represented by legal counsel, and if you are unable to retain legal counsel due to indigency, you have the right to have legal counsel appointed to you.

FILED  
DEC 16 2025

JUVENILE COURT  
PAULDING COUNTY, OHIO

If you are indigent and would like to have legal counsel appointed, please contact Hannah Turpening, Deputy Clerk, at 419-399-8255.

Hannah Turpening, Clerk  
Juvenile Court  
Paulding County, Ohio

By: Hannah Turpening  
Deputy

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Smith (0079180)  
Paulding County, Ohio  
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney  
120 South Walnut Street  
Paulding, Ohio 45879  
419-399-8270



# WT PAYNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANNOUNCES NOVEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Payne Elementary School's Students of the Month for November. These students were chosen for demonstrating the character value 'Cooperation'. Pictured above are the following (front row) Evalynn Pierce, Eli DeJarnett, Finn Feasby, Kolton Eversole, Juliet Wenzlick, Luke Wilcox, Chase Seibert, Auburn Steffen, Maxton Lothamer, Jaxon Danner, and Bennett Gerardot; (back row) Braelyn Gonzales, Kaden Wiechart, Elise Steffen, Celeste Hollar, Allison Fairley, Sam Wilson, Hannah Mawer, Bryleigh Wieland, and Laylah Robertson.

## SINN TRAE EARNS DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC DEGREE FROM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

In a commencement ceremony held December 12, Sinn Trae of Paulding received the Doctor of Chiropractic degree from National University of Health Sciences.

"We are very proud of Sinn Trae, as National University's Doctor of Chiropractic program is one of the most demanding of its kind," says President Joseph Stiefel of National University.

National University of Health Sciences, a not-for-profit educational institution

with locations in Illinois and Florida, offers a wide range of degrees in health sciences, including degrees in chiropractic and naturopathic medicine, acupuncture, and biomedical sciences.

## FREE EXPUNGEMENT PRESENTATION IN INDIANA IN JANUARY

A free presentation by local attorney, Heidi Fowler, explaining Indiana's Expungement Law and local resources for legal assistance will be given on Tuesday, January 20th from 6 - 7 p.m. The event will be held at Ivy Tech Community College - North Campus, 3701 Dean Drive, Tech Center Building, Room TC-

1225. Look for the building with a greenhouse facing St. Joe Road.

Indiana's law allows a one-time opportunity for some low-level convictions, misdemeanors, and arrest records to be expunged (sealed) from criminal records. The Second Chance Initiative, a partnership of the Volunteer Center, the Volunteer Lawyer Program and Indiana Legal Services, offers individuals that meet qualification requirements the opportunity to have their Indiana conviction records expunged.

Volunteer Center Executive Director Ani Etter states, "A criminal record is one of the largest obstacles to better housing, employment, and ed-

ucation. The Second Chance Initiative provides an option for low to moderate income individuals to have a chance at a better future."

For more information, visit [www.volunteerfortwayne.org](http://www.volunteerfortwayne.org).

## NEW USDA AID FOR FARMERS

A New Regenerative Pilot Program worth about \$700 million dollars to farmers will start in 2026. The goal is to help farmers with regenerative farm practices that improve soil health, enhance water quality, increase food nutrition, and help farmers remain profitable long-term.

Brooke Rollins, US Secretary of Agriculture says, "Protecting and improving soil health is critical for long-term farmland success ... We must protect our topsoil from unnecessary erosion and improve soil health and land stewardship. USDA is supporting farmers who choose to transition to regenerative agriculture."

Details of the program are just starting to be released. The Natural Resources Conservation Service will administer the program starting in 2026 with an initial focus on whole-farm planning for soil, water and natural vitality under a single conservation framework. Around \$400 million will come from EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) and \$300 million from CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program). Farmers can bundle multiple regenerative practice with one application. The application includes beginning farmers and experienced farmers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS), Secretary Robert F. Kennedy announced that DHHS is researching the connection between regenerative agriculture and public health. They are investigating soil health and land stewardship and how they can make soil healthy again with less chemicals and how that leads to healthy nutrient rich food for the general public.

The biggest relief to farmers will come for up to \$12 billion dollars for a new farm trade aid package, up to \$155,000 per recipient in February 2026. The farm trade aid package is compensation for farmers struggling to sell crops during the China trade negotiations that disrupted and suppressed farm markets, especially soybeans. This will be a one time, per acre payment which will come from tariff revenues. About \$11 billion is for row crop farmers with another \$1 billion for specialty crops.

Farmers have received almost \$40 billion dollars this year in government payments, mainly for disaster and economic aid. While that may sound like a lot of money, most farmers are barely making ends meet, especially grain farmers. High input prices for chemicals and fertilizer, sky high equipment costs from the pandemic, much higher interest rates, and very low grain prices are driving farmers out of business.

A local Allen county farmer with several hundred acres shared that he only made money on his wheat simply because he forward

# PANTHERS PULL AWAY AFTER HALFTIME TO TOP CONTINENTAL



Paulding Senior Xander Kuckuck nails the basket and fouled on the shot! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

Paulding controlled the tempo from the opening tip and pulled away in the second half for a 65-39 non-conference boys basketball win over Continental on Monday, December 16, at Paulding High School. The Panthers built an early 19-11 advantage after one quarter and carried a 30-22 lead into halftime before clamping down defensively after the break, outscoring the Pirates 17-8 in the third quarter and 18-9 in the fourth.

Tyson Manz led all scorers with 22 points, finishing with eight field goals, one three-pointer, and three free throws to pace Paulding's balanced attack. Xander Kuckuck added 16 points, including six field goals, while Blake Rhone-

house chipped in 13 points as the Panthers placed three players in double figures. Grady Barton scored four points, and Gannon Parrett, Jalen Manz, and Zachary Barton each added buckets as Paulding improved to 3-1 on the season.

Continental, now 2-4, was led by Nolan Cordes with 18 points. Tyson Clementz followed with six points, while Quinn Tegenkamp and Collin Hammond scored five apiece. Despite staying within striking distance in the first half, the Pirates were limited to just eight points in the third quarter as Paulding's defensive pressure and depth turned the game into a decisive home victory.

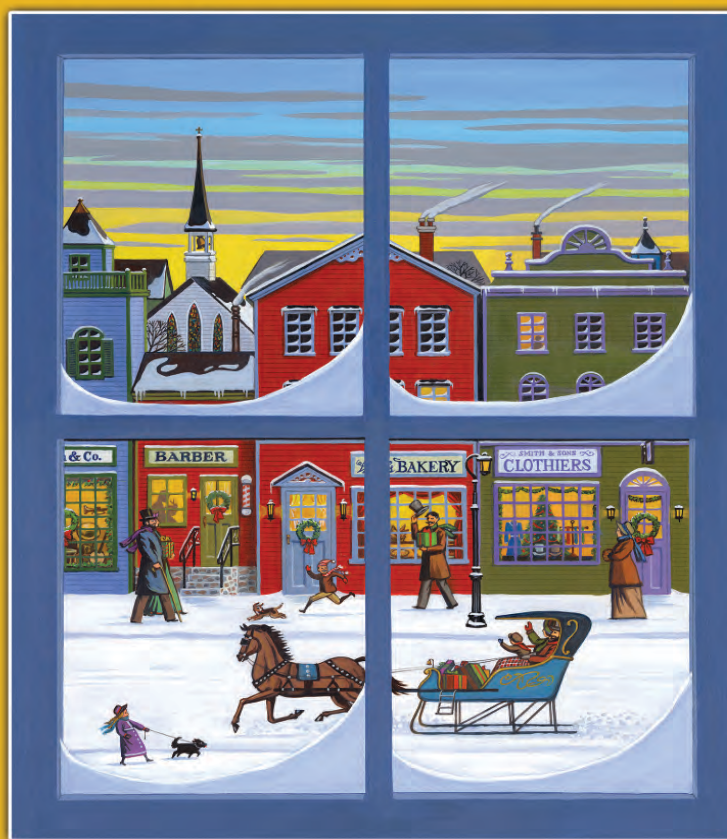
priced it two years ago at a relatively good price. He broke even on all his soybean acres this year and lost \$5,000 on all the corn he produced. He farms part-time and has to rely on his other off-farm job to support his family.

Farmers would rather have good trade programs and be able to farm without subsidies, but the reality is that farming is dependent upon the government to remain profitable. Many banking institutions are indicating that they may be able to loan money to only about 50% of the farmers who need money this year. Farm bankruptcies are increasing and there appears to be many more farm land sales and auctions. Farm aid does not solve any long-term problems with market and trade disruptions. It is really only a band aid which is short-term help.

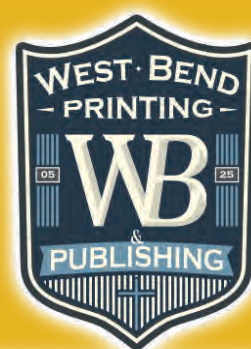
Taking federal payments has become critical for many farmers to survive. The common saying is that "Farmers buy retail, sell wholesale, and pay the freight both ways. Farmers are price takers, not price makers." So, when input prices rise and market prices for crops are so low; it is hard to be profitable. Most farmers receive federal dollars come just in time for them to be paid out immediately for the next crop.

Some people might ask why the price of farmland is so high yet? Basically, because they do not make any more of it, so it is a scarce resource. Millions of acres of land gets developed every year. Also, farmland is a good investment because it holds its value. Many doctors, lawyers, wealthy business men continue to buy farmland and hold it as an investment, so that keeps the price high. Farmers who

## It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas!



May your world be filled with warmth and good cheer this Holy season, and throughout the year.



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own farmland have a valuable asset that keeps them in business. If the price of farmland were to drop like it did in the 1980's, many farmers and bankers who rely on that asset to fund their operations would go out of business. Most people

in the USA like food security. Most of use do not go hungry because farming has been a stable and reliable industry. Let's hope it stays that way.

—James J. Hoorman  
Hoorman Soil Health Services

## GUIDED HIKES AT 15 STATE PARKS AND ONE NATURE PRESERVE OFFER A REFRESHING START TO 2026



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) invites Ohioans to welcome 2026 with adventure, inspiration, and a breath of fresh air during its annual First Day Hikes program. This New Year's Day tradition provides a healthy, energizing way to begin the year, with guided hikes offered across the state.

"First Day hikes are a simple but meaningful way to begin the year with clarity, connection, and purpose," said ODNR Director Mary Mertz. "Whether you're stepping onto a trail for the first time or returning to a favorite path, Ohio's state parks and nature preserves offer a place to reset and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us."

ODNR is offering a variety of First Day Hikes to celebrate the start of 2026.

Guided hikes will take place at 15 Ohio state parks and one state nature preserve, each offering different experiences, from lakeside paths to quiet woodland trails. Naturalists will lead the hikes and share the ecological, historical, and cultural stories that make each site unique.

Each hike is family-friendly and open to all experience levels. Participants will receive a commemorative 2026 Winter Hike sticker while supplies last.

Ohio's First Day Hikes are part of the nationwide First Day Hikes in America's State Parks initiative. With more than 1,000 hikes held across all 50 states, the program has encouraged millions over the past three decades to embrace outdoor recreation on the first day of the year.

Hikers are reminded to dress in layers, protect exposed skin, and bring water and snacks. Let someone know your plans before heading out and visit the ODNR website for winter trail safety tips (<https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/family-friendly/winter-activities/winter-recreation-safety>) and details on each hosted hike by searching "First Day Hike" on the events page (<https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/events->

calendar).

Start 2026 on the right foot by joining ODNR on Thursday, January 1, 2026. Bring family and friends, lace up your boots, and step into the New Year surrounded by the natural beauty of Ohio.

Recognized as the No. 1 state park system in America with the 2025 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management, the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft provides exceptional outdoor recreation and boating opportunities by balancing outstanding customer service, education, and conservation of Ohio's 76 state parks and waterways.

The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves is dedicated to preserving and protecting Ohio's unique natural heritage and finest land and water resources by managing a system of 152 state nature preserves and 17 scenic



rivers. To learn more, visit [naturalareas.ohiodnr.gov](http://naturalareas.ohiodnr.gov)

ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at [ohiodnr.gov](http://ohiodnr.gov).

## RESEARCHERS FIND TREES COULD SPRUCE UP FUTURE WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Trees contain valuable information about Earth's past, so much so that studying their rings may help fill in hidden gaps in Ohio's environmental history.

Trees are the planet's living lungs; they remove carbon from the atmosphere to clean the air, and filter our water. Yet depending on their species, not all record long-term environmental changes, such as fires, floods and droughts, in the same way.

By analyzing how various types of tree rings grow in

# Classified Ads

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**DEADLINE FOR CLASSIFIEDS IN WEST BEND NEWS IS FRIDAYS AT 12NOON!**

response to these distinct weather-related events, researchers discovered that some can act as useful tools in managing local watersheds, that drain water into nearby streams and rivers.

Specifically, they found that trees in the Midwest are extremely apt at recalling past wet and dry conditions, noting that using more than one type of tree's rings to reconstruct previous environmental periods can paint a much more accurate picture of the region's current water ecosystem.

"One human lifespan is not going to show us the big picture," said Alessandra Bertucci, lead author of the study and a graduate student in food, agricultural and biological engineering at The Ohio State University. "So using trees to address these gaps of understanding is really important for managing water resources, even in intensively managed watersheds."

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, healthy watersheds serve nature by helping to ensure water quality, connecting aquatic habitats and ecosystems, and shaping diverse biological communities. But when left unprotected, they eventually degrade, leading to issues like less productive fisheries and polluted drinking water.

Consequently, as the planet continues to warm and water resources are impacted, learning new ways to manage altered watersheds is an urgent priority, said Bertucci. The research was presented this week at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union.

While tree ring chronologies are often used to understand long-term climate changes in the western United States, the tool is often left out of similar studies of the Midwest, where large-scale agricultural production relies heavily on the health of local watersheds. Additionally, already scarce instrumental data in some areas can make it difficult for researchers to grasp historical trends in the region, resulting in misleading esti-

mates about past events, said Bertucci.

These hurdles motivated Bertucci's team to retrieve tree cores from places where watershed data reporting is sorely lacking, such as the Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve near Lake Erie in northern Ohio. There, they took samples from three species of common riparian trees and will plan to compare aspects like ring width and density to real recorded climate data.

Now, with updated measurements, the team expects to be able to build models that could predict how weather and local water flow will change over the next few decades.

"If we can round out that historical data and understand what to expect, we can better plan for how to manage our water resources in the future," said Bertucci. These improved solutions might include helping local resource managers determine which environmental conditions to focus on accounting for when coming up with smart water-saving strategies.

In the future, the team will work to increase the range of tree species they sample and utilize the expanded data they gather to create better reconstruction models of other important watersheds. These models may be especially helpful to farmers in the Midwest, and later on, the United States as a whole.

"Water is life," said Bertucci. "We literally cannot live without it, so it's important to protect and make sure that we are taking care of it, because that is our lifeline."

## COMMERCIAL CRASH CLOSES ROADWAY FOR SEVERAL HOURS

Defiance - The Defiance Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol is investigating a crash involving two commercial vehicles that closed the intersection of State Route 49 and State Route 249 in Milford Township for three hours. The crash occurred Thursday, December 18th at 11:23 AM and there were no injuries.

A 2018 Freightliner Cascadia driven by Wiley King, 29, of Shaker Heights Ohio, was east bound on State Route 249 when it failed to yield from a stop sign and was struck by a northbound truck. The 2007 Peterbilt, which was hauling milk, was traveling north on State Route 49 driven by Craig Kensill, 63, of Woodburn Indiana. The Peterbilt overturned after impact causing a small amount of diesel fuel to leak onto the roadway.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol was assisted on scene by the Defiance County Sheriff's Office, Defiance County Emergency Management Agency, Hicksville Fire Department, Edgerton Fire Department, the Ohio Department of Transportation, John's Towing and Repair Service and K and K Collision.

The roadway was back open by 2:50 PM.

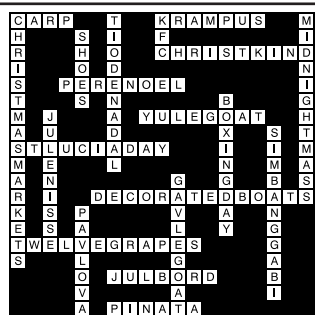
## ACPL IS YOUR HOME BASE DURING WINTER BREAK

As students across Allen County gear up for winter break, the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) is rolling out a full slate of free activities designed to keep kids, teens, and families entertained while school is out. During Winter Break, families can explore a wide range of programs tailored to different age groups — from kindergarten through high school — ensuring that everyone can find something exciting to do during the holiday downtime.

ACPL's Main Library and branches will be open (excluding 12/24, 12/25, and 1/1), offering warm, welcoming spaces perfect for browsing books, discovering new movies and games, or participating in library programs. Whether a child loves art, stories, science, or just a fun reason to get out of the house, the library's event lineup provides a screen-free way to make the most of winter break.

"Winter break is a chance to slow down, reconnect, and make memories; but it can also leave families searching for free, safe, and enriching things to do. The library fills that gap," said Beth Boatright, Director of Community Partnerships and Programs. "Our programs give kids a chance to play and connect in a welcoming, supportive, and safe place. We want caregivers to make ACPL their home base during the break."

Some highlighted Winter Break activities include:



## Crossword solution from page 9

The Studios at the Library - Extended Hours: Enjoy more time to build, create, and work with high tech equipment at the Main Library and Pontiac, Shawnee, and Hessen Cassel branches.

Free Movies at the Main Library: See recent blockbusters "The Bad Guys 2" or "Freakier Friday" and enjoy a theater experience without the theater cost.

Crafts for Every Age: Visit your local branch and create everything from pipe cleaner pets to penguin plushies to LEGO racers. You can even make toys for the animals at Humane Fort Wayne!

Teen Hangouts: Get your teens away from their devices and meeting new friends that share their interests. Activities include structured Dungeons & Dragons adventures, yarn pull paintings for neurodivergent teens and Alphabet Club for LGBTQ+ teens and their allies/ caregivers.

StoryScape: Toys, play structures, and books take center stage in these child-friendly spaces designed for playing, exploring, and burning energy!

Video Games, Board Games, Puzzles, and more: Check out our extensive collection of engaging games to keep young minds engaged!

With multiple locations and flexible hours, ACPL makes it easy for families to drop in for spontaneous fun or plan outings in advance. Parents can explore the full schedule online at [acpl.info/](http://acpl.info/) events and filter to match their child's age and interests.

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# ST. PAUL'S UMC FOOD PANTRY AWARDED \$1,000 GRANT FROM DEFIANCE AREA FOUNDATION



Pictured with several food pantry items are (L to R) Drew Shindler - DAF Board Vice-President and Paul Ferree - St. Paul's UMC Food Pantry Director.

Congratulations to St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Food Pantry for receiving a \$1,000 grant for food pantry food and supplies, during the Defiance

Area Foundation (DAF) fall grant cycle. These funds were granted from the DAF Community Fund and the Feed the Hungry Fund under the DAF umbrella.

## PCED BOARD REVIEWS PROGRESS, SETS DIRECTION FOR 2026

The Paulding County Economic Development (PCED) Board of Directors recently convened its December meeting.

Guest speaker Roni Bakle of Keller Logistics introduced and explained the K.A.V.I.C. program (Keller Assists Veterans in Crisis), now serving Paulding, Williams, and Henry counties providing financial support for veterans in need. The hope is to make more people aware of the program in the future.

Treasurer Jeff Mumma reported strong account bal-

ances, with year-over-year. Membership contributions for 2025 remained steady, and 2026 membership inquiries are in the mail. The board approved the financial report for audit.

Director Tim Copsey provided information on multiple projects around the county including the recent authentication notice from the JobsOhio team, in regard to the 43-acre Paulding Industrial Park site. There was also an update on the Small Business Innovation Center (SBIC), noting full occupancy on the first floor level and current open office spaces upstairs.

It was shared that Lisa Becher, consultant with the

NW Ohio Small Business Development Center, requested county support for entrepreneurial funding. With a positive investment from each of the five counties she serves, there could be a matching grant available. The board approved a donation to the Northwest State Community College Foundation to assist with Paulding County business startups.

A full discussion took place in regard to open board positions. President Jim States, Secretary Sarah Noggle and board member Brett Wagner have all reached their term limits. The board acknowledged their investment of time, effort and excellent service to the board and the county and wished them the best going forward.

In other business:

- Banquet Committee shared 187 member guests attended the November banquet.
- Personnel Committee will begin the process of filling open board seats immediately.
- Governance Committee will begin reviewing strategic plan for 2026 updates
- Set the 2026 meeting and banquet dates

## BRYAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES 2-DAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOP

The Bryan Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce a two-day Leadership Training Workshop on January 23rd and January 30th, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Bryan Chamber of Commerce. The event is sponsored by Northwest State Community College and made possible through part-

# MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM KIWANIS CLUB OF PAULDING!



The Kiwanis Club of Paulding held its annual Christmas party this week, bringing members together for fellowship and holiday celebration.

The event featured a catered lunch provided by Grant's Catering, followed by engaging conversation and a

fun-filled round of Jeopardy that added energy and laughter to the afternoon. Members enjoyed the opportunity to relax, connect, and celebrate the season together.

The Kiwanis Club of Paulding is dedicated to serving the children of the

community through service projects and community involvement throughout the year.

For more information about the Kiwanis Club of Paulding and its programs, please contact the club directly.

nerships with the Montpelier Area Chamber of Commerce, Archbold Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mainstreet Edgerton.

This interactive, activity-based workshop is designed for both new and experienced leaders seeking practical tools to motivate employees, enhance engagement, improve communication, and build high-performing teams. Attendees will leave equipped with strategies to assess employee skills, coach for performance, handle objections, and lead with confidence in 2026 and beyond.

The workshop will be led by Rachael Bowling, who brings more than 35 years of experience in leadership, communication, strategic planning, sales, and employee development.

Rachael has trained leaders for organizations such as Grainger, Amcor, Dow Corning, Verizon, Procter & Gamble, Sunoco, Progressive Insurance, Lowe's, Goodyear, O ice Max, Wells Fargo, BP, Synchrony Bank, and Fidelity.

In addition to this January workshop, the Chamber will offer additional leadership and sales training ses-

sions throughout 2026. For more information, contact the Bryan Area Chamber of Commerce at info@bryan-chamber.org or 419-636-2247.

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