

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FROM WEST BEND NEWS CREW

HOLIDAY CHEER SHINES ACROSS DOWNTOWN PAULDING



Limitless by PC Workshop swept the judging categories in this year's Paulding Chamber's Holiday Lighting Contest.

Downtown Paulding felt a little brighter this December thanks to the many local businesses that took part in the Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Holiday Decorating Contest. Throughout the holiday season, storefronts were filled with lights, color, and creative displays designed to be enjoyed from the sidewalk and street. Families, visitors, and residents were invited to

slow down, walk the square, and take in the festive atmosphere created by local businesses who volunteered their time and energy to decorate. This year's contest included several ways to recognize that effort. Community members voted for their favorites, local children had a voice through the Kids' Choice Award, and judges evaluated displays based on creativity, theme, and overall

presentation. Limitless by PC Workshop stood out across all categories, earning People's Choice, Kids' Choice, and Judges' Choice honors for its festive and imaginative display. Judges also recognized Keepsake Beads by EAW & Boutique as Runner-Up, while Paulding County Innovation Center received Third
(Continued on Page 3)

WEIDENHAMER FAMILY MAKE DONATION TO THE PAULDING VETERANS MEMORIAL



Pictured (l-r) are Bruce Weidenhamer, President of Rayle-Com Communications LLC, and John Daeger of Paulding VFW Post #587.

Bruce and Shellie Weidenhamer recently made two donations to the Paulding Veterans Memorial. The first donation was from the employees of their Defiance-based, veteran-owned company, RayleCom Communications LLC, and the second donation was from their family. The Paulding Veterans Memorial project is focused on building a memorial park

to honor those brave men and women from our community who served in the armed forces of the United States of America. For more information about supporting the Paulding Veterans Memorial project, please contact Lisa McClure at the Paulding County Area Foundation, John Daeger at the Paulding VFW Post or Mike Kauser at Kauser Trucking.

4:00 p.m. Adult Cookbook club will meet on January 26th at 5:30 p.m., bring a prepared dish to share. The Children's room will continue Storytime on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m., join Kirk and interactive story times. Lego Club is back on Thursday, January 15th, 4:00-5:00 p.m., ages 8 to 18, test your skills at Lego building. Bingo at the Library for ages 6-13. Get out of the cold and Let's BINGO on Tuesday, January 20, 5:00-6:00 p.m., win a prize or two. Remember to sign up for

the Winter Reading Challenge, January 1st to March 1st. **ANTWERP BRANCH:** Story times every Wednesday
(Continued on Page 4)

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR LIBRARY IN JANUARY

The Paulding County Carnegie Library wishes you all a very Happy New Year! On to new and exciting programs being planned for the 2026 year, along with your favorites. Winter Reading Program will run from January 1 to March 1, sign-up today to be eligible for prizes. The library is closed Thursday January 1st, and Monday, January 19th for Martin Luther King Day. **MAIN BRANCH:** The Adult section will continue crafts on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. Coffee Talk will be on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. Stop by for some lively conversations. Teen Cookbook Club will be held on January 26th at

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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

January 5

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

January 6

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

• Rock Steady Boxing @ VVW Council on Aging, 5-6p

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 20

• Free Expungement Presentation @ Ivy Tech North Campus, 6-7p

January 21

OneOhio Recovery Foundation Funding Inquiry Webinar, 10a

January 23

• Leadership Training Workshop @ Bryan Chamber office, 8a-5p

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OBITUARIES



ANTWERP, OH:
Hazel Brumett, 80 of Antwerp, Ohio, formerly of Woodburn, passed away Saturday, December 13, 2025, peacefully at home with family by her side. She was born on June 8, 1945, in Duff, Tennessee to Teddy and Truie Perry.

She enjoyed thrifting, camping, going four wheeling and in her younger years, playing softball. She was an avid Tennessee Volunteer and I.U. Basketball fan. She loved kids and was a babysitter for many years when she stayed at home. She was very kindhearted, always looking out for the underdog. She loved her family fiercely and attended as many of their sporting events as she could.

Hazel is survived by her husband, Donald Sr., four children, Sheila (Randy) Kinsey, Donald (Tami) Brumett, Jr., Sherry (John) Brenneke and David (Kristine) Brumett; 11 grandchildren, Nathan Kinsey, Anthony Brenneke, Joshua (Callie) Kinsey, Cameron (Ashley) Kinsey, Sara (Samuel) Rondot, Karli (Callahan) Custer, Kacy (Zach) Kern, Kaden (Topanga) Brumett, Billy (Kayla) Brumett, Samantha Brenneke and Karsyn (Hunter) Sproles; 13 great grandchildren, Liam Kinsey, Keigan Custer, Lukas Custer, Aiden Kinsey, Madison Kinsey, Ruxton Kinsey, Everett Kinsey, Jackson Kinsey, Raegan Rondot, Greyson Rondot, Wyatt Brumett, Kowyn Kern, Tate Sproles and baby Rondot expected in the Spring.

The family had a private celebration of life on December 14. In lieu of flowers, donations in Hazel's honor may be directed to Antwerp Global Methodist Church, 202 East River Street, Antwerp, Ohio 45813 or Community Health Professionals, 250 Dooley Drive, Suite A Paulding, Ohio 45879.

THE DOLL AND A WHITE ROSE

Written by: V.A.Bailey:

Submitted by: Dave

Laukhuf, Paulding, OH

I hurried into the local department store to grab some last minute Christmas gifts. I looked at all the people and grumbled to myself. I would be in here forever and I just had so much to do. Christmas was beginning to become such a drag. I kinda wished that I could just sleep through Christmas. But I hurried the best I could through all the people to the toy department. Once again I kind of mumbled to myself at the prices of all these toys. And wondered if the grand-kids would even play with them.

I found myself in the doll

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Paulding Veterans Memorial Wreaths was proud to host the 8th year for Wreaths Across America ceremony in Paulding County.

The ceremony was held December 13th at St. Paul Cemetery in Paulding, OH.

Boy Scout Troop 315, Paulding VFW 587, Paulding

Sheriff's Department, along with several other veterans were in attendance placing the wreaths in honor of fallen service members.

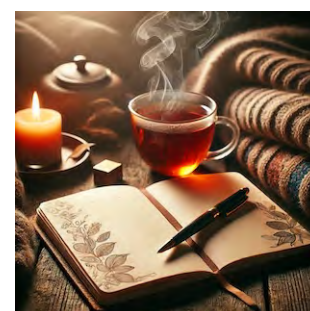
Following the ceremony, the VFW Honor Guard gave a 21 Gun Salute and TAPS were played. As the volunteers placed wreaths on the graves

of the fallen, they stated their names to celebrate their sacrifice for the freedom of all.

The support of all who came out and supported this event and braved a very cold day is much appreciated.

Save The Date: December 19, 2026.

Remember. Honor. Teach.



LETTERS TO HOME

Dotting My Teas By:

Marlene Oxender

I can say something about myself that most people can't say: I have five brothers, and I have five sisters. I was baby number nine of eleven siblings.

My mother was a writer, and she wrote a lot of words in her lifetime. She also saved her words. The papers. The letters. The stories. I'm still reading the material she left behind.

I found a letter she'd written from her hospital bed when she was a young mother. After reading a few sentences, I knew I was the baby she was writing about in her letter to home.

Dear Kids,
Will you ever love this live doll baby that I have with me over here?

I got to hold her for the first time this morning about 6 o'clock. I was still kind of sleepy so didn't fuss with her much. But when I got her at 10 o'clock, I really looked her over

She has a nice little round head like Lee.

A smile like Darrell's
A nose like Donnie's.
Eyes like Carolyn.
Lips like Elaine's.
Cute little ears like Jayne's.
Dimples like Eddie's.

She is soft and smooth like Marcia.

Little like Grandma.
Not much hair like Grandpa.

Cries like her mom - and put her together, she's a big "Doll" like her Dad.

I think I'll put a big ribbon on her and put her under the Christmas tree.

Love, Mom
After I'd read the letter, I stood and simply held it in my hand. It was a wonderful, yet strange, moment in my life. I was the new owner of an old letter. A letter my mother had written on the day after I was born. A letter

Scripture of the Week

"Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

— Luke 2:28-32

that'd been written to my four older brothers and my four older sisters. The letter was about her newborn baby, yet she included each of her children in the letter.

It was December of 1962. A time when silver Christmas trees were found in many homes. My mother had told me she really did put me under the Christmas tree, and her letter confirmed it. I was a newborn baby who was placed under the family Christmas tree.

Three years later, in September of 1965, my mother wrote this letter to her nine children while she was in the same hospital with baby number ten - Jeanette.

Dear Kids,

We have another little fat dolly over here. I got to hold her for the first time about 10 o'clock. Dr. Boerger came in soon after. He said she looks like she belongs to the family.

I looked her over from head to toe. She had to sneeze, she burped, she had the hic-cups, she tried to suck her fist and also tried to scratch her face with her fingernails already. I believe she is well put together and every part is working fine. God has been good to us.

Did you girls realize we have another dish washer? What does Marlene think? What are you going to name her? How about Jean Ellen and call her Jeanie. But you decide.

Love, Mom (over)
On the back side of the letter, she wrote...

Don't change the beds this week-end. We'll do it when I get home.

Don't forget to get the bassinet home from Grandma and clean it up - o.k.

Marcia try to do all the ironing you can this Saturday and Jayne and other girls can clean up house. All help each other (no fighting) please.

Boys play together nice so no one gets hurt.

See you, Love Mom

Jeanette was born on a Wednesday. Mom told the girls not to change the bed sheets on the weekend because she wanted it done when she got home, so apparently, she stayed in the hospital through the weekend.

The hospital bill and payment receipt are in Jeanette's scrapbook. The bill was \$126.00, and the insurance policy through Edgerton Hardware had paid \$118.00. You could say Jeanette cost my mom and dad \$8.00.

I also found a box of handwritten letters that had been sent to my grandmother Lula Bowers Imm. Grandma was born in 1888, and these letters were dated 1903

through 1918.

Apparently, Grandma was single at the time and resided in Elkhart, Indiana. She worked at a place called Tea Garden. I'd love to go back in time and see the place. What did they serve there? Was it a restaurant? I think a trip to Elkhart is in order.

Grandma's collection of letters shares a picture of what life was like at the turn of the century. They wrote about their horses, material to make a table scarf, sweeping the cellar, and how many bushels and cans of food they had preserved. They were baking bread and making soap. They sold turkeys and hens and discussed the prices.

They used the words "grand" and "dandy" in their everyday language. Many of their sentences started with "Say."

There was talk of when Grandma Lula might be planning to come home to Waterloo. They spoke of travel by passenger train between Waterloo and Elkhart.

I learned who was marrying whom, who robbed the cradle, and tidbits of funny stuff.

If Mom hadn't been a saver, I wouldn't be having such a dandy time sorting through old letters and newspaper clippings. Estates can give you so much material, you could write volumes.

And so it began. I became a writer. The items I had unearthed gave me something interesting to write about.

I shared my short stories on social media before publishing them on my website - dottingmyteas. Less than a year later, the stories were shared in a column in my hometown newspaper. Then came the books - thanks to a friend who kept after me to do what it takes to publish a book.

But say... it's always a grand day when friends are there for you. When friends hold your hand while you jump through hoops that are new to you. When friends give you a reason to write a letter to home.

Marlene Oxender is a writer, speaker, and author. She writes about growing up in the small town of Edgerton, her ten siblings, the memorabilia in her parents' estate, and her late younger brother, Stevie Kimpel, who was born with Down syndrome. Her three published books, Picket Fences, Stevie and Grandma, You Already Am Old, are available on Amazon. Marlene can be reached at mpoxender@gmail.com

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December 1896: An elaborate Santa-themed Christmas illustration for local newspaper readers, featuring children enjoying the gifts brought by St. Nicholas.

YEARS AGO IN PAULDING COUNTY

By: MELINDA KRICK
Christmases Past

From the Antwerp Gazette,
Dec. 28, 1871:

Christmas comes but once a year, but never before has "old Santa" presented himself in a more cheerful array than the Christmas just past. We picked up our old hat to start for home when the most musical voice, and cheeriest face presented itself before us. We were not alarmed, for it was Old Santa Claus himself, calling for our humble self to attend him on a "tour of observations."

We sallied forth, and walked up and down the street, he giving us good advice all the while, when he broke out rather abruptly with "what do you intend buying?" He seemed to be making a stride for some particular point, when suddenly we entered the fine hardware establishment of Gordon Bros. Here the old fellow bought most lavishly of skates, tinware cutlery, notions, etc. remarking there was such a variety he would make no choice and he dumped them into his sack. We left and entered McDaniel's drug store. Old Santa Claus threw down some greenbacks, filled up with toys, notions, perfumery, etc., and took his departure.

We ended our way down street and entered the exclusive store of J.J. Shirley. Here, said Old Santa, is what suits me. Plenty of calico and flannel to clothe the poor - and to our utter astonishment he threw down a roll of bills, all of which he invested for the poor.

Applegates was next visited, and oh! what a display of candy, candy toys, nuts, cigars, etc. Nice things for gentlemen. And oh, heavens! the little folks! Here he bought a basket full.

At Zuber's Santa Claus seemed delighted, and took down a list of things as long as your arm, and wanted more.

After meandering all over town we returned to the office.

Old Santa said he must bid us adieu, and left, but not until he had subscribed for the Gazette for 1872.

From the Paulding Democrat, Jan. 6, 1876:

Christmas and New Years days have passed, quietly in some respects, and in others not so quiet. The Odd Fellows had a supper at the Ellsworth Exchange for the purpose of replenishing their treasury.

On Christmas and New Year's Eve, the "young folks tripped the light (and heavy) fantastic toe" in Shirley's Hall.

The usual number of drunken brawls occurred; Capt. Wilkison was knocked down and his face kicked out of shape by a worthless rough.

Antwerp Gazette, Dec. 21, 1876:

Christmas Centennial Party! At Shirley's Hall, Antwerp, Monday evening, Dec. 25th. A cordial invitation extended to all who those who wish to "trip the light fantastic toe," to attend a German and English ball at the above named time and place, in honor of the closing of the Centennial year. Refreshments will be served at the St. Cloud hotel. Tickets per couple, including supper, \$2. Music by Prof. H. Thungmartin's string band of Fort Wayne. Managers, O.S. Applegate, Jno. S. Snook.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 23, 1880:

Do not fail to be present at the courthouse on Christmas Eve, to enjoy a good supper and see the grand Christmas trees; also, bring your presents that you want to give your friends.

The Christmas tree at Mrs. Pursel's new store is splendid. Call and see it.

Paulding County Gazette, Jan. 1, 1885:

Mrs. A.B. Holcombe had a very beautiful Christmas tree for her daughter, Kitten.

Christmas night, Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Gasser were sitting by their parlor fire, thinking of the gratified look of surprise that had overspread the countenances of "the little ones" as they were taking an inventory of what Santa Claus had left them, when the door was

opened and there, loaded down with the good things of this life, were Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Spring, Mr. and Mrs. E.I. Prentice, Mr. and Mrs. A. Durfey, Mr. and Mrs. Seth Cullen, Mr. and Mrs. Gil Barnes, Mr. and Mrs. O.F. Kraner, Mr. and Mrs. V.V. Pursel, Mrs. G.A. Henderson, Mrs. C.W. Baughman and Mrs. W.A. Savage. A good time was had.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 30, 1886:

The Christmas festivities of Hedges consisted of a grand ball given by Warren Omev at the Hedges Hall, supper at the Parrish House. A party of young men and ladies from this place went sleigh riding to Oakwood Christmas afternoon; also a sleigh load went to Dague in the evening.

Melrose, Dague and Antwerp had fights Christmas. All passed off quietly in Paulding.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 29, 1887:

One hundred people skated on the creek east of Payne Christmas Day.

George Shields of Latty informs us that he sold almost \$50 worth of turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens to be devoured on Christmas.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 18, 1890:

Ryel Bros. will conduct a dance at Paulding Opera House Christmas night. Excellent music will be furnished for the occasion. All well behaved persons will be cordially welcomed.

The big store of E. Bell & Son at Broughton purchased 1-1/2 tons of candy for the holiday trade.

Antwerp Argus, Dec. 25, 1890:

Tonight Capt. Kaufman Camp Sons of Veterans will give a select hop at the opera house. Invitations are issued, and if you are not invited don't go.

Christmas Weather Proverbs: A warm Christmas, a cold Easter. A green Christmas makes a fat graveyard. A wind on Christmas Day, trees will bring much fruit. If ice will bear a man before Christmas, it will not bear a man afterward. If the sun shines through the apple-tree on Christmas Day, there will be an abundant crop the following year.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 25, 1890:

John Eibling, who lives in the extreme southwest corner of Benton Township, walked to town Monday, 17 miles, to pay his taxes, and returned home the same day. It was a pretty long trip, but Mr. Eibling is a stout, energetic young man, and didn't seem to mind it much.

Paulding County Republican, Dec. 31, 1891:

The supper given by the Jackson Grange was attended by a large crowd of people that was anxious to view the Christmas tree and partake of the oysters, cake and pie. Boys, if you persist in drinking liquor, you will have to go

somewhere else than the Grange hall, as the Grange has been annoyed long enough and will not tolerate it any longer.

Joe Reiniche gave the "sports" of Tate's Landing a shooting match, Christmas. The weapons used, however, were not explosive.

They tripped the light fantastic toe at McGregor's at Junction Christmas Eve. Dancing is now a popular amusement here.

Paulding County Republican, Dec. 27, 1900:

Richards Band serenaded the business houses of the town Christmas afternoon. It was pretty cold on the fingers, but the boys made good music just the same.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 23, 1909:

Just received, a fine lot of holly, at Moore & Bashore's.

Christmas trees, already mounted at Northrup's grocery. Holly, only 15 cents per pound.

There will be a Christmas entertainment held at the M.E. Church, Junction, Saturday evening, Dec. 25; and also one at the Reformed Church, Junction, Friday evening, Dec. 24.

Bart Richards of Haviland is heeding the advice of the weather man by putting up a fine lot of ice during this month. J.R. Seiders is also picking a line lot of ice for retail trade.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 25, 1913:

Christmas precautions: Paper, cotton and other inflammable materials should not be used on Christmas trees, as they make take fire from the candles and a happy Christmas may end in disaster. Do not use cotton to represent snow; if you must have artificial snow, use asbestos fiber.

Paulding County Republican, Dec. 31, 1914:

On Christmas Day, Drs. Fauster and Huston performed an operation on Mr. Edward Haines of West Harrison Street. Mr. Haines is getting pretty well advanced in age, being 84, but stood the trying ordeal very well.

There was a nice large crowd at the Lutheran Church on Christmas Eve to hear "The First Christmas," a cantata, rendered by the choir. It proved rather surprising that a church with so small a regular congregation could render such a pleasing manner.

(Continued from Page 1)

Place for its thoughtful and welcoming holiday design.

Several businesses received Honorable Mentions in appreciation of their creativity, effort, and attention to detail. Honorable Mentions were awarded to E & R Ceramics, Fuel Good Energy, Lindsey & Company Hair Studio, and Grounded Coffee & Crumbs.

Participating businesses in this year's contest included

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

Burl Simpson Brown, I know, is not known to anyone living, but maybe he has relatives living in the county. I found him very interesting. I hope you will too.

Burl Simpson Brown was born October 19, 1893 in a small town called Saltillo near Zanesville, Ohio. His parents were Erastus H. and Alta M. (Rambo) Brown. As a child living in Ada, Ohio in 1900, Burl and his sister Mildred J., being educated not only in school, but also at home, as his father was also a school teacher. But Burl and his sister could not pull stunts in school!

Burl advanced in his studies and graduated from Bloomdale High School in 1909. He then went to Ada High School, where he graduated in 1910. Burl thought he could learn more, as he felt an extra year would benefit later in college work. Burl became a student at the Ohio Northern University, where he graduated in 1914. Burl later obtained a Masters of Arts Degree from Ohio State University, majoring in political science and school administration.

Burl was Grover Hill School's superintendent for the school year 1916 and 1917. He stayed with John Busick as a "boarder" during that time-frame. While at Grover Hill he directed the Zion Methodist Church Christmas Cantata

Paulding County Innovation Center, Keepsake Beads by EAW & Boutique, Paulding County History Museum at Village Apothecary, Foltz Insurance, Fuel Good Energy, Signature Embroidery, Limitless by PC Workshop, Hidn Treasures, E & R Ceramics, Paulding Recovery Clubhouse, First Financial Bank, Grounded Coffee & Crumbs, Lindsey & Company Hair Studio, and Shisler Insurance.

The Chamber would also like to recognize art students from Wayne Trace High School, who helped decorate Signature Embroidery and Foltz Insurance, adding extra holiday cheer while contributing to the community.

The Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our local judges who generously volunteered their time and thoughtful consideration: Erin Bustos of Stahl Stoller Meyer Insurance, Zach Gorrell of Gorrell Bros, and Emily Schlegel of Midwest

and organized a community chorus.

As the world broke out into war, May 28, 1917, in Grover Hill, Burl registered for the draft. Single, short and slender build, with dark blue eyes and light hair, this young man ended up serving. May 25, 1918, found Burl at Camp Sherman, Ohio serving with 158th and 159th Depot Brigade. Burl received an honorable discharge December 12, 1918.

Burl found himself a gal, Linda E. Kobs, born June 26, 1897. The daughter of Herman W. and Anne (Lingelbach) Kobs. They married, June 11, 1919 in Erie, Ohio. In 1920 Burl and Linda lived in Delphos, Ohio on West Fifth Street. Burl was a school teacher and Linda a housewife. A daughter, Ruth Carolyn Brown was born, September 30, 1921 in Shelby, Ohio. Burl continued to be a school teacher and school administration work until 1926, when he became a minister of the gospel in the Methodist Church.

A son, Walter Paul Brown was born, July 13, 1927 in Essex Union, Ohio. In 1930 the Brown family lived in Claybourne, Ohio where Burl was a Methodist minister.

In 1940 the Brown family lived in Brookfield, Ohio, Burl was still in ministry. In 1942, Burl had to sign up for the draft. July 13, 1945, his son, Walter registered for the draft. He served in Korea 1952-1953.

Burl retired from the ministry in 1960 and settled in Ada, Ohio. Burl and Linda lived at 307 South Johnson Street, Ada, Ohio, until Burl's health went bad. He passed away July 12, 1972 at Hillside Acres Nursing Home, Willard, Ohio. He was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Ada, Ohio. Linda passed away, September 14, 1973 and was buried with Burl. Their daughter, Ruth, passed away February 23, 1957. Their son, Walter became a minister and passed away, June 9, 1994.

... Until Next Time!

Community Federal Credit Union. Their willingness to support this event and celebrate the creativity of our local businesses helped make the contest meaningful and fair for all involved.

"The Holiday Decorating Contest is about more than decorations," said Jill Strahley, Executive Director of the Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce. "It's about businesses, students, and the community coming together to create a welcoming atmosphere during the holiday season."

The Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce extends its sincere thanks to all participating businesses, student volunteers, judges, and community members who helped make the 2025 Holiday Decorating Contest a success.

For more information about Chamber programs and upcoming events, visit www.pauldingchamber.com or follow the Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce on social media.

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RECOGNIZES NURSING GRADUATES AT PINNING CEREMONY



NSCC Fall 2025 Registered Nursing graduates. (Row 1, l-r): Cadence Hillard, Savannah Bergman, Mykenzi Hartz, Melissa French, and Emily Keeran. (Row 2, l-r): Lauren Hall, Jody Henshaw, Ashlee Lyons, Olivia Whitlock, Mary Anna Dinius, Jessica Bockover, and Mariah Schuller. (Row 3, l-r): Christopher Yagel, Stewart Willis, Taylor Boger, Kaylee Poorman, Quinn Horn, Lucas Jones, Kiya McNeil, Summer Strawser, and Madison Chastain.

Northwest State Community College recognized its Nursing graduates at a recent pinning ceremony in the following areas: Practical Nursing (PN) and Registered Nursing (RN). The pinning ceremony took place on Monday, December 15th on the Archbold campus.

Graduates of the nursing programs are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) and enter directly into the workforce, or they may transfer their credits for additional study. During the ceremony, the Col-

lege recognized seven students for induction into the Alpha Delta Chapter of the Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society. In order to qualify, students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average, with at least a B in all nursing classes.

Northwest State congratulates the following students for completing these healthcare programs:

Registered Nursing:

Jessica Bockover (Bryan), Savannah Bergman (Minster), Taylor Boger (Lyons), Madison Chastain (Oakwood),

Mary Dinius (West Unity), Melissa French (Bryan), Lauren Hall (Swanton), Mykenzi Hartz (Edgerton), Jody Henshaw (Bryan), Cadence Hillard (Montpelier), Quinn Horn (Defiance), Lucas Jones (Delta), Emily Keeran (Cloverdale), Ashlee Lyons (Pioneer), Kiya McNeil (Montpelier), Kaylee Poorman (Wauseon), Mariah Schuller (Bryan), Summer Strawser (Payne), Olivia Whitlock (Montpelier), Stewart Willis (Liberty Center), Christopher Yagel (Ney).

DC COMMISSIONERS APPROVE 2026 BUDGET, OPEN BIDS & REVIEW OPIOID FUNDING

The Board of Defiance County Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 18, 2025, in the Defiance County Commissioners' Conference Room. President Dana Phipps called the meeting to order. Also present were Vice President Mick Pocratsky; Commissioner Matthew Koester; County Administrator, Sherry Carnahan; HR Coordinator, Emily Meyer; and Clerk, Liz Stuart.

The Commissioners met in General Session to approve and sign various resolutions, contracts, and documents.

The Commissioners also reviewed the calendar of events and discussed upcoming meetings.

The Commissioners held a bid opening for the Middle Gordon Creek wastewater treatment plant. Bids were received from Dangler Excavating of Paulding, Miller Contracting Group of Ottoville, and Wharton Excavating of West Salem. The Engineer's estimate for this project is \$1,400,000.

The Commissioners met with Ben Williams and Nicole Ferguson of the MAN Unit to discuss opioid funding. They are requesting funding to pay salary and other costs of the program run by Ms. Ferguson as mental health and substance abuse liaison. Her position focuses on outreach to the community, both in education through various agencies and through direct contact with substance users and their families. She assists them in getting into treatment to help them get out of addiction, and works with families through the treatment process and other programs.

The Board passed the General Fund budget for 2026 at a total of \$18,879,098.65, which is a 3.41% increase over the 2025 budget.

The Hicksville Senior Center will be closed on Friday, December 19 due to short staffing.

The Dog Warden's Office will be selling dog tags at South Richland Fire Department every Saturday in December and January from 9:00 a.m. to noon. A one year dog license is \$24.00 per dog. Tags can be purchased year-round at the Defiance County Auditor's Office. Tags can also be purchased in December and January at Jewell Grain, Fort Defiance Humane Society, Hicksville Police Department, Defiance Veterinary Clinic, and Family Farm & Home.

Court Street will remain closed during the construction of the Courthouse Addition. The completion date of this project has been delayed and is currently uncertain.

NSCC FALL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AWARDS 100 DEGREES/CERTIFICATES



Cailynn Young (President's Outstanding Student) with Dr. Todd Hernandez, NSCC President

ARCHBOLD, OHIO - Northwest State Community College celebrated the Fall 2025 graduating class at their fall ceremony last evening, held as an in-person ceremony in the Voinovich Auditorium. The ceremony recognized the awarding of 100 degrees and/or certificates to 94 students from the divisions of Arts & Sciences; Business & Public Services; Nursing and Allied Health; and Science, Technology, Engineering Technology & Math (STEM) and Industrial Technologies.

NSCC President Dr. Todd Hernandez announced the President's Outstanding Student: Cailynn Young. Young graduates with an Associate Degree in Office Management, and is the fifth person in her family to attend Northwest State. Cassie Rickenberg, NSCC Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs followed Dr. Hernandez, and provided a statistical snapshot of the graduating class. Rickenberg noted that 87% of the graduating class lives in the College's six-county service area (Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Van Wert and Williams counties), the average age of the graduates is 28, and the grade point average of the class is 3.17.

BREAKOUT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Of the 100 awards, 75 were associate degrees and 25 were certificates. Awards by academic division included Arts & Sciences (7), Business & Public Services (31), STEM & Industrial Technologies (29) and Nursing & Allied Health (33).

STUDENT SPEAKER: JESSICA BOCKOVER

The student speaker for this year's commencement ceremony was Jessica Bockover of Bryan. Jessica earned her Associate of Science degree from NSCC in 2003, and her Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Defiance College in 2011. Jessica graduated with her Associate degree in Registered Nursing last

evening, and is a member of the Alpha Delta Nu and Phi Theta Kappa honor societies. As an adult learner, Jessica noted "To anyone here tonight who may be older and has chosen to begin again after life happened, this is your moment too. And to any family and friends sitting in the audience tonight wondering what else is out there, do not be afraid to take the chance. Dreams do not expire, and we are allowed to reinvent ourselves at any age. I am proof of that."

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER: ABRAM KLOPFENSTEIN

The keynote speaker for this year's commencement ceremony was Abram Klopfenstein, 2018 NSCC graduate, family farmer, commercial pilot, and Board Member and current Vice President of the County Farm Bureau Board. Of his experience at Northwest State, Klopfenstein remarked "Northwest State is an excellent option for higher education. But don't let 'affordability' become synonymous with 'lesser value.' Attending higher education is to learn relevant information and gain valuable insights that open doors for occupational success, and NSCC delivers time and time again."

EMERITUS STATUS HONOREES RECOGNIZED

The College also recognized two individuals that were awarded Emeritus status, an honorary title awarded for distinguished service to the academic community. The recipients were Ms. Lou Hissong (staff) and Dr. Mindy Stayner (faculty).

Ms. Hissong served as a receptionist, copy center clerk and in the facilities department throughout her two decades of service to the College. Hissong volunteered to serve for many years on several committees, including the faculty-staff campaign and Green Carpet, both assisting to raise money for student scholarships. Dr. Stayner served NSCC for 23 years as a faculty in the nursing division, and was a NSCC graduate, earning her one-year nursing certificate as a licensed practical nurse, and then her Associate degree as a Registered Nurse in 1995. In 2005, Dr. Stayner was recognized as a NSCC Distinguished Alumni. She has held nursing licenses in five states, maintains numerous memberships in professional organizations, including Phi Theta Kappa honor society and the National League of Nursing, and has presented at numerous national nursing conferences.

(Continued from Page 1)

day at 11:30 a.m.
Book Club is on Monday, January 12th at 6:00 p.m.
Cookbook Club is on January 19th at 5:45 p.m.
Stop in and sign up for the Winter Reading Program! Ask us about when you visit us.
Monthly Gift Basket Giveaway is going on for the month. This month is Family Fun Pack and it includes a Pin-a-rama Bowling Certificate! Stop in for more information and help support YOUR library!

Keep a lookout or Bread classes and Canvas Painting classes. Call the branch at 419-258-2855.

GROVER HILL BRANCH:

Munchkin Story Times is moving to Fridays, join us on January 9th and 23rd at 10:30 a.m. for ages 6 and under. They include a read aloud story, activity and treat.

Winter Reading program is January 1st to March 1st.

Senior Bingo will be January 8th at 1:00 p.m. Call to confirm reservations and cancellations.

Bonus snow time activities

and extra programming will take place on Thursday, January 15th and Monday January 26th. Follow us on Facebook or visit the branch to find out more information.

GHBL Book Club will meet on January 28th at 4:00 p.m. The discussion of the winter chilling thriller novel, *I Must Betray You* by Ruta Spytas. Multiple formats are available for check out.

January 31st will be the drawing for the monthly winner.

OAKWOOD BRANCH:

Starting the year with Senior Bingo Luncheon on January 8th at 11:30 a.m.

Children's Storytime is January 10th at 11:00 a.m.

Facebook Riddle January 12th, winner announced January 13th.

Adult Cookbook Club, "That's a Wrap" sweet and savory wrapped foods, January 15th at 5:30 p.m.

All-Natural Laundry Class is January 17th at 11:00 a.m., call to register.

Ms. Ropers Craft Class, January 22 at 5:00 p.m.

Children's Winter Bingo ages 4-12, January 24th at 11:00 a.m.

Quilt Block of the Month Class, January 27th 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PAYNE BRANCH:

Storytimes on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Puzzles for these long winter days. Stop in and take one home, put it together with your family.

Winter Reading Program starts January 1st. Get your reading log and a cozy book to start.

Books and Coffee for Adults starting January 22nd at 1:00 p.m. No reading is required, just listen to others talk about books and share if you wish. Bring a coffee and enjoy some time at the library.

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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
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PAULDING PUTNAM DONATES 1,000+ SHOES & VETERAN ITEMS FOR HOLIDAY DRIVES, STAFF DONATES \$2,200



Paulding Putnam Staking Technician Zak Kauser, Member Service Representative Laurie Ford, and Marketing Specialist Maddy Lamb deliver shoes to Erin Schmidt, Continental Elementary Social Worker.

Paulding Putnam brought members, employees, and community partners together in 2025 to support families, veterans, and local organizations through a series of donation efforts. Each initiative focused on meeting practical needs and strengthening the communities served by the cooperative.

From September through early December, Paulding Putnam hosted a Shoe Drive to provide brand-new shoes to school children and families in need throughout the co-op's service area. Thanks to strong community support, more than 260 pairs of new shoes were collected.

A special thank you goes to Limitless in Paulding, which generously donated 100 pairs of shoes. Additional donations came from Paulding Putnam employees, board

trustees, and members.

Shoes were distributed to local organizations, including:

- Paulding County Opportunity Center
- New Haven Primary School
- The Marsh Foundation in Van Wert
- Putnam County Educational Service Center
- Oakwood Elementary
- St. James Lutheran Church Food Pantry in New Haven
- Continental Elementary
- Paulding Head Start Preschool
- SARAH'S House and Victim Services in Defiance
- Landgyn House Pregnancy Life Center in Van Wert

These donations helped ensure children and families had dependable footwear for school, work, and everyday

activities.

For the fourth year, Paulding Putnam held a donation drive to support local veterans. Donations were accepted leading up to Veterans Day on November 11, the final day of the drive. In total, employees, board trustees, members, and community groups contributed more than 700 full-size toiletry items, including shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, and deodorant.

A special shoutout goes to the Happy Bunch 4-H Club of Paulding County, whose members donated over 100 items. All collected supplies were donated to Clothes for Joes in Fort Wayne, an organization that supports veterans across Northeast Indiana and Northwest Ohio. For more about their mission, visit clothesforjoes.org.

In addition to the donation drives, Paulding Putnam employees raised more than \$2,200 for organizations making a difference close to home. Funds were split between:

- Local school weekend food programs for students, including Paulding Blessing in a Backpack and Continental Packs for Pirates
- Paulding County Dog Warden
- Shriners Children's Hospital

These efforts reflect Paulding Putnam's ongoing commitment to serving the communities within its service territory. By addressing local needs and supporting trusted organizations, Paulding Putnam continues to put the cooperative principle of concern for the community into action.

For more information on Paulding Putnam's community involvement, visit ppec.coop.

Study; 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Commodity Distribution

1/12 - 9:00 a.m., Coffee, Donut & Trivia w/Kari; 10:00 a.m., Exercise; 10:30 a.m., Cornhole; 12:00 p.m., Steering Committee Meeting; 12:30 p.m. Bridge Club

1/13 - 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 10:00 a.m., Caregiver Support Group w/Susan Paulus; 12:00 p.m. Jeopardy

1/14 - 9:00 a.m., Rummy; 10:30 a.m., Bingo w/Vancrest of Payne; 12:00 p.m., Diamond Art w/Mikę & Barbara; 1:00 p.m., Grocery Shopping

1/15 - Digital Navigation; 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 10:00 a.m., Exercise; 12:00 p.m., UNO Attack; 5:00 p.m., Evening Meal w/Fedora & Fretz

1/16 - 10:00 a.m., Bible Study; 12:00 p.m., Family Feud

1/20 - 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 12:00 p.m., Winter Tie pillows w/Kari

1/21 - 9:00 a.m. Rummy; 10:00 a.m., Bingo w/The Gardens of Paulding; 12:00 p.m., Diamond Art w/Mike & Barbara; 1:00 p.m., Grocery Shopping

1/22 - 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 10:00 a.m., Exercise; 12:00 p.m., UNO Attack

1/23 - 10:00 a.m., Bible Study; 12:00 p.m., Cookies, Cocoa Bar & Scattergories

1/26 - 9:00 a.m., Coffee, donuts & Trivia w/Antwerp Manor; 10:00 a.m., Exercise; 10:30 a.m., Cornhole; 12:30 p.m. Bridge Club

1/27 - 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 12:15 p.m., Penny Pitch w/ Meadows of Kalida

1/28 - 9:00 a.m., Rummy; 12:00 p.m., Blood Pressure/Weight w/CHP; 12:00 p.m., Diamond Art w/Mike & Barbara; 1:00 p.m., Grocery Shopping

1/29 - 9:45 a.m., Euchre; 10:00 a.m., Exercise; 10:30 a.m., Musical Bingo w/Grandview Agency; 12:00 p.m., UNO Attack

1/30 - 10:00 a.m., Bible Study

JOIN THE TREND WITH THESE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

With the new year around the corner, many people are setting goals for 2026. After months of rising prices on everything from milk to mortgages, money-related resolutions are prominent.

One out of four Americans (27%) plan to make 2026 the year of their financial comeback, according to 2025 research from Edward Jones and Morning Consult. Others will continue with previous goals (21%), start from scratch (20%) or catch up on missed goals (14%).

Here are their top three financial goals and what to consider if you make one or more of these yours.

Boost your income: Get creative with your time and interests. Consider side hustles such as delivery driving, pet sitting or tutoring. Perhaps you can sell things online that you no longer need. And if you traditionally get a refund on your tax return, consider adjusting your withholdings so less is taken from your paychecks.

To indirectly increase your income, cut your expenses. Every dollar saved effectively increases the "income" side of your budget. The biggest categories Americans plan to cut are restaurants and subscriptions.

Build up savings: Whether you're planning for a vacation or creating an emergency fund, having accessible cash means you're less likely to rely on credit cards. And credit cards can incur interest charges if you don't pay the full amount due every month.

To save for something specific, calculate how much you'll need and by when. Then break it down into monthly targets to help make your goal tangible and achievable.

For an emergency fund, build toward three to six months of living expenses. And remember: an emergency fund is for true emergencies - think medical bills, major auto or furnace repairs,

not a TV on sale.

Pay off debt: Every payment brings you closer to a life of financial freedom. Start by listing all your debts and their interest rates. Then choose one of these payoff strategies.

The Avalanche Method: You'll pay off the debt with the highest interest rate first. With that paid, you'll move on to the next highest. This reduces the amount of interest you pay over time, which generally means a lower total cost and often a shorter payoff period.

The Snowball Method: You'll pay off the card with the lowest balance first, then move to the next smallest balance. This may offer quicker gratification as the number of creditors can dwindle faster.

The Consolidation Method: You may be able to bundle and refinance high interest credit card debts to a 0% bank card for 12 months or longer.

With any of these methods, don't ignore your other debts. You'll still need to pay the minimum balances due on mortgages, auto loans and other credit cards to keep interest rates and late payment fees from accruing and your credit score from dropping.

Ready to join the trend? Across the country, millions of people are committing to improving their financial situation, and ultimately their financial future. By joining this trend, you're not just setting goals—you're shaping a life of freedom and possibility.

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

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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: Sailers, Vancrest, 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, Vancrest 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

PAULDING HOLDS OFF WAYNE TRACE 75-70 IN FRIDAY NIGHT BATTLE AT THE PALACE



Wayne Trace senior Lance Maenle is able to slip past the Panther defense to score a couple points. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

Paulding edged Wayne Trace in a hard-fought non-conference boys basketball battle Friday night, pulling out a 75-70 victory at The Palace on December 19. The win improved Paulding to 4-1 overall and 1-0 in the GMC, while Wayne Trace slipped to 2-3 on the season.

The Panthers set the tone early, taking a 17-13 lead after the first quarter and carrying a 38-32 advantage into halftime. Raiders answered in the third quarter, outscoring Paulding 18-13 to cut the deficit to one heading into the final period. Paulding responded with its strongest quarter of the night in the fourth, pouring in 24 points to hold off the Raiders' late push.

Wayne Trace was led by a pair of big performances from the Maenle-Clemens duo. Lance Maenle posted 26

points on 9-of-14 shooting from the floor and added eight free throws, while Carter Clemens poured in a game-high 27 points, hitting five three-pointers and going 6-for-6 at the line. Tanner Laukhuf chipped in 11 points, and Caden Sinn added five as the Raiders had four players reach double figures or near-double digits.

Paulding countered with balanced scoring and steady production throughout the lineup. Tyson Manz led the Panthers with 21 points, while Jalen Manz followed closely with 17. Blake Rhonehouse added 15 points, and Xander Kuckuck contributed 13, giving Paulding four players in double figures. The Panthers also held a rebounding edge, grabbing 26 defensive boards to limit second-chance opportunities.



Paulding sophomore Tyson Manz has the jump on Tanner Laukhuf as he shoots over and scores for the Panthers. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

Despite Wayne Trace's strong shooting night and a valiant fourth-quarter effort, Paulding's depth and late-game execution proved to be the difference, allowing the

Panthers to escape The Palace with a five-point road win.

In junior varsity action earlier in the evening, Paulding also picked up a win, defeating Wayne Trace 42-38.

WOODLAN DOMINATES HERITAGE

Woodlan put together a commanding performance on Friday night, December 20, rolling past Heritage 61-11 in a girls basketball matchup at Heritage.

The Warriors set the tone early, building a 13-2 lead after the first quarter and blowing the game open with a 27-5 second quarter advantage to take a 40-7 lead into halftime. Woodlan continued to control the tempo in the second half, outscoring Heritage 21-4 over the final two quarters to secure the decisive win.

Woodlan showed balanced scoring throughout the

lineup, led by Alyssa Anderson with 16 points. Jenna Thullner added 10 points, while Emma Scheumann chipped in nine and Ella Gillingham scored eight. Olivia McDaniel finished with five points, Lexie Peoples and Kaitlyn Sterling each added four, and contributions also came from Noble, Crozier, and Smith as the Warriors totaled 61 points.

Heritage struggled to generate offense against Woodlan's defensive pressure. Meyer led the Patriots with five points, while Bickel scored three, Hess added two, and Bickel finished with one.

Woodlan's depth and defensive intensity were on full

ADAMS CENTRAL SQUEAK SPAST WOODLAN



Woodlan's CJ Bullock floats in the air attempting score for the Warriors, instead was served with an offensive foul. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

Adams Central edged Woodlan 57-55 in a tightly contested boys basketball game Friday night, December 19, in Woodburn, handing the Warriors a narrow home loss in a game that came down to the final possessions.

The Jets took an early 19-14 lead after the first quarter and Woodlan responded tipping the scale going halftime, 27-33. Adam Central responded after the break, outscoring the Warriors 8-13 in the third quarter in a tight race heading into the final frame of the night 41-40, Woodlan's lead. Fourth quarter was heated, but Adams Central executed late to reclaim the lead and seal the two-point victory.

Woodlan was led by Camden Brooks, who finished with

15 points, while C.J. Bullock added 13. Keaton Delagrange contributed nine points in the paint, and Nathaniel Peters added five. Alex Art and Tyler Friend each chipped in timely buckets as the Warriors spread their scoring across the lineup.

Adams Central was paced by Deathe and Reber, who each scored 18 points to lead the Jets' offensive attack. Johnson followed with 13 points, helping Adams Central overcome Woodlan's third-quarter surge and close out the game at the free-throw line in the closing minutes.

Despite a strong effort on their home floor, Woodlan was unable to convert on a final push as Adams Central escaped with the 57-55 win in a closely fought nonconference matchup.

display as the Warriors controlled the game from start to finish, heading into the holiday break with a strong road victory.

WOODLAN EDGES CHURUBUSCO IN TIGHT HOME WIN

Woodlan held off a late push from Churubusco to earn a hard-fought 50-48 boys basketball victory Saturday night, December 20, at Woodlan.

The Warriors led 11-10 after the first quarter and used a strong second period to take an 18-17 edge in the frame, heading into halftime with a 29-27 advantage. Both teams traded baskets coming out of the break, with Churubusco trimming the margin in the third quarter, but Woodlan stayed composed down the stretch and closed out the two-point win at the free-

throw line and with key defensive stops.

Woodlan was led by Brooks, who finished with a game-high 18 points. Delagrange added 11 points, while Friend chipped in six. Art contributed seven points, Bullock added two, and Klepper and Peters rounded out the scoring as Woodlan finished with 12 field goals on the night.

Churubusco was paced by C. Tonkel with 17 points, while J. Morales followed with 11. C. Behling added nine points and M. Serrano scored seven as the Eagles kept pressure on the Warriors throughout the contest.

The game featured multiple lead changes and remained a one-possession affair deep into the fourth quarter, but Woodlan's balanced scoring and ability to answer key baskets proved to be the difference.

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EDON OPENS ROUTE 49 TOURNAMENT WITH WIN OVER ANTWERP; EDGERTON EDGES HICKSVILLE



Antwerp sophomore ELIANA HORMANN is fouled on the shot and sent to the line! More pictures at engagingexposures.com



Sophomore Devony Mull drives in and adds two more points to the Aces with Edgerton senior Alivia Farnham attempting to block the shot. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

The annual High School Girls Route 49 Basketball Tournament tipped off Monday night, December 22 at the Hicksville gym, bringing together schools along State Route 49 — Antwerp, Hicksville, Edon, and Edgerton — in a pre-Christmas tradition that returns each season.

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ing the lead to 27-22 at half-time. A strong defensive effort in the second half limited Antwerp to just eight total points over the final two quarters as Edon steadily widened the margin.

Edon was led by Nevaeh Smith, who finished with a game-high 14 points. Balanced scoring also came from Genna Ripke with seven points, along with Grace Ripke, Addison Briner, and Addi Snyder, who each added six or seven points in the win. The Bombers finished with 18 field goals and nine free throws.

Antwerp was paced by Aliyah Friend, who scored 15 of the Archers' 30 points. Briley Bagley added five points, while Raeley Franklin chipped in six. Despite staying close through the first half, Antwerp struggled offensively against Edon's pressure defense after the break.

The nightcap featured a tightly contested matchup between Edgerton and Hicksville, with the Bulldogs coming away with a 40-34 win over the Aces.

Tournament play continues following the holiday, as the Route 49 schools compete once again in the Boys division for local bragging rights in this longstanding seasonal event.

DELPHOS JEFFERSON PULLS AWAY FROM ANTWERP

Delphos Jefferson used its size and shooting efficiency to pull away from Antwerp for a 58-38 boys basketball victory Saturday night, December 20.

The Wildcats jumped out to an early lead and took control by halftime, holding a 27-13 advantage at the break. Antwerp battled in the second half, but Delphos Jefferson continued to find success offensively, outscoring the Archers 31-25 after halftime to secure the win.

Delphos Jefferson shot 51 percent from the field and controlled the glass, out-rebounding Antwerp 31-22. The Wildcats were also able to capitalize on second-chance opportunities, while Antwerp struggled from the floor, finishing at 26 percent shooting for the game. Turnovers were nearly even, with Antwerp committing five and Delphos Jefferson six.

Zaine McMichael led Antwerp with 18 points, accounting for nearly half of the Archers' offense. Weston Rhonehouse added four points, while Hampton Rogge and Brayden Fuller each scored five. Lincoln Lucas, Noah Lucas, and Riley Smith also contributed as Antwerp worked to keep pace against the Wildcats' balanced attack.

Delphos Jefferson was led by G. Howell with 24 points. I. Rostorfer added 13 points, while N. Miller finished with nine. K. Cader chipped in six and J. Harder added six as the Wildcats placed multiple players in the scoring column.

With the loss, Antwerp dropped to 2-5 on the season, while Delphos Jefferson improved to 3-3.

Antwerp did earn a win at the junior varsity level, edging Delphos Jefferson 57-52 to split the night.

WAYNE TRACE EARNS FIVE PLACERS AT LINCOLNVIEW WRESTLING TOURNAMENT



Pictured here are the Invite placers: Brandon Hire (3rd), Colton Kimmel (1st), Ben Gurney (1st), Camden Kimmel (1st), and Dylan Hershberger (4th). Photo by Carrie Kimmel

The Wayne Trace Raiders opened their wrestling season in dominant fashion at the Lincolnview Invitational, bringing home five placers—including three champions. Camden Kimmel (113), Colton Kimmel (120), and Benjamin Gurney (132) each captured titles, while Brandon Hire finished 3rd at 113 and Dylan Hershberger placed 4th at 175.

In the 113-pound weight class, Camden Kimmel controlled the mat from start to finish. He opened the day with a 1:00 pin over Brentley Linderman (Delphos St. John's), followed by a 28-second fall against Eli Guilford (Hicksville) and a 1:17 pin over Heath Calvelage (Van Wert). Kimmel then defeated teammate Brandon Hire by tech fall, 15-0, before shutting out Grant Grubb (Crestview) 6-0 in the championship match to secure the title.

Also at 113, Brandon Hire began his day with a 5:39 pin

over Joshua Franklin (Hicksville). After falling to Grubb by tech fall (20-5), Hire rebounded with a 3-1 win over Dylan Melson (Shawnee). He later faced teammate Camden Kimmel before finishing the day with a 2:27 pin over Heath Calvelage to claim third place.

In the 120-pound division, Colton Kimmel powered his way to the finals with four straight pins: 1:48 over Eliza Lawrence (Wapakoneta), 1:26 over Kanon Freed (Hicksville), 41 seconds against Max Wagner (Van Buren), and 22 seconds over Landon Shartzter (Paulding). He capped off his championship run with a 21-4 tech fall victory over Gabe Ditto (Shawnee).

At 132 pounds, Ben Gurney delivered one of the day's most impressive performances. He opened with a 31-second pin over Cory Wannemacher (Spencerville) and a 38-second fall against

Owen Eichman (Van Buren). Gurney continued his streak with a 1:37 pin over Noah Calvelage (Delphos St. John's) before securing the championship with a 1:48 fall against Karson Crites of Hicksville.

Sophomore Dylan Hershberger added a fourth-place finish at 175 pounds. Hershberger pinned Aiden Delgado (Van Wert) in 1:00, followed by a 1:11 fall over Ivan Martinez (Paulding) and a 3:33 pin against Gabe Myers (Shawnee). He was later defeated by Jaden Green (Parkview) and fell in the placement match to Tommy Basinger (Van Buren).

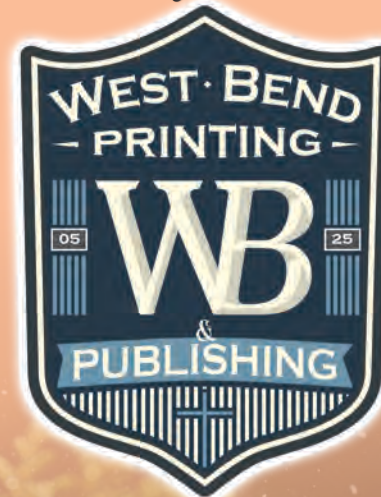
Other Wayne Trace competitors included Seth Ross-wurm (1-2), Waylon McCord (2-2), Nathan Benschneider, and Evan Benschneider.

It was a strong season opener for the Raider wrestlers, who look to build on this momentum throughout the year! Good luck, Raiders!

May your 2026 be Merry and Bright!

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The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

—Numbers 6:24-26

OHIO STATE LIMA ANNOUNCES NORTHWEST CONFERENCE SCHOLASTIC BOWL TOURNAMENT 2025 RESULTS



Varsity Winner, Columbus Grove: Pictured above are (front row, l-r) Laney Auchmuty, Lylah Wilson, Autumn Stechschulte, Avery Birnesser, Anastacia Gratz, Nick Johnson, and Kellan McCluer; (back row, l-r) Connor O'Sullivan, Alexis Kohli, Lily Montgomery, Simon Zimmerly, and Will Horstman.



All-Tournament Team: Pictured above are (from left) Cole Kruger, Daphne Johnston, Simon Zimmerly, Noah Mosier, Alex Groch and Nathaniel Bontrager. Not pictured: Sam Goubeaux and Dante Turney.



JV Winner, Fort Loramie: Pictured above are (l-r) Evan Meyer, Sophia Werner, Liza Poeppelman, Addison Turner, and Will Rethman.

Columbus Grove took home top honors at the 2025 Northwest Conference Scholastic Bowl Tournament held Friday, December 19, at The Ohio State University at Lima. Crestview was runner-up in varsity competition. Fort Loramie won the junior varsity division in their first appearance at the tournament and Bluffton was runner-up.

The winning varsity team from Columbus Grove included Laney Auchmuty, Avery Birnesser, Anastacia Gratz, Will Horstman, Nick Johnson, Alexis Kohli, Kellan McCluer, Lily Montgomery, Connor O'Sullivan, Autumn Stechschulte, Lylah Wilson and Simon Zimmerly. The team finished with a 7-0 record to win the tournament by one point in head-to-head competition with the runner-up team. The runner-up varsity team from Crestview finished with a 6-1 record and

included Noah Mosier, Brentyn Rodriguez, Harold Smacenko and Caleb Thomas.

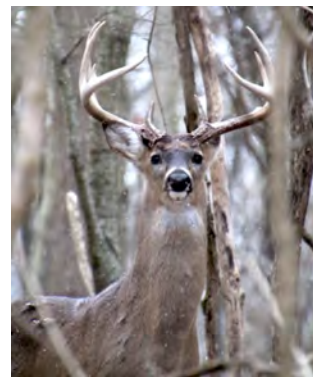
The winning JV team from Fort Loramie included Evan Meyer, Liza Poeppelman, Will Rethman, Addison Turner and Sophia Werner. The team finished with a 4-0 record. The runner-up JV team from Bluffton included Calliope Buckell, Caleb Kantner, Aubrey Maag and Alexis Mummert. Their record was 3-1.

The Columbus Grove coach is John Vennekotter. Crestview is Felicia Kowalski, Fort Loramie is Julie Goldschmidt and Bluffton is Brigitte Hoff.

The Northwest Conference Scholastic Bowl All Tournament Team was chosen by the coaches and made up of one member from each school. The 2025 All Tournament Team members are Cole Kruger from Allen East, Daphne Johnston from

Bluffton, Simon Zimmerly from Columbus Grove, Noah Mosier from Crestview, Alex Groch from Delphos Jefferson, Sam Goubeaux from Fort Loramie, Dante Turney from Lima Central Catholic and Nathaniel Bontrager from Spencerville. Zimmerly repeated as a member of the All Tourney Team for the third time.

High school teams went head-to-head in the round-robin scholastic bowl tournament. Varsity and junior varsity teams from Allen East (Kristin Dixon), Bluffton (Brigitte Hoff), Columbus Grove (John Vennekotter),



OHIO HUNTERS CHECK 15,835 DEER DURING DECEMBER GUN HUNTING WEEKEND

Hunters checked 15,835 white-tailed deer on Saturday and Sunday, December 20-21, during Ohio's gun hunting weekend, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. Last year, hunters took 17,386 deer during the bonus gun weekend, and the three-year average is 16,010.

This season the Division of Wildlife has increased its efforts to help hunters donate their deer to food pantries. Thus far, more than 3,350 pounds of processed venison has been donated by hunters. For more details on how to donate deer, visit wildohio.gov (<https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/hunting-fishing-boating/hunting-resources/donate-venison>).



Varsity Runner-Up, Crestview: Pictured above are (l-r) Brentyn Rodriguez, Caleb Thomas, Noah Mosier, and Harold Smacenko.



JV Runner-up, Bluffton: Pictured above (l-r) Calliope Buckell, Caleb Kantner, Alexis Mummert, and Aubrey Maag.

Crestview (Felicia Kowalski), Delphos Jefferson (Rebekah Dubey and Melanie Stanton), Fort Loramie (Julie Goldschmidt), Lima Central Catholic (Bonnie Brunelle)

and Spencerville (Joshua Vasquez) competed. Coaches' names are in parentheses.

The competition is hosted and sponsored by The Ohio State University at Lima.

boating/hunting-resources/donate-venison).

Ohio hunters checked 15,835 deer during the gun hunting weekend, Dec. 20-21.

The Division of Wildlife annually reports deer harvest totals at notable points during the hunting season. During the gun weekend, hunters reported 4,039 antlered deer (26% of the total) and 11,796 antlerless deer (74%).

The top 10 counties for deer taken during the 2025 gun weekend were: 1. Coshocton (576); 2. Ashtabula (551); 3. Knox (477); 4. Tuscarawas (471); 5. Columbiana (430); 6. Carroll (427); 7. Muskingum (398); 8. Ashland (391); 9. Richland (387); 10. Licking (381)

Totals for this hunting season are lower than average in Athens, Meigs, Morgan, and Washington counties as a result of an unprecedented outbreak of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) in that region over the summer. Coinciding with the start of the seven-day gun season, the bag limit in those counties was reduced in response to the disease outbreak.

Legal hunting equipment during the deer gun season included specific shotguns, straight-walled cartridge rifles, muzzleloaders, handguns, and archery equipment. Deer checked by hunting implement includes:

1. Straight-walled cartridge rifle, 69% (10,900 deer)
2. Shotgun, 24% (3,821 deer)
3. Muzzleloader, 4% (615 deer)
4. Archery equipment, 3% (401 deer)
5. Handgun, less than 1% (98 deer)

Hunters have checked 111,042 deer during nine days of gun hunting and two days of the youth season. Youth hunters checked 9,759 deer on Nov. 22-23, and the weeklong gun season total was 85,448. The season total for deer checked through Sunday, Dec. 21 is 206,583, which includes all deer taken with archery equipment and firearms since the season began in September.

PAULDING ROLLS PAST NORTH CENTRAL

Paulding turned in a dominant performance on Monday night, December 22, pulling away early and never looking back in an 82-35 boys basketball victory over North Central at Paulding.

The Panthers set the tone from the opening tip, building a 22-9 advantage by the end of the first quarter and extending the lead to 49-19 at halftime. Paulding continued to apply pressure on both ends of the floor in the second half, outscoring North Central 33-16 after the break to seal the lopsided win.

Paulding showcased balanced scoring throughout the lineup. T. Manz led the Panthers with 21 points, while G. Parrett added 8 and G. Barton chipped in 16. J. Manz and X. Kuckuck each finished with eight points, and T. Goyngs contributed seven. B. Rhonehouse scored five, with M. Daeger, J. Stitler, and Z. Barton rounding out the scoring as Paulding totaled 29 field goals on the night.

North Central struggled to keep pace offensively against Paulding's defensive pressure. Zack Whitley led the Eagles with 11 points, while Jackson Poynter added seven and Thane Martin finished with six. Kendon Brigle scored four, and Tyler Meyers, Briggs Fiser, and Alex St. John each added two as North Central was limited to 35 points for the game.

TINORA EDGES ANTWERP IN CONFERENCE OPENER

Tinora used a strong first and third quarter to hold off Antwerp, 42-38, Friday night in Green Meadows Conference boys basketball action on December 19. The Rams jumped out to a 14-10 lead after the opening quarter, but Antwerp answered with a 12-6 advantage in the second to take a 22-20 edge into halftime. Tinora regained momentum after the break, outscoring the Archers 11-4 in the third quarter before both teams finished even in the fourth.

Tinora shot efficiently throughout the night and finished at 53 percent from the field, while also winning the rebounding battle 18-13. Antwerp kept the game close by taking care of the basketball, committing just six turnovers and forcing 13 by the Rams, but struggled to find consistent offense in the second half.

Josh Lieb led Tinora with 15 points, going 3-for-3 at the free throw line. Dylan Schaufele added 11 points, while Grant Lymanstall chipped in eight. Parker Hancock scored four points, and Owen Ferrell finished with four to round out the Rams' scoring.

Antwerp was led by Zaine McMichael, who poured in 18 points and added five free throws in a strong all-around effort. Weston Rhonehouse

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followed with 10 points, while Hampton Rogge and Brayden Fuller scored five points apiece. The Archers were limited to eight field goals on the night but stayed within striking distance until the final minutes.

With the loss, Antwerp slipped to 2-4 overall and 0-1 in GMC play, while Tinora improved to 4-3 overall and 1-0 in conference action.

In the junior varsity contest, Antwerp earned a 47-36 victory over Tinora.

HUSTED VISITS WIELAND RANDALL IN LIMA, DISCUSSES HIS WORK FOR OHIO MANUFACTURERS



Sen. Jon Husted (R-Ohio) today traveled to Lima where he met with Wieland Randall leadership and employees, visited their facilities and discussed how his work on the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, along with this year's Working Families Tax Cuts Act will contribute to continued growth and success for the company and its workers.

"Ohio remains a national leader in manufacturing—it's the engine that keeps our economy and our country moving forward. I appreciated the opportunity to be in Lima to see firsthand the innovative work being done at Wieland Randall and to meet the skilled Ohioans behind it. I'm committed to taking the feedback I hear from Ohio job creators back to the Senate to ensure Ohio's continued leadership position in manufacturing on a global scale," said Husted.

Wieland Randall manufactures cast bronze machined parts serving the aerospace, defense, agriculture, distribution, fluid power, heavy equipment, oil and gas and transportation industries. The company's Lima facility is supported by a dedicated local workforce and is part of Wieland Randall's broader North American and European operations.

Husted has been a strong advocate for Ohio job creators, visiting more than 10 manufacturing facilities across the state this year alone. He supported Workforce Pell in the Working Families Tax

Cuts Act to make short term career training and education programs more affordable by expanding access to Pell Grants. This will allow more students to become career ready with in demand and industry recognized credentials.

In the Senate, Husted is working to strengthen Ohio's workforce:

- He introduced the bipartisan Food Eligibility for Education and Development (FEED) Act to update Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility rules so students aged 18 to 21 enrolled in approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs can work part-time without their earnings counting against their or their families' current SNAP benefits.

- He also recently introduced the DECIDE Act and the Student Debt Alternative and CTE Awareness Act to give students and families tools to make informed decisions about their futures and avoid crushing debt.

- He worked to create market-driven solutions for truckers through his Resilient Tire Supply and Jobs Act. This bill would create a tax credit for consumers who purchase tires retreaded in America.

ROLLINS, CHAVEZ-DEREMER PLEDGE NEW STRATEGIES TO REDUCE WELFARE AND EXPAND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins and U.S. Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (PDF, 258 KB) to fulfill common goals of helping low-income workers find sustainable employment.

"President Trump's entire cabinet is working everyday to ensure hardworking Americans can enter the workforce – and have the skills necessary to succeed in our booming economy," said Secretary Brooke Rollins. "Connecting low-income Americans, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, to education and employment opportunities is so important. This MOU signifies how our two agencies can further collaborate and use one another's resources to not only help individuals attain career and technical education, but secure and retain employment. This also complements President Trump's vision in the One Big Beautiful Bill, making certain work-capable individuals work, train, or volunteer for at least 80 hours per month. I thank Secretary Chavez-DeRemer for her commitment and partnership in moving more individuals from the sidelines to the workforce."

"Connecting more Americans with sustainable jobs is a critical responsibility of the Department of Labor," said Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer. "I'm honored to partner with Secretary Rollins on this effort to streamline pathways to the workforce for men and women in need of a hand-up – not a hand-out. Empowering more Americans to become self-sufficient will grow our workforce and strengthen our economy."

This partnership will help USDOL and USDA fulfill the common goals of helping low-income workers find sustainable employment, reducing dependency on public benefits, and maximizing the value to the American taxpayer.

PAULDING COUNTY COURT RECORDS

Criminal/Traffic Disposition Report

Carl W. Walters II of Van Wert was found guilty of disorderly conduct. He was ordered to pay all fines and costs and maintain general good behavior.

Thomas E. Anderson of Middle Point and Braden D. Lintermoot of Lima were both cited for hunting without permission. Anderson waived the case and paid the fine. Lintermoot entered a no contest plea and was found guilty.

Solomon J. Witmer of Spencerville also faced a charge of hunting without permission, which he waived by paying the fine.

Troy M. Smith of Antwerp had two counts of criminal trespass dismissed by the state without prejudice. Court costs were waived.

Kristy R. Ross of Payne had a junk vehicle charge dismissed at her cost.

Delina M. Arnett of Payne, OH, was found guilty of failure to control. She waived her court appearance and was fined \$95.

Matthew D. McCosh of Fort Wayne, IN, was also found guilty of failure to control. His case was waived, and he was fined \$95.

Grant A. Gillett of Grover Hill, OH, entered a guilty plea to an assured clear distance violation. He waived court and was fined \$95.

Nicholas L. Wittwer of Payne, OH, was found guilty

of driving while texting. He waived his court appearance and was fined \$95.

Zachariah D. Landwehr of Oakwood, OH, was found guilty of failure to control. His case was waived, and he was fined \$95.

Logan C. Smith of Oakwood was found guilty of a seat belt violation. The case was waived by the defendant, with fines and costs totaling \$57.

James M. Bowers of Paulding was found guilty of failure to control. The case was waived by the defendant, and he was fined \$95 plus \$70 in court costs.

Gerson Israe Ramirez Gonzalez of Indianapolis was also found guilty of failure to control. His case was waived, with a fine of \$95 and \$70 in court costs.

Norman T. Drumm of Mountain Grove, Missouri, had a charge of criminal damage dismissed with prejudice. All associated costs were waived.

Nicholas J. Sholl of Antwerp was found guilty on two counts of disorderly conduct. He was fined \$100 on each count and ordered to pay all fines and costs while maintaining general good behavior.

George M. Gibson of Paulding was cited for driving without a license and was fined \$50 plus \$97 in costs.

Luis O. Barajas Jr. of Paulding pled guilty to domestic violence. He was fined \$250 and sentenced to 180 days in jail, with 148 of those days suspended. Barajas was ordered to pay court costs, waive service, complete additional community service, undergo a risk assessment, have no contact with the victim, and attend both the "Keeping It in Check" and online classes as part of his probation.

David A. Gross of Paulding was found guilty of driving without wearing a seat belt. He was fined \$30 plus \$57 in court costs.

Tyler J. Levos of Paulding was found guilty of a junk ordinance violation. He was fined \$200 plus \$305 in costs. The court ordered him to come into compliance by January 2. If he complies, the fine will be waived; failure to comply will result in a contempt hearing.

Joy V. Davis of Paulding faced multiple charges. She was found guilty on two counts of menacing and was fined \$50 on each count, with a 30-day jail sentence for each. Seven days were imposed for the first count and 30 for the second. She must complete an evaluation, follow through with recommended counseling, and undergo a risk assessment. She was also found guilty of disorderly conduct with persistence and received a \$50 fine plus \$194 in court costs, and the same probation and counseling conditions apply. She had a charge of disorderly conduct dismissed.

Jaime Flores Garcia of Paulding entered a guilty plea to operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs (OVI) under section 4511.19A1A. He was fined \$565, with 180 days in jail imposed and 177 days suspended. Flores Garcia may attend a Driver Intervention Program (DIP) in lieu of three days in jail and is prohibited from operating a motor vehicle. Additional charges related to his case—including OVI/Breath (Low), no operator's li-

The West Bend News
Sudoku Puzzle

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	4		2		8	9		1
		5	1		6	7		4

Answers to "Sudoku puzzle on Page 11"

cense, speed, and seat belt violations—were dismissed.

Joshua R. Boyd of Rogers, Arkansas, was found guilty of a seat belt violation and ordered to pay a total of \$87 in fines and court costs.

Taylor C. Martinez of Paulding was found guilty of failure to control. The court imposed \$95 in fines and costs, which the defendant is ordered to pay in full.

David R. Scott Jr. of Grover Hill had two separate junk ordinance violations dismissed. All court costs were assigned to the Village.

Bradley R. Schumaker of Ottawa pleaded guilty to a charge of texting while driving. He was fined \$95 with additional court costs bringing the total to \$245. The case was waived by the defendant.

Thomas R. Moelker of La Porte, Indiana, was found guilty of a stop sign violation and was fined \$95 plus \$55 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

Rachel L. Collingwood of Payne, Ohio, was found guilty

of driving while texting. She was fined \$95.

STATE PATROL INVESTIGATES PLANE CRASH

The Toledo Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol is investigating a plane crash at Fulton County Airport in Dover Township, Fulton County. The crash occurred on December 21, 2025 at approximately 5:16 p.m.

The preliminary investigation shows a 1959 Beachcraft BE-35, flown by Seth K. Andrews, 45, of Clearwater, Florida, was westbound on approach to land. Mr. Andrews failed to lower the landing gear and landed on the underside of the plane. Mr. Andrews was not injured.

Impairment and weather were not a factor in the crash, and the crash remains under investigation.

Troopers contacted the Federal Aviation Administration.

LEGAL NOTICE

At its monthly meeting on December 16, 2025, the Paulding County Board of Health approved the 2026 proposed Food Program fee changes for 2026, effective January 1, 2026. Readings of the fees were conducted on September 25, 2025, October 30, 2025, and December 16, 2025.

2026 FOOD FEES	
< 25,000 sq. ft.	Level 3 \$ 822.00
Level 1 \$ 187.00	Level 4 \$ 897.00
Level 2 \$ 212.00	Mobile - high risk 160.00
Level 3 \$ 367.00	Mobile - low risk 80.00
Level 4 \$ 467.00	Temporaries remain the same
> 25,000 sq. ft.	Vending \$11.78 plus CPI
Level 1 \$ 277.00	Plan Review - new \$200.00
Level 2 \$ 287.00	Plan Review - existing \$150.00

For any questions concerning these fees please contact the Paulding County Health Department at 419-399-3921.



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.

ALBERTA LAW PARTNERS OHIO, LLC
BY: F. Peter Costello, #0076112
Mark R. Lembright, #0041545
F. Peter Costello, #0073329
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(216) 588-1500
(216) 771-4334-fax
Ohcontact@alaw.net
24-007600

PAULDING COUNTY WMEA RECYCLING

New Schedule For Large Villages

1st Weekend- Paulding , Fair Grounds
2nd Weekend- Grover Hill , VFW
3rd Weekend- Payne ,
(Paved lot east of Homier's)
4th Weekend- Antwerp ,
(13744 CR 43, sewer treatment plant)

New Schedule For Smaller Villages

3rd Wednesday of each month
Cecil 11:30-12:00 (Fire Station)
Junction 12:30-1:00 (Catholic Church)
Haviland/Scott 1:30-2:00 (SR 114 at Haviland Park)
Latty/Briceton 2:30-3:00 (Latty Park)

For Questions Call : 419-399-3630
or Visit : www.pauldingcountywmea.com

PAULDING INDUSTRIAL PARK EARNs ELITE 'SITEOHIO AUTHENTICATED' DESIGNATION

A 53-acre industrial park at 900 Gasser Road in Paulding has been given a best-of-the-best "SiteOhio Authenticated" designation. The classification is awarded to properties that have passed the most stringent and comprehensive site-certification process in the country, deeming the site truly "shovel-ready" and helping pave the way for economic development in Northwest Ohio.

SiteOhio is a unique model of vetting commercial properties, business parks and industrial sites throughout Ohio. The evaluation includes hundreds of criteria, including guarantees that a property has access to all major utilities (water, sewer, electric, natural gas, fiber optic cable); due diligence studies have been completed; state and federal entities have concurred with the studies; the site is free of incompatible uses; there are no limitations or insurance liability based on surrounding

properties; and other critical factors. Many of the sites also have highway and rail access.

The Paulding Industrial Park is located in the northwest corner of the Village of Paulding, strategically located near companies that manufacture steel, plastics, seating components and other materials. Whenever one large company relocates to an area, it can catalyze additional investment from related businesses. That's why state and local organizations work collaboratively on sites like the Paulding Industrial Park to make them logistically and financially enticing.

"Completing this process has been an invaluable learning experience as we worked to bring all the pieces together for authentication," said Paulding County Economic Development Director Tim Copsey. "We're extremely grateful to the Regional Growth Partnership, JobsOhio and our local leadership and utility providers for their guidance and support. With this milestone achieved, we're excited to embrace the opportunities the site will create."

The site's advantageous lo-

cation offers excellent transportation and logistics benefits (being just 6 miles from U.S. Highway 24), and also comes equipped with a 75-kilowatt solar panel system. Its current sale price is \$798,000 (\$15,000 per acre).

"We understand the speed-to-market needs of business, and site readiness is a critical component for communities to remain competitive," said Dean Monske, president and CEO, Regional Growth Partnership. "Northwest Ohio already offers numerous advantages for business, including talent, logistics and infrastructure. Now, this Authenticated Site in Paulding County enhances the attractiveness of this region as a top location for investment."

Paulding Industrial Park is now one of only 23 SiteOhio Authenticated properties across the state. It is among JobsOhio's robust database of approximately 4,700 properties across the state. (About 1,700 of those are completely undeveloped and eligible for SiteOhio review.)

"Authentication of the Paulding Industrial Park confirms that this site meets the

highest standards for companies looking to expand or relocate quickly and giving Paulding County, the region, and the State of Ohio a powerful competitive advantage," said JobsOhio President and CEO J.P. Nauseef. "Thanks to years of preparation and strong collaboration with our local partners, the Paulding County Industrial Park now offers manufacturers a premier, development-ready destination with completed due diligence, existing utility infrastructure, and access to a proven local workforce."

Companies seeking to find a location for their industrial or manufacturing facility are often on a tight timeframe. The site search can include hundreds or thousands of real estate options; the "SiteOhio Authenticated" process is just one way JobsOhio and its partners are helping businesses limit overall risk, save time, and reduce site development costs.

VWCT PRESENTS BAREFOOT IN THE PARK

The Van Wert Civic Theatre is pleased to announce the

upcoming production of Neil Simon's beloved romantic comedy, *Barefoot in the Park*, a witty and heartwarming look at marriage, compromise, and the chaos of first apartments.

Barefoot in the Park plunges audiences into the hilarious ups and downs of newlyweds Paul and Corie Bratter as they navigate life in their first walk-up apartment—six flights up, no heat, and plenty of opinions. This Neil Simon classic explores the clash of personalities at the early crossroads of marriage, revealing the comedic struggles that come with learning how to live, love, and grow together. Filled with laughter and touching moments, the play reminds us that strong connections can thrive even with big differences, and that love often depends on compromise.

The cast for *Barefoot in the Park* includes:

Paul Bratter: Adam Shananan; Corie Bratter: Alea Rex; Mrs. Banks: Amber Evans; Victor Velasco: Travis Nihiser; Telephone Repairman: Ed Eichler; Delivery Person: Dizzy Lantz

Performances will be held February 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15 at the Van Wert Civic Theatre.

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., with Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Visit vwct.org or call the box office at 419-238-9689.

PAULDING OVERWHELMS OTTOVILLE

Paulding delivered a dominant all-around performance on Friday, December 20, rolling past Ottoville 64-26 in boys basketball action.

The Panthers controlled the game from the opening tip, using strong defense, rebounding, and balanced scoring to pull away early and extend the margin throughout the night. Paulding finished the game shooting 50 percent from the field, including 55.6 percent on two-point attempts and 42.1 percent from beyond the arc, while holding Ottoville to just 15 percent shooting overall.

Gannon Parrett led Paulding with 13 points and a team-high nine rebounds, also dishing out nine assists in a complete performance. Tyson Manz added 14 points, knocking down four three-pointers and going a perfect 4-for-4 from the free-throw line. Grady Barton was efficient with nine points on 3-of-3 shooting, while Xander Kuckuck chipped in 10 points on 4-of-5 shooting. Zach Barton added seven points, and Blake Rhoneho scored five as the Panthers placed multiple players in the scoring column.

Paulding also held a significant advantage on the glass, out-rebounding Ottoville 31-25, and recorded 17 assists as a team while committing just three turnovers. The Panthers' defensive pressure limited Ottoville's scoring opportunities and forced nine turnovers.

Ottoville was unable to find a rhythm offensively, finishing 6-of-40 from the field. The Big Green did get to the free-throw line, converting 11-of-15 attempts, but struggled against Paulding's disciplined defense.

OTTOVILLE PULLS AWAY FROM WAYNE TRACE

Ottoville used a balanced offensive attack and strong rebounding to defeat Wayne Trace 46-31 in a girls basket-

ball matchup Saturday, December 20, at Ottoville.

The Big Green led 9-7 after the first quarter and steadily widened the gap as the game progressed. Ottoville outscored Wayne Trace 11-5 in the second quarter to take a 20-12 lead into halftime, then maintained control with matching 11-point efforts in the third quarter before closing the game with a 15-11 advantage in the fourth.

Brooklyn Koester led Ottoville with a game-high 16 points, shooting efficiently from both the floor and the free-throw line. Kendra Schnipke added 10 points, while Kate Turnwald and Briley Wertenberger each scored six. Jenna Suever chipped in four points, and Ottoville placed eight players in the scoring column overall.

Ottoville finished the night shooting 12-of-28 from two-point range and 3-of-12 from beyond the arc, while going 13-of-18 at the free-throw line. The Big Green controlled the glass with a 31-26 rebounding advantage and recorded seven assists while forcing 15 Wayne Trace turnovers.

Wayne Trace was led by Lexi Moore with 14 points, along with a strong all-around performance that included six rebounds. Caroline Winans added seven points, and Amber Stoller finished with six. Careen Winans contributed three points and multiple defensive plays as the Raiders worked to stay within reach.

The loss dropped Wayne Trace to 5-3 on the season, while Ottoville improved to 7-1.

In the junior varsity contest, Ottoville defeated Wayne Trace 28-13.

WAYNE TRACE PULLS AWAY LATE FOR 67-52 ROAD WIN AT CELINA

The Wayne Trace Raiders put together a balanced offensive effort and used a strong fourth quarter to secure a 67-52 boys basketball victory over the Celina Bulldogs on Monday night, December 23, at Celina. Wayne Trace entered the contest at 3-3 and improved to 4-3 with the win, while Celina fell to 1-6. Wayne Trace led by one after the opening quarter, 15-14, then extended the margin to 35-28 at halftime. Celina stayed within striking distance through three quarters, trailing 46-41, but Wayne Trace closed the game with a decisive 21-11 run in the fourth. Carter Clemens and Caden Sinn led the Raiders with 18 points apiece. Clemens knocked down four three-pointers and finished with three rebounds, while Sinn added a strong all-around performance with five defensive rebounds, three assists, and three steals. Lance Maenle chipped in 12 points, and Tanner Laukhuf added 10 points, six assists, and two steals as Wayne Trace moved the ball effectively, totaling 14 assists on the night. Celina was paced by Gavin Wicker, who scored a game-high 19 points, including five three-pointers. Caleb Schlatter followed with 12 points and seven rebounds, while Parker Wynn scored eight points and Braylon Parker added seven. Despite Celina's effort, Wayne Trace's shooting depth and late-game execution proved to be the difference. In the junior varsity contest, Wayne Trace earned a 38-26 victory over Celina.

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ACPL IS YOUR HOME BASE DURING WINTER BREAK!



(FORT WAYNE, IN) – 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:

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/ events and filter to match their child's age and interests.

PHOSPHITE: A NATURAL FUNGICIDE

Farmers struggle with two major types of fungal pathogens. First are the soil pathogens which thrive on newly planted crops, espe-

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

cially in cold wet soils planted early in the growing season. Second are the foliar leaf pathogens that generally affect plants later in the growing season. The following discussion is on the use of phosphite as a natural soil fungicide and bio-stimulant for early season soil fungal control and fast plant growth.

What is the difference between phosphite and phosphate. Phosphate is an atom of phosphorus with four oxygens attached. Phosphates are what plants take up and use for the majority of their plant nutrition. Very stable, it is used in the plant cell wall, in DNA (genetic code) and RNA (messengers), and for energy transfer. The bad part about phosphate is that it may cause water quality concerns when it leaves the soil.

Phosphite is an atom of phosphorus plus only three oxygens. It is much more mobile, both in the soil and in the plant, but highly reactive so it gets tied up very quickly. Phosphite acts like a natural fungicide, suppressing many soil fungus but it also acts like a bio-stimulant, increasing early root growth, leading to healthier stems and more early leaf growth. Phosphite is the reduced form of phosphate and its highly reactive nature allows it to be beneficial to plant growth, both as fungicide and abio-stimulant. It is also natural and not harmful to humans, animals, or plants.

Some reports say phosphite can also be a fertilizer, however; most reports say it should not replace phosphate fertilizer. I think both statements can be true depending upon the soil conditions. First, do not rely on phosphite for your total P fertilizer. Under just right conditions, phosphite could be oxidized to form phosphate in warm well aerated soils but in cold wet soils (reducing conditions); it is not a plant nutrient.

As a natural fungicide, phosphite allows the plant roots to control soil-borne pathogens like phytophthora, pythium, fusarium, rhizoctonia, anthracnose, sclerotinia (white mold in soybeans) and powdery mildew. On alfalfa,

phosphite applications help with crown rot. It does not kill pathogens, it just suppresses them. In order to work effectively, phosphite can be applied in-furrow at planting to suppress these fungus and also later as a foliar feed on the leaf. The phosphite has to enter the plants xylem (water conducting vascular system) in order to work effectively. There it enhances early root growth leading to healthier and thicker stalks, and more leaves. It is a preventative product. It can not heal or cure fungal disease that already occurs. It also has no activity on the foliar leaf diseases that occur later in the growing season, only soil pathogens.

Usually, phosphite is applied as potassium phosphite but there are other forms including calcium and magnesium phosphite. Phosphite have been used on lawn and turf for over 50 years but now farmers are using it in corn, soybeans, hay crops, and vegetables as a natural fungicide and bio-stimulant. One other factor, phosphite stimulates and activates the plants natural defense system called Systemic Acquired Resistance (SAR) which helps the plant prepare defenses against future fungal pathogenic attacks. Usually, the phosphite is active in the plant for 60 days, so for best results, two applications (either in-furrow as a first application plus a later foliar application) are recommended.

One form of phosphite sold on the market is Xylem Plus. It is a potassium based phosphite with 7 phosphite molecules in a chain. It suppresses disease in the soil, also in the plant, and also activates the SAR or natural plant defense network. It promotes early growth in both corn and soybeans.

Two problem occur for farmers with phosphite application, especially on soybeans. First, not many drills are set up for soil application of a natural fungicide at planting. This can partially be compensated by applying the phosphite early with your herbicide and applying right when the soybean plant forms its first (1st) trifoliate.

The second problem is that phosphite works and should be applied per foot of row. That means 15 and 30-inch soybeans require less product than drilled soybeans at 7.5 inch spacing. The product has to protect the newly planted seed and germinating root right at the source. Again, it can also be applied with a herbicide as a foliar spray with similar results. Results vary depending upon the year, the weather, soil conditions, pathogen population, soil structure, but yield increases of 10-30 bushel on corn and 5-10 or more (18-25) bushels on soybeans are possible. Applications rates vary from 24-32 ounces/acre/application with generally two applications needed per year.

—James J. Hoorman
Hoorman Soil Health Services

VETERANS NATIONAL MEMORIAL WAR HISTORY MUSEUM CLOSING JANUARY & FEBRUARY

The Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum 2122 O'Day Road in Fort Wayne, will be closing for two months so that artifact storage can be re-organized and new exhibits set-up. According to Commander Greg Bedford "we have taken in so many military artifacts that we must re-organize our entire storage system we currently have in place at the War History Museum."

Bedford says "we will redesign the way we file and store our artifacts, how we catalog, digitize photos and ultimately how new artifacts will be displayed throughout the museum. It's a big job and will take all our volunteers and Board Members to accomplish this project over a two month period. Plus this is our slow time for visitors and will allow us the ability to manage space more efficiently if we are closed."

The War History Museum will close on Monday December 29, 2025 and reopen on March 2, 2026. The memorial grounds will remain open 24/7 for visitors. Any questions about Event rentals, Legacy Bricks or Columbarium Sales should be directed to our office at 260-267-5022. honoringforever.org

PAULDING COUNTY LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 12/17/25

The Paulding County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) met on December 17, 2025, in the EOC/Conference Room. Members present signed the official roster, including representatives from the Paulding County Engineer's Office, PZE, Ohio EPA, EMA, West Bend News, Syscon, Paulding County Health Department, Antwerp EMS, and the Paulding County Sheriff's Office.

The meeting was called to order following informal discussion. The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Clarifications were noted, including that Ashley Souter completed much of the formatting and revisions to the emergency plans, which had been mistakenly attributed under another member's section. A spelling correction was noted for Steven Wagner's name, and it was clarified that Havlon Drainage will serve a

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2	8	5	1	9	6	7	3	4

Sudoku solution
from page 9

full three-year term on the committee before requesting to be replaced by another business. With these corrections noted, the minutes stood without further objection.

The Treasurer's report was presented, including a cash income and expenditure printout from the Auditor's Office. No questions were raised.

An update was given on the Operations refresher class, which had limited attendance. It was noted that scheduling during peak farming season likely contributed to low turnout. Future classes will be scheduled either earlier in the spring or later in the fall to improve participation.

Under new business, meeting dates for 2026 were approved. The committee will continue meeting on the third Wednesday of every third month, with meetings scheduled for March 25, June 24, and September 23, 2026. The December meeting will be moved to December 16 to avoid proximity to Christmas. Notice of the annual schedule will be published.

The LEPC grant was discussed. The committee received \$22,000 in funding, which was fully expended on training. It was noted that hazmat awareness and operations classes were more expensive than originally anticipated, and future grant applications will reflect more accurate cost estimates. The committee discussed challenges in scheduling ICS 300 and 400 classes due to limited instructor availability and participant scheduling constraints. Online or evening options will be explored.

Use of the fire training facility was discussed, with general consensus that it is being utilized, though exact attendance figures are not available. Water usage costs remain a flat annual fee.

Additional reports included winter preparedness updates, noting expected colder weather and coordination with dispatch and county services for road treatment as needed. A communications issue affecting tornado sirens was reported and appears to have been resolved following repairs to a VHF line.

The Paulding County Health Department reported on the installation of a public health vending machine located outside its office, providing free items such as thermometers, naloxone, condoms, and dental care kits. Feedback has been generally positive, and potential labeling was discussed to discourage misuse. The Health Department also discussed efforts to expand volunteer capacity, including outreach to churches and possible incentives such as CPR training.

No further business was brought forward. A motion to adjourn was made and approved.

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