

The WEST BEND NEWS

www.westbendnews.net

VOLUME 22 – ISSUE 1

Good News for Good Communities - Serving Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026

A NEW ACORN MEMORIAL



The Tree of Celebration, which is on display in the main lobby of Paulding County Hospital since 2002, has added a new acorn to its tree. Pictured is former employee, Ruby Berenyi R.N. She was a 1948 graduate of the Lutheran School of Nursing in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She was trained as an army nurse. Thankfully, World War II ended so she was employed in Ohio. She practiced nursing here from 1949 to 1970.

Nurse Berenyi's daughters, Lynda (Ed) Kos and Rebecca (George) Geyer had the acorn added to the tree in honor of their mother. She was the wife of William Berenyi and resided in Antwerp for many years.

Ruby was a dedicated em-

ployee who was the surgical nurse for many years. In her career she helped deliver triplet boys, comforted the injured and gave medical care to numerous patients and personal friends in extreme circumstances. She even delivered her own grandson who was breech.

Ruby went on to assist in the first hip pinnings at Lutheran Hospital and then ended her career as head nurse at the B.F. Goodrich in Woodburn, Indiana.

Some seasoned Paulding County residents may recognize Nurse Berenyi's likeness on the acorn and in response fondly recall another dedicated caregiver who gave their expert care to someone in need.

FUNDS GRANTED FOR RESTORATION AT BLACK SWAMP NATURE CENTER

H2Ohio and the Great Lake Restoration Initiative have provided grant funding to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to restore wetland and floodplain habitat at the Black Swamp Nature Center.

The project will convert the old sugar beet ponds back to wetlands that will capture and filter floodwater from Flattrock Creek. This increased floodwater storage during high intensity storm events will improve the community's climate resilience. Other benefits include the treatment of invasive plant species to improve native plant communities and provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife species.

The Paulding Soil and Water Conservation District and Paulding County Commissioners are working in partnership with TNC to bring this project to fruition. We are excited to see the Nature Center be restored to a functional floodplain habitat and the benefits that will bring to the community.

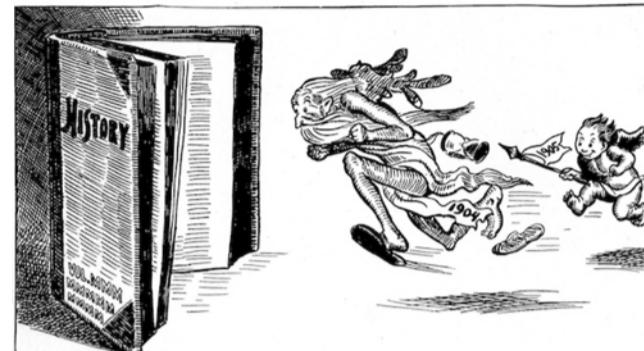
"The Black Swamp Nature Center is a recreational asset to the community, offering trails, fishing, birdwatching, a pollinator garden, and a space to be immersed in nature. We are thrilled to partner with The Nature Conservancy and Davey Resource Group to enhance the quality of life for residents of Paulding County by re-establishing connectivity to the creek, which will improve water quality, natural habitat, and recreation for the community," says Anna Gurney, Education and Outreach Specialist, Paulding Soil and Water Conservation District.

TNC has contracted Davey Resource Group (DRG) to restore floodplain habitat at the Black Swamp Nature Center. Restoration will include site assessments to inform design, pre-construction invasive plant species management, engineer drafted design plans, construction, and two years of post-construction invasive species management. DRG has begun site assessments at the Black Swamp Nature Center and will continue to perform invasive species management of woody species over the winter months.

The public will be invited to provide input on the project during the design phase in the beginning of 2026. Please feel free to contact Jesse Martin at jesse.martin@tnc.org for questions regarding this project.

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YEARS AGO IN PAULDING COUNTY



December 1904: An illustration from 1904-05 by John T. McCutcheon shows the "Baby New Year" closing the old year into the pages of history.

By: MELINDA KRICK

Ringing in the New Year

From the Antwerp Gazette, Jan. 9, 1873:

Festivities were rather mild in town on the 1st. A fisticuff or two, a few fire crackers and the day passed.

Those who could, have been enjoying excellent sleighing for the past week. The roads were never better, and the air was alive with the sound of the merry bells.

Our ice men are busily engaged in reaping the beautiful crop, and storing their [ice] houses for future reference, drawing it from the canal and river. We have seen several loads of beautiful ice coming in, clear and

pure as crystal.

The New Year's ball given by "Uncle Gus" proved to be the grandest social event of the season. The attendance was large, the music was good, and everybody was good natured, and had a good time. From our coign of vantage the beauty of the scene, the brilliantly toileted ladies, and the gallant gentlemen could not be taken in at a glance, or a series of glances. The radiated beauty dispersed all over the ample hall, formed a scene to hold the gaze until time slipped unconsciously away.

And many who came, not to dance, but to admire (Continued on Page 2)



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Proposed By-Law Change

January 12 - 7:00 PM - Men's Meeting

We encourage all members to attend the 3rd reading of proposed By-Laws. Get the word out and pass it on to your brother Eagles!

Starting at 11AM Open for Lunch Starting at 11AM
Monday - Friday

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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

- Community Playgroup (kids 5 & under) @ Black Swamp Nature Center, Paulding, 11a-12p
- Teen Anger Management Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding, 4-5p
- Paulding FOE #2405 Ladies Aux. Meeting, 7pm

January 6

- Kinship Caregivers Support Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding, 6-7p
- Rock Steady Boxing @VW Council on Aging, 5-6p
- Bingo w/Country Inn @ PC Senior Center, 12p
- Antwerp School Board Meeting @ 5p

January 7

- OneOhio Recovery Foundation Regional Grant Cycle 2 Webinar, 10a
- Bargain Bin of Paulding Reopens for 2026, 9a-5p

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
- Fort Wayne Farm Show @ Allen Co. Coliseum, 9a-5p



Add your event to the calendar info@westbendnews.net

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OBITUARIES



James Bernard "Jim" Arend, 88, long-time resident of Antwerp, Ohio, passed away on Thursday, December 25, 2025, at The Lodge Nursing & Rehab Center in Loveland, Ohio. Jim was born September 1, 1937, in Mark Center, Ohio, son of the late Bernard J. and Mary B. (Kenner) Arend.

Jim began his life-long love of farming when he was a young boy helping his father and uncles. His family were members of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Hicksville where he sang in the choir, often accompanied by his mother, the parish's long-time organist. He attended the Mark Center School, where he participated in many activities, including FFA, baseball, basketball, choir, and band. Graduating in 1955, Jim continued farming, and played trumpet in a dance band at events all around northwest Ohio. On October 18, 1960, Jim enlisted in the Army National Guard, serving six years and reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant First Class before his honorable discharge on October 17, 1966. He worked as a proud UAW machinist at Dana-Weatherhead in Antwerp for nearly 40 years, retiring in 2001. In retirement, he was a field inspector for the Ohio Seed Improvement Association for many years.

On April 1, 1967, Jim married Joanne R. "Joni" Sadoski at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Temperance, MI. They shared 52 years together until her passing on May 21, 2019. After he married Joni, they became members of St. Mary's Catholic Church (now Divine Mercy) in Antwerp. They raised their children with a focus on their Catholic faith, education, and community service. They dearly loved their grandchildren, and Jim often played music with and sang with the kids. Jim and Joni loved to dance together, and in their later years enjoyed attending concerts.

Faith, music, and community service were all parts of who Jim was. He was a 3rd degree member of the Knights of Columbus (St. Joseph Council 2584, Paulding, Ohio), coordinator of the lectors for mass, and a member of the Holy Name Society at St. Mary's. He was a talented musician who sang with the Northwesternaires Barbershop Chorus and played for 26 years in the Antwerp Community Band. Over many years, he felt honored to play taps for dozens of military funerals and donated 183 units of blood (nearly 23 gallons, with each donation saving up to 3 lives). Overall, Jim was a resilient man who worked through life's difficulties while always showing kindness

toward others. He was a loyal and loving husband and father.

In his later years, Jim loved to go to the Paulding County Senior Center where he had lunch with friends, played a mean game of euchre, and attended Bible study. He received care from various organizations over time, including Community Health Professionals, Vancrest of Payne's assisted living, and Vancrest of Hicksville's rehab and long-term care. His final months were spent closer to family near Cincinnati in memory care at The Lodge. The Arends would like to sincerely thank all the kind, hardworking professionals who cared for Jim over the years.

Surviving are his four children, Dominic N. (Mary Kate) Arend of Urbana, IL, David J. Arend of North Royalton, OH, Barbara J. (Jeffrey) Arend-Hendricks of Cincinnati, OH, and Patricia L. Arend of Waltham, MA; seven grandchildren, Bernard, Samuel, Jakob, Miriam and Grace Arend, and Ryan and Megan Hendricks; and one sister, Rosemary V. (John) Broxon of Pleasant Lake, IN. Jim was preceded in death by his dear parents and by his beloved wife, Joni.

Visitation for James Bernard "Jim" Arend will be held on Tuesday, December 30, 2025 from 2:00-7:00 P.M. at Oberlin-Turnbull Funeral Home, 706 North Main Street, Hicksville, where there will be a prayer service at 6:30 P.M. to be followed by the Rosary. A funeral mass for Jim will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, at St. Michael's Catholic Church, 100 Antwerp Drive, Hicksville, with Father Daniel Borgelt officiating. Interment will follow in Forest Home Cemetery, Hicksville, where Military Rites will be accorded by the combined honor detail from the Hicksville American Legion Post 223, Farmer American Legion Post 137, and Sherwood VFW Post 5665.

Memorial contributions can be directed to Divine Mercy (Paulding) or St. Michael's (Hicksville) or to the Paulding County Senior Center.

Condolences may be sent to the family, or memories may be shared at www.oberlinturnbull.com.



Alisha Anna Fessel, Cape Coral, FL:

The world became a little less colorful and a lot less sarcastic when Alisha Anna Fessel took her final bow on November 24, 2025, at the age of 50. Alisha, who earned her bachelor's degree in human resources from Spring Arbor University, always believed HR was her calling. And honestly, it was. Who else could bring equal parts compassion, humor, and side-eye to the world of workplace forms, and policies. She spent 2006-2013 serving the Cape Coral Police

Department as an administrative assistant, where she perfected the art of getting things done and keeping everyone laughing. Efficiency, with flair. Professionalism, with personality. Paperwork, with pizzazz.

Alisha's life was a brilliant mix of humor, heart, and a dash of chaos. The good kind, the human kind, the kind that reminded everyone around her how joyful and unpredictable life can be.

She is survived by her husband, Dan Fessel; son, Gabe Fessel; parents, Dave and Teri Nodine; brother-in-law, Rob Dodson; sister-in-law, Jennifer Nodine; and nephews, Charlie, Caleb, and Chase Dodson and Jackson, Vance, and Tripp Nodine; father-in-law & mother-in-law, Robert and Nancy Fessel, and sister-in-law, Kelly Kirkland.

(Continued from Page 1)

dancing, were led away from their renunciatory resolves, and almost before they were aware of it were playing the quick rebound heel.

At the hour of eleven, supper was announced, and the dancers chose their partners and repaired to the Exchange Hotel. Two long tables, extending the entire length of the dining hall - spread with all the late viands of the season.

After supper all again assembled at the hall and continued to "trip the light fantastic toe" until the "wee sma" hours.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 31, 1885:

We are requested to announce that there will be a grand New Year's ball at the Town Hall in Cecil, Friday evening, Jan. 1st. All are invited.

We notice by bills printed in this office that the Paulding Fire Department will give a grand New Year's ball at their hall Friday evening, Jan. 1st. Good music will be in attendance. All are invited.

Paulding County Gazette, Jan. 5. 1888:

The young people of Paulding are to have a dance in the third floor of the jail Friday evening.

Paulding Democrat, Dec. 18, 1890:

The members of Paulding Hook and Ladder Co. have arranged to give a grand New Year entertainment at the opera house on Jan. 1.

Antwerp Argus, Dec. 25, 1890:

Jan. 1 occurs the grand supper and contest to be given by the ladies of St. Mary's church. It will undoubtedly be the great event of the holidays.

Paulding County Republican, Dec. 31, 1891:

There will be a social hop held in H. Stores hall at Broughton Friday evening, Jan. 1st, 1892. This will be a leap year ball.

A select hop will be given at the opera house in Antwerp New Year's Day. The music will be furnished by Signor Correl's Italian Orchestra from Fort Wayne. The bill for dance has been placed at \$1.

Paulding County Republican, Dec. 26, 1895:

Grand Fox Hunt: There will be given an old fashioned Fox Hunt just north of Paulding on New Year's Day. The lines will be as follows:

North line old Wabash Canal; east line, Paulding and Cecil Road; south line,

Alisha was preceded in death by her sister, Summer Dodson and brother, David Nodine.

The Memorial Service took place on December 22, 2025 at Walker Funeral Home, 5155 W. Sylvania Ave. Toledo, OH 43623.

In lieu of flowers donations will be gratefully accepted by the family for Gabe's education.

ANTWERP, OH:

Gerald Lee "Jerry" Wolf, 83 of Antwerp, passed away on Tuesday, December 30, 2025 at Saint Elizabeth Hospice, Edgewood, Kentucky. Arr by DOOLEY FUNERAL HOMES OF ANTWERP AND PAYNE.

PAYNE, OH:

Violet Rosetta Cass, 82, of Payne, Ohio passed away at home Tuesday, December 30, 2025. Arr by DOOLEY FUNERAL HOMES OF ANTWERP AND PAYNE.

Phone: 419-258-2000 • Email: info@westbendnews.net

Scripture of the Week

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

— Psalm 90:12

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU



2 Corinthians 5:17-19

(NIV) states:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

"that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

As we step into a new year, these verses resonate deeply, emphasizing the transformative power of being in Christ. The concept of becoming a "new creation" is particularly relevant during this time when many of us reflect on the past year and set intentions for the year ahead.

In the context of a new year, this scripture invites us to consider what it means to leave behind old habits, attitudes, and even resentments that may have held us back. Just as the changing of the calendar offers a fresh start, our

relationship with Christ provides an opportunity for renewal and growth. We can embrace the promise that our past does not define us, and we have the capacity for change and improvement.

Additionally, the passage highlights the ministry of reconciliation. As we enter the new year, it's a perfect time to mend relationships and foster peace. We are reminded that God has reconciled us to Himself, and in turn, we are called to extend that grace to others. This could mean reaching out to someone you may have drifted apart from, forgiving those who have wronged you, or simply showing kindness and understanding in your daily interactions.

Ultimately, 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 encourages us to approach the new year with hope and a renewed spirit. We can step forward, confident that we are always being transformed in Christ, capable of both personal growth and contributing positively to our communities through acts of reconciliation and love.

Ephesians 4:22 (NIV) states: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires."

This verse encourages us to let go of negative habits and embrace a new way of living.

So, this year, embrace change and let the new you emerge. You're going to love it! **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

God bless you; may He keep you in perfect peace.

Peace and Love,
—Pastor Dwayne

parties and other festivities, local citizens welcomed the New Year last Thursday night. While the celebration in some places was rather hilarious, there was no occasion for increasing the local police force.

Paulding County Republican, Jan. 2, 1919:

The sophomore class of the Paulding high school gave a watch party Tuesday night that proved to be a very lively and enjoyable affair. The young folks held the party in one of A.M. Courtwright's vacant houses where all the games and jollity of watching old year go out and the new year come, could be indulged in without bothering anyone else.

Dancing and various games afforded the amusements for the evening. A fine three-course dinner was served at midnight.

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**LET'S GO TO THE COLONIAL CLUB OF NEW YORK, DATE: MARCH 14, 1900****Penny For Your Thoughts**

By: Nancy Whitaker

Let's take a trip back to New York City to the 1900s where the city is alive with people. Industry and construction are booming and immigrants are arriving thru Ellis Island. The Subway is almost complete which will be a big asset to the city.

William McKinley was President of the United States at the time and wealthy men began to build mansions and moving their families into the West side of New York. However a need was seen for a club to host business meetings and to eat and relax.

Therefore, a huge fancy club was built and completed by the early 1900s. The club boasted a roof garden, bowling alley, observatory, billiards, smoking rooms and fine food. This was a place for men with money. Only men could belong to this club, but it was eventually decided that women were allowed to be members.

The club was located at Broadway and 72 street. So put on your best attire and let's go back to the early 1900s and the Colonial Club to see what's cooking.

After being seated we are given menus. Hmm Wonder what's good to eat.

I would like to try a full course dinner and see what it tastes like and what all I get. The first course is soup, and I see there are choices of Turtle Soup, bouillon, green turtle soup and clam soup. A full cup of soup is .35 and a half is .20 cents. I don't want turtle or clam soup so my choice is bouillon. I will take a half cup which is .20 cents.

Next is hors doeuvres. What do you want to order? Some of the offerings are radishes, celery, French olives, stuffed olives, sardines, almonds and pickled beets. There are also stuffed mangos and caviar. They are

priced at full orders for .35 cents and half orders are .20 cents. Wonder how many you get? What about a half order of French olives? So far I have spent .40 cents.

Oh here comes the next course which is fish which includes sheep head, shad roe and some I can't pronounce. A whole piece of this tasty fish ranges from .75 cents to .30 for a half. Let me see. I may as well try a half piece of sheep head and add .30 more cents to my bill. I don't see on the menu that tartar sauce is available, so I decide to try some mayo for an extra .20 cents.

The next item to try is filet



mignon casserole, English mutton chop, sausage, bacon and roast beef hash with browned peppers.

You can order a whole boiled chicken for 1.25 or a half for .60 cents. Want some stuffed turkey with cranberry sauce which will cost you 1.25 or maybe a Mallard duck, a Ruddy duck or Teal duck? Maybe a nice fattened squab?

The filet mignon casserole sounds good so I will order a half portion for .60 cents.

Do you want a beverage? Now it's time for some hardy rum punch for .20 cents.

Vegetables anybody? Choose from fried egg plant, boiled onions, stewed tomatoes, artichokes, asparagus, and sweet pimentos. A whole order is of veggies is .40 cents and a half order is .20 cents.

I want to try a baked potato for a dime.

For salads things like lettuce, tomatoes, celery and cucumbers items are priced separately. Lettuce runs .35 and .20 cents, tomatoes .35 cents and a half one is .20 cents.

For dessert it all sounds delicious, but I want to taste that lemon ice, lady fingers or Colonial soufflé. Dessert ranges from .25 cents to .15 cents.

There is still fruit and cheese to taste but I am getting

full and it's almost my bedtime. I wonder if I have a Penny left after I pay for that big dinner?

Let's see, I had soup for .20; Hors d'oeuvres... .20; fish... .30; mayo... .20; Filet Mignon casserole... .60; Rum punch... .20; Baked potato... .10; Colonial soufflé... .20. Total... \$2.00

Well I have \$2.01 in my pocket so tell me what you would order back in 1900 and I'll give you that Penny For Your Thoughts.

HUSTED ANNOUNCES \$60 MILLION FOR OHIO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, RAISES FOR TROOPS

Sen. Jon Husted (R-Ohio) released the following statement after voting to pass the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which now heads to the president for his signature.

As part of the legislation, Husted secured \$60 million to support Ohio military installations, growing the state's leadership in supporting national security.

"Ohio makes the things that keep America safe. From Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton and NASA Glenn in Cleveland to the Neil Armstrong Test Facility in Sandusky and the new Anduril facility at the Rickenbacker Air National Guard Installation, this bill supports and creates Ohio jobs and further strengthens the leadership role our state plays in national defense," said Husted.

"The men and women of our Armed Forces, along with their families, give of their time, talent and treasure for our safety, and this bill also delivers a much-needed pay raise for active-duty personnel," said Husted.

"Ohioans can always count on me to put Ohio first and stand fully behind our troops. Peace is preserved through strength, and this bill keeps America in a position to deter our adversaries. I will always fight to make sure our service-members have the tools they need to succeed and return home safely," concluded Husted.

The NDAA is the annual law that authorizes the budget and sets policies for the Pentagon and other defense-related activities.

The FY 2026 NDAA includes a 3.8% pay raise for military members, ensuring their pay remains ahead of inflation.

The inclusion of the below provisions in the NDAA builds on Husted's support for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB), NASA Glenn Research Center and other key defense-related assets in the state of Ohio.

Ohio in the NDAA:

Ohio's leadership position in supporting national defense is strengthened by including:

- \$45 million to build the Human Performance Wing Laboratory at WPAFB.

This building will serve as the modernized headquarters for the Human Effectiveness Directorate of the 711th Human Performance Wing, which advances human warfighter capabilities in training, bioeffects and bioengineering.

- \$15 million in planning and design funding for a full refurbishment of WPAFB's primary runway.

The primary runway servicing the base has been deteriorating for many years, staying operational only through a series of costly patches and restoration work.

- Robust funding for Project Pele to build an expeditionary micronuclear reactor for the military, which will create Ohio jobs.

Language to encourage the Pentagon to use existing hypersonic testing facilities instead of wasting taxpayer dollars on building duplicative facilities.

This language will ensure the Hypersonic Tunnel Facility (HTF) located at NASA's Neil Armstrong Test Facility in Sandusky will remain a critical node of the nation's development of hypersonic weapons.

- A provision requiring the Space Force to detail Guardians as instructors at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) at WPAFB.

This language will protect AFIT's position as a premier center of education for our nation's Airmen and Guardians.

- Language to support the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program.

Through the CCA program, the Air Force is developing a cost-effective, autonomous "drone wingman" aircraft that will pair with manned fighters to expand their capabilities. Defense tech company Anduril will build its participant in the CCA program, the Fury aircraft, at its \$1 billion hyper-scale manufacturing facility in Columbus.

This language builds off Husted's work to secure funding for the acceleration of the CCA program in the budget law.

A provision requiring the Pentagon to develop a supply chain mapping strategy to identify critical vulnerabilities in the supply chains of weapons systems and other military equipment. The development of the Pentagon's supply chain technology is supported by work done in Dayton. Husted fought for the inclusion of this language.

A provision encouraging the Army and the Air Force to require head and hearing protection for aircraft maintenance workers.

Currently, the Navy and Marine Corps mandate head impact and hearing protection

The deadline for the West Bend News is THURSDAYS

at 5pm for the following issue.

Send your news, ads, and classifieds to

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Call 419-258-2000 for information or printing quotes.

MILITARY HISTORY IN PAULDING COUNTY

By: Mark Holtsberry

Riley Finley Ennis (part 2)

After Pearl Harbor was bombed, the United States Army was looking to keep



current educated officers. Riley was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel February of 1942, by December 11, 1942, he was promoted to Colonel. Military records are unclear as to his placement with high command. I sense that his skill set was used to train and set up command organization.

On August 9, 1944, Riley was promoted to Brigadier General, but only as temporary position. By January 1945, Riley served under Major General Roderick P. Allen with the 12th Armored Division, as s Commanding General of Combat Group A. on the borderland of Luxembourg and Belgium.

Near the end of World War 2, Riley, a Major General, was

replaced and sent home for reassignment. He was placed in charge of military affairs in San Francisco, from there, he was sent to Ft. McPherson, Georgia, to work with the Third Army. On June 3, 1946, Riley was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry as a permanent position. Staying in the military, as March 3, 1948, records listed him as a Brigadier General of Infantry.

Then the Korean War broke out. February of 1951, with the rank of Major General, Riley served as Assistant Chief of Staff to General Mathew B. Ridgeway. On May 5, 1951, Riley was sent to Tokyo to become Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. Sometime after 1952, Riley was still serving in the far east, Korea, with intelligence.

On January 16, 1954, Riley was sent home for reassignment. It is unclear when he retired from the military. Riley and Helen moved to 301 Crestline Drive, San Francisco, California.

On September 11, 1963, Riley passed away from heart failure at home. He was buried in San Francisco National Cemetery, San Francisco, California. Section OSA, Row 112, Site 1. January 27, 1974, his wife, Helen, passed away from Bronchial Pneumonia. She was buried beside her career military husband. They had no children to pass on the family name.

Riley was an interesting man who saw serving his country was his true calling.

...Until Next Time!

for maintenance personnel working on or near military aircraft.

The NDAA also includes provisions that:

- Protect women's sports at the military service academies by prohibiting men from participating in women's athletic programs.

- Curtail cell phone use by students in Department of Defense schools.

This builds on Husted's support to restore focus in schools. Earlier this year, he cosponsored the REFOCUS DODEA Act, a bipartisan bill that would prohibit the use of phones during the school day in Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

- Expands the Pentagon's critical mineral recycling programs to increase supply and decrease reliance on China.

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FORT DEFIANCE HUMANE SOCIETY AWARDED \$4,949 GRANT FOR SURGERY EQUIPMENT



Pictured with the grant and Rob the cat are (L to R) Don Hange - DAF grants committee member and Lisa Weener - Fort Defiance Humane Society Executive Director.

Congratulations to Fort Defiance Humane Society for receiving \$4,949 for surgery equipment for in-house and public clinics.

This grant was given during the Defiance Area Foundation (DAF) fall grant cycle and came from the DAF Community Fund.

FIELD REPORTS FROM OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE OFFICERS

Central Ohio - Wildlife District One

State Wildlife Officer Chad Grote, assigned to Marion County, and Outdoor Skills Specialist Billy Finissi recently attended the

10th annual Tom Fetter Youth Day at Waldo Sportsman Club. The Division of Wildlife set up two stations at the event: at the first station, participants could shoot crossbows at a 3D target from an elevated platform, and at the other children tried tree saddles and

learned about their use and safety. One hundred children participated in the event, and 50 of them went pheasant hunting. This year's event reached capacity within two weeks and there was a waiting list to participate. Every child left with a prize!

State Wildlife Officer Matt Teders, assigned to Madison County, was dispatched to a report of an individual shooting squirrels along a sidewalk. Officer Teders requested assistance from the Columbus Police Department to locate the suspect. The police located the individual, who was carrying a BB gun and trying to protect a garden from squirrels. While squirrels can be a nuisance, individuals are required to follow wildlife nuisance laws, and this incident occurred outside of the squirrel hunting season. The suspect was issued a summons for hunting squirrels during the closed season, was found guilty, and paid \$135 in fines.

Northwest Ohio - Wildlife District Two

During the 2025 whitetailed deer archery hunting season, State Wildlife Officer Matt D. Smith, assigned to Huron County, received information regarding a suspicious game check. Officer Smith contacted the individual and discovered that the person who game checked the deer was not a hunter but had checked a buck for a hunter who had already harvested an antlered deer this season. The hunter was issued a summons for taking more than one antlered deer in a license year. The individual was found guilty in Norwalk Municipal Court and ordered to pay \$225 in fines and court costs. In addition, the subject was placed on probation for two years and sentenced to 10 days of jail time, suspended. The antlers and venison will be donated to a local food pantry.

State Wildlife Officer Chris Gilkey, assigned to Meigs County, recently presented to wildlife students at Rio Grande University. The presentation covered the positive and negative impacts of social media platforms on a wildlife officer's job. Students learned how powerful those platforms can be and how to navigate them in a professional manner.

State Wildlife Officer Payton Phenicie, assigned to Wyandot County, helped coordinate a fishing outing at a local conservation club for Carey High School students. Outdoor Skills Specialist Jaron Beck and club volunteers assisted to provide information on how to fish, local fishing spots, and the fishing regulations. Approximately 35 students attended and caught bluegills and largemouth bass. The fishing was so good that at times the instructors had a hard time keeping up with baiting and taking fish off the hooks! Multiple students had never fished before, so this was an excellent opportunity for many students to try something new. This event was also a great way to promote local conservation clubs and the positive impacts they have on the community.

Northeast Ohio - Wildlife District Three

This spring, State Wildlife Officer Jason Warren, assigned to Lake Erie, and State Wildlife Investigator Travis Abele patrolled the waters of Lake Erie by boat. The officers contacted two anglers who did not possess a valid fishing license. Summons were issued and each paid \$160 in fines and court costs in Ashtabula Municipal Court.

In mid-2025, State Wildlife Officer Evan

Huegel, assigned to Ashland County, participated in an Amish Health and Safety Event serving Amish communities throughout Medina, Wayne, and Ashland counties. During this event, Officer Huegel learned that the community had not hosted a hunter education course in more than six years. Recognizing the importance of accessible, in-person hunter education, Officer Huegel organized and coordinated a comprehensive course. The program emphasized hunter safety, ethical hunting practices, and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment in the field. Officer Huegel's efforts culminated in the successful registration and completion of the course by 148 students, with a 100% passing rate. Through this initiative, Officer Huegel helped ensure that new hunters entered the field better prepared to uphold Ohio's strong tradition of safe and responsible hunting.

Southeast Ohio - Wildlife District Four

In November, State Wildlife Officers Darin Abbott, assigned to Lawrence County, and Kiri Williams, assigned to Vinton County, responded to a hunting without permission call in the South Point area of Lawrence County. A landowner had trail camera photos of a hunter dragging a recently harvested whitetailed deer. The officers contacted a suspect and, upon further investigation, issued a summons for hunting without permission. The defendant pleaded guilty in Lawrence County Municipal Court and was ordered to pay \$265 in fines and court costs. The deer was forfeited to the state, and the venison will be donated to a local food pantry.

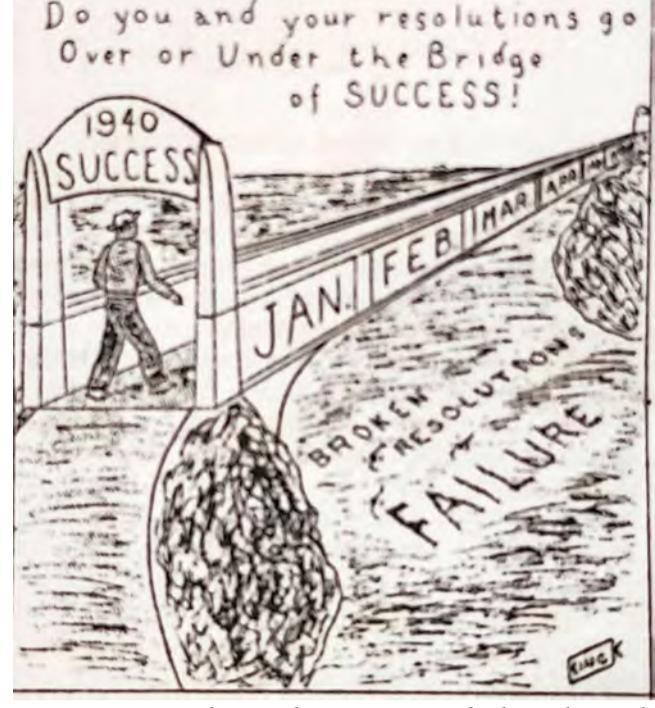
State Wildlife Officer Chris Gilkey, assigned to Meigs County, recently presented to wildlife students at Rio Grande University. The presentation covered the positive and negative impacts of social media platforms on a wildlife officer's job. Students learned how powerful those platforms can be and how to navigate them in a professional manner.

Southwest Ohio - Wildlife District Five

State Wildlife Officer Matt Roberts, assigned to Highland County, contacted two individuals who were target shooting at Oldaker Wildlife Area. Officer Roberts issued both individuals summonses for shooting outside a designated target shooting area. Each paid \$175 in fines and court costs.

State Wildlife Officer Brad Buening, assigned to Mercer County, recently assisted with a hunter education course in Mercer County. Certified volunteers and Division of Wildlife staff teach instructor-led courses, which last about eight hours and take place in a classroom environment. Instructors cover a range of topics, from conservation, safety, and ethics to the proper handling of shotguns, handguns, archery equipment, and more. Completion of a formal hunter education course is required to purchase a standard hunting license in Ohio.

LEO HIGH-LIGHTS



January 1940 edition. The first grade is building a farm in the sandbox in their room. Each student must make a farm related item for the display. The second grade is making a grocery store which will have items for anyone to purchase. The third grade is giving a play to the student body. The fourth grade...

Wow! That sounds exciting! I think I'll enroll in the first grade and start all over again. A "friend," gave me a copy of the Leo School newspaper, Leo-Highlights, January 1940 edition. I was fascinated. I have never even seen a school newspaper. In the 1950s we have didn't have one. I'm sure there have been some but I don't recall seeing one.

This paper was quite well done, 22 pages, school news, announcements, opinions, sports, cartoons, interviews, ads and more. They said they had gobs of pictures but apologized that they had no way of reproducing them. I wonder how they duplicated in those days. Among the December news was the school program, a cantata, "Memories of Bethlehem." It must have been legal to do the Bible story.

I hate history, but this is a great history of their era. Nearly all of the businesses advertised are no longer there. They had many ads from Fort Wayne businesses and the only one left is the Coney Island Hot Dog Stand. In those days it was a full service restaurant serving meals. Advertising can be a good source of revenue for any project. Our tiny town of

Leo even had a Plymouth DeSoto dealership.

There is much more to school than learning your ABCs, or sitting in a classroom for 6 hours each day. Years ago there was a book written, "The Dumbing Down of America." Perhaps part of the problem is that Mrs G knows everything. You can find the answer to any question in an instant. Here is a joke from the paper:

Jackie, 'My teacher said if I had more spunk I would stand a lot better in my class. What is spunk?'

Willie, "I ain't sure, but I think it's the past participle of spank."

I've said before, you guys in Ohio I have many opportunities. The West Bend paper covers a vast area, even a good chunk of Indiana. A few ideas, grow a crop, and market it. Make a book, even a binder of your school year. If you have a yearbook staff join it. Make a DVD of a play, or a movie, Even of your school or basketball team.

The Leo High-Lights said many students stayed up till after midnight making the paper. Don't be afraid to work. The above cartoon, are you traveling above the bridge or below it? We all have something to contribute. A New Year's resolution from the January edition; "Never let a day pass, without making another's life happier and easier."

—James Neuhouser

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Responses need to be received by Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. for the following publication. We reserve all rights to edit as needed.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art. The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this. The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift." The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected. The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection.

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?" "I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets every thing!" God gave his son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The son, the son, who'll take the son?" Because you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.

Submitted By:
Dave Lauku, Paulding, OH

Then a voice in the back of the room shouted. "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?" Another voice shouted angrily. "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Gogh's, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?" Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the long-time gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!" A man sitting on the second row shouted, now get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?" "I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets every thing!" God gave his son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The son, the son, who'll take the son?" Because you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.

Submitted By:
Dave Lauku, Paulding, OH

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Where is the welcoming and compassion for the poor immigrant wanting a better life for them and their families? What Trump is doing is against God's teachings. The Democratic party helps the middle and lower class in our country. They fight to keep our Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. Republicans are constantly chipping away at these programs while they are giving the rich more!

CNN, News Nation are channels that report the truth. Trump is following Project 2025 that will take away the

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NEW YEAR'S FINANCIAL RESOLUTIONS: MAKING THEM STICK

As the calendar flips to a new year, millions of Americans pledge to improve their financial lives. But without a concrete plan, those well-intentioned resolutions often fade quickly.

Some Republicans are finally ignoring him and are doing the job the people elected them to do.

The criminals should be arrested, but 90% of the people have been here for years and are contributing to our economy.

I hope you aren't raising your children in Trump's shadow. He bullies, calls people names, treats women as sex objects. He is a disgusting person who should have never been elected to run our country. He makes fun of the handicapped! Are you ok with that?

I pray our democracy survives. The people who have so much hate for the Democrats need to pray and read the Lord's teaching more! There is something wrong with anyone with that much HATE coming from them.

Look at how Trump and his people are protecting his rich perverted friends who abused young girls with Epstein. They are disgusting people but if you are rich you get protection! He pardoned drug barons but he attacks Venezuelan boats and murders the survivors.

—Judi Grubb
Van Wert, OH

AUDREY GIESIGE NAMED TO FALL 2025 DEAN'S HONOR LIST AT CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY

Audrey Giesige of Paulding, was named to the Dean's Honor List at Cedarville University for Fall 2025. This recognition requires the student to obtain a 3.75 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Cedarville University, an evangelical Christian institution in southwest Ohio, offers undergraduate and graduate residential and online programs across arts, sciences and professional fields. With 7,265 students, it is among Ohio's largest private universities and is ranked among the nation's top five evangelical universities in the Wall Street Journal's 2026 Best Colleges in the U.S. Learn more at cedarville.edu.

fund."

This shift from general to specific transforms wishful thinking into actionable steps. When goals are attainable, it's easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Find an accountability partner. Don't go it alone. Having someone to check in with can help you stay on track. This could be a spouse, friend or family member who shares similar goals.

Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you create a realistic plan, monitor your progress and adjust strategies as needed. A professional can provide expertise and accountability, making it easier to stay on track throughout the year.

Start small and build momentum. Rather than overhauling your entire financial life all at once, focus on one or two priority areas. Identify where the largest gap exists between your current situation and where you want to be, then concentrate your energy there.

Breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable actions makes them less overwhelming and more achievable. Each small win builds confidence and momentum for tackling the next challenge.

The new year offers a fresh start and renewed motivation to improve your financial health. With specific goals, a solid action plan and the right support system, this could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.

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

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Member SIPC



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READER PICK-UP LOCATIONS

OHIO LOCATIONS

Antwerp: Antwerp Library, Antwerp Exchange Bank, Antwerp Manor, Dollar General, Family Dollar, G-Mart, Genesis House, H20 Water Store, Pop-N-Brew, Pit-Stop, Small Town Bliss,

Bryan: 4 Seasons, Bryan Hospital, Chief, CVS, Dollar General, Town & Country, Walmart

Cecil: 127 Maramart, Paulding Pancake House

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

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

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

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

Hicksville: 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

Carrie 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, Walmar

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&W 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

PANTHERS' THOR STROKER ETTER TAKES 4th AT DEFIANCE BORDER WARS

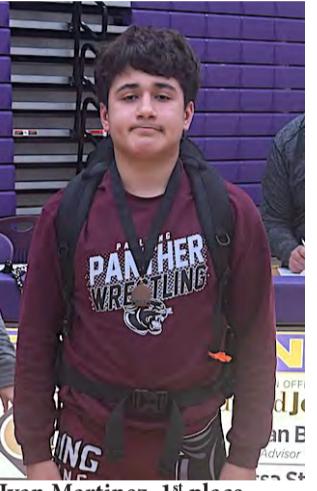


Several members of the boys varsity wrestling team participated in the Defiance Border Wars tournament. The top performer for the Panthers was Thor Stroker Etter, who secured 4th place in the 150 lb weight class.

PAULDING PANTHERS WRESTLERS SHINE AT BRYAN INVITATIONAL



Michael Clifford, 1st place



Ivan Martinez, 1st place



Adan Zacarios, 2nd place



Trenton Bail, 1st place



Isaac Couts, 2nd place



Leonel Reyes, 3rd place



Owen Workman, 2nd place

Several varsity wrestlers from the Paulding Panthers turned in strong performances on December 27 at the Bryan Invitational, earning multiple podium finishes against a competitive field.

Leading the way for Paulding was Michael Clifford, who captured a first-place finish in his weight class with a dominant showing throughout the day. Trenton Bail also brought home a championship, securing first place after a series of hard-fought matches.

Adan Zacarias and Isaac

Couts each finished as runners-up, earning second-place honors with consistent performances on the mat. Owen Workman added another second-place finish for the Panthers, further highlighting the team's depth.

Leonel Reyes and Ivan Martinez rounded out the medalists for Paulding with third-place finishes in their respective weight classes, contributing to a strong overall showing for the Panthers at the invitational.

VAN WERT PULLS AWAY FOR 63-32 WIN OVER OTTOVILLE

Van Wert controlled the tempo on both ends of the floor to earn a 63-32 boys basketball victory over Ottoville on December 27 at Van Wert. The Cougars set the tone early, using defensive pressure and efficient scoring to build separation on the scoreboard and maintain control throughout the contest.

Van Wert was led by a balanced offensive attack, with Keaten Welch and Zach Crummey each scoring 15 points. Xavier Kelly added 12 points, while Griffin McCrackey finished with nine. Cohen Bragg contributed six points, and Zander Stemen, Caden Collins, and Zarik Hall each added two. Ottoville was paced by Joe Leis with eight points, followed by Evan Altenburger and Ashton Miller

with seven apiece. Grady Leach scored five, Matthew Horstman and Nick Brandeberry added two each, and Nick Quartana chipped in one. Despite the loss, Ottoville continued to compete throughout the game, while Van Wert's depth and defensive execution proved to be the difference.

MCPHERSON COLLEGE ANNOUNCES FALL 2025 HONOR ROLL, HONORABLE MENTION

McPherson College, a four-year private college located in central Kansas, recognizes its highest academic achievers in its fall 2025 Honor Roll and Honorable Mention.

Students in the West Bend News readership area receiving this honor are the following:

Alyssa Ritchie, Honor Roll of Defiance, OH

Students must be enrolled full-time and earn a grade point average of 3.55 or higher during the last term to qualify for the honor roll. Students earning a grade point average of 3.25 to 3.54 are named to the honorable mention.

McPherson College offers more than 20 bachelor and pre-professional programs with a curriculum emphasizing entrepreneurship and career-focused education. In 2023, the college secured an unprecedented \$1B commitment to its endowment, marking one of the largest single endowment commitments of any small liberal arts college in the U.S. Nationally recognized by U.S. News & World Report, Money Magazine, and the Chronicle of Higher Education's "Great Colleges to Work For," McPherson College is renowned for its innovative programs. Its Automotive Restoration program, the first four-year degree program of its kind, made history when a student-restored Mercedes-Benz 300 S earned a class award at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance - the first time a student-restored car received such an honor at the prestigious Concours.

Visit www.mcpherson.edu to learn more about McPherson College.

ODNR AWARDS MORE THAN \$2.9M IN GRANTS FOR LOCAL PARK PROJECTS

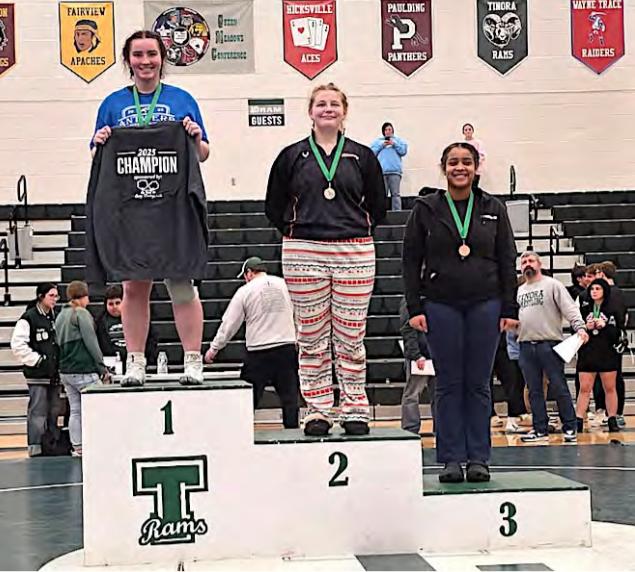
Local parks will be able to build new amenities, such as splashpads and basketball courts, thanks to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) NatureWorks grant program. ODNR approved more than \$2.9 million in project funding that will be distributed across 76 projects that will improve outdoor recreational opportunities for Ohioans across the state.

The 76 projects span across 64 counties in Ohio. Awardees will use the funding to buy new park land and develop new or renovated playgrounds, which include splashpads, sports courts including pickleball and basketball courts. Other project needs include trails and walking paths, pavilions, exercise equipment, and other park amenities such as restrooms, lighting, and parking.

"We want Ohioans to be able to discover an amazing park in their own backyard and that's why we support our local parks," said ODNR Director Mary Mertz. "These grants allow communities to

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CARNAHAN PRAISES EFFORT AS GIRLS WRESTLERS COMPETE AT TINORA INVITATIONAL



"I am extremely proud of the way they all competed until the very last whistle. Keep up the great work ladies!" said head coach Dustin Carnahan following a strong showing by the girls high school and junior high wrestling programs at the Tinora Invitational on December 28.

The junior high group set the tone early in the day, led by Addy, who earned a second-place finish. Addy went 2-1 on the day and recorded two pins, showcasing both resilience and finishing ability on the mat.

grow their love of nature and exploration."

NatureWorks grants provide up to 75% reimbursement assistance to local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas. Projects are funded through the Ohio Parks and Natural Resources Bond Issue, which was approved by Ohioans in November 1993. Additional legislation authorized the creation of the NatureWorks Grant Program.

JANUARY 13.14.15

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McMICHAEL HITS 1,000-POINT MILESTONE AS ARCHERS BATTLE THROUGH ROUTE 49 CLASSIC

Early in the game Edgerton Senior Maddox Baker adds 3 points to the Bulldog side of the board! More pictures at engagingexposures.com



Freshman Boston Tribble nails this 3 point basket for the Aces. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

The annual Route 49 Boys Basketball Tournament returned to Edon on December 29–30, bringing together Antwerp, Edon, Edgerton, and Hicksville for two nights of competitive play. On the opening night, December 29, Antwerp pushed host Edon to the wire before falling 58–57 in a tightly contested matchup. The Archers led 12–10 after the first quarter, but Edon used a strong second- and third-quarter surge to gain momentum and held off a late Antwerp rally. Zaine McMichael led Antwerp with 23 points, while Hampton Rogge added 10 and Weston Rhonehouse and Noah Lucas scored eight apiece. Edon was paced by Gallahue with 21 points and Chrisman with 16. Antwerp picked up a win in the junior varsity game, defeating Edon 52–47.

Tournament play concluded on December 30 with Antwerp facing Hicksville. Hicksville built an early lead and maintained control for a 60–52 victory, using balanced scoring throughout the night. McMichael again led the

Archers with 25 points, with Rhonehouse adding 15 and Brayden Fuller and Hampton Rogge with six each. Hicksville was led by Tribble with 18 points and Eicher with 15 to claim the Route 49 win. Antwerp closed the tournament with another junior varsity win, defeating Hicksville 50–40, for a JV Tournament championship for the Archers. During the tournament, McMichael reached the 1,000-point milestone for his varsity career, a significant achievement that earned the senior a spot on the Route 49 All-Tournament Team.

Following the Antwerp/Hicksville game was the final match of Edgerton routing Edon for the tournament win 62–57.

EAST NOBLE PULLS AWAY IN SECOND HALF TO DEFEAT WOODLAN, 47–30

East Noble used a decisive second-half surge to pull away from the Woodlan Warriors for a 47–30 boys basketball victory on December 27 at East Noble.

LADY RAIDERS TOP WARRIORS IN HOLIDAY MATCH UP

Careen Winans, senior, grabs the ball for a steal and runs down the court to attempt the 2 points. More pictures at engagingexposures.com

Wayne Trace used a strong opening quarter and a balanced scoring effort to earn a 43–35 girls basketball victory over Woodlan on December 27. The Lady Raiders jumped out to a 13–5 first-quarter lead and never relinquished control, closing the game with a decisive 13–10 fourth quarter to secure the win.

Woodlan battled back after halftime, outscoring Wayne Trace 14–8 in the

third quarter to pull within striking distance, but the Raiders answered down the stretch with timely defense and key rebounds. Wayne Trace finished the night shooting 10-of-34 from two-point range and 3-of-8 from beyond the arc, while converting 14-of-20 free throws.

Alyssa Anderson led all scorers for Woodlan with 24 points, accounting for the majority of the Warriors' offense. Mariah Thullner and

Tanner Laukhuf led all scorers with 18 points, knocking down four two-point field goals and three three-pointers to pace the Raiders. Carter Clemens added 10 points, while Zach Stoller chipped in nine. Caden Sinn finished with five points, and Lance Maenle and Blake Noggle each scored four. Owen Welch, Jayce Edwards, Easton Jay, Micah Sinn, and Lane Wenneinger also contributed to the scoring effort as Wayne Trace's defense.

The Raiders continued to

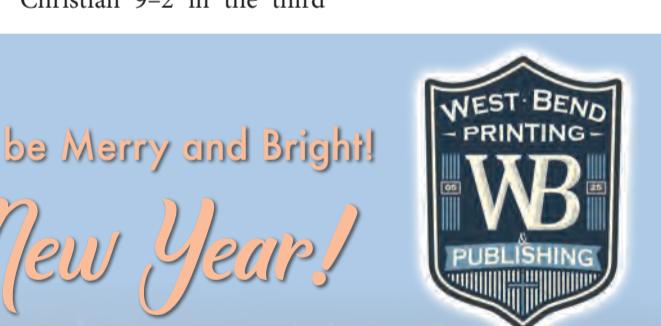
control the game after halftime, outscoring Emmanuel Christian 9–2 in the third

quarter and 8–5 in the fourth to close out the 43-point win. Wayne Trace finished the game shooting efficiently from both inside and beyond the arc while holding Emmanuel Christian to just six made field goals on the night.

The victory improved Wayne Trace to 4–4 on the season and marked a strong showing for the Raiders in McDonald's Holiday Tournament play at Bluffton.

Emmanuel Christian was led by Titus Shepherd with eight points, accounting for more than half of the team's scoring. Gage Morris scored four points, and Jamon Robinson added two, while the remainder of the offense was held in check by Wayne Trace's defense.

The Raiders continued to control the game after halftime, outscoring Emmanuel Christian 9–2 in the third



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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

THE LEFT TURN

Russ Gamester battles Bryan Nuckles to a qualifier victory Friday at the Rumble in Fort Wayne. (KR Poole Photos)

By: Ron Burt

The 2025 Rumble in Fort Wayne was an action packed with two days of excitement. Larry Boos, his staff and volunteers made the 27th annual event the best I can remember. The car counts and entries were up, and every room, hallway and ramp in the coliseum was filled with racecars. Drivers came from all over the country to compete on the Expo Centers 1/7th mile concrete floor track. It was a mix of experience and exuberance that characterized the national midget headliners during the kickoff to Rumble in Fort Wayne. Let me tell you about opening night.

In a new-look format, Russ Gamester and Ricky Peterson Jr. each won midget qualifying features during Friday's program, securing their starting spots into Saturday's Feature Race to 100 inside the Expo Center. Unlike previous years, which included complete shows on both days of the Rumble, Friday's action on the seventh-mile, indoor concrete oval saw the national midgets working to accrue points toward their starting positions in Saturday's heats. It was all a lead-up to the first 100-lap midget feature at the Fort Wayne Rumble since 2002.

The 30-lapper for even qualifiers featured two-time Rumble winner Joe Liguori and Rumble midget rookie Jake Boxell on the front row, with Liguori immediately jumping to the lead as Boxell was shuffled from second to eighth.

Past winner Ryan Flores took over second place at that point. Liguori had a narrow lead over Flores, despite the emergence of lap traffic near the one-third mark. A wild flip and turn-three impact by Trisdon Brown forced a short stoppage. Brown was uninjured, but his night was over. Calm went out the window on lap 14, when Flores moved Liguori for the lead in turn two, only for Liguori to get back into Flores going into turn three and send both cars skidding to a halt. Liguori continued, but Flores' night was over, because his motor locked up entering the corner, causing the loss of speed that led to the collision by Liguori.

Gamester took over the lead and held off fellow veteran Bryan Nuckles the rest of the way despite caution flags on laps 17 and 19. Friday was Gamester's sixth career Rumble Midget win. A runner-up finish wasn't what Nuckles hoped to accomplish Friday, having come so close to Rum-

20th. I hope all of you had a fun and safe Christmas and a fantastic new year's. Until next week, keep your wheels down. Ron out!

HUSTED BILL PROTECTING GREAT LAKES FISHERIES ADVANCES TO PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act, sponsored by Sen. Jon Husted (R-Ohio), was passed by the United States House of Representatives and the president will soon sign it into law. This will mark the third bill spearheaded by Husted signed into law since he took office.

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) and Husted introduced this legislation together on Sept. 18, 2025.

"Whether commercial or recreational, fishing is a staple of Ohio's culture and economy, generating \$5.5 billion for our state. Millions of Ohioans rely on—and enjoy—the experience and the bounty of fishing, from catching and eating perch or walleye to pursuing the many other sport fish found in Lake Erie and its tributaries. A healthy lake is essential to this way of life, and the U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center is on the front lines of ensuring Lake Erie remains a thriving and sustainable fishery," said Husted.

"I'm proud that the Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act will soon be-

come my third bill signed into law, and I will continue to support the resilient communities across Ohio that depend on these waters. This is a testament to what bipartisan cooperation can achieve when we focus on solving real problems for the American people," Husted concluded.

"I'm grateful to my colleagues in the House for taking action to pass this important legislation. The Great Lakes Science Center helps protect the freshwater fisheries and habitats that are invaluable economic and ecological assets for Michigan and the entire Great Lakes Region. I'm pleased to see this bill is one step closer to becoming law, and I'll never stop fighting to support our Great Lakes," said Peters.

The Great Lakes Fishery Research Program expired at the end of September 2025. The Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act will reauthorize the program for another five years through FY 2030. The research program provided the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Great Lakes Science Center with dedicated funding to conduct critical research with direct impact on the multi-billion-dollar commercial fishing industry on the Great Lakes.

The science center provides the Great Lakes region, and other parts of the U.S., with critical scientific information for resource managers to restore, manage, and protect the wildlife and their

habitats within the Great Lakes basin. Much of the work from the science center is centered around strengthening Ohio's rich fishing ecology.

This bipartisan legislation passed the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on Oct. 29, 2025. Senator Husted is the only member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works representing a Great Lakes state. The bill passed the Senate on Nov. 19, 2025. It passed the House of Representatives on Dec. 15, 2025.

Husted also had two other bills signed into law during

his first year in Congress. Both of his laws reflect his ongoing commitment to affordability and improving everyday life for Ohio families:

• Husted's first bill became law in May, reversing a burdensome Biden energy rule that raised costs for taxpay-

ers. • The SMART OTC Act will modernize the Food and Drug Administration's process for giving certain prescription drugs status as over-the-counter (OTC) options. The SMART OTC Act builds on Husted's work to provide high-quality health care for Ohioans.

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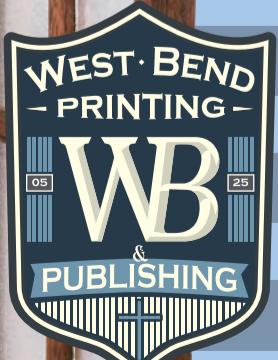
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NATIONAL PROGRAM SHARES WITH KIDS THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES AND FORESTS



Ohio is celebrating an important milestone when it comes to teaching kids across the state about the importance of learning about trees and forests! Project Learning Tree (PLT), a national program, is celebrating its 45th anniversary in Ohio.

Recently, PLT educators, professional foresters, students, and natural resources advocates gathered at Dawes Arboretum near Newark to honor PLT's accomplishments in environmental education over nearly half a century. The celebration, themed "Learning Is in Our Nature," featured storytelling sessions, a panel reflecting on PLT-Ohio's past and present, wagon tours of the Arboretum, and an awards luncheon recognizing leaders who demonstrate exceptional commitment to environmental literacy and stewardship.

Award recipients at the PLT Anniversary Ceremony: (Left to Right) Jen Dennison, Brenda Metcalf, Sue Wintering, Bill Schultz, Carolyn Watkins, Katie Mantel, Amanda Hurley, Nancy Gregory, Heather Sheets, Stephanie Downs.

During the luncheon, ten award recipients were hon-

ored for their outstanding service and commitment to environmental education. This year's honorees included:

Dan Balser, ODNR Division of Forestry; Bill Schultz, retired ODNR Division of Forestry; Sue Wintering, retired ODNR Division of Forestry

Mighty Oak Award:

Carolyn Watkins, retired Ohio EPA; Brenda Metcalf, Environmental Education Council of Ohio; Jen Dennison, ODNR Division of Wildlife

Branching Out Award:

Stephanie Downs, ODNR Division of Forestry

Outstanding Facilitator Awards:

Nancy Gregory, The Dawes Arboretum; Amanda Hurley, Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation District

Outstanding Educator Award:

Katie Mantel, Wildwood Environmental Academy

PLT-OHIO State Coordinator, Heather Sheets, shared upcoming initiatives aimed at expanding educator training, enhancing access to environmental education resources, and strengthening

pathways to green careers for youth. With a growing need for natural resource professionals across Ohio, the program plans to deepen partnerships with schools, workforce initiatives, and local conservation agencies.

Project Learning Tree (PLT), an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, is a nonprofit organization with outreach across all 50 states and several countries through partnerships with natural resource agencies, educators, and conservation organizations. In Ohio, PLT is sponsored by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry, where it plays a central role in advancing environmental education, forest literacy, and green career pathways.

PLT's internationally recognized environmental education program offers a lifetime of learning from early childhood through adulthood, offering engaging multidisciplinary curriculum, advancing environmental education, forest literacy, and green career pathways.

Since its founding in 1980, PLT-OHIO has trained thousands of educators and facilitators and continues to be recognized nationally for its leadership and statewide impact.

For more information about PLT-OHIO or to get involved, email plt@dnr.ohio.gov or visit ohiodnr.gov/plt.

ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at ohiodnr.gov (<https://www.ohiodnr.gov/>).

PAULDING COUNTY COURT RECORDS

Criminal/Traffic Disposition Report

Jayden J. Dalton of Paulding was found guilty on four counts of disorderly conduct. For the first count, he was fined \$50, sentenced to 30 days in jail with 25 suspended, and ordered to pay \$350 in court costs. Conditions included maintaining general good behavior and forfeiture of contraband to the arresting agency.

On the remaining counts, Dalton received an additional 30-day jail term each with all days suspended and a \$50 fine each count. Dalton was also found guilty of FRA suspension and fined \$100 plus \$105 in court costs. In a separate case, he was found guilty of Driving Under Suspension (OVI-related). He was fined \$250, sentenced to 180 days in jail with 177 days suspended, and had his license suspended from January 1 to July 1, 2026. Fines and costs were taken from bond.

Brendon L. Fry of Paulding was found guilty of disorderly conduct and fined \$100.

He was sentenced to 30 days in jail with 27 days suspended. He must also pay \$300 in costs, maintain general good behavior, and pay for his stay at the Paulding County Jail.

Cathy L. Ohms of Defiance was found guilty of failure to confine a dog. She was fined \$50 plus \$139 in court costs and ordered to maintain general good behavior.

Noah T. Coyne of Paulding had two charges dismissed—driving under suspension (non-FRA) and fictitious registration. He is responsible for \$105 in court costs for the DUS charge.

Janet R. Bonham of Paulding was found guilty of failure to control. She was fined \$70 and assessed \$100 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

Chad J. Carper of Oakwood was found guilty of two violations on December 29, 2025: driving while texting and a seat belt violation. He was fined \$95 for the texting offense and received no fine for the seat belt violation. Both charges were waived by the defendant.

Ava J. Zartman of Payne also appeared in the report for a driving while texting offense. She pleaded guilty and was fined \$95. This case was likewise waived by the defendant.

LEPC DISCUSSES TRAINING, GRANTS, AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY CONCERN

Members of the Paulding County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) met December 17, 2025 at the county Emergency Operations Center to address training needs, grant funding, and emerging issues affecting emergency preparedness.

After approving corrections to the previous meeting's minutes, the committee reviewed recent training efforts. Attendance at a fall operations refresher course was low, a challenge attributed to the busy harvest season. Plans are already in motion to reschedule future trainings to times of year that may allow greater participation.

Grant funding was a major topic of discussion. The committee successfully secured \$22,000 in LEPC grant funds this year, all of which were used for emergency training. Officials acknowledged that some training costs exceeded expectations, particularly for hazmat awareness and operations courses, and said future applications will better reflect real-world expenses. Challenges remain in finding instructors for advanced incident command classes that fit responders' schedules, though online options are being explored.

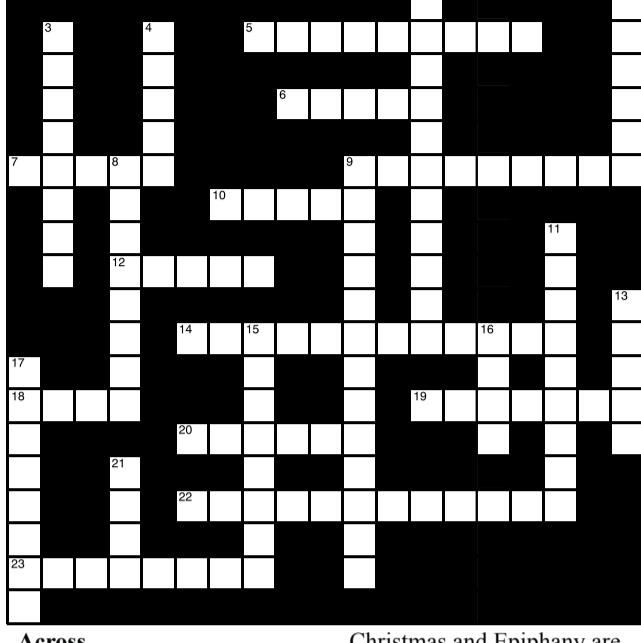
The committee approved its 2026 meeting schedule, maintaining its quarterly format while moving the December meeting earlier in the month to avoid the holidays. Officials noted the importance of publishing the schedule in advance to ensure public awareness.

Updates were also shared on county readiness. Emergency communications issues affecting tornado sirens were reported as resolved, and winter weather preparedness was discussed with an eye toward coordination among local agencies.

The Paulding County Health Department highlighted a new public health vending machine located out-

WEST BEND NEWS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



Across

5. Town where Jesus was born, visited by the Magi.
6. Six of these were "a-laying" eggs.
7. Number of these "a-leaping" in the 12 Days of Christmas carol is ten.
9. The first of the 12 days in the traditional celebration.
10. A burial spice given by the Magi, symbolizing suffering.
12. Eight of these were "a-milking."
14. Final evening of the 12 Days of Christmas, often celebrated with feasting.
18. Three of these "French" birds were gifted.
19. Type of birds received on the fourth day.
20. Eleven of these were "piping" music.
22. Aromatic resin presented to Jesus by the Magi.
23. Scene commemorated throughout the 12 Days and on Epiphany.

Down

1. What the 12 Days of

Christmas and Epiphany are centered around.

2. Nine of these were "dancing."
3. Christian tradition that often celebrates Epiphany on a different calendar date.
4. Seven of these were "a-swimming."
8. There are twelve of these in the carol, one for each day.
9. Liturgical name for the season from Christmas to Epiphany.
11. The bird in a pear tree from the famous Christmas carol.
13. Five of these golden gifts are sung with emphasis.
15. Christian feast day celebrated on January 6th marking the visit of the Magi.
16. One of the gifts brought by the Magi.
17. Epiphany tradition of marking doorways with blessed chalk and the year.
21. The three wise men who brought gifts to baby Jesus.

solution on page 11

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side its office. The machine provides free health and safety items to the public and is part of a broader effort to reduce barriers to care. Officials also discussed plans to grow a volunteer support network for emergency response, potentially working with local churches and offering incentives such as CPR training.

The meeting concluded with informal discussion on

the increasing role of artificial intelligence in government and emergency services, including both its potential benefits and emerging concerns. No official action was taken on the topic, but members agreed it is an issue that will continue to shape emergency management in the future.

The meeting adjourned following a motion from the floor.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Notice is hereby given that pursuant O.R.C. Section 4928.20 (C) the Village of Grover Hill will hold two separate public hearings on the Village of Grover Hill's Electric Power Aggregation Plan of Operation and Governance on Wednesday January 14th, 2026, at 5:30pm and 6:00pm in the Fire Station/Village Hall, 104 S. Main Street.

The Village of Grover Hill's Electric Power Aggregation Plan of Operation and Governance describes the policies and procedures by which the Village of Grover Hill will carry out its municipal electric aggregation program, including those policies and procedures, which relate to rates and customer service.

If you have any questions, you may call the Village between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm at 419-203-5323

*Mayor DeWayne Hinchcliff,
Village of Grover Hill*

LEGAL NOTICE

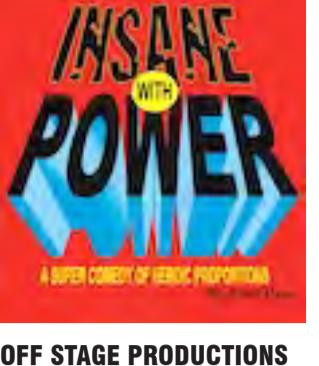
At its monthly meeting on December 16, 2025, the Paulding County Board of Health approved the 2026 proposed Food Program fee changes for 2026, effective January 1, 2026. Readings of the fees were conducted on September 25, 2025, October 30, 2025, and December 16, 2025.

2026 FOOD FEES

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

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





OFF STAGE PRODUCTIONS TO HOLD AUDITIONS FOR SPRING COMEDY

Off Stage Productions, Inc will be holding auditions January 20th & 21st (Tuesday and Wednesday) for "Insane with Power" by Scott Haan. Auditions will be held at Vantage Career Center, 818 North Franklin Street, Van Wert in the Commons area starting at 7:00PM both nights. Enter door 7 in the front of the building.

Show dates will be April 17-19 and 24-26. Directing this show will be Daniel Sanderson, who most recently directed "Gladys in Wonderland" two years ago. The sug-

gested cast size is 3 men and 3 women, but flexible casting is possible.

Synopsis: Lois Lancaster is a big-city journalist writing about the current state of mental health facilities. Her research takes her to a hospital populated with a unique group of quirky inmates who imagine they are crime-fighting superheroes. Speed Freak thinks he can run at incredible speeds, while Dim Bulb, the most enthusiastic person on the face of the earth, thinks he has the ability to turn off lights with his brain. Mental thinks she can read minds, despite being prone to sudden outbursts of bizarre non sequiturs. Kevin, much less quirky and flamboyant than the other inmates, doesn't embarrass himself with a ridiculous code name or costume..at least, not initially. Dr. Gail Eisner appears to be a kindly hospital administrator; a steady influence needed to effectively run a madhouse like this one. At first Lois finds their elaborate superhero fantasies to be an entertaining di-

version, the wild delusions of unstable minds, until something unusual happens that makes her wonder....

Scripts are now available for perusal for those interested in auditioning. Message us if interested in previewing a script or call or text 419-605-2634. No prior acting experience is required to audition.

"Insane with Power" is being produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Pub.

ANTWERP SCHOOL BOARD HIGHLIGHTS ENROLLMENT GROWTH, SAFETY UP- GRADES, AND NEW CAREER TECH PROGRAMS

The Antwerp Local School District Board of Education met in regular session on December 18, 2025, with board members receiving a wide-ranging set of reports highlighting student growth, staffing updates, facility planning, and upcoming academic initiatives as the district heads into the second half of the school year. Winter break was noted as beginning December

23, with students and staff returning after the holiday. Athletic activities will continue through the break, including the Route 49 boys and girls basketball tournaments and multiple wrestling invitationals.

Elementary Principal Doug Billman's report, shared by administration, focused on student recognition, enrollment growth, and student services. Students of the Month were recognized, and the board was updated on active PTO and PTSO events supporting both in-school and after-school activities. Enrollment continues to increase at the elementary level, particularly in kindergarten, which is now at capacity. Due to space limitations, the district has denied several open enrollment requests for kindergarten students from outside the district. Two additional kindergarten students are scheduled to begin in January, with staffing support already in place through dedicated classroom aides.

Student health services

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were also highlighted, including recent vision screenings. Of the 39 students who participated, 33 received full eye exams, and 11 students were identified as needing glasses, all of whom were able to receive them through assistance programs. The after-school program concluded for the semester and is expected to resume later in the winter, continuing through early May.

A special highlight at the elementary building was the introduction of Ozzy, the district's police dog, who made his first visit to the school. Administrators noted the positive response from students as Ozzy begins the process of becoming familiar with the building and student environment ahead of formal training later this year.

Superintendent Marty Miller thanked the district's principals for their leadership and noted the improved rhythm and consistency across buildings. A staffing update included plans to hire a part-time custodian to assist during lunch periods, addressing challenges following recent staffing shortages.

Significant discussion centered on facilities, particularly the planned bus garage renovation. Architectural plans are nearing completion, with bids expected to go out in January and construction anticipated to begin in the spring. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$1.5 million, with completion targeted before next winter. The project will allow buses to be stored in a temperature-controlled space and include a dedicated wash bay.

Technology and safety updates included the district's receipt of a \$40,000 grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office to implement a staff badge and building entry monitoring system. Installation is planned for the upcoming semester. Additional technology upgrades, including entry fobs for staff, are also in progress.

Curriculum and instruction updates were provided by Elise Wren, who reported on third-grade reading assessment results. Fifty percent of Antwerp students passed the fall assessment, exceeding the state average of 38 percent. Targeted intervention through after-school programming is planned ahead of spring testing. Wren also outlined upcoming changes in Career Technical Education requirements. Beginning next school year, the district will introduce middle school CTE programming, including robotics, construction, and media arts, utilizing existing staff licensure and aligning offerings with Vantage Career Center pathways.

The board was also informed that the district will begin the process of selecting a new math curriculum, as existing licenses expire next year. Administrators are reviewing options in anticipation of future state initiatives in mathematics instruction.

In other business, the board approved the 2026-2027 school calendar, multiple overnight student and staff trips, staffing appointments, stipends, and financial transfers. The board also accepted a resignation and approved district memberships and substitute lists. The organizational and regular board meeting for January were scheduled for January 6, 2026, beginning at 5 p.m.

The meeting concluded with an executive session to consider the employment of a public employee, after which the board adjourned.

THE CROSSROAD – ODOT NEWS FOR NORTHWEST OHIO

From the deputy directors

Northwest Ohio is a trucking hub that is supported by the highway infrastructure we maintain. So it's fitting that northwest Ohio is leading a statewide effort to increase truck parking in the state. We highlight that effort in this edition.

At its core, the truck parking issue is about the truckers -- the people behind the wheel. By law, they're required to rest after a certain number of hours. The ability to reach an appropriate parking location when that time comes is currently difficult, which is why you find them parked along highway ramps and other locations not ideal for them or other motorists.

At the direction of Governor DeWine, Ohio is working diligently to alleviate this. You'll see the first projects to construct additional truck parking in the coming year.

We appreciate the trucking industry -- their noble mission to "Bring It," as they say, and the people they employ to do that. We want the infrastructure they rely on to support them in every way.

What's in this issue:

-Northwest Ohio takes the lead in statewide truck parking initiative.

-Intersection conversion to all-way stop planned throughout northwest Ohio.

-Wood County project first in the state constructed with digital plans.

Northwest Ohio takes lead in statewide truck parking initiative

Northwest Ohio is coordinating a statewide effort to add approximately 1,400 truck parking spaces by late 2027.

In 2024, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine directed the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to address the lack of truck parking in the state and to begin construction of additional truck parking sites as soon as feasible.

Chris Hughes, ODOT District 1 deputy director, and a team in District 1 are leading the effort.

Hughes said 33 sites in 17

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REPURPOSE A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife is reminding Ohioans that a live-cut Christmas tree may be repurposed after the holidays as habitat for various species of animals. Before you discard your tree, remember that it can find life after the holidays for Ohio's birds, fish, and mammals.

A live-cut Christmas tree can be recycled as the centerpiece of a wildlife-friendly brush pile. Place the tree in a desirable location and layer limbs around it in a square arrangement. Cover the top with additional brush to create a unique and valuable shelter for small animals.

A repurposed Christmas tree can serve as habitat for birds, fish, and mammals.

Songbirds including cardinals, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and wrens travel in and out of brush piles for food, nesting, and to escape predators. Small mammals such as rabbits and chipmunks also use brush piles for shelter and raising young. Brush piles are valuable shelter for overwintering insects like bees, moths, and butterflies, as well.

Before repurposing or disposing of a live-cut Christmas tree, remember to remove all trimmings including tinsel, garland, lights, and ornaments as these can be harmful to the environment and wildlife. Please obtain proper permission before discarding your tree on public or private prop-

erties. Discarding trees without permission could result in a litter violation.

Live-cut Christmas trees are also useful as compost, mulch, and more. Here are some options for your live-cut Christmas tree following the holidays:

CENTRAL OHIO

The Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District accepts live-cut trees to benefit wildlife at the Headwaters Outdoor Education Center, 151 Home Road, Mount Gilead, until Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

NORTHEAST OHIO

The Mahoning County Green Team accepts donated trees at designated drop-off sites until Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. The Mahoning County Sheriff's Office Community Service Program collects and prepares trees to be used for fish and wildlife habitat in partnership with ODNR.

SOUTHEAST OHIO

City of Athens residents can arrange pickup on Tuesdays and Fridays through Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. Call the city at 740-592-3343 and leave undecorated trees on the curb. The trees will be used for fish structure.

SOUTHWEST OHIO

Drop off your undecorated tree at the North Pool Boat Ramp at Caesar Creek State Park, 8570 E. State Route 73, Waynesville, until Friday, Jan. 16, 2026. Trees are used to create fish habitat.

-- will be constructed.

In northwest Ohio, 247 truck parking spaces will be added in Allen, Henry, and Wyandot counties. For further information and construction schedule, visit the project website.

"Our directive was to get the project under way as soon as possible. For that reason, we determined con-

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structing the sites on state-owned property where no additional property acquisition would be needed was best," said Hughes.

Each site is located near major freight routes, in areas already in high demand for trucks, and where additional truck parking will cause minimal disruption.

Hughes said each parking site will generally include trash receptacles, lighting, and non-flush restroom facilities contained within a permanent shelter. These will be added where existing restrooms do not exist, or as a supplement to existing restroom facilities.

Construction will occur May 2026 through late 2027 in every region of the state. Project cost is estimated at \$150 million, funded through the state transportation budget.

A 2021 Ohio truck parking study conducted by ODOT confirmed the need for additional parking for commercial trucks, and identified locations where it's needed. Nationally, the study concluded there's currently one parking space for every 11 trucks on the road.

By law, truck drivers are required to be off duty for rest after a certain number of worked hours. Failure to adhere to regulations may mean fines, disciplinary action, or license suspension. Currently, truck drivers park at rest areas, decommissioned highway weigh stations, truck stops, and gas stations. When those options aren't available, they go searching, often settling along a highway shoulder or ramp.

In 2023, trucks logged 27.3 million miles on Ohio roads. ODOT estimates freight volume will increase 26% by 2045.

Some intersections throughout northwest Ohio to be converted to all-way stop

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is improving safety at select intersections statewide by converting standard, two-way stop intersections to all-way stop following examples in other states where the

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change brought improved safety.

Since 2018, the state of North Carolina converted over 500 intersections from a typical two-way to all-way stop control. Their analysis of 348 of these locations showed a 100% reduction in fatal crashes and 95% reduction in serious injury crashes. Similar results were also seen in the state of Delaware.

In Ohio, 77 intersections statewide were evaluated and chosen for conversion to an all-way stop. Implementation will occur within the next two years.

In northwest Ohio, 12 locations are identified for conversion. Two intersections were converted to an all-way stop this year: State Route 295 and Archbold Whitehouse Road in Lucas County, and State Route 2 and Township Road 24 in Fulton County. (Work was performed by personnel in the Lucas and Fulton County ODOT garages, District 2 traffic department, village of Archbold, Lucas County Engineer, and the village of Whitehouse):

Some of the identified intersections could potentially become roundabouts in the future, such as in Wood County where the intersection of State Route 199 and Five Point Road will become an all-way stop this spring and is scheduled for roundabout construction in 2029.

"In some cases, the all-way is an interim step to improve safety at an intersection until a roundabout is constructed. In other cases, the all-way in itself is best," said Chris Waterfield, ODOT District 2 traffic safety engineer.

The converted intersections will be monitored for crash trends. ODOT will produce an interim report one year and two years following implementation. A full evaluation report will be issued following three years of implementation.

Roundabout project first in Ohio constructed under digital, 3D design

The new roundabout at U.S. 23 and State Route 105, located in both Wood and Sandusky counties which

opened to traffic this fall, was constructed using digital, 3D plans rather than the typical multi-page paper set.

The new method, referred to as progressive design-build or also BIM (building information modeling) seeks to eliminate unneeded work and speed up both the delivery and construction of projects. The Wood County project was the first in the state to be constructed from start to finish under the digital model.

"We never created a plan set. It was just simply done. It was a full closure and was open in 60 days," said Eric Kahlig, administrator of the ODOT Office of Construction Administration.

Kahlig said the Wood County project was chosen as the first to be completed under the new method because it was ready to go, was a location on Governor Mike DeWine's list of troublesome intersections in Ohio, and was a fairly simple project. "And District 2 was willing to do it, and they're a good group," said Kahlig.

Those constructing the project appreciated the simplicity. "Our inspectors liked the BIM model once they became accustomed to it. They had the digital model on a tablet so when they were in the field, they could pull up the model and see exactly where they were standing and what the proposed work entailed. They didn't have to flip through multiple plan pages to retrieve details about a specific item," said Kacey Young, ODOT District 2 capital programs administrator. "They simply clicked on the item and a table would open up with all the details. It made their job more efficient," she said.

The experiment was a successful one. "It's advanced us in our efforts quite a bit in electronic delivery. And we got a good round-about out of it," said Kahlig.

PAULDING SENIOR CENTER JANUARY DINING MENU

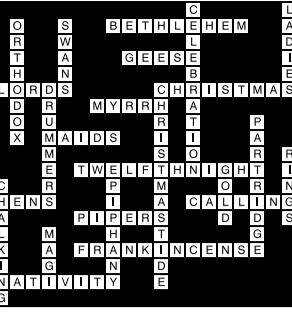
The dining Center Title III-C Nutrition Program is partially funded by the Older Americans Act, sponsored through AOA, ODA, and administered by Paulding County.

Low Sodium/Fat Entrees and Non-Concentrated Sweet Dessert Modified Meals are available. Swiss Steak or Chef salad can be ordered 1 place of liver & onions up to two days prior. Contact PCSC for additional information.

1/2 - Fish Sandwich, Cheesy Potatoes, Capri Salad, Vegetables, Fruit Cocktail, Granola Bar

1/5 - Country Fried Steak, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Corn / Dinner Roll, Strawberries, Angel Food Cake

1/6 - Ham & Cheese Casserole, Stewed Tomatoes, Spinach Salad, Hot Applesauce, Dinner Roll



Crossword solution from page 9

1/7 - Roasted Turkey w/ Gravy, Rice Pilaf/Dinner Roll, Green Beans, Tropical Fruit, Birthday Cake

1/8 - Pancakes & Sausage, Hashbrowns, Warm Cinnamon Apples, Orange Juice, Yogurt

1/9 - Johnny Marzetti, Italian Green Beans, Pears, Apple Juice, Garlic Bread

1/12 - Spaghetti & Meatballs, Warm Pears, Coleslaw, Garlic Bread

1/13 - Turkey & Cheese on Rye, Chunky Tomato Soup w/Crackers, Pineapple Tidbits, Pea Salad, Cookie

1/14 - Pork Roast, Hashbrown Bake, Normandy Blend, Vegetables, Chunky Applesauce, WW Bread, Goldfish Crackers

1/15 - Philly Steak w/ Cheese, Baked Potato, Beets, Apple Juice, Sherbet, Dinner Roll

1/16 - Beef & Noodles, Mashed Potatoes, California Blend, Peachy Cream, Dinner Roll

1/20 - Beef Stew, Tossed Salad, Grape Juice, Biscuit, Peach Cobbler

1/21 - Meatloaf, Hashbrown Bake, Creamed Peas, Mixed Fruit, Dinner Roll, Apple Cinnamon Bar

1/22 - Liver & Onions, Mashed Potatoes, Broccoli, Oranges & Pineapple, WW Bread, Graham Crackers, Alt: Swiss Steak

1/23 - Ham & Swiss Sandwich, Potato Soup, Macaroni Salad, Mixed Fruit, Tomato Juice, Crackers

1/26 - Chicken Alfredo w/Pasta, Broccoli, Fruit Compote, Tossed Salad, WW Bread

1/27 - Chili w/Crackers, Tossed Salad, Tropical Fruit, Gingerbread, Apple Juice

1/28 - Swiss Steak w/ Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, Banana, Dinner Roll, Oatmeal Raisin Cookie

1/29 - Pork Chop, Hashbrown Bake, Beets, Mixed Fruit, Cookie, WW Bread

1/30 - Salmon Patty, Scalloped Potatoes, Pears, Canned Carrots, WW Bread, Fruit Snacks

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McMICHAEL HITS 1,000-POINT MILESTONE



Antwerp Senior Zaine McMichael was not afraid of scoring in Tuesday night's match as he achieved his one thousand point threshold, and was named player of the tournament! More pictures at engagingexposures.com

(See game results on page 7)

KYZER REALTY



PAULDING AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WELCOMES KYZER REALTY

The Paulding Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to welcome Kyzer Realty as a new Chamber member and newest addition to the Paulding

business community.

Kyzer Realty is a locally owned real estate brokerage led by Broker/Owner Rita Bowling, who brings more than 20 years of industry experience. The company officially opens its Paulding office on January 1, 2026, located at 103 1/2 E. Perry Street on the downtown square.

To celebrate, Kyzer Realty will host a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at noon. The public is invited to attend and help welcome the team to downtown Paulding. Light refreshments will be provided, including coffee, cookies,

sandwiches, and beverages.

Kyzer Realty is committed to becoming actively involved in the Paulding community and building strong local connections, reflecting their belief that real estate is about relationships as much as it is about property.

For more information, visit kyzerrealty.com or call (419) 786-0009.

VAN WERT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT SUPPORT FROM THE VAN WERT COUNTY FOUNDATION

The Van Wert County Agricultural Society is pleased to announce it has received grant support from the Van Wert County Foundation. A grant in the amount of \$14,000 was awarded from the John D. and Nellie S. Ault Memorial Fund to support the Society's Dairy Barn Preservation Project.

The Van Wert County Agricultural Society is grateful for the continued support of the Van Wert County Foundation and the John D. and Nellie S. Ault Memorial Fund.

For more information about the Dairy Barn Preservation Project or the Van Wert County Agricultural Society, please contact the Fair Office at (419) 238-9270.

OHIO STATE'S FARM SCIENCE REVIEW DRAWS CROWDS WITH INNOVATION AND REAL-WORLD SOLUTIONS

Imagine a soybean farmer boosting yields and profits just by changing a planting date — and using artificial intelligence to know exactly when to make the switch.

That scenario is quickly becoming a reality thanks to Agroptimizer, a new AI-powered decision-support tool being tested by Laura Lindsey, soybean and small grains specialist with The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

Agroptimizer is just one of many innovations that embodied the theme of the 2025 Farm Science Review: "Transforming Tradition." Held at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center in London from Sept. 16-18, Farm Science Review brought together farmers, industry leaders, educators and families to explore the future of agriculture through technology, research and hands-on education.

Attendance reached 112,701, according to Nick Zachrich, Farm Science Review manager.

"This year's show brought a strong sense of optimism," Zachrich said. "Even though markets are tight and weather has been challenging, the overall attitude in the ag community is positive. Farmers understand that, while they may not upgrade equipment or adopt new practices today, the time is coming."

"Farm Science Review helps them prepare for that future."

Despite ongoing drought conditions affecting more than 96% of the state, the 2025 show saw a modest increase in attendance over last year.

"There were 57,244 visitors just on Wednesday alone, and we were thrilled to see attendance climb over 112,000 for the show," Zachrich said. "That tells us farmers continue to see real value in what we're offering."

MOORE REACHES HISTORIC MILESTONE



Raider Nation celebrated with fellow Lady Raider, Lexi Moore, who achieved her 1,000th Career Rebound at last Saturday's (Dec. 27th) basketball game against Woodlan! More pictures at engagingexposures.com

(See game results on page 7)

Attendees explored more than 4,000 product lines and participated in over 180 educational sessions presented by CFAES researchers and Ohio State University Extension experts. OSU Extension is CFAES' outreach arm.

Drought preparedness, crop disease management, fire safety on farms and farm succession planning were some of the key topics this year at Farm Science Review. CFAES researchers delivered actionable guidance to help producers withstand current challenges and plan for the future.

Aaron Wilson, CFAES field specialist in agricultural weather and climate and Ohio's state climatologist, provided timely insights into weather variability and long-term climate trends. Greg LaBarge, agronomic systems specialist with OSU Extension and member of Extension's Agronomic Crops Team, highlighted emerging AI tools to help farmers make field-specific decisions on planting and disease management.

With drought conditions increasing the risk of farm fires, Dee Jepsen, OSU Extension state safety leader, led daily demonstrations on fire safety, extinguisher use and emergency response planning.

"Farm Science Review is a place where we can reach farmers and the rural community with lifesaving safety information," Jepsen said.

Attendees could also engage with emergency preparedness tools like the Grain C.A.R.T. and the Bovine Emergency Response Plan trailer, which simulated real-world rescue situations involving grain bins and livestock transport accidents.

Environmental sustainability was a central theme at

the Gwynne Conservation Area, a 67-acre outdoor education site at Farm Science Review. From tree and invasive species identification hikes to pond management and fly-fishing demos, the area hosted dozens of hands-on conservation sessions.

Visitors also had the opportunity to learn about the invasive spotted lanternfly. Experts led sessions at the Gwynne that focused on identifying the pest across its various life stages — egg masses, nymphs and adults — and shared guidance on how to report sightings, manage infestations and reduce its spread.

For high school students, the Gwynne offered targeted forestry education to support FFA competition prep, reinforcing the connection between career exploration and natural resource management.

The next generation was also front and center at the Youth Discovery Center, where the Ohio 4-H Mobile Classroom introduced students to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) through robotics, coding, app design and digital art. In total, 7,634 students from 191 schools attended this year's show.

"We want students to leave knowing they can pursue a future in STEAM," said Christy Millhouse, Ohio 4-H STEM educator. "Farm Science Review gives them that spark."

From precision AG and climate tools to immersive conservation lessons and youth empowerment, Farm Science Review 2025 demonstrated how Ohio farmers are transforming tradition while investing in the future.

For more information and ongoing updates, visit fsr.osu.edu.

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