

# The WEST BEND NEWS

www.westbendnews.net

VOLUME 22 – ISSUE 6

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

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026

## LADY PANTHERS EARN GMC TITLE IN CONTESTED MATCH



Paulding Junior Tori Schlatter drives right through the defense to add two points to the Panther side of the score board. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

The Paulding Lady Panthers celebrated Senior Night in championship fashion Thursday night February 5th at The Jungle, defeating the Fairview Lady Apaches 72-65 to secure the GMC champi-

onship and complete an undefeated run through conference play.

Paulding controlled the opening possession after win-

(Continued on Page 7)

## OH REP ROY KLOPFENSTEIN ANNOUNCES 2026 RE-ELECTION

State Representative Roy Klopfenstein announced today he is running for re-election to continue delivering results for the families, farmers, workers, businesses, and communities of Ohio's 82nd House District. The Northwest Ohio counties of Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert and the southern half of Defiance make up the District.

"Serving the people of Northwest Ohio has been the honor of my life," said Rep. Klopfenstein. "I'm running for re-election because there's much more work to do."



Strengthening our communities, keeping government spending and regulation in check, protecting taxpayers, growing good-paying jobs, and ensuring our part of Ohio remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family is an on-going duty and responsibility," he added.

Representative Klopfenstein's 2026 re-election campaign will prioritize:

- Fiscal responsibility, keeping taxes low, and ensuring accountability in state government.
- Supporting agriculture and protecting Ohio's great farming heritage.
- Backing businesses and job creation across the region.
- Public safety and support for law enforcement and first responders.
- Investing in our future

(Continued on Page 3)

## BRANCH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP TO HOST FREE MARRIAGE SEMINAR



Seth and Angela Adkins are the main speakers for this year's Marriage Seminar planned for February 21, 2026 at Branch Christian Fellowship Church.

Branch Christian Fellowship will hold its annual marriage seminar on February 21st from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the church located at 109 N. Main Street in Paulding. This is a free event and is open to the public. There will be a meal provided.

Be sure to register at <https://www.branchchristianfellowship.com> under EVENTS. Come spend some time away as a couple and enrich your marriage. We would love to see you.

Our Speakers: Seth and Angela Adkins are the senior leaders of the River in Delta church. They have been in ministry the past 22 years in

various capacities - youth leadership, church planting, evangelism outreach, healing and freedom ministries. They have six children and one son-in-love.

Seth and Angela are passionate to see hearts reconciled and healed, marriages restored, families saved and set free, and people sent out in their kingdom callings to further the gospel.

They believe in transparency and vulnerability and hope that their stories of failures and successes and the keys they have learned along the way will help others to grow closer to God and to one another.

## HEATING ASSISTANCE STILL AVAILABLE

The Ohio Department of Development and Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission want to help alleviate the burden of costly energy bills this winter and

keep more of Ohio's families warm.

From now through March 31, 2026, income-eligible Ohioans can receive one-time assistance with their home energy bill through the Department of Development's Home

(Continued on Page 2)

**Monroeville American Legion**  
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Thank These Local Organizations & Businesses for being a part of this edition of the West Bend News

## Community Calendar

### TUE & WED

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

### February 9

- Vantage Career Center Open House & Taste of Vantage @ Vantage, VW, 5-7:30p

### February 10

- Kinship Caregivers Support Group @ Recovery Clubhouse, Paulding 6-7p
- PC Democrat Party Meeting @ Paulding Eagles, 7p
- Valentine Movie & Game Night @ Paulding Library Children's Rm., 5-6p
- PCRTA Meeting @ Paulding Pancake House, 10a

### February 11

- Defiance Library Finance & Policy Committee Meeting @ Defiance Library, 4:30p

### February 12

- Coffee Talk at Paulding Library, 1p
- Senior Bingo @ Grover Hill Library, 1p
- WT Art Club Valentine Party @ Payne Library, 4-5p

### February 13

- Steel Magnolias @ Huber; Dinner, 6p, Show @ 7p

### February 14

- Steel Magnolias @ Huber; Dinner, 6p, Show @ 7p

### February 15

- Steel Magnolias @ Huber, Show @ 2p

### February 17

- Adult Bingo @ Paulding Library, 11a; registration req'd



Add your event to the calendar [info@westbendnews.net](mailto:info@westbendnews.net)

**CARD SHOWER**  
Village of Payne Police Chief: Rodney Miller  
After 40 years of dedicated service to Payne Village, Chief of Police Rodney Miller is retiring March 3rd, 2026!  
We want to shower him with love and appreciation. We invite all residents to send a card sharing your favorite memory, a thank you, or well wishes for Rodney's next chapter. Rodney was hired June 2nd, 1986. Appointed Chief September 2nd, 1986.  
**How to Send:**  
Please mail cards to: Village of Payne - ATTN: Retirement, PO Box 58, Payne, Ohio 45880  
Drop them off at the office, or place in night deposit box on front of Village Office building at 119 Main St. Payne, OH  
**Deadline:** Please send by February 23rd so we receive them in time so we can present them to him on March 3rd.  
**LET'S MAKE THIS SEND-OFF UNFORGETTABLE!**

It's not too early for  
**2026 GRADUATION INVITATIONS**  
Time flies - Graduation will be here before you know it. Call us today for a custom designed graduation invitation package - including how we can take care of the hard work for you!  
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**OBITUARIES**



by her husband, Rex Plummer; her daughter, Bev Plummer; grandson, Nathan Plummer.

She will be greatly missed by her children, Carol Plummer, Steven (Deb) Plummer, Jerry Plummer, Kathy (Doug) Dodson, Janis (Scott) Wallace and Rick (Denise) Plummer as well as 13 grandchildren and 27 great grandchildren.

Funeral service will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Friday, February 6, 2026 at Latty Apostolic Christian Church with church clergymen officiating. Burial will follow in Latty Apostolic Christian Church Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at Latty Apostolic Christian Church Fellowship Hall. There will also be visitation from 9:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. on Friday at the church.

Memorial contributions may be made in Anna's memory to the Country Inn Enhanced Living Center or the Latty Apostolic Christian Church.

Den Herder Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements.

Online condolences may be shared at [www.denherderfh.com](http://www.denherderfh.com).

**PAULDING, OH: Deloris M. (Reinhart) Whirrett** passed away on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at Vancrest of Payne.

She was born to Martin and Mae (Kausner) Reinhart on May 24, 1930. On July 28, 1951, she married Alan R. Whirrett and to this union, a son, Donald, was born.

Preceding her in death were her parents, husband, son, and sister, Louise L. Reinhart.

She was secretary to A.C. Bell, county superintendent of schools for several years and was employed for several more years as secretary of Paulding Exempted Village Middle School. Following that was part owner in family business, Don's Dairy, New Hampshire, OH. After retiring from all, she enjoyed the family farm and pond, gardening and her family cats.

She was a member of Human Services Board; VFW Auxillary, Paulding Historical

Society, and Dragonfly Club.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at Paulding St. Joseph Catholic Church (Divine Mercy Catholic Parish - Paulding) at 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 with Father Austyn Ammanniti officiating. Burial will follow in St. Paul Cemetery, Paulding Township, OH.

There will be no visitation.

She has requested friends gather and celebrate her life with things they remember about her.

To honor Deloris' wishes, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Deloris' memory to Friends of Felines, Defiance, OH.

Online condolences may be shared at [www.denherderfh.com](http://www.denherderfh.com).

**PAULDING COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING POSTPONED**



The John Paulding Historical Society, now known as the Paulding County History Museum, is undergoing extensive renovations in the kitchen area. Because of this, our Annual Membership meeting, which was scheduled for Sunday, February 22, at 2:00 p.m., will be postponed to a later date.

The museum has needed this kitchen update for many years and because of the generous donation from Sandra Weidenhamer and other memorials received, the board of directors voted to get the

kitchen done!

The Vantage Career Center has been an essential part of this project and we truly appreciate their help more than we can express. The electricity and carpentry classes have been imperative to the completion of our new kitchen.

Watch our Facebook page and press releases to the newspapers for the date of the Annual Membership meeting once we get the kitchen done! You'll want to make sure you attend the meeting so you can see our new kitchen!

**REP. KLOPFENSTEIN HIGHLIGHTS SCHOOL BUS SAFETY GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL DISTRICTS**

State Representative Roy Klopfenstein (R-Haviland) is pleased to announce that numerous local school districts in Van Wert, Paulding, Putnam and Defiance Counties were recently awarded funding from the Ohio School Bus Safety Grant Program—totaling more than \$143,000.

As part of the state operating budget, the Legislature provided \$10 million toward helping school districts offset the costs of upgrading their bus fleets with advanced safety equipment. Flexible guidelines allowed each school district to best utilize the funds to promote safety in their fleet.

"These grants are a great asset to our local communi-

(Continued from Page 1)

ties," said Klopfenstein.

The list of awardees in the 82nd House District: Paulding Exempted Village School District, \$19,452; Wayne Trace Local School District, \$44,358; Continental Local School District, \$39,078; Miller City - New Cleveland Local School District, \$8,652; Crestview Local School District, \$11,020; Van Wert City School District, \$2,181; Defiance City School District, \$5,526; Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities, \$ 5,346; Northeastern Local School District, \$7,476

Every school district that applied for assistance with eligible equipment received an award. Schools may use the funds to incorporate safety enhancements in new buses or add safety technology to buses currently in service.

Clients need to bring copies of the following documents to their appointment:

- Copies of their most recent energy bills, if available
- A list of all household members and proof of income for the last 30 days or 12 months for each member
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members
- Proof of disability, if applicable

For more information about the Winter Crisis Program, visit [energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://energyhelp.ohio.gov).

The Ohio Department of Development empowers communities to succeed by investing in Ohio's people, places, and businesses. Learn more about our work at [development.ohio.gov](http://development.ohio.gov).

For more information, contact: Mason Waldvogel [Mason.Waldvogel@development.ohio.gov](mailto:Mason.Waldvogel@development.ohio.gov)

**Scripture of the Week**

"Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor."

— Proverbs 21:21

**FAITH COMETH BY HEARING**



**Romans 10:17 NKJV:**

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Consequently, the word of God increases our hearing, and our hearing increases our faith."

How are you hearing?

This verse encapsulates a profound truth about the nature of faith and its origins within the Christian faith. The apostle Paul emphasizes that faith is not a mere internal sentiment or an isolated experience; rather, it depends on the word of God being read, received, and communicated through our actions.

1. The phrase "faith comes from hearing" underscores the necessity of active listening. Having a desire to read and receive the word of God. It requires exposure to the truth of the Gospel. The importance of preaching and teaching within the life of the church and individual believers. It is through the proclamation of God's word that people are invited to respond with faith. Moreover, if you take the time to read the word of God, it will always inspire reflection on your current situation.

2. The message that is heard through the word about Christ, points us to the center of Christian faith—the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is crucial to understand that faith is built on the message of Christ, encompassing His life, death, and resurrection, and their implications for humanity and your own life. We engage with the Bible, the Gospel of truth, we encounter new revelation, which is the basis for our growth and the foundation of our hope.

3. In the Gospel, we have a responsibility to share the Gospel. If faith comes from hearing the mes-

sage, then we, as believers, are called to be conduits of that message. Whether through personal conversations, teaching, writing, or through our living, we can play a vital role in helping others hear about Christ and possibly come to believe.

4. Romans 10:17 encourages us not just to receive the word but also to be proactive in sharing it. This could involve inviting others to church, engaging in spiritual discussions, or simply sharing our personal testimonies of faith. (and Lord knows we have some testimonies) (smile). Each of these actions aligns with the belief that faith is nurtured by hearing the word and the truth of God.

In summary, Romans 10:17 beautifully illustrates the interconnectedness between faith and the proclamation of Christ's message. It serves as a powerful reminder for believers to both nurture their own faith through hearing, studying, and to actively share that message with others, hoping that they, too, can come to faith.

Faith grows when we truly listen and study the word of God. If your faith is weakening, perhaps you are not reading, studying, or hearing the word of God enough. Like you, the word of God is an active, living being that must be fed, nourished, and tended to. Every living thing has basic needs: air, water, and nutrients. Jesus is the air we breathe, the living water we drink, and the food that nourishes our souls.

John 6:35 (NIV) says, "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"

Increase your faith by the hearing of God's word. Let those who have ears hear.

Peace and love,  
—Pastor Dwayne

*Thank You*

The family of Pudge Kennedy would like to thank each and every one for the love and support shown to us at this most difficult time. We will never forget the hugs, prayers, cards, messages, food, flowers, memorials, and all other sympathy gifts and acts of kindness. Special thanks to Dooley Funeral Home and all of the Dooley Family, Grant's Catering, Divine Mercy Catholic Church, Antwerp VFW, Antwerp Fire Dept., staff of Maumee Cemetery, and Warga Concrete Products, Oley McMichael, and Jim Pendergrast.

To CHP & Hospice, Visiting Angels, and Village of Antwerp employees - Curtis Nestleroad, Jeremy Kosch, and Chris Walters for absolutely everything, everyone that was with us at the funeral mass and Celebration of Life we thank you and greatly appreciate everything.

**GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT IN THE WEST BEND NEWS.**

**NEWS ITEMS ARE ALWAYS FREE!!**

**HAVE A WEDDING, ENGAGEMENT OR ANNIVERSARY?**

Let your friends and neighbors know for **FREE** in the West Bend News.

(pictures are extra)

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**Energy Assistance Winter Crisis Program.**

The Winter Crisis Program assists Ohioans facing service disconnection, those who have already been disconnected, individuals needing to establish new service, and those required to pay for a service transfer. It also supports households with 25 percent or less of bulk fuel in their tank to maintain service. Qualifying households must have a gross annual income at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, that is \$56,262.50.

If you need immediate assistance with your energy bills, please contact Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission's 24-hour appointment hotline at 419-219-4641 or visit our website [www.nocac.org](http://www.nocac.org) to schedule an appointment.

**A bad mood is never an excuse to use cruel words.**

Never. Moods pass, but cruel words wound the soul.

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Phone: 419-258-6505

Proclaiming a Changeless Christ in a Changing World.

9:15 a.m. Sunday School, Adult Bible Study  
10:15 a.m. Worship Service



# MY NEW HAT

**Penny For your Thoughts**  
By: Nancy Whitaker

What do you think of this cold and snowy weather? I always liked the snow and when younger liked the colder weather. The older I get, the less I like this cold, powdery, icy white stuff. When we were young and maybe some still do, go out and make snowmen, snow angels, or sledding. Now, I have fears of catching pneumonia or falling and breaking a bone. This winter I haven't went out a lot because that cold wind gets down my throat and nose and I lose my breath. I was in the house for over 2 weeks and was scared to leave the warmth of my home. After being in for so long I felt like climbing the walls. Oh if I could just go to a big store and shop or go out to eat!

Well one day I decided to buy a hat online. I have never been a hat person but if a warm hat could cover my ears and nose, maybe I could keep my mouth shut outside and prevent that cold wind from attacking me. So, it's always fun to get online and look for items. Well I found this furry hat which I could pull over my head, flip up a collar, pull down a hoodie and it was purple. I was so anxious to get the hat that when it came I decided it was time to bundle up and go out.



My sweetie and I decided to go out to eat and then shopping. It was a cold day but sunny. As we drove along, the SUV made a couple clinking noises, but we did not think

much of it. Hmmmmm. by the time we got to Lima the vehicle was knocking and it didn't want to move.

We made it to an oil change place and whatever happened, oil wasn't the answer. So, we got over to a parking lot, traffic was crazy and hat or no hat it was COLD. Thank God for AAA and cell phones. It took forever to get back home, but we made it. No eat out. No Shopping! Oh well the next day that it got up to 20 degrees, I would be hopefully ready to go.

A few days later, I bundled up and sweetie and I decided to try our luck again at going



out. I had got my hair done, put on make up and my purple hat and was ready to go. My sweetie (Denny) had drove his truck over earlier, and went out to start it. I had my hat on plus coats and sweaters and a list made out.

He warmed up the truck but shortly came back in and said, "My computer on the truck must have went out because I have no lights on my dashboard."

"Oh no," I said. "What is wrong with it?" He replied, "I have no idea but I am going to run it to the dealer."

The issue was easier to fix but by that time, it was growing late and so again I did not get to go or get out of the house."

Well, eventually I got out and we went shopping and the outside looked and felt so good that I felt like kicking up my heels.

There are lots of things I can do inside, but after a couple of weeks, I was ready to "take flight" and spread my wings towards Lima. Yahoooo!

As I sit here tonight, I just heard a debate going to get some more snow and cold weather. Well I did buy some hot tea and got some books to read. To all the readers, be careful, bundle up and don't fall down. If it's not too cold I will give you A Penny For Your Thoughts.

## FORT DEFIANCE PLAYERS RECEIVE \$10,842 DAF GRANT FOR AUDITORIUM SAFETY UPGRADE



**Pictured with the grant are (L to R) Chris Yoder - DAF Executive Director and Dr. Bob Barnett - Director of the Fort Defiance Players.**

The Defiance Area Foundation (DAF) would like to congratulate the Fort Defiance Players for receiving a \$10,842 grant received during their fall 2025 grant cycle.

This grant came from the Arts and Theatre Fund, under

the DAF umbrella, and was used to purchase a hydraulic power lift at the Defiance County Auditorium. This lift will make it more safe for the technical stage management to complete their jobs.



*(Continued from Page 1)*

generations, workforce development, and career opportunities. "When I first took office, I pledged to preserve and protect the shared core values of faith, family, and freedom the people of my District hold so dear. There is not a day that goes by that I do not see the importance of that pledge and what it means to our children and grandchildren."

Representative Klopfenstein serves as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee where he has been leading productive, common-sense initiatives that support and advance Ohio's top industry of agriculture and encouraging future generations of Ohio farmers. He has also been serving on the House Energy, Local Government, and Transportation Committees.

"Armed with the experi-

ence I have gained serving in the Ohio House of Representatives, I am more dedicated and determined than ever to protect and preserve the priceless values that make the counties of Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert, and Defiance such great places to live and raise a family. I look forward to earning the vote of the people of the 82nd Ohio House District during the 2026 elections so I can continue working on their behalf", said Representative Klopfenstein.

The 2026 Ohio Primary Election will take place on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 and this year's Ohio General Election will be on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

For more information about Roy Klopfenstein's reelection campaign for State Representative, 82nd Ohio House District, please visit his campaign website at [www.RoyKlopfenstein.com](http://www.RoyKlopfenstein.com)

### VAN WERT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY TO HOST 10th ANNUAL REVERSE RAFFLE

The Van Wert County Agricultural Society will host its 10th Annual Reverse Raffle on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at the Junior Fair Building on the Van Wert County Fairgrounds. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m., with dinner served at 6:00 p.m.

The annual fundraiser will feature multiple chances to win prizes, including a 50/50 drawing along with silent and live auction items. The final ticket drawn will receive a \$7,000 prize, with additional prizes of \$3,500,

\$1,500, and \$750 awarded to the second-, third-, and fourth-to-last tickets drawn.

The evening will be catered by Gibson's Barnyard BBQ. Only 300 raffle tickets will be available, and all ticket holders will receive a catered meal, complimentary drinks, and access to all activities throughout the event.

Tickets are available through the Van Wert County Fair Office at 1055 S. Washington St. in Van Wert or by contacting any Fair Board director. Additional information is available at [www.vanwertcountyfair.com](http://www.vanwertcountyfair.com) or by contacting the Fair Office.

*The deadline for the West Bend News is THURSDAYS at 5pm for the following issue. Send your news, ads, and classifieds to [info@westbendnews.net](mailto:info@westbendnews.net) Call 419-258-2000 for information or printing quotes.*

### MILITARY HISTORY IN PAULDING COUNTY



**By: Mark Holsberry**

Charles Franklin Stiner was born on October 20, 1886, in Antwerp, Ohio. He was the son of John Stiner, born in 1831 in Switzerland, and Mary Jane "Jennie" (Cram) Stiner, born in 1859 in Ohio. John was a Civil War veteran who served with Company G, 14th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a unit comprised of Paulding County men.

John and Mary were married on November 12, 1876, in Paulding County. By 1880, they were raising Annie, born in 1866; Maggie, born in 1868; and John A., born in 1871. These were children from John's first marriage to Sarah Susanna (Cluts) Stiner, who was born in 1844 and passed away in 1875. Sarah and John were married in 1864.

John and Mary had Susanna in 1877 and Jacob in 1879. John was a farmer. John and Mary later added Simeon N., born in 1884, and Charles E., born in 1886. This farming family was busy raising children when tragedy struck. John passed away on February 1, 1887. He was buried in Slough Cemetery in Antwerp.

By 1890, Mary had moved the family to Battle Creek, Calhoun County, Michigan. Simeon and Charles were in school. By 1900, with only two children remaining at home, Mary found it easier to raise the boys.

In 1907, Mary remarried a man named Eli Maynard Munson. By 1910, Eli, Mary, and Charles were living in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Charles was working as a laborer in the laundry business.

On June 5, 1917, Charles found himself back in Antwerp, where he registered for the World War I draft. He was listed as short (5'3"), medium build, with gray eyes and light red hair. He was single and working as a clerk for Joseph Yager, who operated a local laundry.

On June 25, 1918, Charles joined the National Army out of Paulding County. He was assigned to the 158th Depot Brigade for training. He served until July 31, 1918, when he was transferred to the Quartermasters Corps. He was honorably discharged on March 14, 1919.

By 1920, Charles was working in Antwerp as a laundryman. His work with restaurants, hotels, and other patrons earned him the respect of the town's residents. His honest dealings were his stock and trade.

By 1930, feeling the effects of the Great Depression, Charles moved back to Battle Creek, Michigan, where he continued in the laundry business. After a short stay, he returned to Antwerp. He was working as a salesman for a local restaurant and living with Charles and Rosetta Bissell at 215 South River Street.

Charles's mother, Mary, passed away in 1939 and was buried in Memorial Park Cemetery in Battle Creek, Michigan. By 1940, Charles was still living in Antwerp, residing with his sister and brother-in-law.

In 1942, Charles registered for the World War II draft. At the age of 55, he was not selected. Around this time, he moved in with his employer, Hattie Yager, the wife of Joseph Yager, who continued to operate the Antwerp laundry service.

Within the next two years, Charles moved back to Battle Creek, Michigan. With his health failing, he passed away on April 4, 1949. He was buried alongside his mother and stepfather at Memorial Park Cemetery in Lot J-100, Grave 1.

*... Until Next Time!*

### WAGNER NAMED TO HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY'S SPRING SEMESTER DEAN'S LIST

Hayden Wagner of Antwerp has been named to the dean's list at Heidelberg University.

Heidelberg University has announced the names of 382

students who have earned academic recognition on the fall semester dean's list.

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your classified ad today!  
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**Good News doesn't just happen. It's made!**  
Send us your good news and let everyone know of the great things happening in your community.

**Steel Magnolias**  
February 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>  
**A Weekend of Laughter, Love & Southern Charm**  
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### 2026 Knights of Columbus Fish Frys

2 pc. dinner \$9.00 • 3 pc. dinner \$12.00 • 5 pc. dinner \$15.00

**\*\*Dinners Include: baked beans or corn, french fries or baked potato, coleslaw & dinner roll\*\***

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## THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

**Dotting my Teas By:  
Marlene Oxender**

It was announced at the merchants' drawing that a sum of money had been found. If identified, it could be claimed at the Edgerton Hardware. It was December of 1961.

Until I found one of my mother's newspaper clippings that recounted the story, I never knew my brother Ed had found some cash when he was twelve years old.

According to the article, Eddie was Christmas shopping for his family on a Saturday morning when he found some folded money in the snow. He rushed into the hardware where his father worked and gave the cash to Harriet.

If you're an Edgerton old-timer, you can fill in the blank with Harriet's last name - Siebenaler.

When Harriet unfolded the money, they counted \$25.00. Back then, one dollar had the buying power of more than \$10.00 today. That means someone was missing the equivalent of a little over \$250.00.

The name of the person who'd lost the money was not reported in the newspaper. But when you live in a small town, everyone would have known the story.

Like a scene out of a black-and-white movie, I could easily picture a twelve-year-old boy shopping in a small town during the holidays. I can imagine the style of his coat and hat as he reached down to pick up the money and ran into the store where his father worked.

Anyone who knew Harriet can still hear her soft voice as she suggested they put the money in safekeeping until someone could claim it.

If you've perused old newspapers, you've seen the merchant advertisements and the businesses in existence at that time. Within their advertisements are pictures of the gifts available during the holiday season.

If a screenwriter were to write a story that included a scene about shopping in the

early 1960s, they'd write a holiday band into the scene. We'd clearly hear the tuba. There'd be shoppers rushing home with their treasures.

My mom and dad were the parents of eight children back in December of 1961. Thankfully Mom took time out to write the following story of her son finding some folded cash and Harriet Siebenaler coming up with the idea of how best to locate the person who'd lost their holiday spending money.

Ed remembers attending the merchants' drawing and learning that Mrs. Frieda Burlew had lost the cash that her oldest son had given to her. It was a story with a happy ending.

### **Spirit Of Christmas In 12-Yr Old's Find**

*Saturday afternoon just before the merchants drawing, it was announced that a sum of money had been found by a boy that morning and if identified it could be claimed at the Edgerton Hardware.*

*The amount of the money was \$25.00 and the boy was 12 year old Eddie Kimpel who was doing his Christmas shopping for his family Saturday morning. When crossing the street near the hardware, Eddie saw the folded money in the snow. He rushed into the hardware where his dad works. Upon learning his dad was not there, he gave the money to Harriet. It wasn't until the bills were unfolded that he realized the amount of the money he had found. It was decided to put it in an envelope and wait to see if anyone inquired about it and if not, to have it announced at the 4:30 drawing.*

*All day Eddie dreamed of what \$25.00 would buy and being human he secretly wished some rich person had lost it and wouldn't miss it, but as the story unfolds it was greatly missed by a mother who had received the money from her son to buy Christmas presents for her family. It was learned that after she had lost the money she was "just sick." She felt that whoever found it would keep it and the chances of finding it and the excuses for losing it were both mighty slim. She thought if she came to the drawing in the afternoon she might win a \$20 award to sort of replace the lost \$25.00.*

*Eddie attended the drawing and stood near the mother and daughter when the announcement was made. He knew by their anxious looks that they were really the losers. Afterwards at the hardware, when the identification was made and the money given to the*

*mother, she turned with tears in her eyes and with a "Bless your little heart," a pat on the shoulder and gave a \$1.00 reward to him for his honesty.*

Sometimes I feel as if I've found an old diary. A diary that someone else wrote.

When we're young, we start accumulating things - including memories. When we're old, we start giving things away - including memories.

When a grandparent shares a story with us, it may be after they're gone before we see what they did there. They were sharing memories that would leave us with memories of our own. Memories of their voice. Memories of their mannerisms. Their wit. The way in which they blessed us with a gift only they could give - a few paragraphs from within a chapter of the story of their life.

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

### **RIEDEL CONTINUES TO LEAD OPPONENT IN CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING**



Republican State Senate candidate Craig Riedel announced that, as of the most recent campaign finance filings, his campaign for Ohio's 1st Senate District has raised a total of \$418,720.67. Riedel's cumulative fundraising haul to-date is 60% more than the amount raised by his opponent (\$261,534.65).

Riedel issued the following statement on the campaign's fundraising success:

"Danette and I have been humbled by the outpouring of support that our campaign has received from so many hardworking, patriotic Northwest Ohioans. Since entering the race last April, we've knocked on over 11,000 doors, attended countless community events, and raised the funds needed to communicate our message to voters in all 10 counties in this district.

Our state senator should continue to be a strong, principled conservative. We need decisive leaders who will stand up for our values and never back down. I'm the only candidate in this race who fits that bill, and thanks to the incredible support our campaign has received, we'll have the resources to make that case to the voters."

Riedel has previously announced a number of key endorsements from leading conservative organizations, including Ohio Value Voters, Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio, and Americans for Prosperity-Ohio. He recently filed his

petitions with the Hancock County Board of Elections in order to appear on the May 5, 2026 Republican primary ballot.

The 1st Senate District encompasses all or parts of 10 counties in Northwest Ohio: all of Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert, and Williams Counties, and part of Logan County. Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) is term-limited in 2026. Craig and his wife of 37 years, Danette, reside in Defiance. They have two children and three granddaughters. Riedel served as State Representative for the 82nd Ohio House District for six years. A civil engineer, he spent 27 years in the steel industry at Nucor Vulcraft Group.

For more information about Craig Riedel and his campaign, visit [craigriedelforohio.com](http://craigriedelforohio.com).

Inquiries can be sent to: [craigriedelforohio@gmail.com](mailto:craigriedelforohio@gmail.com)

### **CFAES HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW MULTISPECIES ANIMAL LEARNING COMPLEX**

The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) ushered in the next generation of animal sciences education with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Multispecies Animal Learning Complex (MALC) and dairy on Thursday morning.

Situated at Waterman Agricultural and Natural Resources Laboratory near the heart of Ohio State's Columbus campus, the MALC is an innovative, state-of-the-art complex that advances education in essential STEM fields and strengthens workforce development for a wide range of careers related to animal agriculture.

Inside the facility, students will have opportunities to gain hands-on experience with swine, equine, poultry, and ruminants, and the public will have a chance to view the workings of modern livestock production and handling facilities.

The MALC opening reflects CFAES' vision for Waterman as a destination where research, teaching and outreach impact industry and communities across Ohio and around the world.

"The opening of the MALC and dairy is an exciting milestone for our college and for Ohio agriculture," said Cathann A. Kress, Ohio State vice president for agricultural administration and CFAES dean. "The MALC gives our students unparalleled, hands-on learning opportunities while strengthening our ability to engage the public and prepare the next generation of leaders who will sustain life and serve our communities."

More than 250 guests attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which included tours of the complex.

The MALC houses separate, biosecure barns for swine, poultry, equine and ruminants. When fully populated, the MALC and dairy will be home to approximately 2,200 animals.

The new site also features a dairy complete with modern technology that includes robotic milkers for cows and automated manure systems. Including the dairy, the new

## THAT WAS FUNNY



There was something that happened in my youth, that was probably one of the funniest things I have ever encountered. I remember it like it happened this morning. On the farm we had a hired man that was probably in his early twenties.

My dad combined wheat leaving high stubbles, well over a foot high. He also had a beautiful toolbox full of tools. A big toolbox a couple of feet high that opened on top revealing several rows of compartments that held small items. He had a habit of leaving it right where he used it. Paul was pulling a wagon up to the combine to dump wheat. He ran right over that tool box with the rear wheel of the tractor. Smashed it flat.

My dad tried to straighten it out and actually used it for a while in its smashed condition. It was funny to me because Paul was kind of happy-go-lucky, and I knew the toolbox was there. Another thing that was amusing to me that I

will always remember. We were talking in the barnyard,

Dad was probably paying Paul for a week's work and everyone was in a good mood. Paul bought a new Ford car every year and he was showing my dad His new car. My dad was completely flummoxed. The new car looked exactly like the old car. He had had a '47 Ford and bought a new '48 model. The '48 model looked exactly like the '47. Actually Ford did not change model from 1940 to 1948.

Paul explained that the '47 model had one bar in back across the trunk and the '48 model had two bars. My dad could not see why that made a difference, but I guess Paul could. In those days especially in our Mennonite Church many men traded their car every year. I guess it was kind of a status thing.

Anyway to me it was funny, Paul had a new car, even though it looked exactly like his old one.

—James Neuhouser

complex boasts more than 150,000 square feet of space that will host student learning, public engagement and community events.

Other speakers at Thursday's ribbon cutting included Brian Baldrige, Ohio Department of Agriculture director; Elizabeth Harsh, Ohio State Board of Trustee member; and Mark Berven, Nationwide president and COO.

"CFAES' Multispecies Animal Learning Complex will play a vital role in increasing education and strengthening biosecurity measures in our agricultural communities," Baldrige said. "Together, ODA and Ohio State work to support the agricultural industry through innovation, research and collaboration — ensuring Ohioans have access to safe, healthy and quality food today and in the future."

The MALC and dairy are the second major additions to Waterman in the last five years. In 2022, CFAES introduced the Controlled Environment Agriculture Research Complex (CEARC), a state-of-the-art space for industry partners and scientists to research sustainable indoor food production and find solutions to continue to feed a growing population. The CEARC also provides a space for educating the public on new research in controlled environment agriculture and showcases the incredible work of Ohio State faculty and students.

For high-resolution photos of Thursday's ribbon cutting for media use, please visit this link. For questions or assistance with photos, please contact Evan Drexler at [drexler.40@osu.edu](mailto:drexler.40@osu.edu).

## The Paulding County Veterans' Service Office

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

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

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

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

**Our office hours are Tuesday thru Friday, 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Arrangements can be made for after office hours appointments**

**Any questions, please call 419-399-8285**

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

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

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Life's Detours**

Another story I remember from the LP album of Tennessee Guyer was this. Mr. Guyer said his best description of a content person was "someone who can enjoy the scenery on a detour." Anyone who has lived as long as I have will tell you life isn't always easy. Everything doesn't always go the way you wanted or planned. If you are Christian you know you will still have trou-

bles, lots of set backs, lots of disappointments. God doesn't take them away from you, in fact, as a Christian, it seems Satan works harder to defeat you, discourage you, deceive you, God only shows you that if you trust Him he will help you to get through life's challenges. God will help you not only enjoy the scenery on life's detours, but will make you a better person for trusting Him. Remember this is not our home - we are just here for a short time.

I have had lots of adventures in my life. I've had a lot of detours but God has always been their for me when I may not have been there for Him. God loves me! God helps me! My God has always been "faithful". God is full of new mercies every day! Don't let the detours of this life keep you from looking forward to some day being in a part of the scenery in Heaven with Him.

Try to enjoy this life's detours so you can one day spend eternity with our Heavenly Father and His Son.

—Dave Laukhuf  
Paulding, OH

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**America Falling**

I accepted Jesus around 1949 at 13 years old. I also had five straight years of perfect church attendance. Our church also started a youth group in the church in the late 1940's. I was selected as the first leader but didn't know much about it.

I loved my life back then. Church was full twice a week. We also had chapel in Hicksville school gym once a month with a different pastor each time. I can't speak for

the girls but there were three boys in my class that didn't go to church but I know those chapel services helped two of them thru life.

Our church was very involved at Christmas time. We went around town singing Christmas carols at the homes of older shut-ins. We had lots of snow like we have right now but it was all winter long and started somewhere closer to Thanksgiving. Kids played outside all day long, we even played after dark many times. I walk a lot but don't see signs in the snow of kids having played.

I consider myself reasonably intelligent but there are a few things I just don't understand. How can someone claim being a Christian and vote for evil, anti-moral and anti-God Democrats? This kind of person must look only at the down side of life. They have no idea that America was created and grew based on our Bible.

Other "blind ones" say don't mix religion with politics. I would hate to be so blind or dumb as to think like that. They must belong to the ultra blind liberals that give us anti-God, anti-free America like the Muslim leader they gave us or the radical socialist they gave New York City.

What is so difficult about checking on a person's back ground before voting? It was known before his election that Clinton was an accomplished liar. Next you gave us another leader whose religion want to do away with all Christians and rule the world. That is Satan's goal. Could they part of his army?

But that didn't stop you from trying to destroy us. You gave us a sick puppet after Obama by the name of Biden who couldn't tell day from night in our political world.

What happens to a people without God? Most perish and others don't prosper. Just look around our world and try to tell me I'm wrong. It has been 79 years since Satan's Democrats made their first major attack against free America and God. That was in 1947 when they saddled us with separation of church and state.

Under Democrat rule, I see only communism and death in our future. As I said in my last letter, Sandy and I grew up in America's best of times. I've watched and studied for around 60 - 70 years as we have fallen lower each year. There is still time to correct our ways but no one knows how long.

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Please trust what I say next. I am no Bible scholar but I believe with all my heart that it is true. I also believe we are part of the beginning of the end of mankind. It looks like we are deep into the "end times" for man on earth. I'm only asking one thing of you. Please read Matthew 24 and concentrate on "the second coming". It would be a perfect move to read more but that is it for today.

Think on this! Could AI be the beast mentioned in the Bible concerning the end times? Watch out for China, Russia and Iran.

Thanks for your time and may God bless you.  
—Richard Mastin  
Hicksville, OH

**MILLER CITY PULLS AWAY EARLY TO DEFEAT WAYNE TRACE**

MILLER CITY — Miller City jumped out to a fast start and never looked back Friday night, handing Wayne Trace a 59-24 loss in a girls basketball matchup on January 31. The Wildcats controlled the pace from the opening tip, building a 19-5 first-quarter lead and taking a commanding 36-15 advantage into halftime.

Wayne Trace struggled to find consistent offense against Miller City's pressure defense, managing just one point in the fourth quarter as the Wildcats continued to extend their lead. Miller City finished the night with balanced scoring and strong ball movement, improving to 16-2 on the season.

Sophia Ruck led Miller City with 14 points and five assists, while Kiera Ruhe added 13 points. Elizabeth Erford chipped in 11 points, and Anna Lammers contributed eight points, five assists and three steals in a well-rounded effort.

Wayne Trace, now 14-4, was led by Lexi Moore with 11 points, seven rebounds and two assists. Amber Stoller added eight points and five rebounds, while the Raiders were limited to 24 points overall as Miller City outscored them 31-9 in the first and fourth quarters combined.

Miller City closed out the contest with a 14-1 fourth-quarter run to seal the 59-24 victory on its home floor.

**LOVE LANGUAGES CAN HELP YOU ENJOY VALENTINE'S DAY ON A BUDGET**

Valentine's Day doesn't have to break the bank. In fact, the most meaningful expressions of love often cost little to nothing. The key is understanding your partner's love language and tailoring your approach accordingly. When you know what makes your partner feel truly valued, you can create memorable experiences without the financial pressure that often accompanies this holiday.

The five love languages — words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time and physical touch — offer a roadmap for showing affection without overspending. Here's how to express your love while staying financially smart this Valentine's Day.

Words of affirmation: For partners who value verbal expressions of love, heartfelt words matter far more than expensive gifts. Write a letter expressing what you appreciate about them, create a personalized playlist with songs that remind you of your relationship or record a video message. All are free but carry immense emotional value. For this love language, thoughtful expression surpasses financial investment every time.

Acts of Service: If your partner feels loved through helpful actions, Valentine's Day is about sweat equity, not spending. Cook their favorite meal, tackle chores they've been dreading or, for those who have expressed frustration with budgeting, create a simple budget tracker or spreadsheet tucked into a decorative folder. Your time and effort demonstrate your love. The beauty of acts of service is that they cost little to nothing but demonstrate care and attention.

Receiving Gifts: Even gift-oriented partners don't need expensive presents to feel valued. Focus on thoughtfulness and personalization over price tags. Try DIY crafts that show you put time into creating something. Explore thrift stores for vintage treasures or

consider giving stock in a company your partner loves — a retail store, a tech brand or a coffee chain. Many platforms offer fractional shares, so you don't need a huge budget. Remember: A \$10 item chosen with care can mean more than a \$100 generic gift.

Quality time: For those who value undivided attention, experiences often cost less than gifts. Check for free museum days, plan a scenic hike, go stargazing or create a cozy home movie night with homemade popcorn. The key is being fully present without distractions. For a longer-term outlook, consider a future fund jar for shared goals, like a couples massage or a trip. Make the first deposit and pair it with a handwritten note about building dreams together.

Physical Touch: Intimacy and affection are inherently free, but small comfort investments can enhance closeness. Create an at-home spa experience with inexpensive bath products, invest in cozy blankets for cuddling, or clear space in your living room for dancing together. These minimal purchases amplify connection without requiring significant spending.

There's no wrong way to celebrate Valentine's Day, and overspending isn't necessary. If you're diligent about budgeting, you'll know what you can afford to spend. Understanding your partner's love language empowers you to express affection in ways that resonate deeply — without the financial stress. The best Valentine's celebrations come from the heart, not the wallet.

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

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**The deadline for the West Bend News is THURSDAYS at 5pm for the following issue. Send your news, ads, and classifieds to info@westbendnews.net Call 419-258-2000 for information or printing quotes.**

**READER PICK-UP LOCATIONS**

**OHIO LOCATIONS**

**Antwerp:** Antwerp Library, Antwerp Exchange Bank, Antwerp Manor, Dollar General, Family Dollar, G-Mart, Genesis House, H2O Water Store, Pop-N-Brew, Pit-Stop, Small Town Bliss,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ney:** Marathon

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

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

Carnegie Library, Stykemain, VFW Post 587

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

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

**Scott:** Scott Post Office

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

**INDIANA LOCATIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## RAIDERS PULL AWAY IN SECOND HALF TO TOP ARCHERS AT THE PALACE



Senior Tanner Laukhuf puts up the ball while Antwerp junior Lincoln Lucas attempts to block the shot. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

Wayne Trace used a strong second-half surge to pull away from Antwerp on Friday night January 30th, earning a 64-51 GMC boys basketball victory at The Palace. Antwerp came out sharp early, taking a 16-14 edge after the first quarter and carrying a 29-25 advantage into halftime.

The Raiders flipped the momentum in the third quarter with a decisive 24-9 run that proved to be the difference. Wayne Trace shot efficiently inside and from the free-throw line down the stretch, while tightening up defensively to hold the Archers in check.

Tanner Laukhuf and Lance Maenle led the Raiders with 20 points apiece, with Laukhuf adding seven rebounds and Maenle contributing five assists in a well-rounded effort. Zach Stoller chipped in 12

points, Carter Clemens added 10, and Caden Sinn made two as Wayne Trace improved to 10-6 overall and 4-1 in the GMC.

Antwerp, now 3-14 overall and 0-5 in league play, was led by Zaine McMichael with 18 points, three rebounds and four turnovers, while Weston Rhonehouse knocked down four three-pointers on his way to 14 points. Hampton Rogge finished with 10 points, and Brayden Fuller added seven for the Archers, who battled throughout but couldn't recover after the Raiders' third-quarter burst.

Wayne Trace closed the night by outscoring Antwerp 15-13 in the fourth quarter to seal the win. The junior varsity contest earlier in the evening also went to the Raiders, 51-35.

## PAULDING GIRLS WRESTLERS EARN THREE PLACINGS AT TOLEDO START INVITE



TOLEDO — The Paulding Lady Panthers varsity girls wrestling team turned in a strong showing on Saturday, January 31, competing at the Toledo Start Invitational. Paulding had three wrestlers place in a competitive field, led by Civil Pumphrey, who finished as the tournament runner-up with a second-place result. Jezaih Seba Fuentes and Harley Troyer each battled through their brackets to earn sixth-place finishes.

## PANTHERS ROLL PAST CONTINENTAL IN ROAD WIN

CONTINENTAL — Paulding controlled the game from start to finish on Saturday night, rolling to a 52-16 girls basketball victory over Continental on January 31. The Panthers set the tone early, jumping out to a 19-7 first-quarter lead and never allowing the Pirates to gain momentum.

Paulding continued to apply pressure in the second quarter, outscoring Continental 10-7 to take a 29-14 advantage into halftime. The Panthers' defense was especially dominant after the break, holding the Pirates scoreless in the third quarter while extending the lead to 44-14.

Paulding showed bal-

anced scoring throughout the lineup, led by Estie Pease with a game-high 14 points. Addison Pease and Anya Mead each added seven points, while Kate Manz and Tori Schlatter chipped in six apiece. Kayleigh Dunham and Jayla Griffith each knocked down a three-pointer, and the Panthers finished with eight three-point field goals on the night.

Continental, now 7-12, was led by Morgan Shock with seven points, including three three-pointers. Kamryn Searfoss added five points, and Olivia Crossgrove finished with four for the Pirates, who were held to just two points in the second half.

Paulding closed out the contest by outscoring Continental 8-2 in the fourth quarter to secure the 52-16 win and improve to 18-1 on the season.

## OTTAWA-GLANDORF GIRLS, LIMA SHAWNEE BOYS CLAIM WBL SWIM CHAMPIONSHIPS

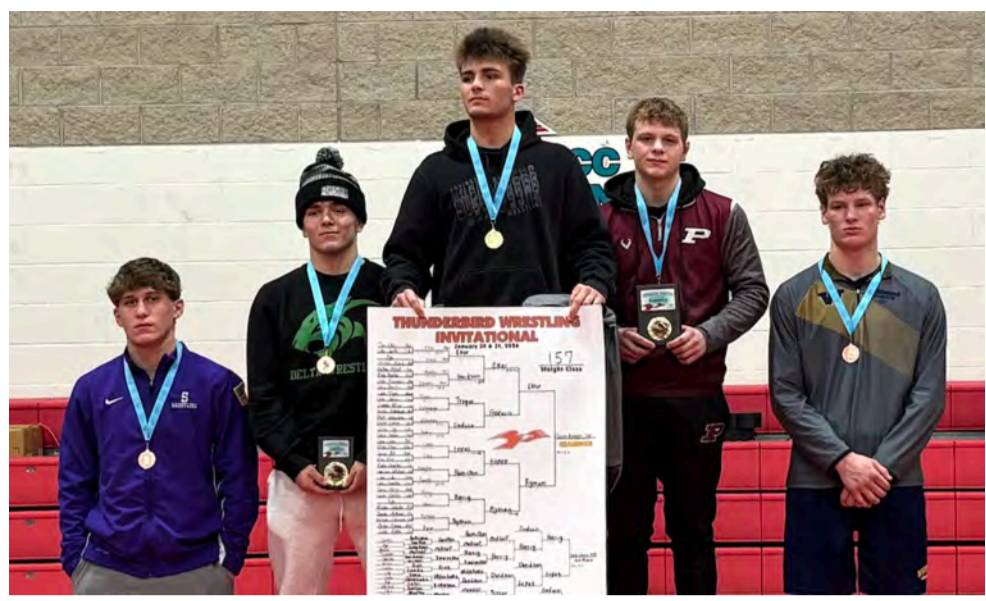
LIMA — The 2026 Western Buckeye League Swimming Championships concluded Saturday at the Lima YMCA, capping three days of competition held from January 29 through January 31. Area teams battled through 24 events, showcasing depth, endurance and speed in one of the league's premier winter postseason meets.

On the girls side, Ottawa-Glandorf captured the team championship in decisive fashion, finishing with 368 points to outdistance the field. Lima Shawnee placed second with 227 points, followed closely by Saint Marys Memorial with 212. Wapakoneta finished fourth at 129 points, while Elida rounded out the top five with 121. Van Wert (93), Kenton (89), Celina (54), Lima Bath (22) and Defiance (11) completed the standings as the girls teams combined for 1,326 total points across the meet.

The boys championship came down to a tighter race at the top, with Lima Shawnee emerging as league champions with 264 points. Saint Marys Memorial finished a close second at 244 points, while Ottawa-Glandorf placed third with 222. Kenton secured fourth with 156 points, followed by Defiance (75), Celina (74), Elida (65), Lima Bath (59), Wapakoneta (53) and Van Wert (34). The boys division totaled 1,246 points across all teams.

The multi-day championship format tested swimmers' versatility, as teams accumulated points through individual races and relays across all strokes and distances. With strong performances throughout the lineup, Ottawa-Glandorf's girls and Lima Shawnee's boys each demonstrated the depth needed to rise above a competitive league field and earn WBL titles to close out the conference season.

## PAULDING WRESTLERS PLACE TWO AT LIMA INVITATIONAL



LIMA — The Paulding Panthers varsity boys wrestling team competed Saturday, January 31, at the Lima Central Catholic Thunderbird Invitational, facing one of the largest fields of the season. The invitational featured 43 teams and 340 wrestlers, providing a deep and highly competitive tournament atmosphere. Paulding came away with two individual placers, led by Thor Etter, who earned a runner-up finish in his weight class. Landon Dasher also turned in a strong performance, finishing fifth.

HAVILAND — A tightly contested nonconference boys basketball matchup came down to the final possessions Tuesday night as Liberty Center held off Wayne Trace, 55-54, at The Palace in Haviland on February 3.

The teams traded momentum throughout the evening, with Wayne Trace holding a slim 12-9 advantage after the first quarter before Liberty Center answered with a 20-point second period to take a 29-22 halftime lead. Wayne Trace came out strong after the break, pouring in 22 points in the third quarter to regain the lead, but Liberty Center responded once more in the fourth to secure the one-point victory.

Wayne Trace was led offensively by Caden Sinn, who scored a game-high 22 points while also pulling down seven rebounds. Lance Maenle added 12 points and four rebounds, while Carter Clemens chipped in 10 points, four assists, and three steals. Tanner Laukhuf contributed seven points and four rebounds, and Zach Stoller added two points and eight rebounds as the Raiders battled on the glass.

Liberty Center was paced by Garrison Kruse with 13 points and three rebounds, while Ethan Gray finished with 12 points, two rebounds, and two assists. Max Walker added 11 points, including a pair of three-pointers, and Jack Badenhop scored 10 points with four rebounds and three steals. The Tigers capitalized at the free throw line, going 12-of-17, which proved

## RAIDERS DROPS IN ONE POINT HEARTBREAKER AGAINST TIGERS



Near the beginning of the game Senior Carter Clemens picks up the turnover and runs back to the Raider side of the court to score for the home team. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

to be the difference in the Wayne Trace shot 16-of-29 close contest.

(Continued on Page 7)

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**WOODLAN PULLS AWAY TO DEFEAT SOUTH ADAMS**



Freshman Alex Art was burning up the 3 point circle every time he was left open, adding another 3 points in the third quarter! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

Warriors three players in double figures. Collin Klepper added six, CJ Bullock contributed five points, Cooper Smith and Ashtin Jacquay each added three, and Nathaniel Peters added two as Woodlan spread the scoring throughout the lineup.

South Adams was paced by Tytus Lehman, who scored a game-high 14 points, knocking down five field goals and four free throws. Derek McKean and Henry Craig each finished with 11 points, providing consistent scoring throughout the night. J. Wanner added nine points, while Nolan Colpaert and G Herring rounded out the scoring with four.

Woodlan finished the game shooting 64 percent from the free-throw line, while South Adams connected on 54 percent of its attempts. Turnovers and missed opportunities at the line proved costly for the Starfires during Woodlan's decisive third-quarter run.

**OTTOVILLE PULLS AWAY LATE TO SNAP PAULDING'S 16-GAME WINNING STREAK**

Paulding saw its 16-game winning streak come to an end Tuesday night as the Lady Panthers dropped a 53-45 decision to Ottoville Big Green in a non-conference girls basketball matchup at Ottoville.

The hosts set the early tempo, jumping out to a 14-5 lead after the opening quarter. Paulding responded in the second, finding more rhythm offensively and trimming the deficit, but Ottoville carried a 27-16 advantage into halftime.

Paulding Panthers came out strong after the break, outscoring Ottoville 13-7 in the third quarter to pull within five points heading into the final frame. The Lady Panthers continued to battle down the stretch, but Ottoville answered with a 19-point fourth quarter to hold off the comeback attempt.

Tori Schlatter led Paulding with 13 points, connecting on three field goals and four free throws. Kayleigh Dunham followed with 11 points, while Addison Pease and Kate Manz each added eight. Estie Pease and Myrriah rounded out the scoring as Paulding finished with 45 points on the night.

Ottoville was paced by Brooklyn Koester, who poured in a game-high 27 points, including three three-pointers and 12 free throws. Kendall Schnipke added 14 points, while Jenna Suever and Briley Wertenburger chipped in four apiece.

game execution sealed the win as the Tigers improved to 10-7 on the season. Wayne Trace fell to 11-7 following the narrow loss.

**MOORE HITS 1,000 AS LADY RAIDERS ROLL PAST EDGERTON**



Senior Lexi Moore has engraved her mark on Raider basketball history as she scores two points, securing her 1000 point threshold on this evening. More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

Wayne Trace used a balanced team effort and a milestone performance from senior Lexi Moore to secure a 52-30 girls basketball win over Edgerton on Thursday night at Wayne Trace.

Moore etched her name into the program's record book by scoring her 1,000th career point on a free throw at the 7:14 mark of the third quarter, becoming the fifth player in Lady Raider basketball history to reach the milestone. She finished the night with a game-high 21 points, along with eight rebounds, three assists, and two steals to lead the Raiders on both ends of the floor.

The Lady Raiders set the tone early, as the teams were tied 8-8 after the first quarter before Wayne Trace pulled ahead to take a 24-11 lead into halftime.

Wayne Trace continued to pull away after the break, outscoring Edgerton 17-9 in the third quarter. The Raiders maintained control in the final period, edging the Bulldogs 11-10 in the fourth to seal the win.

Careen Winans added 14 points and seven rebounds for Wayne Trace, while Amber Stoller chipped in five points and three assists. The Lady Raiders shot 13-of-30 from two-point range, knocked down six three-pointers, and went 8-of-10 from the free throw line.

Edgerton was led by Alivia Farnham with 14 points and Ava Swank with 13, but the Bulldogs struggled to keep pace offensively against the Raiders' pressure defense.

Wayne Trace also claimed a 34-12 victory in the junior varsity contest to cap off a strong night for the Lady Raiders.

**OTTAWA-GLANDORF PULLS AWAY FROM VAN WERT IN GIRLS BASKETBALL**

Van Wert hosted Ottawa-Glandorf on Thursday, February 5, as the Lady Cougars faced a tough matchup against the Titans, falling 61-24 in varsity action.

son Keller each scoring 11 points to lead the Cougars. The pair accounted for nearly all of Van Wert's scoring, finding opportunities inside and at the free-throw line as the Cougars continued to battle through four quarters.

Despite the final score, Van Wert continued to compete on the defensive end, rotating players and gaining experience against a strong Ottawa-Glandorf squad. The game provided valuable minutes for the Cougars as they continue to develop late in the season.

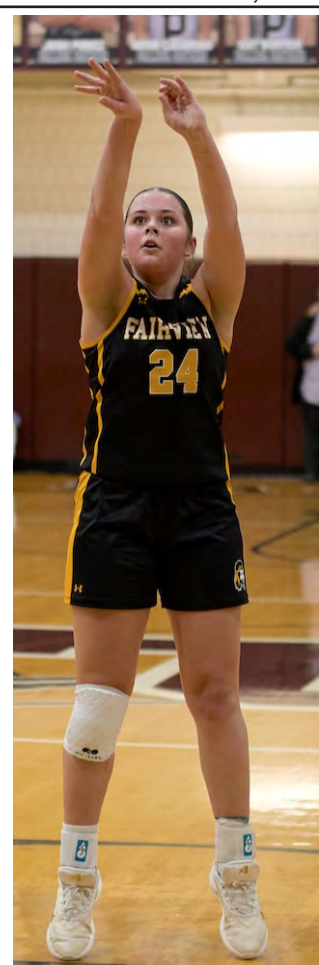
*(Continued from Page 1)*

Paulding struck first, edging ahead 19-17 at the end of the first quarter. The Panthers responded with a strong second quarter, outscoring the Apaches 19-12 to take a 36-31 lead into halftime.

The game remained tight after the break as both teams traded baskets in a physical third quarter. Paulding maintained its advantage by a single point in the frame, 18-17, pushing the lead to 54-48 heading into the final eight minutes. The Panthers closed the door in the fourth quarter, matching their third-quarter output with another 18 points while holding off Fairview's push to seal the seven-point victory.

With the game capped Senior Night with a G League game, Paulding finished conference play unbeaten, continuing a dominant season in The Jungle.

Van Wert was paced offensively by a balanced effort, with Karsyn Eitred and Alli-



Freshman Brianna Moninger scores from the line as she helps to guarantee a solid future for Apache girls basketball! More pictures at [engagingexposures.com](http://engagingexposures.com)

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MINI-YOUTH (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade) BOYS \_\_\_ GIRLS \_\_\_ CO-ED \_\_\_ • YOUTH (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) BOYS \_\_\_ GIRLS \_\_\_ CO-ED \_\_\_

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Large (14-16) ___	X-Large (46-48) ___	

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**Financial Partners Federal Credit Union**

# THE LEFT TURN



USAC Sprints ready for 2026. Campbell Photography.

By: Ron Burt

Race fans have their eyes focused on the sunshine state for the next several weeks. Many plan vacations to take in as much racing as they can, at many different racetracks. USAC Winter Dirt Games XVII Presented by Yokohama Tire, the official kick off to the 2026 USAC AMSOIL Sprint Car National Championship season. Car owners, race teams and drivers set with new and refreshed sprint cars, and all have an optimistic outlook for the 2026 season ahead of them. It all begins in Florida with six events across six nights at a pair of dirt tracks in the heart of the Gator Country.

This will be the 17th annual Winter Dirt Games and will open for practice at the 3/8-mile Ocala Speedway on Sunday, February 8, followed by the first two rounds of racing at Barberville's 1/2-mile Volusia Speedway Park on Monday-Tuesday, February 9-10, while Ocala Speedway finishes out the week with four-straight evenings of racing on Wednesday-Thursday-Friday-Saturday, February 11-12-13-14.

Many eyes are on Kyle Cummins who just had an outstanding Winter Dirt Games in 2025 and has his sprint dialed in for the new season. Last year he won the opener at Volusia, taking the big gator (trophy) home as the DIRTcar Nationals champion. He then won again four nights later at Ocala. In his six races across six nights, he never finished outside the top five, helping him win the Winter Dirt Games Championship. By winning the title 2025 Kyle became the ninth driver in the 16-year history of the series to win a Winter Dirt Games race and the USAC National Sprint Car championship in the same year, joining Bryan Clauson (2013), Brady Bacon (2014), Robert Ballou (2015), Tyler

Courtney (2018), C.J. Leary (2019), Brady Bacon (2020), Justin Grant (2022) and Logan Seavey (2024). Many of these names are current drivers in the 2026 USAC Sprint Series. This year the overall winner will earn an extra \$24,000.00. The point money has doubled.

At least 14 drivers plan to race full-time with the USAC AMSOIL Sprint Car National Championship in 2025, and several more are trying to get sponsors so they can join them. Among the group are past series champions Kyle Cummins (2025), Logan Seavey (2024), Justin Grant (2022 & 2023), C.J. Leary (2019), and Robert Ballou (2015). Then add in USAC National Sprint Car winners Kevin Thomas Jr., Chase Stokson, Mitchel Moles, Jake Swanson and Briggs Danner. Rising contender Hayden Reinbold is back in the full-time lineup as are Rookie of the Year contenders Cale Coons and Chelby Hinton.

The season is long with racing several nights a week as the haulers and crews travel across the country. If you get a chance to see the USAC AMSOIL Sprints, make sure you go. Until next week, keep your wheels down. Ron Out!

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## ARCHERS PULL AWAY IN SECOND HALF TO DEFEAT MONTEPELIER

ANTWERP — Antwerp put together a strong all-around effort on Saturday night, pulling away in the second half for a 45-26 girls basketball victory over Montpelier on January 31. The Archers set the tone early, jumping out to a 15-2 lead after the first quarter behind aggressive defense and balanced scoring.

Montpelier responded in the second quarter, outscor-

ing Antwerp 8-6 to cut into the deficit, but the Archers regained control after halftime. Antwerp erupted for 21 points in the third quarter while holding the Lady Locos to just five, stretching the margin to 42-15 entering the final period.

Briley Bagley led Antwerp with 12 points, knocking down a pair of three-pointers, while Eliana Hormann followed with 11 points. Raelay Franklin added 10 points, and Aliyah Friend contributed six points, including four free throws, as the Archers improved to 7-13 on the season.

Montpelier, now 1-17, was led by Nehriah Thorp with eight points and Zoe Uribes with seven. The Lady Locos were limited to two points in the opening quarter and were unable to recover after Antwerp's third-quarter surge.

Antwerp closed out the night by outscoring Montpelier 3-11 in the fourth quarter to secure the 45-26 win on its home floor.

## LOCOS PULL AWAY LATE TO DEFEAT ARCHERS AT ANTWERP

ANTWERP — Montpelier used a strong finish to pull away from Antwerp on Friday night, earning a 74-47 non-conference boys basketball victory on January 31. The Locos jumped out to an early lead, taking a 20-13 advantage after the first quarter and extending it to 30-26 at halftime behind balanced scoring and steady pressure on the defensive end.

Montpelier began to create separation in the third quarter, outscoring Antwerp 20-17 to build a 50-43 edge heading into the final period. The Locos then put the game out of reach in the fourth, pouring in 24 points while holding the Archers to just four to seal the win and improve to 15-2 on the season.

C.J. Fidler led Montpelier with a game-high 24 points, while Wesley Hartsock followed with 16. Malachi Smeltzer added 10 points, and Kenneth Smeltzer chipped in nine as the Locos finished with 22 field goals and nine made three-pointers.

Antwerp, now 3-15, was led by Zaine McMichael with 14 points. Weston Rhonehouse knocked down three three-pointers on his way to 11 points, while Lincoln Lucas added nine. The Archers stayed competitive through three quarters but were unable to keep pace during Montpelier's decisive fourth-quarter run.

## WAYNE TRACE PULLS AWAY LATE TO DEFEAT KALIDA AT HOME

HAVILAND — Wayne Trace closed strong in the second half on Saturday night, January 31st to earn a 55-45 boys basketball victory over Kalida. The Raiders used a balanced scoring effort and a decisive fourth quarter to secure the win and improve to 11-6 on the season.

Wayne Trace led 10-7 after the opening quarter, but Kalida responded in the second, outscoring the Raiders 13-8 to take a 20-18 advantage into halftime. The momentum shifted after the break, as Wayne Trace erupted for 18 points in the third quarter to regain control and take a 36-29 lead heading into the final period.

The Raiders put the game away in the fourth quarter, outscoring Kalida 19-16 while capitalizing at the free-throw line and limiting second-chance opportunities. Wayne Trace finished the night 14-of-21 from the foul line and held the Wildcats to just three free-throw attempts.

Lance Maenle led Wayne Trace with a game-high 22 points, including five three-pointers, while Tanner Laukhuf added 12 points. Carter Clemens chipped in eight points, and Caden Sinn contributed seven as the Raiders knocked down seven shots from beyond the arc.

Kalida, now 6-10, was paced by Gavin Leis and Jaxon Hoffman with 11 points apiece. Owen Grime added nine points, and Nathan Kahle finished with seven for the Wildcats, who stayed within reach before Wayne Trace's late surge sealed the outcome.

In the junior varsity contest earlier in the evening, Kalida defeated Wayne Trace by a 48-34 score.

## PAULDING DOMINATES HICKSVILLE IN ROAD VICTORY

HICKSVILLE — Paulding turned in a dominant performance on Friday night, rolling to a 63-16 boys basketball victory over Hicksville on January 30. The Panthers set the tone early, building an impressive 20-3 lead after the first quarter before really clamping down defensively and pulling away as the game progressed.

Paulding's defense took control over the final three quarters, limiting Hicksville's scoring opportunities and forcing turnovers that led to transition points. The Panthers steadily extended the margin through the second and third quarters and put the game out of reach by the fourth-quarter finish.

Xander Kuckuck led the scoreboard with 18 points, Tyson Manz followed closely with 13 points, while Jalen Manz added 10. Grady Barton finished with eight, Blake Rhonehouse added seven, Max Daeger chipped in three, and Javon Stiltner took two as the Panthers showcased balanced scoring and depth throughout the lineup.

Hicksville struggled to generate offense against Paulding's pressure, managing just 16 points on the night. Scorers of the game were Jayden Castillo with ten, Boston Tribble, Luke Eicher, and Jesus Avalos each chipping in two.

## WOODLAN GIRLS PULL AWAY EARLY, DEFEAT PRAIRIE HEIGHTS

WOODBURN — Woodlan built a commanding first-half lead and never looked back Friday night, defeating Prairie Heights 63-26 in a girls basketball matchup on January 30. The Warriors set the tone from the opening tip, outscoring Prairie Heights 19-7 in the first quarter and matching that output again in the second to take a 38-12 advantage into halftime.

Prairie Heights showed signs of life in the third quarter, edging Woodlan 10-9, but the Warriors quickly regained control in the fourth by outscoring the Panthers 16-4 to close out the win.

Woodlan was led by a dominant performance from Anderson, who poured in a game-high 25 points. Scheumann added 17 points,

# BAREFOOT IN THE PARK BRINGS BIG LAUGHS TO THE VAN WERT CIVIC THEATRE STAGE



Alea Rex as Corrie and Adam Shanaman as Paul.

By: Dave Mosier

Van Wert Civic Theatre is bringing one of playwright Neil Simon's biggest hit to the local stage, with its production of Barefoot in the Park.

The play, which ran 1,530 performances on Broadway and is Simon's longest-running hit, was also a movie starring Robert Redford and Jane Fonda. Redford also starred in the Broadway production.

The play follows a pair of young New York City newlyweds in the Sixties as they begin married life in a small, drafty apartment on the fifth floor of an elevator-less building. While madly in love, Paul and Corie Bratter are also opposites in personality. Paul is a rather conventional young attorney, while Corie is a free-spirited young woman to whom everything is an adventure.

The VWCT cast is small, just Paul (Adam Shanaman), Corrie (Alea Rex), Corie's mother Mrs. Banks (Amber Evans), an aging roue named Victor Velasco (Travis Nihiser) that Corie sees as a romantic possibility for her widowed mother, a telephone repairman (Ed Eichler), and a delivery person, (Dizzy Lantz).

As the play begins, the newlyweds' individual views of their apartment is the first indication the marriage will have its ups and downs -- and soon. Paul complains about the hole in the skylight, the small bedroom, and the fact the apartment only has a shower and no bathtub. Corie, on the other hand, sees the cramped space as charming and romantic.

While cracks in the marriage begin to appear over the apartment, they widen considerably during a disastrous outing with Velasco and Corie's mother to an Albanian

restaurant. The couple get into a hilarious screaming match that ends with Paul sleeping on the couch and Corie's demand for a divorce.

While the couple eventually reconciles, also hilariously, there is plenty of witty dialogue and physical comedy in between (the long climb to the apartment is a running joke).

Shanaman and Rex transition seamlessly from cooing newlyweds to a couple on the brink of a divorce, while Rex is particularly adept at the both the hippie optimism and emotional nonsense needed for her character. Shanaman also perfectly captures the bewildered look of a man who discovers he's married to an emotional whirlwind.

Both Nihiser, as the aging man-about-town who discovers he's not as young and care-free as he once was, and Evans as the staid widow who learns to unwind (helped by a snootful of ouzo) also do credit to their roles. Of course, Eichler, the consummate VWCT veteran, makes the most of his brief appearances as the harried telephone repairman.

The vintage set also perfectly captures the urban vibe of the Sixties, while sound and lighting contribute to the overall ambiance of the production.

The comedy is the perfect remedy for the winter blahs, or for those who just want an opportunity to laugh a little and enjoy the craziness of a Neil Simon classic. Performances began Friday, February 6 and ran through the weekend and will run next weekend (February 13-15). Evening performances begin at 7:30, while Sunday matinee curtain times is 2 p.m.

For information go online at <https://vwct.org> or call the box office at 419.238.9689.

while Thullner finished with six. Hodson, Crozier, Trygg, Sterling, Smith and Peoples each contributed to the scoring effort as Woodlan spread production throughout the lineup.

Prairie Heights was paced by M. Certain with seven points and A. Certain with six. Godsey added three, while Gibson, Rasler, Park, Hostetler and Wulheter each scored two in the loss.

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## WESBANCO RETURNS AS PLATINUM SPONSOR FOR DEFIANCE AREA FOUNDATION 2026 GALA



The Defiance Area Foundation is pleased to announce WesBanco as a returning Platinum Sponsor for its 2026 Gala. WesBanco has committed a \$10,000 sponsorship, demonstrating its continued support of the Foundation's mission and its dedication to strengthening the Defiance County community.

The Foundation is grateful for WesBanco's ongoing partnership and the important role their sponsorship plays in supporting local charitable initiatives. Businesses and organizations interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities for the 2026 Gala, being held on October 3, 2026, are encouraged to visit [defianceareafoundation.org/gala](http://defianceareafoundation.org/gala).

## PAULDING FFA GETS A TRIPLE CROWN ON OFFICER BOOKS



Pictured left to right is Secretary Myrriah Manz, Reporter Vivi Myers and Treasurer Mariah Klopfenstein with their Gold rated perfect score books.

By: Vivi Myers, Paulding FFA Reporter

At the end of January, the Paulding FFA secretary, treasurer, and reporter's books were evaluated and graded.

The chapter received a GOLD rating on all three record books. The chapter is so proud of Myrriah Manz, Mariah Klopfenstein, and Vivi Myers for all of their hard work in earning a triple crown for their chapter.

For the secretary book, Myrriah Manz had to collect all of the meeting minutes and agendas from the year. She also had to write programs for the activities, keep attendance records, and collect correspondence from this school year.

For the treasurer book, Mariah Klopfenstein had to take month-by-month reports and balance the account based on what came in, and what is left in the account. She had to

figure out each student's financial records and kept records of the receipts and disbursements. Mariah also had to keep reports of the beginning and ending balance for each meeting.

For the reporter's book, Vivi Myers had to write and then collect newspaper articles and pictures throughout the year to use in the scrapbook. She had to put captions under all the pictures she used and make sure that every page was decorated nicely.

These officers did an amazing job and our chapter is very proud of all of the hard work that they put into their books. They will each get to walk across the stage at the Ohio FFA State Convention in May for their Gold Ratings.

## PAULDING PANTHERS CLAMP DOWN, ROLL PAST HICKSVILLE IN GMC MATCHUP

The Paulding boys basketball team put together a dominant all-around performance Friday night, overwhelming Hicksville 63-16 in a Green Meadows Conference contest at Hicksville High School.

Paulding Panthers (17-3, 5-0 GMC) wasted no time setting the tone, jumping out to a 20-3 lead after the opening quarter. The Panthers' defensive pressure forced turnovers and limited clean looks, while their balanced offense steadily built separation throughout the first half.

Paulding extended the margin to 34-10 by halftime and came out of the locker room with another strong surge, outscoring the hosts 22-6 in the third quarter to put the game firmly out of reach.

Xander Kuckuck led the Panthers with 18 points, knocking down four field goals and adding three free throws. Tyson Manz followed with 13 points, while Jalen Manz added 10. Grady Barton chipped in eight points as Paulding saw contributions up and down the lineup.

Hicksville Aces (4-13, 0-5 GMC) was paced by Jayden Castillo, who scored 10 of the team's 16 points. The Aces were held scoreless in the fourth quarter as Paulding's defense closed the night with another strong stand.

## PARKWAY PULLS AWAY FROM VAN WERT IN GIRLS BASKETBALL MATCHUP

The Van Wert girls basketball team hosted Parkway on Monday, February 2, but struggled to keep pace as the visiting Panthers earned a 56-23 victory.

Parkway Panthers set the tone early, building a steady advantage through the first half and maintaining control on both ends of the floor. Parkway's pressure defense limited Van Wert's scoring opportunities, while consistent scoring allowed the Panthers to extend the margin as the game progressed.

Van Wert Cougars battled throughout the night and continued to work for quality looks, but the Cougars were unable to find an offensive rhythm against Parkway's defensive intensity. Despite the final score, Van Wert saw effort across the lineup and continued to gain experience against a strong opponent.

Parkway's balanced attack and defensive execution proved to be the difference, as the Panthers pulled away in the second half to secure the road win. Van Wert looked

ahead to upcoming games with the focus on building consistency and turning lessons from the matchup into improvement moving forward.

## WHITKO USES BIG FIRST QUARTER TO DEFEAT WOODLAN

A strong opening quarter set the tone as Whitko Wildcats pulled away for a 56-37 victory over Woodlan Warriors in girls basketball action.

Whitko jumped out to an 18-4 lead after the first quarter and carried a 28-17 advantage into halftime. Woodlan battled back in the third period, matching the Wildcats with 14 points, but Whitko regained control in the fourth quarter, outscoring the Warriors 14-6 to close out the win.

Whitko was led by J. Stonebreaker with a game-high 21 points, while R. Stonebreaker added 12. J. Liecke finished with eight points, Leffers and Brown scored four apiece, Luecke added three, and Osborn and Lowe each chipped in two.

For Woodlan, sophomore Savannah Scheumann paced the Warriors with 13 points, while senior Alyssa Anderson added 11. Senior Emma McDaniel scored five points, junior Lexie Peoples added four, and junior Layla Hodson and sophomore Kaitlyn Sterling finished with two points apiece as Woodlan worked to recover after the slow start.

Whitko's early offensive surge proved decisive, as the Wildcats maintained control down the stretch to secure the nonconference victory.

## LADY RAIDERS PULL AWAY FOR 52-30 ROAD WIN AT CONTINENTAL

Wayne Trace picked up a convincing road victory Tuesday night, defeating Continental 52-30 in girls basketball action on February 3.

The Lady Raiders jumped out to an early lead and never looked back, taking a 17-9 advantage after the first quarter. Wayne Trace continued to control the tempo in the second quarter, outscoring Continental 10-5 to carry a 27-14 lead into halftime.

Wayne Trace maintained steady pressure in the second half, extending the lead with an 11-4 third quarter before closing out the game with a 14-12 edge in the final period. The Raiders finished the night shooting 15-of-32 from two-point range and went 13-of-13 at the free throw line.

Lexi Moore led Wayne Trace with 18 points, adding 11 rebounds, three assists, and two steals. Caroline Winans chipped in 14 points, while Amber Stoller provided a strong all-around effort with 11 points, five steals, and three assists. Careen Winans added five points, and Liz Graham scored two.

Continental was led by Kamryn Searfoss with 13 points, while Makenzie Shock added eight. Olivia Crossgrove finished with four points, and Kinley Stegbauer scored three for the Pirates.

## AYERSVILLE PULLS AWAY LATE TO DEFEAT ANTWERP IN GMC GIRLS BASKETBALL

Antwerp traveled to Ayersville on Thursday, February 5, for a Green Meadows Conference matchup, where the Pilots used a strong fourth quarter to secure a 44-34 win

## The West Bend News

# Sudoku Puzzle

				5	7			
	2	7			4			
8	4		6				5	7
1		2	4	7		5		6
	6				1	8	3	
9	8			6			2	
2				1	5		7	
		8	2	4		9	1	5
						2	6	

Answers to "Sudoku puzzle on Page 11"

over the Archers. Antwerp led early after taking a 9-3 advantage in the opening quarter, but Ayersville responded with a 13-point second quarter to take a 16-13 lead at halftime.

The two teams traded baskets in the third quarter, with Ayersville holding a slim 28-23 edge heading into the final period. Ayersville then outscored Antwerp 16-11 in the fourth quarter to pull away and seal the conference victory.

Antwerp was led by Clara Rohrs with nine points, while Aliyah Friend added eight points and Briley Bagley chipped in seven. Raley Franklin and Eliana Hormann each finished with five points for the Archers.

Ayersville was paced by Kalyn Hastedt, who scored a game-high 12 points, while Aeriell Brown and Avery Knueven each added nine points. Kendyll Booher contributed eight points for the Pilots.

## MAY 5 PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT: OFFICES SCHEDULED FOR VOTER CONSIDERATION

The Ohio Primary Election will be held Tuesday, May 5, 2026. According to the official 100-day Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) notice issued by the Paulding County Board of Elections, the following offices are scheduled to appear on the primary election ballot. As of the 100-day filing deadline, no valid candidates had been certified for any of the listed offices. All races apply to all precincts unless otherwise noted.

### Statewide Offices

Governor - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

Lieutenant Governor - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

Attorney General - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

Auditor of State - One to

be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

Secretary of State - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

Treasurer of State - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 11, 2027

### Judicial Offices

Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court - One to be elected; six-year term commencing January 1, 2027

Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court - One to be elected; six-year term commencing January 2, 2027

### Federal Office

Representative to Congress, 9th District - One to be elected; two-year term commencing January 3, 2027

### State Legislative Offices

State Senator, 1st District - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 1, 2027

State Representative, 82nd District - One to be elected; two-year term commencing January 1, 2027

### County Offices

County Commissioner - One to be elected; four-year term commencing January 1, 2027

County Auditor - One to be elected; four-year term commencing March 8, 2027

Political Party Offices (State Central Committee, 1st District)

Democratic State Central Committee Member (Man) - One to be elected; six-year term commencing August 16, 2026

Democratic State Central Committee Member (Woman) - One to be elected; two-year term commencing August 3, 2026

Republican State Central Committee Member (Man) - One to be elected; two-year term commencing March 20, 2026

Republican State Central Committee Member (Woman) - One to be elected; two-year term commencing March 20, 2026

(Continued on Page 10)

## PAULDING COUNTY WMEA RECYCLING

### New Schedule For Large Villages

1st Weekend- Paulding, Fair Grounds

2nd Weekend- Grover Hill, VFW

3rd Weekend- Payne,

(Paved lot east of Homier's)

4th Weekend- Antwerp,

(13744 CR 43, sewer treatment plant)

### New Schedule For Smaller Villages

3rd Wednesday of each month

Cecil 11:30-12:00 (Fire Station)

Junction 12:30-1:00 (Catholic Church)

Haviland/Scott 1:30-2:00 (SR 114 at Haviland Park)

Latty/Briceton 2:30-3:00 (Latty Park)

For Questions Call : 419-399-3630

or Visit : [www.pauldingcountywmea.com](http://www.pauldingcountywmea.com)

22319 Ward Rd., Woodburn, IN  
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# ODNR NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER LEAH NAIRN NAMED OPRA RANGER OF THE YEAR



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Parks and Watercraft is proud to announce that Natural Resources Officer Leah Nairn has been named the inaugural Ranger of the Year by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA). The honor was presented during OPRA's Annual Awards of Excellence banquet on February 3 at the Kalahari Resort and Conference Center in Sandusky, held in conjunction with the 2026 OPRA Conference & Trade Show.

Officer Nairn serves as a Natural Resources Officer with ODNR and is widely recognized for her professionalism, leadership, and compassion. Since graduating from the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to protecting Ohio's natural resources while building trust and meaningful relationships within the communities she serves.

Officer Leah Nairn was named the inaugural Ranger of the Year by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association. Early in her ODNR career, Officer Nairn was assigned to Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve, an area that previously lacked a consistent on-site officer presence. She worked diligently to build trust through professionalism, consistency, and approachability which helped reestablish a culture of safety, stewardship, and respect for public lands.

Officer Nairn's impact extends well beyond traditional enforcement. Drawing on her experience as a former probation officer in Licking County, she founded Redemption Through the Lens, a self-initiated project that uses photography and personal storytelling to share the experiences of individuals recovering from substance use disorders. The project fosters understanding, challenges stigma, and builds bridges between law enforcement and marginalized communities.

In addition to this work, Officer Nairn regularly volunteers at a homeless outreach center in Newark, often in uniform, offering food, supplies, Narcan, and support. Within Ohio State Parks, she also serves as the only forest fire investigator in her unit, mentors fellow officers, supports recruitment efforts, and teaches off-road ATV and UTV driving skills during Ohio State Parks' annual Women's Outdoor Adventure Weekend.

Her dedication was recently recognized during the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft winter meeting, where a short film highlighting Redemption Through the Lens was shared, moving many in attendance.

ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft received an Award of Excellence for its inclusive playground project at Strouds Run State Park. The division also received third place in the Capital Improvement (\$500,000 to \$3 million) category for the Strouds Run State Park Inclusive Playground and Accessibility Enhancements project. Completed in partnership with the Ohio State Parks Foundation and community stakeholders, the project added an inclusive playground, ADA-compliant beach access path, accessible kayak launch, and modernized accessible restrooms. The project ensures visitors of all abilities can enjoy the park.

Together, these recognitions reflect the dedication of ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft staff, officers, and partners who work every day to protect natural resources, serve the public, and create welcoming outdoor spaces across Ohio.

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

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://ohiodnr.gov/) (https://ohiodnr.gov/).

ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft Earns Additional OPRA Awards of Excellence

In addition to Officer Nairn's Ranger of the Year honor, the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft was recognized by OPRA with two Awards of Excellence, further highlighting the division's commitment to education, accessibility, and inclusion across Ohio's 76 state parks.

An Award of Excellence was presented to ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft for "My First Hike," an original children's book. The division earned second

place in the Environmental & Interpretive (Programs & Events) category for My First Hike, an original children's book designed to introduce young readers to trail safety, conservation, and Ohio's state parks while promoting positive interactions with law enforcement. Co-authored by ODNR Assistant Director Mindy Bankey and Natural Resources Lieutenant Ryan Swigert, the book follows a family visiting a state park and meeting a friendly Natural Resources Officer who shares safety and stewardship tips along the way. Aimed at children ages 5-7, the book is now used by officers during classroom and community visits to foster early outdoor appreciation and break down barriers between officers and the communities they serve.

Together, these recognitions reflect the dedication of ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft staff, officers, and partners who work every day to protect natural resources, serve the public, and create welcoming outdoor spaces across Ohio.

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ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft Earns Additional OPRA Awards of Excellence

# PAULDING COUNTY COURT RECORDS

## Criminal/Traffic Disposition Report

**Charles E. Armentrout**, Charles City, OH — Guilty of Failure to Control. Fined \$70 plus \$95 in court costs. Case was waived by defendant.

**William J. Wybenga**, Picton, ON — Guilty of Failure to Control. Fined \$70 plus \$95 in court costs. Case was waived by defendant.

**Bradlee J. Rariden**, Paulding, OH — Guilty of Stop Sign violation. Fined \$55 plus \$95 in court costs. Case was waived by defendant.

**Andrew J. Martin**, Payne, OH — Guilty of Possession of Drugs. Fined \$100 plus \$205 in court costs. Sentenced to 180 days jail, all suspended. Ordered to pay fines/costs, placed on probation, complete risk assessment, online court courses, random drug screens, no alcohol or drugs. Count B dismissed.

**Amy M. Neamon**, Paulding, OH — Guilty of Failing to Register Dog. Fined \$50 plus \$409 in court costs. Also guilty of 5 counts of Cruelty to Animals, sentenced to 90 days jail with for each count, with 87 days suspended. The sentences are to run concurrent with Count A. Placed on probation, no animals allowed in her possession, forfeiture of seized animals, mental health assessment and treatment, risk assessment. Conditions concurrent with Count A.

**John W. Daughney**, of Paulding, was found guilty of four counts of Cruelty to Animals. He was sentenced to 90 days in jail for each count, with 87 days suspended. The sentences are to run concurrent with Count A.

**Amanda E. Daughney**, of Paulding, was found guilty of multiple offenses in case CRB 2500219. She was convicted of failure to register a dog and five counts of cruelty to animals. She was fined \$50 and sentenced to 90 days in jail with 87 days suspended on each cruelty charge. She was placed on standard probation, ordered to undergo a mental health evaluation and risk assessment, and is prohibited from possessing animals. All animals seized were ordered forfeited.

**Shawn M. Spencer**, of Oakwood, was found guilty in case CRB 2500220 of unauthorized use of property. He was fined \$100 and sentenced to 30 days in jail, all suspended. He was ordered to pay \$465 in court costs from bond, have no unlawful contact with the Village of Oakwood, and maintain good behavior.

**Timothy L. Stokes Jr.**, of Oakwood, was found guilty in case TRD 2500766 of driving under FRA suspension. He was fined \$100 with an additional \$100 suspended and ordered to pay \$97 in court costs.

**Andrew J. Martin** of Payne, Ohio, was convicted of operating a vehicle under the influence. He was fined \$565 and ordered to pay \$105 in court costs. As part of the sentence, Martin received 180

days in jail with 177 days suspended and an operator's license suspension from February 2, 2026, through February 2, 2027. Special conditions include the option to attend a Driver Intervention Program in lieu of three days in jail, standard probation, an evaluation with Westwood, completion of a risk assessment, prohibition on alcohol use, prohibition from entering bars, and submission to random drug screenings.

**Melanie A. Eyink** of Van Wert, Ohio, was convicted of operating a vehicle under the influence. She was fined \$565 and ordered to pay \$105 in court costs. Eyink was sentenced to 180 days in jail, all of which were suspended, and received an operator's license suspension from October 29, 2025, through October 29, 2026. Conditions of the sentence include standard probation, proof of insurance, the option to install an ignition interlock device, an evaluation with Westwood, completion of a risk assessment, 20 hours of community service, partici-

pation in the Keeping It in Check class, completion of an online course, and prohibitions on alcohol use and entering bars.

**Kenneth L. Tenwalde** of Defiance, Ohio, was convicted of obstructing official business. He was fined \$100 and ordered to pay \$105 in court costs. Tenwalde was sentenced to 90 days in jail with 88 days suspended. Conditions of the sentence include payment of all fines and costs and maintaining general good behavior.

**Tammy J. Makara** of Fort Jennings, Ohio, was convicted of failure to control. She was fined \$70 and ordered to pay \$95 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

**Jesus Gutierrez Mariscal** of Haviland, Ohio, had a charge of operating a motor vehicle without insurance dismissed without prejudice, with court costs waived. In a separate case, he was convicted of a registration violation and fined \$70, with \$97 in court costs assessed.

**Kayson L. Ross** of Payne, Ohio, was convicted of a seat

# OLESKI SPEAKS TO KIWANIS



The Paulding Kiwanis Club recently welcomed Cheyenne Oleski of the NorthWestern Ohio Community Action Commission (NOCAC) as its featured speaker. Oleski was invited by Kiwanis member Jill Strahley as part of the club's ongoing Chamber Spotlight series, which highlights local organizations and their impact on the community.

During the presentation, Oleski provided an informative overview of the many programs and services offered by NOCAC, emphasizing the unique benefits of each. Programs highlighted included Head Start, Early Childhood Education, Weatherization and Home Repair, Elderly Home Repair, and several additional community support services.

The presentation offered Kiwanis members valuable insight into how NOCAC supports individuals and families throughout the region and strengthens the overall community.

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## PAULDING COUNTY OHIO LAND

**MONDAY, MARCH 2 • 6:00PM**  
held at the Paulding County Fairgrounds • Online Bidding Available

**INSPECTIONS: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 & 16**  
4-6pm or call the auction mgr for walk over inspection.

# 5 Farms

# 205± acres

**OFFERED IN 7 TRACTS OR COMBINATIONS**  
Access along Co Rd 106, Twp Rd 96 & SR 49

TRACT 1: 24± acres	<b>IMMEDIATE POSSESSION AT CLOSING</b> <b>QUALITY TILLABLE FARMS</b> <b>WELL MAINTAINED SOILS</b>
TRACT 2: 20± acres	
TRACT 3: 20± acres	
TRACT 4: 25± acres	
TRACT 5: 47± acres	
TRACT 6: 31± acres	
TRACT 7: 38± acres	

*Owner: Kuhn Family*

**Auction Manager: Jerry Ehle • 260.410.1996**

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(Continued from Page 10)

### Ballot Issues

No issues were certified for the May 5, 2026 Primary Election as of the 100-day notice.

The FWAB notice is required for military and over-

seas voters and reflects ballot information available at the 100-day mark.

Additional candidate filings and updates may occur prior to the election in accordance with Ohio election law.

**Saturday, February 14th, 2026**  
**Open 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

# SALT SALE

## H<sub>2</sub>O Water Stores

*Your "Everything Water" Store*

### All Salt Pallet Pricing

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North American Salt Company

**OPERATION CLEAN DUDS AWARDED \$1,000 GRANT FROM DEFIANCE AREA FOUNDATION**



**Pictured are Jasmine Conley - Operation Clean Duds Founder and Tim Whetstone - DAF grants committee member.**

Congratulations to Operation Clean Duds on receiving a \$1,000 grant during the Defiance Area Foundation's fall 2025 grant cycle. Operation Clean Duds provides 100% free laundry events to those under 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, or with an urgent need, by supplying de-

tergent, dryer sheets, laundry bags, and the quarters needed to wash and dry up to four loads per family member. This grant will be used to purchase more supplies for their laundry events and provide quarters to those in our community who are participating.

belt violation while driving. He was fined \$30 and ordered to pay \$57 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

**Brandon K. Siegel** of Grover Hill, Ohio, was convicted of disorderly conduct and fined \$50, with \$103 in court costs. In a related case, Siegel was also convicted of criminal damaging, as well as littering. He was fined \$100 for each of those charges. Special conditions included payment of all fines and costs, and the recall of a warrant and warrant block.

**John W. Daughney** of Paulding, Ohio, was convicted of failure to register a dog. He was fined \$50 and ordered to pay \$409 in court costs. The court placed Daughney on standard probation and ordered that he have no animals in his possession. Animals seized in the case were ordered forfeited. Additional conditions include a mental health evaluation and treatment, along with completion of a risk assessment. In a related case, he was also convicted of cruelty to animals. He was sentenced to 90 days in jail, with 87 days suspended. The court ordered that conditions in this case run concurrent with those imposed in the failure-to-register-dog case.

**Gary D. Sentel** of Cecil, Ohio, entered a no contest plea and was convicted of disorderly conduct. He was fined \$75 and ordered to pay \$112 in court costs. Conditions of the sentence include payment of all fines and costs and maintaining general good behavior.

**Brittany L. Treece** of Paulding, Ohio, was convicted of failure to control. She was fined \$70 and ordered to pay \$95 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

**Nicholaus E. Richey** of Antwerp, Ohio, was convicted of a registration violation. He was fined \$70 and ordered to pay \$95 in court costs. The case was waived by the defendant.

**LEGACY NUTRIENT DEDUCTIONS**

Last week, Legacy Nutrient Tax Deductions (LNTD) were discussed and this is a follow up. This is a 1960's tax deduction for oil, gas, mining, agriculture, and even timber production. It allows farmers to deduct the "excess value" of soil nutrients as a depreciating asset. For 60 years this deduction was ignored but now the IRS has finally come up with tax rules for this deduction. This article will explore how

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Classified ads are \$8.50 for 20 words or less and \$.15 for each additional word.  
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 P.O. Box 262, Antwerp, OH 45813  
**Classifieds MUST be paid up front!!**

**FORT DEFIANCE Antiques: 402 Clinton St. Downtown Defiance, OH. Hours M-Sat 10-5. 419-782-6003 tf**

**FOR SALE: 12000 Badlands Winch with remote with universal truck mount - \$449 - New in Boxes 419-258-0127**

**GRAPPLE FOR SALE - PRICE LOWERED to \$1099, Titan Attachments Grapple for tractor or skid steer. Hydraulic cylinder, 48". 419-258-0127**

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

**MOWER LIFT FOR SALE: Huskee HZR350 Lift for riding or zero turn lawn mower. \$650bo. Call 419-258-0127**

**RAIN TECH SEAMLESS GUTTERS, 419-258-1818 6-8**

**TIMBER WANTED:** Specializing in walnut trees, white oak trees and hardwood trees. Buyer of standing timber. Call Gary Keegan 517-296-4601 2-31p

**DESIGN - PRINT - ADVERTISE:** West Bend Printing & Publishing can get you what you need **FAST!** Logos, office stationery, building signs, yard signs & banners. All done in **ANTWERP, OH!** Call or stop in today! 419-258-2000.

**FEBRUARY SPECIAL!** Schedule a Classified line ad in West Bend News in February and receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> week **FREE!** Let us know what we can sell for **YOU!!** 419-258-2000

some farmers using this deduction. Consult with your attorney and CPA whether you want to pursue this deduction.

Here are some common problems farmers have had with this tax deduction. First, many were taking deductions too quickly or excessively. Improper sampling (mixed depths, inconsistent grids) are an issue. It is easy to double-count current-owner/tenant inputs. Bad baselines will inflate "excess" nutrient values. Thin documentation, i.e. can't satisfy PLR/MSSP guidance for tax purposes.

The biggest problem most farmers who are looking into this deduction was how to document the "excess value" of soil nutrients. Since this tax deduction was mainly focused on the mineral and gas reserves; agriculture and timber were added in. Frankly, it is not a logical deduction. From a water quality and even soil fertility stand point, excess soil nutrients can be a liability. Farmers will find that the calculations and measurements are difficult to take and document. A standard soil test is inadequate. So many frustrated farmers gave up trying to take this deduction.

For example, a farmer

year for 7 years. On an 80-acre field that is \$18,720. The one-time cost to sample is \$40 for 80 acres or \$3,200. This is a one-time deduction that farmers take for land that they inherited, transferred, or purchased.

Depending upon the tax code, nutrient deductions can be classified as either active losses or passive losses. Active losses offset active income for landowners who actively participate in agricultural production. These losses can be used to shelter active income in farming but if there is another side business in construction with a profit, they can also use the farmland loss deduction to shield the construction business income.

For passive income, such as a landowner who does not materially participate in the farming business and just collects rent, they can take the nutrient loss deduction to shelter some of their passive income. Passive income/loss rules are more difficult and it is possible only a portion of the nutrient loss can be taken. As a reminder, this LNTD does lower your basis on your agricultural cropland (including timber). The timber rules are to be available March 2026. This LNTD may not be for everyone, but numerous farmers are actively pursuing and using it.

—James J. Hoorman  
 Hoorman Soil Health Services

**OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL INVESTIGATES FATAL CRASH**

Grand Rapids - The Toledo Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol is investigating a fatal crash that occurred on February 2, 2026, at approximately 2:58 p.m. The crash occurred on Bailey Road at Jeffers Road in Providence Township, Lucas County.

Edward A. Williams, age 68, of St. George, Utah, was operating a 2014 Ford Escape eastbound on Bailey Road when he stopped for the stop sign at Jeffers Road. Susan L. Witte, age 39, of Whitehouse, Ohio, was operating a 2020 Chrysler Pacifica northbound on Jeffers Road approaching the Bailey Road intersection. Mr. Williams failed to yield when he proceeded to pull forward from the stop sign while entering the intersection. Mr. Williams was then struck by Ms. Witte, and both vehicles went off the northeast side of the roadway.

Betty J. Manworren, age 90, of Toledo, Ohio was a rear passenger in Mr. Williams' vehicle. She was transported by ground ambulance to the University of Toledo Medical Center where she was pronounced deceased. A front passenger in Mr. Williams' vehicle, Virgie P. Williams, age 60, of St. George, Utah, was taken by ground ambulance to ProMedica Toledo Hospital with critical injuries. Mr. Williams was also taken to ProMedica Toledo Hospital with serious injuries. Ms.

6	1	9	8	5	7	3	4	2
5	2	7	1	3	4	6	8	9
8	4	3	6	9	2	1	5	7
1	3	2	4	7	8	5	9	6
7	6	5	9	2	1	8	3	4
9	8	4	5	6	3	7	2	1
2	9	6	3	1	5	4	7	8
3	7	8	2	4	6	9	1	5
4	5	1	7	8	9	2	6	3

**Sudoku solution from page 9**

Witte was treated on scene for minor injuries. All occupants were wearing their safety belts, and drugs and alcohol do not appear to be a factor.

The Patrol was assisted at the scene by the Lucas County Sheriff's Office, Providence Township Fire and EMS, Whitehouse Fire and EMS, Monclova Township Fire and EMS, Bubba's Towing, and VJ's Towing. No charges have been filed, and the crash remains under investigation.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol reminds motorists to be extra vigilant while driving through intersections, and to be cautious of approaching traffic.

**HUSTED BACKS BILL TO SUPPORT RURAL AND LOW-INCOME SMALL BUSINESSES**

WASHINGTON - Sen. Jon Husted (R-Ohio) joined Sens. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) and John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.) on the bipartisan Investing in All of America Act. This bill would expand access to capital for small businesses in rural and low-income communities, as well as those in the manufacturing and critical technology sectors.

The bill focuses on enhancing the role of Small Business Investment Companies (SBICs), privately managed firms licensed by the Small Business Administration (SBA), that raise private capital and leverage it with SBA-backed funds to invest in American small businesses. Currently, SBICs are subject to a leverage cap, which limits the amount of SBA-backed capital they can access based on how much private capital the firm has.

The Investing in All of America Act would exempt investments in rural or low-income areas, as well as those in the manufacturing and critical technology sectors, from the leverage cap. In turn, this move would enable more capital to flow to areas with limited access and support the growth of manufacturing and critical technology industries vital to U.S. competitiveness.

**HELP WANTED:**

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**To apply contact us via phone or email**

**HELP WANTED**

The Village of Hicksville is accepting applications for part-time (Seasonal) groundskeepers in our Parks Dept. Candidate must be of a minimum 18 years of age with a valid Ohio driver's license. Duties included but are not limited to mowing, prepping playing fields, painting, cleaning, landscaping, grounds maintenance work. Salary for this position is \$15.45 per hour for up to 29 hours a week. A drug screen and background check is required for the position. Applications are available at the Village Municipal Building.

Deadline for applications will be March 13th. Please contact the Village Administrator with any questions 419-542-6138 ext.6.

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**PAULDING PUTNAM ANNOUNCES 2026 WORK PLAN, INVESTING \$8.4M IN ELECTRIC SYSTEM RELIABILITY UPGRADES**



PAULDING, OH — Paulding Putnam, an electric and internet cooperative serving nearly 14,000 members across northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio, has released its 2026 work plan outlining continued investment in electric system reliability, fiber internet expansion, facility modernization, and member engagement.

The cooperative plans to invest approximately \$8.4 million in electric system reliability improvements during 2026. Planned upgrades are designed to reduce outage duration, improve backfeeding capabilities to maintain service during disruptions, support future capacity needs, and enhance the overall member experience.

Operations and maintenance efforts will include system inspections and infrastructure upgrades across the service territory. Beginning in April, pole testing is scheduled in the Ft. Brown and Continental substation areas. Equipment inspections, including underground, OCR, and recloser

inspections, will take place in the Cecil, Hessen, Continental, and Columbus Grove areas. Contractors will also replace rejected poles in Payne, Convoy, and Paulding that were identified as unsafe during 2025 testing.

Several substation projects are planned. The Herb Monroe substation is scheduled for expansion by the fourth quarter of 2026 to meet future business capacity needs, while design work continues for a full rebuild of the Convoy substation in 2027. Signage at all substations will be replaced due to fading and outdated branding, and substation testing will occur in the Van Wert, Hessen, Kalida, and Antwerp areas. These improvements are expected to improve system communication, enhance backfeeding, and reduce the impact of large outages.

Vegetation management will remain a priority to prevent tree-related outages. Crews will trim circuits in the Seiler, Tillman, Route 14, Herb Monroe, and Hessen substation areas, with work

in the Seiler area beginning in March. Paulding Putnam's new right-of-way contractors, Tree Servants and Grid-Guards, will perform the work. Contractor vehicles will display Paulding Putnam logo magnets, and affected members will receive advance notification.

Several digital enhancements and member programs are planned for 2026. A redesigned website is scheduled to launch this spring, featuring expanded fiber internet information, a modernized layout, and improved mobile functionality. A new pre-pay billing option for electric members is planned for the fourth quarter, offering flexible pay-as-you-go account management.

Member events include the Annual Meeting broadcast on Saturday, March 28 at 10:00 a.m., which will be held online and feature \$1,000 in bill credit drawings for viewers. A Member Appreciation Day is scheduled for Saturday, July 25 at the Fort Wayne Zoo, and the America's Electric Cooperatives PAC event will be held Monday, August 24 at the Wassenburg Art Center in Van Wert.

Expansion of the cooperative's Paulding headquarters is underway, with completion expected in fall 2026. The project is necessary to accommodate staff growth, expanding fiber operations, and increased storage needs for fiber-related equipment and materials. CME Construction is serving as the general contractor. Operations have also been consolidated following the closure of the smaller Columbus

**ANTWERP CHAMBER WELCOMES RAISED AT HOME**



**Celebrating Raised at Home's Grand Opening in Antwerp with a Ribbon Cutting on February 6<sup>th</sup> are Jennifer Ramsier and Sue Fowler with Antwerp Chamber of Commerce; Cooper and Weston Bute with owners Gabrielle Bute with husband Jarrett (holding Levi Bute); Tonya Walker, Shelly Walker and Heather Matusiak with the Antwerp Chamber and Isabella Carwile with Paulding County Economic Development.**

Raised at Home officially celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Thursday, February 6, welcoming community members to its new storefront in Antwerp.

The event was attended by representatives of Paulding County Economic Development and members of the Antwerp Chamber of Commerce in support of the

Grove location in January.

Workplace safety and compliance remain a focus under the leadership of new safety and compliance manager Dave Phillips. The cooperative is launching a safety initiative branded the "3Cs": Compliance, Competence, and Commitment. Lineworker training continues through a four-year apprenticeship program at the Central Ohio Lineworker

new small business. Owners Gabrielle and Jarrett Bute opened the shop after spotting the building while driving to church and deciding it was the right opportunity to pursue Gabrielle's passion for home décor and furniture refinishing.

Raised at Home features a mix of refinished furniture, vintage décor sourced primarily from estate sales, and

Training Facility in Mt. Gilead.

Due to rising wholesale and operational costs, the board approved a rate adjustment effective on February bills, due in March. The flat monthly service charge for residential and general service members will increase from \$41.50 to \$45.00, while the variable energy charge per kilowatt hour will remain unchanged. The cooperative notes that delivery costs rose more than 30 percent between 2020 and 2024, while electric sales increased 21.6 percent, resulting in margin pressure. Paulding Putnam's residential electric rate remains among the lowest in Ohio, averaging about \$7 per day for service.

Paulding Putnam continues construction of approximately 1,500 miles of mainline fiber across its seven-county service territory. More than 400 miles have been completed, with service currently available in Paulding, Payne, Scott, Haviland, Fort Jennings, Cloverdale, Otterville, and Middle Point. Grover Hill is expected to open for service in March, with Payne following this spring. Additional builds are underway in Van Wert and Convoy, with future deploy-

locally made consignment items including soaps, tallow lotion, body care products, and graphic tees. The shop is open Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and by appointment Monday through Thursday. Raised at Home also offers commissioned furniture refinishing services.

ments planned for Kalida, Columbus Grove, Miller City, and surrounding communities. Electric and fiber operations are kept financially separate, and electric rates are not impacted by fiber investments.

CEO Randy Price said the cooperative's investments are focused on long-term reliability and connectivity for members and communities. Members with questions may contact the cooperative at 800-686-2357, enroll in SmartHub updates, or follow Paulding Putnam on social media.

**DLPS FINANCE, POLICY COMMITTEES TO MEET FEBRUARY 11**

[DEFIANCE] - The Finance and Policy committees of the Defiance Public Library System (DPLS) Board of Trustees will hold their monthly meetings on February 11, 2026, at Defiance Public Library, 320 Fort St., Defiance, OH.

The Finance Committee will meet at 4:00 p.m., and the Policy Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m.

Meetings of the DPLS Board and its committees are open to the public.

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