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THE HAMILTON COUNTY
REPORTER
Your Hometown Newspaper

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

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TODAY'S WEATHER

Today: Partly to mostly sunny.
WIND ADVISORY for gusts to 50 mph!
Tonight: Partly cloudy and still breezy.

HIGH: 55 LOW: 31



Photos provided

David Heighway faithfully served as Hamilton County's Historian for 18 years. Thank you for your dedication, sir.

David Heighway honored with Indiana House District Declaration

The REPORTER

At the March board meeting of the Hamilton County Historical Society, State Representative Alaina Shonkwiler (R-29-Noblesville) presented David Heighway, Hamilton County Historian Emeritus, with an Indiana House District 29 Declaration.

laration is a local recognition presented to individuals who have served their community with distinction and made a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

This honor was given in recognition of Heighway's contribution of 18 years as Hamilton County Historian. The county historian program, adminis-

tered by the Indiana Historical Society and Indiana Historical Bureau, is a volunteer position where the appointed person is nominated by the county's historical societies and public libraries.

Text of the Declaration

In recognition of the vital role of history in our community identity, and in honor of those

who preserve and interpret history, the legislature affirms the importance of acknowledging individuals whose service deepens our sense of heritage.

Acts of recognition remind us of what we value as a community. In this declaration, we recognize the values of scholarship,

See *Heighway . . . Page 2*

Thawing out together while walking the labyrinth

L-A-B-Y-R-I-N-T-H Even the word itself makes you slow down.

After this long, harsh winter – the kind that lingers in our bones and tests our patience – I find myself craving something simple. Not loud. Not crowded. Not another notification.

Just quiet.

A labyrinth is not a maze. You don't get lost in it. There are no tricks, no dead ends, no competition. There is only one path: winding, circling, sometimes bringing you closer to the center, sometimes carrying you outward again, but always leading you somewhere meaningful.

This winter felt like a labyrinth.

There were days when the skies stayed gray longer than I stayed optimistic. Days when stepping outside felt like a negotiation. Days when the warmth I missed wasn't just the sun, but the warmth of connection and community.

And then, almost without announcement, the shift begins.

The light changes first. It lingers a little longer in the evening. The air softens. The birds rehearse their return.

Early spring in Indiana is not glamorous. It's muddy boots and unpredictable winds. It's stepping outside without knowing if you chose the right jacket. It's hope mixed with hesitation.

But that's exactly what a labyrinth teaches us.

See *Labyrinth . . . Page 3*

COLUMNIST



POJA THAKKAR
Taste of Community

Welcoming new Americans

221 people earn the right to take Oath of Citizenship

Submitted

A Naturalization Ceremony was held Wednesday, March 11 at the Payne & Mencias Palladium at Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel.

Prior to the ceremony, the Indiana Wind Symphony and the Indiana National Guard Band played patriotic songs in front of red, white, and blue background lighting.

The proceedings were opened by the courtroom deputy. Applicants were asked to stand as their country of origin was called; 221 applicants from 48 countries were in attendance.

All applicants stood as the Honorable James R. Sweeney II of the United States District Court, Southern District of Indiana, administered the Oath of Citizenship. Following the National Anthem, Judge Sweeney delivered remarks and interacted with the applicants, discovering

the three tallest were all 6-foot-3. He learned the shortest amount of time to receive citizenship was seven months, while the longest took 58 years. The youngest new citizen, age 19, then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additional remarks were given by Jeffrey McDermott, CEO and President of the Allied Solutions Center for the Performing Arts, and David Burian, from the office of Congresswoman Victoria Spartz. Dianne Powell, from the office of Senator Todd Young, and Abdul Alsaad, from the office of Congressman Andre Carson, also spoke and both shared that they are Naturalized Citizens.

A flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol was presented to the oldest new citizen, Champaben Patel, 82 years old. Judge Sweeney gave his final remarks, followed by the playing of "The Stars and Stripes Forever."



Photo provided

New citizens take the oath. Notice the gift bags from DAR Horseshoe Prairie Chapter in the foreground.

Each new citizen was called to the stage, one at a time, to receive their Certificate of Naturalization along with other handouts from the represented offices.

See *Oath . . . Page 2*

Fishers Century Club awards donation to "Not Today" initiative

Group focused on protecting children from online predators

The REPORTER

The Fishers Century Club held its quarterly crowd-giving meeting on Tuesday, March 10, where members heard presentations from three impactful charitable initiatives serving veterans and protecting youth.

Presentations included *Indy Honor Flight*, presented by Brian Wright, which provides veterans with trips to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials built in their honor. Members also heard from Jared Hoss about *Indy Vet House*, a non-profit that offers lodging and support for veterans traveling to Indianapolis for medical care at the VA.

The evening's winning presentation came from Howard Burd, representing a new initiative being implemented by



Photo provided

Generosity flowed at this quarter's meeting of the Fishers Century Club when the organization, Not Today, asked that the two other presenting charities also receive funds, Indy Honor Flight and Indy Vet House.

the Fishers Kiwanis Club called "Not Today."

The initiative focuses on raising awareness among youth

about the growing threat of online predators. Inspired by tragic cases that have impacted communities across the coun-

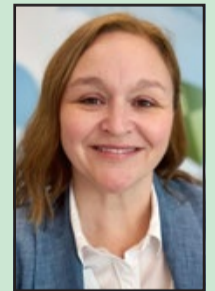
ty, including a recent incident in our community, "Not Today"

See *Not Today . . . Page 2*

Caylie Dicken named next Director of WWS Early Learning Center

Submitted by Westfield Washington Schools

Westfield Washington Schools (WWS) has announced that Caylie Dicken has been named the next Director of Early Learning Programs at the Virginia F. Wood Early Learning Center (ELC), continuing the district's commitment to providing exceptional care and early learning opportunities for young children and families. She will take over after Marci Derado, current Director, retires at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.



Dicken

Dicken has served at the ELC since the facility opened in 2022 and is currently in her fourth year with the district. During that time, she has played an integral role in launching and supporting the district's early learning initiatives.

"I am honored and excited to step into the role of Director of Early Learning Programs," Dicken said. "I am so proud of the work that we do at the ELC. I am grateful for the mentorship Marci has provided over the years and hope to continue the good work for years to come. As both a leader and a parent with my own toddler in our program, I feel especially connected to the work we do every day and the impact it has on families in our community. I'm excited to connect with families and staff involved with before and after care (B.A.C.) and to listen and learn about the needs of the program."

See *Dicken . . . Page 3*

Community News

The Easter Bunny is on his way to Sheridan Public Library!

The annual Indoor Easter Egg Hunt & Bunny Visit will return to the Sheridan Public Library from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, March 21. Hunts will begin every 15 minutes.

This event is for kids aged 10 and under. Children are encouraged to bring baskets or bags to carry eggs.

For more information on upcoming events, please visit sheridan.lib.in.us.

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Thanks for reading!

HEIGHWAY

storytelling, and civic engagement, and today, we proudly recognize Mr. David Heighway for 18 years of living those values as Hamilton County Historian.

Mr. Heighway's works are a seminal contribution to the preservation and interpretation of Hamilton County history. Through his book *Hidden History of Hamilton County, Indiana*, his historical essays, and public programs, he illuminated overlooked stories that otherwise would have been lost. His work spans local history includ-

ing early settlement and treaties, transportation and canals, community celebrations, sports and recreation, notable individuals, economic life, and the everyday experiences that shaped the county.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, David Heighway was supported and inspired by the love of his brother Rob and his sister Anne. Their encouragement allowed him to devote countless hours to public service, and they share in his legacy.

Let it be affirmed that

this declaration is not merely ceremonial, but a meaningful acknowledgment of public service. To honor David Heighway is to recognize the profound impact one historian can have in education, preserving memories, and setting a light local pride in Hamilton County.

Declared with gratitude on behalf of the people of this district, this recognition stands as a testament to our values and to the importance of preserving history through the service of individuals like David Heighway.

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About the Historical Society

The Hamilton County Historical Society, located on the southwest corner of the square in Noblesville, is housed in the Old Sheriff's Residence and Jail. The museum is open on Fridays and Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. and is free to visit, but donations are encouraged. In addition to exhibits on Hamilton County history, the museum includes rooms restored to the 19th century as well as three floors of jail cells. Follow along on Facebook and Instagram and check out hamiltoncoins.com.

OATH

The Horseshoe Prairie Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was honored to represent the DAR at this large ceremony during America's 250th birthday year. Chapter Regent Amy Holzum, Carmen Cliff, and Robin Sullivan presented each new citizen with an American flag. As each new citizen descended the stage, Pam Bollier, Jenny Ward, and Shirley Hutchison gave them a Stars and Stripes gift bag filled with patriotic-themed items including a pencil, pen with an attached bookmark, stickers, mints, and a pocket-sized copy of the Constitution, which was provided by Rep. Spartz's office.

As each new citizen left the auditorium, Billie Jones and Melissa Scheidegger distributed bookmarks with the Preamble to the Constitution and fliers with DAR scholarship information.



Photos provided

(TOP) The Indiana Wind Symphony the Indiana National Guard Band performed at the Naturalization Ceremony. (ABOVE LEFT) A new citizen receives her naturalization certificate from Judge Sweeney. (ABOVE RIGHT) Amy Holzum, Robin Sullivan, and Carmen Cliff present a flag to a new American citizen.

NOT TODAY

aims to reach young people where they spend a lot of time: online. Through targeted marketing, produced content, digital outreach, and partnerships with micro-influencers, the program will work to educate youth about recognizing dangerous online behavior and encourage them to alert trusted adults or authorities when concerns arise.

The message resonated strongly with Fishers Century Club members, many of whom are parents and grandparents and recognized the importance of helping protect children in an increasingly digital world.

After the winner was announced, in a moment that reflected the spirit of the group's mission, the "Not Today" initiative asked that \$500 of the evening's funds be shared with each of the other presenting charities, Indy Honor Flight and Indy Vet House.

Shortly after that an-



nouncement, Ned Campbell, a new member attending his first Century Club meeting, spoke up and offered to donate \$1,000 to replenish the funds being shared, ensuring the winning organization still received its full support.

Burd expressed appreciation for the group's support.

"We are thankful for the Century Club's donation toward this project," Burd said. "We've already met with local officials and public safety leaders who strongly support what we're doing and have highlighted the need for it. These funds will allow us to market directly to young people and help prevent tragic situa-

tions before they happen."

The Fishers Century Club is a men's crowd-giving organization that meets quarterly to hear presentations from three charities before voting to select a winning cause. All donations go directly to the selected nonprofit.

The next Fishers Century Club meeting will celebrate the club's fifth anniversary, set for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 23. Community members interested in networking and supporting local charities are encouraged to attend.

For more information and a list of previous winners, please visit [Fishers CenturyClub.com](http://FishersCenturyClub.com) or visit

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[Facebook.com/fisherscenturyclub](https://www.facebook.com/fisherscenturyclub). Those who wish to participate in the group who are unable to attend in person can visit their online Grapevine site at tinyurl.com/OnlineGivingFCC.

About Fishers Century Club

The Fishers Century Club, founded in 2021, is a group of individuals committed to making a positive impact on the local community. Through collective giving and active participation, the club aims to support and uplift deserving charities, ultimately contributing to the betterment of Fishers and the local community. The Club has donated over \$70,000 since its inception.

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Taste the Tradition

LABYRINTH

from Page 1



Photos provided by Pooja Thakkar

You step forward anyway. Not because you can see the whole path. Not because you know what the center holds. But because standing still is no longer enough.

This season invites us to unplug, not just from our devices, but from the heaviness we carried through winter. To read again. To sit by a window with a book and notice the light shifting across the pages. To take a slow walk, even if the trees are still bare. To reconnect with our own rhythm instead of the world's noise.

There is courage in seasonal transition.

Winter keeps us inward. Spring nudges us outward. And somewhere in between is that tender space where we are asked to step outside our comfort zone and embrace what's coming, even before it fully blooms.

And sometimes, we don't have to do that alone.

Join us March 21 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. as we gather at the Peace Labyrinth next to PLC at Eagle Creek Park for a relaxed, low-key evening to welcome the season's change.

For \$10 (park entry included), you'll receive:

- A brief introduction to what a labyrinth is and the

centuries of history behind it

- Time to walk at your own pace with soft music in the background

- A solid excuse to watch the sunset and notice that the world is thawing out

- A moment to pause and reflect

- Water and light snacks for simple nourishment

No pressure. No performance. Just space to breathe and walk.

If winter has felt long, this is your gentle transition.

Here is the link to sign up for the March Peace Labyrinth gathering: peacelearningcenter.org/events/seasonal-shifts-spring-equinox-labyrinth-walk.

sonal-shifts-spring-equinox-labyrinth-walk.

The beauty of a labyrinth is that you emerge the same person, but somehow lighter.

We don't rush through it. We walk it.

And perhaps that is the lesson this almost-spring offers us:

We don't have to leap into transformation. We only have to take the next step. Slowly. Intentionally.

Together.

Pooja Thakkar is working to build connections through cuisine. You can read her column each week in the pages of The Reporter.

Get your tickets for HOPE Bingo fundraiser

Submitted

HOPE Family Care Center, a free health care provider in Cicero, extends a sincere and heartfelt "Thank You" to everyone in the community who donated, volunteered, sponsored, or participated in an event to support HOPE in 2025.

HOPE's patient numbers and total provided services were up almost 50 percent last year. Since services are provided at no charge, the organization relies on dedicated grants, fundraising events, and individual/corporate contributions to meet the financial demands of providing medical, dental, counseling, and women's health services to the uninsured and under-insured of central Indiana.

One of the fundraising events is HOPE's annual Bingo Night, which will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 16 at the Tipton County Event Center, 1200 S. Main St., Tipton.

HOPE's 2026 Bingo



Night will feature games, raffles, a Silent Auction, food, prizes – and even some surprise guests. The event will generate much-needed funds to continue HOPE's vital community mission.

For more information or to purchase tickets, [click here](#) or call the clinic at (317) 984-3444.

About HOPE

HOPE Family Care Center is a faith based 501(c)(3) non-profit clinic providing free medical, dental, mental health counseling, women's health, mammograms, and diabetes education services to uninsured, under-insured, and medically under-served patients from Hamilton, Tipton, Madison, and Boone counties. For more information or to inquire about an appointment, call (317) 984-3444 or email hfccicero@gmail.com.

DICKEN

The ELC provides a range of services designed to support young children and families in the Westfield community. The program offers childcare for district staff members' children from infancy through age 2, while 3- and 4-year-old programming is open to the broader community. The ELC also supports children with identified exceptionalities, helping them build the skills needed to successfully

transition to kindergarten.

The ELC serves as a hub for several district early childhood services, including developmental preschool programs, evaluations, and transitions from Indiana's First Steps early intervention program into school-based services.

In addition to early childhood programs, the Director of Early Learning Programs also oversees the district's B.A.C. program,

which currently operates in seven school buildings and will expand next year.

Derado, who helped open the ELC in 2022, expressed confidence in Dicken's leadership.

"Making the decision to leave was hard for me, but I am comforted knowing that Caylie will be the one taking the lead because I have full faith in her to continue what we've already started," Derado said.

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Dicken says maintaining the ELC's strong culture will remain a priority moving forward.

"Our goal is to maintain our current vision of exceptional care and high-quality learning experiences," Dicken said. "We have built a great reputation for supporting and retaining our staff, and we believe that hiring great people and treating them well is the recipe for success."

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Municipal leaders & utility representatives join CIRDA for strategic discussion on data centers

Submitted

On Wednesday, March 11, the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority (CIRDA) held a panel discussion on data centers to examine their requirements, benefits, and any challenges they present.

The panel, moderated by Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen, consisted of the following municipal leaders, energy sector representatives, and a land use expert:

- Andrew Greenwood, Bargersville Town Council President
- Mike Dellinger, Morgan County Economic Development Corporation
- Patrick Maguire, AES
- Justin Forshey, Center-Point Energy
- Ed Bukovac, Citizens Water
- Erin Schneider, Duke Energy
- Kelley Karn, Duke Energy
- Chad Sweeney, Gino-vus

“Today was a very important step for central Indiana – which represents 40

percent of the state’s GDP – to have a factual conversation about data centers, knowing that this technology is going to continue to grow,” said Mayor Jensen, who also serves as the Vice Chair of CIRDA.

The panel discussion served as a balanced conversation among experts, each answering questions as they pertained to their respective industry. This learning session served as a collaborative effort to build a foundational understanding of data centers as CIRDA works to develop a long-term economic development strategy to solidify Central Indiana as a globally competitive region.

“CIRDA is going to continue to be part of the discussion in central Indiana, and we need to understand the facts around what type of energy uses they have, what type of water uses they have, what kind of land they’re looking for,” Jensen said. “Then, that allows us – on the local level – to go back and inform our



Photos provided by CIRDA

citizens and have an honest conversation about our future, how this may or may not fit into our communities, and how it could affect the region as a whole.”

CIRDA will be meeting on the following dates:

- May 13
- July 15
- Sept. 16

All meetings will be

held at IU Indianapolis – Hine Hall (Kelley Room 137), 875 W. North St., Indianapolis. Meetings take place from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and are open to the

public.

For more information about the Central Indiana Regional Development Authority (CIRDA), visit centralindianarda.org.

Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness endorses Tiffanie Ditlevson for State Senate

Submitted

Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness has endorsed Fishers City Councilor At-Large Tiffanie Ditlevson in her campaign for Indiana State Senate District 31, backing her as a proven, results-focused leader prepared to serve effectively on day one.

Fadness said Ditlevson has demonstrated the kind of compassionate leadership and consistent engagement with residents that communities need from their state senator.

“Tiffanie is the kind of

leader who is consistently engaged with the community she serves,” Mayor Fadness said. “She shows up, listens to residents, and works through issues with a compassionate, practical approach. That kind of constituent-focused leadership will serve Fishers well at the Statehouse.”

Ditlevson serves as an at-large member of the Fishers City Council, where she was elected citywide and represents a significant portion of Senate District 31. A former U.S. Air Force Major and combat veteran,

she has built her campaign around common-sense conservative leadership focused on protecting taxpayer dollars, keeping Indiana affordable for families, preserving local control for communities, and ensuring the state’s investments in infrastructure and education deliver real value for Hoosiers.

“I’m honored to have Mayor Fadness’s support,” Ditlevson said. “He has led



Ditlevson

Fishers through tremendous growth while maintaining a strong focus on quality of life, responsible planning, and strong public safety. I’m proud to serve our community alongside him.”

Ditlevson said her campaign is focused on bringing experienced, accountable leadership to the Statehouse.

“This campaign is about who is prepared to do the job well from the start,”

Ditlevson said. “I’ve been accountable to voters across this community, worked on the local issues that directly affect families and neighborhoods, and led in both military service and public office. I’m running to be a strong, credible voice for District 31 and to fight for responsible government, safe communities, and a stronger future for the next generation.

“I’m proud to already represent a large portion of this district as a citywide elected Fishers City Councilor. In this race, I’m the

only elected Republican candidate, the only candidate elected citywide, the only candidate with municipal governing experience, and the only combat veteran in the field.

“I’ve always believed service doesn’t end when you take off the uniform. Whether serving my country in the Air Force or serving my community here at home, I’ve tried to lead with honor, integrity, and a focus on results.”

Learn more about the candidate at tiffanie4indiana.com.



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Governor Braun touts conservative group in free speech proclamation

By GARRETT BERGQUIST
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

Gov. Mike Braun on Thursday urged schools and universities to allow students to join groups regardless of their political leanings, including conservative groups.

His remarks came during an event at the Governor's Mansion with members of Club America, the high school arm of Turning Point USA, the conservative group founded by the late Charlie Kirk. The governor issued a proclamation calling freedom of speech "a foundational human right" and declaring it "a core value worthy of protection." The proclamation specifically cited Turning Point USA.

"I call on all schools and universities in Indiana to take all necessary steps to facilitate student organizations — such as Turning Point USA — that foster the values of liberty and freedom of speech in their students and institutions," Braun said.

In his remarks Thursday morning, Braun praised the work of Club America in reaching and mobilizing young conservatives. He said the proclamation is

about protecting speech, not suppressing it.

"It's going to be an even playing field," Braun said. "I'm about equal opportunity, no bigotry, none of that stuff, everybody has a voice, make sure you respect the other side's voice. Win it by making the best case."

Braun's proclamation is the second time in two days the state of Indiana has explicitly endorsed or partnered with Turning Point USA or one of its affiliates. On Tuesday, Secretary of State Diego Morales announced his office will partner with Club America to register young people to vote. Neither Club America nor Turning Point USA themselves endorse candidates. However, Turning Point Action, a political action committee Kirk founded in 2019, regularly endorses candidates it says reflects the organization's values.

Senate Minority Leader Shelli Yoder, D-Bloomington, called those two announcements concerning. She said the problem with partnering with a branch



Braun

of Turning Point USA is that the organization has a specific political viewpoint and openly endorses a specific religious worldview.

"What does that mean for students attending those schools? What kind of pressures is that going to be putting on these schools and the students who attend those schools?" Yoder said. "I think this is an announcement that every Hoosier should be asking more questions, and we demand to hear from the administration, what exactly does this mean, or was this just kind of for show?"

Braun said students who want to form student groups, such as a Club America chapter, will still have to go through whatever steps are required by the local school administration.

"This does nothing that says you've got to do it," Braun said. "It just creates the opportunity to make the case to do so."

This story was originally published by WISH-TV at wishtv.com/news/politics/braun-supports-turning-point-usa-club-america.

Fake BMV text tries very hard to appear legitimate

The REPORTER

On Wednesday, March 11, The Reporter received the following scam text message.

Given the clean language and URL that attempts to appear as a legitimate state website, The Reporter thought it prudent to share this information with readers in case you, too, receive this scam text message.

Be sure to delete the message without clicking the link.

State of Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)

Final Notice – Enforcement Penalties Begin March 12

Our records show you have an unpaid traffic violation that remains outstanding.

Under Indiana state law, if payment is not received by March 11, 2026, the BMV will proceed with the following enforcement actions beginning March 12:

1. Record the violation on your official BMV driver record
2. Suspend your vehicle registration
3. Suspend your driving privileges for up to 30 days

4. Refer your account to a collection agency, which may add a collection fee of up to 35%

5. This delinquency may be reported to credit bureaus and negatively impact your credit score, and you may be subject to further legal action

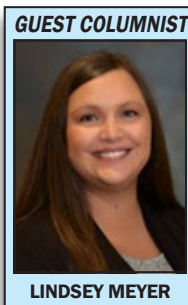
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Please resolve this balance immediately to avoid suspension and additional penalties.

(Reply Y to confirm receipt, then click the link or copy it into your browser to pay.)

National Reading Month: the push to keep Indiana's literacy gains from stalling

The month of March not only marks National Reading Month, it is also a critical time for elementary school students as many are currently taking this year's Indiana Reading



LINDSEY MEYER

Evaluation and Determination (IREAD) assessment. In 2025, we saw promising results for Hoosier students as scores improved following a dangerous drop during the pandemic.

While this month is dedicated to literacy awareness, it also serves as a critical reminder: Although 87.3 percent of third graders passed the assessment last year, more than 10,000 Indiana students still struggle with foundational reading skills.

Reading is not just an academic requirement; it's a vital life skill that shapes futures. Whether a student eventually heads to college, serves in the military, or steps straight into the workforce, foundational literacy is the cornerstone of communication, opportunity, and critical thinking.

To reach those remaining students, we must embrace diverse education models that give families more opportunities to learn

in ways that work best for them. Online learning options can be a lifeline for students who struggle in traditional brick-and-mortar schools. These platforms provide flexible schedules, one-to-one instructional time, and responsive tools right at a student's fingertips.

But literacy doesn't just happen in a classroom setting, National Reading Month is the perfect time for parents to kickstart lifelong reading habits at home. Research shows that reading with children early in life helps them build an oral and listening vocabulary of approximately 5,000 words by the time they reach Kindergarten. Even just 20 minutes of daily reading can dramatically help sharpen a child's skills.

Here are a few tactics families can use this month to engage with their children and encourage them to read more:

- **Make it fun:** Let kids read what they enjoy and how they like, whether that means physical storybooks, nonfiction, or age-appropriate reading apps.
- **Make it a game:** Try

reading in a new place like a pillow fort, have your child read to a stuffed animal or pet, or participate in virtual reading challenges to win prizes.

• **Make it part of your daily schedule:** Dedicate 20 minutes each evening to read together or independently, and share what everyone learned during family dinner.

Indiana's Department of Education, the Indiana Literacy Cadre, and our dedicated teachers have made tremendous strides by using research-based methods to move the needle on literacy.

As we observe National Reading Month, now is not the time to slow down. Every page turned, every story, and every shared moment with a book helps a child grow and our communities thrive.

Lindsey Meyer is a reading coach with the Indiana Gateway Digital Academy, specializing in early childhood and elementary education with nearly two decades of experience as an educator.

Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre's EXODUS hits Tarkington stage soon

The REPORTER

Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre's epic masterpiece returns to the Tarkington stage in two weeks. The performances will take place at 7 p.m. Friday, March 27 and 5 p.m. Saturday, March 28.

Inspired by the Book of Exodus but adapted to the

modern world, EXODUS is a cautionary tale of hatred and ignorance. The 10 modern plagues include desecration of the Earth, gun violence, racism, war, poverty, crime, social media, government, selfishness, and death of the first born.

Set to a score of epic symphonic and choral mu-

sic, and enhanced with complex visual artistry, EXODUS transports the audience into an emotional story of love and sacrifice. The talented cast leads the audience through thematic stories of oppression, emigration, and freedom that resonate today.

[Click here](#) for tickets.

FOOTLITE MUSICALS

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FUNNY GIRL is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC. www.concordtheatricals.com

CARMEL DADS' CLUB

Now Hiring

Business Manager/Bookkeeper

Location: Carmel, Indiana
Status: Full-time, available immediately

Carmel Dads' Club is seeking a dependable and highly organized **Business Manager/Bookkeeper** to support the financial and administrative operations of our long-standing youth sports organization. This role is essential to our daily operations and requires professionalism, discretion, and a strong commitment to accuracy and integrity.

Position Overview

The Business Manager oversees all financial records and accounting functions for Carmel Dads' Club, including recreational and travel sports programs, facilities, concessions, and corporate financials. This position reports directly to the President and plays a key role in ensuring smooth operations across the organization.

Key Responsibilities

- Manage all accounting and bookkeeping functions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, deposits, check writing, and refunds.
- Maintain accurate and comprehensive financial records across all sports and departments.
- Perform monthly bank reconciliations and prepare monthly financial reports, including budget-to-actual summaries.
- Oversee accounting software updates, filings, and year-end reporting (including 1099s).
- Support sport commissioners with financial processes, budgeting, reimbursements, and reporting.
- Assist concession administrators with budgeting, deposits, and financial procedures.
- Manage hardware and software needs related to computers and phone systems.
- Assist with purchasing and vendor relations for office equipment, including copiers and postage meters.
- Prepare materials for monthly Board meetings and annual budget presentations.
- Provide administrative and financial support for special events, including the annual golf outing.

Core Competencies

- Strong integrity and ethical judgment
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work independently and manage multiple priorities
- Proven problem-solving skills with minimal supervision
- Highly organized, detail-oriented, and reliable
- Ability to handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately

Required Qualifications

- Prior experience managing all aspects of business and financial operations
- Strong knowledge of basic accounting and bookkeeping principles
- Proficiency in QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel
- Demonstrated administrative and organizational skills
- Experience conducting presentations
- Ability to build and maintain professional relationships internally and externally
- Reliable transportation

Work Schedule

Standard business hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
This position is fully in person at the Carmel Dads' Club office located at 5459 East Main Street in Carmel.

Benefits

- Long-term, stable employment
- Competitive compensation
- Health, dental, and vision benefits
- Meaningful impact on the Carmel community through youth sports

How to Apply

The position is available immediately. Interested candidates should send their resume to: mtrent@carmeldadsclub.org by **March 16**

The position is full-time, year-round, with a very competitive wage and full benefits package.

Thanks for reading The REPORTER



Photos provided

Together with the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority, Hamilton County Express and RIDE Hancock can get you where you need to between the counties.

New public transportation program between Hamilton & Hancock counties starts April 6

The REPORTER

For the first time, anyone needing a ride between Hamilton and Hancock counties has access to public transportation with a single call for a flat fee.

The new program – One-Call Connect – was developed by the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), Hamilton County Express, and RIDE Hancock.

Because of the way public transportation funding works, transit providers typically cannot cross county lines. As a result, transit users have to find other transportation when traveling from one county to another.

Working in collaboration, One-Call Connect partners have arranged for a connection point in McCordsville where passengers can easily transfer from

one county's service to the other's.

"People don't think about crossing county lines. They just want to get where they need to go," CIRTA Executive Director Jennifer Gebhard said. "One-Call Connect will create a more streamlined user experience for people in Hamilton and Hancock counties. We see this as a pilot program that will provide data on ride demand, as well as opportunities for future cost efficiencies throughout the region."

One-Call Connect is open to everyone in Hamilton or Hancock counties, and trips can be for any purpose – medical appointments, shopping, visiting family, etc. The cost to ride is \$8 cash each direction, paid to the drivers at pick up. A round trip costs \$16, which is significantly less

than the cost of comparable trips using commercial transportation services.

Trips must start in one county (Hamilton or Hancock) and end in the other (Hamilton or Hancock). All vehicles are ADA accessible. Riders will transfer from one vehicle to another at Leo's Market and Eatery, 8956 N. County Road 600 West, McCordsville. Drivers will stay with riders until the next vehicle arrives and assist riders with the transfer if needed.

Trips within one county are handled by Hamilton County Express or RIDE Hancock.

To book a One-Call Connect trip:

- Call CIRTA at (317) 327-7433 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Trips must take

place between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

• Trips must be booked 48 hours in advance but not more than two weeks ahead.

About the organizations
Hamilton County Express, a service of Janus Developmental Services, provides reservation-based transportation for the general public in Hamilton County.

RIDE Hancock, a service of Hancock County Senior Services, provides reservation-based transportation for the general public in Hamilton County.

The **Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority** enhances transportation connectivity to the benefit of residents and businesses across the 10-county region.

MGP: Midwest Grain Products

"The biggest distillery you've never heard of."

My wife and I recently went on a little vacation to Madison, Ind. It's beautiful down there along the Ohio River. While there, we decided to travel

east to Lawrenceburg before heading back home. Mainly because I wanted to take a gander at the "mysterious" MGP whiskey distillery there.

Indiana is the third-largest producer of bourbon and rye in the world, and there can't be a discussion of Indiana bourbon (or bourbon, *period*) without mentioning MGP. In fact, MGP is why Indiana ranks amongst the top bourbon and rye producers.

When one arrives in Lawrenceburg, it is impossible to miss the huge MGP distillery. It's a gigantic, old, brick, factory that is totally reminiscent of something out of the movies. No lush grounds. No tasting rooms. No tours that I'm aware of. Just a gargantuan whiskey making behemoth.

I half expected to see a bourbon making version of Willy Wonka strutting behind its gate. He wasn't there. Disappointing.

The plant was first put into operation in 1847 and was the former Seagram's Distillery. It has been making whiskeys continuously for over 175 years. Yes, even through Prohibition. Seagram's went out of business in the early 2000s and the distillery changed hands a few times until bought by MGP. The whiskey-making side of the operation (they also make products for agriculture) now operates under the name of Ross & Squibb, though the term MGP has become ubiquitous in the whiskey world.

So, what's the big deal? That's a long story that involves secrecy, multi-million-dollar lawsuits, and bottle labeling laws ... too much to get into here. Suffice it to say that MGP makes a lot of our favorite brands of bourbons and especially ryes, and most of us don't even realize it. This is particularly true of MANY of the smaller distilleries

around the country, as mentioned in my last column regarding West Fork. For some reason some bourbon enthusiasts find this distasteful.

Simplifying the story quite a bit:

Imagine a new distillery is started. Whiskeys, especially bourbon, take time to age; at least two years by law, and the longer the better. There aren't going to be any profits made for at least two years.

The remedy? Find a large distillery that has product on hand and is willing to sell it to you. You then finish it by blending, aging it longer, finishing it in special barrels, or a combination thereof, and then bottling/labeling it. Viola! You have a bourbon/rye brand!

The kicker is that small distilleries might not (they usually don't) want the consumer to know that their quaint, homegrown product is actually made in a huge distillery. Much of the time these smaller distilleries only use MGP's barrelings until their own whiskeys come of age. Many times they don't. Doesn't really matter. As far as the "controversy" surrounding it goes, I say more power to them.

I've mentioned ryes a few times today. That's because rye whiskey is where MGP really shines. They make many of the best rye whiskeys in the world. This is true of their own outstanding brands such as Remus Highest Rye and Rossville Union. They also make Bulleit Rye, Templeton Rye, Angel's Envy Rye, and Redemption Rye, just to name a very few.

Books could be written about the story of this venerable distillery, the dozens upon dozens of whiskeys that they make, and the "controversy" surrounding it. I, for one, am thankful that there is such a wonderful place making outstanding bourbons and ryes. The world is a little better place with their great whiskeys in it.

After all, good whiskey is good whiskey, no matter what the label reads, or where it comes from.

Until next time – cheers!
Jon Smyrnis is a lifelong Indianapolis area resident. He enjoys traveling, hiking, biking, kayaking, dining out, and, of course, fine cocktails and great bourbons.

COLUMNIST



JON SMYRNIS
Bourbon Psychosis

Thanks for reading!

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Letter to the Editor

Shaffer: Fishers & Carmel neck-and-neck on debt

Dear Editor:
 Carmel is no longer Hamilton County's largest city. The latest population estimates put Fishers ahead at 106,228 while Carmel came in at 105,455. Carmel retains the dubious distinction of owing more debt: \$1.6 billion to \$1.4 billion. Fishers taxpayers will pay more on their debt this year – \$154 million to \$102 million. This year Carmel taxpayers will fork over \$102 million in debt pay-down while folks in Fishers are on the hook for \$154 million. When it comes to mottos, Fishers wins hands down:
 • Fishers: Smart, Vibrant, Entrepreneurial.
 • Carmel: Built for Big Dreams.
 Put another way: Fishers = Pragmatic; Carmel = Dreamy.
Bill Shaffer
 Carmel

Letters to the Editor do not reflect the opinions of The Reporter, its publisher or its staff. You can submit your own Letter to the Editor by email to News@ReadTheReporter.com. Please include your phone number and city of residence. The Reporter will publish one letter per person per week.

Banks introduces bill to help prevent youth suicide

Submitted by Office of U.S. Senator Jim Banks

On Wednesday, March 11, U.S. Senators Jim Banks (R-Ind.) and Tina Smith (D-Minn.) introduced the Raising Awareness for Youth Suicide Prevention (RAYS) Act, which would require middle and high schools to include the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and relevant suicide prevention information on student IDs.



Banks

This bill will make suicide prevention readily accessible for students, helping to save lives and protect their mental health.

"It is unacceptable that suicide is the leading cause of death for Americans under 21," Sen. Banks said. "This legislation will expand access to vital resources and help save lives."

Key provisions of the bill

• Require middle and high schools to provide the phone number for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

as well as relevant state and local suicide prevention contacts.

• Schools that do not issue an identification card would not be required to start, but would need to publish the information on school websites and other student portals.

Background

In 2021, suicide was the leading cause of death for youth under 21 years old. Child mental health continues to worsen, with 37 percent of high school students reporting experiencing poor mental health. By making suicide prevention resources more readily available for children and their families, lives will be saved. In fact, 25 states, including Indiana, have already adopted a version of this bill, and those states report a 36 percent increase in calls to 988 within just one year of the law being enacted, indicating reduced suicide risk as people take advantage of the resources available to them.

Indiana launches Find-A-Vet portal to help animal owners locate veterinary services

By KATY DONINGER
 WISH-TV | wishtv.com

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health announced in a statement Tuesday that they are launching an Indiana veterinary practice finder, Find-A-Vet.

The ad-free online portal allows users to search for veterinary services by species, location, specialty, and how services are delivered (in-clinic, on-site, or haul-in facility).

"We know the search tool will not solve all the shortfalls we hear about," said Indiana State Veterinarian Kyle Shipman, DVM. "Our goal is to help where we can to match up veterinary practices with capacity for new clients with those who need their services. Many times smaller clinics are not well known outside their immediate communities, so an animal owner may not be aware that a veterinarian is available in the next town or county away." Information in Find-

A-Vet is provided by Indiana-licensed practices that voluntarily opt-in and are accepting new clients. Veterinary practices do not pay for the service, nor do the clients.

"More than 200 practices registered with Find-A-Vet, and we continue to reach out to our veterinary colleagues, encouraging them to join as we expand this service," Dr. Shipman said.

Updates to the portal, including new practice listings, will be added quarterly. The veterinary practice finder is available now, online:

- [Indiana Center for Animal Policy](#)
- [Indiana Board of Veterinary Medicine](#) (select "Consumers")
- [Indiana State Board of Animal Health \(BOAH\)](#)

This story was originally published by WISH-TV at wishtv.com/as-seen-on-indiana-launches-find-a-vet-portal-to-help-animal-owners-locate-veterinary-services.

Indiana Peony Festival unveils winning design

By KELLY McVEY
 President, Indiana Peony Festival, Inc.

We're thrilled to reveal the official 2026 design for the Indiana Peony Festival, created by talented South Bend artist Sammy Kacius!



Kacius

This vibrant artwork highlights the beauty and symbolism of historic Seminary Park, while showcasing the spirit of Hoosier tourism. We can't wait to share this design and our full festival collection with you this May!

We were blown away by the many amazing submissions we received and are deeply grateful to every artist for sharing their creativity, time, and effort in this year's competition.

Kacius is a graphic designer, illustrator, and engineer originally from Indianapolis. He has a passion for both creative and technical design, hav-

ing graduated from Notre Dame in 2023 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Design. He now lives in South Bend and works for the university as a graphic designer on the Leadership Events team, where he uses his skills to craft meaningful experiences that advance fundraising efforts.

As a lifelong Hoosier, Kacius said he couldn't be more excited to be a part of this year's Indiana Peony Festival and help showcase the beauty found here in the Crossroads of America.

Thank you, Sammy Kacius! We love to hear our peony reach is growing amongst the state of Indiana!

Stay tuned for more merchandise updates and official IPF collectible offers as we progress into spring. Make sure to follow along on our social



Graphic provided

media for the latest news, announcements, and all things peony. May will be here before we know it! Learn more at IndianaPeonyFestival.com.

Indiana Business Health Collaborative announces new executive leadership

Submitted

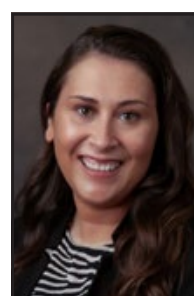
The Indiana Business Health Collaborative (IBHC) has entered into an association management services agreement with Lock Strategies, LLC. Under this agreement, Beth Lock, President and Owner of Lock Strategies, will serve as the new CEO/Executive Director to the IBHC, effective March 9.

Lock will provide day-to-day operational management, membership engagement, and statewide advocacy on behalf of the IBHC.

The IBHC was formed in 2024 with a group of stakeholders focused on reducing health care

costs, maintaining a healthy workforce, and strengthening Indiana's economic competitiveness. The CEO/Executive Director role was previously held by Luke Messer, who notified the Board late last year that he would be stepping down during the first quarter of 2026.

"Beth brings a wealth of health care knowledge, policy expertise, and corporate experience to the organization," said Susan Brock Williams, IBHC Board Chair, AVP of State Government Affairs, Eli



Lock

Lock and Company. "The board looks forward to this partnership with Lock Strategies to advance our strategic goals with excellence, clarity, and precision. The board greatly appreciates Luke Messer's original vision of the IBHC and his commendable service as our chief executive officer since the group's inception."

"Health care matters continue to be a central topic in the media and the state legislature, as well as among Hoosier employers and residents," Lock said.

"Building on the previous momentum of the organization, I look forward to growing the IBHC membership so Indiana businesses and health care industry representatives can coalesce around robust research and advanced ideas that drive innovative health care delivery and affordability models in Indiana."

Lock has 20 years of advocacy and leadership experience, having previously served as the Director of Government and Legislative Affairs for the Allen County Board of Commissioners and Parkview Health, respectively, prior

See IBHC . . . Page 8

ON-LINE ONLY PUBLIC AUCTION
 The Estate of Annetta White &
 The Personal Property of Daniel Rayl

BIDDING OPENS: Friday, February 27th @ 6pm
 SOFT CLOSE BEGINS: Saturday, March 14th @ 6pm
 PREVIEW DAY: Thursday, March 12th, Noon - 6pm
 PICK-UP DAYS: Monday, March 16th, Noon-6pm
 Tuesday, March 17th, Noon - 6pm

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Meeting Notice

The Noblesville Schools Board of Trustees will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, 2026, in the Board Room at the Noblesville Schools Educational Services Center, 18025 River Road.

Each year, the Hamilton County Reporter requests government entities to notify us of public meetings as their Open Door Law notification under I.C. 5-14-1.5-5. The Reporter publishes these notices as a public service in our Tuesday through Friday digital editions. Meeting notices for Open Door Law compliance can be sent to PublicNotices@ReadTheReporter.com.

Thanks for reading!

Invest Hamilton County's State of the Workforce expands to full-day program

Event will include inaugural Champions of Opportunity Awards

The REPORTER

Invest Hamilton County (IHC) will hold its expanded State of the Workforce event from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday, April 24 at the Renaissance Indianapolis North in Carmel.

Now a full-day program open to the public, the event will convene local school superintendents, state economic development leaders, city partners, employers, and community stakeholders for a comprehensive look at the forces shaping Hamilton County's workforce and economy. The event will also feature the inaugural Champions of Opportunity awards, recognizing five individuals or organizations making a significant impact in expanding opportunity across the community.

The full-day format reflects the growing complexity of workforce challenges and the depth of collabor-

ative solutions underway across the county. Keynote presentations from Lightcast – a leading labor market analytics firm – and IHC President & CEO Mike Thibideau will anchor the program, alongside sessions featuring Hamilton County school superintendents, Indiana Economic Development and entrepreneurship leaders, and city economic development directors from across the county.

Hamilton County continues to distinguish itself through a data-driven workforce strategy. Since 2019, the county has added 19,490 net new jobs, while personal income growth has increased 50.5 percent over the past five years, outpacing inflation. Approximately 3.3 percent of local job



Thibideau

postings now reference AI-related skills, reflecting a rapid shift in employer demand and the need for new approaches to talent development and career readiness. These insights, drawn from IHC's Data Hub, underscore the county's commitment to aligning workforce systems with evolving economic realities.

"Data drives what we do at Invest Hamilton County, and as AI, diploma requirements, and policy changes evolve in our society, we need to evolve along with it to stay at the head of the pack," Thibideau said. "This expanded event is about bringing the right people into the same room to have honest conversations about what's working, what's next, and how we

continue to lead."

The event will also feature the inaugural Champions of Opportunity awards, recognizing employers, educators, community leaders, and partners who embody IHC's commitment to removing barriers and creating sustainable pathways to economic vitality. Award recipients will be announced at the event.

The event is presented with support from the Hamilton County Community Foundation, Hamilton County Tourism, Aspire Indiana Health, Hamilton County Government, One-Zone Chamber of Commerce, Westfield Chamber of Commerce, and Noblesville Chamber of Commerce.

Registration is open to the public, and ticket pricing and the full agenda are available at investhamiltoncounty.com/events.

Ball State University Department of Theatre & Dance to present CATS

Submitted

Ball State University's Department of Theatre and Dance will present *CATS* at 7:30 p.m. March 20 and 21 and 2:30 p.m. March 22 in Emens Auditorium, 1800 W. Riverside Ave., Muncie.

Tickets are on sale through Ticketmaster, at the Emens Box Office, or by phone at (765) 285-1539.

With music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T.S. Eliot, *CATS* is directed and choreographed by Anne Beck, assistant professor of musical theatre and tap dance at Ball State, with musical direction by Michael Rafter, associate professor of musical theatre.

On one special night each year – the night of the Jellicle Ball – the Jellicle Cats gather to share their stories for the amusement of Old Deuteronomy, their wise and benevolent lead-

er, who will choose one cat to ascend to the Heaviside Layer and be reborn into a new Jellicle life.

"Ball State's *CATS* is a profound exploration of forgiveness, belonging, and renewal – universal themes that resonate across generations," Beck said. "Through the stories of the Jellicle cats, we witness journeys of acceptance, regret, and rebirth, brought to life by high-energy dancing, powerful vocals, and masterful storytelling by our students. It's a show that reminds us that everyone deserves a second chance ... or in feline culture – nine of them."

CATS is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Really Useful Group.

For a full schedule of upcoming events and performances at Emens Auditorium, visit bsu.edu/web/emens/events.

IBHC

to launching Lock Strategies, LLC. Notable legislative accomplishments in the health care policy arena include initiating the legislation that authorized the state to enter the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and successfully aligning state and feder-

al health care regulations, particularly in transparency, medical staff credentialing, and health information privacy.

Lock holds a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Supervision from Purdue University, Fort Wayne.

About the Indiana Business Health Collaborative

The Indiana Business Health Collaborative (IBHC) is an innovative partnership between Hoosier employers and health care industry stakeholders who are committed to working together to lower the cost of health care in Indiana without jeopardizing quality or access to the critical services that Hoosiers rely on. Through the IBHC, members help accelerate market solutions that will reduce costs, maintain a healthy workforce, and strengthen Indiana's eco-

nom competitiveness. To learn more, visit indianabhc.org.

About Lock Strategies

Lock Strategies is a strategic consulting firm, based in Fort Wayne, providing services in the areas of public affairs, strategic communication, and coalition building. By leveraging two decades of experience, principled leadership, and trusted influence, Lock Strategies navigates complex projects and policies to achieve real, tangible results. For more information, visit lockstrategiesllc.com.

from Page 7

Spring into wellness with TTR Networking & friends

Submitted

Please plan to attend a day of wellness activities and networking with TTR Networking & Friends to kick off spring.

As the first buds of spring emerge, it's the perfect time to renew your mind, body, and spirit. Join us for a vibrant Health & Wellness Fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, March 27 at Anchor Health Chiropractic, 14300 Mundy Drive, Suite 100, Noblesville. This uplifting event is all about embracing positivity, nurturing mental health, living in gratitude,

fostering positive thinking, and celebrating holistic well-being in the fresh spirit of the season.

For everyone attending, explore booths filled with wellness wonders, connect with like-minded individuals, and enter the exciting raffle at the end for prizes that spotlight and support several local businesses.

Let's bloom together this spring ... mark your calendars and spread the positive vibes! Who's ready to spring into a healthier, happier you?

[Click here](#) to register.



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The hunt begins at 10am, we will provide collection bags!

Take a picture with the Easter Bunny! • Fun activities!

Major investments in athletic programming, student safety were focus of HSE School Board & Fishers City Council joint meeting

Submitted

Hamilton Southeastern Schools (HSE) and the City of Fishers convened a joint board meeting on Wednesday, March 11, producing several significant approvals that mark a new chapter in their long-standing partnership.

Following the joint session, the HSE Board of School Trustees continued in a separate meeting, taking additional actions to support student well-being, district stability, and continued excellence.

Together, the meetings strengthened athletic infrastructure, expanded arts opportunities for kindergartners through a new partnership with The Arts Center, ensured continued school safety resources, and positioned the district for long-term success.

Editor's note: In addition to the interlocal agreement formed between HSE Schools and the City of Fishers to expand and enhance student athletic facilities, the meetings also covered the following topics. You can read about the interlocal agreement in a story published here in the Thursday, March 12 edition of The Reporter.

Renewed School Resource Officer partnership

The Board and Council approved a renewed Interlocal Agreement between HSE Schools and the Fishers Police Department governing School Resource



Officers (SROs) and School Safety Officers (SSOs).

Presented by Fishers Police Chief Ed Gebhart, the updated agreement replaces the 2023 agreement, reflects recent changes in Indiana law, and reaffirms the shared commitment to safe school environments.

Under the agreement, HSE will continue to share equally in the cost of officer salary, benefits, equipment, and training for SROs and SSOs stationed in district schools. Officers are trained through the National Association of School Resource Officers and will continue to serve as designated school officials for purposes of school safety planning.

Following the conclusion of the joint session, the HSE Board of School Trustees convened its regularly scheduled meeting to address several matters specific to the district.

Administrator contract renewals

The Board unanimously approved the renewal of administrator contracts and wage agreements for more than 70 district administrators, with contract terms extending through June 30, 2028, and June 30, 2029. The broad scope of renewals spans building principals, central office

administrators, and district leaders, and reflects the Board's confidence in the strength of HSE's leadership team.

Expanded behavioral health services through Aspire Indiana Health

The Board also approved a new Memorandum of Understanding with Aspire Indiana Health to provide school-based behavioral health services, ensuring continuity of care following Community Health Network's decision to end its behavioral health contracts with school districts.

The agreement, beginning June 1, will allow Aspire therapists to work on-site within HSE schools, providing directly enrolled students with access to mental health treatment while coordinating closely with school counselors and staff. Importantly, the arrangement carries no financial cost to the district, with Aspire billing through Medicaid and other accepted funding sources.

Board receives Apex contract review

The Board received a high-level overview of the district's Apex Benefits contract from CFO Tim Brown and Apex Chief Strategy Officer Jim Harenberg. The presentation covered the scope of services Apex

provides to the district, the cost-saving measures built into the partnership, and the value it delivers for HSE employees and the district's overall fiscal health.

Since partnering with Apex in July 2024, HSE has worked to keep employee healthcare affordable while maintaining high-quality benefits:

- Approximately \$3 million in district savings were achieved through strategic plan design changes (approximately \$1.5 million) and pharmacy management improvements (projected \$1.6 million).

- For 2026, premium increases were kept low. The district currently covers approximately 83 percent of total premium costs, keeping employee contributions at roughly 17 percent.

- As part of the agreement, Apex conducted a comprehensive review of service providers and ancillary benefits to ensure competitive pricing and strong care options for employees.

Overall, HSE Schools remains committed to responsibly managing healthcare costs while continuing to provide employees with strong, affordable benefits.

Applications are now open for students outside of HSE's district boundaries to enroll for the 2026-27 academic year. For more information, please visit hschools.org/about/enrollment/non-resident-transfer.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

KORAH, DATHAN AND ABIRAM

Then Moses said, "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: If these men die a natural death and suffer the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the dead, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt."

Numbers 16:28-30 (NIV)

— WESTFIELD —

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF PROPOSED ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of the City of Westfield, Hamilton County, Indiana, that the Common Council at their regular meeting place at Westfield City Hall at 130 Penn Street, in Westfield, IN at 7:00 PM, on the 23rd day of March 2026, will consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the budget for the current year.

Additional appropriations to be added:
 567 Opioid Distribution Grant Fund
 Major Budget Classification:
 Other Services and Charges-Grants-Transfers #567012349 \$25,000
 TOTAL for Opioid Distribution Grant Fund \$25,000
 Taxpayers appearing at the meeting shall have a right to be heard on the additional appropriation.
 R7643 3/13/26, 3/16/26



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The Hamilton County Reporter does not charge families for publishing obituary notices in our pages. Every obituary appearing in online editions Wednesday through Saturday also appears in our Monday print editions. In order to continue to offer this as a community service, we ask that obituaries not exceed 500 words. The limitations of space may not allow for longer ones to appear in print.

Submit obituaries under 500 words online at ReadTheReporter.com/obitform.

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SOLD!
 11405 Haverstick Road
 CARMEL
 This immaculate ranch in Carmel boasts hardwood floors, crown molding, a stone fireplace, and a relaxing sunroom. It sits on .37 acres, a four-minute walk to Woodbrook Elementary. Spotless basement and garage.
 Listed at \$409,900

SOLD!
 875 S 9th street
 NOBLESVILLE
 Located in downtown Noblesville, this beautiful 1912 Craftsman perfectly blends historic charm (original trim, staircase) with modern updates, including a remodeled kitchen, finished outbuilding, and fenced yard.
 Listed at \$430,000

SOLD!
 1307 CLIFF VIEW DRIVE
 WESTFIELD
 This 4BR/2.5BA home with a 3-car garage offers a covered front porch overlooking a pond. Flexible living spaces, a 2-story great room with fireplace, and a spacious kitchen. Primary bedroom features a spa-like bath.
 Improved Price \$479,900

SOLD!
 18826 LONG WALK LANE
 NOBLESVILLE
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REPORTER SPORTS FRIDAY

Sports Editor Richie Hall | Sports@ReadTheReporter.com | Twitter @Richie_Hall

CARMEL, FISHERS, GUERIN CATHOLIC, HAMILTON HEIGHTS, HAMILTON SOUTHEASTERN, NOBLESVILLE, SHERIDAN, UNIVERSITY, WESTFIELD

The Arena at Innovation Mile to host Horizon League basketball tournaments

By **RICHIE HALL**
sports@readthereporter.com

NOBLESVILLE – Starting next year, the Horizon League’s path to the Big Dance goes through Noblesville.

The city announced that in 2027, the Arena at Innovation Mile will host the men’s and women’s Horizon League basketball championships. Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen made the news public at a press conference Thursday morning at The Arena, calling it “another giant step forward” for the city.

Interim commissioner Chris Neuman also spoke at the press conference, as did Carl Daniels, director of Hamilton County Sports Authority.

The Horizon League currently consists of 11 schools from across the Midwest, with a 12th school, Northern Illinois University, joining on July 1.

Next year’s tournament will be the first of a five-year run at the Arena. The facility will host quarterfinal games on Sunday, March 7, semifinal games on Monday, March 8 and the championship contest on Tuesday, March 9. First-round games will be played at the different schools, with the winners advancing to play at the Arena.

“We’re super excited for the City of Noblesville and



The Arena at Innovation Mile’s video screen announced the news of the Horizon League championships’ future plans soon after the press conference.

the Arena at Innovation Mile to provide major experiences across our six-state, soon to be seven Midwest footprint,” said Neuman.

Daniels said bringing the Horizon League championships to Noblesville was a “collaborative effort” between the city, the Arena, REV Entertainment (operator of the Arena) and Hamilton County Sports Authority and the state of Indiana.

“The state of Indiana has a bid fund that we were able to tap into to help bring this event here,” said Daniels. “It was about an 18-month process. And this is a fantastic venue that we’ve been able to secure for this event, and it was built intentionally for events just like this.”

With the expected attendance, Jensen said the tournament will translate into

- Who’s in the Horizon League?**
- Cleveland State University
 - University of Detroit Mercy
 - University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
 - Indiana University Indianapolis
 - University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
 - Northern Illinois University (joining on July 1)
 - Northern Kentucky University
 - Oakland University
 - Purdue University Fort Wayne
 - Robert Morris University
 - Wright State University
 - Youngstown State University

“thousands of student-athletes and fans and families staying at our hotel rooms, dining at our restaurants, enjoying other entertainment opportunities all around central Indiana.”

Luke Bosso is the athletic director at IU Indianapolis, one of the Horizon League schools, and he attended the press conference as well.

“I’ve told the other ath-

letic directors in the league, Indiana is basketball hungry and I feel pretty confident that we’re going to sell out this arena when we have it here,” said Bosso. “It’s going to be great basketball.”

Jensen said during the press conference that this is just the beginning for the Arena. Later, he expanded on that comment.

“I think you’ll see an an-



Photo provided
The Arena at Innovation Mile will be the site of the Horizon League men’s and women’s basketball championships beginning in 2027. The announcement was made at a press conference Thursday at the Arena. Speaking at the press conference were (from left) Carl Daniels, director of Hamilton County Sports Authority, Chris Neuman, interim Horizon League commissioner and Noblesville Mayor Chris Jensen.

ouncement later this month about this facility specifically, and I think you’ll also see an announcement probably later this month, or in April, about other events happening

here and in and around Innovation Mile,” said Jensen. “So, we are in constant conversation with not just sporting opportunities, but also corporate opportunities.”

Girls Lacrosse

Noblesville girls lacrosse falls to Chatard



Reporter photo by Julie Brown
The Noblesville girls lacrosse team dropped an away game 17-1 at Bishop Chatard. Mara Dunn scored the lone goal for the Millers. Pictured is Noblesville’s Eva Blout.



(LEFT) Guerin Catholic’s Caroline Ford scored seven goals for the Golden Eagles during their season-opening win over Carmel on Thursday. (RIGHT) Carmel’s Ellie Espey scored two goals.



Photos by Mike Navarro

Golden Eagles win state rematch

By **RICHIE HALL**
sports@readthereporter.com

The Guerin Catholic and Carmel girls lacrosse teams opened their seasons by playing each other Thursday at the Golden Eagles’ field.

The two teams have met for the Class 2A state championship for the past four years, with the Greyhounds winning the last two. But Guerin Catholic was the winner to begin the 2026 campaign, using a late surge to beat Carmel 13-6.

“The girls were anxious to play, because we haven’t played anybody yet, so it was great to get out there the first time,” said GC coach Joe Bellflower.

Guerin Catholic trailed 2-1 after the first quarter, then led 5-4 at halftime. The Golden Eagles went up 6-4 early in the third before Carmel came back to tie at 6-6.

After that, it was all Guerin Catholic, as the Golden Eagles scored the game’s last seven goals.

Caroline Ford, a star player for GC last season and still

only a junior, contributed to that run by pouring in five of those goals.

“I think they really stepped up in the second half and I think we took over,” said Bellflower. “They ran a really tough zone for us, which we struggled with in the first half. But once we figured it out, I think that was the difference.”

Ford finished the game with seven goals. She has committed to play lacrosse at Temple University.

“She’s obviously the best athlete out on the

field there,” said Bellflower. “She’s a big difference-maker.”

Senior Lucy Esposito scored three goals, with junior Claire Flannagan added two goals and junior Maggie Scott scored one. Senior Audrey Papay also is back from last year’s team, and Bellflower said she played “a really good game.”

Carmel was led by seniors Jacqueline Mabry and Ellie Espey; both scored two goals. Senior Mallory Wingenroth had one goal, as did junior Gia Ferrettie.

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Boys Basketball Regional Preview

Greyhounds to play Panthers for regional title

The REPORTER

The Carmel boys basketball team is back in a regional championship game for the first time in 2021.

The Greyhounds will travel to New Castle's famous fieldhouse on Saturday to play Fort Wayne Snider for a regional title. The game will start at 4 p.m., following a 1 p.m. 3A regional game between Delta and Blackhawk Christian.

The Panthers won their first sectional since 2022 at the four-team Sectional 5 last week. Snider defeated Carroll 58-48 in the semifinals, then edged out Fort Wayne North Side 65-62 in an overtime sectional title game.

After starting the season 3-5, the Panthers have won 16 of their last 18 games for a 19-7 record. That includes a 7-2 finish in the Summit Conference, where Snider finished tied for the championship

along with Carroll and Fort Wayne South Side.

Senior Xavier Wilson is the Panthers' leading scorer, averaging 15.6 points per game. He also dished out 3.6 assists per contest and collects 4.4 rebounds.

Next on the scoring list are two juniors. Trell Hogue scores 11.4 points per game, followed by Keron Paschall at 9.0 points. Paschall is also the leading rebounder at 6.7 per game.

Carmel enters the regional with an 18-5 record and a similar sectional path. The Greyhounds beat Noblesville 44-30 in their semifinal game, then won an epic Sectional 8 championship, beating No. 1-ranked Fishers 50-49 at The Mill.

Senior Ben Bremer hit a 3-pointer with under 30 seconds left to secure the win. Senior Evan Harrell, a Bellarmine commit, scored 18 points for Carmel in its victory.



Joshua Herd / File photo
Carmel's Evan Harrell scored 18 points during the Greyhounds' Sectional 8 championship win over Fishers.

Special Olympics Hamilton County men's basketball teams celebrate successful seasons

The REPORTER

Special Olympics Hamilton County (SOHC) is celebrating the successful season of its two men's basketball teams following Area 8 competition.

The Special Olympics Hamilton County Bulldogs finished the season as Area 8 Champions in the Blue Division, Level 2, demonstrating teamwork, perseverance, and skill throughout the season.

The Special Olympics Hamilton County Cardinals also had a great season, building teamwork and playing hard, earning second place in the Level 3 Area 8 Men's Basketball division.

Special Olympics Hamilton County is a volunteer-led organization that provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Through sports, athletes develop physical fitness, build confidence, experience joy, and create meaningful relationships within their community.

Athletes must have an intellectual disability to participate in Special Olympics from age 8 to 108, providing that the opportunity to compete, grow, and belong truly lasts a lifetime.

All athletes participate free of charge, and all program expenses, including uniforms, equipment, facility rentals, and competition fees, are funded through donations raised locally by Special Olympics Hamilton County.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving



Photos provided
(TOP) The Special Olympics Hamilton County Bulldogs team finished the season as Area 8 Champions in the Blue Division, Level 2. (Front row, from left) Blake Buckner, Caiden Wetherald, and Caleb Short. (Back row, from left) Coach Todd Hieber, Dylan Feil, Coach AB Buckner, Nash Huffman, Cade Agnelli, David Scott, and Colin Etchison. (ABOVE) The Special Olympics Hamilton County Cardinals earned second place in the Level 3 Area 8 Men's Basketball division. (Front row, from left) Ryan McNarney, Christian Vittorio, and Raheem Harrington. (Back row, from left) Coach Drew Bollenbacher, Jerry Moore, Andy Poulter, Coach Mike Morris, Noah Morris, Derrick Moss, and Cashius Parker.

ing them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Community members interested in learning more, volunteering, or supporting Special Olympics Hamilton County can visit sohcindiana.org where donations can also be made to support local athletes and programming.

Soccer

Indy Eleven prepare for 2026 home opener

By **HERNAN GUTIERREZ**
WISH-TV | wishtv.com

A hometown standout for the Indy Eleven is setting sights on returning to the USL Championship Playoffs this season. The team is preparing for its **home opener** against regional rival Detroit City FC later this month.

Midfielder Logan Neidlinger joined WISH-TV's Daybreak Tuesday morning to give an outlook on the **2026 season**. This will be the 20-year-old's third year with the team.

Last year, he was the youngest player on the roster. He grew up on Indy's south side and went to Roncalli High School for two years. He finished out his last two years online to be able to train with the Indy Eleven full-time.

"Growing up in Indy, it's been a dream to play for Indy Eleven all my life," Neidlinger said. "It's definitely a dream come true."

This year, the local star says fans can expect a more direct style of play on the pitch and more chemistry on the team.

Neidlinger is hopeful that several off-season signings will reenergize the squad.

"Last year, we kind of lacked a little bit of hunger and desire to win," Neidlinger said. "By bringing in a lot of younger guys, we've kind of brought that back. We've got guys who are more willing to work hard and do their job."

Indy Eleven started its 2026 USL Championship campaign on the road with a 0-1 loss to Brooklyn FC.

It continues with a U.S.

Open Cup match at Grand Park in Westfield against Des Moines Menace on March 17

The March 21 home opener at Carroll Stadium will feature the classic Indy Eleven family-friendly experience, including a kids' zone.

"[Detroit City is] one of our rivals," Neidlinger said. "They're going to be a good team this year, but we are expecting a good game. We obviously [want to] come out and win, and we want to put on a show for you guys and for the fans."

Kickoff for the home opener is scheduled for 7 p.m. on March 21. For tickets, visit the **Indy Eleven's website**.

This story originally appeared on WISH-TV at wishtv.com/sports/indy-eleven/indy-eleven-home-opener-detroit-2026.

Football

Fishers Freight season opener is Saturday

The REPORTER

The Fishers Freight football team will play its season opener Saturday at the Fishers Event Center.

The Freight, part of the Indoor Football League (IFL)

takes on the Quad City Steamwheelers, with the kickoff at 5 p.m. Doors open at 4 p.m.

Fishers residents are eligible for discounted tickets to the game. Click [this link](#) to order.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Friday, March 13**BOYS LACROSSE**

Bishop Chatard at Westfield, 6 p.m.
South Oldham (Ky.) at Hamilton Southeastern, 6 p.m.

GIRLS LACROSSE

Carmel at Kentucky Country Day School, 6 p.m.

TRACK AND FIELD

Guerin Catholic at HSR Qualifier #2, 6 p.m. at University of Indianapolis

Saturday, March 14**BOYS BASKETBALL**

Regional at New Castle

Carmel vs. Fort Wayne Snider, 4 p.m.

BOYS LACROSSE

Fishers at Evansville Reitz, noon

Fishers at Gibson Southern, 4 p.m.

Hamilton Southeastern at Cincinnati St. Xavier, 5 p.m.

Guerin Catholic at South Bend St. Joseph, TBD

GIRLS LACROSSE

Hamilton Southeastern at Brebeuf Jesuit, 11:15 a.m.

Hamilton Southeastern at Guerin Catholic, 1:45 p.m.

Guerin Catholic at South Bend St. Joseph, TBD

GYMNASTICS

Noblesville, Westfield at IHSAA state finals, 11:30 a.m. at Ball State

TRACK AND FIELD

Carmel, Hamilton Heights, Westfield at HSR Qualifier #3, 10 a.m. at Indiana Wesleyan

University at McCutcheon HSR Qualifier, 10 a.m. at Purdue

Please email schedule changes or corrections to sports@readthereporter.com.

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