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# REPORTER

THE HAMILTON COUNTY

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Newspaper

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026**

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**TODAY'S WEATHER**

Today: Partly to mostly cloudy.  
Tonight: Mostly cloudy.  
Spotty showers late.



HIGH: 67 LOW: 57

# Well-shod for a good cause

*Heights students collect shoes to raise funds & reduce waste*

Submitted by Hamilton Heights School Corp.

Hamilton Heights Class of 2029 is already lacing up and making strides with a fundraiser that's equal parts creative, sustainable, and community-powered.

The freshmen have officially launched their Shoe Drive Fundraiser, and they're inviting families, neighbors, and local partners to jump in and help keep the momentum going.

Donate your gently used or new shoes and help the Class of 2029 raise money for future class activities, all while keeping reusable materials out of landfills.

Every pair makes a difference. The more the shoes weigh, the more the class earns. All types of shoes are welcome – sneakers, athletic, sandals, boots, dance, dress shoes – as long as they're in good condition and still wearable. Shoes will be repurposed or rehomed, giving them a second life and reducing waste.

This is a fundraiser that



Photo provided by Hamilton Heights School Corporation

**Freshmen from the Class of 2029 proudly hold up donated shoes as they rally the community to join their creative, sustainable Shoe Drive Fundraiser. (From left) Iain Van Elk, Adler Effing, Reagan Van Kirk, Stella Hartwick, and Mazie Morrison.**

helps students and the planet – a win for the Heights community.

Bring your bagged pairs to any of these convenient loca-

tions: any HHSC School, Arcadia Christian Church, Cicero Christian Church, Remnant, or Beck's Hybrids. For questions

or more information, contact Caty Wiegman at [cwiegman@hhschuskies.org](mailto:cwiegman@hhschuskies.org) or (317) 984-3551, ext. 1050.

# An inclusive community

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and was established in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan. The purpose is to foster inclusion and highlight the contributions of people with developmental disabilities. The hope is that it will break down barriers and ensure equal opportunities in education, employment, and daily life.

I had the opportunity to support the developmentally disabled community in few amazing ways this month.

First, I partnered with the City of Noblesville, to take part in a Public Service Announcement for our city. The point of the PSA was to highlight Noblesville's commitment to make our community a thriving place for all abilities. I, along with a few others, participated by uniting our voices with an honest and encouraging message.

Next, I had the opportunity to attend the Fishers Arts Council's Disability Awareness Exhibition. It was a lively event where I was able to connect with people in the disabled community and enjoy their art that hung on the walls throughout the Fishers Art Center Gallery. There were some really moving pieces in the exhibit illustrating life with a disability. It is mind blowing how one piece of art can take you to so many introspective places.

Last week, I went to an event hosted by Noblesville's Advisory Council on Disabilities. They hosted Disability Awareness Trivia Night at the Hamilton East Public Library. My son and his girlfriend were home from college for spring break, and they joined in on the fun with my husband and I, representing Team Humbly Courageous. I am proud to say we were the winning team! It was a group effort, and we all agreed that while we did collectively know a lot of the answers, there were many things we learned about various disabilities that night.

One of the important things that events like these remind us of, is that it should not be an "us versus them" mentality in our community. The disabled community is not a separate community, but rather part of the community as a whole.

Although we cannot separate from our disabilities, not everything we do is about disability. Yet the fact that we are disabled inescapably shapes us.

I think my disability does define me in more ways than not, but that is not a terrible and sad thing. In many ways, it is a chance for me to highlight my strengths within my own community. Educating others on this very thing. The more we can see disability as a way someone is created beyond their control, just as your eye color is, the more we can start integrating disabled people into our communities.

Of course, not everyone who is disabled is born with their disability. Many people become disabled during their lifetime which is another great reason to educate yourself. You never know when you or someone you love will need the accessibility and inclusion that many disabled advocates tirelessly fight for.

Inclusion requires conscious effort. To learn from others, we must listen to gain deeper understanding. Attending community events and taking the time to learn about others can shape our perspectives and broaden our knowledge.

Diversity is what makes communities interesting and promotes learning. Imagine how boring it would be if we are all the same. How stagnant that would become.

See Inclusive... Page 2

# Attention tennis fans!

The City of Noblesville announced that the internationally renowned Mouratoglou Tennis Center will open an academy near Noblesville's Innovation Mile.

Read the full story on Page 9 in today's edition.



# Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. wins four Indiana Tourism Awards

*Organization recognized for excellence in marketing & sports*

**The REPORTER**

The **Indiana Tourism Association** (ITA) presented Hamilton County Tourism with four Indiana Tourism Awards during its 2026 conference in Indianapolis. A panel of out-of-state judges selected winners based on creativity, innovation, and maximization of budget. A total of 141 entries were received across 30 categories.

First, Hamilton County Tourism won Best Culinary-Focused Marketing Campaign for **Around the Table**. This digital initiative featured video spotlights of local restaurants and received over

one million impressions during the monthlong marketing push to promote Hamilton County's growing culinary scene.

The **HamCo Hubway** received recognition for Best Digital Marketing Campaign. The trail-focused campaign drove measurable visitation growth, boosting overall trail use and contributing to more than 300,000 attributable visits.

Next, the **Visit Hamilton**



**County website** won Best Website for its success in design, interactivity and copywriting, among

other attributes. The refreshed website saw a 16.7 percent year-over-year increase in new users, demonstrating a growing awareness of Hamilton County as a destination.

Finally, Hamilton County Sports Authority secured the award for Best Event for hosting **LIV Golf Indianapolis** and sup-

porting its success at The Club at Chatham Hills in August 2025. This event set an attendance record for LIV Golf's United States tournaments.

"Earning four Indiana Tourism Awards is a true honor, especially among such a talented and competitive field of entries," said Todd Bolster, Hamilton County Tourism Executive Vice President of Marketing, Sales and Sport. "These recognitions reflect the creativity and dedication of our entire team. We're proud of what we've built, and even prouder to bring attention to our communities at the state level."

# Hamilton County Leadership Academy applications now open for 2027 season

By **DUBBIE BUCKLER**  
Carmel Rotary Club Board

Hamilton County Leadership Academy Executive Director Maria Kanger addressed Carmel Rotarians at their March 20 meeting about the Hamilton County Leadership Academy (HCLA). She explained its purpose and the application process.

Kanger shared that the HCLA was established in 1991 to develop a pool of knowledgeable community leaders to apply their skills to government, business, and civic activities and positively shape the future of Hamilton County. The HCLA was developed by the Noblesville Chamber and the Carmel-Clay Chamber of Commerce. HCLA's mission is to educate and inspire leadership to create a positive impact in our community. Funding is provided by participant tuition fees, contributions from local governmental entities and corporations, grants, and private donations.

Kanger explained that each year the HCLA selects a cohort of leaders to complete a comprehensive, 10-month curriculum exploring local issues. After completing the program, graduates are prepared to assume active roles in addressing critical issues facing Hamilton County.



Eligible applicants must reside or work in Hamilton County; share a desire to gain a deeper understanding of Hamilton County trends, operations, and services to the community; demonstrate a record of leadership both professionally and through volunteerism in the community; have the opportunity and passion to significantly influence issues facing our community; articulate the impact they hope to make

in Hamilton County due to their HCLA participation; be able to commit to the attendance and time requirements of a monthly class experience from 8:20 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. one time a month from September to May (missing no more than two classes) and mandatory attendance at a two-day opening retreat in August and a two-day overnight closing retreat in June; invest in their leadership journey and have the ability to pay the \$2,250 program tuition; and be eager to learn, network, and engage with peers across Hamilton County. Cohort members must arrive on time and stay until sessions adjourn.

If these requirements are not met, this could jeopardize the member's matriculation to graduation and grant of alumni status.



Photo provided HCLA Executive Director spoke with Carmel Rotarians at their most recent meeting.

Kanger announced that applications for the 2027 HCLA are now open. Applicants can go to [HCLA.net](http://HCLA.net) for the application and instructions. Tuition for HCLA is \$2,250 and may be paid by the class member, their employer, or a sponsor supporting the class member. Limited scholarships are available, and applicants should state their interest and need in the HCLA application.

Kanger emphasized that the class size is limited and the selection of participants is highly competitive. She commended the many Rotarians who are HCLA alums and those who support HCLA.

**INCLUSIVE**

from Page 1

I encourage you to support our community members with disabilities. There is a lot to learn from people who live daily life persevering against constant hardship. I think what you will find is that the hardship is not the focus, but rather the consistent, bold effort that surrounds the hardship is what stands out.

I am encouraged by Hamilton County's efforts to move forward to make our county an inclusive

place for all. Small, intentional steps pave the way to lasting change.

Until next time...

*Amy Shinneman is a former National Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, disability blogger, freelance writer, wife, and mom of two boys. She is the recipient of the Reporter's Winter 2025 Ink-Stained Wretch award. You can find her blog at [humblycourageous.com](http://humblycourageous.com) and reach her on Instagram @ashinneman.*

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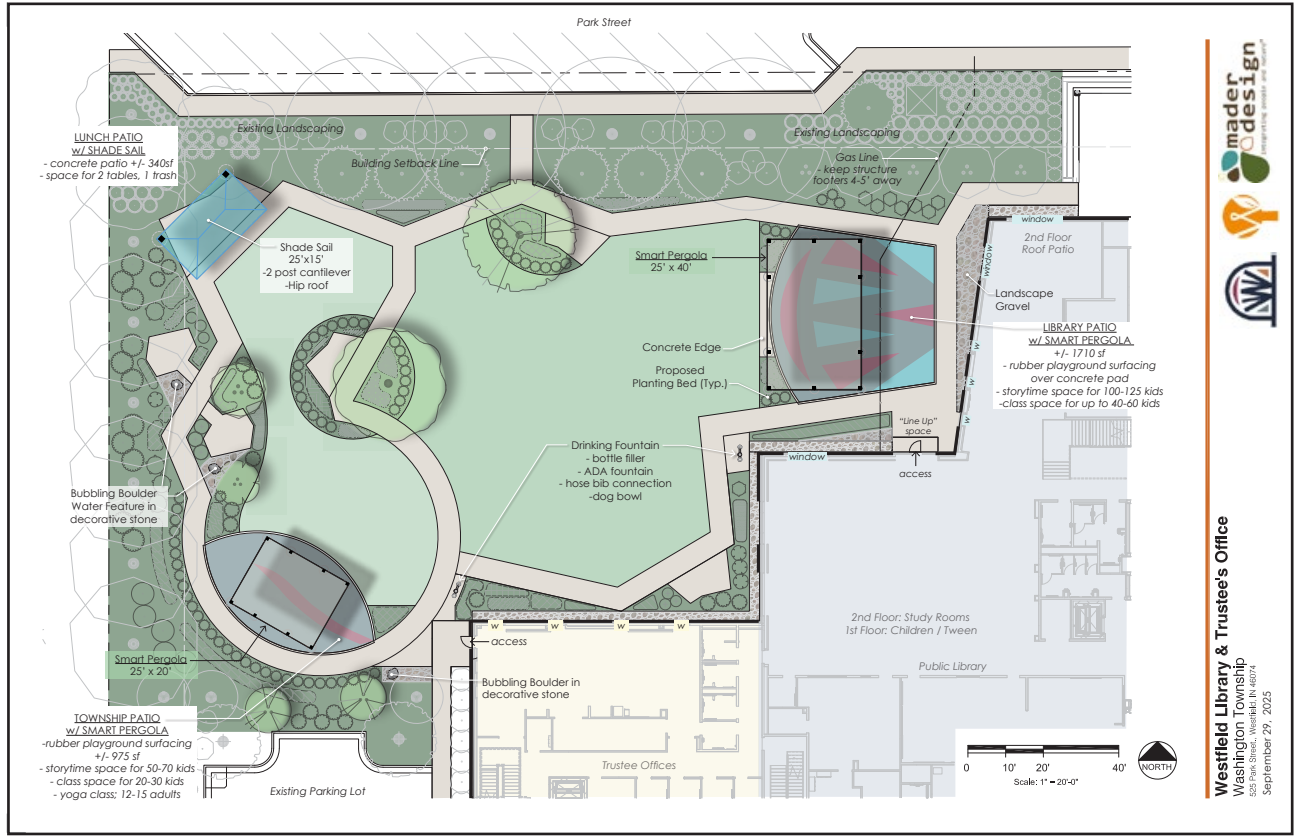
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**THE REPORTER**



Graphic provided

The project is expected to be finished by the end of this summer.

**Westfield Washington Public Library & Township launch landscaping project**

Plan to add outdoor event & program space by Summer 2026

**The REPORTER**

The Westfield Washington Public Library (WWPL) and Westfield Washington Township (WWT) have officially kicked off a major landscaping project as part of the final phase of their building project.

Once complete, the outdoor activity space will feature two shaded structures, reading nooks, ADA-accessible tables, drinking fountains, several water features, and fresh landscaping.

"This outdoor space is

the final piece of our new library's plan," WWPL Executive Director Sheryl Sollars said. "It will expand our programming possibilities in such exciting ways – from story times under the shade structures to family activities and summer learning events. And the best part is patrons can watch the progress through the library's many windows and outdoor patios."

The WWT office, located on the west side of the shared library building, is equally eager to see the

new green space take shape.

"This open lawn area will give us a beautiful, flexible space for township and library events alike," WWT Trustee Jamie Goetz Mills said.

"It will be a place where residents of all ages can come together to learn, celebrate, and connect. We're especially excited to use it for our summer camps and youth programs."



Sollars



Goetz Mills

The project was designed by Mader Design and will be executed by KD Landscaping. Construction is set to begin soon, with completion expected by the end of summer.

**Main Street Zionsville launches 'Charming on Purpose' to celebrate local businesses**

**Submitted**

The charm of Zionsville isn't accidental. It's built, brick by brick, by the people behind its small businesses and the experiences they create. Now, Main Street Zionsville (MSZ) is putting those stories front and center with the launch of its new Charming on Purpose initiative.

Charming on Purpose is set to shine a spotlight on the unique character, businesses, and experiences that define MSZ. The initiative aims to capture the heart of the district by telling authentic stories, highlighting local entrepreneurs, and inviting visitors to experience the charm that makes Main Street a beloved destination.

Building on its first year as an officially designated Indiana Main Street community, the organization is entering a new phase focused on long-term growth, economic vitality, and preserving the village's historic character.

"Every brick and every business owner has a story," said Erica Carpenter, MSZ president and owner of Fivethirty Home. "Zionsville's charm is an intentional choice made every day by the small business owners who invest their passion and their livelihood into this community. Charming on Purpose brings those stories to life."



Photo provided by Main Street Zionsville

From 4 to 8 p.m. April 9, stroll the Main Street Zionsville district, step into welcoming shops and experience treats, specials, and surprises along the way. Each shop offers its own unique touch, creating a perfect night out with friends. Sponsored by Duke Energy and Angstadt/Lindsay.

The initiative highlights Zionsville's iconic Main Street and the more than 175 local businesses within the MSZ district. Through storytelling, events, and strategic promotion, the campaign aims to strengthen connections between visitors, residents, and the people behind the storefronts.

MSZ received grant funding from Discover Boone County to support marketing, storytelling, and visitor engagement efforts tied to the campaign. This investment complements

ongoing public and private improvements to buildings, infrastructure, and the overall Main Street experience.

"Our business owners are a large part of what makes the Main Street Zionsville experience so special," said Jason Plunkett, Zionsville Town Council president. "They choose Zionsville not just as a place to operate, but as a place to build something meaningful. That level of care shines through every day and during special events."

To celebrate the launch,



MSZ will host a series of events throughout the coming months, inviting the public to experience the Charming on Purpose spirit firsthand. Event details and additional stories will be shared at [MainStreetZionsville.org](http://MainStreetZionsville.org) and on Facebook and Instagram @MainStreetZionsville.

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# State Rep. Hunter Smith visits Sheridan Community Schools



Photos provided by Allison Waitt

On Monday, March 23, Sheridan High School welcomed State Representative Hunter Smith to speak with students. Smith, who serves District 24 and is a former Indianapolis Colts Super Bowl champion, took time to speak with students, share his experiences, and tour the facilities. His unique path journeys from professional athletics to public service, business, and farming. He gave students valuable insight into leadership and perseverance. Thank you, State Rep. Smith, for visiting and investing in the future of the Blackhawks.

## American Water Charitable Foundation supports Sheridan's traditions & celebrations

### The REPORTER

The American Water Charitable Foundation, a philanthropic non-profit organization established by American Water, the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the U.S., and Indiana American Water, announced Tuesday, March 24 that the Foundation has awarded a \$10,000 State Strategic Impact Grant to the Sheridan Events Committee. The grant will support community events that bring residents together and preserve long-standing local traditions.

Additionally, a \$1,000 grant was awarded to Sheridan Main Street, Inc., to help enhance downtown Sheridan's historic character and strengthen its role as a center of community activity. Both grants were presented during the Town of Sheridan's City Council meeting on March 17.

The funding will help enrich Sheridan's community life by supporting events and programs that foster civic pride, celebrate local heritage, and create welcoming spaces for residents and visitors alike.

"Everything we do is for the community of Sheridan and the surrounding areas in Hamilton County. These donations help us organize our events and spread the



Photo provided

Members of Indiana American Water's Sheridan Operations were joined by the Sheridan Events Committee, Sheridan Downtown Inc., and the Sheridan City Council took part in a grant presentation during the Council's regular meeting on Tuesday, March 17.

word to those who want to take part," said Carol Williamson, President of the Sheridan Events Committee. "This year, we're super excited to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and Sheridan is ready to do it up right. Our community loves the parade, the traditions, and of course – the fireworks!"

"Indiana American Water is grateful for the opportunity to support the Sheridan community. Through the American Water Charitable Foundation, we are

honored to award grants to the Sheridan Events Committee and Sheridan Main Street in recognition of the meaningful work they do to strengthen this community," said Joel Reuter, Manager of External Affairs at Indiana American Water. "We value our partnership with Sheridan and look forward to continuing to work together to meet future community needs."

The State Strategic Impact grant is part of the 2026 Keep Communities Flowing Grant Program, focusing on three pillars of giving: Water, People, and Communi-

ties. State Strategic Impact grants support high-impact projects and initiatives throughout American Water's national footprint.

"The American Water Charitable Foundation is pleased to support organizations that help strengthen Sheridan's sense of community," said Carrie Williams, President of the American Water Charitable Foundation. "Through these grants, we look forward to helping preserve cherished local traditions, enhance shared community spaces, and foster opportunities for residents and visitors to come together."

Learn more about the American Water Charitable Foundation [here](#).

### Letter to the Editor

## National Vietnam War Veterans Day is March 29

Dear Editor:

On behalf of Horseshoe Prairie Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, we would like to remind readers that throughout this year, and especially on *National Vietnam War Veterans Day* on March 29, a special focus is spent on reaching Vietnam veterans in private or public senior care facilities; specifically, those who may be challenged to attend public events honoring their service.

The positive impact of seeking out and honoring these men and women, and their families, has proven immeasurable for those reached thus far.

*National Vietnam War Veterans Day* joins six other military-centric national observances codified in Title 4 §6 of the United States Code, among them Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day. You can find out more by visiting [vietnamwar50th.com](http://vietnamwar50th.com).

In observance of Women's History Month, we would like to remind readers that approximately 7,000 to 11,000 American women served as nurses during the Vietnam War, often working in combat zones, field hospitals, and on hospital ships. Known as "Angels in Fatigues" they managed, under fire, high-volume trauma care, amputations, and severe infections, with most serving with the Army Nurse Corp.

March 29 was chosen as National Vietnam War Veterans Day because on March 29, 1973, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was disbanded and the last U.S. combat troops departed the Republic of Vietnam. Approximately 2.7 million American personnel served in uniform in Vietnam, representing 9.7 percent of their generation, with over 58,000 deaths and over 1,500 still unaccounted for. As of 2024 to 2026, an estimated 5.2 to 7 million Vietnam-era veterans are still living. The median age for these veterans is about 71, with 300 to 500 passing daily.<sup>1</sup>

As DAR members remember and salute all military veterans of the wars and conflicts facing our country for 250 years, we pay particular homage at this time to our Vietnam veterans – those who served in combat and those who served globally, supporting those troops. As descendants of those who both fought the tyranny of government and those who supported them, we say a deep and heartfelt thank you to all our Vietnam veterans. As we now know, their "welcome home" was anything but welcome.

When you see them, you know them – by their hats, shirts, pins, license plates – share your gratitude. Who knows; as their initial homecoming was in many cases unwelcome, yours may be the first thank you they have received.

<sup>1</sup> [RedWarriors.US](http://RedWarriors.US)

Sharon McMahan

Past Regent

Horseshoe Prairie Chapter, NSDAR

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](mailto:News@ReadTheReporter.com). Please include your phone number and city of residence. The Reporter will publish one letter per person per week.

Thank you for reading The Reporter!

\*Bingo is free to play and tickets sold help cover food, support a good cause, and to reserve your spot. IGC ref. #164314 - Lic. #017492.



Photo provided

## Prepare to be amazed

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## OneZone Business Action Committee endorses Republican Speaker Todd Huston

### Submitted

The OneZone Business Action Committee (ZoneBAC) announces its endorsement of Speaker Todd Huston for State Representative, District 37.

"Speaker Todd Huston has been a strong and consistent advocate for Indiana's business community and economic growth," OneZone Chamber President Jack Russell said. "His leadership at the Statehouse and his commitment to policies that support employers, workforce development, and thriving communities make him an outstanding choice for State Representative."

State Rep. Todd Huston serves as Speaker of the

Indiana House of Representatives and represents District 37. Under his leadership, the Indiana House has advanced policies focused on economic growth, fiscal responsibility, workforce development, and strengthening communities across the state. His collaborative approach and extensive experience continue to play a key role in shaping Indiana's business climate and long-term success.

The ZoneBAC is made up of OneZone Chamber members. Speaker Huston was previously endorsed by the committee and con-



Huston

tinues to demonstrate strong leadership and a commitment to the business community. His track record and ongoing engagement on issues impacting employers and the regional economy made him a clear choice for endorsement.

ZoneBAC endorsement decisions are made by the committee using nonpartisan criteria. Committee members review candidate information and determine which candidates to support based on their positions, qualifications, and commitment to issues important to the business community.

## Indiana regulators call utilities' affordability programs insufficient

By GARRETT BERGQUIST  
WISH-TV | [wishtv.com](http://wishtv.com)

Indiana's utility regulator chair said Tuesday he wants more comprehensive plans from utility providers to provide relief to ratepayers.

The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) took hours of testimony from each of the state's five largest investor-owned utilities: AES Indiana, Duke Energy, NIPSCO, Indiana & Michigan Power, and CenterPoint Energy. The commissioners focused on affordability for ratepayers, specifically residential customers.

Company leaders for AES Indiana and Duke Energy both said they already have programs in place to help customers lower their utility bills. AES Indiana President Brandi Davis-Handy said AES offers home energy assessments and weatherization services at no cost for qualifying customers and distributes energy-saving items through partners including Gleaners and Midwest Food Banks. Duke Energy Indiana President Stan Pinegar said his company offers time-of-use accounts that provide discounts for doing household chores during off-peak hours.

IURC Chair Andy Zay, who was appointed to the job by Gov. Mike Braun in January after serving for 10 years in the Indiana Senate, said what he heard from utility companies wasn't much different from what they have already adver-

tised. He said he wants to hear more specific, immediate relief plans.

"I'm not certain I've heard anything tangible [today] that is really going to hit Main Street and our ratepayers. And that concerns me," Zay said. "I think there are some programs and some plans out there. I would like to see the utilities stretch a little bit more, make a commitment, invest that to really make a difference with Hoosier ratepayers and Main Street."

AES officials came under especially heavy questioning regarding their company's pending acquisition by a consortium of investors led by BlackRock. Davis-Handy said the acquisition requires federal approval and would not be complete before late 2026 or early 2027 at the earliest. She said the consortium of buyers is committed to maintaining AES' affordability commitments and would not pass the costs of the acquisition along to customers.

"I will tell you that they are long-term infrastructure investors," she said. "And so that means, and I think that it is an important moment that we are in in the state of Indiana. This is not their first potential acquisition of a company that has investor-owned utilities."

Rep. Cherrish Pryor, D-Indianapolis, who serves on the House Utilities Committee and was one of several state lawmakers who attended Tuesday's hearing, said she doesn't

have much faith in that promise.

"They're paying, what, \$33 billion for this company? You don't pay \$33 billion for a company and then say, I'm not going to recoup my costs," she said. "How are they going to recoup their costs if ratepayers aren't paying more?"

Zay said he couldn't say whether he believed that promise but added any concerns about the AES acquisition would inform the questions commissioners ask moving forward. He said he was more optimistic about utility companies' assertion that data center developers will cover all of the costs associated with their facilities. So far, Zay said he has seen nothing to indicate utility companies are passing data center costs on to consumers.

In addition to Tuesday's hearing with utility companies, Zay said the commission will hold a series of 10 listening sessions throughout the state beginning Thursday and running through April 22. Members of the public are invited to come talk to the commission about their experience with utility bills. In central Indiana, listening sessions will be held at Columbus City Hall on April 2, Noblesville City Hall on April 9, and the Ivy Tech Conference Center in Indianapolis on April 20. Those listening sessions all run from 6 to 8 p.m.

*This story was originally published by WISH-TV at [wishtv.com/news/politics/indiana-utility-relief-plans](http://wishtv.com/news/politics/indiana-utility-relief-plans).*

## Reliable Energy issues statement on IURC's investigative inquiry

### Submitted

Reliable Energy, Inc. (REI) President Savannah Kerstiens issued the following statement following Tuesday's IURC Investigative Inquiry on energy affordability and Indiana's investor-owned utilities.

"Affordability is essential, and Reliable Energy commends Chair Zay, Counselor Gray, and the members of the Commission for today's Investigative Inquiry into Indiana's five investor-owned utilities. A key part of affordability and transparency is to scrutinize both past and future plans to retire existing generation during this time of scarcity, particularly as utilities themselves acknowledge rising demand and a rapidly expanding customer base.

"In particular, AES should have addressed the costs associated with

converting its coal-fired units, assets that have not yet been fully paid off by ratepayers, to natural gas steam generation. This approach has been identified by MISO's accredited capacity framework as a loss of winter capacity. At a time when affordability and reliability are increasingly critical, shifting toward more expensive, lower-accredited resources raises serious concerns about system performance, resilience, and long-term costs for Indiana ratepayers.

"By contrast, Reliable Energy appreciates Duke Energy's more balanced and pragmatic approach. Duke acknowledged its decision to extend the life of the Gibson coal plant beyond 2032, citing recent federal policy changes and the resulting cost savings for customers as

demand increases. The company also highlighted its compliance with Governor Braun's executive order to preserve in-state generation, including exploring the potential sale of the Cayuga coal plant to a third party under an agreement approved by the IURC in coordination with Reliable Energy.

"If successful, this approach could save ratepayers close to 100 million dollars by avoiding demolition costs, preserving Hoosier jobs at the facility, and maintaining critical in-state generation capacity.

"Reliable Energy hopes the IURC will continue its efforts and prioritize the importance of maintaining dispatchable, in-state generation resources and taking a thoughtful, reliability-focused approach as Indiana works to meet growing energy demand while protecting affordability for consumers."

**About Reliable Energy, Inc.**

Reliable Energy, Inc. is committed to ensuring an abundant supply of available, affordable, and dependable energy in our great state of Indiana and nationwide. Learn more at [ReliableEnergyInc.org](http://ReliableEnergyInc.org).

The 2026 Hamilton County Passion Play

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# Republicans flock north to hear from local candidates



The Northern Hamilton County GOP met Monday, March 23 at Greek's Pizzeria of Sheridan. State Senator Jim Buck started the evening off with a legislative update. The crowd of 65 then heard the candidates for Sheridan Town Council – Garrett Gossard, Heidi Kienholz, Andrew Porterfield, Michael Foote, and Daniel Bragg – speak about their qualifications for Council. Sheriff's candidates Dustin Dixon and John Lowes also spoke on their background and qualifications. The evening was completed hearing the judicial candidates speak about their qualifications: Chris Evans, Amy Summerfield, Chadwick Hill, Angela Swenson, Trampas Whalin, Danica Eyley, Christopher Barrows, Sarah Shields, and Paul Sweeney. Every candidate who spoke thanked their spouses for their support. (ABOVE LEFT) Cicero Town Councilwoman Emily Pearson and Noblesville Attorney Ray Adler. (ABOVE RIGHT) Judicial candidates Christopher Barrows, Angela Swenson, and Chris Evans.

Reporter photos

# DUCTZ of Noblesville earns Tom Yacobellis Innovation Award

Submitted

DUCTZ of Noblesville has won the 2025 Tom Yacobellis Innovation Award at BELFOR Franchise Group's annual convention. DUCTZ of Noblesville was established in 2008, and is owned and operated by Carlton Mills.



Duct cleaning industry standards. DUCTZ teams arrive with the necessary tools, techniques, and equipment to tailor services to each property's specific needs.

Mills has been in the air duct cleaning industry for over 15 years, and has extensive experience leading businesses to success. He won the Tom Yacobellis Innovation Award in recognition of his team's commitment to delivering the best possible customer experience through open communication and transparent pricing.

"Carlton embodies the core values of the DUCTZ brand due to his unwavering commitment to raising the bar in the air duct cleaning industry," said Tim Fagan, Operations Support at DUCTZ. "Carlton and his team's dedication to providing exceptional service has truly set their business apart. We're delighted to see him win the Tom Yacobellis Innovation Award and look forward to seeing his continued success and growth as a top-performing franchise owner."

"This award means so much to me and my entire team, and serves as a reflection of all the hard work and dedication we've put into the business over the years," Mills said. "A huge thank you to my team of incredible technicians, whose eagerness to always go above and beyond for our customers has truly set the business apart."

DUCTZ has the added advantage of being part of the BELFOR Franchise Group family of brands. BELFOR Franchise Group is the world's largest residential and commercial services franchisor based on geographic footprint, and has over a decade of experience growing brands and helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses through industry-leading training, support and equipment, turnkey business models, and ongoing coaching and business development.

Whether you're in need of routine air duct cleaning, post-disaster HVAC restoration, dryer vent cleaning, coil or exhaust cleaning, DUCTZ technicians provide solutions suited to the specific needs of homes and businesses. DUCTZ teams adhere to National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) and Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA) stan-

To request a service from DUCTZ of Noblesville, call (317) 773-9831 or email [carlton.mills@ductz.com](mailto:carlton.mills@ductz.com).

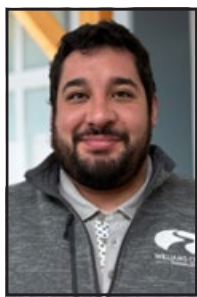
# Williams Creek Management appoints Gus Mariscal as Installation Project Manager

The REPORTER

Plainfield-based Williams Creek Management, a leader in ecological restoration and natural resource management, is proud to announce the strategic addition of Gus Mariscal as Installation Project Manager for the Central Indiana Region. Mariscal brings 13 years of industry experience and a deep-seated entrepreneurial spirit to the Williams Creek team.

In his role as Installation Project Manager, Mariscal will be instrumental in delivering professional

installation services across both public and private sectors. His leadership will support the firm's commitment to Clean Water Act requirements and high-performance quality-of-life initiatives. With a focus on the long-term integration of natural and built systems, Mariscal will oversee the successful implementation of mitigation, restoration, and landscape projects that enhance wildlife habitats



Mariscal

of Williams Creek. "With his strong background in managing complex outdoor improvements and his technical studies in construction management, he is perfectly positioned to ensure our clients' projects are executed

and create opportunities for pedestrian connectivity.

"We are thrilled to welcome Gus to our Installation Division in Central Indiana," said Neil Myers, President and CEO of Williams Creek. "With his strong background in managing complex outdoor improvements and his technical studies in construction management, he is perfectly positioned to ensure our clients' projects are executed

with the logistical precision and high-quality workmanship our brand represents."

Mariscal's experience is rooted in over a decade of hands-on leadership. Prior to joining Williams Creek, he owned and operated a full-service landscaping company for more than 10 years, managing all aspects of residential and commercial improvements from initial estimation to on-site execution. His technical foundation includes studies in Design Technology at Ivy Tech and Construction Management at IUPUI.

# 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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# Ball State president educates Carmel Rotarians university's successes

By **DUBBIE BUCKLER**  
Carmel Rotary Club Board

Ball State University President Geoffrey S. Mearns, J.D., provided the Carmel Rotary Club an overview of BSU's new strategic plan, Destination 2040: Our Flight Path, that sets priorities across five key areas: undergraduate excellence, graduate education and lifetime learning, community engagement and impact, scholarship and societal impact, and inclusiveness and institutional excellence.

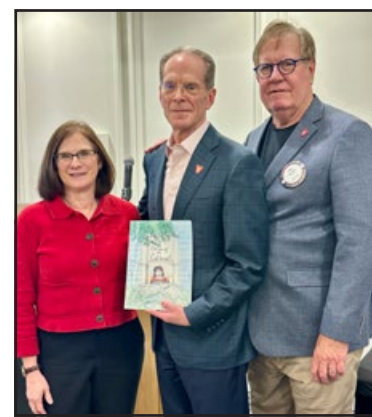
Mearns informed Rotarians about BSU's many successes, its prestigious Carnegie Foundation classification, and its special oversight and leadership relationship with Muncie Community Schools.

He cited that BSU's freshmen enrollment of 3,700 has a median high school grade-point average of 3.57; 91 percent are Indiana residents; 90 percent eligible for some type of financial aid, with 46 percent eligible for a Pell grant; and 29 percent are first-generation college students in their families. BSU has more than 270 undergraduate and graduate academic programs, and boasts a 94 percent career placement for BSU grads.

Under President Mearns' leadership, BSU has increased alumni engagement and fundraising, and sustained and expanded its enrollment, despite the adverse impact of the pandemic.

Conversely, Mearns cited a growing reality adversely affecting the country: the alarming increase in the number of males age 18 to 30 who are not enrolling in college nor seeking employment. Reports about young adult males, including a recent one from the Sagamore Institute, cite declining male student GPAs, teen boys' fixation on social media, decreased participation in sports and extracurricular activities, dramatic declining college enrollment and labor participation rates, isolation, and increased male suicides.

"The great challenge is to reverse these disturbing trends with positive pro-



Photos provided

(ABOVE LEFT) Ball State University President Mearns reviews campus improvements. (ABOVE RIGHT) Rotarian Tammy Haney, BSU President Mearns, and Rotarian and BSU alum Jay Brill, who introduced Mearns.

grams and mentoring for young men," said Mearns. He commended Rotary for its many youth outreach programs.

President Mearns was proud to share that BSU has been named an "Opportunity College and University" by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, recognizing the University as a national model for advancing student success and long-term economic outcomes. Developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education, the classification evaluates institutions based on their ability to serve students from the communities they represent and on how alumni earnings compare to peers in their regional job markets.

In 2025, just 479 institutions – approximately 16 percent of U.S. colleges and universities – earned this classification. Ball State is the only public institution in Indiana to receive this recognition, and one of just three Mid-American Conference institutions to be honored. The two criteria are a) the institution must enroll students who represent demographics of region institution serves ("access"), and b) 2) Eight years after graduation, institution's graduates must earn at least 50 percent more than non-college graduates in region ("earnings"). Also, BSU met the additional classifications as a Doctoral Institution with High Research Activity (R2), one of only 27 in country; and a Community-Engaged Institution – one of only 11 in country meeting all three major classifications.

In 2025, for the first time in BSU's athletic program history, the Ball State Cardinals received the prestigious Mid-American Conference (MAC) Dr. Carol A. Cartwright Award for its program excellence in academics, athletics, and citizenship during the 2024-25 school

year. The Cartwright Award for overall excellence of a member institution's athletics department is presented annually to only one university in the Mid-American Conference. A former competitive college athlete, President Mearns has been actively involved in NCAA governance many years and is chair of the Mid-American Council of Presidents.

Rotarians were particularly impressed to learn of President Mearns and BSU's unique innovative partnership with Muncie Community Schools (MCS). In 2018, enacting new state legislation allowing the state to take control over failing public school districts, then Governor Eric Holcomb requested President Mearns and BSU accept a unique role to take over, lead, and turn around the then-failing Muncie Community Schools (MCS).

The results have been remarkable. Under BSU's collaborative leadership and historic partnership with MCS, Muncie Schools have increased student attendance; annually achieved a balanced operating budget; increased teacher compensation by nearly 40 percent and more than doubled teacher and staff retention; invested heavily in MCS facilities; stabilized student enrollment; and dramatically improved student outcomes in Kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading, and high school graduation. Mearns credited BSU's relationship with the community for MCS's remarkable success.

Mearns also described BSU's ambitious plan to revitalize "The Village," the commercial district located immediately adjacent to Ball State's campus. With much community support and investment, plans include a new Performing Arts Center, Cantino Hotel, Center for Innovation and Collaboration, and enhancing the Village South student residential area.

Mearns became BSU President in May 2017, having served five years as president of Northern Kentucky University. Before becoming president of NKU, he served as dean of the law school and then as provost at Cleveland State University. Before his academia career, Mearns served several years as Assistant U.S. Attorney where he participated in the prosecution of several high-ranking members of the Gambino organized crime family. He concluded his career with the U.S. Department of Justice as one of the principal trial lawyers in the prosecution of Terry Nichols, Timothy McVeigh's conspirator in the Oklahoma City bombing.

### About Rotary Club of Carmel

The Rotary Club of Carmel, founded in 1972, regularly contributes to local community projects including the Merciful H.E.L.P. Center, Crooked Creek Food Pantry, Meals on Wheels, Carmel Summer Lunch Program, Trinity Free Clinic, and many others.

Carmel Rotary's youth outreach includes Leadership Connection, a leadership skills development and scholarship program for Carmel area high school students; Interact, a Rotary-sponsored service club for youth ages 12 to 18; and the Youth Exchange Program, hosting foreign exchange students and sponsoring Carmel High School students studying abroad.

Carmel Rotary proudly presents Carmel's annual 4th of July parade and celebration, CarmelFest. Carmel Rotary is also involved in global service projects focused on Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution; Disease Prevention and Treatment; Water and Sanitation; Maternal and Child Health; Basic Education and Literacy, and Economic and Community Development. The longstanding primary goal of Rotary International is the eradication of polio on earth.

For more information visit [CarmelRotary.com](http://CarmelRotary.com).



Photo by Rob Slaven / [IndyGhostLight.com](http://IndyGhostLight.com)  
(From left) Jo Bennett as Bessie, Sarah Eberhardt as Margaret, and Monya Wolf as Alice.

## MSP's *The Drowning Girls* is "community theatre at its best"

*The Drowning Girls*, an extraordinary script co-written by Daniela Vlaskalic, Beth Graham, and Charlie Tomlinson, receives an extraordinary staging in director Molly Bellner's offering at Main Street Productions in Westfield.

The 2008 play deals with overlapping memories of three murdered wives wedded to a common husband – one George Joseph Smith, who charmed the ladies off their feet, married them in short order and, after making sure he would benefit from their life insurance and their wills, murdered them in their bathtubs during the early 1910s in Britain. A sordid trio of real-life crimes, to be sure, but as presented by Ms. Bellner and her wonderfully prepared trio of actresses, the production is a compelling study of the sad mishaps as well as the state of womanhood in that era. Each bride's story is slightly different, but all are based in the second-class citizenship the three felt and faced.

The three ladies – Bessie, played by Jo Bennett; Alice, portrayed by Monya Wolf; and Margaret, offered by Sarah Eberhardt – were all young women of their times, insecure without the assurances of marriage, frightened by the prospects of being a lonely maiden, and dreamily hopeful of finding the saving power of love. None could help but fall for Smith's well-planned advances, thinking that their dream has finally been answered, and thereby throwing all cautions out the door.



KEN KLINGENMEIER  
A Seat on the Aisle

The play presents the story as if these three, united in death, can convey what happened directly to us – telling us and showing us all that they endured with no fourth wall present. The device works tremendously well as they depict all the assorted characters in their tales and smoothly transition from one aspect of story-telling to the next.

Ms. Bellner has crafted the action to be seamless with a heartbeat pace and not one wasted motion. The actresses move about with a confidence their characters never possessed, often tossing some mirth into the play, and never allowing us to look away. They effortlessly blend together into a powerful ensemble, as hardly a line is separate from the next in the flow of their delivery.

Ed Trout's simple, uncluttered three tub set contributes to that flow and costumes by Cathie Morgan are remarkable – functioning well while either wet or dry. Eric Matters' lighting design helps to accentuate the changes of mood.

**Bottom line:** Mrs. K's reaction was "Community theatre at its best," and I totally agree. Something very special has been done here and I urge you to be sure to see it. Highly recommended!

*The Drowning Girls* continues at Basile Westfield Playhouse through March 29. Information about the schedule and reservations can be found at [BasileWestfieldPlayhouse.org](http://BasileWestfieldPlayhouse.org).

Read more great play reviews from *A Seat on the Aisle* at [asota.wordpress.com](http://asota.wordpress.com).

Main Street Productions, Inc. Presents

# the DROWNING GIRLS

by Daniela Vlaskalic, Beth Graham and Charlie Tomlinson

Directed by Molly Bellner

## March 19th – 29th, 2026

Thursday, Friday, Saturday Shows at 7:30 pm,  
Sunday Shows at 2:30 pm

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For reservations visit our website:  
[www.basilewestfieldplayhouse.org](http://www.basilewestfieldplayhouse.org)

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## Community News

*Celebrate Holy Week with free choir & orchestral performance*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invites everyone to a multi-denominational Holy Week musical celebration.

This choir and orchestral performance will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, March 28, at the Pike Performing Arts Center, 6701 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis. Doors will open at 4 p.m.

This presentation brings together a multi-denominational adult and youth choir and orchestra, small vocal ensembles, and a children's choir in a powerful celebration of the life, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Reserve your free spot at [this link](#) ... but hurry! Seats are going quickly.

## Banks' Tyler's Law passes United States Senate

Submitted by Office of U.S. Senator Jim Banks

On Monday night, March 23, Tyler's Law, a bill introduced in 2025 by Senator Jim Banks (R-Ind.) passed the Senate unanimously. This bill directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide hospitals with guidance on implementing fentanyl testing in routine emergency room drug screens.

The bill is named after Tyler Shamash, a teenager who died from a fentanyl poisoning after doctors failed to test for the drug when he was admitted to the emergency room the previous day.

"Too many families in Indiana and across the country have lost loved ones to fentanyl," Sen. Banks said. "Tyler's Law will help prevent these tragedies by requiring ERs to screen for fentanyl so patients can get life-saving care faster. I'm grateful to Tyler's mother Juli for leading this effort to make testing the national standard."



Banks

Key provisions of Tyler's Law

- **Study Fentanyl Testing** – HHS would assess current hospital emergency department fentanyl testing rates, costs, and benefits.

- **Provide Guidance** – HHS would issue recommendations for routine fentanyl testing in hospitals.

- **Enhance Diagnosis & Treatment** – The bill aims to improve fentanyl exposure diagnosis and guide prevention and treatment efforts.

Click here to read the full text of the bill.

Background

Senator Banks' first Senate bill, the Countering Beijing's Weaponization (CBW) of Fentanyl Act, seeks to amend the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. The legislation would classify fentanyl and its precursors as chemical and biological weapons under U.S. law.

## Young & colleagues' resolution honoring six fallen U.S. service members unanimously passes

Submitted by Office of U.S. Senator Todd Young

The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution introduced by Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.) and a group of senators honoring the service of six American heroes who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the loss of a U.S. KC-135 refueling aircraft over western Iraq while supporting Operation Epic Fury.



Young

Senators Katie Britt (R-Ala.), Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.), Jim Banks (R-Ind.), Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio), Jon Husted (R-Ohio), and Tim Sheehy (R-Mont.) joined Young in introducing the resolution.

The resolution honors Captain Seth R. Koval of Mooresville, Ind.; Captain Curtis J. Angst of Wilmington, Ohio; and Master Sergeant Tyler H. Simmons of Columbus, Ohio, who were members of the 121st Air Refueling Wing at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base based in Columbus, Ohio, and Major Alex Klinner of Auburn, Ala.; Major

Ariana G. Savino of Covington, Wash.; and Technical Sergeant Ashley B. Pruitt of Bardstown, Ky., who were members of the 99th Refueling Squadron of the 117th Air Refueling Wing located at Sumpter Smith Joint National Guard Base in Birmingham, Ala.

"We continue to mourn the loss of Hoosier Captain Seth Koval and the Airmen who perished while bravely answering the call to serve," Sen. Young said. "We will never forget the ultimate sacrifice these American heroes made and continue to pray for their loved ones."

Last week, Senator Young joined President Donald Trump, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Caine, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-La.), and Senators Britt, Tuberville, Banks, Moreno, Husted, and Sheehy at Dover Air Force Base for the dignified transfer of the fallen service members.

## Altrusa Club welcomes Hamilton County Health Department's Emily Tolerson to March meeting

Submitted

At the March meeting of the Altrusa Club of Hamilton County, Emily Tolerson from the Hamilton County Department of Health gave a fabulous presentation to members and guests. She talked about how to prevent falling, a major health concern for everyone although it needs more attention by elderly people. She presented each person present with a bag of goodies containing essential products for senior citizens to use.

\*\*\*

The President of Hamilton County Altrusa, Pam Wesley, was joined by a prospective member of the club plus a member of the Indianapolis Altrusa Club to read stories to all classes at the Hamilton County Head



Photos provided

(ABOVE LEFT) Altrusa Club President Pam Wesley and speaker Emily Tolerson from the Hamilton County Health Department. (ABOVE RIGHT, from left) Gloria White, Angie Gilbert, and Pam Wesley speak to one of the classes at Hamilton County Head Start center.

Start center.

\*\*\*

Our April meeting will be on April 13 at the Carmel MCL Restaurant & Bakery,

1390 Keystone Way. Charity Ballow will speak about human trafficking.

If you are interested in attending this meeting or

would like further information about Hamilton County Altrusa club, please email [sharon@justnotewort-events.com](mailto:sharon@justnotewort-events.com).

## Walker achieves 99 percent voting record in State Senate

Submitted by Office of State Sen. Kyle Walker

State Sen. Kyle Walker (R-Lawrence) achieved a 99.3 percent voting record for the 2026 legislative session. This record reflects Walker's stellar attendance during session.

"I was elected by Senate District 31 to ensure their voices and opinions are heard at the Statehouse, and I take this responsibility seriously," Walker said. "When voting on legislation that can impact the lives of my constituents, I work hard to make sure I am on the floor during votes and representing their opinions."

The following are just some of the new laws Walker supported in the 2026 session.

**Protect Indiana's foster youth**  
**Senate Enrolled Act 15** requires the **Indiana Department of Child Ser-**

**vices** to develop and update a statement known as the Foster Youth Bill of Rights that describes the rights and responsibilities of a foster youth to help them understand their rights and receive the support they need.



Walker

**Prevent waste, fraud & abuse**  
**Senate Enrolled Act 1,**

Senate Republicans' top priority, will help prevent waste, fraud and abuse in Indiana's SNAP and Medicaid programs by increasing eligibility checks for public assistance programs. It also requires the state government to verify the citizenship or immigration status of people applying for Medicaid and SNAP to help prevent illegal immigrants from claiming benefits and preserve the integrity of the program for the Hoosiers

who need it most. **Improve public safety**

**Senate Joint Resolution 1**

seeks to amend Indiana's constitution so judges can hold arrestees without bail if there is no way to release them without threatening the safety of the public. While most states already allow judges to deny bail for dangerous suspects, current Indiana law only allows bail to be withheld in instances of murder and treason. Under Indiana's constitutional amendment process, Hoosier voters will have a chance to vote on SJR 1 on this November's ballot.

**Senate Enrolled Act 2** is a companion law that will guarantee all arrestees have legal protections like the right to an attorney at their bail hearing, the right

to present evidence and the right to have their bail set in a timely manner.

**Lower utility rates**  
**House Enrolled Act 1002**

is the biggest change to Indiana's ratemaking process in over 100 years, changing from a fee-for-service model to a performance-based ratemaking model. HEA 1002 will ensure electric utilities promote affordability, predictable monthly bills, and reliable service by tying the amount utilities can collect to the quality of service they provide to customers.

Walker encourages constituents to contact him by filling out a **Contact Me** form online at [IndianaSenateRepublicans.com/Kyle-Walker](http://IndianaSenateRepublicans.com/Kyle-Walker) or by calling 800-382-9468.

State Sen. Kyle Walker (R-Lawrence) represents Senate District 31, which includes portions of Hamilton and Marion counties.

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## TODAY'S BIBLE READING

## THE BUDDING OF AARON'S STAFF

The Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the ark of the covenant law, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die." Moses did just as the Lord commanded him.

The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die! We are lost, we are all lost! Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle of the Lord will die. Are we all going to die?"

Numbers 17:10-13 (NIV)

## Karen Lay

January 28, 1959 – February 11, 2026

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Karen Lay on February 11, 2026, at the age of 67.



Karen was born January 28, 1959, in Indianapolis, and raised in Sheridan. A proud graduate of Westfield High School's Class of 1977, she was well-known and well-loved as Little Miss Shamrock, the school's spirited mascot.

In early adulthood, Karen moved to California, where she embraced a life of adventure. She made her first on screen appearance in *Under the Rainbow* and later achieved a cherished place in film history as an Ewok in *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*. During her years in California, she also worked for the Internal Revenue Service.

After returning to Indiana, Karen built a career as a Customer Service Representative with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. She delighted in meeting people from all walks of life and was especially tickled when local celebrities came through her line – often exchanging autographs with them. Many people knew her simply as "the little person at the Nora License Branch," a recognition that always brought a smile to her face.

Karen is survived by her sisters Debbie (Richard) Baugh, Michelle (Jim) Sexton, Donna Lay Proctor; her bonus sister, Becky Rushing; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Rena and Lloyd Lay.

A celebration of Karen's life will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, March 27, 2026, at Kercheval Funeral Home, 306 E. 10th St., Sheridan, with Pastor Chris Owens speaking at 6 p.m.

Condolences: [kerchevalfuneralhome.com](http://kerchevalfuneralhome.com)

## The Reporter's policy on obituaries

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](http://ReadTheReporter.com/obitform).

## Russian citizen sentenced to federal prison for hacking into U.S. companies

## Submitted

Aleksei Volkov, 26, of St. Petersburg, Russia, has been sentenced to 81 months in federal prison for assisting major cybercrime groups, including the Yanluowang ransomware group, carry out numerous attacks against U.S. companies and other organizations.

Volkov facilitated dozens of ransomware attacks throughout the United States, causing over \$9 million in actual losses and over \$24 million in intended losses.

Volkov was indicted for this activity in both the Southern District of Indiana and Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Police in Rome, Italy arrested Volkov and he was extradited to the United States, where he pleaded guilty to unlawful transfer of a means of identification, trafficking in access information, access device fraud, and aggravated identity theft; as well as two counts from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania indictment, namely, conspiracy to commit computer fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering after the two cases were consolidated in the Southern District of Indiana.

According to court documents, Volkov was an "initial access broker," that is, a person who specializes in gaining unauthorized access to computer networks and systems of corporations and organizations and selling that access to other cyber threat actors such as ran-

somware groups. Volkov scoured computer networks and systems for vulnerabilities, identified ways to access those networks and systems without authorization, and sold that illicit access to conspirators who were also cybercriminals.

Volkov's conspirators then infected computer networks and systems to which Volkov had given them access with malware. This malware encrypted the victims' data and prevented the victims from accessing it, damaging their business operations. The conspirators then demanded that the victims pay them a ransom in cryptocurrency – sometimes in the tens of millions of dollars – in exchange for restoring the victims' access to the data and promising not to publicly disclose the hack or release victims' stolen data on a "leak" website. In some cases, the victims paid the ransom and in others the conspirators posted the victims' confidential data on the leak site. If the victims paid the ransom, Volkov received a share of the money.

As part of his plea, Volkov admitted that he and his co-conspirators hacked into numerous victims' computer networks, stole their data, deployed ransomware, demanded payment in cryptocurrency to exchange for restoring access to the data, and divided the ransom payments among themselves. In fact, they demanded tens of millions of dollars in ran-

som and received millions. Volkov agreed to pay full restitution to victims including at least \$9,167,198.19 to known victims to compensate them for their actual losses as well as to forfeit equipment he used for his crimes.

"This case shows the strength and determination of our federal prosecutors and partners to protect American companies from global cybercriminals. If you assist ransomware groups in targeting our businesses, we will use the vast resources of the federal government to ensure you face the full force of the United States justice system," Tom Wheeler, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana.

"This conviction sends a strong message: the FBI will relentlessly pursue cybercriminals who target U.S. companies and consumers," said FBI Indianapolis Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. O'Malley. "We are taking these criminals off the streets, disrupting global extortion networks, and defending American businesses and citizens from cyber threats."

"The defendant in this case helped set in motion cybercrime attacks targeting dozens of U.S. companies and organizations, including

ones by the notorious Yanluowang ransomware group," said Assistant Attorney General A. Tysen Duva of the Justice Department's Criminal Division. "The defendant thought he could hide behind a keyboard and evade justice, working with others to extort tens of millions of dollars in ransom payments. The Department of Justice will continue to pursue cybercriminals like Mr. Volkov wherever they operate and ensure that they face consequences for their actions."

The FBI investigated this case with valuable assistance provided by The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs and law enforcement authorities in Italy. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Court Chief Judge James R. Sweeney II.

U.S. Attorney Wheeler thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys MaryAnn T. Minidrum and Matthew B. Miller, as well as Senior Counsel Matthew A. Lamberti of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS), Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut Edward Chang (on detail to CCIPS), and Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Wolfe for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

## Meeting Notices

The Carmel Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing will meet at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 26, 2026, in the Council Chambers on the second floor of Carmel City Hall, 1 Civic Square.

The Carmel Police Department Pension Board will meet in an executive session at 2:30 p.m. Monday, March 30, 2026, pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(7) for the discussion of records classified as confidential by state or federal statute.

A regular meeting will follow at 2:35 p.m. or immediately after the executive session (whichever is later) in the Support Conference Room at Carmel Police Department Headquarters, 1000 S. Range Line Road.

TriCo Regional Sewer Utility will hold its monthly Budget and Finance Committee meeting at 7:30 a.m. Friday, March 27, 2026, at 7236 Mayflower Park Drive, Zionsville.

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](mailto:PublicNotices@ReadTheReporter.com).

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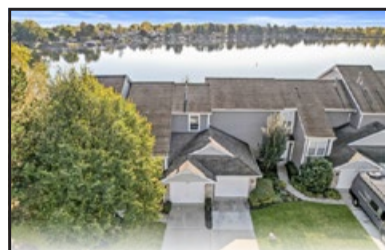
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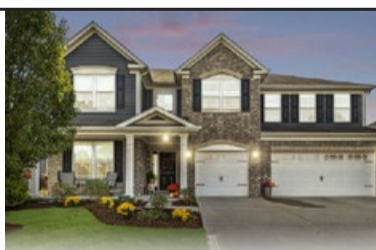


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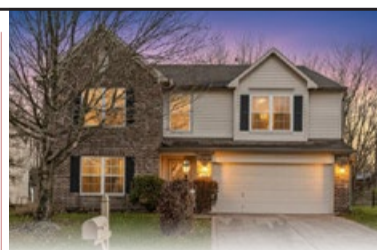


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## REPORTER SPORTS WEDNESDAY

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

# 'A relationships business': Ballenger celebrates 250<sup>th</sup> win as Huskies coach

By **RICHIE HALL**  
[sports@readthereporter.com](mailto:sports@readthereporter.com)

After 30 years of coaching, Chad Ballenger summed up what it means to him in one sentence.

"It's a relationships business and I love it," he said.

Ballenger has been in the business of coaching boys basketball since the 90s, including the past 19 seasons as the head coach at Hamilton Heights. With all that time coaching and winning, Ballenger has seen several milestones in his career, including one he reached this past January.

On Jan. 23, the Huskies beat Lafayette Central Catholic 64-48. In the locker room after the win, Ballenger's players gave him a celebratory shower – it was the coach's 250th victory at Hamilton Heights.

"We had a little celebration in the locker room," said Ballenger.

Last week, the Huskies conducted their awards banquet night and Ballenger was recognized a little more formally. Athletic director Kurt Ogden presented Ballenger with a basketball commemorating his achievement.

"I didn't expect any-

thing to happen, so from that standpoint it was pretty cool to be honored," said Ballenger.

"The nicest thing about Chad is the loyalty he's given to Hamilton Heights," said Ogden. "Committing 19 years of his coaching career to one place is almost unheard of, where coaches are chasing money and talent. Chad hasn't been doing that."

Thirteen of Ballenger's 19 seasons have been winning campaigns for the Huskies, including 10 seasons with 14 or more wins. In addition, Heights has won two sectional championships (2013 and 2015) during Ballenger's tenure.

"It's a really good place," said Ballenger. "We've had a lot of talent. We've had a lot of good players. I've had really supportive administration, good assistant coaches and good parents. It's been a perfect storm. They've been really good to me."

Ballenger is a graduate of Hagerstown High School and Ball State University. His introduction to coaching came when he served as an assistant under Pat Mapes – the current Hamilton Southeastern Schools superinten-

dent – when Mapes coached at Cowan and Knightstown.

Later, Ballenger spent six years as an assistant at Kokomo under Basil Mawbey, the Hall of Fame coach who consistently took the Wildkats deep into the post-season throughout the 80s and 90s.

"We won a lot," said Ballenger. "We went to four semi-states. We got to play in the last one-class state tournament. Great memories."

One of the Kokomo players during that time was Brian McCauley. He would go on to coach the Kats from 2006 to 2014, a run that included a state runner-up finish in 2011.

McCauley then coached at Noblesville from 2014 to 2019, which included some games against Heights. Ballenger said McCauley is an "exceptional player" and "exceptional leader."

"Brian and I are really tight," said Ballenger. The coach said coaching against his former player was "extremely difficult. You both want to win, but you hate to beat someone you've been on the same sideline with."

Ballenger returned to Knightstown to coach the

Panthers from 2002 to 2007. Knightstown won three consecutive sectional titles during those years, including a regional title in 2005.

While the success and championships are nice, it comes down to the relationships for Ballenger. He has formed many of them over the years, including those with his former players.

"Last night I got invited to an NCAA party and it was former players who played at Kokomo when I was an assistant at Kokomo," said Ballenger. He also maintains contact with his players from Knightstown and Hamilton Heights.

"It's fun to see guys grow up and be successful as an adult," said Ballenger. "It does seem like yesterday when I got there, but time has really flown by."

Time may be flying, but the Huskies can expect to see Ballenger around for years to come. The coach said he still has "a passion and a love" for the game. "It's year-round and there are times you get tired, but I still have a fire for it," he said.

Ogden said that this past season may have been Ballenger's best year coaching.



Photo courtesy Hamilton Heights Athletics  
Hamilton Heights boys basketball coach Chad Ballenger was presented with a basketball commemorating his 250th win as coach of the Huskies during their awards banquet last week. Ballenger just finished his 19th season as the Heights coach.

The Huskies started 0-7 before finishing 14-10, another winning streak, which included his 250th victory. Heights finished 14-10, another winning record.

"Maybe he's getting better with age," said Ogden.

## International academy proposes tennis center in Noblesville

By **GREGG MONTGOMERY**  
[WISH-TV | wish.com](http://WISH-TV.com)

An international tennis training group wants to open a facility in Noblesville, and the City Council on Tuesday night introduced the proposal.

Mouratoglou Tennis Center hopes to open a new academy at 14469 Olio Road for upcoming and professional athletes in September at the **Deer Creek Business Park**, located just off I-69 northwest of The Arena at Innovation Mile and east of Ruoff Music Center.

Just before the council meeting, the business and the Hamilton County city's government announced the proposal in a **news release**.

Lexie Rock, a spokesperson for the city government, told News 8 by email that the existing building where the tennis center hopes to go has a property

tax abatement that was previously approved when it was constructed on a speculative basis.

A spokesperson for Mouratoglou Tennis Center did not immediately return a request from News 8 to find out how much will be spent on the tennis center. That question is one that could be asked during a public hearing for the project at 6 p.m. April 20 before the **Noblesville Plan Commission**.

The Noblesville tennis center would feature six indoor tennis courts, eight padel courts and four indoor futsal pitches, the release said. Construction would be scheduled to begin in May, the release said. The facility would hold a soft opening in August, with a full opening expected by September.

Joyceann Yelton with the Noblesville Planning

See **Tennis . . . Page 10**

## Softball

# Hounds win, Sheridan drops opener

The **REPORTER**

Carmel improved to 2-0 for the season with a victory Tuesday at Zionsville.

The Greyhounds beat the Eagles 9-4. Carmel never trailed, scoring three runs in the top of the first inning. Ellie Goddard doubled in Lolah Pence, then Chloe Junkersfield sent Jayden Kleiner and Goddard home with another double.

Zionsville cut the Hounds' lead to 3-2 in the bottom of the first inning. Carmel got a run back in the top of the second when Goddard hit a sacrifice fly to score Kleiner.

The Eagles tied the game with two runs in the third inning, but the Greyhounds responded again. Goddard hit a second RBI sacrifice fly in the fourth inning, bringing Pence home to put Carmel ahead 5-4.

The Hounds pulled away in the sixth inning by scoring three runs. Kleiner smacked a two-RBI triple to



Photos by Dwight Casler  
(ABOVE LEFT) Sheridan's Abby Dallas talks with new head coach Natalie McGuire during the Blackhawks' season-opening game Tuesday at Tipton. (ABOVE RIGHT) Sheridan's Amiyah Doss scored a run and went 2-for-3 at the plate.

bring in Tinsley Malek and Riley Petrites. Then Goddard delivered her second double of the game to score Kleiner.

Carmel added one more run in the seventh inning when Petrites doubled Avery Klein home. It was the Greyhounds' fourth dou-

ble of the game and gave Petrites a perfect 4-for-4 mark at the plate.

Kleiner also had two hits. Emily Smith pitched four innings for the win, with Keira Libel throwing the other three innings.

Carmel hosts Westfield at 6 p.m. tonight.

\*\*\*

Fishers won its season opener Tuesday, beating Tri-West 10-3 on the road.

The Tigers put up three runs in the first inning. Adrienne Cook singled in Chloe Summerfield,

See **Softball . . . Page 10**

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# SPORTS SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, March 25**

**BASEBALL**  
 Carmel scrimmage at Hamilton Southeastern, 5:30 p.m.  
 Fishers scrimmage at North Central, 6 p.m.  
 Westfield scrimmage at Noblesville, 6 p.m.

**BOYS LACROSSE**  
 Hamilton Southeastern at Fishers, 6 p.m.  
 Westfield at Carmel, 8 p.m.

**SOFTBALL**  
 Hamilton Heights at Frankton, 5:30 p.m.  
 Noblesville at Western, 6 p.m.  
 North Central at Hamilton Southeastern, 6 p.m.  
 Westfield at Carmel, 6 p.m.

**TENNIS**  
 University scrimmage at North Central, 4:30 p.m.

**TRACK & FIELD**  
 Hamilton Southeastern girls at North Central (with Warren Central), 6 p.m.  
 North Central boys at Hamilton Southeastern, 6 p.m.

**VOLLEYBALL**  
 University at Traders Point Christian, 6 p.m.  
 Noblesville at Zionsville, 7 p.m.  
 Franklin Community at Carmel, 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, March 26**

**BOYS LACROSSE**  
 Park Tudor at Fishers, 6 p.m.

**GIRLS LACROSSE**  
 Fishers at Park Tudor, 7:30 p.m.  
 Noblesville at Carmel, 7:30 p.m.  
 Westfield at Hamilton Southeastern, 7:30 p.m.

**SOFTBALL**  
 Fishers at Lebanon, 6 p.m.

**TRACK & FIELD**  
 Brownsburg girls at Westfield, 5:30 p.m.  
 Westfield boys at Brownsburg, 5:30 p.m.

**VOLLEYBALL**  
 Noblesville at New Castle, 6 p.m.  
 Westfield at Lawrence North, 6 p.m.  
 Hamilton Southeastern at Franklin Central, 7:30 p.m.  
 Perry Meridian at Fishers, 7:30 p.m.

Please email schedule changes or corrections to [sports@readthereporter.com](mailto:sports@readthereporter.com).

## Girls Lacrosse

# Carmel falls to Zionsville



Photo by Mike Navarro  
 The Carmel girls lacrosse team dropped a 13-7 game at Zionsville on Tuesday. Pictured is Jackie Mabry, one of several Greyhounds who scored goals during the game. Complete stats were unavailable at press time and will run in a later edition. The Greyhounds host Noblesville on Thursday.



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## SOFTBALL

from Page 9

Kennedy Shockley got home on a wild pitch, then Brooke Clayton scored on an error.

Cook blasted a three-run home run in the second inning, also scoring Shockley and Clayton. That gave Fishers a 6-0 lead.

Grace Waltermann singled Caroline Thompson home in the third inning to push the Tigers ahead 7-0. Fishers added three more runs in the sixth inning: Summerfield got home on a wild pitch, Anna McGrath singled in Clayton and Bella Balbo sent Cook home with a single.

Summerfield went 4-for-5 at the plate, including a double. Frankie Jackson also hit a double and pitched 3.2 innings for the win. Jackson allowed only three hits.

The Tigers play at Lebanon Thursday.

\*\*\*

Westfield began its season at Plainfield on Tuesday, with the Quakers making a comeback to win 16-13.

The Shamrocks led 6-1 after the first inning. Bella Blakeley hit a two-run home run in the second inning, which finished with Westfield ahead 8-2.

The Rocks were up 12-2 in the middle of the fourth inning. Plainfield scored two in the bottom of the fourth before Cam Pulice led off the fifth inning with another homer for Westfield.

That put the Shamrocks up 13-4, but Plainfield scored three runs in the bottom of the fifth, then stunned Westfield for nine runs in the sixth inning.

Makenna Watson and Carlyne Schrock both had three hits, with Watson driving in three runs. Schrock, Sydney Jordan and Alyssa Ayers all hit one double. Sofia Easterhaus and Blakeley both scored two runs, while Reese Mahannah, Blakeley and Olivia Sampia all batted in two runs.

Mackenzie Delph pitched 4.2 innings, striking out four.

\*\*\*

Sheridan dropped its season opener Tuesday at Tipton, falling 8-4.

The Blue Devils led 5-0 after two innings. The Blackhawks got on the board in the top of the third inning by scoring three runs. Ellie Eaton doubled in Abby Dallas and Amiyah Doss, then Adria Jump smacked a double to score Eaton.

Tipton put up three runs in the bottom of the third to lead 8-3. The Blackhawks got a run back in the fourth inning; Anna Rusk scored on Dallas' RBI groundout.

Eaton and Doss both had two hits. Norah Adams pitched a complete game, striking out eight.

Sheridan's next game is April 13 when it hosts Horizon Christian.

## TENNIS

from Page 9

Department told the council that an existing building next to the roundabout at East 146th Street and Olio Road would be refurbished as part of the project.

Patrick Mouratoglou, a coach for more than 25 years, founded the tennis center, with the flagship being in France. Others are in China, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Malaysia and Mexico. In the United States, there are centers in California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts and Texas. Mouratoglou previously coached Serena Williams.

Mouratoglou said in a statement, "Bringing Mouratoglou Tennis Center to Noblesville is an exciting step in our international expansion. What makes this project truly special is the ambition of the city to build a complete sports ecosystem where performance, education and community come together."

The new academy will join several other major sports and wellness projects in the area: The Arena at Innovation Mile, which serves as the home for the Indiana Pacers G League affiliate, the Noblesville Boom; and the future site of the USA Gymnastics Training and Wellness Center and headquarters. Additionally, The Arena was recently selected to host the 2027-2031 Horizon League Men's and Women's Basketball Championships.

In July, the **Noblesville government announced** Gared Performance Sports Systems, a maker of institutional-grade sports equipment, would be coming to the 45-acre Deer Creek Business Park by August.

This story was originally published by WISH-TV at [wishtv.com/news/business/international-academy-proposes-tennis-center-in-noblesville](http://wishtv.com/news/business/international-academy-proposes-tennis-center-in-noblesville).



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# Pro football returns to Grand Park

*Indianapolis Capitols revived for new era of Continental Football League*

## The REPORTER

A new era of professional football is coming to the nation's premier sports destination.

Grand Park Sports & Entertainment announced Tuesday, March 24 that it will serve as the home of the Indianapolis Capitols, marking the return of a historic franchise as the Continental Football League (CoFL) officially relaunches.

The Capitols name carries a proud legacy in Indiana football history. The original team competed in the Continental Football League from 1965 through 1969, capturing the league championship in its final season with a thrilling 44-

38 overtime win over the San Antonio Toros. With the league returning to competition, the Capitols are set to bring professional football energy to the country's most dynamic sports campus.

"The return of the Indianapolis Capitols represents an important step in the continued expansion and proliferation of football at Grand Park. When we learned this historic franchise would be coming back to market as part of the Continental Football League's relaunch, we were intentional about positioning Grand Park as the right long-term home," said Greg StremLaw, Co-Chief Executive Officer at

Grand Park Sports & Entertainment. "This partnership aligns with our vision to grow the game at every level while creating meaningful new experiences for fans and opportunities for our community."

Droplight Grand Park Sports Campus will serve as the Capitols' venue for roster selection, training, fan engagement, and home game competition. The addition of professional football strengthens the campus's growing portfolio of marquee events and reinforces its reputation as a year-round destination for sports and entertainment.

League leadership emphasized the significance of restoring the Capitols brand

as part of the Continental Football League's new chapter.

"Bringing the Indianapolis Capitols back to the field is about honoring history while creating momentum for the future," said League Commissioner Mike Kelly. "Grand Park provides a championship-caliber environment to build our program and connect with fans across Indiana and beyond. We are excited to begin this journey and represent this community with pride."

Alumni of the Continental Football League include Sam Wyche, Bob Kuechenberg, Garo Yepremian, and Pro Football Hall of Fame inductees Bill



Walsh, Ken Stabler, and the legendary Doak Walker.

"Grand Park continues to be a driving force behind Westfield's growth, attracting new events, visitors, and opportunities to our city," said Westfield Mayor Scott Willis. "The addition of the Indianapolis Capitols marks another professional sports team calling Grand Park home, further strengthening our ability to host high-level competition

while supporting local businesses and our economy."

The relaunched Continental Football League aims to deliver competitive professional football with a strong regional identity and a renewed focus on fan experience. Additional details regarding the Capitols' inaugural season schedule, ticket information, and community initiatives will be announced in the coming weeks.

## Counting Crows to headline Miller Lite Carb Day Concert

*Special guest Switchfoot to open; fans can expect full day of entertainment*

### Submitted by IMS

Grammy and Academy Award-nominated Counting Crows will headline the Miller Lite Carb Day Concert on Friday, May 22, 2026, at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Counting Crows will be joined by special guest Switchfoot, which will open the show.

Miller Lite Carb Day is a full day of on- and off-track action and entertainment. All general admission, concert pit and VIP Deck concert tickets include admission to the concert and to on-track activities that day at IMS, which include the final practice for the 110th Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge, the second annual Oscar Mayer Wienie 500 and the Indy 500 Pit Stop Challenge.

"Miller Lite Carb Day is the unofficial kickoff to summer," INDYCAR and IMS President J. Douglas

Boles said. "From 33 drivers speeding around the track in the final '500' practice to the Wienie 500 and Pit Stop Challenge, there is no shortage of on-track action leading into a legendary rock concert in Turn 3. It's a day like no other at the Racing Capital of the World, and many of our fans take the day off work to spend it at IMS, a tradition we can all celebrate."

Tickets are on sale now at [IMS.com](https://www.ims.com), by calling 317-492-6700 or by visiting the IMS Ticket Office at the IMS Administration Building.

Counting Crows have enchanted listeners with an intensely soulful and intricate take on rock & roll for more than three decades. Exploding onto the music scene in 1993 with their multi-platinum breakout album, *August and Everything After*, the band has gone on to release seven studio al-

bums, selling more than 20 million records worldwide, and is revered as one of the world's most pre-eminent live touring rock bands.

The band's double-platinum sophomore studio album, *Recovering the Satellites*, debuted at number one and further solidified their growing reputation as one of the leading American alternative rock bands in the world.

In 2004, Counting Crows recorded the chart-topping "Accidentally in Love" for the animated motion picture *Shrek 2*. The instant success of the track earned the band an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song at the 2005 Academy Awards, a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Song and a Grammy Award nomination for Best Song Written for a Motion Picture, Television or Other Visual Media.

In 2021, Counting

Crows ranked No. 8 on *Billboard's* "Greatest of All Time: Adult Alternative Artists" 25th-anniversary chart. The band released their latest full-length album *Butter Miracle, The Complete Sweets!* to rave reviews in May 2025. In December 2025, HBO premiered, *Counting Crows: Have You Seen Me Lately?* part of the "Music Box" documentary series. The film also received widespread acclaim and chronicles the band's rise to fame, the pressures of success and the creation of some of their most celebrated albums.

Switchfoot – consisting of Jon Foreman (vocals, guitar), Tim Foreman (bass), Jerome Fontamillas (keys, guitar) and Chad Butler (drums) – has sold more than 10 million copies worldwide of their 13 studio albums, including their 2003 triple-platinum breakthrough *The Beautiful*



Graphic provided by IMS

*Letdown* and 2009's Grammy Award-winning *Hello Hurricane*.

Through a unique blend of emotionally intelligent and uplifting brand of alternative rock, Switchfoot has earned a devoted and loyal global fan base. The band has racked up a string of alternative radio hit singles and performed sold-out tours in more than 40 countries. Switchfoot also has raised more than \$3 million to aid kids in through their BRO-AM Foundation.

Miller Lite Carb Day general admission tickets

start at \$50. A limited number of concert pit package upgrades that include general admission are available for \$90. A very limited supply of exclusive VIP platform tickets also is available for \$285, including concert pit access, snacks, two complimentary drinks, dedicated bars and restroom trailers.

The 110th Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge is scheduled for Sunday, May 24. Tickets are on sale at [IMS.com](https://www.ims.com) or by calling or visiting the IMS Ticket Office.

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