

COMMERCIAL-NEWS



Army veteran Neal Stephens with his service dog from K9 Warrior Mission on his motorcycle.

Photo provided by Dave Hughes

Community meeting set for Viscofan health impacts

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DANVILLE — A community meeting is being hosted by Hunterbrook Law & Luxenburg PC for the public to discuss potential legal options concerning the health and property impacts from Viscofan.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Rabbittown Trade Center, which is located off of College Street in Danville.

Previous employee of Viscofan, Brandy Lake, who worked there from 2020 to 2023, claims she was let go because of her questions about what she says were safety violations.

“We’re supposed to tell supervisors when the gas levels are too high, so that they can evacuate the workers that are in that area,” Lake said. “But they don’t, and they don’t tell the workers when the gas levels are too high. And so I started going to the safety person about it and asking lots of questions they didn’t like.”

Lake said during her time as an employee of Viscofan, she noticed several odd symptoms, from what she says are unhealthy chemical and gas levels in the plant.

“The workers that work there are drenched in it, covered in it,” Lake said. “You could be off work for a whole week, and you’re still sweating it out of your pores. If you have white sheets. When you take a shower and everything, and you sweat, your sheets will turn yellow and orange from the viscose leaving your body,” claimed Lake about how the product for hotdog casings is leaving a mark on current employees.

Lake said following some media attention to the issue from ‘Hunterbrook Media’, another reporter, Monique Zamora reached out to her.

“I have had another reporter from Spain contact me and ask me questions about the investigation, because the Viscofan plant in Spain is doing the same things that the

SAVING LIVES

Mission K9 Warrior provides service dogs for qualified veterans

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Fighting veteran suicide with service animals has led to saving 40 lives since 2016, according to Dave Hughes, founder of Mission K9 Warrior.

“I will tell you we have almost 40 with dogs right now, 40, and none of them have taken their life, so we’ve already beat the stats,” said Hughes about their program.

The mission provides service dogs for qualified veterans.

“The service dog is specifically trained for the veteran,” Hughes said. “You may have a veteran who doesn’t like to go into a dark room. That dog may be trained to turn that light on for the veteran.”

Hughes said the pups are also trained for those who suffer from

night terrors.

“The dog will be trained to bring that veteran to wake up, to nudge him, to lick his face, whatever it takes,” Hughes said. “And for me, I can finally sit in a restaurant and my back can be toward the door. How about that?”

Many veterans struggle with being hypersensitive to their surroundings and have unique PTSD triggers.

“He’s perfect. I mean, he really is perfect for me,” he said, “I get so irritated at things, and pretty soon

he’s doing something. He’s nudging me, getting me to hold him. And finally, I look at him and start laughing. Wow, but yeah, these dogs are pretty incredible. And it does work.”

Marine veteran Tim Dippon has a service dog from the organization.

Dippon said his dog has helped him regain trust again.

“My dog is my life. He’s like my superhero sidekick. He’s my

See **DOGS** on 4

Pyle statue unveiled in Dana

DAVID KRONKE
CNHI NEWS INDIANA

DANA, Ind. — “This will be one of my most proud moments,” artist Bill Wolfe said of his sculpture of legendary World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle.

Wolfe’s sculpture was unveiled Tuesday morning on the grounds of the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum in Dana in Vermillion County.

Due to temperatures hovering in the 30s, much of the dedication took place down the street in the volunteer fire department, right alongside the firetrucks.

Steve Key, President of the Friends of Ernie Pyle Development Fund, which operates the museum, declared, “There could be no better day than Veterans Day to honor Ernie.” He welcomed the veterans in the crowd of approximately 150 people, a turnout he called “wonderful.”

Phil Hess read a column Pyle wrote in May of 1943.

“I love the infantry — the infantry are the underdogs,” Pyle wrote, describing the “inhuman exhaustion” of weary soldiers who despite their youth appeared to be middle-aged as they marched.

“They went a long way down a road that does not come back,” Pyle’s column concluded.

Wolf then recalled his own association with Pyle goes back years.

He said that when he revealed his first sculpture around 2001, someone advised him to start working on an Ernie Pyle piece, as Wolfe certainly was “going to be asked to make one.”

He fashioned a small clay model of



Steve Key

Pyle, and when no order appeared to be forthcoming, he stored it. And it melted.

Singer/songwriter Jack Shannon debuted his song “Ernie.”

The chorus went, “He was just a farm boy but only for a while/Soon the world would come to know the name of Ernie Pyle.”

Key said this unveiling event had sent him “over the moon,” and he was enthusiastic about Wolfe’s creation.

“Bill is just a wonderful sculptor, I really believe he went beyond catching Ernie’s likeness but also was able to get his personality,” he said. “There’s a little smirk on Ernie’s face, like he’s kind of amused by this whole bit of attention to him.”

The sculpture was funded, Key said, by “people all over the country routinely send in \$50, \$100. It’s been a process.”

See **PYLE** on 4



Joseph C. Garza | CNHI News Indiana

Sculptor Bill Wolfe bows his head with others in attendance as Taps is played during the unveiling ceremony for the new Ernie Pyle statue on Tuesday in Dana, Ind.



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INSIDE

LOCAL	2	FOOD	6
OBITUARIES	4	SPORTS	6-7
COMICS	5	CLASSIFIEDS	8

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57 | 38
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