



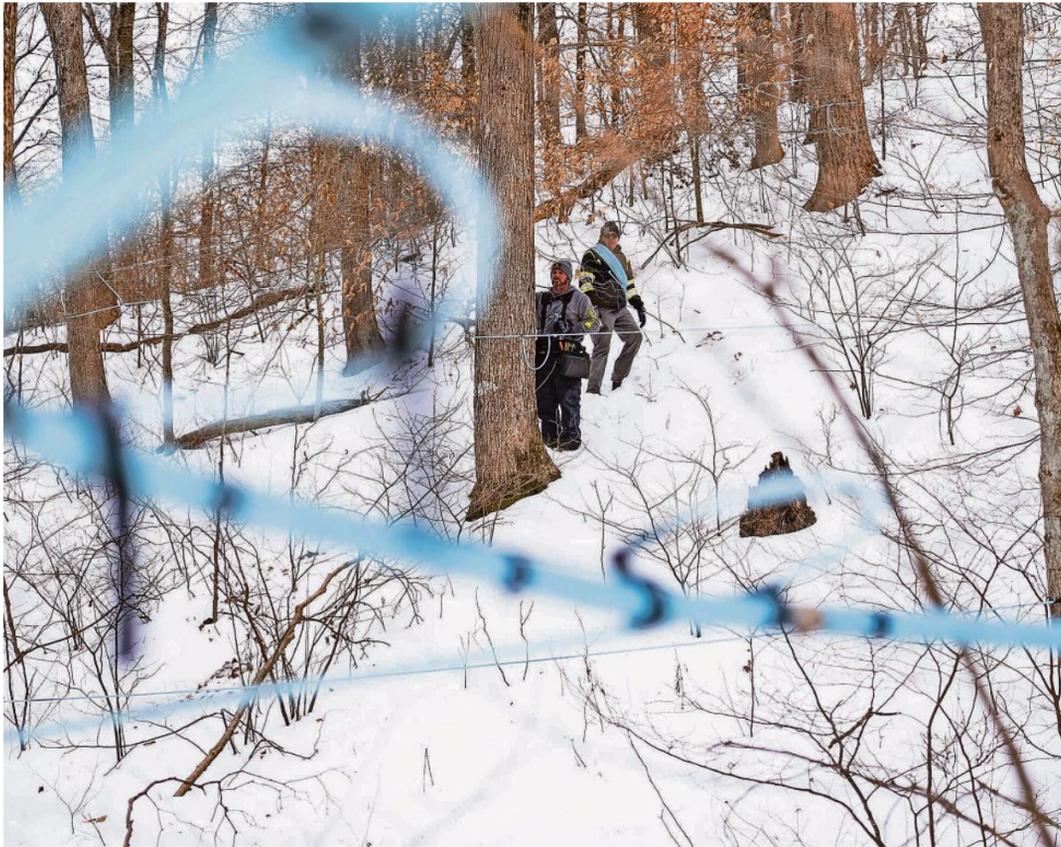
Evansville area sectional pairings for boys basketball

SPORTS, 1B

Evansville COURIER & PRESS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | COURIERPRESS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Sugarmakers scale a steep hill to tap maple trees to start harvesting sap to make maple syrup Feb. 8 at LM Sugarbush in Salem. PHOTOS BY GRACE HOLLARS/INDYSTAR

Sweet season SHRINKS

Indiana producers confront climate shifts threatening future sap harvests

Sophie Hartley Indianapolis Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

On dark winter nights, Indiana sugar maker Emily Blackman sometimes finds her husband, Robert, pacing the floor of their home in Clark County, anxiously thumbing through the forecast on his cell phone, checking to see what the weather might have in store for the family's maple trees. • Syrup production is a fickle business, subject to the whims of the climate — and Emily has known this for most of her life. She and her sister, Jen Reisenbichler, grew up tapping trees and chopping firewood on the family's Salem maple farm. When their parents sold the property in 2013, the sisters and their husbands snatched it up. The two families have been running LM Sugarbush ever since.

Most people don't associate maple syrup with Indiana, but after decades of dormancy, the once-booming industry is now making a comeback. The state ranks as the tenth largest maple syrup producer in the country. Roughly 200 farms produced about 24,000 gallons of maple syrup in 2025, up from below 12,000 gallons a decade prior.

But that does not mean sugar makers have it easy. They are at the mercy of an unpredictable and evolving climate.

Researchers fear that maple syrup production could become impossible in Indiana by the end of the century as climate change shrinks the window of time when maple trees produce sap. This could strike a devastating blow to an Indiana industry that has just barely been resuscitated after a century of deforestation. For now, all sugar makers can do is adapt to the uncertainty, even if it means more work and less syrup.

A delicate dance between maple trees and weather

At LM Sugarbush each winter, the two families, aided by friends and farm dogs, hop on a fleet of bright red UTVs and spend a weekend on 140 acres of steep, snowy hills to drill and hammer spigots into 3,000

See SAP, Page 2A



Josh Reisenbichler taps a maple tree for syrup Feb. 8 at LM Sugarbush.

“There were no resources or trees available for tapping anymore.”

Mo Zhou Forest economist at Purdue University who studies Indiana

INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Haynie murder spurs parole alert reform

Measure closer to governor's desk after unanimous Senate approval

Houston Harwood Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

EVANSVILLE — A bill that promises to reform how local law enforcement are notified of violent offenders' release from prison, which came after police accused a recent parolee of killing Evansville real estate agent Susan Haynie last year, took another step toward becoming law this week.

On Thursday, the Indiana Senate unanimously passed the legislation, House Bill 1250, in a triumph for Haynie's friends and family, who rallied support to address what they said were shortcomings in how the state notified law enforcement and victims when a violent offender is released on parole.

Haynie's accused killer, Jamerus Perrale Parkman, had been described by Evansville police as a “serial burglar” as far back as 2010 for a series of break-ins and attempted rapes in downtown Evansville, but his prior victims said they were left in the dark when Parkman walked out of an Indiana prison in February 2025 after serving just 13 years of a 35-year prison sentence.

According to Vanderburgh County prosecutors, Parkman would go on to strangle Haynie inside her East Side home within six months of his release, leaving her lifeless body to be discovered by a friend on Aug. 27.

Haynie's killing crystalized the issue for State Rep. Tim O'Brien, who also counts himself among Haynie's many friends and former colleagues at Evansville real estate firm F.C. Tucker Emge. He worked with the Justice for Susan Committee, an association of family, friends and advocates, to whip up support for reforming the notification process.

“Susan was a cherished community builder and a

See REFORM, Page 3A

Evansville-backed bill banning crypto ATMs heads to governor

Sarah Loesch Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

EVANSVILLE — A bill in the Indiana Statehouse originally hoping to tamp down scams at crypto currency ATMs now bans the machines entirely, and it's headed to Gov. Mike Braun for signature.

Wendy McNamara, R-Evansville, authored House Bill 1116 in an effort to heavily regulate crypto currency kiosks that have popped up all around the state, including locally. It easily passed the House in a vote of 87-7 and headed to the Senate where it then underwent major changes in the Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee.

Questioning the existence of the ATMs if scams are so prevalent, chairman Sen. Scott Baldwin, R-Noblesville, submitted an amendment to ban the machines completely. The amendment was accepted 7-0. The bill then moved to the full Senate where it passed 45-0, as amended. Both Sen. Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville and Sen. Jim Tomes, R-Wadesville, were present to vote yes.

It returned to the House, where the body

See BILL, Page 2A

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to courierpress.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 182 | No. 42
Subscribe 800-288-3100
©2026 \$3.49



6 97822 01100 2