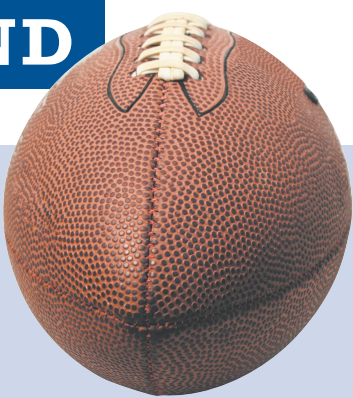




Civil rights groups make urgent plea for voting rights

Hundreds assemble in DC to condemn 'significant assault on voting rights'

MATT BROWN AND MATTHEW JUNKROSKI ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Voting rights, the work of the civil rights movement and racial justice took center stage on the National Mall Friday,

with protesters gathering ahead of midterm elections and following a wave of changes to voting laws and redistricting that some have condemned as detrimental to Black Americans. Hundreds of people gathered near the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for the 2026 "Defend the Vote" March on Washington, organized by the Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III, echoing the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 march. The event follows the U.S.

Supreme Court's landmark April decision in Louisiana v. Callais that reinterpreted key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, allowing Southern states to redraw their congressional maps in a way that erodes equal representation in Black communities. "We've been doing these marches for years, but this is probably the most important because this is the first year we are marching that the

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Members of the National Guard walk past the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool before the March on Washington, Friday in Washington. Julia Demaree Nikhinson | Associated Press



An emergency vehicle passes a closed section of Highway 97 south of Peachland, British Columbia, Canada, on Saturday, Aug. 8, 2026. Gary Nylander | The Canadian Press

WILDFIRE WORRIES Experts: Indiana not at risk, but health concerns remain

CALEB AMICK THE HERALD BULLETIN

ANDERSON — As hazy smoke from wildfires in Ontario lingered in Indiana last month, their root cause was the subject of considerable debate. Among the possible culprits put forth were improper forest management, arson and climate change. Brian Wiens is managing director of Canada Wildfire, a fire science hub connected with the University of Alberta, where he is a professor. Wiens noted the affected forests are large and very remote, which makes fighting those fires nearly impossible. The forests encompass thousands of square miles. The forest in question in Ontario has about 700 million acres of trees. Fire departments, he said,

INDIANA IN DEPTH (environment)



A helicopter being used to battle the Bald Range wildfire takes off from the Penticton Regional Airport, in Penticton, British Columbia, Monday, Aug. 10, 2026. Darryl Dyck | The Canadian Press

work to keep the fire contained and away from homes and infrastructure. Trees in those areas are "managed," meaning they are regularly harvested. "Where a lot of the smoke was coming from is extremely remote,"

Wiens explained. "So the priority is always given to responding to fires that are going to destroy communities or infrastructures. There are a number of fires where you say, 'It's part of the natural process, it's far away, it's not going

to threaten anything.' So you don't intervene. "Frankly, some of those fires, there's nothing you can do to stop them," he continued. "The level of intensity is pretty much incomprehensible." Wiens said the arsonist theory is easily dismissible because the affected forests are so difficult to access. Wiens said climate change is the most likely culprit, because it explains the weather conditions leading up to the fires. Gabe Filipelli, professor and executive director of the Environmental Resilience Institute at Indiana University Indianapolis, noted that climate change continues to fuel conditions necessary for wildfires. "People say, 'Well, you can't have both (extreme droughts and rain).' In fact, you can," he said. "The rain we're getting is a little more intense, and the drought is a little

See WILDFIRE on A2

Lapel council to decide if Blake can continue to serve

Council president purchased property in Edgewood

KEN DE LA BASTIDE THE HERALD BULLETIN

LAPEL — The Lapel Town Council continued a hearing on whether or not its president, Chad Blake, can continue to serve. A large number of local residents gathered Thursday to hear evidence in the matter of his residency presented by Blake and council members. Following the hearing, the council tabled a decision on Blake's residency, but didn't set a new meeting date. Councilman Jeff Beck made a motion to continue the hearing and for the council to receive additional evidence. Blake's home was destroyed in the 2025 tornado. He has purchased a house in Edgewood and said he plans to rebuild in Lapel. Resident Clay Barkson said he is questioning the legality of the council president continuing to serve when he doesn't live in Lapel. "Your making million-dollar decisions that impact the town and you don't live here," he said. Barkson said he didn't understand how Blake can continue to serve on the town council when he purchased a home in Edgewood. Another resident commented that her confidence in the town council is minimal, adding that the appointments of Beck and Kristi Worthman to the council were positive steps. Attorney William Cain said the town council could vote to remove Blake as a non-resident of Lapel, but it would require a vote by three of the five council members. With Rouger Fouse's recent resignation, the Lapel Town Council currently has only four members. Fouse's seat is expected to be filled by the Madison County Republican Party next week. Blake said the meeting was to determine if his residency is valid. "This is a hard meeting," councilwoman Lindsay Washmuth said. "We're going to look at the law. This is about facts." Worthman said people wanted to understand how Blake could continue to serve when not living in Lapel. "Is his intention to move back to



Chad Blake

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WEATHER



Today: Sunny and warming this weekend with highs in the mid-80s. 85 | 63 Full forecast on Page A10.

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