



WNBA Power Rankings: Aces, Liberty top list of early 2026 title contenders

SPORTS, 1B

The Herald-Times

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More parklets now open in downtown



People enjoy eating outside of BuffaLouie's in the booths behind the parklet on April 15. RICH JANZARUK/HERALD-TIMES

6 restaurants add feature for more outdoor dining options

Carol Kugler
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

More outdoor dining options just opened up in downtown Bloomington with the opening of parklets at six restaurants. Parklets are converted on-street parking spaces converted into outdoor dining areas. It's the sixth year the city has authorized parklets, something that began as a way to offer safe dining options during the COVID pan-

dem. The parklets will be open now through Nov. 9.

In the past couple years fewer downtown restaurants used parklets since portions of East Kirkwood Avenue between the courthouse square and Indiana Avenue were closed to vehicles, allowing participating restaurants to offer outdoor dining. In 2025, portions of Kirkwood were closed but only five of the 25 restaurants along the "corridor" participated in the "outdoor street activation," according to a city news release

from February. City staff reviewing the 2025 closure concluded the limited participation and uneven weekday activity meant the program was "not producing a sustained economic lift for the downtown as a whole."

This year the road will not be closed to vehicles but will operate as a shared-street model, open to pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists, according to a city news release.

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ANALYSIS

Trump's options for Cuba thorny

President has threatened U.S. intervention recently

Rick Jervis and Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – As President Donald Trump begins to look beyond Iran, his options on what to do with Cuba appear varied and thorny – and all of them fraught with political landmines.

Launch a military strike and the United States could be saddled with an unpopular nation-building mission. Cut a deal with Havana and risk a revolt from Cuban American lawmakers in Trump's party – who bristle at the thought of negotiating with the regime that forced their families into exile.

In many ways, it's a lose-lose-lose situation, said Michael Bustamante of the Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami.

"It's a domestic political issue that seems to have very little upside for anyone involved," he said, adding: "None of these options seem particularly palatable or feasible."

After imposing an oil embargo on Cuba that has pushed the island to the brink of a humanitarian crisis, the Trump administration seemed poised to impose its will on Cuba.

On April 17, after talking about the U.S. military and the capture of deposed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Trump said at a Phoenix rally that "very soon this great strength" would bring about a "new dawn for Cuba, we're going to help them out with Cuba."

In late February, the president said he'd dispatched Secretary of State Marco Rubio to negotiate with Cuban officials at a high level. It was then that he said America could have a "friendly takeover of Cuba."

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New commercial tenant plans to take over former Pizza Hut on east side

Boris Ladwig
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The former Pizza Hut property on Bloomington's east side may be getting a new tenant. Here's what we know.

Where is the former Pizza Hut on Bloomington's east side?

It's at 250 S. Pete Ellis Drive, just south of the Goodwill store.

What's going into the former Pizza Hut on Bloomington's east side?

Valvoline plans to open an oil change facility, said Gabriel Holbrow, a zoning planner with the Bloomington Planning and Transportation department.

Does Valvoline have other locations in Bloomington?

The company already has a location

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The former Pizza Hut location on Bloomington's east side may be getting a new tenant. BORIS LADWIG/THE HERALD-TIMES

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