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County Council OKs hiring fire chief

\$200,000 for 'key person' to oversee consolidated 4 districts

TONY SANDBEN
The Journal Gazette

Allen County is looking for a new fire chief to oversee the consolidation of four fire districts, a move supported Wednesday by County Council.

Council members approved a

\$200,000 grant to fund the new chief who will act as a liaison between county government and the fire districts as they combine into one. The county created the Northeast, Northwest, Southwest and West Central Allen County fire protection districts with the intention of combing them into one county-

wide district.

Council members last month decided to delay the decision because they wanted clarity on the position's compensation. A salary has not been determined, but Commissioner Ron Turpin said it would range from \$130,000 to \$140,000 a year, plus benefits.

Councilman Tom Harris, R-2nd, said he wanted more information on how the figure was determined.

"This is a brand new position," he said. "We've not seen anything like this. The state of Indiana has very few of these if not more than one or two. Yet, we've tried to pull data to determine what that pay rate should be. So, my question is still where did we get that data?"

Council members noticed dis-

crepancies between the documentation and information they were told. The documents said a four-member board would work with the executive chief to make consolidation decisions. Turpin first referred to four members but then said there will be five.

Councilman Ken Fries, R-at large, said that was a problem.

Council, Page 10A

Deer Ridge kindergartners decorate gingerbread houses



Stan Sussina | The Journal Gazette

Kindergartner Ellie Fryman, left, decorates a gingerbread house alongside her classmates Wednesday afternoon at Deer Ridge Elementary School.

Trump: US seized oil tanker

Operation near Venezuela done for 'very good reason'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the United States has seized an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela as tensions mount with the government of President Nicolás Maduro.

Using U.S. forces to take control of a merchant ship is incredibly unusual and marks the Trump administration's latest push to increase pressure on Maduro, who has been charged with narcoterrorism in the United States. The U.S. has built up the largest military presence in the region in decades and launched a series of deadly strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. The campaign is facing growing scrutiny from Congress.

"We've just seized a tanker on the coast of Venezuela, a large tanker, very large, largest one ever seized, actually," Trump told reporters at the White House, later adding "it was seized for a very good reason."

Trump did not offer additional details. When asked what would happen to the oil aboard the tanker, Trump said, "Well, we keep it, I guess."

The seizure was led by the U.S. Coast Guard and supported by the Navy, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The official added that it was conducted under U.S. law enforcement authority.

The Coast Guard members were taken to the oil tanker by helicopter from the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, the official said.

Tanker, Page 10A

Fed cuts key rate as dissent increases

Officials at odds over further cuts in 2026

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The Federal Reserve reduced its key interest rate by a quarter-point for the third time in a row Wednesday but signaled that it may leave rates unchanged in the coming months.

Chair Jerome Powell signaled at a news conference that the Fed would likely hold off on

further rate cuts in the coming months while it evaluated the health of the economy. And in a set of quarterly economic projections, Fed officials signaled they expect to lower rates just once next year.

Wednesday's cut reduced the rate to about 3.6%, the lowest it has been in nearly three years. Lower rates from the Fed can bring down borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards over time, though market forces can also affect those rates.



Powell

evolves." The chair also said the Fed's key rate was close to a level that neither restricts nor stimulates the economy.

Three Fed officials dissented from the move, the most dissents

Fed officials "will carefully evaluate the incoming data," Powell said, adding that the Fed is "well positioned to wait to see how the economy evolves."

in six years and a sign of deep divisions on a committee that traditionally works by consensus. Two officials voted to keep the Fed's rate unchanged, while Stephen Miran, whom Trump appointed in September, voted for a half-point cut.

December's meeting could usher in a more contentious period for the Fed. Officials are split between those who support reducing rates to bolster hiring and those who'd prefer to keep

Fed, Page 10A

Ukraine sent revised peace plan to DC amid talks

BLOOMBERG NEWS

Ukraine sent a revised peace plan to Washington as President Donald Trump held a call with European leaders, according to a person familiar, as both sides scramble to keep efforts on track to end Russia's invasion.

The war-torn country's latest submission was sent as Trump held a separate discussion with Prime Minister Keir Starmer, President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Friedrich Merz

on Wednesday. That phone call was outlined in statements from the German and UK governments and confirmed by the White House.

"We discussed Ukraine in pretty strong words, and we'll see what happens. I mean, we're waiting to hear answers before we progress," Trump told reporters at the White House later on Wednesday.

"I think it's time to get that

Ukraine, Page 10A



A man descends steps Wednesday next to the memorial for fallen Ukrainian and foreign fighters in Independence Square in Kyiv.

Getty Images North America/TNS

INSIDE

WEATHER



Mostly cloudy

High in the upper 20s.

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