



IN SPORTS

FRIDAY FOOTBALL

■ Baris Moore, Wildkats hammer NCC rival Giants; plus area coverage. **B1**



IN LOCAL

PET OF WEEK

■ Meet Coffee! This adorable 4-month-old feline is ready for adoption at the Kokomo Humane Society. **A3**



IN-DEPTH

WETLANDS

■ Duke Energy hosts Wabash River ecology lesson. **A6**



IN LOCAL

HISTORY PHOTO

■ Check out this week's look back at a local landmark. **A2**

ALSO INSIDE

■ Have a laugh with the color comics including "Peanuts."

Kokomo council meets Monday to discuss budget, trash fees

KAITLYNN MYERS
KOKOMO TRIBUNE

Two hot button issues are on the agenda for the Kokomo Common Council's Monday evening meeting. Council members will be discussing the city's 2026 budget and are also likely to make a decision on what has become a controversial trash fee ordinance.

Last month, council members met with all department heads to hammer out a budget. Setting a budget is a little trickier than in past years, thanks to Senate Bill 1 that cuts property taxes to local government units in Indiana by \$1.3 billion. This has resulted in cities, counties, towns, school corporations and other entities scrambling to cut expenses and find new revenue.

Kokomo is facing the same issues as other cities throughout the state, and

that's also where the idea of a trash fee came into play.

Ordinance 7208, the "trash fee" ordinance, passed on first reading on Sept. 8 by a council vote of 7-1, with one council member being absent. If it passes again on second reading on Monday, a \$10 per month fee with be assessed on Kokomo residents, with deductions being available for qualifying individuals. If passed, the ordinance will not be implemented until January of 2026.

Taxpayers have the right to be heard during this meeting. Following the meeting, anyone hoping for a budget, tax rate or tax levy change will need to file an objection petition within seven days of the initial hearing. The petition will need to be filed by 10 or more people in order for changes to be considered. The notice

See **COUNCIL** on A2



A large crowd gathered inside the Kokomo City Hall council chambers the last time the city council discussed implementing a trash fee.

COVID confusion



Pfizer

This photo provided by Pfizer in August 2025 shows a vial of the updated COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty.

Experts weigh in on new vaccine recommendations

KIM DUNLAP
KOKOMO TRIBUNE

With fall here and winter around the corner, medical experts say COVID-19 is once again rising in several states across the country.

According to the latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 29 states are reporting "high" or "very high" levels of the disease.

That includes Indiana.

While there are vaccines currently available to combat the effects of the illness, some in the medical community say recent developments in the recommendations of those vaccines have left people feeling a bit confused. That, they say, could have dangerous results.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

"Today, we are prioritizing the restoration of public trust above any specific pro- or anti-vaccine agenda. ... A clean sweep is needed to re-establish public confidence in vaccine science."

Those were just a few of the words written by United States Department of Health and Human

Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy during an agency media release last June.

Kennedy's comment came in response to his decision to remove 17 sitting members of the CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices, also known as the ACIP.

According to the CDC website, the ACIP is a group of medical and public health experts that "develop recommendations on how to use vaccines" to control various diseases in the United States.

One of those vaccines is the COVID-19 vaccine.

Earlier this month, during a two-day meeting, the newly appointed ACIP members met and approved changes regarding recommendations for the COVID-19 vaccine, such as how the vaccine will be administered and who will ultimately be able to get it.

Unanimously approved by the ACIP panel was the recommendation allowing the COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to people ages 65 and older, as well as those who are immunocompromised.

But it was a second unanimous recommendation that some in

the medical community and public health field say has caused the confusion.

According to ACIP's recommendations, anyone younger than 65 can still obtain a COVID-19 vaccine if they speak with their primary physician or a pharmacist first, a process called "shared clinical decision-making."

ACIP's recent recommendations came a few weeks after the Food and Drug Administration announced it had rescinded emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccine.

That move essentially meant the FDA approved updated versions of the COVID-19 vaccine, but only to certain groups of people like those over 65.

The FDA's guidance notes people ages 64 and younger with at least one underlying condition that puts them at higher risk of serious illness would also be able to get the vaccine.

The FDA's guidance used to state any individual 6 months of age and older was eligible.

So how does the public navigate

See **COVID** on A2



Kokomo Tribune file photo

The Cat Café's cat colony has doubled in size and has more seating options, while being able to host more people and cats.

Kokomo Humane Society continues to battle disease outbreak

The Kokomo Humane Society continues to manage a Strep Zoo infectious disease outbreak at the shelter.

While dogs continue to improve with treatment, some cats are now being treated for signs of infection. Out of abundance of caution, the Cat Café will be closed until further notice.

Until this situation is resolved, the shelter is only accepting emergency strays (injured or aggressive dogs or injured cats).

Kokomo Humane asks that residents not surrender their pets or bring lost or stray animals to the shelter until further notice.

If an animal is posing a risk to the public, call 765-452-6224. Kokomo Humane can help interested parties with temporary foster guidance and supplies.

Strep Zoo (Streptococcus zooepidemicus) is a newly emerging and highly contagious bacterial infection that can cause hemorrhagic pneumonia. While very rare, this bacteria can also affect immunocompromised individuals and other animals.

Resolution involves rapid identification, separation and treatment with antibiotics. The close proximity inherent in animal shelters increases the risk of rapid transmission for this type of infection.

Kokomo Humane is taking the recommended precautions with its staff and animals. It is continuing to work with veterinarians and animal health experts at Purdue and Best Friends Animal Society to contain and eliminate this outbreak while providing treatment for the animals in its care.

Postal delivery information:

WEATHER

84
55
Sunny.
Full forecast on A8.

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