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LA PORTE COUNTY

Herald-Dispatch

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County, city enter Microsoft deal

By ELIZABETH BUNTON
Staff Writer

La PORTE — La Porte County will also now be profiting from the Microsoft data center.

The La Porte County Redevelopment Commission (RDC), on April 22, unanimously approved a joint undertaking agreement between the La Porte County Redevelopment Commission and the city of La Porte

Redevelopment Commission. At a separate meeting on April 29, the city's RDC unanimously approved the same agreement.

In June 2024, the city of La Porte entered a partnership with Microsoft Corp. for the technology giant to construct a 245,000-square-foot data center on 489 acres of on the southern edge of the city. And now, as of late, an additional 20 parcels of county land within the same area of



REARDON



COOK

Pleasant Township — south of Boyd Boulevard between CR-250S and State Road 2 — has been brought before the La Porte City Council for super-voluntary annexation

to allow Microsoft to expand their data center project.

If the La Porte City Council, at their May 18 meeting, were to decide to annex the land into the city, plans are already in motion, according to La Porte County Office of Economic Development Executive Director Matt Reardon, for the creation of a tax increment financing (TIF) district within the newly annexed area.

"... when you create a TIF

district, the entity that creates the TIF district collects all the money from the county, township, library, school-board, special district and uses it for specific purposes that are outlined in a plan document," Reardon told the County RDC.

Currently still in the planning stages — which is when the city will determine what projects the monies

See MICROSOFT, page A2

Juvenile killed, two others injured in shooting

STAFF REPORTS

THE PINES — A juvenile has died and two other people were injured after a shooting in the town of Pines late Saturday night.

The Porter County Sheriff's Office said they are investigating a battery with shots fired at a residence in the 1700 Block of Liberty Avenue in Pine Township.

According to the Sheriff's Office, deputies were dispatched at about 11:01 p.m. to a disturbance involving several Michigan City High School students following prom activities. As a result of this disturbance, one male juvenile died and one 18-year-old female and another male juvenile were also shot.

The Sheriff's Office said this appears to be an isolated incident, and they do not believe there is an on-going threat to public safety at this time.

Anyone with information regarding this case is encouraged to contact Detective Sgt. Marshall at 219-477-3136.

"If you were at this residence when the disturbance took place, we encourage you to contact Sgt. Marshall," the Sheriff's Office said in a statement Sunday.

"We do not have any further comment regarding this on-going investigation. Thank you to all the Agencies that assisted in this investigation," the Sheriff's Office added.

In a statement Monday, Michigan City Area Schools Communications Director Megan Daurer said the district was aware of the "tragic off-campus incident" involving several MCHS students following prom activities.

"Our thoughts are with the students, families, and everyone impacted during this difficult time. Counseling and support resources will be available to our students and staff. Questions regarding the investigation should be directed to law enforcement," she said.

Responding to Saturday's shooting, Michigan City Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch said that her heart is "especially with the mothers, fathers, families, classmates and friends" who are grieving.

"On this Mother's Day, our Michigan City community is carrying unimaginable pain following last night's tragic shooting after prom that claimed the life of a Michigan City High School student and seriously injured two other students," Nelson Deutch stated Sunday via Facebook.

"Out of respect for the families, I had hoped to allow them space and

See SHOOTING, page A2

LP to keep collaborating with Avenew on roads

By ELIZABETH BUNTON
Staff Writer

La PORTE — The partnership between the city of La Porte and the Indianapolis-based company Avenew has been extended.

The La Porte City Council, on April 20, unanimously approved adopting the provisions of Indiana Code 5-23-1-1 — which allows for the "state or a political subdivision [to] enter into a public-private agreement with an operator" — in the city of La Porte.

The working relationship between the city and Avenew — which specializes in infrastructure and asset management — was originally approved by the Board of Public Works on Oct. 7, 2025, and, during this time, the relationship was based on the company helping to improve the city's roads — which, according to La Porte Mayor Tom Dermody, is exactly why the city is continuing the relationship.

"Before we've taken office ... in 2020, we've heard from the public saying, 'we need more roads paved. Our infrastructure is extremely old.' We made a point to show the public how old our water [and] wastewater. We have a 100-year-old infrastructure. Our roads are in similar shape," Dermody said on April 20.

And with the limited amount of funding available through the state — which, Dermody said, is typically used to do "the same thing expecting a different result" — smaller communities, such as La Porte, have had to "rethink how we do roads."

Which is why the city has decided to extend its partnership with Avenew, "to have professionals that are in the business, every day, to look at our road system," and help discover new ways to help improve the city's roads on a tight

See AVENEW, page A2



Photos by Anthony Hudson

Michigan City High School (MCHS) football team member Nathaniel Simmons carries a rock during volunteer work at Keys to Hope Garden on April 28. The team, as part of a service project, helped build raised beds and clean the garden for the season.



From left, Dezmon Howard, Jaden Scully and Bryson Adkins, junior defensive linemen, work together at the Keys to Hope Garden on April 28.



Sylas Bradford, MCHS junior defensive lineman, contributes to the cleanup of the Keys to Hope Garden on April 28.



The MCHS football coaching staff works as a unit during a service project at the Keys to Hope Garden on April 28.

Bonding through gardening

MCHS football helps Keys to Hope as part of team-building project

By ANTHONY HUDSON
Staff Writer

MICHIGAN CITY — As the Michigan City High School football team gears up for their 2026 season, preparation is already in full swing with workouts, team meetings and an unexpected twist: gardening?

At Keys to Hope in Michigan City, the Michigan City High School football team participated in a community service effort that also



The team talks among themselves following the volunteer effort at the Keys to Hope Garden on April 28.

served as team bonding. For nearly an hour, players used their strength and

teamwork to position pallets, move Lowe's supplies to the front of the building,

construct raised garden beds and clean up trash around the property.

Jamie Miller, development officer with the Unity Foundation of La Porte County, noted the visit was beneficial for both sides, helping the players connect with the Keys to Hope Community Resource Center and learn that it is a place they can turn to for support in the future.

"It's very important for the kids to give back, understand the good feeling and see the end results of making a place better," Miller said.

As Miller explained, she is also a member of the

See GARDENING, page A6

Michigan City named National Tree City

STAFF REPORTS

MICHIGAN CITY — Michigan City was recently named 2025 Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation in recognition of the city's continued commitment to planting, maintaining and growing a healthier urban tree canopy.

The national designation honors communities that prioritize responsible urban forestry, environmental stewardship and investments that improve quality of life for residents.

In recent years, Michigan City has become more intentional in the way it manages its trees, with year-round monitoring of tree health, growth and disease screening.

An inventory of trees on Michigan City property was completed in 2025 and used to develop an urban forestry management plan. The city continues to plant new trees throughout neighborhoods and green spaces, resulting in a net positive tree inventory even as older trees must be removed for public safety

concerns and development needs.

Those efforts are helping expand Michigan City's tree canopy while strengthening the city's environment and beautification mission.

"Michigan City is proud to receive this recognition, and we remain committed to building a cleaner, greener and more beautiful community for current residents and future generations," said Jen Birchfield, Michigan City Tree Board president.

"Trees play an important role in the health, character,

and long-term vitality of our neighborhoods," she added.

In cities and neighborhoods, trees help reduce urban heat, improve air quality, manage stormwater runoff, lower energy costs, and support both mental and physical well-being. They also beautify streetscapes, enhance property values and make communities more welcoming.

"We're proud Michigan City is among the growing network of communities

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