

PLAIN DEALER

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NEWS BRIEFS

Book sale in Manchester

NORTH MANCHESTER — The Friends of the North Manchester Public Library’s Fall Book Sale will take place from 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Oct. 22, and from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 23 and 24, in the library, 405 N. Market St.. Call 260-982-4773 or email northmanchesterlibrary.org for more information

New Heritage Pointe director

WARREN — For William “Bill” Reese, leadership in senior living starts with a simple question: How would you want your own family member to be treated?

That question has guided Bill throughout more than three decades in healthcare management, and now it is helping shape his approach as the new executive director of Heritage Pointe of Warren.



“I believe to work in healthcare, especially senior living, every employee must have a ‘servant’s heart,’” Bill says. “You need to ask the question, ‘If this was your mother, father, grandmother or grandfather, how would you like them to be treated?’”

We are very pleased to welcome Bill to Heritage Pointe of Warren,” says Chod Boxell, CEO of Heritage Pointe Communities. “His extensive healthcare experience, commitment to senior living and belief in treating every resident with dignity and respect make him a wonderful addition to our team.”

Bill’s career in healthcare management has included management in long term care, medical practice management and hospitals. He has worked in both nonprofit and for-profit organizations, but says church sponsored nonprofit healthcare has been particularly meaningful to him.

Local teacher named finalist

HUNTINGTON — Educators from across the state gathered in Indianapolis on Oct. 2, for the fifth annual Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala. As part of this black-tie event, more than \$210,000 was awarded to schools and educators across Indiana in recognition of their impactful work for students.

“Across our state, educators are leading with bold, student-centered strategies that strengthen learning from the earliest grades through high school and beyond,” said Governor Mike Braun. “Our Hoosier teachers empower students, support families, and help shape the future of our state. This night celebrates their extraordinary dedication to supporting student success each and every day.”

Winning \$500 as a 2026-27 Indiana Teacher of the Year Finalist was David Harvey, Huntington County Community Schools.

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Commissioners advance \$500K housing grant

By WESLEY DEHNE
Plain Dealer Correspondent

HUNTINGTON — The Huntington County Commissioners moved forward with major county upgrades during their meeting Oct. 5, 2026.

Key actions included advancing a \$500,000 owner-occupied housing rehabilitation grant, approving new voting and postal equipment, and welcoming the return of a popular downtown holiday tradition.

Commissioners Rob Miller and Tom Wall attended but Commissioner Terry Stoffel was not present.

Miller provided a detailed status report on the county’s \$500,000 owner-occupied housing grant, administered through Region 3A.

This program uses federal funds to help local homeowners with low or limited incomes fix up their properties. Instead of cosmetic upgrades like painting, the grant pays for critical emergency repairs that keep a home safe and liveable. This includes fixing leaky roofs, upgrading outdated electrical wiring, installing new water heaters, repairing broken furnaces and adding wheelchair ramps.

By tackling these expensive structural issues, the program prevents homes from falling into major disrepair and helps vulnerable residents – especially senior citizens and people with disabilities – stay safely in their own homes.

Shortages in contractor bids delayed Huntington County’s initial May timeline, forcing the county to rebid the work in August. Contracts were finalized for a Sept. 1 release, placing the project firmly back on track.

The first phase of the project released 10 homes to contractors, serving nine homeowners and utilizing \$150,000 in grant funding.

A second phase of 10 homes went out for bids on Sept. 1, with quotes returned by Sept. 22. The county expected to announce these awards around Oct. 6, drawing another \$100,000 to assist nine additional homeowners.

Looking ahead, a building inspector was to evaluate a third group of 10 homes around now. Region 3A will receive the scopes of work by late October, contractors will return quotes by Nov. 15, and awards will follow by the end of November.

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Commerce meets social conscience

By DAVID FRIESE NELSON
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NORTH MANCHESTER — A local business recently celebrated its one-year anniversary, a year in which its goal far exceeded merely the bottom line.

Behind the jewelry, bags and fashion accessories at Accessories for Hope is an endeavor to create social awareness.

“Accessories for Hope is dedicated to providing fair trade and ethically made products that provide customers with unique, high-quality items,” said Sherry Searles, owner of Accessories for Hope. “The jewelry, bags and other accessories are handmade by women living in situations of poverty or who have been rescued from human trafficking. Proceeds go toward helping them live sustainable lives, free from violence.”

Searles commented patrons may shop with a purpose, adding shoppers will discover something beautiful and unique while knowing their purchase supports women working toward safer, more sustainable futures.

Searles, a North Manchester resident, was first inspired toward this endeavor by the book, “Not for Sale” by David Batstone, becoming immersed in the heart-breaking topic and subsequently deciding to reach out to others to help make a difference. In the ensuing years, she’s gone onto work with many women in more than a dozen countries across the globe as well as stateside.

While a deep, heavy subject matter, the shop itself has a welcoming, peaceful calm ambience as guests can admire the dozens and dozens of handmade items. A woman of faith, Searles has the Biblical scripture “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” from Isaiah 1:17 written on the wall of her shop.

From jewelry to stuffed animals, many of the products include a biographical sketch of the artisans behind the creation.



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“Accessories for Hope is dedicated to providing fair trade and ethically made products that provide customers with unique, high-quality items,” said Sherry Searles, owner.

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Beckwith office initiates ex parte communication with judge

By NIKI KELLY
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Lt. Gov. Micah Beckwith’s office attempted to intervene in a criminal case involving a years-old hit-and-run but the reason is a mystery so far.

The judge informed attorneys in the case and refused to consider the correspondence.

“The Court finds that the correspondence constitutes an ex parte communication concerning a pending matter and is not appropriate for consideration by the Court pursuant to the Indiana Trial Rules,” reads a Sept. 25 order from Franklin Circuit Judge Alex Dudley, who is the special judge in Jordan Wadle’s Fayette County criminal case.

Ex parte communications are unauthorized because they don’t involve all legal parties in the case.

Beckwith’s office has not responded to multiple emails and phone calls from the Indiana Capital Chronicle starting Sept. 29.

The court confirmed the communication was a phone call, so there is no record to review.

The judge’s order came on the same day as a family member filed a handwritten emergency transport petition so Wadle could attend his father’s funeral on Sept. 26. The judge stroke the request and didn’t rule on it.

Larry Dale Wadle died Sept. 21 in Connersville. His obituary said he was a longtime deputy with the sheriff’s department and was Fayette County Sheriff from 1989 to 1991. He also was a pastor at East Side Pentecostal Church.

Beckwith is also a pastor.

According to an Indiana Supreme Court ruling, Wadle made unsolicited sexual advances toward a woman at a bar while drinking in 2015. There was an altercation in the parking lot with the woman’s husband and his brother, Charles Woodard.

“Although physically unprovoked by his interrogators, Wadle went on the offensive, punching and kicking. Wadle then returned to his car, suggesting an end to the fracas. But as Woodward retreated, Wadle’s car struck him from behind.

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Peru Board of Works OKs fall, holiday events

By WESLEY DEHNE
Plain Dealer Correspondent

PERU — At its Oct. 6 meeting, the Peru Board of Works approved several event requests, green lighted traffic changes and enhanced safety measures for upcoming fall and holiday traditions.

The approvals, made under new business, include the annual St. John’s Lutheran Church sauerkraut supper, the Miami Nation of Indians Removal March and the Light Up Peru Christmas parade.

Gwen Gerke, representing St. John’s Lutheran Church, presented a request for the church’s annual sauerkraut supper. The board approved the use of an alleyway and the closure of Fremont Street on Tuesday, Oct. 20, from 4-7 p.m.

To accommodate drive-thru, carryout and dine-in options during the busy event, traffic will enter the alley on Hood Street, flow down to Fremont Street and exit onto Third Street. The mayor noted that the arrangement has worked exceptionally well for many years without issue. Representatives from the police, street and fire departments voiced no concerns.

Sarah Siders Bitzel, tribal secretary for the Miami Nation of Indians, requested a police escort for the nation’s annual Miami Indian Removal March on Sunday, Oct. 18, beginning at 11 a.m.

The march will start at the tribal complex headquarters at 80 W. Sixth St., proceed east to Miami Street, head south to the West Canal intersection and conclude at the Ole Olsen Pavilion. The police department will provide a rolling closure, using a lead vehicle to block intersections and reopen them naturally as the march passes. No stationary barricades are required. The board approved the request 3-0.

The board also approved road closures and parking restrictions for the Light Up Peru Christmas parade, scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 21 – the weekend before Thanksgiving.

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More Coverage

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