

Local pantries face rising food demand



Food Bank of Northwest Indiana Volunteer Coordinator Twila Burks, center, directs volunteers as goods are packed to be shipped by the organization on Thursday. **KYLE TELECHAN/FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE**

Township offices, nonprofits prepare to meet need as SNAP cuts take hold

By Alexandra Kukulka
Post-Tribune

With SNAP benefits ending Nov. 1, Lake and Porter county officials are preparing for an influx of people seeking food assistance as SNAP benefits are set to expire.

Hilltop Neighborhood House in Valparaiso will be open an extra day next week and doubling hours for donations as community members have been coming to give more food, Hilltop CEO Jennifer Wright said.

The food pantry, which is typically open Thursdays, added an

extra day for Tuesday next week, Wright said. Next week, the Hilltop Mission Kitchen will be open Monday for hot meals from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the Hilltop Food Pantry will be open from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday, she said.

In the last few weeks, Wright said the food pantry line has been increasing and it will continue to grow as it gets closer to the end of the month. Wright said about 100 new families have started coming in the last two weeks.

“We’ve already seen an increase just in the last few weeks,” Wright

said. “The tipping point will be Saturday, and we didn’t want to make folks wait until the following Thursday ... so we added services for Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.”

The fate of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which helps about 1 in 8 Americans buy groceries, could dry up Nov. 1 without either a resolution of the federal government shutdown or other action.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees SNAP, told

Turn to Snap, Page 3



WNBA star and Gary native Dana Evans speaks after receiving the Key to the City at Westside Leadership Academy in Gary on Thursday. **MICHAEL GARD/FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

ISP arrest rattles East Chicago

ICE rumors sparks after staging at Police Department

By Michelle L. Quinn
Post-Tribune

An arrest by the Indiana State Police early Friday morning wasn’t a Homeland Security action despite initial confusion that it was, according to the ISP.

The Illinois State Police asked the ISP to assist with the arrest of Miguel A. Rodriguez, 45, of East Chicago, for his alleged involvement in a recent interstate shooting, ISP spokesman Sgt. Glen Fifield said in a release Friday afternoon. Rodriguez, who has a history of armed violence, had a warrant out for him for aggravated discharge of a firearm in Cook County, Illinois, he said.

ISP’s SWAT Team, along with marked and unmarked ISP vehicles, set up staging at 7 a.m. in the East Chicago Police Station’s west lot, according to a statement East Chicago Police Chief Jose Rivera released on the department’s social media page.

After seeing the staging, Rivera contacted ISP State headquarters; the ISP sergeant to whom he spoke said that “ISP personnel were conducting an operation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in our area” and that “their activities would continue through the weekend with commercial truck enforcement,” at which point Rivera alerted city leadership, he said.

“It’s common practice for outside law enforcement agencies to notify local departments of major operations within city limits. Unfortunately, this is the second time Indiana State Police and Immigration & Customs Enforcement Agents did not inform us of a major operation in our city,” Rivera said. “Though they are not required to by law, it is courtesy to notify department leadership that you’re (sic) agency is conducting an investigation in their city. These advance notifications prevent misinformation from being spread and ensures (sic) transparency.”

That wasn’t true, Fifield said. “(Rodriguez) has a history of armed violence, and it was determined that SWAT would be used to make the apprehension,” he said in the release. “To dispel false

Turn to ICE, Page 3

‘We were counted out, always doubted’

Dana Evans earns key to Gary’s heart

By Carole Carlson

WNBA two-time champion Dana Evans sat in a white pantsuit near center court next to her parents Thursday in the Gary West Side gym.

She heard accolades rain down from a lineup of elected officials and school leaders and accepted proclamations and a three-foot key from Mayor Eddie Melton.

Earlier in October, Evans won her second WNBA title as her Las Vegas Aces dismantled the Phoenix Mercury in four games.

Off the bench, Evans drilled five 3-point shots and scored 21 points in game one.

Turn to Key, Page 3



From left, Gary Mayor Eddie Melton, WNBA star and Gary native Dana Evans and mayoral advisor Markael Watkins display Evans’ Key to the City at West Side Leadership Academy.

This turkey is ready to travel

Make-ahead bird tastes nearly as good as it does right after roasting. **Page 9**

SAY HAYDEN

Sophomore defensive specialist Klimowicz ‘will go after any ball’ for semistate-bound Crown Point. **Page 14**

Gary council to vote on stormwater, wastewater rate changes

By Maya Wilkins
Post-Tribune

At its Tuesday meeting, the Gary Common Council heard from the city’s sanitary district executive director and multiple residents about upcoming changes to the wastewater treatment and stormwater fees.

The council was originally expected to vote on the rate increase ordinances Tuesday,

but Councilwoman Linda Barnes Caldwell, D-5th, asked for the legislation to move back to the finance committee.

Council members unanimously approved the motion, citing residents’ concerns as the reason for the delay.

A public hearing for the wastewater treatment and stormwater fee increases is scheduled for Nov. 17. The city council has final say on the fee increases.

According to ordinance documents, the wastewater fee increases are for “non-residential” users. Gary Sanitary District Executive Director Ragen Hatcher said Tuesday that the increases would impact about 28 industrial users and 1,800 commercial users throughout the city.

The average commercial user in Gary uses between 2,000 and 3,000 gallons of water per month, Hatcher said, adding that the rate

increase would be about a \$15 change per month in their bill.

Industrial users will have a larger increase because their usage is greater, Hatcher said. She did not elaborate on what the actual change will be.

“I just want to say that also, we are under pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Justice to make

Turn to Water, Page 3