



Minus Burrow, things getting worse for Bengals

SPORTS, 9A

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Carol Chaney poses in her store Annie Rooney's Home Decor with one of her children and grandchildren. SHELBY REEVES/CHILLICOTHE GAZETTE

Store celebrates 25 years of business

Shelby Reeves Chillicothe Gazette | USA TODAY NETWORK

For 25 years, Annie Rooney's Home Decor has sold everything from candles and pillows to upholstered furniture in Kingston. After a quarter of a century, owner Carol Chaney is looking back at the memories and celebrating the future. • The business, located inside a restored old general store, sells primitive furniture and decorations. From floor to ceiling, the store offers a variety of chairs, rugs, curtains, signs and more. Chaney has filled the space with pieces, most of which are made in America.

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Carol Chaney is seen here in 2000 with her son after opening her store. CHILLICOTHE GAZETTE ARCHIVE PHOTO/2000

Officials announce decreased property taxes

Destiny Torres
Chillicothe Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

CHILLICOTHE — The Ross County Commissioners have announced a decrease in property tax for the county starting in the 2026 tax year, according to a Sept. 29 press release.

“Over the last three years, property valuations have skyrocketed in Ohio at a level never experienced before,” release said. “The main cause of these increased residential and commercial property values, and the associated tax payments, are because of the low inventory of homes available for sale, creating bidding wars during sales negotiations, combined with record inflation.”

According to the press release, the state of Ohio now ranks eighth in the nation for property tax burden.

“Increases to property taxes each year between twenty percent to thirty percent or more is not fair to Ross County Residents,” The release said. “With viable concerns of people being forced out of their homes because they cannot afford the taxes, the Ross County Commissioners are saying enough is enough.”

That is why in 2025, the county commissioners voted unanimously to lower the inside mileage tax rates of the county government's portion of property tax from 3.1% to 2.4% with the help of the Tax Commission.

“The Tax Commission is restricted by Ohio State law as to how low they can reduce the tax rate, and they cannot take it any lower,” The press release said.

However, Commissioners are able to lower inside mileage to a lower level based off of their analysis of lower tax revenue compared to total county expenses for the services provided to tax payers.

For the upcoming 2026 tax season, Commissioners have reduced the inside mileage from 2.4% to 1.88%, meaning Ross County will no longer take any additional property tax income to run the county.

“We must emphasize that the county government portion of the total

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Ohio struggles with fixing high absentee rate in schools

Cole Behrens
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Over a quarter of Ohio students regularly miss school — and education leaders say that's a serious problem.

According to the 2024-2025 Ohio Department of Education and Workforce state report card, the statewide average for chronic absenteeism was 25.1%, a half of a percent improvement from 25.6% the previous year but still a nagging problem. Chronic absenteeism in Ohio is defined as a student missing 10%

Absenteeism has a direct correlation with student outcomes and academic success, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Low-income and minority students tend to have higher rates of absenteeism, often due to challenges related to transportation, caregiving, housing and other factors.

or more of a school year for any reason. Last year, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine announced he was making the chronic

school absenteeism issue a priority, and said the state was aiming to cut the absenteeism rate in half over the next five

years. The chronic absenteeism rate spiked during the pandemic, when more than 30% of Ohio students were chronically absent during the 2020-2021 school year. Before the pandemic, the rate was around 17%.

Hedy Chang, executive director of the national policy group Attendance Matters, said that when students are missing school, rather than blaming the child or family, it needs to be a “sign that we need to do more engagement and outreach.”

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