



Health insurance debate may spell trouble for GOP

INSIDE, 7A



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When the USDA announced in late October that there would be no SNAP benefits in November, it was the first time federal food aid had not arrived in the program's more than 60-year history. GARY C. KLEIN/SHEBOYGAN PRESS

Food banks will feel fallout for months

Many Americans used up reserves during closure

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

The Missoula Food Bank & Community Center in Montana doubled its food order for the first two weeks of November to help handle a flood of requests and will spend “far and above” more than what its has budgeted this month, said Executive Director Amy Allison.

A half-dozen other food banks across the country have similar stories: They’ve carved massive holes in their budgets over the past six weeks as they’ve tried to keep up with demand sparked by the federal government shutdown. It hit at the same time layoffs and rising prices had already boosted the number of people seeking help.

And now they’re facing the rest of the year having already pleaded with every donor on their list to give as much as possible.

“The fallout is going to be huge, and I don’t think we can even really wrap our heads around that yet,” Allison said.

The food banks said they expect to feel the impacts of the shutdown for

See **FOOD BANKS**, Page 2A

State touts new AI threat reporting system

Nancy Molnar
Canton Repository
USA TODAY NETWORK

CANTON – Ohio has a new system for reporting suspicious activity that uses a chatbot powered by artificial intelligence to collect tips from the public about potential threats of violence.

Ohio Homeland Security’s online system, Safeguard Ohio, allows users to upload video, audio, and photos while giving them the option to remain anonymous. It replaced an online reporting method that required individuals to fill out a form online.

Initial results show the innovation resulting in more tips, said Andy Wilson, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, which houses Ohio Homeland Security.

Before Safeguard Ohio’s soft launch in early August, Homeland Security got 25 to 30 tips per month. The number tripled even before the existence of the AI-powered software was announced at a Sept. 12 press conference, Wilson said.

How does Safeguard Ohio work?

Submitted information goes first to a Homeland Security analyst.

“This is why the AI function is so important, because the Homeland Security analyst goes through and basically assesses the credibility or the validity of the tip,” Wilson said.

See **SYSTEM**, Page 3A

Ohio sends Christmas trees to troops overseas for 30th year

Jane Imbody
AI-assisted reporter
The Daily Record | USA TODAY NETWORK

REYNOLDSBURG — The Ohio Department of Agriculture is spreading holiday cheer to military members stationed overseas through Operation Evergreen, now in its 30th year.

Each year, ODA partners with the Ohio Christmas Tree Association to

send dozens of Ohio-grown Christmas trees, along with homemade holiday decorations and cards, to military personnel. This year, approximately 50 trees will be sent to troops serving in Kuwait, according to a community announcement.

“Sending a piece of home overseas lets our service men and women know

See **EVERGREENS**, Page 3A



Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Brian Baldrige helps wrap a Christmas tree that will be sent to military personnel in Kuwait. PROVIDED BY OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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