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TO ADDRESS  
ADDICTION AND  
HOMELESSNESS. B1**

## TOP LOCAL STORY

# Miami University unveils major AM Hub school

Manufacturing classes to open in VORA Tech HQ near regional campus.

By Michael D. Clark  
Contributing Writer

Hundreds turned out Monday in Hamilton for the unveiling of the region's most ambitious, joint education-business partnership attempted in Butler County.

The \$31 million Advanced Manufacturing Workforce and Innovation Hub, or AM Hub, center was officially opened in the former Vora Technology Park adjacent to Miami University's regional campuses near the Great Miami River.

The unique partnerships involving Miami, Butler Tech, Butler County, the city of Hamilton, state backing and dozens of private manufacturing companies saw employees, supporters and local and state political leaders mix with an overflow crowd heralding the launch of unique project to join area schools with private industry.

"This shows the power of collaboration," noted Ande Durojaiye, Miami's vice president for strategy and partnerships, in a statement announcing learning and training center's opening in the 375,000-square-foot former corporate headquarters of the Champion Paper Company off Knightsbridge Road.

"The AM Hub is a space that provides the training, upskilling, and talent development that our community needs. This is a real driver of economic mobility," said Durojaiye.

William Sprankles, superintendent of Butler Tech, said the



A ribbon-cutting was held for the new Advanced Manufacturing Workforce and Innovation Hub Monday in Hamilton. The facility is a partnership between Miami University and Butler Tech in the former VORA Technology Park. The robotics lab features a variety of robots from different manufacturers.

partnerships are about strengthening America's workforce from the ground up.

The Butler Tech portion of the expansive learning facility opened to area high school students last month.

"The Advanced Manufacturing Workforce and Innovation Hub is a national model for how education, industry and higher education can work together to prepare highly skilled, industry-ready talent," said Sprankles.

"By aligning hands-on training with rigorous academics and real employer needs, we're helping ensure the United States remains competitive in advanced manufacturing – while creating clear, attainable pathways for students to move from education into meaningful, high-demand careers."

The new facility expands the Miami University Regionals Hamilton campus, which is adjacent to the AM Hub grounds.

According to Miami officials, students at AM Hub begin their pathway at Butler Tech, with the opportunity to progress to associate and bachelor's degrees in engineering technology at Miami Regionals and undergraduate and graduate programs in the College of Engineering and Computing on the university's main Oxford campus.

"The Advanced Manufacturing

AM Hub continued on A6

LOCAL IMPACT

**Judge blocks end of TPS for Haitians**

DHS' McLaughlin vows to take case to Supreme Court.

By Cornelius Frolik  
and Jessica Orozco  
Staff Writer

A federal district judge on Monday evening issued a ruling that blocks the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from terminating Temporary Protected Status for Haiti, a decision that impacts potentially thousands of Haitian people who live in Springfield and Clark County.

U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes in Washington paused the termination of TPS for Haitians while a lawsuit challenging the move proceeds. The TPS designation for people from the Caribbean island country was scheduled to end 11:59 p.m. Feb. 3.

"During the stay, the Termination shall be null, void, and of no legal effect," the judge said in her two-page order.

The ruling postpones the end of TPS for Haiti indefinitely while the case proceeds. The Trump administration could seek to stay the judge's order in an effort to allow the termination to take effect as the case continues.

DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin vowed Monday evening to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"This is lawless activism that we will be vindicated on," McLaughlin posted to her X account following the ruling. "Haiti's TPS was granted following an earthquake that took place over 15 years ago, it was never intended to be a de facto amnesty program, yet that's how previous administrations have used it for decades. Temporary means temporary and the final word will not be from an activist judge legislating from the bench."

The Monday ruling came in a lawsuit alleging that Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem unlawfully decided to terminate Haiti's TPS even before she took office because she was following President Donald Trump's orders.

The Trump administration

TPS continued on A6

ONLY IN THE JOURNAL-NEWS

## Locally owned Ohio Kings to play two games here

Professional basketball team is owned by Middletown grads.

By Rick McCrabb  
Contributing Writer

The opportunity to showcase their professional basketball team at the renovated Robert "Sonny" Hill Jr. Community Center was too much for two Middletown natives to ignore.

Team owners Kevin S. Aldridge and his cousin, Kevin L. Aldridge,

both Middletown High School graduates, are bringing their Ohio Kings, based in Cincinnati, to Middletown for games Feb. 7 and Feb. 14.

The two games tip off at 5:30 p.m., with doors opening at 5 p.m.

The Ohio Kings, part of the American Basketball Association, were founded seven years ago, and this is their sixth season because COVID-19 canceled one year.

The team played at Wade E. Miller Arena at the high school several years ago. Kevin S.

Aldridge said he hopes the two games give local basketball enthusiasts a chance to watch professional basketball and get a glimpse of the renovated community center.

Late last year, the 82-year-old center officially reopened following a \$6.7 million renovation and more than one year of construction.

The renovation has almost doubled the square footage of the facility, including a new 9,000-square-foot gym and 1,800-square-foot family room.

Kevin S. Aldridge, 51, a 1992 MHS graduate, said it's important for Middletown residents to understand the center is for the entire community, not just those who live in that end of the city.

"We want people to come and check it out," he said of the center, 800 Lafayette Ave. "They're doing some really great stuff down there."

The Ohio Kings are the second longest running professional basketball team in Cincinnati,

Kings continued on A6

### THE LATEST

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3 smart recipes that will change way you make meatballs. C1

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# DIGGING DEEP TO GET THE REAL STORY

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