



## DOJ argues you can't use cannabis and guns

NEWS, 6A

# LANCASTER EAGLE-GAZETTE

Welcomed into your life since 1809

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 | LANCASTER, OHIO | LANCASTEREAGLEGAZETTE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



U.S. 23 between Columbus and Toledo would become part of a new interstate route that would connect six states. The Ohio Department of Transportation is studying the feasibility of the new interstate.

KYLE ROBERTSON/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

# ODOT studies the feasibility of I-73

## New interstate highway would link 6 states

Laura A. Bischoff and Victoria Moorwood

State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's been a highway dream for decades: Interstate 73, a new interstate through six states, including Ohio, that would untangle traffic from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to South Carolina's Myrtle Beach.

The idea is gaining some traction. The Ohio Department of Transportation is conducting a \$1.5 million study for Ohio's portion of the project from Toledo to Chesapeake. The study is expected to be done by December 2026.

At the federal level, U.S. Rep. Dave Taylor, an Amelia Republican, intro-

duced a resolution backing an I-73 through Ohio and spoke to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy about it in July.

A new I-73 would combine existing stretches of highways, such as Interstate 75 through parts of Michigan and U.S. 23 north and south of Columbus. The exact routes and segments and funding have yet to be nailed down.

Advocates for the new interstate say it would help with tourism, emergency evacuations and economic development.

Parallel to the I-73 feasibility study, Gov. Mike DeWine's administration has been pushing for massive improvements to U.S. 23 from Worthington to Waldo. In 2024, DeWine unveiled plans to remove 33 of 39 traffic lights, install overpasses and add interchanges along the 23-mile stretch in an attempt to improve traffic and improve safety.

Ohio Department of Transportation spokesman Matt Bruning said the state is dealing with U.S. 23 congestion and won't wait for the I-73 plan to become reality. The I-73 plan has support from both ends of the state.

Brian Dicken, vice president for advocacy and strategic initiatives for the Toledo Chamber, said addressing congestion and safety along U.S. 23 just north of Columbus is the priority.

"When I come to Columbus, I don't know if it'll take two and a half hours or four hours. It depends on what you run into," Dicken said.

Ohio needs a bypass that allows through traffic to travel off U.S. 23 and join I-71, he said. More broadly, Ohio needs to look at ways to make accessing customers and goods in the Southeastern U.S. easier, he said.

See I-73, Page 2A

# DeWine uses task forces to tackle problems

Laura A. Bischoff

State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK

When a thorny problem comes up, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine calls on friends and experts to quickly size up the issue and draft recommendations.

Since he took the oath of office in January 2019, DeWine has appointed two dozen working groups to wrestle with issues such as school bus safety and nursing home safety. Task forces are as much as DeWine's brand as homemade pie, baseball and grand-kids.

"It's a way to focus on particular problems and come up with practical solutions that will work," DeWine said. He added "I think with every task force we've been able to do something that was positive."

The latest groups are working on property tax reforms and how to restrict SNAP recipients from using the program to buy sugary drinks.

Not surprisingly, a chunk of the 24 working groups has focused on issues near and dear to DeWine: children, health and safety, and criminal justice. Some of DeWine's appointed groups are spurred by investigative journalism such as a Cincinnati Enquirer, Columbus Dispatch, Akron Beacon Journal and Canton Repository investigation into conditions in Ohio's youth prisons, and Dispatch projects on failures in how missing persons are handled, and problems with outstanding warrants.

Here's a list of working groups launched by DeWine:

- 2025: Public safety in state parks; property tax reform; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; missing persons.
- 2024: Diversion from state mental health hospitals; children's vision screening and eyeglasses.
- 2023: Juvenile detention and

See TASK FORCES, Page 2A

# What books are popular in Fairfield County? Read on

Ava Agoranos

Lancaster Eagle-Gazette  
USA TODAY NETWORK

LANCASTER — With the school year starting throughout August, you may be inspired to start a new book to read. Check out the books that have gotten the most reads this year in Fairfield County.

The top 10 most popular Fairfield County District Library books from January through July 2025:

1. "Paranoia" by James Patterson & James O. Born
2. "Holmes is Missing" by James Patterson & Brian Sitts
3. "The Crash" by Freida McFadden

4. "The Mirror" by Nora Roberts
5. "Never Say Never" by Danielle Steel
6. "The Women" by Kristin Hannah
7. "Counting Miracles" by Nicholas Sparks
8. "The Writer" by James Patterson & J.D. Barker
9. "The House of Cross" by James Patterson
10. "Raised by Wolves" by James Patterson & Emily Raymond

The most popular Fairfield County District Library books of the summer from June 1 to July 31:

1. "2 Sisters Murder Investigations" by James Patterson & Candice Fox
2. "25 Alive" by James Patterson & Maxine Paetro

3. "The First Gentleman" by Bill Clinton & James Patterson
  4. "A Mind of Her Own" by Danielle Steel
  5. "Hidden Nature" by Nora Roberts
- The Central Library Consortium is made up of 18 other libraries and their branches throughout Central Ohio. Here are the top 10 titles from this summer across the CLC:

1. "The Women" by Kristin Hannah
2. "Great Big Beautiful Life" by Emily Henry
3. "Funny Story" by Emily Henry
4. "The Housemaid is Watching" by Freida McFadden

See BOOKS, Page 2A



Ruth Hood restocks and straightens shelves at Books & Such, the books store at the Lancaster branch of the Fairfield County District Library, on August 19. LANCASTER EAGLE-GAZETTE FILE

### Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to lancastereagle-gazette.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 116 | No. 196  
Subscribe 877-424-0213  
©2025 \$1.50

