



Jones scores two touchdowns on defense in Ross victory

SPORTS, 1B

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LEGALIZING POT



Cannabis plants grow in a cultivation tent at Prolific Growhouse in Mount Holly on April 4, 2024.

CHRIS LACHALL/USA TODAY NETWORK ATLANTIC GROUP

New rules eliminate some marijuana offenses in Ohio, but not all

Nancy Molnar Canton Repository | USA TODAY NETWORK

Michigan may be Ohio’s biggest rival when it comes to the legal marijuana industry, thanks to lower prices. • But it’s not the only one. • The underground market — people growing and selling marijuana illegally — remains active in Ohio, law enforcement officials say, despite cannabis being readily available in joints, gummies, oils and other forms at more than 225 regulated dispensaries throughout the state. • Law enforcement agencies admit they are more focused on other illegal drugs such as fentanyl and heroin, but marijuana-related arrests — while significantly down from years ago when cannabis was illegal in Ohio — continue.

It raises the question of why people are still buying illegally when they don’t have to. Marijuana experts and law enforcement say perhaps because it’s cheaper or because people don’t want to step into one of the legal cannabis businesses. “The answer is economics,” Morgan Fox, political director of the marijuana advocacy group NORML and an Olmsted Falls native, wrote in an email. “Establishing a legal, regulated market isn’t like flipping a

See MARIJUANA, Page 2A



Canton Police Chief John Gabbard presents 2025 crime statistics before City Council. ABREANNA BLOSE / CANTON REPOSITORY

TALK ABOUT WOODVILLE:

Fright Night returns with a spooky twist

Rene Dix
Special to the News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fall means leaves changing colors, pumpkins and giant skeletons popping up in yards and one of Woodville’s favorite events: Woodville Business & Community Association’s Fright Night. Always the fourth Thursday of October,

it will be Oct. 22 this year. Fright Night will start off with the annual lamppost decorating contest. Local businesses are invited to decorate a lamp or signpost along Main St between Cherry and Water Streets. Votes will be collected at the Woodville Library and via Facebook beginning Oct 19. There will also be a chance to vote at the library during Fright Night. The top

vote-getter in each category (judge’s choice or people’s choice) will win a “delightfully tacky trophy,” courtesy of the WBCA. Food trucks will be located on N. Walnut St. from 4:30-7:30 p.m., making it easy to pick up dinner before getting the kiddos into their costumes or

See FRIGHT NIGHT , Page 2A

State house race still has GOP candidate on ballot

Roger LaPointe
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Caleb Stidham is to remain on the ballot as the Republican Party candidate for state representative after his nomination was challenged at the Ohio Supreme Court for possibly violating Ohio’s Open Meetings Act. “Rather, we deny the writ based on the doctrine of laches. [Carl] Koebel unreasonably delayed in bringing his complaint, and the board of elections and the secretary of state have been prejudiced by this delay,” the Ohio Supreme Court wrote in their opinion Oct. 9.

Erie County Treasurer and Republican Party Chair Caleb Stidham was tapped to be the nominee for the 89th House District seat, which includes most of Ottawa County, after incumbent State Rep. D.J. Swearingen withdrew his name Aug. 4. Swearingen won the Republican primary May 5.

House District 89 includes Ottawa, Erie and part of Huron counties. Upon the withdrawal of candidacy, a “party district committee,” consisting of members of the Republican Party county central committees of the three counties, chose a replacement in a non-public meeting.

See CANDIDATE, Page 3A



Stidham

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