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Portage leaders mourn Eric Decker

Banker, avid volunteer battled pancreatic cancer

April Helms

Akron Beacon Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Family and colleagues remember Eric Decker as a good friend and someone who was actively involved in the community.

“Eric was a truly exceptional person, a

beloved friend, devoted family man, and he will be deeply missed and never forgotten,” said Robert S. Standardi, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Portage Community Bank in Ravenna in a news release. Decker was the bank’s senior vice president and chief lending officer.

“Not only was he successful in com-



Decker

community banking, but he was also successful in life and positively touched so many people on his journey. He was enthusiastic about everything and put everyone before himself. His impact and legacy are ever enduring.”

Decker, 47, of Hudson, died Jan. 9 at Hillcrest Hospital in Mayfield Heights of

complications from pancreatic cancer. He was born April 17, 1978, in Ravenna, the son of Vanessa (Giorgio) and Blaine (Mike) Decker.

“Eric was a deeply valued member of PCB’s leadership team whose professionalism and commitment reflected the values of our bank through and through,” said Connie M. Bennett, chief executive

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POWERING AI DATA CENTERS

Polluting plants – disproportionately located in low-income communities – forced back into service

GETTY IMAGES

‘VERY DISAPPOINTING’

Laila Kearney
REUTERS

CHICAGO – In Chicago’s working-class Pilsen neighborhood, a 1960s-era oil-fired power plant rises up from an industrial lot behind Dvorak Park, which in warmer weather is packed with children climbing on its colorful playground and zooming down slides.

The rarely-used eight-unit Fisk power plant owned by Houston-based NRG Energy was scheduled to retire in 2026. But then came electricity demands from artificial intelligence.

Prices shot up in the country’s biggest power market, PJM Interconnection, as electricity requests from data centers

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The rarely used Fisk power plant in Chicago’s working-class Pilsen neighborhood was scheduled to retire in 2026.

PHOTOS BY ERIC COX/REUTERS

“If you were a redlined neighborhood, you were more likely to have a fossil fuel power plant built nearby, and we saw that relationship was even stronger for peaker plants.”

Lara Cushing, UCLA professor of environmental health sciences



Fisk Coal Station’s dormant smokestack is visible from Dvorak Park in Pilsen, a predominantly Mexican community.

Ohio ACA enrollment drops as premiums increase

Haley BeMiller

State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

The number of Ohioans getting health care through the Affordable Care Act dropped 20% after extra assistance for enrollees expired last year.

About 463,000 people have signed up for coverage this year, down 120,000 from 2025, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The numbers reflect new and returning consumers who enrolled in the marketplace as of Jan. 3.

Open enrollment ended Jan. 15, meaning those figures may not be final.

Ohio saw the second-largest decline in signups by percentage behind North Carolina. Enrollment could dip even further throughout the year if people are unable to pay their premiums and lose coverage, according to KFF, a health care policy nonprofit.

Health care costs are front and center after enhanced tax credits under the Affordable Care Act expired at the end of 2025. The law provides subsidies to enrollees who qualify based on their income, but Congress approved extra aid and expanded eligibility in 2021.

The GOP-controlled U.S. House and Senate let the enhanced credits expire after the issue dominated the longest government shutdown in history. Some Republicans support a two-year extension, but others contend the health care system needs to be overhauled first.

As a result, Ohioans who use the marketplace could face higher costs. An adult in Franklin County earning \$50,000 may spend \$1,700 more on health care, according to estimates from KFF. Premiums could increase by \$8,700 for a family of four in Summit County with a household income of \$130,000.

U.S. Sen. Jon Husted, an Upper Arlington Republican, introduced a bill in December that would extend the enhanced subsidies for two years, cap income eligibility and require enrollees to pay a \$5 minimum monthly payment to discourage fraud. Ohio’s other U.S. senator, Bernie Moreno, was part of bipartisan talks on legislation that have started to stall, NBC News reported.

“We have a lot of work to do to make health care more affordable in this country,” Husted said Jan. 13. “It’s

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