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**MYERS
MARKET
OFFERING
FIVE NEW
OPTIONS. A3**



**PLAYOFF HOPES
FADE AFTER
BENGALS' LOSS
TO STEELERS. D1**

**MAKE THE
MOST OF
SHORTER
BOUNDS OF
EXERCISE. C1**

TOP SPRINGFIELD STORY

Historical marker for Lawrence unveiled

Local sports legend
broke color barriers
in football, baseball.

By **Brooke Spurlock**
Staff Writer

The Conscious Connect Community Development Corp. unveiled its second Ohio Historical Marker during a dedication in Springfield to honor Brooks Lawrence, a “talented all-around athlete that used sports to create social change.”

Lawrence is a local trailblazer who was Springfield High School’s first Black quarterback and the first Black player inducted into the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame. He was a track star, a basketball, football and baseball player, and he became an avid golfer as an adult.

“Brooks Lawrence is truly the godfather of Ohio’s baseball color barrier, and it was my social responsibility to ensure that he received proper recognition,” said Karlos L. Marshall, co-founder and co-executive of The Conscious Connect CDC, and lead researcher on the project.

The “baseball color barrier” refers to the segregation Black players experienced when they were mostly excluded from major and minor league baseball until the 1940s, according to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

“Thousands of cars and pedestrians will pass this marker daily,” Marshall said. “It brings me joy that his legacy will never be in the shadows again, and that his story will inspire future generations to come.”



The Conscious Connect Community Development Corp. Co-Executive Director Karlos L. Marshall speaks during a ceremony unveiling a historical marker for Brooks Lawrence on Friday at The Dome on South Limestone Street. Lawrence, a Springfield native, broke the color barrier on Miami University’s baseball team and for a St. Louis AAA minor league team. He later was a star pitcher with the Reds and the organization’s first Black front-office executive. **BRYANT BILLING / STAFF**

**‘Greatness can
grow right here’**

This project has been nearly two years in the making, Marshall said, and it represents a man who had a vision that said “talent has no color and courage has no limit.”

“As we unveil this marker today, may it stand as more than a metal and words. May it stand as a mirror for our young people, as a reminder

that greatness can grow right here from the soil of these very hallways right here in the Champion City,” he said. “May this marker ensure that his story, his struggle and his successes will never again be hidden in the shadows.”

Gov. Mike DeWine attended the dedication to honor Brooks, not only as a fan of Brooks, but also as a fan of the Cincinnati Reds who he has followed since he was young.

“I remember whenever Brooks was pitching, my dad would remind me how proud he was because he was from Springfield. That was a big deal that somebody local made the Reds,” he said.

“I’m just here really to say how happy I am that this day has occurred ... I think different things that I get to do as governor, this is one of the happy ones,”

Lawrence continued on A6

CLOSER LOOK

Food trucks serve up skilled workers

Goodwill Easterseals
trains job seekers
with developmental
disabilities.

By **Michael Kurtz**
Staff Writer

Nathan Prouty’s fingers dance over the point-of-sale screen, easily finding the items he needs to ring up.

If it’s something that’s not there, Prouty knows the necessary programming to add it. He’s comfortable making change or completing the transaction using a card.

A year ago, the 27-year-old had never had a job. Now he envisions himself heading to work each day for a chance to serve customers by preparing their meals, ringing them up or both.

“I like ringing things up. I’ve done a little bit of both,” Prouty said. “There’s nothing I don’t like.”

Prouty is a participant in the Good Connections vocational habilitation program launched in 2024 by Goodwill Easterseals Miami Valley, designed to help people with developmental disabilities develop job skills.

The latest additions to the program’s arsenal are two food trucks custom-built by Blue Magnolias Trailers that

Trucks continued on A6

CLOSER LOOK

Analysis shows more U.S. consumers are falling behind on utility bills

Trump’s promotion of
AI data centers could
increase costs as well.

By **Josh Boak**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON – More people are falling behind on paying their bills to keep on the lights and heat their homes, according to a new analysis of consumer data – a warning sign for the U.S. economy and another political headache for President Donald Trump.

Past due balances to utility companies jumped 9.7% annually to \$789 between the April-June periods of 2024 and 2025, said The Century Foundation, a liberal think tank. The increase has overlapped with a 12% jump in monthly energy bills during the same period.

Consumers usually prioritize their utility bills along with their mortgages and auto debt, said Julie Margetta Morgan, the foundation’s president. The increase in both energy costs and delinquencies may suggest that con-

sumers are falling behind on other bills, too.

“There’s a lot of information out there about rising utility costs, but here we can actually look at what that impact has been on families in terms of how they’re falling behind,” Margetta Morgan said.

Troubles paying electricity and natural gas bills reflect something of an economic quandary for Trump, who is promoting the buildup of the artificial intelligence industry as a key part of an economic boom he has prom-

ised for America. But AI data centers are known for their massive use of electricity, and threaten to further increase utility bills for everyday Americans.

These troubles also come as Trump faces political pressure from voters fed up with the high cost of living.

Ever since Republicans saw their fortunes sag in off-year elections this month and affordability was identified as the top issue, Trump has been trying to convince the public that prices are falling. Fast-rising electricity bills

could be an issue in some congressional battlegrounds in next year’s midterm elections.

Trump has put a particular emphasis on prices at the pump. Gasoline accounts for about 3% of the consumer price index, slightly less than the share belonging to electricity and natural gas bills – meaning that possible savings on gasoline could be more than offset by higher utility bills.

The president maintains that any troubling data on inflation

Utilities continued on A6

THE LATEST

MAGA rift grows as
President Trump feuds
with longtime ally. **B1**

Business groups
ask to pause climate
reporting laws. **B2**

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INDEX

BUSINESSB3
COMICSC4
CROSSWORDC5
DEATHSA4



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