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TECHNOLOGY

Police touting use of drones

Goal to be more effective

By ALICE MOMANY
BLADE POLITICS WRITER

Earlier this month, Rossford Sergeant Brandon Lewis was dispatched to a call concerning a missing 13-year-old.

"It was about 9 at night, it's dark out, it was like 23 degrees, and he's done it before and known to frequent certain areas that are hard to access by vehicle or by foot," Sgt. Lewis said.

Instead of searching wooded areas and railroad tracks by foot, Sgt. Lewis utilized drone technology to narrow down the location of the child.

"I was able to put it up and within five minutes of putting it up, I already cleared some of those areas," he said.

The Rossford Police Department has used drone technology for about two years to assist with a variety of operations, and Sgt. Lewis doesn't expect the department to stop anytime soon as it looks to the future of policing.

Drone technology increases efficiency

Like Rossford, the Toledo Police Department has used a variety of drones for at least 10 years, Toledo Police Chief Michael Troendle said.

In September, the department rolled out its first Drone as First Responder program, or DFR, through Flock Safety. As the pilot program comes to an end, TPD will get two additional DFR drones through a grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation. Chief Troendle said he expects to transition to the new drones in June.

"That's going to allow us to have more areas of coverage, a little bit of a different setup," Chief Troendle said. "For sure, we will have two different locations and possibly a third



THE BLADE/KURT STEISS

A Toledo Police Department drone returns home atop One Government Center. The department is set to add two more drones, possibly by June.



THE BLADE/KURT STEISS

Lt. Leslie Cook points to the Toledo Police Department's drone, which is part of the Drone as First Responder program, or DFR, through Flock Safety.

location to run the drones from, which will give us almost complete coverage of the city."

The current Flock drone is docked on the roof of One Government Center in downtown Toledo. With the two new drones, the police chief said the department is looking at docking one near Hill and

Westwood avenues and the other off Sylvania Avenue.

Chief Troendle called the DFR drone a "force multiplier" for the department by increasing efficiency and providing live updates of the scene before crews arrive.

Toledo Officer Daniel Balon, who has been with

the department for about 11 years, became a DFR pilot in October. As calls for service come into the department, the pilot on duty will determine if the drone can respond to the call and dispatch the device to the scene.

"The other day, I had a

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Region set for start of roadwork

Route 795, I-475 lead projects in Toledo area

By DAVID PATCH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

When the State Rt. 795 bridge over I-75 closes for a 75-day repair next week, some of Ed Nagle's truck drivers will have detours along their routes.

Most prominent among them will be the Nagle Companies driver who makes 10 round trips each workday to a First Solar plant in Perrysburg Township from a supplier in Bowling Green. The loaded trip won't be affected, but the empty return will.

"It's going to add about 20 minutes to the trip," Mr. Nagle said, describing the logistics as "regimentally scheduled" because it's one truck cycling back and forth.

Longer-distance trucks that use Route 795 to travel from the trucking company's headquarters in Lake Township to I-75 also will be affected, and Mr. Nagle himself will have to pick alternative commuting routes from and to his home on the south side of Perrysburg.

"I'm sure I'll try a couple of different routes," he said. "It's different depending on the time of day."

The Route 795 bridge repair will rank high among the Toledo area's most disruptive new roadway projects during the 2026 construction season, although a resurfacing project on the south end of I-475/U.S. 23 in

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SHIPPING FACES FURTHER THREAT

Houthis enter war with fire on Israel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian-backed Houthi rebels entered the month-old war in the Middle East on Saturday, claiming two missile launches at Israel.

Meanwhile, Pakistan said regional powers plan to meet Sunday to discuss how to end the fighting, while Iran expressed skepticism about the diplomatic efforts.

The Houthis' entry could further hurt global shipping if they again target vessels in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off the Red Sea, through which about 12 percent of the world's trade typically passes.

There could be limited relief in sight after Iran on

Friday agreed to allow humanitarian aid and agricultural shipments through the Strait of Hormuz following a request from the United Nations. President Trump, meanwhile, has given Iran until April 6 to reopen the strait.

Witnesses in Tehran reported heavy strikes late Saturday. Israel's military earlier said it targeted Iran's naval weapons production facilities, and asserted that it would finish attacking essential weapons production sites within "a few days."

Iran fired missiles toward Israel. The United States said it has struck over 11,000 Iranian targets

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It's time for kickoff

University of Toledo football began spring practices ahead of April's Glass Bowl.

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Seeking a solution

A shortage in mental health care workers has Ohio and Michigan looking to fill the gap and meet demands.

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Sharing culture beyond Ramadan

Coffee shops highlight Arab flavors

By MADDIE COPPEL
BLADE FOOD EDITOR

Toledo is known for its abundance of coffee shops — with cold brews, lattes, and pour-overs found in many corners of the city.

But before House of Coffee, 420 Madison Ave. Suite 110, opened in May, Toledo lacked Arab-owned cafes. This absence led people to travel to places like Dearborn, Mich., for more diverse offerings.

"Every culture has its uniqueness," said Hilal Merhi, owner of House of Coffee. "We definitely thrive in the Lebanese communities and culture, for our hospitality. We are known for that."



THE BLADE/ADDISON ANNIS

Hilal Merhi, House of Coffee owner, stands next to menu specials that the downtown Toledo shop offered during Ramadan.

Mr. Merhi said he saw a gap in the market. There weren't any local coffee shops offering traditional

Lebanese coffee: a strong, unfiltered blend available with or without cardamom. House of Coffee also

serves lattes inspired by Mediterranean flavors like

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