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Kent State dean to speak at MLK tribute

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The Times-Reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK

DOVER – A longtime local university leader will deliver the keynote address at the 40th annual Christopher Lowery Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday tribute in Dover.

Bradley Bielski, dean and chief administrative officer of Kent State Tuscarawas, will speak at 7 p.m. Jan. 19, at First Baptist Church, according to a community announcement. The event

is free and open to the public.

The celebration will include musical performances by Prime, food and fellowship.

The tribute, hosted by First Baptist Church at 140 Regent St., has been held annually since the first federal observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1986.

“We are extremely honored to have a leader of Dr. Bradley Bielski’s caliber join us for what has really grown over the years to become Tuscarawas County’s premier event and celebration of the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Lu-

ther King Jr.,” the Rev. Rasheed As-Samad, pastor at First Baptist Church, said in the announcement. “Each year this event brings together civic and spiritual leaders from throughout the county to honor Dr. King and share his message of hope and inspiration.”

About the speaker

Bielski has more than two decades of experience in higher education administration and is known for his leadership

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George Broughton, left, and Craig Butler, MWCD executive director, sign a document to complete the purchase of the 700-acres Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area. PROVIDED BY MUSKINGUM WATERSHED CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

700 acres to be preserved permanently

MWCD buys the Broughton Nature Area

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NEW PHILADELPHIA – The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) has officially completed the purchase of the 700-acres Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area in Marietta. This finalized an agreement announced earlier and secures the property’s long-term future as a publicly accessible natural space.

The purchase on Dec. 15, 2025, marked the culmination of a partnership between the Broughton family, MWCD, and the Marietta Community Foundation, according to a community announcement. With the transaction complete, the property is now permanently protected under MWCD owner-

“For our family, this land has always been about giving back to the community. With the purchase now complete, we’re confident the park will be protected and cared for in a way that aligns with our values and ensures it remains open and welcoming to the public.”

George Broughton

ship, ensuring continued conservation, responsible management, and public access for generations to come.

“This is a meaningful milestone for our organization and for the community,” said Craig Butler, MWCD executive director, said in the announcement. “Completing this purchase transforms a shared vision into a lasting commitment.”

The Broughton family has long shared the property with the public, fos-

tering appreciation for nature, wildlife, and outdoor recreation in the region. Through this purchase, their legacy of conservation continues, supported by MWCD’s operational stewardship and a dedicated fund established by the Broughton Foundation through the Marietta Community Foundation.

“For our family, this land has always been about giving back to the

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Marijuana law changes hit speed bump

Haley BeMiller
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Advocates who want to overturn changes to Ohio’s marijuana law have to start the process over.

Attorney General Dave Yost rejected a referendum petition for Senate Bill 56 on Jan. 13, saying his office “identified omissions and misstatements” that could mislead voters. The new law, which takes effect in March, changes the recreational marijuana program and restricts intoxicating hemp products.

The Ohio Constitution allows citizens to temporarily block new laws and put the issue before voters. Yost’s rejection means the group, Ohioans for Cannabis Choice, must collect another 1,000 signatures, tweak the petition language and resubmit it.

“Voters this November will have the opportunity to say no to Senate Bill 56, no to government overreach, no to closing 6,000 businesses and abandoning thousands of Ohio workers, and no to defying the will of Ohioans who overwhelmingly supported legalizing cannabis in 2023,” spokesperson Dennis Willard said.

Senate Bill 56 requires hemp products with more than 0.4 milligrams per container to be sold in licensed marijuana dispensaries.

Lawmakers carved out separate

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