



United Way, Brandon Graham host kickoff for campaign

SPORTS, 1B

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Ernie Hershberger says he modeled his business, Homestead Furniture, after the auto industry and lean manufacturing. He says he was intrigued enough to research Toyota, which was leading in “quality, in price point, in longevity. So, I traveled to Lexington, Kentucky, to tour their plant and study the lean concept. From there, I went to the Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, and did the same.” PHOTOS BY KEVIN LYNCH/THE DAILY RECORD

‘People make the difference’

The success story of Amish manufacturing in Holmes County

Kevin Lynch
Wooster Daily Record
USA TODAY NETWORK – PENNSYLVANIA

The success of Holmes County businesses leaves economic experts who research this type of phenomenon scratching their collective eggheads. There are no major highways entering Holmes County, which facilitates importing/exporting activities. There is limited use of technology, as many Amish do not use electricity. The manufacturers aren’t operating on Sundays. They don’t have many three-shift operations. They allow time for family and faith, the main tenets of the Anabaptist faith. These are key factors to the success of the Holmes County economy, according to Mark Leininger, executive director of the Holmes County Economic Development Council.

See **AMISH**, Page 7A



One of Holmes County’s many successful furniture stores is Homestead Furniture. Ernie Hershberger and his wife, Barb, started the business 35 years ago out of an old chicken coop.

How to spot signs of toxic workplace

Experts share signs of a problematic work environment

Alora Bopray
SPECIAL TO USA TODAY

In today’s rapidly evolving work environment, companies that prioritize psychological safety and employee well-being are reaping measurable benefits. According to the 2024 “Work in America” survey by the American Psychological Association, companies that foster emotional well-being see stronger retention, higher productivity and more engaged teams. In fact, 70% of workers say their psychological well-being has a strong positive impact on their productivity, and 93% of those with higher psychological safety feel they matter to their employer. It’s clear that a healthy work environment benefits everyone, yet nearly 75% of workers have experienced a toxic work environment, according to a 2025 study done by iHire. Perhaps even more telling, almost 60% of employees said they would rather accept a lower-paying job than stay in a toxic workplace. “These cultures aren’t just unpleasant, they’re unproductive,” explains Brandon Dawson, the chairman and co-founder of health and wellness company 10X Health System. “People spend more time navigating internal politics or protecting themselves than driving results.” A toxic workplace is where negativity, fear and mistrust dominate a company culture. You might see it show up as gossip, passive-aggressive behavior, stagnant growth, cliques among employees, lack of recognition or outright hostility between departments and company leaders. “Many employees endure toxic environments out of necessity, but this inevitably leads to burnout, disengagement and, over time, can damage confidence

See **WORKPLACE**, Page 6A

Family’s ordeal shows complexity of mental illness

Ian Lenahan
Portsmouth Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

RYE, NH – Eli Robinson awoke from a medically induced coma in November, his sister and brother at his hospital bedside.

One week prior, Eli attempted suicide, jumping off the 150-foot-high Piscataqua River Bridge into the swift current below. Instances of a person surviving a jump from the Interstate 95 span connecting Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Kittery, Maine, are rare. Eli became one of the few, suffering a collapsed lung and several broken ribs. Eli, 34, made a vow to his siblings. “(Eli) said, ‘I will never do that again.’” Marta, his sister, tearfully recalled in a July 31 interview.

Duncan, their younger brother and a seven-year NBA veteran, told him: “‘You don’t understand. We cannot survive without you,’” Marta added. “And (Eli) goes, ‘I promise I will never do that again.’”

See **MENTAL ILLNESS**, Page 5A

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