

Martin County JOURNAL

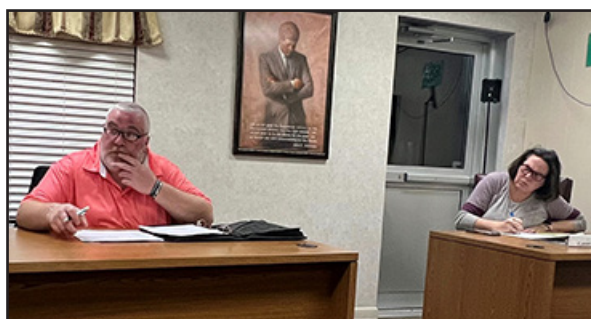
Year 15, Issue 2

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

Nine pages



-Photos by Courtney Hughett
Shown above from left to right, are Loogootee Council Members Mark McAtee, Carroll Rayhill, Dave Smith, and Mike Engleman and new Mayor Brian Ader. In the photo on the right are Council Member Buck Holland and Clerk-Treasurer Lori Carrico.



Loogootee Council starts year with several spending decisions

BY COURTNEY HUGHETT
Martin County Journal Publisher

The Loogootee City Council held their first meeting with the new mayor and four new council members on Monday night, January 8.

The council approved spending \$44,000 to purchase a new police car. Mayor Brian Ader had brought two options to the council – lease a vehicle for \$16,000 a year with unlimited mileage or buy one outright for \$44,000. The council decided to save money by buying the vehicle outright.

The council also agreed to spend \$1,076.13 for repairs to two police vehicles at Stemen Automotive.

The council approved spending \$1,800 plus parts to have Lane repair a gearbox at the wastewater plant.

The council approved spending \$165,000 buying 576 radio-read water meters from the supplier and another 48 meters from the Town of Shoals. Shoals purchased more than they needed and agreed to sell them to the city for what they paid. Mayor Ader said they have been working on getting radio read meters for the last 13 years and they need to get them all switched over. Roughly 950 have been purchased and installed with 500-plus more that need to be

done. He suggested taking half of the money from the water fund and half from the sewer fund. The water fund contains \$1.2 million, and the sewer fund balance is at \$1.4 million. The meters being purchased from the supplier will not be delivered for 10 months.

The council approved paying \$1,625.30 from the general fund to repair a damaged electrical box next to Big John's, on East Main Street. No one knows how the box got damaged however Mayor Ader said it was demolished. The electrical box is used during Summerfest for vendors.

The council approved spending \$11,500 to purchase new pumps for the city pool.

The council approved adding cell phones onto the city plan for the mayor and Superintendent Bo Wilson. The mayor said they should not have to use their personal cell phones to conduct business. It was estimated the cost would be \$45 per line.

Mayor Ader said the current proposal at the railroad property at the corner of JFK Avenue and Church Street, that was planned to be a greenspace/pavilion, was going to cost \$200,000 to have the poles and lines moved by CSX Railroad. Ader said he has been in talks with CSX and has a meeting with them planned for next week
(See 'LOOGOOTE' on page 2)

Martin County Council discusses ambulance service, FSG contract

BY COURTNEY HUGHETT
Martin County Journal Publisher

The Martin County Council met Monday, January 8. The council chose Jordan Dant to again serve as president and Adam Greene as vice president.

Ambulance Director Jeramey Osborn reported there were 1,206 ambulance runs in 2023 with 779 of those as transports to the hospital. The ambulance service has taken in \$381,690.44 since the ambulance service started in 2021. Osborn noted that billing is a few months behind, however. He said they do have some unpaid bills and will have to look into turning those over to collections. He said he gets approached by residents asking him how they can pay their bill and is not comfortable being a part of the money collection. Discussion ensued on how the county could set up a way for those bills to be paid but no deci-

sion was made.

Osborn said they have all three ambulances up and running and things are going well. He said they started doing convalescent transports (i.e. from hospital to hospital) and it looks like they are going to have a lot of them to do. He said there will be some costs incurred with these transports however they will be making more than they will be spending.

Former Soil & Water District Coordinator Teresa Harder approached the council to discuss the need for training for the new soil and water coordinator, Michelle Grace. Harder retired but has since been asked to return to help with training. She said there are some year-end matters that will have to be dealt with, however she doesn't see the need to stay on very long because Grace is learning quickly. The proposal presented was for 15 hours
(See 'COUNTY' on page 2)

Commissioners approve timber funds for land purchase, pay recycling center insurance

BY COURTNEY HUGHETT
Martin County Journal Publisher

The Martin County Commissioners met Tuesday morning, January 9. The board reorganized and kept Paul George as president and Aaron Summers as vice president.

Highway Superintendent Scott Seals requested the commissioners decide where the money will come from to purchase rights-of-way for the Brickyard Road bridge replacement, which is being paid for with federal funds. Commissioner George said they recently received \$14,320 in DNR timber money and while they are required to give at least \$1,000 to each of the four fire departments in the county, they can use the rest of the money to go toward the land purchases. The cost to purchase the land is \$11,630 so the commissioners decided to take the remaining money needed, \$1,309, from the cumulative capital development fund.

County Attorney Dave Lett noted that there is still one property where the owner cannot be located so he will be filing paperwork for that.

Superintendent Seals told the commissioners he hired Henry Conway at the highway department, and he started this week. He said they currently have two dump trucks that have broken down and are out for repairs.

Ambulance Director Jeramey Osborn gave the 2023 annual report to the commissioners and asked how often they want him to attend meetings. The commissioners agreed that they would like him to email a report monthly but could come quarterly to the meetings. Commissioner George said they are also looking into putting together an advisory committee for the ambulance service.

Civil Defense Director Monty Wolf told the commissioners that after serving as director since 1987, this will be his last year. He said the plan is for Andy Ringwald to take over as director. He requested the commissioners appoint Cory Brassine to serve as one of the deputy directors to take the place of Mike Ringwald. The commissioners agreed.

Alliance Director Jessica Potts reported the Hindostan Shelter House project is still in the works. They are currently waiting on the DNR to sign off on the plans. She said the project is expected to be put out

Public hearing for solid waste fee increase

The Martin County Solid Waste Management District Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, January 11 at 6 p.m. in the community building on the 4-H fairgrounds. The board is considering a raise in the district user fee, currently at \$24 per year. The proposal is to increase that to \$48 per year. The fee is billed on Martin County residents' property tax.

After receiving questions and comments from the public, the Solid Waste District Board will meet on Tuesday, January 16 at 8:30 a.m. to make a decision regarding a raise in the user fee. The location of this meeting will be announced prior to the meeting.

for bids in early spring with construction starting in late spring or early summer.

Auditor Michelle Norris talked to the commissioners about the county's contract with Matrix for IT services. Currently, Matrix is only covering 13 county employees to provide remote IT assistance. The cost is \$140 each. Norris said if they go up to 57 employees, the cost would be \$90 per user. She said having each computer covered allows for Matrix to offer remote assistance and not have to come to the courthouse. The 57 employees don't include the highway department, ambulance service, soil and water or the extension office because they do not have a server. Norris said the contract allows for six hours per month of on-site IT so those offices can use those hours if they need help. The extra six hours a month costs \$10,800 a year. The total amount for the 57 users would be \$61,560 a year for a total of \$72,360.

The commissioners discussed whether it would be more cost effective to go ahead and pursue finding a dedicated IT employee for the county. Norris explained that there are still costs that would have to be paid out for cybersecurity or antivirus, on top of the IT support. Commissioner Cody Roush said an IT employee would cost a minimum of \$80,000 a year. Norris said they would have to pay that person benefits too on top of the salary.

Commissioner George said the amount being spent is not the situation they want to be in, but they have to ensure all the employees have equal access to help when they need it. The commissioners agreed to pay the contract amount of \$72,360 but look into possible alternatives for the future.

Auditor Norris explained that last year, the recycling center added their two employees who receive insurance onto the county's plan so they could get a better group rate. The agreement was they pay their own premiums. Norris said they paid for May and June last year but not for the rest of the year. She said the recycling center bookkeeper wanted the money to come out as an EFT instead of writing a check and they have had to work that out with the bank. The recycling center had requested the commissioners pay for the premiums from July through December to help them out, at a cost of \$10,518. The commissioners agreed to cover the cost noting that this is a one-time only "bail out". Norris said the EFT is now set up with the bank for future premium payments.

Mary Smith, who was in the audience, asked about a property that is going up in a sheriff's sale that the commissioners were talking about buying. She said when she asked about it at the last commissioners' meeting, they wouldn't give her any information. She said the county council discussed it at their meeting and since the sheriff's sale is coming up before the next commissioners' meeting, she would like to know the cost and what the plan is for the property. Commissioner George said they have discussed buying the house in question but are not sure they can. Commissioner Roush said they wanted to have a county-owned building to eliminate rent
(See 'COMMISSIONERS' on page 2)

LOOGOOTEE

(Continued from page one)

in Indianapolis to work something out. He said the goal is to get that cost reduced or to find a way to have the lines transferred to the Frontier poles located along Church Street. He said he will give more information after his meeting with CSX.

Mayor Ader said he has been working with the installer about fixing the downtown fountain. He said they are not sure what the solution is at this time, and they are discussing options. He said he learned that the base of the fountain is not big enough to contain the flowing water so they can either take off another layer from the top or drill holes to only allow a controlled amount of water to come out. He said there are several options they are considering to get the fountain working as it should.

Mayor Ader provided information on several areas they are looking to change.

COMMISSIONERS

(Continued from page one)

being paid by various county departments. He said the county is paying \$25,000 a month for rent payments. County Attorney Lett said the house in question is in good shape and would be adequate for what the county needs. Smith asked how much the county is willing to pay. Commissioner George said the amount owed to the bank is \$54,000 but he doesn't know how much the county would be able to spend. He said they may not be able to do anything at all. Smith asked why they couldn't build something on the lot the county purchased next to the jail. George replied that by the time they built a building, it would \$200,000 and not be feasible.

The commissioners made the following appointments for 2024:

SIDC Board - Cody Roush and Dave Lett

Alcoholic Beverage Board - Bill Shaw

Redevelopment Commission - all three commissioners

Regional Mental Health Board - Danielle Murphy

County Attorney - Dave Lett

Veteran Service Officer - Wes Rincker replacing Jonathan Cropp

Highway Superintendent - Scott Seals

White River Military Coordination Alliance - Dana Strange

He said they would like to get GPS on all city vehicles and would like to re-start employee drug testing. He said they are also looking at all the city ordinances to see if any need to be changed or updated.

Mayor Ader discussed the city's desire to purchase a property on North Street. He said they will have to get two appraisals on the property as a first step. The goal is to construct a new city building if they can acquire the property.

The board of public works and safety voted to re-hire Jeff Sanders as a part-time employee and promote Kelly Rayhill to assistant chief of police.

Mayor Ader said a resolution will be presented at the next meeting to increase the board of public works and safety to five members instead of three. He said he believes this will give more opinions and ideas to board discussions.

PTABOA (Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals) – Assessor Carolyn McGuire asked the commissioners to wait on making these appointments.

Local Economic Development Commission – Cody Roush

Solid Waste Management District Board – all three commissioners

EMA (Emergency Management Director) - Monte Wolf

EMA Deputy Directors – Cory Brassine and Andy Ringwald

South Central Region Workforce Board - Paul George

Community Corrections Advisory Board - Paul George

Loogootee Public Library Board - Betty Huelsman and replace Shirley Jeffers with Brenda Coulter until 2026

Martin County Health Board - Amy Grafton

Four Rivers RC&D Council - Aaron Summers

After the meeting, former Veteran Service Officer Jonathan Cropp provided the following statement regarding leaving the position: “The Martin County Veteran Service office should be a beacon of hope and support for our county veterans, ensuring their needs are met with compassion and dedication. During my short tenure, I have attempted to exemplify the values of service, commitment, and sacrifice. My

COUNTY

(Continued from page one)

a week, for Harder, through January and February for a total cost of \$2,513. Harder said she didn't want to overburden the county with the extra cost however she does want Grace trained well so she stays in the position. The council agreed to the proposal.

The council discussed the FSG (Financial Services Group) contract for 2024. FSG serves as the county's financial advisors. The contract for 2024 is the same as the past three years, not to exceed \$25,000. Auditor Norris was asked how much of the \$25,000 FSG bills and Norris said almost all of it. Council Member Andrew Beaver asked Auditor Norris if she would be comfortable operating without FSG's help. Norris said she felt comfortable with everything except the sustainability plan. She said she also isn't sure she would be

able to keep up with changes that come from the state as well as FSG can.

Council Member Warren Albright suggested they stay with FSG for another year. Council Member Adam Greene said he would like to see the county wean themselves off the need to have FSG's help. He said they need to start cutting it down now so it would be easier to “rip the Band-Aid off” later.

Council Member Jordan Dant said he is fine with having FSG as long as there is accountability, and the county is getting what they are paying for. He noted he was not accusing FSG of any wrongdoing, he just wants to be definitive on what the county wants from FSG.

The council discussed possibly scaling down the contract some so it would cost less and be more in line with what the county needs. The contract includes three days of FSG attending budget meetings and the council said they are not sure if that is necessary. It was suggested they do the budget hearings without FSG and then send them the completed draft of the budget for review.

It was also noted that FSG would be needed if the council decides to reduce taxes. Council Member Greene said 2024 may be a good year to look into that. Council Member Dant said there is no guarantee they would be able to lower the tax rate, however they would need FSG's help if they decide to look into it.

The council decided to have County Attorney Dave Lett look over the contract and have Auditor Norris work with FSG to figure out what services the county needs to include.

The council vaguely discussed whether the county would purchase a property going up in sheriff's sale next Tuesday that is two houses down from the courthouse. Auditor Norris said she isn't sure where the money would come from to pay for the property. It was noted that the judgment on the property is \$54,000. The council discussed whether it would be cost effective to remodel the house in its current state to use as the prosecutor's office and eliminate the rent the county is currently paying. Council Member Gregory said it may be more cost efficient to tear down the current house and build. Others disagreed. No decision was made on the matter.

assistant Kim has played a crucial role in connecting veterans with the resources they need, tirelessly and aggressively advocating for their well-being. Kim has been an integral part of this project, and the community is indebted to her service. I promised at the start that I would step aside the moment that I felt that I could not meet the needs of our cherished veterans. Unfortunately, that day has come. I do not feel I can provide them the attention at the level they deserve. It is my intention to continue to support our veterans by remaining an unpaid volunteer for the county. I will provide training and support for the oncoming service officer to hopefully ensure a high level of service going forward. If possible, I will help by providing medical opinion letters helping veterans receive the benefits which they have earned and are entitled to receive. I hope to help organize more community events to bring honor and public awareness to the issues facing our veterans. We have an opportunity now to rise to the level of some of our neighboring counties that have very well-funded and well-organized programs. I would encourage these commissioners and this county to continue a high level of support to our veterans who have given so much of themselves.”

The next commissioners' meeting will be Tuesday, January 23 at 9 a.m.

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OBITUARIES

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MARTIN COUNTY JOURNAL

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

CLARA BRADLEY

Clara Frances Bradley passed away at 10:42 p.m. January 7, 2024, at her home. A resident of Loogootee, she was 87.



CLARA BRADLEY

She was born February 12, 1936, in Loogootee; daughter of the late Leo and Letha (Queen) Bradley.

Clara was a member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. She loved to walk and work in her yard.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Leo and Letha Bradley; siblings, John (Mary Margaret) Bradley, Mary Jane (Paul) Ryan, Louise (Martin) Ward, Agnes (Nelson) Hauser, Ernest (Louise) Bradley, and Inez Bradley; one niece, one nephew, two great-nieces and one great-great nephew; and brothers-in-law, Guy Padgett, Eugene James, and John Zins.

Clara is survived by her siblings, Stacia Padgett of Loogootee, Ruth James of Washington, and Irene Zins of Loogootee; 25 nieces, 22 nephews, 56 great-nieces, 55 great-nephews, 42 great-great-nieces, 52 great-great-nephews, and eight great-great-nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Very Rev. J. Kenneth Walker at 10 a.m. Saturday, January 13 at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Loogootee. Burial will follow in St. Mary Catholic Cemetery – Barr Township.

Visitation will be held Friday, January 12 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Blake Funeral Home in Loogootee.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church.

Condolences may be made online at www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

CAROLYN JOHNSON

Carolyn T. Johnson passed from this life Monday, January 8, 2024 at Sycamore Care Strategies in Loogootee. A resident of Loogootee, she was 78.



CAROLYN JOHNSON

She was born March 23, 1945, in Washington; daughter of Frank and Ruth (Caress) Thompson. Carolyn married her loving husband of 52

years, Greg Johnson on June 19, 1971.

Carolyn loved being a schoolteacher before retiring in 2000. She was a member of the Retired Teachers Association and the American Sewing Guild. Carolyn enjoyed sewing, traveling and especially spending time with her grandchildren.

Family left to cherish the memories of Carolyn include her husband, Greg Johnson; one daughter, Erin (Joe) Bateman; and grandchildren, Delani and Brylee Bateman.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Graveside services to honor the life of Carolyn will be at 10 a.m. Friday, January 12 at Fairview Cemetery in Elora with Ed Frost officiating.

Arrangements and care were entrusted to Meng Family Funeral Home in Odon. Condolences and memories may be shared with the family online at www.mengfuneralhome.com.

RON CANTRELL

Ronald C. "Ron" Cantrell passed away Wednesday January 3, 2024, at Memorial Hospital and Healthcare in Jasper, Indiana surrounded by his family. A resident of Loogootee, he was 70.

He was born October 31, 1953, in Great



RON CANTRELL

Bend, Kansas; son of the late Hugh B. and Mary June (Coulter) Cantrell. Ron was a United States Air Force Veteran. He was a member of Calvary Baptist Church. Ron worked in construction for over 28 years in roofing and building for the local community. He drove a semi-truck for over 12 years, before "semi-retiring" and driving for the Amish Community. Ron married Lisa (Worley) Cantrell on August 31, 1996. He loved the Lord, and spending time with his family. He was an avid Astros, Colts, and Longhorns fan.

Ron is preceded in death by his parents, Hugh and Mary June Cantrell.

He is survived by his wife, Lisa Cantrell; his children, Sonja (Brian) Bridgewater, Lester (Haley) Cantrell, and Eric (Crystal) Cantrell; his step-children, Autumn (Kelly) Rayhill and Kyle (Denise) Trambaugh; his grandchildren, Trevor, Mariah, Cruse, Logan, Colton, Emma, Cameron, Peyton, Chloe, Addyson, Ayden, Anistyn, Anderson, Carson, Brock, Taylin, Kallin, Colleen, and Karcyn; eight great-grandchildren, his siblings, Joann (Chuck) Jones, Randy Cantrell, Rhonda Dickens and several nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Saturday January 6 at Blake Funeral Home in Loogootee with Pastor Taj Eaton officiating. Burial and military rights followed in Houghton Cemetery in Loogootee.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Power House Youth Organization at Washington in memory of Ron.

Online condolences can be made to www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

Arrangements provided by Blake Funeral Home in Loogootee.

JAY VENTERS

James Clyde "Jay" Venters passed on Thursday January 4, 2024, at his home. A resident of Loogootee, he was 47.

He was born June 7, 1976, in Washington; son of Edger C. Jr. and Kathryn (Isaacs) Venters.

Jay liked to fish and hunt. He enjoyed playing music videos on his phone, and video games. Jay liked to spend time with his family and will be missed.

He is preceded in death by his father, Edger C. Venters Jr. and his brother, Donald Coleman Venters.

Jay is survived by his lifelong companion, Megan Welker; their daughter, Kaelynn Elizabeth Venters; his mother, Kathryn "Kay" Venters; his siblings, Joshua (Amy) Venters, Lisa (David) Nixon, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A graveside funeral service was held Sunday January 7, at Goodwill Cemetery in Loogootee with Denver Craft officiating.

Online condolences can be made at www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

EARL MILLS

Earl B. Mills passed away at 4:12 p.m. Friday, January 5, 2024, at Greenwood Village South. A resident of Loogootee, he was 93.

He was born June 23, 1930, in Montgomery; son of the late Earl Thomas and Catherine Elizabeth (Gootee) Mills.

Earl married Ruth Denson on May 1, 1953, and together they shared 70 years of marriage until her passing.

He was a United States Army veteran and served in the Korean War. Earl was a charter member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post 9395. Earl and Ruth volunteered for many years at St. Vincent De Paul and managed bingo at the VFW Post 9395. Earl was a member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church.



EARL MILLS

Earl was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Mills; parents, Earl and Catherine Mills; and ten siblings. He is survived by his children, Peter (Bunny) Mills of West Brook, Maine; Andrew (Robin) Mills of Greenwood, Patrick Mills of Indianapolis, and Julie Mehrlich of Indianapolis; eight grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren; and sister, Alice Payne of Beech Grove.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Very Rev. J. Kenneth Walker at 11 a.m. Thursday, January 11 at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Burial will follow in St. John Catholic Cemetery.

Visitation will be held Thursday, January 11 from 9 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to St. Vincent De Paul or the Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post 9395.

Condolences may be made online at www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

DORA QUALKENBUSH

Dora Rosalie (Pennington) Qualkenbush passed away Monday, January 8, 2023, in Shoals, surrounded by her loving family. A resident of Shoals, she was 80.



She was born December 24, 1943, in Martin County; daughter Claude Payne and Ruby (Wagoner) Payne. She married Fred Qualkenbush, and he survives.

Dora was a homemaker and worked at several restaurants in Martin County. She enjoyed attending church, car shows, and parades, and spending time with her family and friends.

Surviving are her husband of over 43 years, Fred Qualkenbush; children, Tracie (Pennington) Stuckey, Scott (Amanda) Pennington, Nina (Millard) Anderson, Tammy Crowe, John Crowe, and James "Jimmy" Qualkenbush; one brother, Leonard Payne; and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; daughter, Mary Rose (Pennington) Kidwell; brothers, Carl Payne, Henry Payne, Charlie Payne, George William Payne, Pat Payne, and William George Payne; and sisters, Caroline Sue Payne, Helen Hart, May Payne, and Deloris Payne.

A funeral service will be at 1 p.m. Thursday, January 11 at the Queen-Lee Chapel of George Funeral Care with Pastor Randy Stevens officiating. Burial will be in Pleasant Valley Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 10 a.m. until the service hour on Thursday at the Queen-Lee Chapel, Shoals.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.queenlee.com.

DONALD TAYLOR

Donald Ray Taylor passed away at 7:15 a.m. Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at Popular Care Strategies. A resident of Loogootee, he was 88.

He was born October 18, 1935, in Loogootee; son of the late John S. and Pauline I. (Wyman) Taylor.

Don married Juanita Davis on April 27, 1956, and she survives.

He was a United States Army veteran and served in Germany. He was a faithful employee to NSWG for 30 plus years as a Quality Assurance Inspector. He was a



DONALD TAYLOR

member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church and the Washington Boat Club. Don enjoyed fishing and gardening.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John S. and Pauline I. Taylor and sisters, Wanda

Bradley and Wanita Bennett.

Don is survived by his wife, Juanita Taylor of Loogootee; children, John (Lea Ann) Taylor of Alfordsville, Paul "Tony" (Melinda) Taylor of Greenfield, Neina (Mike) Engleman of Loogootee, Greg (Lisa) Taylor of Loogootee and Debra (Greg) Smith of Mitchell; 13 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, four step-grandchildren; and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Very Rev. J. Kenneth Walker this morning, Wednesday, January 10 at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Burial followed in St. John Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church.

Condolences may be made online at www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

Blake Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Donald Ray Taylor.

TRAVIS KLINE

Charles "Travis" Kline passed away January 4, 2024. A resident of Loogootee, he was 50.

He was born August 6, 1973, in Jasper; son of Charles and Carla (Ross) Kline.

Travis is survived by his parents and one brother, Micheal "Troy" Kline.

Cremation has been chosen and no service will be held.

Services are under the direction of The Queen-Lee Chapel of George Funeral Care.

BEN ASDELL

Benoni Willard Asdell passed away January 3, 2024, with injuries as a result of a motor vehicle accident. He was 91.



Ben was born in Scotland, Indiana on March 3, 1932; son of Drib and Sophia Asdell.

He lived a great small-town Depression-era life with three brothers and two sisters.

He graduated from Scotland High School in 1949 and joined the US Air Force shortly thereafter. He attended basic training at Keesler Air Force base in Mississippi and also spent time at Lackland Air Force base in Texas. He was deployed to Japan during the Korean War where he worked in the 15th Radio Squadron depicting morse code. He was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1954. He then worked various jobs including driving a truck and became a member of the iron workers union.

He then met a girl from another small town, Jane Elizabeth Ackerman, and they were married in January of 1958. Ben then began his undergraduate studies at Butler University while working and supporting his family. He entered the IU School of Dentistry in 1961 and graduated in 1965. He continued to have several jobs and three children while in dental school. He then moved his family to Loogootee where he entered the practice of general dentistry with his father-in-law, Dr. B.A. Ackerman. As is the case in many small (See 'OBITUARIES' on page 4)

Martin County Sheriff's Department log

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

12:09 a.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance north of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1, Martin County Medic 2, Deputy Baumgart, Deputy Branham, and Shoals Fire Department responded. Medic 2 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital with a Dubois County Medic on board.

11:00 a.m. - Received a report of a vehicle off the roadway north of Shoals. Deputy Branham responded.

2:13 p.m. - Received a call requesting to speak with an officer. Corporal Hawkins responded.

2:31 p.m. - Received a report of possible harassment southeast of Shoals. Deputy Branham responded.

3:12 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Loogootee Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

5:08 p.m. - Received a call reporting a controlled burn southeast of Shoals.

7:18 p.m. - Received a call reporting a lost debit card in Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Davis responded.

8:20 p.m. - Received a report from Sheriff Greene that there is a water main break south of Shoals. East Fork Water was notified.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

1:48 a.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance in Shoals. Martin County Medic 1, Shoals Fire Department and Deputy Doane responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

7:32 a.m. - Received a 911 call reporting a car-deer accident south of Loogootee. Chief Deputy Keller responded.

10:45 a.m. - Received an accidental 911 call.

10:52 a.m. - Corporal Hawkins transported two inmates to court.

11:43 a.m. - Received a call requesting to speak with an officer in Loogootee. Loogootee Police were notified.

1:01 p.m. - Corporal Hawkins transported two inmates to court.

1:45 p.m. - Received a call from Life-line Alert requesting an ambulance southeast of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1 and Shoals Fire Department responded. No one was transported.

2:30 p.m. - Received a call requesting a vehicle unlock in Shoals. Captain Gibson responded.

2:35 p.m. - Received a report of horses in the roadway north of Loogootee. Captain Gibson responded.

3:58 p.m. - Received a call requesting to speak with an officer northeast of Shoals. Corporal Hawkins responded.

4:20 p.m. - Received a call reporting a reckless driver on US 50, traveling east into Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Davis responded.

6:17 p.m. - Received a call from Dubois County requesting to speak with an officer. Captain Gibson responded.

8:28 p.m. - Received a call reporting a domestic dispute in Loogootee. LPD Officer Davis, Sergeant Wells and Deputy Doane responded.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

8:34 a.m. - Received a call advising of a controlled burn south of Shoals.

10:46 a.m. - Deputy Baumgart transported three inmates to court.

1:08 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Loogootee Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

1:33 p.m. - Received a report of a vehicle off the roadway in Shoals. Captain Gibson responded.

2:11 p.m. - Received a report of a miss-

ing dog in Loogootee.

4:12 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance south of Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Haysville Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

6:07 p.m. - Received a call requesting to speak with an officer in Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Davis responded.

6:43 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance east of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1 and Shoals Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

7:35 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 2 responded and transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

10:00 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance southeast of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1, Loogootee Fire Department, Loogootee Officer Davis and Sergeant Wells responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital with a Daviess County Medic on board.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

12:19 a.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance in Shoals. Martin County Medic 2 and Shoals Fire Department responded.

5:05 a.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance east of Loogootee. Deputy Erwin, Deputy Coroner Abel, and Martin County Medic 3 responded.

9:40 a.m. - Received a call requesting to speak to an officer. Chief Deputy Keller and Sergeant Wells responded.

9:46 a.m. - Deputy Baumgart transported three inmates to court.

11:25 a.m. - Deputy Baumgart transported two inmates to court.

3:38 p.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Loogootee Chief Long, Loogootee Officer Wagoner, Sergeant Wells, Loogootee Fire Department, Martin County Medic 1, and Big Johns Towing responded. No transport was needed.

3:55 p.m. - Received a call reporting a vehicle repossession in Shoals.

4:21 p.m. - Received a 911 call reporting a reckless driver north of Loogootee. Loogootee Chief Long and Deputy Shields responded.

4:34 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting to speak to a deputy. Deputy Shields responded.

4:44 p.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance in Shoals. Martin County Medic 1 and Shoals Fire Department responded. Medic 1 did not transport the patient.

5:09 p.m. - Received a call requesting an ambulance south of Loogootee. Sergeant Wells, Martin County Medic 1, Haysville Fire Department, and Deputy Coroner Patt Todd responded.

8:40 p.m. - Received a call reporting a domestic complaint in Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Wagoner and Deputy Shields responded.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

12:00 a.m. - Received a call reporting a reckless driver south of Shoals. Deputy Erwin responded.

4:50 a.m. - Received a call requesting to speak to an officer. Loogootee Chief Long responded.

6:00 a.m. - Received a call requesting to speak to an officer. Loogootee Chief Long responded.

9:40 a.m. - Received a call requesting to speak to a deputy. Deputy Branham responded.

10:20 a.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Loogootee Fire De-

partment responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

3:37 p.m. - Received a 911 call reporting a two-vehicle accident east of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1, Shoals Fire Department, and Big Johns Towing responded. Medic 1 did not transport.

3:42 p.m. - Received an animal complaint in Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Wagoner responded.

3:56 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting to speak to a deputy. Deputy Shields responded.

4:43 p.m. - Received a 911 call reporting a reckless driver south of Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Wagoner responded.

4:51 p.m. - Received a call from Orange County advising of a hit-and-run vehicle possibly heading into Martin County. Deputy Shields responded.

10:48 p.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance north of Shoals. Martin County Medic 1 and Shoals Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

2:38 a.m. - Received a call from Care Alert advising of a pressed emergency button in Shoals. Advised by owner it was an accidental push.

6:17 a.m. - Received a call advising of a reckless driver on US 150, traveling East. Deputy Erwin responded. Orange County was also notified.

10:22 a.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Loogootee Chief Long responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

12:22 p.m. - Received a call advising of a controlled burn in Shoals. Advised caller there is a no burn ban in city limits.

12:32 p.m. - Received a call requesting to speak with a deputy. Deputy Branham responded.

12:50 p.m. - Received a call reporting possible harassment in Shoals. Deputy Branham and Deputy Shields responded.

1:42 p.m. - Received a report of a suspicious person in Shoals. Deputy Branham and Deputy Shields responded.

1:59 p.m. - Received a report of a controlled burn east of Loogootee.

3:34 p.m. - Received a report from Medic 1 that they will be transporting one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

1:29 a.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1, Loogootee Fire Department and Loogootee Officer Davis responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Daviess Community Hospital.

9:02 a.m. - Received a 911 call requesting an ambulance in Loogootee. Martin County Medic 1 and Loogootee Fire Department responded. Medic 1 transported one patient to Jasper Memorial Hospital.

11:01 a.m. - Received a call requesting a vehicle unlock in Shoals. Deputy Branham responded.

1:11 p.m. - Received a request for Shoals Fire Department and Martin County Medic 1 in Shoals. No transport was needed.

1:18 p.m. - Received a 911 call reporting a domestic dispute in Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Stivers responded.

2:52 p.m. - Received a request for Martin County Medic 1 and Shoals Fire Department in Shoals. No transport was needed.

3:49 p.m. - Received a call requesting an officer in Shoals. Deputy Branham responded.

4:25 p.m. - Received a call requesting an officer north of Shoals. Deputy Doane responded.

7:19 p.m. - Received a call reporting a disabled vehicle east of Shoals. Caller ad-

vised they would call a wrecker service for tow.

8:05 p.m. - Received a call reporting an accident northeast of Loogootee. Loogootee Officer Davis, Major Reed, Deputy Doane, Loogootee Fire Department, Martin County Medic 1, and Big John's Towing responded. No transport was needed.

OBITUARIES

(Continued from page 3)

towns, Ben was known only as "Doc" to the people of Loogootee. Ben practiced general dentistry in Loogootee until 2015 when he begrudgingly retired from the profession he loved. He loved dentistry not only for the service he provided but for the ability to talk with his patients. He was an awesome storyteller and used that skill to relate to his patients. He was also a great contributor to his community. He was a member of multiple boards and associations, including the American Dental Association, the Indiana Dental Association, the Greene County Dental Association, the Knights of Columbus (4th Degree), the Navy League of Crane, the Boy Scouts, IU Alumni, IUSD Alumni and West Boggs Development. He was also the Greene District Trustee for the Indiana Dental Association for many years. He was very proud of his participation and his many contributions.

Ben enjoyed life and loved having fun, especially with his family. He spent many days at West Boggs Park in Loogootee on the water with his family on the Tooth Ferry I and the Tooth Ferry II. He also loved the many family vacations that he and his family were a part of.

Ben was a huge sports fan, especially Loogootee and Indiana University sports. He loved listening to IU basketball games on the radio as he could not always get the games on TV. He also loved watching and following his grandkids in many of their activities.

Ben was baptized in the Catholic Church as an adult and became a very active participant. He was a member of St. John Catholic Church in Loogootee. He attended St. Thomas More in Mooresville and St. Susanna Catholic Church in Plainfield. He was devout in his belief and took care of the religious men and women at his expense. He was extremely proud of his induction into the Fourth Degree of the Loogootee Knights of Columbus.

Ben is survived by his spouse, Shirley Silagi Asdell; his three children, Dr. Jay (Rulan), Dr. Susan Dorenbusch (Dr. Mike), and Dr. Steven (Dr. Tessa); seven grandchildren, Dr. Patrick (Dr. Nicole), Joseph, Dr. Robert (Claire), Dr. Stephanie (Dr. Sachin), Will, Dr. Elizabeth, Ben; one great-grandchild, Wyatt; brother, Billy Nelson Asdell; stepchildren, Steven (Cori) Silagi and Holly (Dr. Jeffery) Clark; step grandchildren, Stefanie (Fabian) Larson, Shane Silagi, and Austin Clark; step great-grandchildren, Kyle and Eli; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Jane and a daughter, Elizabeth Ann; siblings, Kenneth Elwood Asdell, Davie Joe Asdell, Doris June Baron and Drima Faye Asdell.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Very Rev. J. Kenneth Walker on Monday, January 8 at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Burial followed in St. John Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Indiana University School of Dentistry – 1121 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202, attention John Hoffman.

Condolences may be made online at www.blakefuneralhomes.com.

COURT NEWS

Loogootee Police log

ARRESTS

CIVIL COURT
New Suits Filed
December 28
Republic Finance, LLC vs. Timothy Wiscaver, civil collection.
January 2
Crown Asset Management, LLC vs. Matthew Shoultz, civil collection.
Progressive Southeastern Insurance Company vs. Amy N. Freeman, civil tort.

CIVIL COURT JUDGMENTS
December 28
Judgment in favor of the plaintiff LVNV Funding, LLC and against the defendant Linda Stanger in the amount of \$2,300.72.

CIVIL COURT DISMISSED
January 2
Velocity Investments, LLC vs. Daniel Cox, civil collection, dismissed.

SMALL CLAIMS COURT
New Suits Filed
December 27
Jason Marion Davis vs. Geoffery Kallner and G&H Concrete, complaint.

SMALL CLAIMS JUDGMENTS
December 28
Judgment in favor of the plaintiff James M. Seals and against the defendants Bob Canada and Tonya Canada in the amount of \$1,313.

Indiana State Police partnering in Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative

The Indiana State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division (CVED) is partnering with the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) for CVSA's Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative January 8 -12, 2024. During this annual human trafficking initiative, ISP's CVED personnel will raise awareness about human trafficking by distributing outreach materials to commercial motor vehicle drivers while conducting commercial motor vehicle inspections.

CMV drivers, crisscrossing America, are in a unique position to identify potential incidents of human trafficking and raising their awareness and providing drivers the tools to identify and report signs of human trafficking is the goal of this campaign. CVSA's Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative will be conducted across North America: US January 8 -12, 2024, Canada February 19-23, 2024, and Mexico March 11-15, 2024.

According to the United Nations, human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of people through force, fraud, or deception with the aim of exploiting them for

MONDAY, JANUARY 1
3:14 p.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Cedar Street.
7:18 p.m. - Officer Davis responded to a report of theft at Dollar General.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2
11:56 a.m. - Chief Long responded to a complaint on station.
8:28 p.m. - Officer Davis responded to a civil disturbance on Southwest Third Street.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3
9:56 a.m. - Chief Long responded to a complaint on Church Street.
1:09 p.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call at the Loogootee High School.
6:07 p.m. - Officer Davis responded to a complaint on station.
10:00 p.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Brooks House Road.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4
10:50 a.m. - Chief Long responded to an animal call at Loogootee High School.
12:10 p.m. - Chief Long investigated a 911 hangup on West Main Street.
3:00 p.m. - Chief Long assisted a motorist at JFK and Vincennes Street.

profit. Men, women, and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world, including North America. Human traffickers often use violence, fraudulent employment agencies, and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims.

The Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative is part of CVSA's Human Trafficking Prevention Program. The program seeks to reduce human trafficking throughout North America through coordinated enforcement and investigative and educational awareness measures within the commercial motor vehicle industry.

CVSA and the Indiana State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division collaborate with Truckers Against Trafficking (www.truckersagainstrafficking.org) to engage and equip the commercial vehicle industry in the fight against human trafficking.

To report suspected human trafficking, please call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888 or text INFO to 233733

4:21 p.m. - Chief Long responded to a report of an erratic driver on US 231 North.
8:40 p.m. - Officer Wagoner responded to a civil disturbance on North JFK Avenue.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5
4:50 a.m. - Chief Long responded to a call at Taco Bell.
12:23 a.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Locust Street.
4:10 p.m. - Officer Wagoner responded to an animal call on East Broadway Street.
4:44 p.m. - Officer Wagoner responded to a report of an erratic driver on US 231 South.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6
10:26 a.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Redbud Street.
1:35 p.m. - Officer Davis performed a funeral escort on Church Street.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7
1:29 a.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Cedar Street.
9:05 a.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a medical call on Byron Street.
1:18 p.m. - Officer Stivers responded to a call on Dewey Street.
8:05 p.m. - Loogootee Fire Department responded to a report of an accident on Love Cemetery Road.

Real estate transfers

Jarrold D. Graves and Rhiannon Graves, of Martin County, Indiana to **Michelle Joyner**, of Martin County, Indiana, Lot Number 22 in the Town, now City of Loogootee, Indiana.

MONDAY, JANUARY 1
6:53 a.m. - Tikelan Kilburn, 40, of Washington, was arrested by Deputy Baumgart and charged with operating while intoxicated. He is being held on \$3,000 10% bond.
10:43 a.m. - Justin Lacey, 31, of Orleans, was arrested by Corporal Hawkins on a Martin County warrant. He was released to Community Corrections.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2
7:57 p.m. - Teiara Hanes, 38, of Shoals, was arrested by Corporal Hawkins on a Martin County warrant. She is being held without bond.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4
9:35 p.m. - Tammie Smith, 55, of Loogootee, was arrested by Loogootee Officer Wagoner and charged with domestic battery and strangulation. She is being held on \$15,000 10% bond.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5
5:16 a.m. - Robert Curren, 33, of Bedford, was arrested by Deputy Erwin and charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated Endangerment. He is being held on \$15,000 10% bond.
2:58 p.m. - Larry Holt, 48, of Vincennes, was arrested by Deputy Branham and charged with possession of methamphetamine and unlawful possession of a syringe. He is being held without bond. Deputy Erwin assisted with the arrest.
2:58 p.m. - Cecorra Holt, 25, of Loogootee, was arrested by Deputy Branham and charged with possession of methamphetamine and unlawful possession of a syringe. She is being held on \$15,000 10% bond. Deputy Erwin assisted with the arrest.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7
2:28 a.m. - Timothy Cody Troutman, 27, of Shoals, was arrested by Deputy Erwin and charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of paraphernalia and possession of a legend drug. He is being held on \$45,000 10% bond.

WestGate @ Crane Authority Board
2024 Meeting Schedule
Each meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. in the WestGate Academy or via Zoom when requested.

Tuesday, January 9	Tuesday, July 9
Tuesday, February 13	Tuesday, August 13
Tuesday, March 12	Tuesday, September 10
Tuesday, April 9	Tuesday, October 8
Tuesday, May 14	Tuesday, November 12
Tuesday, June 11	Tuesday, December 10

Our Prayers for the Unborn in 2024,

We pray for our country and its Leaders that they will respect the lives of the Unborn and we pray for the election of Individuals during this election year who will respect the lives of those unborn children! We also pray for the appointment of pro-life judges to all the courts systems, Federal, State and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Father, all life is in your care. You have entrusted us to one another so that we may show our brothers and sisters the same love you have for us.

We pray for those among us who cannot defend themselves, the innocent children of the womb. Protect them from the violence of abortion. We pray for those that are scheduled to die at all Abortion Chambers. Please extend you protective hand and protect those from the destruction by Abortionist.

We pray dear Lord, to save them from death. Give new hope to their parents so that they may turn away from the desperate act of abortion. Grant Conversion to the abortionist and to their staff and to the parents who choose abortion instead of life for the unborn.

Show us how we are to respond to the bloodshed in our midst. Lead us to the day when these places of death will be transformed into a haven of life. Guard us with your joy and your peace. For in you, life is victorious, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Paid for by Martin County Right to Life Inc., P.O. Box 11, Loogootee, In. 47553

The Martin County Soil & Water Conservation District



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LOOGOOTEE, IN 47553

Visit us at our new office space with the Martin County Alliance in downtown Loogootee!

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More Neat Stuff



By Ann Ackerman



What is the difference between “completed” and finished?” No dictionary has been able to define the difference between the two.

In a linguistic conference in England, Sam Sherman, an Indian-American, was the clear winner.

His response: When you marry the right woman, you are “complete.”

If you marry the wrong woman, you are “finished.”

And when the right woman catches you with the wrong woman, you are “completely finished.”

His answer received a five-minute ovation.

THOUGHTS
*I got fired from my job at the bank today. An old lady asked me to check her balance, so I pushed her over.

*My favorite word is “drool.” It just rolls off the tongue.

*One thing nobody ever talks about being an adult is how much time you debate yourself on keeping a cardboard box because it’s like a really, really good box.

*Practical Advice: If all the toilets in your house are occupied and you are waiting for one to be free, switch off the wi-fi.

*A man walks into a pet store and asks for a dozen bees. The clerk carefully counts 13 bees out onto the counter. “That’s one too many!” says the customer. The clerk replies, “It’s a freebie.”

*People need to learn the difference between want and need. For example: I want abs, but I need tacos.

*I only drink coffee Monday through Friday (and on weekends).

*Me: I need some help around here!

Also Me: No, not like that. Here. I’ll do

Notes from the WIC Nutritionist

BY ELIZABETH WHITE
Martin County WIC Nutritionist

2024 is well underway. I hope everyone has made at least one healthy goal for 2024. Goals are very important when starting something new. You need them to be attainable and measurable. Ask yourself “what can I do tomorrow.” If you accomplish that goal, then ask yourself “what can I do next week.” Start small for example: tomorrow I will walk for 15 minutes or tomorrow I will decrease my soda/pop intake by one can. As you achieve your goals build on them and add new goals. Of course, you can always make more than one goal or make them more difficult but always make them attainable and measurable.

Reminder Martin County WIC has moved to the Martin County Community Learning Center on the Martin County 4-H Fair Grounds, 2666 Highway US-50, Loogootee.

The WIC program provides supplemental nutritional foods, referrals, breastfeeding support, and nutrition education for pregnant women, nursing women, infants, and children 1-5 years. The Martin County WIC clinic is open Monday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please call 812-407-4282 to make an appointment. Breastfeeding line: 812-226-9820

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

it.
*I think ghosts are just people who died trying to fold a fitted sheet.

Guy in a library walks up to the librarian and says, “I’ll have a cheeseburger and fries, please.”

Librarian responds, “Sir, you know you’re in a library, right?”

Guy says, “Oh, sorry. *[in a whisper]* I’ll have a cheeseburger and fries, please.”

A farmer lost his watch in the barn. The watch had great sentimental value, so he searched for it to no avail.

He heard some kids playing outside, and explained to them about his watch, and asked if they would help him find it. They all searched but could not find the watch.

The farmer thanked them for their help and sent them off. As they were leaving, one little boy asked if he could try again. The farmer decided to give him another chance, and the boy returned to the barn.

About half an hour later, the boy walked out of the barn with the watch. The farmer was amazed, and asked how he could find it when so many had been looking and failed?

The boy replied, “I didn’t do anything...I just sat in the silence and listened. Eventually, I heard the ticking of the watch, and followed the sound.”

Make someone smile today!



Midwestern Engineers honors Darrel Koontz

Darrel Koontz, of Loogootee-based Midwestern Engineers, Inc., was recently honored by the company’s Board of Directors, with the prestigious Gordon Bough Distinguished Service Award. The Bough Award is the company’s highest honor for valued employees. Koontz was recognized for his collaborative spirit, consistent quality of work, and dedication to the firm’s clients. Joining Midwestern in 2001 as a drafter, Koontz now serves as a Senior Project Designer, specializing in water utility infrastructure, wastewater systems, and transportation facilities. Darrel, and his wife Deanna, are residents of Petersburg. Shown above, Koontz (left) is presented the award by Nathan Walker (right), Vice-President of Midwestern Engineers, Inc.).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Loogootee School Board meeting
The Loogootee School Board will meet Thursday, January 11 at 4 p.m. in the high school media center. The meeting is open to the public.

Celebrate Recovery meetings
Celebrate Recovery meetings will be held every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at The River Church in Shoals. This is a Christ-centered recovery program and anyone is welcome to attend.

Dog/cat Wellness Clinic
The Martin County Humane Society hosts wellness clinic for January has been cancelled. Dr. Loughmiller will not be available this month. The next wellness clinic will be Friday, February 16 from 5-6 p.m. at the animal shelter. No appointment is required.

St. Vincent Food Pantry
The St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, on Park Street in Loogootee, is open the fourth Thursday of the month except November and December when they are open the third Thursday. The hours are 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3:30 p.m.

Free lunch for kids
New Beginnings Community Church will be offering a free lunch to all school age children every Saturday. Lunches can be picked up at the fellowship hall of the church, located at 105 Wood St, Loogootee no later than 10:30 a.m. Deliveries will begin between 10:30 and 11 a.m. Saturdays.

SOAR Tutoring
Need Skills? SOAR tutors can help! Free and confidential. Call or text Karen at 812-709-1618 to learn more. Located in the Martin County Community Learning Center Improve Your Skills, Improve Your Life!

LUMC Food Pantry
The Loogootee United Methodist Church Food Pantry is open every Thursday (except the fourth Thursday) from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Solid waste board
The Martin County Solid Waste Board holds their monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at the recycling center located at 500 Industrial Park Drive in Loogootee. The meetings

are open to the public and anyone is invited to attend.

Soil and Water meetings
The Martin County SWCD meets the third Monday of the month at the SWCD office located at Martin County Learning Center. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays except Fridays when it is closed. Visit www.martinswcd.com or call at 295-3149.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

‘It’s important that we keep this topic alive’

To the editor of the *Martin County Journal*,

As 2024 begins let’s remember that the opposition to the Mid-State Corridor is not a political one. It doesn’t matter if you are a Democrat, a Republican or something in between, the Corridor is not to our mutual benefit.


My father’s family were all Democrats, albeit moderates; and my mother’s were all Republicans. As a kid I listened to the “grown-ups” discuss (argue) politics. What I remember was that although they differed on how to get things done, they all agreed that what was best for the community was the best solution. We all need to rally together in our opposition to the Mid-States Corridor, as I feel this is the best solution for our communities.

Regardless of your political persuasion it’s important that we keep this topic alive. We need to continue to support all who oppose the Corridor, attend any meetings that are held, write letters, have conversations but above all, keep the opposition alive.

As you start to look over the candidates for local and state office, see if any of them mention the Corridor. Regardless of party, try and support those candidates that oppose the Corridor. They are the ones who believe like we do that small towns and rural areas are the backbone of our great country.

Jim Arvin
Rutherford Township
Martin County

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Shoals Town Council hears from robotics team, makes appointments

The Shoals Town Council met Tuesday, January 2. Those in attendance were Council Members Cary D. Albright, Roger L. Abel, and Micky Crew, Clerk-Treasurer Sierra Rutledge, Attorney Dave Lett, Darlene Grogran, Jeff Ferrell, Zack Brown, Jenny Hembree, Bridget Bush, Kaylee Bearden, Vyllette Self, Silas Survance, Bentley Smith, Leeland Ryan, Eyan Hovis, Adi Brown, and Tritt Rutledge.

The FLL Robotics Team “ROXSTARS” presented their 2024 challenge project to the Town Council. Each year the FLL (First Lego League) and FTC (First Tech Challenge) will present a theme for the season of competing. In 2024, the theme is “Masterpiece.” Masterpiece’s purpose is to challenge the robotics teams to imagine and innovate new ways to create and communicate art across the globe through STEM. Each member of the team spoke during the presentation explaining the projects they have done for the challenge and ways they have been able learn, teach and showcase art right here in their very own community. The team also went over core values and ways they are applying those values to their specific projects. The team has hosted pop up art galleries in Shoals and Loogootee, a team led cupcakes and canvas in both Shoals and Loogootee for youth and visited surrounding art galleries.

Council Member Albright stated some board appointments needed to be addressed. First was the Mid-States Corridor Steering Committee. Councilman Abel made a motion to appoint Councilwoman Crew to the committee with Councilman Abel making the second. Albright stated he had been appointed to the SIDC (Southern Indiana Development Commission) board and that Councilwoman Crew was taking his place. Councilman Abel made a motion to approve with Councilman Albright making the second.

Albright said Councilwoman Crew was the appointee for the WRMCA (White River Military Coalition Alliance) board and he would be taking her place. Councilwoman Crew made a motion to approve with Councilman Abel making the second.

It was noted that Councilman Abel would remain as the appointee for the Martin County Solid Waste Board.

Councilman Albright stated he has a scheduling conflict for the April meeting and asked if it could be changed to Monday, April 1 at 4 p.m. Councilwoman Crew made a motion to approve the change with Councilman Abel making the second.

Albright presented an agreement to provide service from HWC Engineering for the engineering services to apply for a grant for the water main located under the US Highway 50 Bridge. Albright stated the language requested by Attorney Lett at the last meeting had been added. Attorney Lett stated he has reviewed and had no objections to the document. Councilwoman Crew made a motion to approve the agreement with Councilman Abel making the second.

Attorney Lett stated he would have all of the vacated alleyway documents ready for the next regular session of the council in February. Jeff Ferrell, in the audience, stated he was an adjoining property owner to the requests and that his water meter would be located in the area being requested to vacate. He asked what that would mean for his water line. Councilman Abel stated the town has an easement for all water meters and lines. Attorney Lett stated he could include easement information in the vacate documents.

Clerk-Treasurer Rutledge requested approval to close out the town’s credit card with Old National Bank and open one with German American Bank to align with the banking change over. Councilwoman

an Crew made a motion to approve with Councilman Abel making the second.

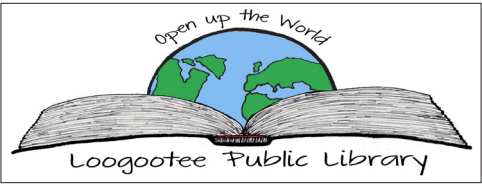
Rutledge presented an advertisement for the 2024 Spring Hill Cemetery mowing. It was decided to advertise for a two-year contract.

Rutledge presented meter deposit and applies for R. Browder and M. Tedrow. Councilman Abel made a motion to approve with Councilwoman Crew making the second.

Rutledge stated the LED Jug Rock light up sign at the ballpark was being wired up and should be lit tonight.

With no further business Councilman Abel made a motion to adjourn with Councilwoman Crew making the second meeting closed at 4:19 p.m.

The next regular meeting is Monday, February 12 at 4 p.m.



BY DARLA WAGLER
Librarian, Loogootee Public Library

The library will be closed on Monday, January 15 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Even though the building is closed, patrons can still access eMaterials via the Libby app.

Friends of Loogootee Library (FOLL) will have a Book Lover’s Book Sale starting on Saturday, January 10 at 8 a.m. and last until Saturday, January 17, at noon. The tables of books will be displayed throughout the library for the week. There are several gently used hardbacks, paperbacks and movies.

The next Sensory Hour with Elizabeth Mathias will be on Monday, January 22 at 3:30 p.m.

Adult beginner computer workshop will be held on Saturday, January 13 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Please call before you start out to make sure the instructor made it here. He is not local and travels to provide this service.

BINGO for ages 55 and up will be held on Monday, January 22 at 10:15 a.m. The prizes are \$15 restaurant gift cards and large containers of sundries. Sponsored by FOLL.

The library has two sets of pickleball paddles (and balls) to check out with your local library card. You can try your hand at pickleball to see if you like it before investing in equipment.

New Books:
Mystery: “Holmes, Marple, and Poe” by James Patterson and “The Night Island” by Jayne Ann Krentz.
Inspirational Fiction: “Double Take” by Lynette Eason.
DVDs: “Sound of Freedom”, “Oppenheimer” and “Stars in My Crown”.

The library inclement weather policy states: if Loogootee School System is closed then we are as well. Staff will notify WWBL and WAMW radio stations plus post on Facebook.

Library hours: Monday 10-6, Tuesday 10-5, Closed on Wednesday, Thursday 10-6, Friday 10-5, and Saturday 9-1. The library phone number is 812-295-3713 and check out the website www.loogootee.lib.in.us or like us on Facebook. The library has free Wi-Fi service available for patrons.

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MARTIN COUNTY
Community
Foundation
Partnership

Making A Difference

By Curt Johnson
MCCF Director



-- ARISTOTLE --
“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” So, what does a quote from an ancient Greek philosopher and scientist have to do with you and I here in Martin County in 2024? You’ve probably seen it used before to make a point about working together to accomplish something good, something more than could have been done individually. So, you bet, here’s another time to see it.

-- SMALL FOR BIG --
And I’ve said it before that we are a small county. Nothing new there. But as we’ve seen more than once, our residents come together to make our county better. So many times, people volunteer their time and talent to help pull together that important event, to improve the quality of life in some way for someone in our community. People from a small county can make a big difference when they work together.

-- YOUR GIVING PLAN --
This same thought also applies when you start thinking about your giving plan for the year. You’ll need to decide how much you can donate to a charity so that you can have an impact on a concern that is important to you. Some people donate money whenever there’s an event or celebration. Sometimes instead of buying gifts, they donate in honor or memory of a loved one. Some can donate a significant amount of money, but the majority of us are not that fortunate.

-- LITTLE BITS ADD UP --
But there is an amount this is right for each of us. Pick some percentage of your income or a specific amount that you want to donate and how often. And it can be a small amount. Whatever or however you do it is fine; just stay committed to your cause. Over the year it adds up. And if many people commit to donating what they can, together it adds up to make a big difference. It’s “strength in numbers.”

-- YOUR MCCF --
The MCCF is here to help you put your giving plan into practice. We start every new year with board members that give us good representation across the county. Please contact any of them to start that conversation about how you can be a part of something bigger.

The 2024 MCCF Board members are:
Krista Ausbrooks, President
Megan Hawkins, Vice-President
Janie Johnson, Secretary
Mike Arvin
Greg Bateman
Liz Chatten
Tracy Rayhill
Paula Ringwald
Angie Risacher
Kelli Wilson

-- TRIPLE YOUR IMPACT! --
And as you consider your giving options, please know that if you want to help others deal with the changing and emerging needs in our county, your donation to a new or existing MCCF “unrestricted” fund will do that for you. And the MCCF has a matching grant opportunity where we will match \$2 for every \$1 donated to any of these unrestricted funds. Triple your impact!

-- MORE INFORMATION --
For more information about the MCCF or how we can help you help our county, please visit Director Curt Johnson at 2668 US Hwy 50 (on the Martin County fairgrounds, back building) or contact him at 812-295-1022, mccf@cfpartner.org, or PO Box 28 Loogootee IN 47553.

You are also welcome to visit our webpage at www.cfpartner.org and “follow” the MCCF Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mccommunityfoundation.

Filing period open for 2024 Martin County Primary Election

Filing period for the 2024 Martin County Primary Election starts today, January 10, 2024 and ends February 9, 2024 at noon. All registered voters in the county will be eligible to vote in the May 7 election. If you are unsure of your voting status, you may contact the Martin County Clerk’s Office, visit an Indiana BMV office, or go online at <https://indianavoters.in.gov> to register or update your voter registration. You have until April 8, 2024, to update or register to vote in order to vote in the Primary Election.

The following local offices will be on the May 7 primary ballot:
Martin County Auditor
Martin County Recorder
Martin County Treasurer
Martin County Coroner
Martin County Surveyor
Martin County Commissioner District 1
Martin County Commissioner District 3
Martin County Council-at-Large will have three positions open
Republican Precinct Committeemen
4 Republican Convention Delegates-at-Large

2 Democratic Convention Delegates-at-Large

You must be a registered voter at the time of filing for one of the above positions. You may obtain the proper forms for filing at the Martin County Clerk’s Office at 129 Main Street in Shoals. If you have questions, please call the clerk’s office at 812-247-3651.

School board offices will be on the November General Election ballot only. School board candidate filing period has changed. The filing period will run from Tuesday, May 21 through Thursday, June 20 at noon.

All forms will be available in the Martin County Clerk’s Office.

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Journal

Email courtney@martincountyjournal.com

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Sullivan
(812) 268-5252

Jasonville
(812) 665-3969

Shoals
(812) 247-3321

Martinsville
(765) 342-6623

Bicknell
(812) 735-3545

Jasper
(812) 634-2222

Linton
(812) 847-4494

Bloomfield
(812) 384-4453

Washington
(812) 254-2540





It has been a week of winter walks in the garden. The best thing one can add to a garden is the gardener's shadow. The weather this past week was far from ideal, but there were plenty of occasions to get out and walk through the gardens. A couple of visitors helped give me the impetus to get out there.

Flowers are usually seen as the hope of spring, and my inspections last week revealed that several of the hellebore clumps are sporting swelled buds, some even showing some color. If we get a couple of warm days, there will likely be blooms in two or three weeks! Hellebores usually bloom in late winter, but earlier blooms are not exactly rare. Still, their presence just helps take some of the bite out of winter. My visitor was certainly impressed, although he has seen the hellebore blooms in the past. I scratched through the leaves looking for some signs of winter aconite but did not find any yet. There are, however, several other perennials putting out early foliage, including tall sedums, goldenrods and pulmonaria. Plants which come up in the fall and hold their leaves through the winter add to the interest, as do some plants which hold their old leaves until new leaves start to come out later in spring. The garden may be sleeping, but it certainly is showing signs of life and the hope of spring.

Another plant that caused my visitors to take notice was the contorted filbert. The specimen in my garden was planted in 1992 as a memory plant for my father, who was fond of canes made from crooked wood. This shrub is now over eight feet tall and at least six feet wide. I know of only one other specimen of that size in this area (although there may be others in private gardens). In those years, some of the branches have contorted to the point of almost tying themselves in knots. While those contorted branches are still there in the summer, they add a peculiar interest in winter when there are no leaves to compete for attention. Not

2024 4-H Trips

2024 4-H Trips - need to contact the 4-H extension office at 812-295-2412 for more information.

- 4-H Camp Counselors - TBA
- Southern Indiana 4-H Camp - TBA
- 4-H Academy at Purdue - June 12-14, open to grades 9-12.
- State 4-H Junior Leader Conference - June - TBA, open to grades 7-12
- 4-H Band Workshop - June 22-24, open to grade 9 -12
- 4-H Chorus Workshop - June 22-25, open to grades 9-12
- 4-H Round-up - June 24-26, open to grade 7-9.

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far from the contorted filbert is a contorted mulberry. The branches of this tree are crooked, but not nearly as twisted as those of the filbert. Still, it does add interest to the winter landscape.

Interesting bark also is more noticeable in the winter garden. The river birch is particularly beautiful, with the exfoliating outer bark, revealing several colors of inner bark. I think the vase-like shape of this multi-stem tree adds to its interest. Another plant with interesting exfoliating bark is the oak-leaf hydrangea. In addition to the layers of bark, these plants continue to hold on to the bloom heads from last year and even some of the burgundy leaves remain. I have several oak-leaf hydrangeas, including the species and some miniature versions. I also have several branches that were pulled down and buried last summer, and I hope they have rooted to yield more plants to increase their presence for this year. Osier dogwoods also add a lot of winter interest. My red-twig cultivar has been left to grow without trimming for the last couple of years because I was concerned that it had suffered root damage due to having to replace a nearby water line. However, it now looks strong enough to endure some pruning, and I plan to take out the largest branches to encourage new growth, which will result in more of the bright red color. The yellow-twig dogwood had to be transplanted a couple of years ago, but now seems to be established in its new home, and also will be able to be improved with some trimming. I am looking forward to some nice winter days to do this work. The final star of the interesting bark is the coral-bark maple. Like the dogwoods, the color is greater in new growth, so the coral pink twigs shine best on sunny days. It also seems to improve in colder weather.

Even in the cold weather of the first week in the year, there were things to see at Sandhill Gardens, and I am glad I got out and took the walks. Come by and walk with me sometime.

Bedford Outdoors Series presents - “The Last Old Growth Animal in Indiana”

Is it possible that an animal specially adapted to old-growth forest is still present? This presentation will make the case that indeed such an animal still exists in Indiana and the story will include Native Americans, fire, passenger pigeons, bison, and more.

Allen Pursell, Forest Programs Director for the Sam Shine Foundation, will present this fascinating topic on January 23, from 6 to 7 p.m. as part of the Bedford Outdoors Series. The presentation will be held at the Forest Service Office, 811 Constitution Ave, Bedford, Indiana. RSVP by January 19 is required. Contact

Autumn Ray, Bedford Parks Department, at 812-275-5692.

For those who cannot attend in person, the event will be livestreamed on the Hoosier National Forest Facebook page facebook.com/HoosierNF/.

The Bedford Outdoors Series is hosted in collaboration by Bedford Parks Department, Purdue University Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District, Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry, and USDA Forest Service - Hoosier National Forest.

The Town of Shoals is accepting sealed bids for the contracted mowing of Springhill Cemetery for the 2024 & 2025 mowing seasons.

Mowing Season: April 1st through October 31st of each year.

Contract Terms:

MOWING: Mowing of grass to a height of 3.5 inches is desired.

- The expectations of the contractor is to mow the area once a week except in adverse weather conditions. For example, drought grass may not need mowing once a week in certain areas and wet and soft areas need plenty of time to dry to reduce the risk of making ruts in the cemetery.

TRIMMING: Trimming around headstones, trees, shrubs, etc. is to be done twice per month. Headstones are to be cleared of grass clippings after trimmings.

CLEANING: Cleaning out of the cemetery grounds is to take place five (5) times per year. This is preferred to happen during the following time through the season:

1. At the beginning of the mowing season April 1st.
2. The week before the Memorial Day holiday.
3. The week before the 4th of July holiday.
4. The week before the Labor Day holiday.
5. The week after the last needed mowing of the season.

Accepted contractor is required to furnish proof of \$1,000,000 liability insurance coverage prior to the start of the mowing season.

BID INFORMATION: Sealed bids will be accepted at the Shoals Town Hall at 221 Low Street Shoals, Indiana 47581 or by mail at P.O. Box 1078 Shoals, Indiana 47581 until Friday, February 9th, 2024 at 3:00 P.M. Bids will be opened at the regular scheduled meeting on Monday, February 12th, 2024 at 4:00 P.M. at the Shoals Town Hall. Bid should include: Bidder Name, address, phone number. Bid amount in total for each year. Upon awarding, the bidder will sign a contract with the Town of Shoals agreeing to all terms listed above.

The Town of Shoals reserves the right to refuse or deny any bid received.

Brian Price, MD Cardiologist

Cardiologist Brian Price, MD, JD, FACC, FSCAI was recently appointed to the Medical Staff at Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center. Dr. Price is joining the staff at Memorial Hospital's Heartland Cardiology.

Dr. Price received his medical degree at West Virginia University School of Medicine in Morgantown. He completed a residency in internal medicine at University of Louisville Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky. He also completed a cardiology fellowship and interventional cardiology fellowship at Marshall University School of Medicine in Huntington, West Virginia. Dr. Price is board certified in cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology and is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions. Dr. Price also earned a law degree at Washington & Lee University School of Law in Lexington, Virginia.

To schedule an appointment at Heartland Cardiology, please call 812-996-5656. The office is located at 440 Scott Rolen Drive in Jasper.

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Councilman's Corner

By Shoals Town Council President
Cary D. Albright

Successful completion of \$2.9 million wastewater project enhances Shoals infrastructure

Shoals has reached a significant milestone with the successful completion of a \$2.9 million wastewater project, marking a crucial step in the improvement of local infrastructure. The comprehensive initiative addressed various aspects of the wastewater management system, ensuring enhanced efficiency and environmental sustainability.

One of the key components of the project involved upgrading the screens at the lagoon, a vital element in the wastewater treatment process. The improvements aimed to optimize the screening process, enhancing the removal of debris and contaminants from the wastewater. This upgrade not only contributes to the overall effectiveness of the treatment system but also aligns with environmental standards, safeguarding the local ecosystem.

Additionally, the information gathering and data storage capabilities of the lagoon were enhanced, signifying a commitment to modernizing wastewater management practices. The incorporation of advanced data storage systems facilitates more efficient monitoring and control of the wastewater treatment processes, enabling authorities to respond promptly to any operational challenges.

A significant portion of the project focused on the rehabilitation of over 4,000 linear feet of wastewater line, equivalent to more than 13 football fields. The relining of this extensive network ensures the integrity and longevity of the infrastructure, minimizing the risk of leaks and system failures. This proactive approach to maintenance is crucial for preventing environmental hazards and ensuring the sustained functionality of the wastewater system.

An innovative aspect of the initiative involved the installation of 750 feet of forced main pipe underneath the White River East Fork bridge. This strategic placement enhances the overall connectivity of the wastewater system, optimizing the transportation of waste to the lagoons. The utilization of cutting-edge engineering solutions, such as mounting the forced main pipe under the bridge, demonstrates a commitment to maximizing efficiency while minimizing the impact on the local environment.

The project also addressed the need for additional lift station motors, crucial components responsible for lifting and transferring waste to the lagoons. The integration of these motors, along with a sophisticated control panel managing complex three-phase systems, ensures a seamless and efficient operation of the wastewater transfer process. This not only



Shown above is the 750-foot wastewater line under White River, East Fork Bridge.

contributes to the reliability of the system but also positions Shoals, Indiana, as a forward-thinking community invested in sustainable infrastructure solutions.

Furthermore, the introduction of sophisticated electronic testing equipment for water quality analysis and maintenance is a testament to Shoals' commitment to environmental stewardship. This advanced equipment enables real-time monitoring of water quality parameters, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and promoting the responsible management of natural resources.

In conclusion, the successful completion of the \$2.9 million wastewater project in Shoals represents a significant leap forward in enhancing the town's wastewater management infrastructure. Through upgrades, rehabilitation, and the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies, Shoals is not only ensuring the efficient treatment of wastewater but also establishing itself as a model for sustainable and forward-looking community development.

University of Evansville announces Fall Dean's List

Students at the University of Evansville are named to the Dean's List every fall and spring semester. To merit the honor of being placed on the Dean's List, a student must have carried a full academic load of 12 hours or more and have earned a grade point average of 3.5 or above.

The following are students on the 2023 Fall Dean's List at the University of Evansville:

McKenzie White, Majoring in Criminal Justice, Shoals

Alyssa Howell, Majoring in Nursing, Shoals

Haley Fischer, Majoring in Accounting, Shoals

Ethan Ziegler, Majoring in Accounting, Loogootee

Easton Ziegler, Majoring in Business, Loogootee

Lindsey Nolan, Majoring in Exercise Science, Loogootee

National unemployment stays at 3.7 percent for December

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 216,000 in December, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.7 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported last week.

Employment continued to trend up in government, health care, social assistance, and construction, while transportation and warehousing lost jobs.

This news release presents statistics from two monthly surveys. The household survey measures labor force status, including unemployment, by demographic characteristics. The establishment survey measures nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings by industry.

Household Survey Data

The unemployment rate held at 3.7 percent in December, and the number of unemployed persons was essentially unchanged at 6.3 million. These measures are higher than a year earlier, when the jobless rate was 3.5 percent and the number of unemployed persons was 5.7 million.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rates for adult men (3.5 percent), adult women (3.3 percent), teenagers (11.9 percent), Whites (3.5 percent), Blacks (5.2 percent), Asians (3.1 percent), and Hispanics (5.0 percent) showed little change in December.

The number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more), at 1.2 million, was little changed in December and over the year. The long-term unemployed accounted for 19.7 percent of all unemployed persons in December.

The labor force participation rate, at 62.5 percent, and the employment-population ratio, at 60.1 percent, both decreased by 0.3 percentage point in December. These measures showed little or no change over the year.

The number of persons employed part time for economic reasons, at 4.2 million, changed little in December but was up by 333,000 over the year. These individuals who would have preferred full-time employment, were working part time because their hours had been reduced or they were unable to find full-time jobs.

The number of persons not in the labor force who currently want a job edged up to 5.7 million in December and was up by 514,000 over the year. These individuals were not counted as unemployed because they were not actively looking for work during the 4 weeks preceding the survey or were unavailable to take a job.

Among those not in the labor force who wanted a job, the number of persons marginally attached to the labor force changed little at 1.6 million in December but was up by 306,000 over the year. These individuals wanted and were available for work and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months but had not looked for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. The number of discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed that no jobs were available for them, at 346,000, was little changed in December and over the year.

Establishment Survey Data

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 216,000 in December. Employment continued to trend up in government, health care, social assistance, and construction, while transportation and warehousing lost jobs. Payroll employment rose by 2.7 million in 2023 (an average monthly gain of 225,000), less than the increase of 4.8 million in 2022 (an average monthly gain of 399,000).

Government employment increased by 52,000 in December. Employment continued to trend up in local government (+37,000) and federal government (+7,000). Government added an average of 56,000 jobs per month in 2023, more than double the average monthly gain of 23,000 in 2022.

In December, health care added 38,000 jobs. Employment continued to trend up in

ambulatory health care services (+19,000) and hospitals (+15,000). Job growth in health care averaged 55,000 per month in 2023, compared with the 2022 average monthly gain of 46,000.

Employment in social assistance rose by 21,000 in December, mostly in individual and family services (+17,000). Social assistance employment rose by an average of 22,000 per month in 2023, little different than the average increase of 19,000 per month in 2022.

In December, construction employment continued to trend up (+17,000). Employment in nonresidential building construction increased by 8,000. Construction added an average of 16,000 jobs per month in 2023, little different than the 2022 average monthly gain of 22,000.

Employment in transportation and warehousing declined by 23,000 in December. Couriers and messengers lost 32,000 jobs, while air transportation added 4,000 jobs. Since reaching a peak in October 2022, employment in transportation and warehousing has decreased by 100,000.

Employment in leisure and hospitality changed little in December (+40,000). The industry added an average of 39,000 jobs per month in 2023, less than half the average gain of 88,000 jobs per month in 2022. Employment in the industry is below its pre-pandemic February 2020 level by 163,000, or 1.0 percent.

Retail trade employment changed little in December (+17,000). Over the month, employment increased in warehouse clubs, supercenters, and other general merchandise retailers (+14,000); building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (+8,000); and automotive parts, accessories, and tire retailers (+4,000). These job gains were partially offset by a job loss in department stores (-13,000). Retail trade employment has shown little change, on net, since recovering in early 2022 from pandemic-related losses.

In December, employment in professional and business services changed little (+13,000). Employment in professional, scientific, and technical services continued to trend up (+25,000); this industry added an average of 22,000 jobs per month in 2023, about half the average monthly gain of 41,000 in 2022. In December, employment in temporary help services continued its downward trend (-33,000) and has fallen by 346,000 since reaching a peak in March 2022. Overall, employment in professional and business services changed little in 2023.

Employment showed little change over the month in other major industries, including mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; manufacturing; wholesale trade; information; financial activities; and other services.

In December, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls rose by 15 cents, or 0.4 percent, to \$34.27. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 4.1 percent. In December, average hourly earnings of private-sector production and non-supervisory employees rose by 10 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$29.42.

The average workweek for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls edged down by 0.1 hour to 34.3 hours in December. In manufacturing, the average workweek was little changed at 39.8 hours, and overtime remained at 2.9 hours. The average workweek for production and nonsupervisory employees on private nonfarm payrolls edged down by 0.1 hour to 33.7 hours.

The change in total nonfarm payroll employment for October was revised down by 45,000, from +150,000 to +105,000, and the change for November was revised down by 26,000, from +199,000 to +173,000. With these revisions, employment in October and November combined is 71,000 lower than previously reported.



Corner Cafe

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Sunday (Breakfast Only!) 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.