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Vol. 2 No. 7 August, 2021 Evansville, IN

# Evansville Regional Economic Partnership announces key promotions in its early months

**AUGUST 2021**  
 The Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP), a unified organization advancing the interests of businesses while fueling economic and community growth, is pleased to announce the promotion of Audrie Burkett



to Senior Vice President of Strategy and Operations. Burkett is well known throughout the Evansville Region for her work as part of the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana where she most recently served as the Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Joining the Coalition in 2015, she provided administrative oversight and led two significant initiatives: Southwest Indiana's Regional Cities Initiative dispersing \$42 million for quality of place initiatives and the Coalition's public policy work championing increased internet access for those living in rural areas.

In her new role with E-REP, she will continue to apply her command of economic and community development strategy to position the Evansville Region for success. Serving on the E-REP leadership team, with co-CEO's Tara Barney and Greg Wathen, Burkett will guide the team of 26 subject matter professionals providing counsel and technical

assistance in talent development, innovation, entrepreneurship, public policy, and the complex alignment of public and private horsepower that is delivering the quality of place energy transforming the Evansville Region.

Making the announcement, Burkett's long-time mentor and boss, Greg Wathen said, "We're excited to fully recognize the talent that Audrie brings to E-REP as she is a thoughtful strategic thinker and her value has been demonstrated in countless ways over the past year. It also reflects our strong desire to identify and promote talent within the organization."

Most recently, Burkett has been a key contributor to the successful alignment of the three organizations that comprise E-REP and has added responsibilities for overseeing all aspects of the merger, both internal and external. Her new role leading strategy and operations will position E-REP to fulfill its commitment to regional stakeholders to deliver impactful and measurable services to businesses and communities while also building a stronger Evansville region.

"I am lucky that my everyday professional life revolves around strengthening my hometown community, said Burkett. "Thinking about the future vision for our region in its simplest terms, when our children are able to make the choice where to live, we should be working hard now to make that decision an easy one."

Burkett is a Purdue Boilermaker with a B.S. in Agricultural Communications and honed her project management and peer leadership skills with a four-year stint at Angie's List where she worked alongside the co-founder and CMO during a period of extraordinary growth. In 2020, she was recognized as a Mitch Daniels Leadership Fellow, a prestigious two-year program designed to catalyze passionate Hoosiers to invest in Indiana.

"It has been my honor to get to know Audrie Burkett over these past three years. Her promotion is well-earned and is the beginning of a bright future for E-REP, our stakeholders, and members. I have every confidence that under her leadership the Evansville Region and Indiana are in great hands. Her personal commitment will strengthen the Evansville region's innovation resources, create new opportunities for companies to scale, and accelerate our journey to advance regional prosperity and global relevance," said Tara Barney, E-REP co-CEO.

A Posey County native, Burkett boomeranged back to Southwest Indiana in 2015 and resides in the Evansville region with her husband and daughter. Outside of E-REP, Burkett is an integral part of her family's small business, a dental practice located on Evansville's Westside. Burkett has served on the board of directors for the Art's Council of Southwest Indiana and Vanderburgh County Fair.

## USI Vaccination Clinic opening to general public every Tuesday through December 21, 2021



**AUGUST 2021**  
 The University of Southern Indiana is opening its Vaccination Clinic to the general public, allowing anyone eligible for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to make an appointment and receive the vaccine at the on-campus University Health Center.

Appointments are currently available for reservation in 10-minute increments from 9 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. beginning Tuesday, August 3. Vaccine appointments will be offered every Tuesday and Thursday that the University is open through Tuesday, December 21.

COVID vaccine doses administered by the USI Vaccination Clinic will be administered at no cost. Insurance information is not required.

To make an appointment, visit the State of Indiana

*-continued on page 14*

## When parents choose, students excel

By State Representative Cindy Ledbetter  
 House District 75

**AUGUST 2021**  
 As parents check off their children's back-to-school list and prepare for the start of another academic year, Indiana lawmakers are empowering families to take control of their children's education.

Indiana continues to be a national leader in school choice. Hoosier students have a wide variety of educational options, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, nonpublic schools, virtual schools and homeschool. Families can customize their child's education and ensure they thrive in the right academic environment.

From different teaching methods to varying course options, students at every level

*-continued on page 14*



## Attorney General fighting to protect Hoosiers from unconstitutional power grab

**AUGUST 2021**  
 The Office of the Indiana Attorney General today filed papers directly with the Indiana Supreme Court to stop some of the gubernatorial overreach manifested in the Holcomb v. Bray lawsuit, in which the Governor is suing the Indiana legislature because it overrode his veto of a duly passed and now enacted piece of legislation while that body is still in session conducting business.



"We are asking the Supreme Court to stop the executive branch power grab underway by preserving the constitutional protections that are meant to preserve Hoosiers'

*-continued on page 14*

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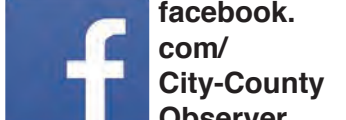
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# Commentary

## We consider ourselves to be a beacon of light for the community

By Staff of the City-County Observer  
AUGUST 2021

Over the years the City-County Observer has strived to serve as a "community watchdog" by sounding the alarm when our citizens' rights are in danger of being violated by our elected and appointed officials.

We encourage our elected and appointed officials to always consider the welfare of this community. We realize that a community can have no greater ambassador of goodwill than one which keeps its citizens informed about the accomplishments, failures, and triumphs of their elected and appointed officials. The primary focus of this publication is built upon the foundation of our readers for contemporary information in order to enhance their quality of life.

Our mission is to provide vital information concerning social, entertainment, dining, and lifestyle articles for your educational reading pleasure. We will strive to report and inform our readers about important issues that help shape their lives. We will educate and inform you about the competence and triumphs of area restaurants, dining venues, and social atmospheres. We also encourage you to send any and all information to our email to inform our readers about important issues that help shape their lives. Articles concerning weddings, anniversaries, social gatherings, concerts, and other activities are appreciated.

The Constitution of the United States of America is our Beacon of Light. The first amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."



The right to assemble and to see redress of grievances is enshrined in our constitution. Over the past several years, we have witnessed both peaceful and violent protests throughout our country. Recently outside groups of anarchist agitators attempted to foment lawlessness and unrest to advance their own objectives and cause anarchy.

We are a nation born of the revolutionary spirit of protest, coupling expressions of grievances against injustice with the desire to be free. However, the publisher and staff of the City-County Observer deplore the theft, looting, and burning of the buildings caused by the random acts of lawless anarchists and thugs. In fact, we believe these lawless thugs should be arrested and thrown in jail.

Since the "defund the police" movement has taken hold in some large American cities, violent crime has increased more than 300% in many of those cities. The City-County Observer strongly opposes the "defund the police" movement.

The City-County Observer is a member of ACP, Association of Community Publishers.



## A tribute to Steve Melcher, a true public servant



By The City-County Observer Staff  
AUGUST 2021

Steve Melcher was proud to admit that he never ran a negative campaign in his political career. Though certain moments may have warranted a less-than-kind response, he always remained positive, straightforward, and to the point. Steve's political success was due to the fact that people genuinely trusted him; a true rarity, it seems, in politics today. His open door policy earned him the trust of those in the City of Evansville and in Vanderburgh County. Melcher encouraged his constituents to approach him with questions, believing that communication was critical in the

process of government.

When asked how he viewed politics, Melcher simply answered, "There are many politicians, though there are few public servants." It was a humble response from a man who came from humble beginnings.

In 1991, Melcher borrowed three thousand dollars to make his first run at a city council seat and won the election. During his time on the Evansville City Council, he focused heavily on improving the infrastructure of the 3rd Ward. He fought for the extensive drainage renovations to correct the flooding issues that plagued his ward at that time. When all was said and done, Melcher's ward ranked 2nd in the city in storm drainage and 3rd in the city in streets repairs.

In 2008, and after 17 years on the city council, Melcher decided to run for County Commissioner. His motto, "A name that you know, a name that you trust," reflected the reputation he gained throughout his years in office. Melcher won the election in 2008 and began his first term as County Commissioner. In 2012 he prepared himself for yet another election race. His campaign was again successful and he was elected to his second term in November 2012.

Melcher was the first to ad-

mit that he was one of the most politically balanced office holders in Evansville and Vanderburgh County. Though he was a Democrat, he had a wide range of political views. Melcher held positions in many community organizations, reflecting his ability to respect the views of all people that might or might not be a party affiliate.

Steve Melcher was a lifetime member of the following organizations: NAACP; NRA; Evansville African American Museum (Charter Member); and Lake View Optimist Club (President). Melcher was also very involved in many neighborhood awareness groups around the city and worked closely with National Night Out, the national program famous for heightening crime and drug prevention awareness in neighborhoods across the country.

Steve Melcher considered himself a vital link to his community and was actively involved in neighborhood associations. These included United Neighborhoods of Evansville, President of the Vanderburgh County Drainage Board, member of Fraternal Order of Police Association Lodge # 73, East Side Lions Club, Indiana

Right to Life, and Right to Life of Southwest Indiana (Board member and Chairman of the Public Policy Committee). He also served on various other county and non-profit boards in our community.

He was a 10-year veteran of the military, having served three years in the Army at the rank of SP/5 E5 and seven years in the Indiana National Guard at the rank of Sergeant First Class E7. His military involvement led him to become active within the veteran community after his time of service. Melcher was a life member of the Amvets Post 84, American Legion Otis Stone Post 354, and Voiture 471 Forty & Eight. Melcher served as Commander of the Vanderburgh County Veterans Council and remained on the board of directors after his term was served.

Commissioner Melcher came from a very faith-based background. He was brought up in a Lutheran household from a very early age. Melcher found solace in his Bible studies and attended two services on weekends.

The people of this community have been well served by Steve Melcher, "A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT." May God rest his soul.

## Women's Equality Centennial Celebration tickets now available

By State Senator Vaneta Becker  
AUGUST 2021

Individual tickets for the 18th Annual Women's Equality Luncheon commemorating the Women's Suffrage Centennial are now available.

The 2020 luncheon was postponed due to COVID-19 and astronaut, engineer, author and STEM proponent Dr. Mae C. Jemison will speak at this year's event from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021 at Old National Events Plaza.

Seating is limited and no tickets will be available the day of the event. Individual tickets are available for \$60 each and special \$100 individual seat tickets or Centennial Patrons who will be recognized in the program.

The luncheon will follow social distancing guidelines. Table sponsorships are also available.

Women's Equality Day, Aug. 26 annually, celebrates the 19th Amendment of women earning the right to vote. In November of 1920, Evansville and other Hoosier women joined others in the nation at the polls to celebrate their right to vote.

Please join in commemorating the Women's Suffrage Centennial at the Annual Women's Equality luncheon, a collaboration of Stepping Up and Evansville YWCA.

Further information and tickets can be found at <http://steppingupevv.com/wed> and <http://steppingupevv.com/tickets>.

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# A system that rewards fights and punishes solutions

By John Krull  
TheStatehouseFile.com  
AUGUST 2021

## INDIANAPOLIS -

Gerrymandering is the problem that prevents us from solving just about every other problem.

The fact that we have set up a system of electing to the legislative branch unreasoning and unrelenting partisans who feel accountable only to people who think exactly the way they do warps every part of the government. It paralyzes what should be our system of resolving differences and turns even trivial matters into high-stakes, winner-take-all-loser-be-crushed conflicts.

Gerrymandering - the practice of drawing maps for legislative districts to give one party or another a disproportionate edge - adds immeasurably to the strife in our divided country and state.

Gerrymandering has been around from the earliest days of the republic. It draws its name from Elbridge Gerry.

Gerry was briefly vice president under President James Madison. He also signed the Declaration of Independence. He was one of only three delegates to the Constitutional Convention who refused to sign that august document until it included a bill of rights, a defect he helped remedy as a member of the First Congress.

All that worthy service to the fledgling nation, though, has been overshadowed by Gerry's more dubious contribution to history. While he was governor of Massachusetts, he oversaw a redistricting effort that resulted in a map that included a Senate district that a cartoonist caricatured as resembling a salamander and called a "Gerry-mander."

The name, simplified to gerrymander, took up permanent residence in the nation's vocabulary.

So, sadly, did the practice.

Through the decades, both Democrats and Republicans have resorted to gerrymandering. The desires of politicians to gain or hold onto power through any means, just or unjust, are nothing new.

What is new, as Janet Williams and Bill Theobald of The Indiana Citizen demonstrate in a deeply reported story on Indiana's 2011 redistricting efforts, is how technological advances have enhanced gerrymandering.

(Disclosures: Janet is a former executive editor of TheStatehouseFile.com. She, Bill and Indiana Citizen editor Kevin Morgan all are old friends and former colleagues of mine from our newspaper days. And The Indiana Citizen and TheStatehouseFile.com are partners.)

What the two reporters demonstrate in dispassionate but chilling detail is that what once was a dark and imprecise art practiced with paper maps and magic markers now is a precise science applied with surgical, laser-like accuracy. Politicians now can pick the voters they want with ease, almost as if they were ordering items off a fast-food menu.

I could summarize the reporting Janet and Bill did, but you really should read it for yourself: The room where it happened: A decade after Indiana's 2011 redistricting, those on the inside still aren't talking - TheStatehouseFile.com

This matters for at least three important reasons.

The first is that the Indiana General Assembly's preoccupation with minor and often divisive matters - permitless gun bills, measures to regulate the usage of public restrooms - is a product of a process that rewards extremists who seek election to the legislative branch and punishes more reasonable, rational candidates. The folks that gerrymandering pushes into the legislature want fights, not solutions.

The second is that gerrymandering exacerbates the natural - and somewhat healthy - the tension between the legislative and executive branches. One reason Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb and the General Assembly have gone to court to resolve a constitutional crisis involves redistricting. Governors and other officials who run statewide must balance the interests of all Hoosiers to be elected and fulfill their duties of the office. Lawmakers from gerrymandered districts only have to consult the face in the mirror.

But the last reason is the most significant.

Indiana, like other states, now is engaged in the redistricting process required after every census. This is the moment for Hoosiers to make their voices heard about the kind of government they want - about whether they want a system in which citizens choose their leaders or whether we will continue to allow politicians to pick their voters.

It is our chance to say that we want a government that helps us resolve our differences, aids us in meeting the challenges before us, rather than making problems worse and driving us further apart.

Make no mistake about it.

Indiana, like every other place on earth, does face difficult problems, but none are so immense that we cannot solve them if we summon the will and the good sense to work together.

## The sky is falling

By Jim Redwine  
AUGUST 2021

The national media pushes a highly addictive drug called paranoia. If one wants to get a reliable weather forecast or find out if a local kitten is not lost, local TV and regional newspapers are the best source. But if we are in need of a rush brought on by fear of catastrophe or schadenfreude, we flip the remote incessantly between CNN and FOX. CBS, NBC and ABC are available but boring. PBS can be interesting but is about as exciting as a library. No, if we want cataclysm or the satisfaction of seeing the rich and powerful fail, we must have cable. You might wonder about MSNBC but we can only take so much self-indulgent cynicism.

Gentle Reader, if you were awake, as I was, at 4 a.m. staring at the peach-colored ceiling and wondering if I should use the restroom again or make a cup of coffee, you may have defaulted to cable TV. That is where I saw the bobbleheads of CNN and FOX fervently seeking our advertising eyeballs by continually ratcheting up the partisan rhetoric.

-continued on page 14



That is why gerrymandering is the problem we must solve before we can solve every other problem.

**FOOTNOTE: John Krull is director of Franklin College's Pulliam School of Journalism and publisher of TheStatehouseFile.com, a news website powered by Franklin College journalism students.**

**The City-County Observer posted this article without bias or editing.**

## Indiana provides big boost for law enforcement

Guest column submitted by House Speaker Todd Huston  
AUGUST 2021

The vast majority of us don't worry whether we'll make it home for dinner let alone whether we'll make it home at all. That's not the case for thousands of Indiana's law enforcement officers who work hard to protect all Hoosiers. This year, legislators stepped up in a big way to recognize the sacrifices of the men and women in uniform by making strong investments in law enforcement training programs and facilities, and providing better hiring and crime-fighting tools.

This session, Republican efforts resulted in \$70 million being directed to modernize law enforcement training facilities and programs. The Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in Plainfield is an expansive campus preparing law enforcement professionals for service through rigorous training. While ILEA offers many state-of-the-art training programs, some areas have not been updated since the 1970s. Our investment will help ILEA make much-needed improvements and enhance their top-notch training programs. We're also providing salary increases for state police, conservation and excise officers, and funding to construct a new Indiana State Police post and laboratory.

Thanks to the next two-year state budget, local departments can now apply for one-time grants to purchase body-worn cameras. While many departments are already using this technology to increase transparency and accountability, the state is offering matching grants to help departments that may not have the resources to equip all of their officers.

House Enrolled Act 1006, authored by State Rep. Greg Steuerwald, is one of the greatest achievements of the legislative session. Referred to by many as "historic" and a "national model," this robust legislation gives police more tools to vet candidates and hire the best officers. The law requires full employment record sharing between police departments so they can identify bad actors. I strongly believe that we honor the best by getting rid of the worst. This legislation received bipartisan support, total backing from law enforcement, and support from the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus.

To help solve more crimes across the state, Indiana will expand the use of High Tech Crimes Units so prosecutors and law enforcement can work with Indiana's colleges to gather and process digital evidence in a variety of cases. Through the passage of House Enrolled Act 1082, university students could help find additional evidence or exonerate a person of interest.

Overall, Republicans delivered big wins this session for our hardworking law enforcement officers and the communities they protect. Whether investing in training programs and facilities, or providing enhanced hiring and crime-fighting tools, these efforts serve all Hoosiers. We recognize the tremendous efforts of those who wear the badge, and Indiana's Republican lawmakers stepped up to help provide them the resources they need to do their jobs and come home safe.

**FOOTNOTE: House Speaker Todd Huston (R-Fishers) represents House District 37, which includes portions of Hamilton County and Fishers.**



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# Community

## Lawmakers to study important issues facing Hoosiers

By State Rep. Wendy McNamara  
AUGUST 2021

Lawmakers are kicking off summer study committees to work on policy, examine top issues, gather testimony and recommend legislation ahead of the official start of session in January.

I will serve as vice chair of the Interim Study Committee on Corrections and Criminal Code, which will delve into key topics like human trafficking, jail overcrowding, sentencing, incarceration and treatment.

I was also appointed to the Justice Reinvestment Advisory Council, which is charged with conducting state-level reviews of corrections departments, county jails and probation services.

We will examine treatment and mental health services available for those in the criminal justice system.

Additionally, I will also serve on the board of trustees for the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, which is the state's planning agency responsible for coordinating with local, state and federal entities to analyze emerging trends in criminal justice, law enforcement and public safety.

Members of the public are welcomed to attend and testify at committee hearings, which typically occur at the Statehouse in Indianapolis. Hearings are also livestreamed and archived online, where committee calendars and meeting agendas are posted.

Below is a list of topics state legislators will be examining in the coming months, and please reach out if you plan on visiting the Statehouse.

- STUDY TOPICS FOR STUDY COMMITTEES
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS AND CRIMINAL CODE
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON FISCAL POLICY
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE

- ON PENSION MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICE
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC POLICY
- INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION
- AUDIT AND FINANCIAL REPORTING SUBCOMMITTEE (IC 2-5-1.1-6.3)
- CODE REVISION COMMISSION (IC 2-5-1.1-10)
- LEGISLATIVE STATE OF EMERGENCY ADVISORY GROUP (HEA 1123 (2021))
- 21st CENTURY ENERGY POLICY DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE (HEA 1220)

## Auditor Klutz announces \$3.9 billion state reserve

State cash reserves jump despite pandemic challenges and economic downturn



AUGUST 2021  
STATEHOUSE - State Auditor Tera Klutz, CPA announced that Indiana closed the 2021 fiscal year with reserves of \$3.9 billion.

"Indiana once again exceeded expectations and soared through the recession with one of the fastest recoveries on record to end with a cash reserve of \$3.9 billion at the end of June," said Auditor Klutz. "Indiana is poised to make an excess reserve transfer of \$1.1 billion, which will be split between retirement funding and a refundable income tax credit for Hoosier taxpayers."

The annual report, prepared by the State Budget Agency, highlights the state's fiscal year ending on June 30, 2021.

Auditor Klutz credits strong fiscal leadership and team-work for how Indiana was able to financially navigate through the national pandemic and economic uncertainty while ensuring a reasonable state reserve.

"Indiana's economic future and fiscal responsibility are directly linked. Maintaining sustainable finances creates a better, stronger, more prosperous Hoosier state for the next generation," added Auditor Klutz.

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## O'Brien receives standing committee assignments

AUGUST 2021

STATEHOUSE - State Rep. Tim O'Brien (R-Evansville) was recently appointed to serve on the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Elections and Apportionment Committee.

"Whether it's managing our state's spending or maintaining the integrity of our elections, these committees will tackle issues most important to Hoosiers," O'Brien said. "This is a tremendous opportunity and I look forward to diving into these issues during the next session."

House standing committees meet throughout the legislative session, which convenes each year in January. O'Brien said committees hear testimony and further vet potential new laws before the full



House of Representatives considers the bill. Committee hearings typically occur at the Statehouse in Indianapolis, and Hoosiers can access committee hearings, calendars and agendas online at [iga.in.gov](http://iga.in.gov).

Standing committee appointments are typically made biennially after each election, however O'Brien was selected by a caucus in March to serve out the remaining term of former State Rep. Holli Sullivan (R-Evansville).



### The future's so bright

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# Nine hearings in three days: Legislative leaders announce tight schedule of redistricting hearings

**AUGUST 2021**

The legislative leaders in charge of Indiana's redistricting process on Thursday announced a concentrated schedule of nine public hearings, limited to three days and timed well before the public release of the proposed congressional and legislative maps on which the Indiana House and Senate are expected to begin debate in September.

The schedule, posted on the General Assembly's website, lists the following two-hour field hearings - each in a different congressional district - held jointly by the Senate Elections and the House Elections and Apportionment committees, with members of each committee divided among the hearings scheduled to take place simultaneously:

- Ivy Tech Anderson Campus (815 E. 60th St., Anderson), Friday, Aug. 6, 10 a.m.
- Ivy Tech Lafayette Campus (3101 S. Creasy Lane, Lafayette),

Friday, Aug. 6, 10 a.m.

- Ivy Tech Valparaiso Campus (3100 Ivy Tech Drive, Valparaiso), Friday, Aug. 6, 3 p.m. CDT.

- Ivy Tech Columbus Campus (4475 Central Ave., Columbus), Friday, Aug. 6, 4 p.m.

- Ivy Tech Fort Wayne Campus (3800 N. Anthony Blvd., Fort Wayne), Saturday, Aug. 7, 10 a.m.

- Ivy Tech Evansville Campus (3501 N. First Ave., Evansville), Saturday, Aug. 7, 9 a.m. CDT.**

- Ivy Tech Sellersburg Campus (8204 County Road 311, Sellersburg), Saturday, Aug. 7, 4 p.m.

- Ivy Tech Elkhart County Campus (22531 County Road 18, Goshen), Saturday, Aug. 7, 4 p.m.

A ninth hearing is scheduled in the House Chamber of the Indiana Statehouse on Wednesday, Aug. 11 at 1 p.m.

Specifics on the hearing locations at the eight Ivy Tech campuses will be announced later. All listed times are the local time zones, and are Eastern

Daylight unless otherwise noted.

The hearings also were announced on the Indiana Senate and House Republican caucuses' websites, quoting the committee chairmen as follows:

•Sen. Jon Ford, R-Terre Haute, who will chair the hearings in



Anderson, Columbus, Evansville and Sellersburg: "Public input on redistricting is extremely important to the map-drawing process. We look forward to hearing from Hoosiers from all over Indiana during these meetings."

•Rep. Tim Wesco, R-Osceola, who will chair the meetings



in Lafayette, Valparaiso, Fort Wayne and Goshen. "We look forward to hosting these important meetings across the state to hear directly from the public on Indiana's redistricting process. Hoosiers can be confident that we'll continue to meet all of our statutory and constitutional requirements."

Also in Thursday's announcement, Ford and Wesco said that "an online portal with mapping software will be launched in late August that will allow the public to draw and submit their own maps for consideration."

**FOOTNOTE: This article was published by TheStatehouseFile.com through a partnership with The Indiana Citizen (indianacitizen.org), a nonpartisan, nonprofit platform dedicated to increasing the number of informed, engaged Hoosier citizens.**

# USI face coverings mandate reinstated indoors

Decision follows updated guidance from CDC



**AUGUST 2021**

Beginning Wednesday, July 28, face coverings will again be required indoors on the USI campus, regardless of vaccination status, and until further notice. Physical distancing of three feet or more will continue to be required.

This decision was made after today's announcement and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The University has consistently followed CDC guidance throughout the pandemic.

Reversing previous guidance,

the CDC recommended July 27 that people vaccinated for the Coronavirus resume wearing face coverings indoors in areas of the country where infection rates are at a high level. Vanderburgh County and most surrounding counties throughout the Tri-state area are now in the high transmission status level according to the CDC data tracker.

The CDC's change in guidance follows case surges across the country in areas with low vaccination rates and new science regarding the Delta variant

in which, in rare occasions, breakthrough infections of the virus have occurred in people who were fully immunized and therefore may spread the virus to others. Vaccines remain one of the most effective deterrents of the dangerous symptoms of infection, including those involving the Delta variant.

The University strongly encourages all students and employees to get vaccinated as soon as possible. More information about receiving the vaccine and scheduling an appointment on campus can be found on the USI

Covid-19 Vaccination webpage.

The University of Southern Indiana's highest priority has been the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff since the beginning of this pandemic. The USI Presidential COVID-19 Task Force will continue to evaluate appropriate safety measures and other policies and procedures and will inform the campus community of any changes. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our campus community safe and healthy.

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# What to know about the latest COVID-19 variant and other Coronavirus mutations

By Microbiologist and Pathologist Daniel Rhoads, MD – Cleveland Clinic  
AUGUST 2021

**Another new variant appears to be more contagious, but there is lots left to learn**

Once again, some of the latest headlines about the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are alarming: Another variant of the virus is now on the rise in the United States. "Although this is concerning, it's not surprising - we've been watching for this and more or less expecting it," explains microbiologist and pathologist Daniel Rhoads, MD. As scientists and public health experts work to better understand what impact these new variants will have on the course of the pandemic, here's what we do and don't know so far.

## The Delta Variant

The variant now causing concern around the world is the "Delta" variant. Experts say a particular strain of the Delta variant (a mutated version of the variant that is more infectious) is responsible for the recent surge of cases in the United Kingdom.

This strain, B.1.617.2, is currently the dominant one in the U.K. and is labeled as a "variant of concern" by the World Health Organization (WHO). The main reason for the concern: Experts believe it to be up to 60% more transmissible than the original strain of COVID-19.

While research is ongoing, early data also suggests that this particular variant could be one of the driving forces behind the enormous surge in cases - and, subsequently, COVID-19 deaths - in India in the spring.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) recently classified the Delta variant as a "variant of concern" due to an ongoing increase of cases. In mid-May, it accounted for only 2.5% of U.S. cases but by mid-June, that number increased to at least 6%, according to the National Institute of Health.

## How Does A Virus Mutate?

While the idea of a virus mutating might sound scary, it's actually quite normal. Viruses mutate constantly. This is especially true of viruses that contain RNA as their genetic material, such as Coronaviruses and influenza viruses.

All viruses are made up of a bundle of genetic material (either DNA or RNA) that's covered by a protective coating of proteins. Once a virus gets into your body - usually through your mouth or nose - it latches onto one of your cells. The virus's DNA or RNA then enters your cell, where it can make copies of itself that go off and infect other cells. If the virus can copy itself and hijack enough of your cells without being wiped out by your immune system, that's how you get sick.

Every now and then, an error occurs during the virus's copying process. That's a mutation.

Most of the time, mutations are so small that they don't significantly affect how the virus works, or they make the virus weaker, Dr. Rhoads says. But occasionally, a mutation helps the virus copy itself or get into our cells more easily.

"If these advantageous genetic mistakes are included when the virus replicates, they're passed

on and eventually become part of the virus's normal genome," Dr. Rhoads explains. We can see these mutations accumulate over time, and that's how we get new variants of a virus strain.

If you get confused about strains, variants and mutations, think of it this way: New variants of a virus strain emerge through the process of mutation. In the media, the words strain and variant are often used interchangeably.

## What Do We Know About Other COVID-19 Variants?

The Delta variant is just the latest one to cause concern in the U.S. as it spreads across the globe. Earlier this year, more infectious variants from the U.K., South Africa and Brazil made headlines as they became more dominant in different parts of the world.

Each has its own set of mutations, but they all contain small changes to parts of the spike protein that helps the coronavirus attach to our cells.

"This is concerning, because it means the virus could spread more easily," Dr. Rhoads says.

It's hard to measure exactly how much of an impact new variants initially have on the pandemic since many factors contribute to how quickly a virus spreads - including human behaviors.

But those concerns over the new Delta variant are for good reason. The U.K. variant that alarmed experts in the U.S. at the beginning of the year, called B.1.1.7 or "Alpha," now accounts for nearly 70% of all U.S. cases. And the variant from Brazil, P.1, accounts for over 11% of all U.S. Cases. The CDC considers both



"variants of concern," notes Dr. Rhoads.

There is good news, though, as a study out of England showed that the Pfizer vaccine was still highly effective (88%) against symptomatic disease from the Delta variant. "These new variants can also still be detected with our current tests, so that's one thing that should be reassuring," Dr. Rhoads adds.

## The Takeaway? Stay Vigilant And Get Vaccinated

In the end, the shape-shifting nature of the Coronavirus (and all viruses) is something that experts across the world are keeping a close eye on, but it's not something you should expect to change the course of the pandemic overnight.

However, the contagiousness of the newer variants is all the more reason to stay careful even as most states roll back social distancing guidelines. Only half of U.S. adults are fully vaccinated but, in many states, that number remains below 50%.

"These new waves of infections show that the pandemic is not close to being over yet," Dr. Rhoads says. "At this time, vaccination has proven to be our most effective tool, and vaccines are readily available for many children and adults in the U.S. Vaccinations are our best defense against these emerging mutations."

# Express Enrollment offered at Ivy Tech Saturday, August 7



**AUGUST 2021**  
**EVANSVILLE** - A special Express Enrollment Day is planned on Saturday, Aug. 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the main campus, located at 3501 N. First Avenue.

At this event, potential students can receive assistance in walking through the steps they need to do to get enrolled for Fall classes that start Wednesday, Aug 18. There are more than 50 programs

of study to choose from. To RSVP go to: [link.ivytech.edu/august](http://link.ivytech.edu/august)

Ivy Tech recently announced that tuition has been frozen for the next two years and textbooks are free - through the Ivy+ initiative.

"Next to home ownership, the cost of college is one of the biggest investments for Americans. People are either trying to pay for college for their children or they are trying to attend college themselves. It is the crux of why many are questioning the value of a college degree. When calculating the cost of tuition and fees, plus textbooks, along with living expenses, simply put, college can be expensive," said Chancellor Daniela Vidal.

"To help combat this financial obstacle and ensure Hoosiers can afford a postsecondary education, Ivy Tech Community College has maintained its low-cost tuition model. This

year, we are pleased to announce that Ivy Tech will freeze tuition for the next two years and offer free textbooks for all students," she said.

The added benefit of Ivy+ is that all credits over a full time load of 12 credits per semester will be at no additional cost, Vidal said. "Ivy Tech will ensure no full-time student will pay more than \$4,500 per year for as many credit hours as they want to take."

For answers to questions

about Express Enrollment Day call 812-429-1435.

## About Ivy Tech Community College

Ivy Tech Community College serves communities across Indiana, providing world-class education and driving economic transformation. It is the state's largest public postsecondary institution and the nation's largest singly accredited statewide community college system. It serves as the state's engine of workforce development, offering high-value degree programs and training that are aligned with the needs of its communities, along with courses and programs that transfer to other colleges and universities in Indiana. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

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# New state record set for cover crops

AUGUST 2021

According to a recent conservation survey, Indiana farmers have set a conservation record this year by planting an estimated 1.5 million acres of overwinter living covers, the largest amount ever recorded by an Indiana Conservation Partnership survey.

Overwintering living covers (i.e. - cover crops and small grains, like wheat) are known for their environmental benefits. Cover crops and small grains help increase organic matter in the soil and improve overall soil health by adding living roots to the soil more months of the year. Cover crops also improve water infiltration into the soil, while other covers, like legumes serve as natural fertilizers.

Although the conservation transect doesn't differentiate between cover crops and small grains, Indiana farmers typically plant fewer than 200,000 acres of small grains annually, so cover crops vastly dominate the 1.5 million estimated acres. With the exception of corn and soybeans, cover crops are planted on more acres than any other commodity crop in Indiana. Cover crops are typically planted in the fall after harvest, and designed to protect the soil and keep roots in

the ground throughout the winter, which improves soil health and helps filter water runoff.

"I want to congratulate Hoosier farmers for continuing to be a leader in conservation," said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who also serves as Indiana Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "By increasing our cover crop practices, we are keeping Indiana waterways and soil healthier for future planting seasons and the next generation of farmers."

As a result of the cover crops planted last year, it is estimated that 1.6 million tons of sediment was prevented from entering Indiana's waterways, which is enough sediment to fill more than 453 Olympic-size swimming pools. Overwintering covers also prevented 4.1 million pounds of nitrogen and over 2 million pounds of phosphorus from entering Indiana's waterways.

The conservation survey also showed that 62% of farmed acres were not tilled and 18% had employed reduced tillage after the 2020 harvest. This early spring survey is not intended to quantify pre-planting tillage.

"This year's data may be surprising to some considering the tough farm economy this past

year. But over time, our farmers have learned that incorporating a comprehensive management system into their operation that includes cover crops and no-till/strip-till have helped improve the sustainability and productivity of their soils," said Indiana State Conservationist, Jerry Raynor. "As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat - all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.

Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Bruce Kettler is excited to see what the future holds for soil conservation in Indiana.

"Soil conservation remains strong in Indiana and this recent survey proves that Hoosier farmers go above and beyond in their best management practices to increase soil health," said Kettler. "I am optimistic that this trend of increasing cover crop acres will continue for years to come."

One Indiana farmer is already experiencing the benefits of adding a cover crop mixture to his operation this past year. Greg Mager farms 450 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat in Parke County, Indiana. Along with managing cover crops



on his operation for more than eight years, Mager is also promoting soil health on his land by continuously no-tilling for more than ten years and having a comprehensive nutrient and pest management plan for his land.

"The cover crops that I planted this year's corn and beans into have held the weeds down considerably. So much so, I may not need any herbicide applications this year. If I do, it will be limited," Mager said.

The conservation transect is a visual survey of cropland in the state. It was conducted between March and April 2021 by members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue Extension, as well as Earth Team volunteers, to show a more complete story of the state's conservation efforts.

## EPA's Safer Choice program highlighted in Sustainable Shopping Initiative

AUGUST 2021

Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly initiative has announced that it now includes cleaning and other products certified by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safer Choice program. Safer Choice is now one of 30 sustainability certifications highlighted under Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly initiative which helps customers shop for more than 75,000 products through the company's online store. Highlighting Safer Choice-certified products makes it easier for consumers to locate products that contain safer chemical ingredients without sacrificing quality or performance.

"We are pleased that Amazon is increasing awareness of

products with safer ingredients by including EPA's Safer Choice certification in its initiative," said **EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Assistant Administrator Michal Freedhoff**. "EPA's Safer Choice program provides national and international leadership for our chemical safety mission in a way that benefits families, children, workers, communities, pets, and the environment."

EPA reviews all ingredients in Safer Choice-certified products, regardless of percentage, and they must meet specific human health and environmental criteria. For example, they cannot contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and must meet low-toxicity limits and biodegrade quickly.

Limiting VOCs can improve indoor air quality. Ensuring low toxicity and rapid biodegradation can help protect water resources impacted by climate change. This is particularly important when products like detergents go down the drain or when products are used outside and may go directly into the environment and waterways.

Products identified as Climate Pledge Friendly are distinguished on Amazon's website by an hourglass-with-wings symbol. The company also provides its customers with detailed web pages that include information on how and why products are certified as sustainable.

Later this year, EPA will award



the 2021 Safer Choice Partner of the Year awards. In support of the Biden-Harris Administration's goals, EPA will select winners with consideration for those that show how their work in the design, manufacture, selection and use of those products promotes environmental justice, bolsters resilience to the impacts of climate change, results in cleaner air or water, or improves drinking water quality.

## DNR hopes to attract more organ donors with new license program

By Claire Castillo

TheStatehouseFile.com

AUGUST 2021

**INDIANAPOLIS** - Hoosiers applying for their hunting, fishing and trapping licenses now have the option to register as organ and tissue donors, an effort to help shrink the size of the national waiting list.

Gov. Eric Holcomb authorized the new options in March 2020, and they took effect July 7.

"This is a big step forward for donation in our state," said Tim

Clauson, board president of Donate Life Indiana. "One of our primary goals is increasing the number of registered donors in Indiana, and we're excited to expand this opportunity to the hunting, fishing and trapping community."

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources paired with Donate Life Indiana to encourage more Hoosiers to donate their organs to help save lives.

"We are proud to be a part of this important mission and hope that our hunters, anglers

and trappers participate in this lifesaving program that will benefit all Hoosiers," said Dan Bortner, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

There are currently 107,000 people in the United States waiting for an organ donation. If one person donates their organs, they can potentially save up to eight lives.

More than 4 million Hoosiers are registered as organ or tissue donors, with 99% of them

processed through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Over 700,000 hunting and fishing licenses are sold annually in the state of Indiana, according to the government website, and the new program expects to add more donors as the year goes on.

Organdonor.gov said that over 90% of adults support organ donation, while only 60% are actually signed up as donors.

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# Student journalists for student-run radio station earn awards from Indiana SPJ

**AUGUST 2021**  
 Three University of Southern Indiana students were recognized for their reporting and broadcasting skills for 95.7 The Spin, USI's student-run radio station, by the Indiana Society of Professional Journalists in the 2020 Best in Indiana Contest.



Cole Carter, a news and sports team member for The Spin from Carmi, Illinois, was awarded 1st Place in the Student Radio Sports Reporting category for his report on basketball attendance and the new Screaming Eagles Arena. Nathaniel Barbee, of Wayne City, Illinois, was awarded 1st Place in the Student Radio News Reporting category for his report on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted student tours at USI. Marina Current, News Director for The Spin from Oakland City, Indiana, received 3rd Place in the same category for her story on the

overall impact COVID-19 has had on the University. The 2020 Best in Indiana Journalism Awards are given annually by the Indiana Professional Chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists. This year's award ceremony was held virtually due to the pandemic and can be viewed at [www.indyprospj.org/awards](http://www.indyprospj.org/awards). For more information about 95.7 The Spin, visit their website at [www.957thespin.com](http://www.957thespin.com).

# Yesteryear: R-R-R-E-I-I-I-T-Z! Reitz! Who? Reitz! What? Victory!

**By Hanna Myers**  
 Panthers have been making memories on the hill since Reitz High School first opened on the west side in 1918. The opening of the school allowed many west side families the opportunity to advance their children's education further than had ever been possible before. Prior to 1918, the only other high school in Evansville was Evansville High School (old Central High School) in Downtown.



The building students know today would be unrecognizable to the first students of Reitz. In the past century, the school has undergone numerous additions and renovations. Pictured here is the school under construction looking up at the main entrance. Very little of this view is recognizable from the outside today because of the addition of a new gym and classroom wing to the front of the original structure in the 1950s.

# Indiana employment record

**AUGUST 2021**  
**INDIANAPOLIS** - Indiana's unemployment rate stands at 4.1 percent for June, and the national rate is 5.9 percent. The monthly unemployment rate is a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicator that reflects the number of unemployed people seeking employment within the prior four weeks as a percentage of the labor force. Indiana's labor force had a net increase of 4,148 over the previous month. This was a result of an increase of 3,014 unemployed residents and an increase of 1,134 employed residents.



Indiana's total labor force, which includes both Hoosiers employed and those seeking employment, stands at 3.35 million, and the state's 63.2 percent labor force participation rate remains above the national rate of 61.6 percent.

Learn more about how unemployment rates are calculated here: <http://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/infographics/employment-status.asp>.  
**Employment by Sector**  
 Private sector employment has increased by 123,500 over the year and increased by 8,900 over the previous month. The monthly increase is primarily due to gains in the Leisure and Hospitality (8,300) and the Manufacturing (4,400) sectors. Gains were offset by losses in the Professional and Business Services (-2,900) and the Construction (-1,900) sectors. Total private employment stands at 2,628,600, which is 111,900 below the December 2019 peak.

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# FSSA Secretary Dr. Jennifer Sullivan stepping down

## Dr. Dan Rusyniak named new secretary

AUGUST 2021

After more than six years of state service as the secretary of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and as the deputy state health commissioner, Dr. Jennifer Sullivan has notified Gov. Eric J. Holcomb that she is stepping away from her position for a new role in North Carolina. To ensure a smooth transition, Gov. Holcomb today named Dr. Dan Rusyniak, FSSA's chief medical officer, as the new secretary, effective Aug. 1.



"Jennifer Sullivan has dedicated herself to improving the social and human needs Hoosiers are faced with every day," Gov. Holcomb said. "Secretary Sullivan tackled some of the most complex issues our state has ever dealt with and found new innovative ways to deliver improved results. She created a purpose-driven work culture that empowers staff, collaborates with experts while leading with courage and creativity. I'll never be able to say thank you enough for all she has done for health care and social services in Indiana, but I'll never stop trying. I wish her and her family all the best in this next chapter in their lives."

Dr. Sullivan, M.D., M.P.H., was appointed FSSA secretary by Gov. Holcomb in January 2017 and has the longest tenure of any secretary in the agency's 30-year history. Under her leadership, the agency achieved a number of high-profile accomplishments:

- Securing a first-ever 10-year extension of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) to continue uninterrupted health coverage for more than 572,000 low-income adults;
- Integrating Indiana 211 to better connect Hoosiers with local, state, and federal resources;
- Expanding On My Way Pre-K statewide;
- Implementing SNAP delivery and uninterrupted emergency food benefits for children during the COVID pandemic;
- Achieving the lowest infant mortality rate in state history through collaborative programs such as My Healthy Baby OB Navigator;
- Creating the only comprehensive human services state/academic partnership in the country.

During Dr. Sullivan's time as the deputy state health commissioner, the Indiana Department of Health accomplished a number of achievements:

- Implemented the first needle exchange program in state history;
- Led the Scott County HIV response as the medical incident command;
- Directed the implementation of a statewide bystander naloxone program.

"I am most grateful for the way in which the Holcomb administration has fostered innovation, autonomy and accountability," Dr. Sullivan said. "I have had every resource needed to make changes based on the priority pillars laid out each year. My voice has been heard and I have grown as a leader, a policy expert and a citizen of this great state."

Dr. Sullivan has accepted a role at Atrium Health as senior vice president of strategic operations where she will develop and execute a strategy to integrate clinical service lines across health systems and states.

Dr. Rusyniak was critical in leading the statewide COVID-19 long-term care response and is the point person for the state's efforts to reform Indiana's long-term care systems.

"Dr. Rusyniak showed his true character and leadership skills on a statewide stage during the pandemic," Gov. Holcomb said. "He was consistent under pressure and always based his decisions on the overall health and well-being of Hoosiers. "Dr. Dan" will seamlessly step into this new role and continue to serve some of our most vulnerable with that same compassion and a steady hand."

Going beyond his dedication to improving public health care and social services, Dr. Rusyniak continues to practice medicine one day a week at Eskenazi Hospital, which Dr. Sullivan has done throughout her term at Riley Hospital for Children.

Prior to his role at FSSA, Rusyniak was the medical director at the Indiana Poison Control Center and the division chief of medical toxicology. He previously held several positions at IU School of Medicine including vice-chair of faculty affairs in the Department of Emergency Management.

"I am honored by this opportunity and committed to continuing the work of assuring that Hoosiers get the medical and social services they need to reach their greatest emotional, mental and physical well-being," Dr. Rusyniak said. "I appreciate Gov. Holcomb's confidence in me and I'm excited to build on the important work started under Secretary Sullivan."

Dr. Rusyniak earned his medical degree from Wake Forest University School of Medicine and completed his emergency medicine residency and a toxicology fellowship at IU School of Medicine.

# State directs \$200M for Ohio River Crossing

AUGUST 2021

To improve safety and encourage growth, Indiana is going the extra mile by investing \$200 million to complete the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project. The project includes an interchange with the existing I-69 and Veterans Memorial Parkway, as well as a new, 1.5-mile portion of I-69 approaching the river.

Since 2016, Indiana and Kentucky worked to develop the I-69 Ohio River Crossing near Evansville. The Indiana Department of Transportation and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will continue to partner on this project to see it through to completion.



Once fully connected, I-69 will be a continuous interstate from the U.S.-Canada border near Port Huron, Michigan, to the Kentucky-Tennessee state line. These investments will expand our transportation network and attract more businesses to the area, which will help create jobs and boost the local economy. Construction on the Ohio River Crossing project is set to begin in 2024.

# Riley Children's Health welcomes a new president

AUGUST 2021

Accomplished pediatric healthcare executive Gil Peri is the new president of Riley Children's Health. Peri's first day with IU Health and Riley was June 28, but he is no stranger to leading pediatric healthcare institutions. He comes to Riley from Hartford, CT where he most recently served as President and Chief Operating Officer of Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Peri has a reputation for establishing a clear vision and roadmap to deliver value for patients and families. With more than 20 years of success creating and executing strategy differentiation, leading complex operations and partnering to achieve the best outcomes



for children and adults, he is recognized as an inspiring leader committed to value, innovation and continual improvement.

Additionally, Peri understands Riley is more than just a hospital. He sees the impact Riley can have on the whole child - addressing mental, behavioral and physical health. Part of Peri's vision is finding more ways to connect Riley with patients and families throughout the continuum, from prevention through care and

-continued on page 14

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# Education

## Efroymson Family Fund supports UE art, creates new endeavors

AUGUST 2021

The University of Evansville (UE) is grateful to receive support for the Department of Art from the Efroymson Family Fund. The generous gift from the family, which is in place for the 2021-22 academic year, will not only fund existing traditions within the department but also create new opportunities for art students.

"We are really excited to create a more impactful learning experience for our art students, thanks to the Efroymson Family Fund," said Todd Matteson, chair of the Department of Art. "Their contributions help us in preparing our students to be successful not just at UE, but beyond the classroom."

With the support from the fund, the department will continue to welcome an artist to Evansville each semester as part of the Efroymson Family Emerging Contemporary Artists Lecture Series. The artist's pieces will be on display in the Melvin Peterson Gallery as well as the Krannert Gallery. Art students are able to interact with professional artists through lectures and workshops, and the public is invited to view the galleries.

Each year, the fund supports a marketing internship for a current

art student. One intern is selected each semester, and the student works closely with the department chair. The paid internship provides beneficial, hands-on experience, as the student will design print and digital materials that assist with recruitment, exhibitions and receptions, and departmental advertising.

The Efroymson Family Fund will, for the first time, provide a Bridge Fellowship Program for the upcoming academic year. This new program will deliver invaluable experience for a recent graduate for the Department of Art who wishes to pursue further education. They will work on research and assist with studio management and teaching. The fellow will also receive a studio space and exhibit their research. The assistance performed by the Bridge Year Fellow will allow current art faculty to dedicate more time to classrooms, student mentorship, and artwork.

"The University is tremendously grateful for the ongoing support from the Efroymson family," said Sylvia DeVault, corporate and foundation relations officer for UE. "For ten years now, they have been supporters of the arts, which has created a lasting impact on our campus and in the Evansville

community."

*Students at the University of Evansville shape powerful and enduring change. UE is the first in Indiana to be designated as an Ashoka U Changemaker Campus, and its changemaking culture empowers students to improve the world around them as UE Changemakers. UE has an array of majors in business; engineering; the arts and sciences; and health science programs. UE has a diverse student*



*body that represents 44 states and 52 countries. U.S. News & World Report recognizes UE as the #4 Best Regional University in the Midwest. For more information, please visit [evansville.edu](http://evansville.edu).*

## University of Evansville launches Music Community Conservatory

AUGUST 2021

EVANSVILLE - Earlier this year, the University of Evansville (UE) announced the creation of the UE Music Conservatory to better serve students and the local community. Beginning this fall, the Conservatory will expand its offerings to provide musical opportunities and lifelong learning for all ages through the new Community Conservatory. Lessons and classes will begin in August.

Community Conservatory membership will allow students to take private instrument or voice lessons from UE music faculty. Lessons are available to all ages and abilities. In addition to one-on-one lessons, students will have opportunities for masterclasses and coaching, recitals with a provided pianist, reduced class rates, a discount toward the UE Summer Music Camp, and a guaranteed talent-based scholarship toward a UE music degree.

A variety of classes will also be available to the community, accommodating many age groups and skill levels. Course offerings will include chamber music, group piano, audition preparation, drumming, ensembles, and more. Registration for classes is now open.

UE will continue to offer existing services through the Conservatory, including community ensembles such as UE Choral Society, UE Symphony Orchestra, and the UE Community Band. Rehearsals are held on a weekly basis and performances are presented each semester. The long-running Suzuki Program will also continue as part of the Community Conservatory. Founded in 1972, the program teaches more than 100 students aged 4-17 in the tri-state region.

"Recognizing UE's commitment to the community, the faculty are excited to offer and develop new musical opportunities in the area," said Kenneth Steinsultz, co-director of the UE Music Conservatory. "Music can be a lifelong talent and passion no matter your path in life, and the Community Conservatory will allow anyone to accomplish that."

## USI accepting proposals for conference on diversity, equity and inclusion



AUGUST 2021

University of Southern Indiana Student Affairs invites proposals for the first Southern Indiana Conference on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), to be held Friday, October 1 and Saturday, October 2 on the USI campus.

The conference, "From Moment to Movement: Transforming DEI in Organizational Spaces," will bring together individuals from across organizations to address critical challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the academy, workplace and community at large. The purpose of this conference is to provide a space where individuals assess, develop and enhance their current knowledge/practices in order to transform current practices and/or policies in their organizations.

All are encouraged to submit one of four types of proposals: research manuscripts, workshops, panels or practice/application manuscripts. Proposals must align closely with one of the four categories chosen by the conference:

- Building, Sustaining and Valuing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education
- Reconstructing the Cultural Climate in Organizational Systems
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Inclusive Hiring and Employee Wellbeing

Proposals will be accepted through Friday, August 6 and can be submitted online through the conference website. Registration for attendance is also available online and is open to the public.

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# Sports

## Aces Assist Club opens membership for 2021-22 Campaign

### Assist Club supports Purple Aces Men's Basketball



AUGUST 2021

Membership is officially open for the Aces Assist Club, which serves as the official booster club for the University of Evansville men's basketball program.

Three primary membership levels are available and include All-Conference, All-American and Champions. Membership at the All-Conference level is \$1,000/year with benefits consisting of an exclusive club sideline pullover, "Dinner with the Aces", recognition in the game program and Ford Center scoreboard, road game ticket opportunities and membership in the University of Evansville President's Club.

The second level is the All-American, which has a cost of \$2,500/year and includes all benefits from the All-Conference level as well as a pair of Aces lounge sandals and an exclusive dinner for two with head coach Todd Lickliter and his staff.

Champion's level features some of the most exclusive opportunities for Purple Aces supporters. Members at this level are entitled to a charter flight for two to a conference road game, a complimentary golf admission for the Aces Golf Scramble, courtside seating for two at one UE home game and a VIP parking space at the Ford Center. Champion's members also receive all benefits from the All-Conference and All-American levels.

Additional Household Memberships are available to people living in the same household as an Assist Club member at any of the three levels. This cost is \$500 and the additional member receives benefits at the All-Conference level. Gear will be branded at the primary member's level.

Those interested in joining the Aces Assist Club are able to do so in multiple ways. To sign up online, click here to access the secure membership form. If you want to sign up through mail, print out the official club brochure and return the registration form to the address at the bottom. To join over the phone, please contact Athletics Advancement Officer Sarah Tuohy at 812-488-4065.

A limited number of spots remain for the annual Aces Assist Club Golf Scramble, which will take place on Monday, August 30 at Rolling Hills Country Club in Newburgh. Registration is \$600 for a foursome or \$150 per individual. Call 812-488-2297 for more information or to sign up.

## USI wins 2020-21 GLVC Commissioner's Cup

AUGUST 2021

In an announcement by the league office Tuesday, University of Southern Indiana Athletics has captured its third Great Lakes Valley Conference Commissioner's Cup and its first since the 2017-18 season. The Screaming Eagles earned the award for the 2020-21 campaign by posting the strongest finish in the league's seven core sports.

Points are allocated for the Commissioner's Cup based on the athletic department's finish in the GLVC's postseason tournaments and regular-season standings in men's soccer, women's soccer, volleyball, men's basketball, women's basketball, softball and baseball. All 15 Conference members sponsor these sports at the intercollegiate level.

Under the guidance of Director of Athletics Jon Mark Hall, USI earned 81 points throughout the course of the academic year, besting runner-up Lewis University (76) by five points and third-place University of Indianapolis (75) by six. Drury University (67) was fourth, while Lindenwood University (63) and the University of Missouri-St. Louis (63) was tied for fifth.

Three points separated No. 7 Maryville University (59) and No. 10 Quincy University (56), with McKendree University (58) and Rockhurst University (57) finishing eighth and ninth, respectively. Truman State University (48), the University of Illinois Springfield (46), Missouri S&T (35), Southwest Baptist University (28) and William Jewell College (27) rounded out the bottom half of the standings.

USI qualified for GLVC Championship Tournaments in six of the seven core sports this past year, highlighted by a GLVC title in volleyball as well as a runner-up finish in women's soccer.

Despite not being able to participate in the conference tournament due to COVID-19 safety protocols last year, USI Men's and Women's Basketball made significant contributions to the Eagles' cause. The men's team had earned the No. 2 seed and garnered fourth-place points following the conclusion of the GLVC Tournament, while the women's team garnered third-place points after earning the No. 3 seed.

Men's Soccer earned the No. 6 seed in the GLVC Championship Tournament, while Baseball was the No. 3 seed from the GLVC Blue Division.

Created prior to the 2002-03 season, the Commissioner's Cup has had six different institutions claim the award. USI earned its second Cup in 2017-18 and its first in 2003-04.

In addition to the GLVC Commissioner's Cup, the league office announced the GLVC All-Sports Trophy results on Monday, with USI finishing sixth with 146.5 points. Men's Cross Country and Women's Cross Country had second and third-place points, respectively, to aid the Eagles, while Women's Track & Field had a fourth-place finish.



## MVC announces 2020-21 academic honor roll

AUGUST 2021

One hundred ten student-athletes highlight more than 2,000 of those to earn selection to the 2020-21 Missouri Valley Conference Honor Roll, as announced by the league office. Those 110 student-athletes earned the league's highest academic achievement by capturing the Missouri Valley Conference Presidents' Council Academic Excellence Award.

The Presidents' Council Academic Excellence Award requires a minimum 3.8 cumulative grade point average, participation in athletics a minimum of two years, and the student-athlete must be within 18 hours of graduation (by the end of the Spring 2021 semester). Also, 894 student-athletes received the league's Commissioner's Academic Excellence Award, which requires a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for each of the previous two semesters, a minimum 3.2 cumulative grade point average, and participation in athletics a minimum of two years.

In addition, the Missouri Valley Conference has announced its 2020-21 Honor Roll, which recognizes academic achievement of student-athletes. To qualify for the Valley Honor Roll, a student-athlete must have recorded a minimum 3.2 grade point average for a specified term (Fall 2020/Spring 2021), must have been a member of an athletics team, and must have been enrolled full time during the term they earned the honor.

The University of Evansville had six student-athletes earn the Presidents' Council Academic Excellence Awards. They include:

### HONOR ROLL

**BASEBALL** – Troy Beilsmith, Danny Borgstrom, Mason Brinkley, Nolan Brooks, Tanner Craig, Kenton Crews, Zac Cummins, Tyler Denu, Shane Gray, Joshua Halterman, Shane Harris, Chase Hug, Evan Kahre, Niko Klebosits, Jace Kressin, Max Malley, Michael Parks, Caleb Reinhardt, Eric Roberts, Simon Scherry, Donovan Schultz, Mark Shallenberger, Craig Shepherd, Nick Smith, Indiana Stanley, Brent Widder, Robert Wilkes

**MEN'S BASKETBALL** – Gage Bobe, Samari Curtis, Iyen Enaruna, Noah Frederking, Evan Kuhlman, Jax Levitch, Shamar Givance, Devan Straub

**MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK/FIELD** – Tyler Frields-Reifsteck, Alton Hoops, Carson Kline, Jackson Maurer, Jackson McPheeters, Timmy Miller, Jacob Moffat, Joshua Myers, Drew O'Neil, JJ Pedersen, Jon Pedersen, Christian Veerkamp, Luke Watts, Ian Alberts, Geordan Blades, Peter Blok, Michael Boots, Steven Burkhart, Justus Donaldson, Zachary Dove, Alan Kerstiens, Gregory King, Trey Riggs, Joseph Rucinski, Andrew Schuler

**MEN'S GOLF** – Jessie Brumley, Nicholas Gushrowski, Michael Ikejiani, Henry Kiel, Dallas Koth, Carson Parker, Spencer Wagner, Caleb Wassmer

**MEN'S SOCCER** – Michael Adams, Luis Aranda, Leonardo Barba, Francesco Brunetti, Raffaello Colasito, Adam Dahou, Evan Dekker, Baptiste Fousse, Ethan Garvey, Ben Godden, Nkosi Graham, Jacob Grant, Jakub Hall, Porter Hedenberg, Johan Helander, Filip Johansson, Caleb Knight, Nicolas Likulia, Jacob Madden, Alex McAlister, Alex McDonald, Simon Paez, Abedanck, Matic Pavlic, Brock Wandel, Brian Zambrano

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL** – Lola Reed, Kayla Casteel, Abby Feit, Jossie Hudson, Nataya Partee, Rylie Stephens, Sydney Thurwalker

**WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY/T&F** – Emma Boebinger, Hannah Bryan, Isabel Dawson, Emma Denbo, Gwyneth Gorley Claire Griffy, Haylee Harmeyer, Kennedy Jester, Anna Lowry, Lauren Meyer, Alexis Parker, Alexis Sutherland, Alexander Taiza, Julie Burkholder, Brittany Corley, Baylee Geng, Caitlin Kehler, Kylee Peck, McKenna Sapp, Mariah Schaefer, Carlie Schultheis, Skylar Tucker, Monica Watkins

**WOMEN'S GOLF** – Allison Enchelmayer, Carly Frazier, Alyssa McMinn, Caitlin O'Donnell, Sophia Rohleder, Mallory Russell, Lexie Sollman

**WOMEN'S SOCCER** – Zoe Ahlers Maria Alexopoulos, Nicole Benati, Morgan Blair, Cassandra Bykowitz, Alexandra Eyler, Lauren Fischer, Kristen Harvey, Emilie Hill, Jayme-Lee Hunter, Georgia Katsonouri, Karsyn Kleinrichert, Josephine Kremzar, Monique Landrum, Abigail Lenk, Isabel Lynch, Emily Olson, Emily Ormson, Reilly Paterson, Abigail Phelps, Sophia Rodil, Rachel Rosorrough, Abigail Sena, Abigail Snyder, Michaela Till, Emily Wiebe, Emily Wolak, Jenna Zirkelbach

**SOFTBALL** – McKenzie Adams, Megan Brenton, Isabella Coffey, Allison Daggett, Alexa Davis, Halie Fain, Jessica Fehr, Antonia Galas, Eryn Gould, Macey Harrington, Elyse Hickey, Erin Kleffman, Jenna Lis Mackenzie McFeron, Katie McLean, Kathrine Mueller, Jaime Nurrenbern, Lindsay Renneisen, Isabell Vetter, Marah Wood, Haley Woolf

**WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING** – Sonsoles Aguayo, Sarah Alexander, Danielle Baugh, Grace Cullen, Maggie Franz, Natalie Gerard, Abigail Groenewold, Sarah Jahns, Fae Keighley, Sarah Kempf, Jenna Krolkowski, Emily Lane, Alexa Markl, Allison McDonald, Sage Moore, Kasey O'Rourke, Morgan Ribaldo, Andrea Ruiz Ramis, Apryl Stahl, Jessie Steele, Kara Steward, Iryna Tsesiul, Emily Vasquez, Nicolette Wickes

**VOLLEYBALL** – Rachel Basinski, Chloe Bontrager Melanie Feliciano, Alana McInnis, Elise Moeller, Elena Redmond, Laura Ruiz, Emilee Scheumann, Cecilia Thon, Katherine Tsironis, Elaine Vazquez, Hannah Watkins



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Find complete details at TropEvansville.com



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SATURDAY, AUGUST 7**

Open to all Rewards Members

Swipe your card each day during the promotion at any Promotional Kiosk to receive a free daily entry.

Earn **MORE** entries by playing your favorite casino games from 6AM CT on Friday, August 6 through 7:30PM on Saturday, August 7

To be eligible for the Drawings, activate your entries by swiping your Players Card at any Promotional Kiosk between 6PM – 7:30PM CT on Saturday, August 7th.

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## The sky is falling

-continued from page 3

In between the machine gun fire of five minutes of ads were crammed five-minute exhortations camouflaged as news. Today, as usual, CNN was frothing about Donald Trump and FOX was exorcised about Cuba and communism, which FOX posited was one and the same.

CNN was giddy with the no-so-breaking story that former President Trump was unhappy about the last election, so much so that General Mark Milley, Trump's choice for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the military, was concerned about a peaceful transfer of power. FOX apparently either did not know who Milley was or did not care. FOX made no mention of this "bombshell" possibility. FOX was excitedly showing Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' campaign coozies which attacked Anthony Fauci as FOX repeatedly rolled film of protests in Cuba. CNN did not take note of Cuba nor communism, as its commentators were busy extolling the virtues of giving away trillions of dollars of borrowed taxpayer money.

What came through quite clearly, even as I dozed in and out while desperately seeking facts hidden among the rushes of opinion, was that CNN and FOX both believed that Chicken Little was correct. Each of their favorite evil acorns that fall upon us is a harbinger of the sky's collapse upon America. We must eliminate all vestiges of Trumpism, and now DeSantism too, along with President Biden and any federal help for poor people. Of course, we can do this by buying the products hawked among the invective spewed by the incredulous news anchors. Just as grade school teachers emphasizing that we children should obey the crossing guards, cable news claims it is our best source for gospel; critical analysis is just too much trouble, and no fun besides. Most importantly, run out and buy more stuff before prices rise again.

For more Gavel Gamut articles go to [www.jamesmredwine.com](http://www.jamesmredwine.com).

## Riley Children's Health welcomes a new president

-continued from page 9

back into the community. He is also passionate about ensuring that all Hoosier children have access to the world-class expertise of Riley Children's Health.

As he settles into his new role, Peri looks forward to sharing more about his vision for making Riley an even better children's health system in the future. He is committed to Riley patients and families, and supporting the Riley Children's Foundation and donors as they share their time, talent, and treasure.

## When parents choose, students excel

-continued from page 1

can learn in a way that creates opportunities for success.

Our latest state budget paves the way for more families than ever to be able to send their children to schools that best meet their needs through a significant expansion of Indiana's Choice Scholarship program. Scholarships provide 90 percent of state tuition support to a family to enroll their child in school. Newly created Education Scholarship Accounts will also help families of students with special needs choose the best educational option for their child.

In addition to empowering families, Indiana lawmakers made historic investments in overall K-12 education with an unprecedented \$1.9 billion increase over the next two years.

Parents understand their student's strengths and challenges, and are in the best position to determine where their child will succeed academically. It's clear students excel when they are in a learning environment that meets their academic, emotional and physical needs.

A strong education system provides equal opportunities for every child to learn and succeed. A student's ZIP code or income should not limit their options.

When parents decide, children thrive. To learn more about School Choice Scholarships, visit [in.gov/doe](http://in.gov/doe) and click on Student Learnings and Pathways. Parents can also explore school options by visiting [MySchoolOptions.org](http://MySchoolOptions.org).

## USI Vaccination Clinic opening to general public every Tuesday through Dec. 21, 2021

-continued from page 1

Vaccination appointment portal and choose "USI University Health Center" as the location. All healthy individuals age 12 and older are eligible to receive the vaccine, regardless of state of residence. Minors must be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.

The USI Vaccination Clinic is located in the University Health Center, Room 0091 on the lower level of the Health Professions Center. Use the entrance at the southwest corner of the building. Directional signage will be in place. Parking is free and located in close proximity to the Health Center.

Masks or face coverings and a valid driver's license or other photo ID are required for all patients receiving the vaccination, and patients receiving their second dose should bring their Vaccination Card. After vaccination, you will sit for a 15-minute observation period to watch for rare allergic reactions.

More information is available on the Health Center website.

## Attorney General fighting to protect Hoosiers from unconstitutional power grab

-continued from page 1

individual liberty and that have served Indiana well for more than 100 years," said Attorney General Todd Rokita. "Allowing the Governor's lawsuit to continue confers power on the judiciary, the branch of government that, by design, is least representative of the people. This power grab by the Governor and the authority it would give to the courts to interfere with political decisions should scare us all."

The implications of the court's decision in this case will extend far beyond the current news cycle, and on behalf of all of the state's clients, the people of Indiana, the hundreds of cases that rely on the same precedents, and to keep power in check and costs low, the Office of the Attorney General will continue to fight this battle. This approach should also help save the taxpayers from costly litigation at the lower court level on a case that will likely end up before the Supreme Court anyway.

"The Attorney General's Office was created to enable the state to speak with one voice on legal matters," said Attorney General Rokita. "The reasons are straightforward: allowing the branches to sue one another, or individual office holders to do the same, whenever they want, will add significant costs for taxpayers as well as create confusing and unsettled policies for all Hoosiers."

The office's petition for writ of mandamus comes after a Marion County court ruled the Governor's lawsuit may continue in his court and denying the Office of the Attorney General's request to make a preliminary appeal of all the issues raised to date.

Pursuant to the lower court's order, however, the attorneys of the Office of the Attorney General have modified their representation of the parties to exclude the Governor and will continue to take up that issue through the regular appellate process, should that be necessary. The Office of the Attorney General maintains that the trial court's order violates Indiana statutes specifically enacted for the situation before it. By statute, the Office of the Attorney General is authorized to represent all state elected public officials in court, so there is no conflict under the Court's Professional Rules of Conduct, which are subject to Indiana statutes.

A petition for writ of mandamus is filed directly with the Supreme Court, rather than a typical appeal working its way up through the lower courts leading to the Supreme Court. A narrow category of cases may be filed directly with the Supreme Court, and the Attorney General's Office is arguing that some of the issues raised in the Governor's lawsuit meet that standard.

## Auditor Klutz announces \$3.9 billion state reserve

State cash reserves jump despite pandemic challenges and economic downturn

-continued from page 4

Cris Johnston, Office of Management and Budget Director, echoed Auditor Klutz's statements and added, "Years of fiscal discipline, sound tax policy, a resilient Indiana economy, and federal pandemic financial assistance are all reflected in these impressive year-end results which have presented the opportunity to make strategic investments which will benefit Hoosiers in the years to come."

"The official revenue forecast on April 15th added \$463 million to our projections for FY 2021," said Zac Jackson, State Budget Director. "In the last 75 days of the fiscal year, we exceeded those projections by an additional \$1.222 billion. It's unprecedented for the General Fund reserve balances to increase by nearly \$1.7 billion in less than three months."

"Indiana continues to be a leader in fiscal responsibility and, with the recent upgrades to the Indiana Transparency Portal, a leader in financial transparency as well," noted Auditor Klutz. In May, the Auditor updated the Indiana Transparency Portal with local government distribution data as part of the in-depth reports on the state's revenues and expenditures.

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