

Commentary

We Consider Ourselves To Be A Beacon Of Light For Our Community



October 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.

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. We are a strong supporter of law enforcement.

Small businesses vital to economic growth

By District 78 State Representative Tim O'Brien
October 2021

Small businesses contribute to our communities in a multitude of ways. Not only do they sponsor youth sports teams, donate to nonprofits and give our hometowns character, but they also employ more than 1.2 million Hoosiers statewide, making up 44 percent of all workers, according to the Indiana Economic Development Corp.

Indiana's economic growth is dependent on small businesses, and I am dedicated to taking action to help Hoosier entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed.

To continue mitigating the impact of the pandemic, small businesses can receive a Hoosier Hospitality Small Business Restart Grant, providing funds to cover a portion of certain expenses. More than \$30 million in CARES Act funding is available for grants and more businesses can qualify for help. Businesses that already received a Small Business Restart Grant can reapply in order to reach the new maximum reimbursement amount of \$100,000, but it's important to note that expenses covered by a previous grant are not eligible for this second round of funding. Be sure to apply as soon as possible, especially as grants will be issued in the order received until funding is exhausted. Learn more and apply for a grant at backtrack.in.gov.

Recruiting talent is also a challenge

facing many employers. Hoosiers can skill up and earn credentials for jobs in fast-growing industries through the state's Next Level Jobs program, helping businesses find highly trained employees. Workforce Ready Grants cover tuition costs to earn an eligible, high-value certificate from Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University. To learn about free training opportunities, visit nextleveljobs.org.

Hoosier veterans in need of training as they transition to civilian life can apply for grants through Next Level Veterans. This program, available at tin.gov/veterans, helps connect employers to veterans looking for career opportunities. Here in Evansville, Jeff Klump, founder of MidAmerica Safety Solutions and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, makes it his mission to hire veterans and their families. For his efforts, Klump and his traffic control safety company earned Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year for Indiana's Small Business Week 2021.

When dining, shopping or in need of a service, support a local small business and for every \$100 spent, \$48 stays in the community, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. Spend the same amount at a big box store and only \$14 stays locally.

Thank you to all of the small-business owners who make a difference in our state. For additional resources, visit the Indiana Economic Development Corp. at iedc.in.gov.

Tales of lingering and listening

By John Krull
TheStatehouseFile.com
October 2021

STURGEON BAY, WI - So many of the best stories happen in small, even out-of-the-way places.

I learned that truth many years ago. The newspaper for which I worked gave me a beat that required me to travel around Indiana and the four states surrounding it in search of interesting tales.

I covered some fascinating stories. Some were tragic, such as the story of a high school music teacher in a tiny town in Michigan. His leadership of the school band made it a powerful force. It began winning regional and national competitions. The little town was overjoyed. They celebrated the band's achievements and lauded the teacher. Then some people in the community found out the teacher was gay. They mounted a campaign to drive him away. Their effort split the town. People on both sides of the question were angry - furious even. The teacher was the rope in a community tug of war. He and the school reached a settlement and he agreed to leave. But the struggle took a toll on his health. Not long after he left the school, he had a heart attack and died. He was only 32.

Other stories were bittersweet. I traveled to Marion, Ohio. I talked with an old woman in a wheelchair. When she was a little girl, national news photos of Warren G. Harding's successful presidential campaign featured her. Harding, touting a need to return to "normalcy" in the turbulent days following World War I, ran a front-porch campaign. The little girl who became the old woman had luxurious ringlets of hair that caught everyone's eye. Her mother cut one of them and preserved it. Harding won a landslide victory. For a moment, Marion seemed to be the center of the universe. After Harding died in office, though, an avalanche of scandals involving his administration destroyed his reputation. And Marion began a hard slog as another struggling town in rust-belt America. The old woman showed me her ringlet of hair, carefully preserved in a special box, a keepsake of a time when she was young and her hometown was at its zenith.

Still, other stories were uplifting. I interviewed a man who left California to work on a tugboat on

the Ohio River. His life in California, he told me, had melted down around him. He'd lost jobs, relationships, even hope. He'd even gotten to the point where he wouldn't eat. The hard work of pulling and pushing barges up and down the river helped him find his way. He sorted his life out and settled down. When we stopped for lunch after I'd shagged a ride with him and the rest of the tug's crew, he dove into his meal. I glanced at him, and he smiled. "That river makes you hungry," he said.

I think about those days and those stories now as I walk along the streets of this small community nestled along Lake Michigan. It isn't a large place. Around 9,000 people live here year-round. But, attracted by the water and the clear northern skies, the population swells to 36,000 in the summer months.

I learned a long time ago that the key to coming to know something about a place involved two "l" words - linger and listen. What I find here confirms what I already know. There are tales of pain and desperation and sorrow in this little place.

The local district attorney tells me the town and the surrounding county battle with drunk driving, domestic violence and methamphetamine use. These are all scourges that roam across much of America these days, but each tale of this kind is its own tragedy.

There also are stories of striving. Of joy.

When I stop at a local coffee shop, two women greet the man behind the counter - presumably the owner - and ask if they now are talking to a PhD.

He is, like me, a man of mature vintage. He ducks his head sheepishly and acknowledges that he now has his doctorate.


"I doubt it will help me sell any more coffee, but I'm glad I did it," he tells them.

When I pay him for my scone, I thank him and say, "Congratulations, doctor."

His smile almost splits his face. So many of the best stories happen in places like this.

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.

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Gov. Holcomb partners with neighboring states to coordinate electric vehicle charging infrastructure

October 2021

•Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin will collaborate to support an electric vehicle charging network across Midwest.

•Demand for new EV-related jobs requires cooperative approaches within Midwest Region.

•Multi-state effort will support EV manufacturing, futureproof regional commerce, & reduce pollution.

Governors from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin today announced the establishment of a partnership to collaborate on electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the Midwest region, signing the Regional Electric Vehicle for the Midwest Memorandum of Understanding (REV Midwest MOU). The goal of the REV Midwest MOU is to collectively accelerate vehicle electrification in the Midwest Region. REV Midwest will provide the foundation for cooperation on fleet electrification along key commercial corridors to safeguard economic security, grow jobs, futureproof interstate commerce, reduce harmful emissions, improve public health, and advance innovation. The MOU also ensures the entire Midwest region is able to effectively compete for new private investment and federal funding for vehicle electrification.

"As the Crossroads of America, transportation plays a vital role in Indiana's economic success and continued growth," Indiana Gov. Eric J. Holcomb said. "I'm proud to partner with our neighboring states to put the Midwest region on the leading edge of providing the charging infrastructure needed to futureproof our transportation network and meet the demand as rapid adoption of electric vehicles continues."

"Today's REV Midwest partnership is a bipartisan effort to build the future of mobility and electrification and connect our communities," said Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "Our partnership will enable the Midwest to lead on electric vehicle adoption, reduce carbon emissions, spur innovation, and create good-paying jobs."

Building on the advanced manufacturing, engineering, research and development, and technological expertise of the Great Lakes Region, REV Midwest will coordinate to promote clean energy and mobility manufacturing, leverage the states' automotive industry electrification leadership, grow the region's share of electric vehicle production, and elevate access to tools required to equip the workforce of tomorrow.

Improving access to charging infrastructure and reducing range anxiety will support EV adoption and the next generation of American-made electric automobiles. Through REV Midwest, the states will work together to remove barriers to electric medium and heavy-duty vehicles (MHDV) and enable EV charging across states by coordinating to optimize charging infrastructure, cooperate on best practices, and support standardization.

"Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act puts us on track to be the best state in the nation to manufacture and drive an electric vehicle – but we're just getting started, and the work doesn't stop at our state borders," said Illinois Governor JB Pritzker. "By working together with our Midwestern neighbors, we can accelerate the region's growth in the transportation sector, create jobs across our communities, and prioritize the environment that makes the Great Lakes region so great along the way."

An estimated 105,000 new jobs in the utility sector are anticipated to be needed to deploy EV charging infrastructure by 2030.[1] The states will work together with the industry to understand future workforce needs and support workforce training programs to build the transportation system of the future.

"The Midwest has the ingenuity and the drive to develop innovative solutions to curb climate change," said Minnesota Governor Tim Walz. "I am proud to work with my fellow Midwest governors to not only reduce pollution, but protect public health, create jobs, and increase consumer choice across the region."

The REV Midwest is a multi-state compact to develop, operate, and market our region and strategically develop an EV charging infrastructure network that works for industry and people. The network will initially focus on the interstate and regionally significant commercial corridors and creating publicly accessible charging opportunities capable of serving MHDV where the Midwest can leverage our existing role as a shipping and logistics hub.

The MOU is meant to competitively position the Midwest for upcoming federal funding opportunities and create a welcoming environment for economic development and innovation around EVs, EV charging infrastructure, battery performance, and other technologies on the cutting edge of the transportation energy sector convergence. These innovations and opportunities will be crucial to safeguard the region's manufacturing economy in the long term.

"We shouldn't have to choose between building a cleaner, more equitable state and economic development—and thankfully, vehicle electrification is an area where we can do both," said Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers. "This regional partnership will be critical for addressing emissions from the transportation sector, ensuring folks in every community have cleaner air to breathe and creating jobs to meet our future workforce needs."

The transportation sector is a leading source air, climate, and water pollution. REV Midwest can also support goals to promote a fair and equitable transition to EVs for all communities. One benefit of the initial focus on MHDVs will be to reduce pollution in communities located near freight and shipping facilities and along transportation corridors, where nearby historically disadvantaged communities are harmed by emissions and the negative environmental impacts. Reducing harmful emissions through EV deployment makes all communities more sustainable, healthy, and equitable places to live, work and play. REV Midwest will cooperate with energy providers to address the full emissions reduction potential and encourage community sustainability through grid advancement.



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Vanderburgh County Commissioners announce AT&T rural broadband project

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our residents have less access to many resources, including banking and health care. Our rural community has been left behind due to the cost of providing wired Broadband access, much like they were a hundred years ago when electrical wires were first strung in cities, and only reaching the rural areas decades later", stated Commissioner Cheryl Musgrave.

"The prospect of moving from little or no service to excellent service is truly a transformational opportunity. Fiber to the home and business is the pinnacle technology in today's world and is considered "future proof" as well. Fiber delivers the best in speed and uninterrupted durability in Internet technology", stated Commissioner Ben Shoulders.

"We are thrilled to partner with

AT&T to bring the best of today's technology to our rural neighbors" stated Commissioner Jeff Hatfield.

This Commission has taken solid steps to build a foundation for digital infrastructure. This project is a direct result of the 2018 Broadband Ready Ordinance, which received unanimous support. Vanderburgh County was one of the first in the state to achieve this designation. The ordinance removed barriers by creating a 10-day permitting process and create tax exemption for new broadband investment.

This project follows earlier Broadband actions taken by the Vanderburgh County Commission, including the active pursuit of state grants and devoting local Tax Increment Finance District dollars to improve access in a northwestern portion of the county.

City-County Observer announces inaugural "Person-Of-The-Year" winner

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base and an expanding array of retail establishments. As a native of Evansville, Mayor Winnecke witnessed the demise of downtown Evansville that was accelerated when the Washington Square and Eastland Malls were opened on the East Side. When retail pulled out, people did too, leaving downtown Evansville as a shell of its former self. It was Winnecke's diligence and calmly staying the course that seemly have brought people back to downtown Evansville to live. His steady hand on the plow finally seeded downtown Evansville for future sustainable prosperity.

Mayor Winnecke has also learned to let go of the past when it is appropriate to do so, as has been exhibited in the demolition of some long-standing but, obsolete buildings including the 420 Building that was the home of Old National Bank and the Petroleum Club for many decades. The reality has been apparent that some of the older buildings were functionally obsolete for years, and Winnecke realized this. He found creative ways to navigate through

the maze of State and Federal bureaucratic rules and regulations to find the funds for future housing, retail and commercial development.

Mayor Winnecke is likable and also can take a joke very well, even when the joke is on him. In his early days as Mayor of Evansville, his enthusiasm and love for Evansville and its people did lead to some hilarious moments like the chicken fat video that was made to promote healthy living. Much fun was made of the video, and Winnecke took it all in stride while positioning himself to become the first Mayor of Evansville and attempt to reverse the decline of the downtown.

He had to make a multi-million dollar decision to repair and replace our dilapidated water and sewer system, pushed for the needed renovations to our Zoo, and spearheaded the effort to build the much-needed Aquatic Complex in the North Main area. He also help will the tedious process of locating the IU Medical School Downtown and was a strong advocate in the funding and the building of the Downtown Doubletree Hotel.

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Arts Commission and the Indiana Small Business Development Center improve the economic resilience of over 100 arts-based small businesses

October 2021

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – The Indiana Arts Commission announced today that over 100 Hoosier artists have participated in the annual On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator for artists and creative professionals through local partnerships statewide.

On-Ramp is a national award-winning program designed to educate artists and creative professionals in ten key areas of entrepreneurship and finance and to provide ongoing mentorship and development of arts-based small businesses. A recent study has shown alumni of the program have been more resilient as entrepreneurs compared to similar businesses across the nation. They have retained more of their savings in the midst of the pandemic and are actively managing and tracking expenses, identifying new allies and partners, and adjusting their business plans with more success than their peers.

The local partnerships were made possible

with support from the Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Minerva Financial Arts, and the Indiana Arts Commission. The six locally-based teams were led by:

- Carnegie Center for Art and History (New Albany)
- Indiana University Arts and Humanities Council and the Center for Rural Engagement (Bloomington)
- Marion Design Co. (Marion)
- Pathfinder Services and the Huntington Arts and Entrepreneurial Center (Huntington)
- South Shore Arts (Munster)
- Tippecanoe Arts Federation (Greater Lafayette)

“Entrepreneurs and small businesses make communities throughout the state places that Hoosiers want to live, work, and visit,” said David Watkins, State Director of the Indiana SBDC. “The Indiana SBDC was proud to work with the Indiana Arts Commission to take the On-

Ramp Accelerator statewide and help over 100 creative entrepreneurs develop critical business skills to make them more competitive in the marketplace.”

As the next step in the process, the entrepreneurs submitted proposals for a \$2,000 fellowship to directly apply course lessons to their creative career and small business development.

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of mentor creative entrepreneurs who will provide feedback based upon their individual and collective expertise. Panelists may identify areas of the proposed project that can be strengthened and better meet career development goals, in which case applicants will modify their proposal prior to receiving the award.

Panels will meet virtually during the week of October 18, 2021. A public notice of the meetings will be sent closer to that date.

COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund announces RFP Awards and close of fund

October 2021

EVANSVILLE, IN – The COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund of the Greater Evansville Region made grants totaling \$1 million to six organizations with collaborative proposals that reimagine our region’s future. This one-time funding opportunity supports nonprofits who are reconceptualizing systems, environments, and pathways to create a more resilient region. The Request for Proposal drew 41 requests, seeking nearly \$8 million. The recipients and the intended use of funds are listed below.

The Community Foundation Alliance, awarded \$165,000, will expand the PATHS program. PATHS uses case managers, working through three local nonprofits, to help individuals improve their long-term financial stability.

For Evansville, awarded \$185,000, will foster shared information and collaboration among the region’s nonprofits by encouraging the adoption of a shared regional database (Charity Tracker). The goal is to address duplicate services, prevent abuse of assistance, and identify gaps in service to vulnerable populations.

Ronald McDonald House Charities is awarded \$145,000 to launch and operate a “Care Mobile”

program, along with local healthcare providers. This medical clinic on wheels will provide neighborhood-based medical care to underserved pregnant and post-partum women, along with infants up to 1 year of age.

The Southwest Indiana Chamber Foundation is awarded \$240,000 to utilize technology and targeted marketing to build a talent pipeline, as well as expand the quality of place assets.

The University of Evansville is awarded \$90,000 to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating the Springboard summer day program. Springboard is a partnership with Black Lemonade that will address the preparation gap for under-resourced high school students before graduation. The program includes STEAM curriculum, character development, and leadership training.

YMCA of SWI, awarded \$175,000, will establish a coalition of organizations dedicated to improving grade-level reading by third grade. Nationally, 80% of children from low-income families are not proficient readers by the end of third grade, creating significant, long-term consequences for both the children and

the community.

“The members of the Executive Committee were impressed by the many collaborative, innovative proposals that were submitted. Even though the Response Fund wasn’t able to make grants to all 41 programs, it is our hope that many of them will find funders through other private and public partnerships. We eagerly anticipate the impact these new initiatives will have on our region. As the Fund comes to a close, we believe it has not only helped with relief and recovery, but also generated a movement toward greater resiliency. We are grateful for the community’s support and encourage everyone to give generously to our region’s nonprofits,” said Carl Chapman, COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund Executive Committee Chair.

Thanks to a community effort led by local leaders, the Response Fund has raised more than \$6.6 million since its inception in March 2020. It has distributed the \$6.6 million by awarding 209 grants to various nonprofits throughout the five-county region. For a detailed list of grantees, visit www.unitedwayswi.org/ COVID-response-fund-recipients.



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Senate maps released, Democrats claim they are no better than House maps

By Haley Pritchett
TheStatehouseFile.com

October 2021

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – On Tuesday, the Indiana Senate released its new redistricting maps.

To many Democrats, the Senate maps pose problems resembling those of the Indiana and U.S. House maps, released last week. They have accused the Republican supermajority of manipulating



district lines to secure seats. The Indiana Senate released its proposed redistricting maps Tuesday. Image provided.

The Indiana Democratic Party issued a statement following the release expressing its disapproval, claiming the maps were drawn unfairly, without transparency, and are gerrymandered with the help of a Washington, D.C., Republican consultant the Indiana GOP hired.

“The Republicans’ new Indiana Senate map keeps in place a broken system where self-serving politicians benefit at the expense of Indiana families,” the statement said.

In a Fort Wayne Journal Gazette opinion piece written by Mike Schmuhl, chair of the Indiana Democratic Party, he argued that at the end of the last decade, elections were more competitive and public offices more balanced. He feels these new maps will kill that.

“With gerrymandered districts that are 95% more biased toward its side compared to the rest of the country, the Indiana Republican Party has been more focused on power, control and extreme partisanship in recent years,” he wrote.

Republicans say the Indiana Senate maps comply with all state and federal requirements, use guiding principles provided in statewide redistricting hearings, and keep communities of interest together.

“I’m very pleased with the work done to produce the new Senate district maps we are proposing,” said President Pro Tem Rodric Bray, R-Martinsville.

Bill sponsor Sen. Eric Koch, R-Bedford, said they aspired to keep communities together in redrawing the maps, using new U.S. Census data delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With more than 90% of cities, towns and townships kept whole, I believe we have honored that request while navigating the competing interests that inevitably exist when you undertake a project of this magnitude,” he said.

There will be a public meeting to gather feedback at 9 a.m Monday in the Senate Chamber of the Indiana Statehouse. The Senate Committee on Elections will then meet again Sept. 28 for an amend-and-vote-only meeting.

FOOTNOTE: Haley Pritchett is a reporter for TheStatehouseFile.com, a news website powered by Franklin College journalism students.

Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch held annual Excellence In Affordable Housing awards program

October 2021

Recently Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch held her annual Excellence in Affordable Housing Awards Program. Part of the program is a joint award given by IHADA and the Indiana Affordable Housing Council to a resident that goes above and beyond within their community to improve the day-to-day lives of themselves and those around them.



Program Highlight - Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Within each of our affordable housing developments in Indiana are residents. Many of them have transformed their lives by having safe, decent and affordable housing. This includes this year’s award recipient.

Treat those around you how you want to be treated. Go above and beyond for your neighbor. Rodney Allen exemplifies these statements as a valued resident at Florence Fay School Senior Apartments in Indianapolis. His kindness and selflessness show through a variety of activities such as:

Paying out his own pocket to support bingo games on Friday nights

Providing gifts for all new moves in’s also out of his own pocket.

Picking up trash for the seniors that cannot walk to the dumpster

Mr. Allen also is a go to person for local resources, often offering his own car to take people to get to medical appointments. The type of friend and neighbor we would all love to have. .

It is a pleasure and honor to acknowledge and share some of the great things with you about Mr. Rodney Allen, our 2021 Outstanding Resident Volunteer

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Energy assistance is a one-time annual benefit that can assist low-income Hoosiers with the high cost of home energy and can help those who are about to get disconnected.

Beginning October 1, 2021, Hoosiers can apply for a one-time benefit assistance payment to help with utilities. You don’t need to have fallen behind on your heating or electric bills to qualify. These benefits are paid directly to the utility vendor to help cover your heating and electric costs during winter months. If your utilities are included in rent, you may still qualify for this program.

This program is available to Hoosiers renting and for those who own their home.

All interested weatherization applicants need to contact their local Community Action Agency to find out if they are eligible for services. Click [HERE](#) to access an interactive map with details on who serves your county.



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Expired driver's licenses open lane for cybercriminals

By Jenni Bergal
October 2021

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year, many states issued emergency declarations allowing driver's licenses to remain valid past expiration dates. But those extensions mostly have ended, and drivers now need to make sure their licenses are renewed.

Scammers are exploiting that shift, cybersecurity experts say. Driver's license phishing scams designed to steal people's identities have been popping up across the U.S., according to state motor vehicle agencies.

Fraudsters send out texts or emails falsely warning that the target's license needs to be updated, is missing information or is expiring. If the person clicks the link, it typically opens a Google Forms spreadsheet requesting personal information such as a Social Security number and date of birth.

"It's really despicable," said David Druker, a spokesperson for the Illinois secretary of state's office, which issues driver's licenses. "It's just outrageous that when the country is going through the COVID crisis, people are taking the time and energy to steal information from others."

In typical phishing, scammers email malicious links or attachments and people unwittingly click them. When the scammers operate through texting, the method is called "SMS phishing" or "smishing."

In the past two months, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Vermont and Wyoming were among the states warning residents about the scams.

In Illinois, Druker said, thousands of people have received texts and emails in which scammers pose as the secretary of state or as officials from the state

department of transportation. Druker said he is not aware whether anyone has fallen for the ploys.

After learning about the phishing and smishing, Illinois officials alerted the FBI and IRS, which have worked with Google to take down the sham webpages. So far, the agencies have identified 1,035 sites and Google has shut down nearly 900 of them, Druker said.

"We do not communicate with people about personal information through text or email," he said. "We send formal letters from our office."

Hackers Seized on the Pandemic. Some States Are Fighting Back.

Scams in some states have played off the Real ID, a secure government-issued driver's license or identification card that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will soon be requiring for air travel or access to government-restricted areas. The federal government has extended the deadline for states to issue Real IDs from Oct. 1, 2021, to May 3, 2023, because of the pandemic.

In New York, the Department of Motor Vehicles alerted residents to a text scam that asks them to update their mailing address and contact information for "expedited compliance" with new Real ID regulations.

The agency posts a running list of examples of the many phishing ruses in which scammers pretend to be the DMV. The texts and emails often include DMV logos, images and content copied from the department's website or from another state government agency.

'Perfect Scam Storm'

Fraudsters love to create a sense of urgency when trying to hook victims, cybersecurity experts say.

Driver's license phishing texts and emails play into that strategy, and have become the "scam du jour," said Alex Hamerstone, risk management director at TrustedSec, a cybersecurity consulting company based near Cleveland.

"It's very topical. A lot of states extended driver's license expirations because of COVID. It feels real and looks like it comes from the DMV," Hamerstone said. "It's a perfect scam storm."

In New Jersey, the Department of Transportation posted a warning on its Facebook page last month with a screenshot of a bogus text message that claimed the target needed to "validate" their driver's license.

"NJDOT is not involved in driver's licenses or vehicle registrations. They are handled by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission," the department wrote. "We will never ask for



or need your driver's license information."

Earlier this month, New Jersey's Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness issued its own alert about a similar, email-based phishing effort.

It's been difficult for some residents to get in-person appointments with the state's motor vehicles department, so these scams may have played into that backdrop, said Michael Geraghty, New Jersey's cybersecurity director.

While New Jersey officials have alerted Google about the scams and gotten it to take down the sites, that won't necessarily stop the criminals, Geraghty added.

"It doesn't prevent the same bad actors from opening a new Google account with a fictitious name, creating a form and using software to blast out text messages," he said.

In Utah, the state departments of transportation and public safety issued a joint warning about the texting scam. The phony text pretends to come from the DOT and asks people to click on a link because "their contact information seems to be invalid or missing."

Clicking on the link opens a Google Forms page soliciting personal information. The document, which the agencies included with their warning, features a header image from the state DOT, which doesn't even issue licenses in Utah.

"We really hope that anyone who received this noticed a lot of red flags," said Joe Dougherty, the public safety agency's spokesperson. "Asking for someone's Social Security number is a huge one. Even your credit card company only asks for the last four digits."

Dougherty said Utah officials reached out to Google, as other states have, and the company killed the web page.

In a statement from Google to Stateline, the company said its policy prohibits the use of its products for phishing, including for soliciting or collecting sensitive data.

"We are deeply committed to protecting our users from phishing abuse across our services, and are continuously working on additional measures to block these types of attacks as methods evolve," the spokesperson wrote.

While shutting down the pages helps, it may not be enough, Dougherty said. "That doesn't stop a person from going out and doing this again."

FSSA Clarifies Reimbursement Of Virtual Services During The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

October 2021

This information clarifies services eligible for reimbursement under Indiana Health Coverage Programs (IHCP) when delivered virtually by Medicaid and Medicaid Waiver providers. This clarification reflects the passage of Senate Enrolled Act 3 (SEA 3) and the expiration of provisions related to telehealth services set forth in Executive Order 21-13.

As part of Appendix K authority, Medicaid waiver providers can continue to provide non-health care services virtually and receive IHCP reimbursement. The temporary authority to bill for these services is granted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through Appendix K as part of the federal response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This temporary authority is tied directly to the federal public health emergency declaration, and as a result the ability to bill for these virtual services will end no later than six months after the public health emergency ends. Currently the public health emergency is anticipated to end December 31, 2021. The Division of Aging and the Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services oversee the waiver programs and the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers that are covered in Appendix K and the COVID-specific conditions under which a provider may bill for virtual services.

Medicaid waiver providers who deliver remote support services as part of preexisting waivers were previously approved to deliver these services by CMS, and

therefore these providers can continue to deliver these services virtually as they fall outside of the definition of "health care services" set in SEA 3. These remote support services are only available under the Family Support and the Community Integration and Habilitation Waivers.

Providers that have been granted the authority to bill for case management when delivered virtually (e.g., telephone or via video conferencing), either through the Appendix K authority or by Indiana Medicaid, can continue to do so. Case management is considered outside the definition of health care services established in SEA 3. The individual FSSA divisions (e.g., OMPP, Aging, DDRS) retain the authority to set parameters and approve or deny the ability to bill for case management provided virtually under the Appendix K or existing Medicaid authorities.

Provider types not listed as a "practitioner" in SEA 3 and not covered under Appendix K authority or a preexisting Medicaid waiver are not able to bill for virtual health (i.e., telehealth) or virtual service delivery at this time. EO 21-13, issued May 11, 2021, allowed other providers operating under a temporary expansion of telehealth services a 60-day transition period which has since expired.



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City-County Observer looking for part-time sports and political writers



October 2021
 The City-County Observer will be kicking up it a notch by adding additional writers to report on the activities on local political and sports happenings. The City-County Observer is currently looking for part-time Sports and Political writers. The CCO Sportswriter's main focus will be the reporting of local parochial and public school's high school sports schedules, standings, and results. The Sportswriter's mission will be to write about high school golf, swimming, track, wrestling, and soccer events. Local college scores will continue to be posted by our editor. The CCO Politicalwriter's main focus will be the reporting of Evansville City Council, County Commission, County Council, and the Evansville Redevelopment Commission meetings. Our part-time writers will be allowed to work from their homes. Retired individuals and college students are encouraged to apply. We encourage applicants to send their current resumes to CCO Publisher at the citycountyobserver@live.com

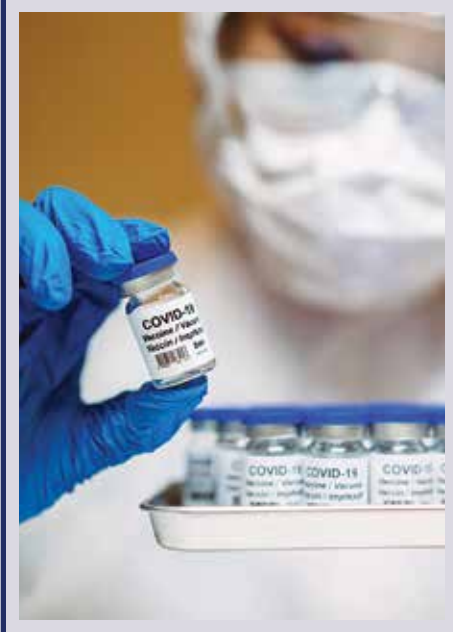
Upcoming Changes To SNAP For October

October 2021
 We wanted to pass along some important information about two upcoming changes the U.S. Food and Nutrition Services Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Together these changes may impact the benefits received by Hoosier SNAP participants. On Sept. 30, 2021, the 15% increase in SNAP benefits provided as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 will end. Starting in October 2021, benefits will increase due to the recent re-evaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan. The result of these two updates occurring at the same time is that in October most SNAP participants will see a slight increase to their monthly benefit. SNAP households may have heard that because of the updated Thrifty Food Plan their benefits are increasing. However, they may not understand that this increase is to the pre-pandemic benefit amounts—before the 15% increase. As a result, some participants may be expecting their benefits to increase substantially over their current level. With these changes happening around the same time, SNAP participants, stakeholders, and others may become confused.

FSSA clarifies reimbursement of virtual services during COVID-19 public health emergency

October 2021
 This information clarifies services eligible for reimbursement under Indiana Health Coverage Programs (IHCP) when delivered virtually by Medicaid and Medicaid Waiver providers. This clarification reflects the passage of Senate Enrolled Act 3 (SEA 3) and the expiration of provisions related to telehealth services set forth in Executive Order 21-13. As part of Appendix K authority, Medicaid waiver providers can continue to provide non-health care services virtually and receive IHCP reimbursement. The temporary authority to bill for these services is granted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through Appendix K as part of the federal response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This temporary authority is tied directly to the federal public health emergency declaration, and as a result the ability to bill for these virtual services will end no later than six months after the public health emergency ends. Currently the public health emergency is anticipated to end December 31, 2021. The Division of Aging and the Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services oversee the waiver programs and the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers that are covered in Appendix K and the COVID-specific conditions under which a provider may bill for virtual services. Medicaid waiver providers who deliver remote support services as part of preexisting waivers were previously approved to deliver these services by CMS, and therefore these providers can continue to deliver these services virtually as they fall outside of the definition of "health care services" set in SEA 3. These remote support services are only available under the Family Support and the Community Integration and Habilitation Waivers. Providers that have been granted the authority to bill for case management when delivered virtually (e.g., telephone or via video conferencing), either through the Appendix K authority or by Indiana Medicaid, can continue to do so. Case management is considered outside the definition of health care services established in SEA 3. The individual FSSA divisions (e.g., OMPP, Aging, DDRS) retain the authority to set parameters and approve or deny the ability to bill for case management provided virtually under the Appendix K or existing Medicaid authorities. Provider types not listed as a "practitioner" in SEA 3 and not covered under Appendix K authority or a preexisting Medicaid waiver are not able to bill for virtual health (i.e., telehealth) or virtual service delivery at this time. EO 21-13, issued May 11, 2021, allowed other providers operating under a temporary expansion of telehealth services a 60-day transition period which has since expired.

When to seek emergency medical attention if you have signs of COVID-19 virus



October 2021
 COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Infected people have had a wide range of symptoms reported – from mild symptoms to severe illness. **Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:**

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

Learn more on [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
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The City-County Observer introduces guest columnist, Jesse Kauffman, lead consultant for “Everyday Business Resilience Group”

October 2021

In February of 2020, Jesse Kauffman founded “Everyday Business Resilience Group” (EBRG) in partnership with his wife, Josi, with the mission to empower small businesses to be prepared, self-sufficient, and to thrive in the face of the unexpected.

His goal with the upcoming columns is to share learnings, tools, and processes with City-County Observer readers that will hopefully be helpful to your own businesses and organizations so that he can all make the Tri-State a more resilient community.

As EBRG kicked off at the beginning of 2020, Jesse had an inkling that the spreading COVID-19 virus would have some level of impact on businesses around the world, but after having worked through the pandemic’s spread, he wishes he had started his businesses years ago to have been able to help more businesses be prepared for just such an event. Having seen how the pandemic, and the regulatory and economic responses to the pandemic, have impacted businesses in the Tri-State, there’s no better time than the present to help local businesses and organizations recover and grow in the wake of the changes COVID has affected on our community.

While Jesse is a mechanical engineer by degree, he had the good fortune in his 17+ year career to work across a wide range of industries and business areas. It’s this comprehensive experience across all aspects of business that “Everyday Business Resilience Group” will strive to bring your business or organization useful information that will be helpful to their development. Examples of previous career successes that he will draw from to share in this column are:

Business Continuity and Crisis Management Planning: He’s developed and executed highly effective global corporate business continuity processes and crisis management training for executive leadership teams and large-scale nutrition and pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities with Mead Johnson Nutrition and AstraZeneca.

Project Management: He’s been the project manager for many global large-scale



new product innovations, on schedule and on budget, for Mead Johnson Nutrition.

Capital Strategic Planning and Execution: Jesse owned the \$35 million capital planning process and leading-edge innovative systems management development for Mead Johnson’s North American manufacturing supply chain network.

Product Development: He executed R&D new product design for leading companies in the appliance and plastics industries, including Whirlpool, Gladiator, Amana, Sub Zero, GE, and more.

Manufacturing and Maintenance Operations: Mr. Kauffman led a high-performing pharmaceutical manufacturing maintenance group management for 24x7 manufacturing operations with AstraZeneca.

Additionally, Jesse is a car and motorcycle enthusiast, an amateur photographer, and a small-scale hay farmer. As a proud father, he volunteers as a youth basketball coach and Cub Scout leader. He also actively support Tri-State businesses, as an E-REP Ambassador and an active member in multiple area networking groups.

Finally, Jesse’s initial focus for this column will be a 3 part series on turn-around management for businesses, to look at how to make big changes to an existing business to be prepared for growth. He will be published twice each month. He looks forward to helping the Tri-State become more resilient, and if you have any questions or suggestions for topics to cover in the future, he encourages you to reach out to him and share your thoughts.

Footnote: If you have any questions please contact Jesse at 812-568-0515 or Jesse.kauffman@everydaybusinessresilience.com

Meet Ginger Harper, Director of Sales & Marketing at ONBP

October 2021

Some people are always out in front, shaking hands and making new friends everywhere they go. Others tend to bury themselves in strategic planning, working behind the scenes towards the next goal. As Director of Sales and Marketing for the Old National Events Plaza, Ginger Harper spends most of her time doing both.

A native of Evansville, Harper has cultivated her business development skills through relationship building and operational functions across a diverse set of industries. After graduating with a business degree, focused on marketing and entrepreneurship from the University of Southern Indiana, Harper began her career in Event Management with Old National Events Plaza, then known as The Centre. She spent the first part of her career planning and executing some of the venue’s most complex events like the Association of Indiana Mayors (AIM) convention. Next, she moved into a role with the venues culinary team, SAVOR, remaining in a sales and service position. During that time her work was focused on planning events with local clients who required catering services. Harper also traveled to other destinations with team SAVOR, assisting venues with major events like the Honda Grand Prix in St. Pete, FL.

Ginger’s next step was in the non-profit sector, combining her passions for reaching the underserved, planning special events, and marketing them. As the communications and events



manager for the Evansville Christian Life Center, Harper planned the organization’s fundraising events and managed marketing operations, messaging the Life Centers’ services to thousands of community members every year. A few years later, Ginger transitioned to a position in retail management, taking on a new set of challenges, shifting to the co-management role of a five/million dollar high-end retailer where she was charged with managing the store’s operational flow as well as team training. In retail management, Harper enjoyed the personal aspects of cultivating deeper client relationships, driving business culture, and motivating her team members. She says the experience truly helped frame her view and strategies for sales and marketing now.

“Retail, when done right, builds a very personal and loyal relationship with the customer. That business development model, putting the client’s need and vision first, translates well to the venue and destination sales. It boils down to the client trusting you to make

-continued on page 15

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Education

National Academy Of Medicine Award to advance USI research linking artificial intelligence and aging

October 2021
 The University of Southern Indiana has received a \$50,000 Catalyst Award from the U.S. National Academy of Medicine (NAM) — part of the National Academy of Sciences — for a project to improve emotional well-being and independence for people living with dementia, especially those aging-in-place.

Dr. Lisa Fournier, Project Coordinator for the USI Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), entered NAM's Healthy Longevity Global Competition with a proposal to investigate whether an artificial intelligence (AI) virtual assistant can help create a positive emotional environment for people with cognitive disabilities. Her application was one of 25 accepted this year by NAM and was among 145 international awardees

announced during a virtual event on Wednesday, September 22.

"To be recognized on a global stage is very exciting," said Fournier. "I'm so inspired by all the research and innovative projects that are taking place worldwide to help maintain health and well-being as we age."

Fournier's project, Joy for People Living with Dementia Using a Virtual Assistant, is based on "Joi," an AI virtual assistant that creates personalized "joy pops" for people living with dementia within a smart-home living environment. "Joy is linked to dopamine systems that reward the brain when having a positive experience, as well as reinforce behavior, motivating a person to repeat an activity," she said. "Our goal is to harness the power of AI and combine it with joy, meaning and positivity to help

people living with dementia grow and rise above the challenges of cognitive disabilities and maintain independence."

Fournier and the GWEP team will use the NAM Catalyst Award to accelerate "Joi" in the Minka Learning Lab for Living Well, a 600-square-foot home on the USI campus that integrates technology, adaptable living and innovations in aging and wellness. She said the AI "joy pop" triggers will be based on input from sensors in the smart home, including motion, sound, temperature and light to provide a comfortable and moderately stimulating environment to reduce agitation, apathy and anxiety. Read the USI project description on the Healthy Longevity Global Competition website.

According to NAM, older adults will begin to outnumber



the young for the first time in recorded history in the year 2030. This demographic shift poses significant challenges, but also is an opportunity for innovation around healthy longevity. NAM founded the Healthy Longevity Global Competition to accelerate research and entrepreneurship with a series of monetary awards and prizes. The first of three cycles of the Catalyst phase began in January 2020, and there are also Accelerator and Grand Prize phases. Learn more about NAM's 2021 Catalyst Award recipients.

Report reveals Ivy Tech Community College's economic impact in Evansville region

College produces \$3.9 billion cumulative annual impacts throughout the state

October 2021
 An in-depth study, conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl. (Emsi), has revealed the significant positive economic impact Ivy Tech Community College makes on the State of Indiana, including the local impact of \$271.5 million in income to the Evansville Campus Service Area economy in 2018-19.* The report outlines the return on investment the Community College makes to its major stakeholder groups – students, taxpayers and the communities it serves. Results of the analysis reflect a \$3.9 billion cumulative annual impact statewide.

The 2020 Ivy Tech Community College Economic Impact Report, based on fiscal year 2018-19, includes the following key findings for the local area:

Alumni have the greatest impact on the state because of higher earnings and increased productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2018-19, Ivy Tech alumni generated \$244.7 million in added income for the region's economy, which is the equivalent to supporting 3,145 jobs.

In the 10-county Evansville service area, Ivy Tech employs 457 full-time and part-time faculty and staff with a total operational spend of \$23.7 million contributing to the local economy.

The expenditures of retained

students in FY 2018-19 also added \$3.1 million in income to the local economy and supported the equivalent of 80 jobs in the Evansville Campus Service Region.

"We who work and learn at Ivy Tech, see daily the incredible impact the college has on our communities and state, but this report is very eye-opening," said Evansville Region Chancellor Daniela Vidal. "In FY 2018-19, Ivy Tech Evansville served 6,053 credit and 1,266 non-credit students – who invested in their future. In return, they are receiving a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives," she said.

And, Ivy Tech Evansville generates more in tax revenue that it takes. The report indicates that for every \$1 of public money invested in Ivy Tech Evansville, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of \$2 over the course of the students' working lives. Value is created from several perspectives, Vidal said.

"Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of Ivy Tech Evansville students and the corresponding reduced government services," Vidal said. "Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. This will generate savings in healthcare, crime and income assistance, which in turn lowers the

demand for national healthcare services, law enforcement, and make graduates more employable reducing the income assistance needed."

"Ivy Tech's impact goes well beyond the benefits students derive from their education," said Sue Ellspermann, president of Ivy Tech. "When the College's students enter the workforce, they bring with them valuable skills acquired through their education, resulting in increased productivity for their employers. That has a lasting impact on our state and the dozens of communities where our students live and work."

For details on the statewide impact, visit www.ivytech.edu/impact. To find full details about the Evansville campus, click the Evansville button.

Individual student impact grows with investment

In addition to identifying the economic impact of the institution, the study also analyzed the value of the investment students are making in themselves by choosing an Ivy Tech education, and the value the community is investing in students through public dollars the institution receives from taxpayers.

The study found that students invested \$502.8 million in time



and money that will generate a cumulative return of \$2.2 billion in higher future earnings over their working careers. The average Ivy Tech associate degree graduate from FY 2018-19 will see annual earnings that are \$10,200 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Indiana.

"In today's job market, a post-secondary credential is more important than ever," Ellspermann said. "Ivy Tech offers a cost-effective way of acquiring knowledge and skills that lead to new careers and improved earnings."

In fact, students will see an average annual return on investment of 18.3%, which is significantly higher than the U.S. stock market's 30-year average rate of return of just under 10%, or the 30-year U.S. Treasury at 1.91% rate of return.

*Evansville campus service area consists of the following counties: Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Posey, Perry, Dubois, Pike, Daviess, Knox and Spencer.

University of Southern Indiana reports growth of first-year graduate students

Entering first-year class boasts record-high grade point average

October 2021
 For the first time since 2017, the University of Southern Indiana has grown in new, first-time freshman students. 1,327 such students are part of the incoming USI Class of 2025, representing a 3.2% increase over the previous year, and are entering with a record overall average high school cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4-point scale.

Graduate enrollment at USI also rose 4.5% over Fall 2020, marking the sixth consecutive year of growth for Graduate Studies. Of the 1,845 graduate students at USI, more than 1,680 are choosing programs that are offered exclusively online, such as the accelerated Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program offered by the Romain College of Business.

"The faculty and staff have worked exceptionally hard to demonstrate that USI is where all students can be inspired, have their passions ignited and achieve at the highest level," said Ronald S. Rochon, USI President. "Our newest students are already achieving at record high academic potential, and we can't wait for the impact of their exceptional USI education to see where they go from here."

In total, joint graduate and undergraduate enrollment totaling 7,938 is down 6.7% compared to the Fall 2020 Semester. The Class of 2025 also features 461 new first-time transfer students, representing growth of 2.2% over Fall 2020. Overall undergraduate enrollment is 6,093.

"We continue to learn about how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting students and higher education as a whole," said Dr. Mohammed Khayum,



Dr. Mohammed Khayum, -continued on page 11

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Education

Vanderburgh County lawmakers urge Hoosiers to connect to free training, careers in fast-growing fields



STATEHOUSE
October 2021

Vanderburgh County lawmakers urge Hoosiers to join the thousands who are already taking advantage of Indiana's Next Level Jobs certificate program to skill up at no cost and obtain a higher-paying job.

With many high-wage positions requiring specially trained workers, Hoosiers can skill up for free with a Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant, which covers tuition costs for those earning a high-value certificate from Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University. Since launching in 2017, more than 50,000 Hoosiers have enrolled to complete a high-demand certificate program through Indiana's Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant.

"Thousands of Hoosiers have already taken that first step to an exciting new career path," said State Rep. Wendy McNamara (R-Evansville). "A high-value certificate through Next Level Jobs will open up a lot of rewarding career opportunities for local job seekers."

According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, those who earn a Workforce Ready Grant certificate see an annual median wage increase of \$6,800.

"These grants help Hoosiers obtain higher-paying jobs to support their families," said State Rep. Tim O'Brien (R-Evansville). "If you're looking for a career change to earn more money, the Next Level Jobs program can help you achieve that goal."

O'Brien said the program is designed so that participants can continue to work while earning a certificate in 1 of 5 in-demand job fields, including health and life sciences, IT and business services, building and construction, transportation and logistics, and advanced manufacturing. To learn more about Workforce Ready Grants, visit NextLevelJobs.org.

McNamara said to connect to a career in a fast-growing field today, Hoosiers can also visit IndianaCareerReady.com/INDemandJobs. This website helps job seekers easily explore industries experiencing significant growth, both in the number of hires and in rising wages. High-demand jobs in Indiana include nurses, accountants, computer systems analysts, construction managers, electricians, plumbers and software developers. The web portal offers a sortable list displaying the educational requirements, average salary, job postings and training opportunities for each occupation.

UE School of Education reaches \$1 million in grants since 2017

October 2021

EVANSVILLE, IN - The University of Evansville (UE) School of Education was recently awarded a \$110,000 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) grant from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE). This is the third STEM grant the School of Education has received from the CHE. With these funds, UE has now received over \$1 million in grants for the School of Education since 2017.

The recent \$110,000 grant will be used to fund full-tuition scholarships for students in the Transition to Teaching program who are entering STEM fields, such as math, science, and computer science. Transition to Teaching is an accelerated, 17-credit education program that prepares students to pursue licensure in teaching. During their time in the program, students will receive teaching placements in local schools and are paired with a mentor teacher and University supervisor for constant support.

The grant will also provide STEM professional development opportunities for current students in elementary and secondary education majors, as well as UE alums and teachers within the region. Additionally, a mentoring program for graduates teaching in STEM fields will be maintained and funded.

The School of Education will continue to implement a Project Lead the Way program for undergraduate elementary education majors. Project Lead the Way is an American organization that develops and provides STEM curricula to create engaging classroom environments. Through this program, students will be equipped with the knowledge, training, and support to incorporate these in-demand skills into their future classrooms.

"We are thrilled that this grant will bring even more STEM training and opportunities to our students," said Sharon Gieselmann, PhD, who serves as chair for the UE School of Education. "The teaching shortage in these fields continues to rise as the demand for these skills grows. This grant is going to have a dual purpose. It will equip our students for teaching STEM in the classroom, but it will also give K-12 students a greater understanding of these areas as they think about their own future aspirations."

In addition to the three STEM grants from the CHE, the School of Education also received a \$735,000 grant in 2020 from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund. The initiative of this grant was to improve distance learning techniques in the classroom. Since receiving the funds, the School of Education has been offering a free community tutoring program as well as professional development opportunities for current students and local teachers to improve student outcomes.

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 change-making 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.



Ivy Tech Community College New Hires

October 2021

Ivy Tech Community College Evansville has several recent new hires. They include:

Amber Becker is now a nursing faculty at Ivy Tech Community College. She holds a master's degree in Nurse Educator and a bachelor's degree in Nursing and Finance from the University of Southern Indiana. She most recently served as a telehealth registered nurse for Deaconess Hospital. Becker is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society, and the Indiana League for Nursing.

Nathan Jochum is now assistant director of development operations at Ivy Tech Community College. He attended St. Meinrad College and then completed his bachelor's degree in Public Relations and Advertising at the University of Southern Indiana. Jochum went on to earn his master's degree in Library and Information Science from Drexel University. He serves as co-director of the ParksFest Music Festival.

Jochum comes to the College from Aurora, Inc. where he served as marketing, communications and special events coordinator. He has also worked for Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library and SCORE.

Jennifer Julian is now a medical assisting faculty at Ivy Tech Community College. She holds a bachelor's degree in Individual Studies from the University of Southern Indiana. She most recently served as an adjunct for Ivy Tech and clinical coordinator for St. Vincent Pediatric After-Hours Clinic.

Laura Purcell now serves as college connection coach for Perry County at Ivy Tech Community College. She holds bachelor's degrees in Art and Advertising/Public Relations from the University of Southern Indiana. She most recently served as family and community outreach coordinator for Tell City-Troy Township School Corporation. Prior to that, she was an advertising account executive with the Messenger Inquirer.

Purcell is a Perry County Tri-Kappa Member, Perry County Habitat for Humanity board member, and a Perry County CASA.

Evelyn Rivas is now executive assistant to the chancellor/strategic facilitation lead at Ivy Tech Community College. She attended Indiana University and earned her bachelor's degree in social work with minors in both communications and sociology. Rivas serves as vice president of ALASI, as a member of the Latino Collaboration Table, VUJ board member, Quality of Place Steering Community member, and is a Huntingburg Optimist.

Rivas comes to the College from German American Bank where she most recently served as an executive assistant. Prior to that, she held the roles of training and development specialist and customer service specialist.

Gina Talbert is now the Surgical Technology program chair at Ivy Tech Community College. She holds a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and Sports Medicine from the University of Evansville and an associate degree in Surgical Technology from Ivy Tech Community College. She most recently served as a certified surgical technologist for St Vincent's Surgicare/ Ascension Orthopedic Hospital. Prior to that, she was an adjunct faculty member at Ivy Tech.



University of Southern Indiana reports growth of first-year graduate students

Entering first-year class boasts record-high grade point average

-continued from page 10

Provost. "As we gradually return to more normal operations, we are optimistic that the areas of growth mentioned will provide us with opportunities for expansion and continued growth going forward."

Total enrollment at the University of Southern Indiana, combining graduate, undergraduate and dual credit students taking courses in 27 high schools across the state through the College Achievement Program, is 9,758.

Students at USI represent 90 Indiana counties, 45 states and 45 countries. In-state students comprise 78.7% of the student body, with out-of-state and international students making up the remaining 21.3%. Minority and international student numbers grew to a record 15.9% of the student population.



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Sports

The City of Evansville and YMCA of Southwestern Indiana are pleased to announce additional details about the Deaconess Aquatic Center (DAC)

October 2021

Hours of Operation

Lilly King Competition Pool

5 – 9 a.m. (Mon.-Sat. for public lap swim)

3 – 6 p.m. (Mon.-Fri. for swim team practice and lap swim)

Noon - 5 p.m. (Sat. & Sun. for public lap swim)

Recreational Pool & Splash Pad

9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)

3 – 7 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)

Noon – 5 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.)

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance will be available to those in need for membership and programming at DAC.

Assistance will be awarded based on a sliding scale to ensure

equitable access to safe, family-fun activities and water fitness.

“We want people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds to discover the joy and health benefits of swimming,” said Mayor Lloyd Winnecke. “The City of Evansville and YMCA are working together with the Dream Center, Welborn Baptist Foundation, Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Jacobsville stakeholders and several other community organizations to ensure access for the children of our community.”

As Evansville’s newest asset, Deaconess Aquatic Center is available to all in our community. Although the YMCA is managing the facility, a YMCA membership is not required for admittance.

Pricing

Pool passes and memberships

are available for purchase, immediately. The following are the standard rates without discounts or adjustments.

Daily Pass: \$6

Pass Packages:

15 visits: \$55

30 visits: \$106

45 visits: \$135

Monthly Ind. Membership: \$25

Monthly Family Membership: \$50

Community Rooms

Two community rooms are available for birthday parties, meetings, and event rental.

The rooms are currently being offered to neighborhood partners - Jacobsville Neighborhood Improvement Association and the Dream Center - for their respective board meetings.



Upcoming Programming/Services

October 4: GREAT Swim Club will begin training in the Lilly King Competition Pool

October 12: Morning water fitness classes begin on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week

October 25: EVSC and ECS boys and girls high school swimming season begins

October 31: Last day of the season for the CenterPoint Energy Splash Pad

November through December:

YMCA will be scheduling stroke clinics, adult swimming workshops and other programs like masters swimming

January 1: Swim lessons will begin

For more information about passes, memberships and rentals, call 812-402-9770.

MVC Schedule Announced For UE Men’s Basketball

Aces set to build on last year’s success

October 2021

One of the top turnarounds in Missouri Valley Conference history saw the University of Evansville men’s basketball team make a 7-game improvement last season while clinching one of the top six seeds. The Purple Aces look for more as they head into the 2021-22 campaign.

On Tuesday, the MVC announced the league portion of the schedules. Conference play opens for UE on Wednesday, December 1 with a contest against Southern Illinois inside the Ford Center. It will mark the earliest MVC contest in program

history, surpassing a Dec. 8 contest in 1999 at SIU.

After wrapping up its non-conference slate, the Aces open the New Year on January 2 with a visit to Northern Iowa. The Panthers have had a solid mark against Evansville inside the McLeod Center, winning the last seven matchups with the Aces last win in the building coming on Jan. 9, 2013. UE remains on the road to take on Indiana State on the 5th. The Hulman Center is another facility where the Aces look to end a streak with the Sycamores winning the last 10 games in Terre Haute.

The first home game of the new

year will see the Aces welcome Illinois State on 1/8. In last year’s scheduling of back-to-back games, UE split a home series against the Redbirds. A stretch of three out of four games on the road will conclude on Jan. 12 with a trip to Bradley.

Following the trip to Peoria, UE will host the top two conference squads from last season – Drake and Loyola. The Aces face the Bulldogs on the 15th inside the Ford Center before taking on Loyola three days later. Drake made the NCAA Tournament last season with a 26-5 overall and 15-3 league mark. Taking on former conference foe Wichita State in the tournament, the Bulldogs picked up a 53-52 win. The Ramblers were 16-2 in the MVC while going 26-5 overall. They advanced to the Sweet 16 in the NCAA Tournament with wins over Georgia Tech and Illinois.

UE returns to the road on the 23rd for a trip to Redbird Arena to face Illinois State before finishing the month at home against UNI (1/26) and on the road at Missouri State (1/29). Evansville swept a 2-game series from the Panthers at the Ford Center in 2021 while splitting its series versus the Bears to complete the 2020-21 regular season.

February opens at Valparaiso on the 1st. It will mark the first trip to Valparaiso since January of 2020 as Valpo was one of four trips (UNI, MSU, Illinois State being



the others) that the team did not make last season due to the COVID scheduling. Two home games follow with the Aces facing Bradley (2/5) and Indiana State (2/9) before the team travels to Southern Illinois on the 12th. In the last trip to Carbondale to open the 2020-21 MVC schedule, the Aces halted a 19-game conference skid against the Salukis. Four days later, the squad returns to Iowa to take on Drake.

Two of the final three regular-season games will take place at the Ford Center with the Aces playing host to Valpo on Feb. 19. UE faced the Beacons in a pair of home games last year, taking both contests. The road finale will see the Aces head to Gentile Arena on 2/23 to face Loyola before hosting Missouri State on Feb. 26 to close the regular season.

Season tickets for the 2021-22 season are on sale now and can be purchased by calling the UE Athletics Ticket Office at 812-488-2237. Individual game tickets go on sale on Monday, October 11, and can be purchased at the Carson Center Ticket Office, Ford Center, or on Ticketmaster.com



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Earn entries from 6AM to 8PM on Saturday, October 16 for the Saturday Drawing!

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Details at ballysevansville.com.

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USI to begin exploration into feasibility of move to Division I Athletics

By Alex Brown
October 2021

EVANSVILLE, IN - The University of Southern Indiana is exploring the possibility of moving to Division I athletics.

In a letter to USI students, faculty, staff and alumni, President Ronald Rochon said the feasibility

review will consider a number of factors, including fiscal and facilities requirements, as well as internal and external community support.

USI currently has a Division II athletics program in the Great Lakes Valley Conference. Rochon says the university will engage an outside consultant and form a university

committee "in the coming days" to conduct the review.

The university currently has 17 men's and women's sports programs. However, Rochon says the review will not include a consideration for football because it "would require investment and facilities that are out of scope at this time."



Rochon says the information gathered during the review process will be provided to the USI Board of Trustees during its November meeting.

2021 CCO "Community Service Luncheon" date set for Oct. 20, 2021

-continued from page 1
The Public Good," but also a "Public Watch Dog" that demands our appointed and elected

officials become "Good Steward of The Public Trust."

Mr. Berger graduated from the University of Evansville in

1969 with a major in history and a minor in political science. He also lettered in football and was a member of Phi Kappa Phi, an honorary fraternity. He graduated from Indiana University School of Law, Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1972 and received a Jurisprudence Doctor with honors. Mr. Berger as admitted to the bar in 1972, Indiana, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana and U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit; 1975, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; 1977, U.S. Supreme Court; 1981, U.S. District Court, Western District of Kentucky; 1984, U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit. Director, Indiana Lawyers' Commission, 1973-1977.

Mr. Berger's professional accomplishments include the following: Evansville, Indiana State (Chairman, Trial Lawyers Section, 1982-1983) and American Bar Association; Indiana Trial Lawyers Association (Director, 1977 -); Treasurer, 1982-1983); American Board of Trial Advocates; The Association of Trial Lawyers of American (State Committeeman 1975-1979); Bar Association of the Seventh Federal Circuit; Fellow, Indiana Bar Foundation; Board of Directors, Indiana Equal Justice Fund; Member of the Indiana Supreme Court Rules Committee (2005 - 2015); Member of the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission: Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications (2016 - Present). Mr. Berger was awarded the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association (ITLA) Trial Lawyer of the Year in November 2014 for his work on behalf of individuals who were denied rights under the Indiana Constitution.

Charlie Berger is listed in "The Best Lawyers in America" and "Who's Who in American Law." Has chaired several panels at Continuing Legal Education Forums and participated in making presentations at Continuing Legal Education Forums. In 2005 was the recipient of the James Bethel Gresham Award for Freedom from the Evansville Bar Association. Member of Adjunct Faculty at the University of Southern Indiana in Criminal Law and Constitutional Law.

Co-Chairperson Of "Feed Evansville" Alex Burton

When COVID-19 impacted Evansville, Indiana, in mid-March, Community Activist Lisa Vaughan and Evansville City Council member Alex Burton started a grassroots effort to ensure the Tri-State had food access COVID-19 government shutdown. The effort was so successful it led to the Mayor of Evansville deeming the Feed Evansville Group the official government Food Security task force of the area and named Lisa and Alex the co-chairs. These efforts also shined a light on Food Security as an issue within the area. The mayor officially announced that work would need to be ongoing after the pandemic is over.

Feed Evansville organized a communication hub and tracked

what every organization was doing (both businesses and non-profit). The task force created and shared a weekly food access flyer so community members would know where to receive services and published grocery & restaurant hours through social media, TV, radio, and emailed organizations to spread the word. All services have been provided through fundraising and in-kind donations.

City Councilman Alex Burton was born and raised in Evansville, IN. He graduated from Indiana State University with a degree in Communications. As an undergraduate, he had the opportunity to intern with Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel, which led him to attain his Master's in Public Administration from Western Kentucky. During this time, he interned for two Members of Congress.

Alex returned to Evansville to serve his community. He serves as Vice President of the City Council and has sought to make positive traction in workforce development, housing, food insecurity, and public education.

Retired Vanderburgh County Superior Court Judge Rich D'Amour

Former Superior Court Judge Rich D'Amour has earned the reputation of being fair, impartial, and objective while adhering to the law's letter. He is very personable and well respected. Judge D'Amour moved to Evansville in July of 1981 after getting his undergraduate degree from Notre Dame and his law degree from Indiana University.

During the time he has practiced law, he had the pleasure of working with many fine partners. His practice areas were primarily as a deputy prosecutor for 19 years, and he estimates he has tried over 150 criminal jury trials and done several thousand divorces.

Judge D'Amour has served on numerous state judicial committees, including the domestic relations committee, where he helped draft the Indiana Child Support Guidelines, the Parenting Time Guidelines, and the Parenting Time Calendar. He established the Alternative Dispute Resolution Fund in Vanderburgh County, which helps provide mediation services to low-income litigants. In 2016 he was one of six judges in Indiana chosen to start the new Indiana Commercial Court, a system of courts specifically developed to address business and commercial litigation. These courts are now permanently established in Indiana and are being adopted by other counties throughout the state.

In 2005, seeking a change from the law's hectic practice, Rich was appointed as Magistrate in the Vanderburgh Superior Court. He served in that position until 2011, when he was fortunate enough to be elected Judge in the Vanderburgh Superior Court, which he held when he retired on April 1, 2021. After nearly 40 years

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USI's Gatling recognized as "Top 20 Women in Business"

October 2021

EVANSVILLE, IN - University of Southern Indiana Women's Basketball Assistant Coach Randa Gatling '99 has been selected as one of the "Top 20 Women in Business" Class of 2021, which is presented by the Junior League of Evansville and sponsored by News 4 U and Legence Bank.

Nominees for this honor were selected from a large pool and must be 18 years old or over and live or work in Warrick, Gibson, Vanderburgh, Posey, Pike, Dubois, Spencer, Union, Webster, McLean or Davies counties. The nominees were then rated based on the following criteria: Demonstration of volunteerism in the community, innovation in her profession, mentors others within her profession and contributes to her business community.

Gatling was selected based on those qualities as she has been an "innovative servant leader and makes the Tri-State area a better community."

"Randa is very deserving of this honor," USI Director of Athletics Jon Mark Hall said. "She cares deeply about this community, our wonderful institution and treats people of all different backgrounds the same way, with compassion. I am happy to be associated with her and am excited that she is receiving this recognition."

USI Women's Basketball Head Coach Rick Stein said, "Words can't describe how proud we are of her and just how deserving she is of this award. She has been a true leader on our campus and in the Evansville community for years and has poured her heart and soul into USI, USI Women's Basketball and into her hometown of Evansville, Indiana!"

"When Randa was a player, she was always first in line to volunteer on campus and in the community," Stein continued. "She has carried that over into her professional life and has made sure that our team is always first in line to help others whenever possible. She has spent the last 22 years helping prepare all of our young women to succeed in whatever path they choose after USI."

Gatling will be honored by the Junior League of Evansville during the Women's Conference's Luncheon November 4 at the Old National Event Plaza.

Mike O'Daniel is the CCO 2021 "Community Service Awards" luncheon keynote speaker

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Margot is married to Wolfi who serves as general manager of the north side and east side D-Patrick collision centers, in addition to D-Patrick Honda. Molly O'Daniel recently moved back to Evansville from Denver, and is engaged to be married to Dylan Krohn. Molly is the president of Lancaster Insurance.

When Mr. O'Daniel isn't working, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, flying his 1978 Cessna 172 airplane, playing tennis, golf, fishing, water skiing, and snow skiing.

This year's COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNERS are: local attorney Charles L. Berger, retired Vanderburgh Superior Court Judge Rich D'Amour, retired Vanderburgh County Treasurer Susan Kirk, State Senator Veneta Becker, Evansville City Councilman Alex Burton, Community Volunteer Lisa Vaughn and Mayor Winnecke.

Our ANNUAL AWARD LUNCHEON will be held at BALLY'S-EVANSVILLE on October 20, 2021.

THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions pertaining to county governmental issues contact me.

Ben Shoulders

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bshoulders@vanderburghgov.org

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2021 CCO "Community Service Luncheon" date set for Oct. 20, 2021

-continued from page 14

in the legal profession, Judge D'Amour moved to Asheville, North Carolina, with his wife, Holly, to begin his next adventure.

Former Vanderburgh County Treasurer And County Clerk Susan Kirk

Former Vanderburgh County Treasurer, Susan Kirk, has been one of Vanderburgh County's greatest assets and best-kept secrets. She has done her job with fairness and integrity, following the laws and regulations set by the state. People like Susan Kirk run for public office because they really want to serve people and make a difference.

Susan's political career began in 1968. At that time, she was working as a dental assistant. Remembering that May and November are typically busy times in the County Treasurer's Office, her father asked her to come work for him part-time. She was then offered a full-time position as a secretary at The Centre. Later, when Shirley Cox was elected Clerk, she asked Susan to come to work for her in the Election Office.

While she has worked in a political atmosphere for most of her life, Susan doesn't consider herself a seasoned politician. While most people have viewed her as the Vanderburgh County Clerk, she's much more than that. Take one step into her office and look around. She is adventurous and family-oriented. Her office is decorated with photos of her son, granddaughter, and 97-year-old mother, who incidentally still lives with her. She also has a certificate from a tandem jump from her lone skydiving adventure. And let's not forget her Indiana Women's Golf Association Hole-In-One certificate from a perfectly played hole at Quail Crossing Golf Club.

Susan Kirk retired at the end of 2020, after serving the public in appointed and elected offices for over 50 years. "I really can't complain. I'm very thankful for the life I have. I enjoy my job, and I have a wonderful, healthy family with my two brothers, my son, my granddaughter, and my mother," said Susan softly.

Co-Chairperson Of "Feed Evansville" Lisa Vaughn

Community Volunteer Lisa Vaughn moved to Evansville in 2016. She has studied Music Education and Pastoral Counseling.

Lisa is a 14-year active member and Past President of the Junior League of Evansville, and is the current Placement Chair, and has chaired several JLE committees. Lisa has been involved in various activities and has offered countless hours of volunteer service in the community.

Lisa says, "I have experienced situations throughout my life where I witnessed a lack of support to others in need. Joining the Junior League of Evansville in 2007 provided me with skills and training to be a civic leader so I could advocate, execute, and market an event. It taught me to network and collaborate, as well as taught me about being committed to community impact."

When COVID-19 impacted Evansville, Indiana, in mid-March, Community Activist Lisa Vaughn and Evansville City Council President Alex Burton started a grassroots effort to ensure the Tri-State had food access COVID-19 government shutdown. The effort

was so successful it led to the Mayor of Evansville deeming the Feed Evansville Group the official government Food Security task force of the area and named Lisa and Alex the co-chairs. These efforts also shined a light on Food Security as an issue within the area. The mayor officially announced that work would need to be ongoing after the pandemic is over.

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Honorable Mayor Lloyd Winnecke

Lloyd Winnecke was inaugurated on January 1, 2012, as the 34th mayor of Evansville, Indiana. Mayor Winnecke is a graduate of Central High School with a Bachelor of Science in Communication from the University of Evansville. A native of Evansville with a successful business background in banking communications and news information, Mayor Winnecke held numerous public and private sector management positions before assuming the role of the city's top executive official.

Before becoming Mayor, Lloyd's position as Senior Vice President and Marketing Director for Fifth Third Bank taught him the business skills he brought to the city government. Before joining the bank, Lloyd Winnecke spent nearly two decades in the television news industry, working in several markets, including Louisville and Indianapolis. He was News Director at WEHT-TV News 25 in Henderson, Ky., before switching from news to banking.

In the public sector, the mayor was elected to the Vanderburgh County Commission in 2008 and served as President of the County Commissioners. Before that, he served nine years on the Vanderburgh County Council, including three years as County Council President and one year as Council Finance Chairman. As a county official, Lloyd proposed balanced budgets for 11 straight years and held per capita spending to 43% below the state average. He has never lost an election.

In 2012, Lloyd and his wife, Carol, were honored with the Keep Evansville Beautiful Volunteer of the Year Award for launching the monthly litter pick-up initiative, Clean Evansville, and inspiring others to help keep Evansville beautiful. Last year, the Indiana Association of City and Towns recognized the City of Evansville with the 2013 IACT Community Achievement Award and the 2013 IACT Green Community of the Year Award for promoting civic pride, work ethic, and the spirit of volunteerism through various city activities, in particular Clean Evansville. In 2013, Mayor Winnecke was named an honorary member of the West Side Nut Club for his enthusiastic support of the community and the city's West Side.

The Mayor has served on the Boards of Evansville Civic Theatre, Gilda's Club of Evansville, the American Red Cross, the Evansville African American Museum, and the University of Evansville Purple

Aces Club. He also serves on the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana and the ITAC (city-county information technology committee). He is a past board member and current volunteer for the Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center and a past cabinet member for the local

United Way campaign. Other organizational involvements include the Evansville Parks Foundation, Wesselman Nature Center, the University of Evansville Theatre Society, Reitz Home Museum, University of Southern Indiana Arts and Humanities, and Junior Achievement.

Meet Ginger Harper, Director of Sales & Marketing at ONBP

-continued from page 9

them look good. When an event is executed well from point of sale to completion, the planner and host organization look like the winners. That means the convention center wins too, and downtown Evansville wins. When our clients feel confident hosting with us, we've done our jobs," Harper says.

After six years of growing sales, developing lasting client relationships, and managing business operations, she had the opportunity to return to the Events Plaza as the sales & marketing manager. Since 2016, Ginger has taken on expanding responsibilities almost yearly. Moving from sales manager to assistant director, interim director and finally the sales and marketing director - all in under 5 years. Harper has keen attention to detail, an eye for identifying market trends and gauging local appetite for new products and offerings. She is well versed at selling not only the Plaza to potential events but also the city and partnering venues. Ginger says she enjoys working with the team at Old National Events Plaza and will continue driving the convention centers growth by hosting successful local and regional events.

When she's not working, Ginger enjoys spending time with her little one, baking, hiking, biking, and spending time outdoors."

"For those interested in booking an event at the Old National Events Plaza, please contact Ginger at 812.435.5770 or Gharper@oldnationaleventsplaza.com"

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