



TRIBUNE-COURIER

RICHLAND COUNTY'S ONLY LOCALLY-OWNED NEWSPAPER • SINCE 1961

news@tribune-courier.com

12.18.25



Photo By Traci Little

THE ONTARIO LIONS CHARITIES, INC. received a significant fourth-quarter grant through Walmart #1539's "Spark Good" program. To celebrate, a "big check" presentation was held on Monday, Dec. 8, at Walmart store #1539, 539 Lex-Springmill Rd., Ontario. Ontario Lions Club officers, Mayor Kris Knapp, the Ontario Police Chief and staff, and Walmart #1539 management were all present for the event. The grant was designated to support the 2025 Ontario Lions Charities Christmas Giving Project, a collaborative effort between Ontario Lions Charities and the Ontario Police Department. These funds — combined with additional donations and toys collected at the Ontario Craft Show on Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Richland County Fairgrounds — were used to help provide meaningful support to local families during the 2025 Christmas season.

77 years of soil and water conservation celebrated

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD) celebrated soil and water conservation at the 77th Annual Celebration Sept. 11. The celebration brought together partners, volunteers, elected officials and community members to share the district's mission and the past year's impact and accomplishments of award recipients and Richland SWCD.

The celebration began with the board supervisor election. Leonard Fox was congratulated for being re-elected to a second three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2026.

The Ohio State University at Mansfield was recognized for being named the 2025 Cooperator of the Year for their work educating the public and students about environmental science.

The EcoLab is an umbrella term inclusive of all the outdoor assets on campus. Among other features, the EcoLab consists of a maple research sugarbush complete with maple syrup production, woodland and wildlife management showcase areas, Right-of-Way Pollinator demonstration plots, vernal pools, hiking trails with interpretive signage and the Grant and Mary Milliron Research Wetlands and Classroom.

The EcoLab was established to provide a range of course work and research experiences for students interested in careers in forestry, water, biology and wildlife. Balancing internal teaching and research priorities while embracing the external community through outreach and leisure recreation is an overarching goal.

The EcoLab provides educational workshops and programs to the public and fosters partnerships with public and private entities on a range of natural resource and environmental topics. The award was accepted by Dr. Jason Opal, Dean and Director at The Ohio State University at Mansfield, Cynthia Callahan, Associate Dean of Student Enrichment and Professor of English and Dr. Gabriel Karnes, Professor in the School of Environment and Natural Resources and EcoLab Director.

Elaine Oswald was acknowledged as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year. Oswald has volunteered with Richland SWCD since 2016 as a precipitation monitor and provides daily reports of rain and snow in real-time on the District website. The data is used by the public, other volunteers, gardeners, community developers, elected officials and many more.

Each volunteer of the year award recipient picks a public location

for a native tree to be planted in his or her honor and Elaine chose Liberty Park due to all the activity aimed at revitalizing the park. A Green Gable Black Gum tree donated by the District in Elaine's honor
(Continued on Page 5)

Local book collection underway for Big Red Bookshelf project

By Traci Little

With the holiday season in full swing, Graham Auto Mall is inviting neighbors across Richland County to help brighten a child's Christmas by supporting a community book drive now through Christmas Eve. All donations will benefit the Big Red Bookshelf, a United Way project that helps young children discover the joy of reading.

The Big Red Bookshelf is simple but meaningful: volunteers build bright red bookshelves and place them in spots families visit often. Those shelves are then filled with new or gently-used books, free for any child from birth through third grade to take home. For many local families, it's a small shelf that makes a big difference.

"This project is a wonderful example of how a community can come together to support early learning," said Jessica Thompson of Graham Auto Mall. "We're proud to help keep these shelves filled and accessible for local families."

This year's drive is focused on books for newborn through kindergarten-aged children, as early childhood titles tend to disappear from shelves the fastest. Board books, picture books and simple early-learning stories are especially helpful. Teen and young adult books aren't needed this season.

As a thank-you, anyone who drops off a book at a Graham Auto Mall Service Department will be entered to win a holiday gift basket. A winner will be drawn after Christmas Eve.

Donations can be delivered to Graham Auto Mall – Service Department, 1515 W. Fourth St., Mansfield.

All books collected will stay in Richland County, finding their way to Big Red Bookshelf locations and into the hands of children who could use a little extra holiday magic — and a good story to go with it.

LOST IN A BOOK Assistance now available through HEAP



A Book Review
By Mandy Belczak Gurney



We recently had our first snow of the season in my town and the students and I were buzzing with excitement. It was the perfect day to read *Blizzard* by John Rocco.

His picture books tell amazing stories that make space for a depth of thinking. I love how the illustrations hold new surprises each time I read.

This particular story is about a massive blizzard that hit his hometown as a child, and the brave actions taken to help his neighbors.

It's the perfect children adventure picture book. If you like this one, check out his books *Black-out* and *Hurricane*.

Follow my blog at [Green Gurneys](#) at [GreenGurneys.com](#)

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. has announced that assistance is available to help with home energy bills.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps Ohioans at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of up to eight members and 60% of State Median Income for a household of nine or more members to pay their heating bills.

The benefit is applied directly to the customer's utility or bulk fuel bill. Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and completing the application or visit [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](#) to apply online or to download a copy of the application.

Applications must be received by May 31, 2026. For information call 419-524-4144.

When applying, individuals need to have copies of most recent utility bills, a list of all household members (including birth dates and Social Security numbers, proof of income for the past 30 days for all household members (12 months for certain income types), proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members and proof of disability (if applicable).

HEAP benefits are applied to energy bills after Jan. 1. To be connected to a local energy assistance provider, call 800-282-0880 (hearing impaired clients may dial 711 for assistance) or visit [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](#).

THE ENTERTAINMENT EXAMINER — By Ian Stumbo —

Legacy sequels are very popular these days and one of the best cult films of all time is This is *Spinal Tap*.

This 1984 mock documentary about a fictitious rock band headed by Nigel Tufnel (Christopher Guest), David St. Hubbins (Michael McKean) and Derek Smalls (Harry Shearer) showed all of their crazy happenings along the way like getting lost going to the stage and the classic amp that goes to 11.

Spinal Tap II: The End Continues shows these characters getting back together for a reunion concert. The movie's director, Rob Reiner, also comes back in the movie as the director of the original documentary.

It's great to see these characters and actors again along with some of their memorable and hilarious songs though lightning does not strike twice.

This movie spends so much of its time in the rehearsal hall that it bogs down what could have been some great scenes and se-

quences (some great ideas actually come during the movies end credits). There are also tons of cameos and performances by such greats as Elton John and Paul McCartney though many feel wedged into an 82 minute movie because of lack of ideas.

There are some fleshed out storylines regarding Nigel's family life and what they were doing in the meantime though the laughs are lacking and that is too bad because it is following up such a hilarious and iconic film.

Spinal Tap II has so many missed opportunities. As a fan of the original, I was really hopeful this would at least be a decent film though staying in one location does not help and the few humorous moments do not elevate this sequel.

This movie is now streaming on HBO Max.



Spirit Island, Alberta, Canada • Photo By Mark Shutt

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at [www.tribune-courier.com](#)**

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PO Box 127, Ontario, OH 44862 • 419-529-2847
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News Briefs

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Dec. 27 and 28. Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Christopher Reynolds on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Winter Solstice: Phoenix Fire of Love's Rebirth." On Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 10:30 am Hayley Young and Jen Gibson will speak during a Christmas Eve candlelight service. For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

★

Everyone is invited to a Birthday Party For Jesus Dec. 20, from 10 am to noon, at Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield.

Santa Claus will share the "True Meaning of Christmas," and Mrs. Claus will share the "Candy Cane Story." There will be plenty of fun games, food, candy canes and cupcakes.

★

Madison Music Department will host the high school band concert Thursday, Dec. 18 at 7 pm at the Madison Middle School.

★

First English Lutheran Church, 53 Park Avenue West, Mansfield will host worship on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. Music begins at 7 pm with candlelight worship at 7:30 pm. A New Year's Eve worship service will be held at 7 pm, Dec. 31, with Damian Boyd's Jazz Band.

Donations being accepted for blessing closet and food pantry

The Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet & Food Pantry recently opened and is offering free clothing and food for those in need.

Open Mondays, 9 am to noon and 4-6 pm, as well as every third Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm, the closet is located at the church, 2656 Taylortown Rd., Shelby.

Church volunteers also serve a free hot meal every third Thursday from 5:30-6:30 pm. This month's will be on Dec. 18.

There are no income or residency requirements. All are welcome.

Those wishing to donate to the closet can drop-off items during the open hours or call or text Lyndi Oakley 419-814-0372 or Tonja Barnett 419-571-3846 to set up a time outside of normal hours.

The biggest needs are non perishable food, coats, hats, gloves and kids clothing. Food is distributed quickly and will probably always be the greatest need. 100% of all donations go to filling the closet and pantry.

Please note that hours are subject to change for holidays.

Follow on Facebook at Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet.



Photos By Jeff Hoffer

THE BELLVILLE WHOVILLE HOUSE offered a visit with the Grinch and friends on Dec. 13. Those attending were able to get free photos with the Grinch and Cindy Lou Who. The house, located at 72 Church St., Bellville, has become a tradition for the community.

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Church Directory

Clay Memorial Lutheran Church

1601 Amoy East Rd., Mansfield
419-747-6882
Pastor Carol Kilgore
Sunday School 9:15 am • Sunday Worship 10:30 am

Clear Fork Alliance Church

1008 State Route 97, Bellville
419-886-4333 • www.clearforkalliance.org
Rev. Matt Merendino • Rev. Mike Stine, Associate Pastor
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship
Sunday Evening 6 pm Home Groups
Monday Men's Group 7:30 pm
Wednesday evenings: 6:45 pm, Prayer Meeting
6:30–8 pm and TeamKID and Youth Group

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

200 West Third St., Mansfield
419-524-4813 • mansfield1stcc1833@gmail.com
Rev. David Zerby
10:30 am Sunday Worship
Office Hours: Tu., W., Th. 9 am to 1 pm
Christian Builders, Sunday, 9:30 am
www.FirstChristianChurchMansfield.com
FB: FirstChristianChurch,Mansfield,Ohio

First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3046 • www.mansfieldfcc.com
Pastor Brad Bunn
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery–high school)
10:30 am Monday Morning Bible Study
7:30 am Wednesday Men's Breakfast

First English Lutheran Church

53 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
419-522-0662 • www.felc-mansfield.org
Pastor Jay Jackson
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship
Call about Prayer Groups, Small Groups, Bible
Studies, Book Clubs, Pub Theology, Community Meals,
Free Produce distribution and Senior Boxes.

Grace Episcopal Church

41 Bowman Street, Mansfield
419-524-2661
Rev. Christopher D. Hofer, Priest-in-Charge
Rev. Daniel Orr, Associate Priest
Worship: Sundays, 8 am and 10:15 am
Christian Formation for All Ages: Sundays, 9:15 am
Food Pantry: Thursdays, 9–11 am
2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 4–6 pm
gracemansfield.org • facebook.com/GraceChurchMansfield

G & M Body & Paint Shop

1689 West Fourth St., Ontario • 419-529-2747

Wappner Funeral Home

Mansfield • Ontario • Ashland • 419-522-5211

Lexington Church of Christ

230 Delaware Ave., Lexington
419-884-1532 • www.lccoh.com
Lead Minister Brandon Bogue
9 am Sunday School • 10 am Sunday Worship

Lexington Church of the Cross

236 Otterbein Dr., Lexington
419-884-2150 • Churchofthecrosslex.com
Pastor-Rev. Dr. Edna Stahl
Sunday Worship 9:30 am
Junior Church for 10 and under • Wesley Class 10:45
5th Sunday of the month-Do Something Sunday AA, Girl Scouts,
Yoga, Knotty Ladies
and Bible Study.

Lexington Presbyterian Church

35 Church St. West, Lexington
419-884-1330 • 10:30 am Sunday Worship
Pastor Denny Nezrick
https://www.facebook.com/Lexington-Presbyteri-
an-Church-117768414915815

Mansfield 1st Presbyterian Church

399 Trimble Rd., Mansfield
419-756-7066 • www.mansfield1st.com
Rev. Joseph Yerger
9 am Adult & Youth Sunday School
10 am Traditional Sunday Worship
ADA Accessible Nursery & Children's Programming

Mansfield Baptist Temple

752 N. Stewart Rd., Mansfield
419-589-5413 • www.mbt.org
Pastor Rob Kurtz
9:30 am Sunday School • 10:30 am & 5:30 pm Sunday Worship
7 pm Wednesday Service

Oakland Lutheran Church

2045 Olivesburg Rd., Mansfield
419-571-9920
Pastor Paul Lintern
9 am Sunday Worship

Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario
419-529-4345 • ontarioumc.com
Rev. J.P. Snyder
9:30 am Grace & Eggs
11 am Sunday Worship and Kingdom Kids

St. John's United Church of Christ

68 Park Avenue East, Mansfield
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Proietti • 10 am Sunday Worship
Office hours: Mon–Fri 9 am to 1 pm
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm
Clothing Ministry by appt: 419-512-9817

Southside Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

2055 Middle-Bellville Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3436
Pastor Paul Lintern
10:45 am Sunday Worship

Trinity Grace Fellowship

1592 Grace St., Mansfield
419-589-5890 • trinitygracefellowship.org
Pastor Larry Carnes
9:30 am Sunday School • 11 am Sunday School
Bible Study Mondays 2 pm

•77 years of soil and water conservation celebrated

(Continued from Page)

was planted with assistance from the City of Mansfield Parks Department and will be maintained by them.

In addition to being recognized by the District and the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), the contributions of The Ohio State University at Mansfield and Elaine were also recognized by Richland County Commissioners, Ohio Senator Mark Romanchuk, Ohio Representative Marilyn John and City of Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry.

The 72-member volunteer team was thanked for their contributions to the District with a donation of over 2,000 hours with savings to the county general fund of approximately \$69,000.

Matt Christian, Richland SWCD Director, and his staff shared the year's past accomplishments. The District hosted the Area II Envirothon in the spring for northeastern Ohio high school teams in a 17-county area, which includes Richland County. Envirothon is a high school competition held annually designed to stimulate, reinforce and enhance interest in the environment and natural resources. Students are tested on their knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology and current environmental issues. In addition, the Envirothon encourages cooperative decision-making and team building. Winners move onto the State competition and may ultimately move onto the international competition. The annual competition brought over 200 students plus their advisors to Richland County. Volunteers and donors attending the competition swelled the number of people in attendance to over 400 and donors contributed over \$11,000 to purchase competition supplies, awards, food, t-shirts, and fund future Envirothons.

Jordan Keller, Richland SWCD Technician, shared the purpose of the H2Ohio water quality program is to encourage farmers to voluntarily adopt management practices through monetary incentives to help decrease phosphorus runoff from agricultural land. As of the Annual Celebration, over 24,000 acres of farmland were enrolled in H2Ohio for the year and since then that figure has increased to 30,000 acres making it the largest number of acres enrolled since the program's inception in 2021 in Richland County.

Sam Foley and Zoe Baumberger, Richland SWCD Technicians, shared the impact of the Stormwater Management and Sediment Control Program administered on behalf of the Richland County Commissioners in unincorporated areas of Richland County and the Village of Lexington. For the year, over 1,200,000 acres were developed as a result of 350 residential and 38 commercial projects and 600 inspections were conducted.

Theresa Rozic Sutter, Marketing and Volunteer Coordinator, shared Richland SWCD partnered with Richland County Farm Bureau and the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library to provide Cultivating Minds Literacy Kits to Richland County elementary schools to foster environmental and agriculture education in K-6 grades. The kits may also be checked out through the library. She thanked the Richland County Foundation Gift of Grain and Richland County Youth and Family Council for providing grants to cover the cost of kit supplies and the Mansfield Richland County Public Library for providing books for the Freddy the Fish kit.

The celebration concluded with a demonstration by Matt and Zoe to provide a better understanding of how land use and pollution affect waterways.

Kayla Mitchell, one of this year's interns, created cornhole boards depicting different surfaces and a hole in the boards represented a stormwater drain. A variety of colored beanbags symbolized pollutants like car oil, road salt, and fertilizer. Where beanbags landed determined whether stormwater was absorbed into the soil or ran off into waterways, potentially polluting the water.

For more information on Richland SWCD services and programs, visit <https://richlandswcd.net> or call 419-747-8686.

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council looking for input on 2027-'31 plan

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council has approved a draft Five-Year State Plan on developmental disabilities. The council now seeks public feedback on the goals and objectives the council has created for 2027-'31. Additionally, the council is proposing to provide funding for 19 grant projects. Each of the proposed projects, along with goals and objectives, can be found at ddc.ohio.gov.

The council began working on the draft plan in 2024 when it published a public survey seeking input on the needs in Ohio. More than 1,000 survey responses were received from Ohioans with developmental disabilities, family members and system stakeholders. Council began evaluating the needs identified by Ohioans and developing goals and objectives to address those needs.

Now, the council seeks feedback on the plan it has created. Anyone can submit comments or feedback on the draft plan at <https://form.jotform.com/253015784369060>. The survey will be open through Dec. 31, 2025.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

Willard Bert Lind Jr., December 3
Kathryn Etta Kleilein, December 5
Peggy Ann Colvin, December 7
Blonda Elliott Gayheart, December 9
Thomas Lee Mies, December 9
Fannie Mae Duck, December 10
James A. Hellinger, December 11
Stephen John Zemka, December 11

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Buckeye Imagination Museum powers-up new electrical exhibit with FirstEnergy sponsorship

Photos and Article By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — The Buckeye Imagination Museum officially unveiled an exciting new hands-on electrical activity zone Tuesday morning during a ribbon-cutting celebration at its downtown Mansfield location.

Hosted by the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development, the event marked the launch of a new interactive exhibit made possible through a sponsorship from FirstEnergy. The new space is designed to spark curiosity and learning through glowing circuit demonstrations that light up as children make correct connections, along with a challenge area where young visitors can try on real lineman gloves and safely “work” on simulated power lines.

Ellen Heinz, President and CEO of the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development, welcomed guests and praised the partnership. “We have a great new exhibit here at Buckeye Imagination Museum,” Heinz said. “It’s very dynamic and a wonderful addition. FirstEnergy has stepped up to spark curiosity and education in a whole new way.”

Justin Ross — the new president of the Buckeye Imagination Museum — thanked FirstEnergy and community supporters for helping bring the exhibit to life.

“This is amazing. It’s going to get a lot of use here,” he said. “It’s a welcome addition to this floor and helps carry over the imaginative, hands-on experience from the lower level to the upper floor.”

FirstEnergy representative Torey Tolson shared the inspiration behind the project, recalling an early visit to the museum with her young son.

“When I came here and my son just lit up, I went back to work and said, ‘We’re going to figure this out,’” she said. “We really believe that the experiences kids have today are what connect them later on to careers like this, especially in STEM fields.”

The exhibit also highlights the work of electrical linemen, allowing children to experience firsthand how challenging and important safety equipment can be in everyday utility work. Tolson is the Community Involvement Consultant for Ohio.

Mansfield Finance Director Kelly Converse noted the exhibit’s broader impact on workforce development.

“As technical trades have gone by the wayside in favor of traditional college education, this is something that can really spark interest in our youth,” Converse said. “Electricity is something we take for granted every day, and this exhibit helps kids think about how it all works.”

Chamber leaders also encouraged families, schools and local organizations to visit the museum and consider it as a venue for parties and events, especially during the holiday season. The Buckeye Imagination Museum is located at 175 W. Third Street in Mansfield.

You're Invited to our

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 7 pm

First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Road www.MansfieldFCC.com



Photos By Jeff Hoffer

THE OHIO BIRD SANCTUARY hosted "Christmas with the Birds" on Dec. 13. Those attending could meet Santa and Mrs. Claus and visit with birds from the sanctuary.



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State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company of Texas, State Farm Lloyds, Richardson, TX

State Farm Florida Insurance Company, Winter Haven, FL



SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP in Ontario added four new full-time firefighters during a swearing-in ceremony on Dec. 1. Being added to the Springfield Township Fire Department were Cody Burden, Jonathan Smith, Reece Miller and Luke Bruce.



You're INVITED *Coming HOME*

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
Wednesday, December 24, 6 pm
Message: "Coming Home"

Ontario United Methodist Church
3540 Park Ave. West
www.ontarioumc.com





WARRIOR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL at Ontario High School volunteered to help with Crossroads Community Church's community-wide outreach to provide Christmas for over 1,200 local children in need.

Ontario recognizes Jerod Them for eleven-year school board term

The Ontario Board of Education met for its organizational and regular meeting on Dec. 9.

The board recognized Jerod Them as he concludes his eleven-year term on the school board.

Stingel Principal Kimberly Johnson, Stingel STEM teacher Mark Johnson and students gave a presentation about the things they are learning in the new STEM class.

The board approved a resolution declaring the necessity of issuing bonds and a resolution requesting fiscal officer to certify maximum maturity bonds.

The board approved employment of certificated substitute teachers for the 2025-'26 school year. Hired were Kiersten Denney, Stingel/middle school/high school; Kassie Salts, Stingel/middle school/high school; Trey Willoughby, Stingel/middle school/high school; and Katelynn Vavra, Stingel/middle school/high school.

Substitute classified staff personnel hired for the current school year include Kiersten Denney, secretary; Kooper Kilgore, custodian; Gavin Miller, custodian; and Brendan Ady, custodian.

The board approved a Memorandum of Understanding with OFT for the hiring of an additional assistant track coach due to the number of athletes signed up. The resignation of Gianna Gallo, varsity/JV cheer advisor, was accepted, effective Dec. 2.

Employment of extracurricular/supplemental staff personnel for the 2025-'26 school year was granted to Tracy Byrd, varsity basketball cheer coach, 1/4 stipend, \$445.75 and JV basketball cheer coach, 1/4 stipend, \$445.75; Samantha Ball, varsity basketball cheer coach, 1/4 stipend, \$445.75 and JV varsity basketball cheer coach, 1/4 stipend, \$445.75; Matt Dille, OHS volunteer wrestling assistant

coach, \$0; Meghan Willeke, OHS track assistant coach, \$4,675; and Jerod Them, girls seventh grade volunteer basketball coach, \$0.

Six will share four stipends for OHS track assistance coaching positions. Ethan Pensante, Kyle Ward, Jeromy Bolen, Paige VanCura, Carlos Smith and Eric Barrison will each receive \$3,116.67.

The board approved 2025-'26 Ontario Athletic Handbooks and a transportation contract with Heather Ball to provide transportation for her children.

The board approved a stipend for Kari Tarvin as a piano accompanist for \$800.

Donations were accepted from an anonymous donor for girls soccer totaling \$1,000 and Max Physicians Services LLC, \$400 for boys basketball.

Donations to Warrior Wishmakers were accepted from Nate Henderson, \$300; Minutemen Ohio Comp Managed Care Organization, \$500; Brian & Michelle Gates Insurance Agency Inc., \$500; Robin Owen, \$125; Karen Kaufman, \$50; Allysha Hoskins, \$200; Brian and Heidi Zimmerman, \$160; and anonymous donations totaling of \$1,720.

Facility usage was granted to Ontario Youth Sports (Kenn Spencer) for use of the middle school gym for basketball practice and for use of Stingel gym and multi-purpose room; Richland County Special Olympics (Sherry Minnig) for use of the middle school pool for swim practice; and Team Chitwood (Shawn Chitwood) for use of the middle school gym and commons for Marshall Arts Tournament.

Jerod Them gave a legislative liaison report and Brett Baxter and Todd Friend gave an Ontario Athletic Council Report.

The next board of education meeting will be held on Jan. 13.



Johanna Beer



Emily Cline



Abby Kaufman



Abby Snyder

Mechanics Bank announces James A. Courtney Award winners

Mechanics Bank has announced that Johanna Beer, Emily Cline, Abby Kaufman and Abby Snyder have been awarded the James A. Courtney Award. The award is presented to Mechanics employees who best exemplify the company's mission — "to pursue excellence in every possible way to enrich the lives of people and the communities we serve." The award is presented on a peer nomination basis.

Johanna Beer joined Mechanics in 2014 as a Customer Service Representative and currently serves as a Senior Accountant. She holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting from The Ohio State University and is also a Certified Treasury Professional.

Emily Cline joined Mechanics in 2005 as a Customer Service Representative and currently serves as Manager of Loan Administration. She is a graduate of the Ohio Bankers League Bank Management School and Bank Leadership Institute and serves on the United Way of Richland County Board of Directors.

Abby Kaufman joined Mechanics in 2020 as a Customer Service Specialist and currently serves as the Assistant Branch Manager at the Lexington Office.

Abby Snyder joined Mechanics in 2008 as a Customer Service Representative and currently serves as Senior Vice President, Risk and Strategic Initiatives. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Toledo. She serves on the Catalyst Life Services Board of Trustees and is a graduate of Leadership Unlimited.

The James A. Courtney Award, named for Mechanics' former President, is the company's most prestigious recognition of performance. Mechanics Bank is an independent, community bank.

The Richland County Board of Elections announces closure for holidays

The Richland County Board of Elections members voted at the October board meeting to close the board office from Wednesday, Dec. 24 through Friday, Jan. 2.

The directors will monitor their emails and phone messages during this time and will be available as needed.

Please note that no additional paid time off days were neces-

Sutter honored with Innovation in Lake Management Award

The Ohio Lake Management Society (OLMS) honored Theresa Rozic Sutter, Marketing and Volunteer Coordinator with Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD), the Innovation in Lake Management Award for 2025 in recognition of her contributions to water quality education and outreach in Richland County.

Since joining Richland SWCD in 2013, Sutter has worked to advance the district's mission to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of Richland County, with focus on the health of the county's soil and water resources.

Carter Bailey of OLMS shared, "Due to her innovative and tireless commitment working with individuals and organizations, Mrs. Sutter consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to public education, outreach, and engagement, using a variety of platforms and programs to increase awareness of water quality."

Sutter's approach to community engagement includes leading workshops, district sales, volunteer programs, and school and youth education initiatives among other efforts. Additionally, Mrs. Sutter has effectively utilized social media and community events to reach a broader audience, ensuring residents across Richland County are informed of local soil and water conservation efforts and volunteer opportunities.

Richland County is unique in that it contains eight distinct watersheds, compared to the more typical one per county. These watersheds are critical to water quality, as three flow to Lake Erie and five to the Ohio River. The county is also home to several important water bodies, including Charles Mill Lake, Clear Fork Reservoir, and Pleasant Hill Lake — all vital to environmental health and recreational activities. Mrs. Sutter's efforts embody the importance of local involvement and fostering community-driven efforts to protect and improve water quality.

To learn about Richland SWCD programs, services and volunteer opportunities visit <https://richlandswcd.net/> or call 419-747-8686.



THERESA SUTTER of Richland Soil and Water Conservation District receives the Innovation in Lake Management Award from **Carter Bailey** of the The Ohio Lake Management Society.

sary, as the staff must take vacation, personal or comp days for the non-holiday days during this period.

Normal business hours will resume Monday, Jan. 5, from 8 am to 4 pm.

The office is located at 1495 W. Longview Ave., Suite 101, Mansfield. For information call 419-774-5530.



MRS. RHODES' CULINARY FUNDAMENTALS CLASSES at Ontario High School has continued a tradition of inviting all the first grade classes over from Stingel to the high school to roll out sugar cookie dough, form the cookies with cookie cutters, bake them and frost them together. This is a fun Christmas tradition that has been at Ontario for over 20 years.

End-of-the-year bloodmobiles scheduled around Richland County

The American Red Cross urges donors to make an appointment to give blood or platelets now to keep the blood supply steady over the busy holiday season. Types O positive, O negative and B negative blood donors are especially needed now and in the coming weeks.

December is National Month of Giving, and your Red Cross blood or platelet donation can bring hope and healing. Create a new holiday tradition and help spread comfort and support lifesaving care. When the unexpected happens, it's the blood products already on the shelves that matter.

Schedule a blood or platelet donation appointment by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Those who donate by Dec. 18 will receive a \$15 Amazon Gift Card by email. Those who come to give Dec. 19, through Jan. 4 will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved t-shirt, while supplies last.

Bloodmobiles will be held:

Friday, Dec. 19, noon to 5 pm, Resurrection Parish, 2600 Lexington Ave., Lexington

Saturday, Dec. 20, 9 am to 2 pm, The Ontario Center, 2209 Richland Mall

Monday, Dec. 22, noon to 5 pm, The Ontario Center

Tuesday, Dec. 23, 11 am to 4 pm, Marvin Memorial Library, 29 W. Whitney Ave., Shelby

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 9 am to 2 pm, YMCA, 750 Scholl Rd., Mansfield; and 9 a. to 2 pm, The Ontario Center, 2209 Richland Mall

Saturday, Dec. 27, 9 am to 2 pm, The Ontario Center

Monday, Dec. 29, noon to 5 pm The Ontario Center

Wednesday, Dec. 31, 9 am to 2 pm, The Ontario Center

Scan to Subscribe FREE

Or Visit <http://eepurl.com/hnS9N9>



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL FCCLA STUDENTS toured The Columbus Blue Jackets stadium, attended a listening panel for different careers within the Blue Jackets stadium, created cards for United Way's back to school backpack stuffing event in the fall and attended the game against the Senators on Thursday, Dec. 11. The day is an annual event for Ohio FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) members.



KINDERGARTENERS in Ashley Baker's class at Ontario Stingel Elementary have been learning about Christmas around the world.



ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL celebrated Christmas Spirit Week with the themes of Monday, Flannel Day; Tuesday, White Out; Wednesday, Christmas Sweater; Thursday, Dress Your Class (freshmen, babies; sophomores, toddlers; juniors, elementary; seniors, elderly); and Friday, Christmas Jammies).

DAR offering scholarships

Various local, state and national scholarships are available through the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Each has separate requirements.

The Jared Mansfield Chapter local scholarship is open to all students, both genders, who will be attending OSU-Mansfield, NCSC or the Dwight Schar College of Nursing, Mansfield and pursuing any field of study.

The local Jared Mansfield Chapter Scholarship is open to any student currently enrolled at any of the above schools as well as high school graduating seniors. This scholarship is renewable, and the student may apply each year. Call scholarship chair Joedy Studer at 419-631-1015 for more information.

The completed application must be postmarked by April 15.

The Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution awards the "Wings of Eagles" scholarship to graduating high school seniors including those completing a certified home school program, in the amount of \$1,000 each.

Awards are based on academic excellence and financial need. All applicants must be citizens of the United States and legal residents of the State of Ohio and must attend an accredited college or university in the United States.

Visit OSDAR at ohiodar.org to obtain a scholarship application. All applicants must be sponsored by the local DAR chapter and applications must be submitted to the local chapter by Jan. 31.

The National Daughters of the American Revolution, NSDAR, also offers scholarships in many different majors. This year, DAR has announced that all students will submit their applications using an online process. The online portal can be found on the DAR public website's scholarship page. The direct link to the online application submission portal is <http://dar.academicworks.com>. Emailed or mailed applications will no longer be accepted. The deadline for these is Jan. 31.

Call Joedy Studer at 419-631-1015 for more information.



FRED COOKE'S family and friends accept an inaugural County Leader of Distinction Award on his behalf from the Ohio Farm Bureau.

Ohio Farm Bureau presents County Leader of Distinction Awards

Ohio Farm Bureau recently presented four members with the inaugural County Leader of Distinction Award. This award recognizes deserving members who have had an indelible and lasting impact on both their county Farm Bureau and local community.

The 2025 recipients are Fred Cooke (posthumous) of Richland County, Marvin Dietsch of Williams County, Steven Knollman of Hamilton County and Michele Miller (posthumous) of Ottawa County.

Fred Cooke dedicated his life to youth, agriculture and Farm Bureau. A 50-year Farm Bureau member, he served on the Richland County Farm Bureau board from 2004 through his passing in 2023, including three years as county president, and contributed to numerous membership campaigns and committee work.

He played a key role in launching the Richland County Farmers Share Breakfast, raising \$20,000 over 16 years, and was integral to

starting Farm to Plate, which was a community Farm Bureau program at the Shelby Farmers Market teaching community members to cook with fresh food. As a natural communicator, Cooke brought in more new members each year than any other board member and was widely known as "Mr. Farm Bureau," asking everyone he met, "Are you a Farm Bureau member?"

Cooke taught agricultural education at Shelby High School for 30 years, farmed and mentored many FFA and 4-H youth with their livestock projects at the Richland County Fair.

The County Leader of Distinction Awards were presented Dec. 12 at Ohio Farm Bureau's 107th Annual Meeting in Columbus.

Ohio Farm Bureau's mission is working together for Ohio farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen our communities. Learn more at ohiofarmbureau.org

Sutton Bank welcomes Moenickheim as new chief risk officer

Sutton Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Peter Moenickheim, CERP as Chief Risk Officer and Executive Vice President. With an accomplished record in enterprise risk management, fintech, Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS), and regulatory relations, Moenickheim brings deep expertise and a forward-thinking approach to Sutton Bank's executive leadership team.

Moenickheim joins Sutton Bank with a proven history of designing and leading robust risk programs for financial institutions with complex business models. He has successfully built and implemented comprehensive enterprise risk programs that support traditional community banking operations as well as institutions engaged in fintech and BaaS partnerships, demonstrating his ability to strengthen risk governance in dynamic environments.

Prior to joining Sutton Bank, Moenickheim held several leadership roles including serving as Executive Vice President of Corporate Development at Gateway First Bancorp, where his strategic insight and extensive risk knowledge led the CEO to appoint him to a role focused on deploying capital and diversifying income. In this role, Moenickheim led strategy, analytics and due diligence on bank acquisitions.

As Chief Risk Officer at Gateway First Bank, he built and executed the Enterprise Risk Framework for a community bank serving commercial clients and operating a large mortgage platform. He also introduced automated solutions that significantly reduced costs and improved quality across credit, operational risk, and information security functions.

Other notable risk and compliance roles include developing a first



line of defense program for an international bank, developing credit programs for credit card portfolios and building a risk program for an early fintech, now part of Fiserv.

In addition to his corporate leadership roles, Moenickheim is the founder of PMRisk Consulting, where he has advised banks, credit unions, payments companies, and fintechs on enterprise, credit, and operational risk. He has served as a fractional Chief Risk Officer for several institutions and supported innovative crypto-based financial products.

Moenickheim holds a B.A. in Economics from Princeton University, and his professional development includes completion of the ABA's Certified Enterprise Risk Professional (CERP) program, and the Kellogg School of Management's Negotiation Strategies program.

"We are excited to welcome Peter Moenickheim to the Sutton Bank family," said Tony Gorrell, CEO of Sutton Bank. "His depth of experience across enterprise risk, fintech, and community banking - combined with his proven leadership in building strong, scalable risk frameworks - will be valuable as we continue to grow and innovate. He brings not only technical expertise but a collaborative, strategic mindset that aligns with Sutton Bank's commitment to safety, soundness, and service."

In his new role, Moenickheim will play a key role in strengthening Sutton Bank's enterprise-wide risk management, supporting strategic initiatives, and guiding the bank's continued expansion in digital banking and fintech partnerships.

Founded in 1878, Sutton Bank is an independent, community-focused financial institution headquartered in Attica, OH. With a tradition of service, innovation and community partnership, Sutton Bank provides a full range of personal, business and agricultural banking solutions throughout north central Ohio. For more information visit www.suttonbank.com. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Football All-Ohio teams announced for 2025 season

The Division I, II, III, IV and V football All-Ohio teams have been announced by the Ohio Prep Sports Media Association.

Information used for the All-Ohio teams comes from the regular-season accomplishments and does not include playoff games. The seven districts of the OPSMA determine the all-district teams and nominate their best for the All-Ohio teams.

The OPSMA was created in 1972 to support, promote and recognize coverage of high school sports across Ohio and is endorsed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

Local athletes named All-Ohio include:

2025 Division II All-Ohio Football Teams

OPSMA Division II Ohio Offensive Player of the Year: Nathan Bernhard, Ashland

First Team Offense

QB: Nathan Bernhard, Ashland, 6-6, 240, sr.

First Team Defense

LB: Gunner Lacey, Ashland, 5-11, 200, sr.

Second Team Offense

OL: Brandon Briggs, Ashland, 6-3, 265, sr.

K: Carson O'Brien, Ashland, 6-4, 210, sr.

Third Team Offense

WR/TE: Gabe Baith, Ashland, 5-8, 160, sr.

Honorable Mention

DL: Drayston Martin, Ashland, 6-0, 240, sr.

DB: Jeff Hickey, Ashland, 6-0, 170, Jr.

2025 Division III All-Ohio Football Teams

First Team Offense

QB: Joe Caudill, Lexington, 6-4, 230, sr.

WR/TE: Brayden Fogle, Lexington, 6-4, 235, sr.

Second Team Offense

OL: Dale Morris, Ontario, 6-4, 295, sr.

Second Team Defense

DB: Seven Allen, Lexington, 5-9, 160, sr.; Guy Trader, Ontario, 5-9, 160, sr.

Third Team Offense

WR/TE: DJ Corbin, Mansfield Senior, 6-1, 205, sr.

OL: Kade Wahl, Lexington, 6-0, 240, sr.

Third Team Defense

LB: Cole Eichorn, Lexington, 5-10, 195, sr.; Gavin Miller, Ontario, 5-8, 180, jr.

Honorable Mention

RB: Kaleb Gordon, Mansfield Madison, 5-10, 150, sr.

K: Kooper Kilgore, Ontario, 5-11, 195, so.; Cohen Lautzenhiser,

Lexington, 6-0, 160, sr.

DL: Trenton Maglott, Ontario, 6-0, 215, sr.

2025 Division IV All-Ohio Football Teams

OPSMA Division IV Ohio Offensive Players of the Year: Brayden DeVito, Shelby

OPSMA Division IV Ohio Coach of the Year: Rob Mahaney, Shelby

First Team Offense

QB: Brayden DeVito, Shelby, 5-11, 175, sr.

WR/TE: Brady Bowman, Shelby, 5-9, 150, jr.

First Team Defense

DL: Carter Kessler, Shelby, 6-2, 215, sr.

LB: Sam Gwirtz, Shelby, 6-1, 180, sr.

Second Team Offense

WR/TE: Michael Shepherd, Shelby, 6-4, 200, jr.

OL: Quinton Albert, Shelby, 6-1, 250, sr.

Second Team Defense

P: Nash Evans, Bellville Clear Fork, 5-10, 165, jr.

Third Team Offense

OL: Evan Hamilton, Bellville Clear Fork, 6-4, 305, sr.

Honorable Mention

OL: Bryce Booker, Shelby, 5-11, 270, sr.

LB: Alex Schlosser, Bellville Clear Fork, 5-9, 200, jr.

DB: Devyn Oswalt, Bellville Clear Fork, 6-0, 185, sr.

2025 Division VI All-Ohio Football Teams

First Team Offense

WR/TE: Karter Goon, Ashland Crestview, 6-3, 200, sr.

Second Team Offense

OL: Montgomery Cline, Ashland Crestview, 6-0, 240, jr.

Second Team Defense

DB: Max Durbin, Ashland Crestview, 6-2, 185, sr.

P: Keith Abshire, Ashland Crestview, 6-0, 180, sr.

Honorable Mention

QB: Liam Kuhn, Ashland Crestview, 6-5, 185, sr.

2025 Division VII All-Ohio Football Teams

Second Team Offense

OL: Joey Culler, Lucas, 6-4, 244, jr.

Third Team Offense

RB: Brady Guegold, Lucas, 6-0, 190, jr.

Honorable Mention

LB: Cooper Day, Lucas, 5-11, 180, jr

DB: Tim Daley, Lucas, 6-2, 180, sr.



AT THE SHELBY CITY COUNCIL meeting on Monday, Dec. 15, Mayor Steven Schag, issued a special proclamation to honor the Shelby Whippets football team for their historic season that culminated in their first-ever state championship appearance, where they finished as Division IV State Runners-Up.

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO VS GALION VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL · DEC. 11
WARRIORS WIN 62-53 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO VS GALION JUNIOR VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL • DEC. 11
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO AT MADISON VARSITY WRESTLING • DEC. 12



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO WRESTLING AT THE KILTED CLASSIC · HIGHLAND · DEC. 13

**Ontario High School Results****Kilted Classic at Highland**

Turnbaugh: Champion

Miller: Champion

Maglott: Runner-Up

Unger: Fourth

Robertson & Rhinehart: Seventh

At the Clyde Girls Tournament

Lilly Gray: Runner-Up

Raelynn Amerine: Fourth



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

Boys basketball season heating up in Richland County

By Kris Leiter

As you know, old man winter has been causing havoc this past week here in the Mansfield area. It's nice to know that things are always warm in the "Furnace" — the Mansfield Christian Flames' gymnasium.

The Flames are starting out the 2025-'26 season in fine fashion. Even with the absence of phenom Davion Mack, who made a huge impact in the line-up last year as a sophomore, the Flames have a stout lineup coming into the hardwood season.

The Flames never seem to disappoint! As they traveled just down the road they brought the heat into St. Peter's Spartans territory. They have been HOT by recently nipping the Mid-Buckeye Conference foe with a nail-biting score of 49-47!

What a game! Both teams were within one-point after the first quarter, the Spartans leading 11-10. The second quarter, the Flames returned the favor by edging the Spartans 16-14 and by halftime, the score was a slim margin of 26-25 with the Flames leading.

In the third quarter, the Flames turned on the afterburners and sizzled the scoreboard with a third quarter tally of 14-6, putting the score at 40-30! The Flames held their own with a comfortable 10-point lead.

Basketball can be a game of quick dynamics and during the fourth quarter, the Spartans would not be taken lightly as they would out-score the Flames 16-9! The Flames would hold them just enough to keep them at bay and end the game with a final of 49-47!

The Flames seem to be holding their own in third place of the

MBC at 1-1, 2-1 overall putting them in middle of the pack.

They are slotting in just below the mighty Bulldogs of Crestline who are 2-2 overall, and 1-1 in the MBC.

The current leader in the MBC is the Central Christian Comets. The Comets are on fire with a steaming record of 3-1 overall and 1-1 in the MBC.

Flames head coach Cary Craner has had nice runs into the post-season in recent years and are off to a great start again this year.

The Ontario Warriors and third-year coach Jerry Moten have been blazing a trail on the Reservation with a daunting overall record of 4-0, 2-0 in the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference and are tied for first place with the River Valley Vikings over in Marion County.

They took the win over friendly foe the Crestview Cougars back in late November, 63-57.

Times have changed from the 2023-'24 season, as the Cougars gave the Warriors some challenging games over the past two years. The Cougars defeated the Warriors by 105-94 in an incredible high-scoring game in Cougar Country in 2023.

This year, the Warriors got redemption by turning the table and handing the cougars the loss of 63-57 on the road at Crestview.

The remaining victories came from defeating Clear Fork on the road on Dec 5, 61-55

The Ontario Warriors followed with another win over Norwalk at home on Dec. 6, 64-52. The most recent victory comes from handily taking down the Galion Tigers in Ontario on Dec. 11, 62-53.

ONTARIO WARRIORS AND GALION WRESTLING • DEC. 9



Ohio Goes to the Movies reveals calendar of events

Ohio Goes to the Movies, an America 250 Ohio Signature Event, has released its calendar of 2026 film screenings at OhioGoesToTheMovies.org.

Ohio Goes to the Movies is a statewide cinematic celebration that kicks off on Feb. 11, delivering more than 250 free movie events hosted by local venues in all 88 counties through October as part of Ohio's official commemoration of America's 250th anniversary.

This first ever initiative showcases Ohio's long-standing influence on American film, its nationally recognized actors and directors and the iconic movies filmed across the state.

Ohio has produced some of the most distinguished talent in Hollywood history, including Halle Berry of Cleveland, Paul Newman of Shaker Heights, Doris Day of Cincinnati, John Lithgow of Akron, Clark Gable of Cadiz, the Russo Brothers of Cleveland and Sarah Jessica Parker of Nelsonville. Their contributions have shaped American cinema for decades and underscore the creative strength rooted in Ohio communities.

The 2026 series also recognizes many of the most popular films made in Ohio.

Screenings across the state will feature films such as *The Shawshank Redemption* filmed in Mansfield and Upper Sandusky, *A Christmas Story* filmed in Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood, *The Avengers* shot in

downtown Cleveland and *Rain Man* filmed throughout Cincinnati. These films and others serve as anchor titles for the statewide series, drawing audiences who want to experience Ohio's storytelling legacy on the big screen.

"Ohio has played a significant role in the history of American film and continues to attract talent, productions and storytelling that resonate around the world," said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. "Ohio Goes to the Movies ensures that residents in every community can participate in the America 250 celebration and rediscover the films that connect us."

Molly Kreuzman, program director for Ohio Goes to the Movies, said the initiative reflects the state's creative depth and community pride. "This celebration honors Ohio's filmmakers, in front of and behind the camera, and the towns and cities that brought some of America's most beloved stories to life. By offering more than 250 free events across all 88 counties, we are making the America 250 celebration accessible and meaningful for every Ohioan."

Local showing will include:

March 1, Cinemark Ontario Towne Center, *The Shawshank Redemption*

March 13, Marvin Memorial Library, Shelby, *Fighting the Sky*

March 18, The Ashland Theatre, *Major League*

Sept. 11, Mansfield/Richland County Public Library, *Air Force One*

May 20, The Ohio Theatre - Loudonville, *Hairspray*

Oct. 1, Renaissance Theatre, Mansfield, *Silence of the Lambs*

Oct. 4, Hayesville Opera House, Ashland, *Summer Catch*

Oct. 10, Malabar Farm, *Key Largo*

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL

Notice of Intent for the Village of Lexington to sell certain designated skate park equipment through GovDeals. See GovDeals for further details of future sale of said equipment.

Brenda Barton
Clerk of Council
Village of Lexington, OH
(T-C 12-11, 18 '25) 9L

Balderson and Cotton introduce bill to stop frivolous lawsuits blocking American energy projects

Congressman Troy Balderson (OH-12) introduced legislation to streamline America's energy projects by ensuring a project can move forward without being trapped in perpetual legal battles. The Curtailing Litigation Excess and Abuse Reform Act of 2025 (CLEAR Act) eliminates excessive litigation against energy projects while maintaining stringent environmental standards.

Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

"Activist groups have long weaponized our legal system to attack promising energy projects, filing lawsuit after lawsuit to grind progress to a halt. The CLEAR Act puts an end to this serial litigation," said Congressman Balderson. "To unleash American energy, lower costs, and strengthen our energy security, we must restore predictability and common sense to our permitting system."

"Cutting-edge American energy infrastructure is critical for everything from lowering energy costs to winning the AI race," said Senator Cotton. "Unfortunately, these projects often get delayed by frivolous litigation. My bill will end this nonsense and streamline the process to restore American energy dominance."

The CLEAR Act would:

- Ensure that once a court has ruled on an energy project, opponents can't drag it back into court repeatedly
- Prevent activist groups from filing serial lawsuits to block projects they oppose ideologically, while still preserving legitimate avenues for oversight and enforcement
- Enable critical energy infrastructure to be built faster by limiting costly delays. Create certainty for investors and communities
- Maintain exceptions for certain lawsuits after a project is running
- Support America's energy independence, grid reliability, and access to critical minerals needed for modern technology



MANSFIELD SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA held its holiday concert at The Renaissance Theater under the direction of Stephen Domka. Ontario students selected for this prestigious symphonic band include front, Eliana Fittante and Maja Seibel; and back, Director Stephen Domka, Madeline Saltzgiver, Bryant Born, Myles Born, Jake DuChene and Elton Toska.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

**First Federal
Bank of Ohio**

THE RIGHT LOAN. THE RIGHT BANK.

1728 W. Fourth Street
Mansfield, Ohio 44906
Phone: 419-529-4687
Fax: 419-529-4154

landerson@firstfederalbankofohio.bank



Lisa Anderson
NMLS 618735

Branch Manager - Loan Officer