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04.30.26



Walk for Life aims to unite community in support of life

The 2026 Walk for Life will take place on Saturday, June 6, at 10 am at, North Lake Park, Hope Rd., in Mansfield,, bringing together individuals, families, churches and community organizations to peacefully and publicly affirm the value of human life at every stage.

Organized by Richland Pregnancy Services, the Walk for Life is expected to draw hundreds of participants from across the region. The event will include a prayer gathering and a family-friendly walk through North Lake Park, with prizes, gifts, and games for all participants

"This year's Walk for Life theme is based on "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:16.

RPS believes in supporting mothers, fathers, and children with love, resources and real solutions. Proceeds and donations from the 2026 Walk for Life will benefit Richland Pregnancy Services, helping provide services such as pregnancy support, parenting education, material assistance and counseling.

Participants of all ages are welcome. Walkers are encouraged to form teams and collect pledges to support the cause. Registration information is available at <https://friendsofrichlandpregnancy.com/events/walkforlife/>, and same-day registration will begin at 9 am.

Richland Public Health, City of Mansfield celebrate King Street Park improvements with ribbon cutting

Photos and Article
By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — A neighborhood park once marked by broken equipment and limited usability is now a revitalized community space, thanks to a collaborative effort between Richland Public Health and the City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department.

Community leaders, partners and residents gathered at King Street Park for an official ribbon cutting, celebrating a series of improvements designed to make the space more accessible, inclusive and welcoming for all.

"We are so excited and so proud to be here," said Dr. Julie Chaya, health commissioner at Richland Public Health. "We are very passionate about making sure that our local parks and spaces throughout the community are accessible and inclusive to all."

The project was made possible through a combination of

grant funding, private donations and city investment, highlighting what officials described as a strong example of community collaboration.

The project was supported in part by remaining federal ARPA funds, alongside contributions from Richland Public Health.

Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry reflected on the park's condition early in her administration, recalling a visit that revealed deeper issues beyond what was visible from the road.

"It's important to not just drive by—you have to get out," Perry said. "The swings were broken, the playground was broken, and the basketball court was completely grassed over."

Recognizing that the park sits within walking distance of many residents, city officials saw an opportunity—and a responsibility—to invest in the space.

"They needed better facilities, quite frankly. They deserved better facilities," Perry said.

Since then, the park has undergone significant upgrades, including improvements to walking paths, playground equipment and a newly restored basketball court. City officials also credited in-house engineering efforts for helping maximize resources and stretch available funding further.

Richland Public Health has played a key role not only in the King Street Park project but in park improvements across the city, supporting initiatives that connect public health with outdoor recreation.

"Richland Public Health has really been at the heart of all of these efforts in our parks," Perry said.

In addition to physical upgrades, the partnership has introduced new health-focused features, including tick-check stations placed at parks and trailheads throughout Richland County. These stations provide

(Continued on Page 10)

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LOST IN A BOOK



A Book Review
By Amanda Belczak



The Night We Lost Him by Laura Dave started off strong but got a little slow towards the end.

Laura Dave writes some good mysteries where secrets, long buried, are bound to be discovered.

In this story the wealthy and successful father is found dead after he fell over a cliff. His adult children put their lives on hold to search for answers.

This story hooked me in the beginning, but by the end, I didn't feel very invested in the characters. I struggled with their choices, but still enjoyed the mystery revealed at the end.

My rating: ★★☆☆

Follow my blog at amanda-belczak.com

Richland County resident passes bar examination

The Supreme Court of Ohio has released the results of the February Ohio Bar Examination.

Haley Chester, a Richland County resident, has successfully passed the assessment. A total of 338 aspiring attorneys took the statewide examination.

This achievement represents a substantial milestone in their professional development as they prepare to enter the legal field and serve their communities.

Applicants who meet all admission requirements will be sworn in as attorneys during a special session of the Supreme Court of Ohio.

The Bar Admissions ceremony is scheduled for Monday, May 18 at 2 pm at the Palace Theatre in Columbus. To accommodate public viewing, the ceremony will be live streamed on the Supreme Court website.

The Supreme Court of Ohio administers the bar examination twice a year.

The Court retains exclusive authority over the regulation of the practice of law in Ohio, which encompasses the admission of new attorneys, the biennial registration of active attorneys, the administration of continuing legal education, and the discipline of attorneys in cases of professional misconduct.

The Supreme Court of Ohio is the highest court in the state, serving as the court of last resort on questions of Ohio law and the state constitution.

The Court is dedicated to ensuring equal justice under the law, overseeing the state's judicial system, and regulating the legal profession to maintain the highest standards of integrity and public service.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Tribune-Courier readers:

There is much misinformation circulating this election season regarding a proposed data center near the Mansfield Airport, and also the referendum concerning industrial solar fields and wind farms.

First, let me clearly state that I do not, and have never, supported the recent EnergiAcres data center proposal. I had a number of one-on-one conversations with Shawn Cutter, the founder and CEO of EnergiAcres. I walked away with the firm opinion that the proposal is not right for our community.

However, a Facebook post falsely indicated that I favored the project. The individual who posted this, intentionally took excerpts from an unrelated May 29, 2025, Richland Source article in which I approved a water line extension in Mansfield, and attached it to the end of a Source article about the data center.

The person who did this hides behind the anonymity of Facebook in an effort to impact my current campaign for re-election as Richland County Commissioner. It was a deliberate and malicious act, one that was recognized by Richland Source itself, last week.

Secondly, I'd like to give a clear perspective on the industrial solar and wind farm referendum.

When the Ohio legislature pushed the determination of industrial solar and wind farm approvals to the counties, Richland County Township Trustees were quick to give their opinions of these zoning restrictions.

Eleven of the 18 townships voted to restrict them, while seven gave the green light to them. Remember, the issue only affects the UNINCORPORATED areas of Richland County, so the cities, towns and villages are free to allow them.

So when it came time for the commissioners to decide what to do, we had only two options: 1) support the local decisions of the townships by those elected officials (the trustees) or 2) basically shove unrestricted wind and solar down their throats whether they favored it or not. It was an easy decision for us, and we passed a resolution supporting the township trustees. We don't believe Richland County is a one-size-fits-all county.

I am asking residents to vote yes to show that here in Richland County we respect the will of the local communities.

Large solar and wind lobbying groups have spent \$417,000 to buy Richland County votes and prevent local decision making. These groups are from New York City, Dallas, TX and Columbus, OH

As always, I welcome the opportunity to discuss these and any other concerns Richland County residents have on their minds.

Cliff Mears
Richland County Commissioner



MR. NIKIFOROW'S CCP Environment and Society class at Ontario High School planted trees in honor of Earth Day.

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News Briefs

The City of Ontario's 2026 Concerts in the Park will be held at the band shell in Marshall Park at 6 pm.

Concerts are scheduled for June 9, Canyon Echoes; June 26, I Told You; July 7, Conne; July 21, Oolong Gurus; Aug. 11, Soul Town; and Aug. 25, Red Ball Jets.

This event is free to attend. Lawn chairs and blankets are encouraged.

★

A special meeting of the Ontario Board of Education will be held in the Ontario High School Library, 467 Shelby-Ontario Rd., Ontario, on Tuesday, May 5, at 6:30 pm.

The meeting will be to discuss the development of tax policy with Rockmill Financial.

★

The National Day of Prayer will be celebrated on May 7 with a parade in Mansfield.

The event, sponsored by Godsfeld, will line-up at Penn Avenue beginning at 5 pm. The parade will start at 6 pm.

A service will be held in South Park, 100 Brinkerhoff Ave., at 7 pm. There will be a time of public worship and prayer and ministry. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/100-brinkerhoff-ave-mansfield-oh-44906-3238-united-states/national-day-of-prayer-parade/167706599331490> for more information on the event or to sign-up for parade participation.

Some churches will be bringing bagged meals and hygiene products to pass out to those at the park.

★

Ontario UMC, 3540 Park Ave West, Ontario, will host exercise/walking led by an instructor for various age groups every Thursday at 10 am. This is open to the community at no charge. This will include chair yoga, dance exercise, resistance bands and walking.

★

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am at Der Dutchman, Rt. 97, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will be May 20, and will include chicken. This is the LASC's 52nd anniversary. Jane Horton will be the guest.

The group will also meet for lunch on May 6 at 11 am at O'Charley's in Ontario.

For information visit the Facebook page at Lexington Area Senior Citizens (LASC). Dues are \$10 per year.

★

The Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. will host a free Senior Spring Extravaganza on Friday, May 29, from 10 am to 2 pm, at the Mid-Ohio Education Center, 890 W. 4th St., Mansfield.

The Mardi Gras-style event will be focused on healthy and positive aging. Guests will enjoy resources and information on aging-related topics, along with a free lunch, BINGO, an on-site classic car show, music by Randy Velez and a variety of community vendors.

Register for the car show by calling 567-247-6458. Registration is not required to at-

tend the event. For more information call 419-524-4144 or follow www.facebook.com/aaa5ohio. Sponsorships are available by visiting www.aaa5ohio.org

★

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Joan Richmond on Sunday, May 3, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "Where Do We Go From Here?" For information visit www.allsoulsuohio.org.

★

Due to storm line repairs, it is necessary to close the intersection of W. 1st Street and S. Walnut Street, in the City of Mansfield.

The intersection will be closed and construction signs will be posted through Friday, May 1. Traffic is advised to plan an alternate route to avoid possible delays. No traffic will be permitted to pass through.

★

Due to sanitary main repairs, Arthur Avenue from W. 1st Street to Spruce Street in the City of Mansfield will be closed and construction signs will be posted through Friday, May 1. No traffic will be permitted to pass through.

★

SR 97 closed on Monday, April 27 for two consecutive culvert replacements. Once culvert is located just north of Vanderbilt Road, and the second culvert is located south of Vanderbilt Road. The detour route is SR 97 east to SR 13 south in Bellville to SR 546 north to SR 97 in Lexington and reverse. The estimated completion is Friday, May 1.

★

The 5th Annual SPT Charity Golf Outing will be held Friday, May 15, at Twin Lakes Golf Course, 2220 Marion Avenue Rd., Mansfield.

The event will benefit GraceHaven Youth for Christ and will include breakfast, dinner,

beverage, snacks, golf, cart and prizes.

Arrival begins at 8 am with a cannon start at 9 am. Cost is \$340 per team (\$85 per golfer). The registration deadline is Friday, May 1. To register visit <https://files.constantcontact.com/5fc06ec5201/4231d24e-872b-4b87-b374-775ffd521a0a.pdf?rdr=true>

For information contact SPT at 419-834-8366 or aaron@sptohio.com.

Jesse Halfhill named to All-Ohio Academic First Team

A new class of Ohio community college academic all-stars is being celebrated as part of Community College Month.

The 52 students chosen for the 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team have been recognized for their excellence in academics, leadership, and community service. College faculty, staff and other campus leaders nominated these top-performing students, who come from all parts of the state.

Jesse Halfhill, North Central State College, Lexington High School, is a member of the First Team 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team.

"Members of the 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team are the best and brightest this state has to offer, and they are driving this transformation," Zaffini said. "Their success in the classroom and their potential for their chosen careers shows the value of Ohio's community colleges in developing a well-educated, motivated workforce that will drive our state's economy for decades to come."

The All-Ohio Academic Team program is a collaboration among OACC, the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and event sponsors Honda, KeyBank, and Franklin University.

First-team honorees will receive \$1,000 scholarships meant to help the honorees transfer to universities to complete their bachelor's degrees.



Re-Elect
Cliff Mears
RICHLAND COUNTY
COMMISSIONER

In the May 5th Republican Primary Election

The conservative candidate endorsed by the

Richland County Republican Party

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Local teachers can apply for classroom grants through foundation

Local educators are invited to submit applications to receive grants from the Richland County Foundation.

A committee of community volunteers awards education grants for creative and innovative supplemental programs not covered by school funding. The grants are given to K-12 teachers in public or private Richland County schools to encourage them to develop new programs for their classrooms.

The committee will prioritize requests which emphasize atten-

dance, literacy, mathematics and/or career advising.

Items not eligible for funding include awards and incentives, seating and furniture, storage containers and rugs, substitute teacher costs and hysical technology items (cameras, printers, tablets, etc.)

The applications are available at richlandcountyfoundation.org, go to the Nonprofit Organizations tab, select Grant Opportunities. The deadline is Friday, May 1. For additional information contact Community Investment Officer Bobby Rhea at brhea@rcfoundation.org or 419-525-3020.

Church Directory

All Souls Unitarian Universalist

25 Church St., Bellville
419-886-3497 • www.allsoulsuohio.org
10:30 am Service and Sunday School
Adult RE Book Club (quarterly)

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 am Monday Morning Bible Study

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.

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

2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
(At Hope Lutheran Next to Drug Mart)
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
contact@stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Proietti • 11 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

Trinity Grace Fellowship

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

G & M Body & Paint Shop

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

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A PREVIOUS RCF GRANT funded the STEMtastic Learning program at Lexington's Western Elementary School.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

- Patrick "Pat" Dennis Burns, April 15
- Robert Eugene Hughes, April 18
- Else Klein, April 21
- Daniel Stark McLarnan, April 21
- Angela Lynn Ruckman, April 21
- Sandra "Sandy" E. Whitaker, April 21
- Arta Brooks Cox, April 22
- Janet Marie Krichbaum, April 22

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www.wappner.com

Main library to open new creation and learning labs

The Mansfield Richland County Public Library (MRCPL) will officially host a ribbon cutting and grand opening on Tuesday, May 5 at 11 am for the new Creation Lab and newly constructed Learning Lab at the main library.

The new Creation Lab is a do-it-yourself creative learning center offering innovative tools and technology for customer use, including 3D printers, 3D pens, a Cricut® machine, an embroidery machine, and more. While the Creation Lab is a DIY space, knowledgeable staff will help bring design ideas to life and train customers to work independently on future projects.

The new Learning Lab features natural lighting, ample space, updated technology, and will continue to serve as the hub for the Library's technology classes.

"We are excited to open this brand new creative space to the community," said Library Director Chris May. "The completion of this project aligns with our strategic plan to update library spaces by exploring ways to repurpose existing library spaces. It also supports our mission to provide innovative, relevant experiences for all ages to experience new technology as they imagine and create."

Both spaces are located at the main library, 43 W. Third St., Mansfield. The Learning Lab will be open during regular library hours Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 8 pm; Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm.; and Sunday from 1-5 pm.

The Creation Lab will initially be open Monday and Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm; Tuesday 10 am to 7 pm; closed on Sundays. For questions about these new spaces, call the Learning Lab at 419-521-3146 or visit mrcpl.org.



Heating assistance available to Ohioans through HEAP program

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. want to remind older Ohioans that assistance is available to help with their 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.

Applied directly to the customer's utility or bulk fuel bill, the benefit can help manage heating costs. Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and completing their HEAP application. They may also visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to apply online or to download a copy of the application.

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 an individual's energy bill after Jan. 1, 2026. Applications for the HEAP program must be received by May 31, 2026.

For more information or assistance with applying for a HEAP benefit, contact the Area Agency on Aging office at 419-524-4144 or 800-860-5799. To be connected to your local Energy Assistance Provider, call (800) 282-0880 (hearing impaired clients may dial 711 for assistance) or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov.

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

2026 Walk To End Alzheimer's NCO/Mansfield

SAVE THE DATE - NEW LOCATION at the Mansfield Speedway Saturday September 19

SCAN ME!

alz.org/walk

Mansfield Speedway: 400 Crall Rd E, Mansfield

Event Details : Check in 9:00 am | Ceremony 10 am / Walk at 10:20 am



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goldberryroasting.com

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126 East Main Street,
W 2nd St Rear, Ashland

4th Street Coffee House
1996 W 4th St, Ontario

Pump and Grind
586 Park Avenue East,
OH-430, Mansfield

How Ya Brewin'?
Mobile Coffee Trailer
Bellville | 419-210-3737

Fresh Grounds Coffee House
1621 W 4th St, Ontario

Brew'd Coffee & Donuts
7 Main St, Hayesville

Bubble Bean And Sweets
44 East Main St., Shelby

The Pickwick Place Cafe and Market
1875 North Sandusky Avenue, Bucyrus

Revive Coffee Bar
1201 Mill Rd, Bellville
revivecoffeebar.com

Marando's Cafe
marandoscafe.com
@marandoscafe
330-347-7058

The Cafe at Arbor Creek
Gardens and Floral
3052 Mabee Rd, Ontario

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Pronto Pizza and Coffee
914 Ashland Rd, Mansfield
(419) 589-7777

Advertise Your Business Here



Senior Spring Extravaganza will celebrate Older Americans Month

The Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. will host a free Senior Spring Extravaganza on Friday, May 29, from 10 am to 2 pm, at the Mid-Ohio Education Center 890 W. 4th St., Mansfield.

In partnership with the Administration for Community Living, this year's Older Americans Month theme is Champion Your Health! This event is made possible through the generous sponsorship of our Elite Sponsors, Mechanics Bank and Richland Public Health, in addition to many other sponsors, community-based organizations, and vendors that will be participating in the event.

We are excited to celebrate older adults with a festive Mardi Gras-style event focused on healthy and positive aging. Guests will enjoy helpful resources and information on aging-related topics, along with a free lunch, BINGO, an on-site classic car show, music by Randy Velez, and a variety of community vendors to keep your feet moving while celebrating health and wellness.

Sponsorships and vendor booths are available but must register. To become a sponsor or vendor, please visit www.aaa5ohio.org/events/senior-spring-extravaganza/

Car show slots are available. Register by calling 567-247-6458.

Registration is not required to attend the event. No early birds, please. For more information, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 567-247-6458. Follow our Facebook page to keep up to date on upcoming events at www.facebook.com/aaa5ohio.

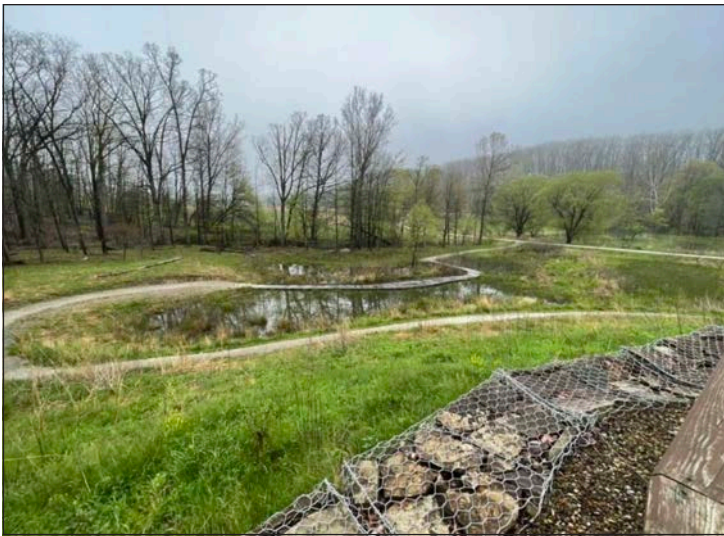


Photo by Damon Callis

Day Trippin' With Damon – Watershed Stewardship Center is located in the West Creek Reservation, 2277 West Ridgewood Dr., Parma, and is the first facility in Cleveland Metroparks dedicated to scientific research and promoting sustainable action. Science-based programs invite teachers, students, professionals and the public to learn about replicable stormwater management methods. For information visit www.clevelandmetroparks.com.



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First-of-Its-Kind in Ohio: Silver Birch of Mansfield welcomes first resident, expands access to affordable senior living

Photos and Article By Traci Little

MANSFIELD — A historic milestone unfolded in Richland County this week as Silver Birch Living of Mansfield officially welcomed its very first resident—marking not only a new beginning for one individual, but a groundbreaking moment for senior care across Ohio.

Right here in Mansfield, a first-of-its-kind senior living community in Ohio is set to open its doors, bringing a new level of access, affordability and care to local families.

As the state’s first 100 percent Medicaid-certified assisted living community, the Mansfield location is redefining what access to care can look like — offering 120 affordable apartments for seniors who have often been told they don’t qualify for traditional assisted living options. The community is designed to be affordable for all residents, whether paying privately or through the Medicaid program.

That mission became a reality Friday as Charles Risner moved into his new apartment, becoming the first resident not only in Mansfield, but in a model that leaders hope will expand across the state.

“Yesterday we moved Papa (Charles Risner) into his new apartment at Silver Birch,” shared Kimberly Miller. “He made history as the first resident to move into this brand new building in Mansfield, but also the first ever in Ohio. This place is absolutely gorgeous, and the care team is amazing.”

The moment was both personal and symbolic—celebrating not just a move-in day, but a shift in how assisted living can serve individuals regardless of income.

Silver Birch of Mansfield was designed with a specific mission: to serve seniors who need daily support but have historically found assisted living financially out of reach. It’s helping redefine what affordable assisted living looks like for our local families!

“This community was created to address a massive gap in care right here in Richland County,” said Robin Pecak, vice president of sales and marketing for Silver Birch. “There are thousands of seniors in what we call the ‘missing middle’ — individuals who need assistance but cannot afford traditional private-pay facilities.”

For years, that gap has left families facing difficult decisions — balancing safety, independence and cost when caring for aging loved ones.

Pecak said State Sen. Mark Romanchuk played a key role in bringing the project to Mansfield, working alongside state agencies, Medicaid partners and housing officials to secure funding, approvals and sustainable reimbursement structures.

Recently, city leaders had the opportunity to tour the facility ahead of its official opening, getting a firsthand look at what the new development will offer.

“We had a chance to see inside the new Silver Birch of Mansfield facility on Cline Avenue,” said Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry. “This is a state-of-the-art assisted living complex, and the first one in the state for Silver Birch. Residents will soon begin moving in.”

Perry noted the community includes studio and one-bedroom units, along with a full calendar of activities designed to keep residents engaged.

“They have 120 units in total. Many are already reserved, but they still have more available,” she said. “There will be a grand opening later this year, but it was awesome to see the work that has been done.”

For many Ohio families, the introduction of affordable assisted living brings a new level of relief and possibility.

Rather than relocating far from home or delaying needed care, seniors can now remain in their community — close to family, friends and familiar surroundings — while receiving the support they need.

“It means bridging the gap between independence and skilled nursing,” said Bobby Folden, executive director of Silver Birch of Mansfield. “It means delivering dignity, choice and stability to a rapidly growing aging population.”

Silver Birch operates through a collaborative model with the Ohio Department of Aging and other state and federal programs, making it one of the first purpose-built public-private partnerships of its kind in Ohio.

The community has also built strong relationships with local healthcare providers, including OhioHealth, ViaQuest and the Area Agency on Aging, along with home health, rehabilitation and hospice partners.

For many families, that partnership becomes essential when navigating how to access care. The Area Agency on Aging plays a key role in the process, helping determine eligibility for services through in-person assessments that evaluate an individual’s daily living needs.

Those who qualify may be eligible for Medicaid waiver support, allowing them to receive care in an assisted living setting rather than a traditional nursing facility. In addition to expanding access, this model generates significant savings for the state’s Medicaid program when compared to traditional nursing facility costs.

“We know this process can feel overwhelming,” Folden said. “That’s why we have a dedicated team member who helps guide

(Continued on Page 9)



•First-of-Its-Kind in Ohio: Silver Birch of Mansfield welcomes first resident, expands access to affordable senior living

(Continued from Page 8)

families through applications, documentation and Medicaid eligibility, so they're not trying to figure it out alone."

In many cases, individuals living on fixed incomes, including Social Security, may still qualify through income-based housing guidelines set by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency.

More Than Care: Creating Community

While affordability and access are central to the mission, the experience inside Silver Birch is designed to go beyond basic care.

Residents can expect restaurant-style dining, wellness programs, fitness opportunities and a full calendar of activities centered on connection and engagement.

At the heart of it all is the organization's mission: inspiring purposeful lives for all.

For Folden, that mission is deeply personal.

"I didn't find healthcare—healthcare found me," he said. "I found something that I absolutely love, and coming to work each day means something different. Watching the smiles on the faces of those we serve and hearing the laughter through the hallways is the reason I continue doing what I do. I truly feel that I found my calling."

Signature programs are designed to engage residents mentally, physically and socially, creating experiences that go beyond routine care.

"These programs create moments residents look forward to and remember," Folden said.

Building Something New in Mansfield

Bringing the community to life has been both a challenge and a milestone.

As the first assisted living community in Ohio fully licensed to serve both Medicaid and private-pay residents in this model, the project required close collaboration with multiple state agencies.

"The past year has been exhilarating and rewarding," Pecak said. "It's been an honor to make such a positive impact—not only in Mansfield, but across the state."

Touches of Mansfield

Designed with comfort, dignity and community in mind, Silver Birch of Mansfield offers more than just housing. Residents have access to private apartment-style living spaces alongside a wide range of shared amenities that encourage connection and engagement. Inside the community, residents will find a welcoming dining room with daily meals, a movie theater, game and activity rooms, puzzle and hobby spaces, and comfortable lounges throughout the building. A fitness area, on-site salon, and dedicated laundry services further support daily living, while outdoor walking paths, a pond, and gathering spaces provide opportunities to enjoy time outside.

Adding a unique local touch, the interior is thoughtfully decorat-

ed with images and elements reflecting Mansfield's history—helping residents feel connected not only to their home, but to the community around them.

Support services are equally central to the model. The community provides 24-hour staff, assistance with daily living activities, medication support, housekeeping, transportation and wellness monitoring — allowing residents to maintain independence while receiving the care they need.

Looking Ahead

In its first year, Silver Birch hopes to reach full occupancy, serving up to 120 seniors and their families in Richland County.

Mansfield is expected to serve as a model for future expansion, with additional communities already planned in Bedford Heights, Amherst, Canton, Cuyahoga Falls, Columbus and Mason.

For Folden, success will ultimately be measured in something simpler.

"We want people to walk in and feel like this is home," Folden said. "A place where they belong, where they're supported, and where they can continue living a meaningful life. We believe a person's care and quality of life shouldn't depend on their bank account."

Those interested in learning more or exploring Silver Birch of Mansfield as their future home are encouraged to call 419-517-2460 or stop by 300 Cline Avenue for a visit.



•RPH, Mansfield celebrate King Street Park improvements

(Continued from Front Page)
tools and guidance to help residents protect themselves and their pets from tick-borne illnesses such as Lyme disease.

“Ticks are becoming more prevalent in our community, and we want to make sure that if those bugs are biting, they’re not spreading disease,” Chaya said, noting that collected specimens may also be tracked and tested to monitor local health trends.

City officials emphasized that

maintaining the park’s improvements will be a priority moving forward, with Parks Director Mike Woogerd helping to ensure the space remains a safe and inviting place for neighborhood families.

The project reflects a broader vision to enhance quality of life through accessible outdoor spaces — particularly in neighborhoods where such investments can have the greatest impact.

Officials emphasized that

parcs play a critical role in promoting physical activity, wellness and overall community health.

“It’s really a story of a community working together,” Perry said.

King Street Park stands as a visible reminder of what collaboration can accomplish—transforming a once-overlooked space into a vibrant hub for recreation, connection and community well-being.



Photos By Traci Little

Local officials recognize National Work Zone Awareness Week

Construction season is ramping up in northeast Ohio, and today officials from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Ohio Laborers Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET), Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC), Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) and Kokosing Construction partnered to recognize National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW).

This annual spring campaign started in 2000 and is held every April to encourage safe driving through highway work zones. This year’s theme is ‘Safe actions, save lives.’

The backdrop for the event was the I-90 work zone in Lorain County between the Ohio Turnpike and SR 611 where work is underway by Kokosing Construction.

According to the OSHP, there were 4,435 work zone crashes in Ohio in 2025, and 34 percent of these crashes occurred with workers present. Sadly, 21 people were killed in 17 deadly work zone crashes. Another 96 work zone crashes resulted in serious injuries.

“After a three-year decline of work zone crashes in Ohio from 2022 to 2024, 2025 saw an increase,” said ODOT District Three Deputy Director, Bob Weaver. “Drivers must stay alert, follow the posted speed limit, and avoid distractions to help reduce crashes and save lives in 2026.”

Speeding and following too closely continue to be the top factors in work zone crashes, which is one of the many reasons member safety is a top priority for Ohio LECET. In 2025, Troopers from the OSHP wrote 7,019 citations for speeding in work zones with 36% for speeds more than 20 miles per hour above the posted speed limit.

“Work zone safety is a shared responsibility. It’s important that drivers realize that our members are real people working to support their families,” said Bethany Billi, Executive Director of Ohio LECET. “Our members show up in the elements to improve the roadways everyone uses, and it’s vital that motorists approach work zones ready to slow down and adhere to signage.”

Work zones can include anything from miles of orange barrels or concrete barriers to temporary lane closures or a single vehicle on the side of the road making a repair. Traffic patterns change, construction vehicles are moving in and out, and speed limits are reduced.

Ohio Turnpike’s Deputy Executive Director and Chief Engineer, Chris Matta shared, “If you practice safe driving behaviors on the Ohio Turnpike and elsewhere, you won’t get pulled over by our friends at the Ohio State Highway Patrol. And more importantly, you won’t become a statistic on a traffic crash summary report.”

On Feb. 28, 2026, a vehicle drove onto a closed section of I-70 in downtown Columbus and struck Jordan Thomas, an employee of Kokosing Construction. Thomas, 25, died from his injuries.

The driver of the vehicle fled the scene and still has not been found. A reward of \$110,000 has been offered for information leading to their arrest. Anyone with information about the hit-and-run is asked to contact Central Ohio Crime Stoppers at 614-461-8477. Tips can be reported anonymously.

Lexington Farmers Market announces 2026 season launch

The Lexington Farmers Market has announced its 2026 season beginning Wednesday, May 20, and running weekly through Oct. 14. The market will be held every Wednesday from 4–7 pm in the Lexington–Shelby Elks Lodge #2554 and Common Ground Training parking lots, 320 E. Main St., Lexington.

The 2026 season will feature a mix of local farmers, growers, bakers, makers and artisans offering fresh produce, cottage foods, handmade goods and unique small-business products.

The market’s mission is to support local agriculture, strengthen community connections and provide residents with access to fresh, locally sourced options.

The Lexington–Shelby Elks Lodge #2554 and Common Ground Training are sponsoring the market by providing parking lot space for vendors and shoppers, as well as access to porta potties during market hours.

For information contact lexohiofarmersmarket@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/lexingtonohiofarmersmarket or Instagram at [lexingtonohiofarmersmarket](https://www.instagram.com/lexingtonohiofarmersmarket).

Madison approves contracts in preparation for next year

The Madison Local Board of Education met for the regular meeting at Madison Middle School on Wednesday, April 22.

Superintendent Rob Peterson presented Ram Pride Awards to Kim Miller, High School Business Technology Teacher; and Josh Miller, Maintenance Department.

An Award was also presented to Mifflin Elementary for being a Prodigy Math March State Champion/National Qualifier and Madison Career Technical Center for the State Report Card 5-Star Rating.

Mr. Ditlevson, Mr. Conway and Mr. Grove presented awards to National Qualifiers for Business Professionals of America (BPA). Students recognized were Kylie Carroll, Health Administrative Procedures; Alaina Washington, Fundamental Word Processing; Aubrey Conn, Administrative Support Team; Nick Maglott, Payroll Accounting; Jamelyn Mays, Administrative Support Team; Olivia Penrod, Administrative Support Team and AJ Studer, Administrative Support Team.

Mr. Conway, Mr. Rickert and Coach Bryan Mosier recognized Wrestling State Placers Estella Koppert-Smith, seventh place State Placer; Aiden Proctor, sixth place State Placer; and Jaxin Stancombe, fourth place State Placer.

Eastview Elementary Principal Melissa Wigton then gave a presentation.

Donations accepted include \$721.44 from VFW Post 3494 to be used by the Skills USA program to purchase equipment for state/national competitions; \$500 from VFW 9943, 806 Grace St. to the Rams Care Closet; \$500 from Mechanics Bank to be used by BPA students for the BPA National Conference in Nashville, TN; \$50 gift card from Walmart to the Rams Care Closet; \$250 from Mechanics Bank to be used for the Rams Care Closet; \$3,500 from the Middle School PTO to the Middle School Principal's Fund to be used for field trips; \$500 from Sons and Daughters of Herman Benevolence to be used for the Rams Care Closet; and \$100 worth of hygiene and household items from Donna Holt, a 1978 Madison graduate, and her family to the Rams Care Closet.

The March, 2026 Financial Report and the Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid and Student Wellness and Success Fund expenditure plan for FY27 were both approved.

The board approved participation in the Group Rating Program with Sheakley for the 2027 Worker's Compensation Group Rating Program at a cost of \$69,464.00 (projected savings of \$10,380 from previous plan).

The board approved Requisition 26ALD147 to Madison Adult Education in the amount of \$88,400.00 for Ada Ford Scholarships, coming from the 019 fund and Requisition 26ALD148 to Madison Adult Education in the amount of \$89,844.00 for Work Ready Scholarships, coming from the 499 fund.

A resolution was approved for the former Madison Junior High property to be put back up for auction. This includes 12.85 acres of property at 690 Ashland Rd. and Madison Rd., in Madison Township.

Resignations were accepted from Cody Barker, intervention specialist; Katelyn Oslie, high school math teacher; Steve Farley, Varsity boys' golf coach; Emily Crossen, intervention specialist; Brittany Tharp, intervention specialist; Julie Skripac, high school math teacher; and Brittany Farley, fourth grade teacher.

2026-'27 school hirings include MaShala Schmid, Health Technologies teacher; Trinity Page, seventh grade English/language arts teacher; Sandra McGregor, middle school intervention specialist; and Elizabeth Barr, fourth grade ELA/social studies.

Supplemental positions awarded for the 2026-'27 school year include Naomi Adinkrah, primary student council advisor, ½ contract; Curtis Ashley, high school drama advisor (play); Stephanie Bistline, second grade department chair; Kim Boehm, assistant cross country coach and high school social studies department chair; Josh Boliantz, junior class advisor and middle school drama advisor; Derek Boyd, assistant seventh grade football coach; Melissa Brandt, FCCLA advisor; Jennifer Branstetter, senior class advisor and high school student council advisor; Jeff Burkholder, winter fitness coordinator; Breanna Crunkilton, kindergarten department chair and intermediate musical advisor, ½ contract; Kate Darnell, junior class advisor, high school Key Club advisor; James Dillon, high school Academic Challenge advisor and high school science department chair; Mi-

chelle Dillon, Academic Booster coordinator and high school English Department Chair; Krista Ferini, Spanish Club advisor, ½ contract; Teri Foley-Kanz, eighth grade cheer advisor; John Foust, head eighth grade football coach; Lindsey Frank, middle school Key Club advisor and 7/8 special education coordinator; Matt Godsil, Art Club advisor; Craig Green, vocal ensemble; Lynn Gross, seventh grade cheer advisor; Dane Henry, intermediate math department chair; David Hipp, assistant varsity boys' basketball coach and assistant boys' golf coach; Kobi Johnson, head varsity football coach; Julie Kirkpatrick, Writers' Club advisor; Jessica Kunz, Spanish Club advisor, ½ contract and sophomore class advisor; Jennifer Lawhorn, primary student council advisor, ½ contract; Tim Lord, middle school audio visual, middle school social studies department chair and head varsity boys' soccer coach; Traci Luckie, middle school English department chair; Lukas Mann, band director assistant; Tiffany McCoy, intermediate special education coordinator; Chad Metzger, high school math department chair and National Honor Society advisor; Nicole Norris, 5/6 special education coordinator, ½ contract; Shelbi Ohl, sophomore class advisor; Melissa Parish, assistant swim/dive coach; Jennifer Porter, first grade department chair; Mindi Reiter, 5/6 special education coordinator, ½ contract; Chad Reynolds, head swim/dive coach and head girls' tennis coach; Heather Reynolds, primary special education coordinator; Brent Sanders, high school audio visual; MaShala Schmid, music assistant (Ramettes); Preston See, seventh grade boys' basketball head coach and assistant varsity football coach; Christa Shutt, middle school math department chair; Dave Stupka, assistant varsity football coach; Zinda Thomas, middle school science department chair and middle school student council advisor; Jim Thompson, junior class advisor and SkillsUSA advisor; Katrina Tripp, intermediate student council advisor, ½ contract; Karen VonStein, Career Tech Department chair; Katie Wade, senior class advisor, high school special education coordinator and high school student council advisor; Matt Wade, head cross country coach; Jerusha Walker, intermediate musical advisor, ½ contract; and Steve Zellner, assistant eighth grade football coach.

Pupil activity positions approved for the 2026-'27 school year include Tyler Albright, assistant girls' basketball coach, ½ contract; Zach Brandt, assistant seventh grade football coach, ½ contract; Michelle Byus, head varsity cheerleading advisor; Mico Castelvetere, head varsity girls' golf coach; Kyle Conkle, assistant varsity wrestling coach, ½ contract; Amy Daniels, assistant varsity cheerleading advisor; Tim Deel, head 7th grade football coach; Zac Dodd, assistant 7/8 grade wrestling coach; Jennifer Drake, Intermediate student council advisor, ½ contract; Geoff Eckenwiler, assistant varsity boys' basketball coach; David Gilbert, head 7/8 grade wrestling coach; Calvin Gordon, assistant varsity football; Cody Helbig, assistant ninth grade football coach; Jenna Hendershott, assistant varsity wrestling coach, ½ contract; Davey Hipp, head varsity boys' basketball coach; T. Justin Hunt, head ninth grade football coach; Chad Hutcheson, assistant varsity wrestling coach; Bob Johnson, assistant varsity football coach, ½ contract; Chad Leach, assistant girls' soccer, ½ contract; Julia Litt, assistant girls' soccer, ½ contract; Brian Lowe, assistant girls' basketball coach, ½ contract and assistant varsity football coach ½ contract; Bryan Mosier, fall fitness coordinator, head varsity wrestling coach; Dustin Moysi, assistant varsity boys' soccer coach; Renee Neron, head seventh grade volleyball coach; Trenton Osborne, assistant varsity wrestling coach, ½ contract; Doug Rickert, head varsity girls' basketball coach; Victor Skoog, assistant varsity football coach, ½ contract; Matt Stancombe, assistant seventh grade football coach, ½ contract; Travis Stantz, head ninth grade boys' basketball coach; Mike Thomas, assistant varsity wrestling coach, ½ contract; and Sarah Wiggins, head eighth grade volleyball coach.

Substitute teachers hired on an "on call" basis, as needed for the 2025-'26 school year: are Karlie Wilson, Daniel Toney, Makayla Boucher, Ethan Enders and Macey Ault.

Volunteers approved for the 2026-'27 school year are Megan Moysi, girls' soccer; Pat McLaughlin, eighth grade football; Dryden Durbridge, cross country; Jayden Jeffries, varsity boys' basketball; John Pavlansky, varsity boys' basketball and David Parks, varsity football.

(Continued on Page 12)

•Madison approves contracts in preparation for next year

(Continued from Page 11)

Continuing contracts, effective with the 2026-'27 school year, were approved for Jeff Burkholder, Neely Burkholder, Judy Conner, Kate Darnell, Barbara Dwyer, Michael Marshall, Nick Melton, Nicole Norris, Charlotte Ray, Erin Schulz, Troy Stimpert, Carlye Watson, Danielle Wentworth and Steve Zellner.

A sick bank for 34 days for Katy Lang, intervention specialist at Mifflin, was approved for medical reasons.

James Dillon, who is currently employed as a high school science teacher, will be retired and is seeking re-employment with the Madison Local School District in the same position following his service retirement. A public meeting will be held June 17, at 6 pm in the Madison Middle School Auditoria. Mike Leeper, who is currently employed as a high school career-based intervention teacher, will be retired and seeking re-employment with the Madison Local School District in the same position following his service retirement. A public meeting pertaining to these employees will be held June 17, at 6 pm in the Madison Middle School Auditoria.

Jordan Gaston resigned as the MECLC lead teacher.

Hirings for the current school year include Margaret (Miller) Carmichael, MECLC assistant teacher; Kaydence Kaser, MECLC assistant teacher; Brittney Wayman and MECLC lead teacher; Stacy Foote.

Hired as temporary general laborer/summer help were Melissa Vetter, Amy Weaver, Beth Conn, Jenny Jones, Tyson Hicks, Pat McLaughlin and Brayden Spittle.

Substitutes hired on an "on call" basis, as needed for the 2025-'26 school year are Chelsea Givens, paraprofessional; and Shelly Adams, secretary, retroactive to August, 2025.

The 2026-'27 calendar for the Madison Early Childhood Learning Center was approved as was the preschool calendar, Preschool Parent Handbook and Itinerant Services Parent Handbook.

Eli Shopbell was approved for in-lieu of transportation for the 2025-'26 school year.

Attorney Lee Skidmore was approved as the referee in a matter of contract termination.

The Interagency Agreement between Ohio Heartland CAC Head Start-Early Head Start, the North Central State/OSU/M Child Development Center-Early Head Start, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and the Madison Local School District was approved, effective July 1, 2026 until June 30, 2027.

A Memorandum of Understanding was reached between the Madison Local School District and Ohio Heartland CAC Head Start for the 2026-'27 Program Year.

A service agreement was approved to provide EMIS services to Ontario Local Schools from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

An overnight trip for Skills USA students to attend the Skills USA State Competition in Columbus May 4-6 was approved.

The amended Independent Contractor Agreement with Silver Lining Group for ABA services for a student from April 27-May 29, 2026, was approved.

A service agreement was approved between Madison Local Schools and River Education Services, Inc. for the 2026-'27 school year.

The next regular board of education meeting will be May 13, in the Madison Comprehensive High School Library/Media Center.

City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation, Richland County Park District denounce recent vandalism

The City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation and the Richland County Park District issued a strong statement condemning the recent acts of vandalism at Fleming Falls Preserve (Richland County Park District) and Liberty Park (Mansfield Parks and Recreation).

"These actions undermine the shared investments our community has made to ensure safe, welcoming, and high-quality public parks for all residents," said Louis Andres, Public Works Director of the City of Mansfield.

"Criminal acts against community assets will not be tolerated. We are committed to pursuing and holding accountable any individuals who damage or vandalize our public parks."

"We remain fully committed to providing safe, well-maintained parks that serve as places of recreation, connection, and pride for our community," said Jordan Tackett, Executive Director of the Richland County Park District.

"Our parks represent significant investments supported by foundation funding, tax levy dollars, volunteers, and partnerships with private businesses — all dedicated to enhancing quality of life in Mansfield and Richland County."

Community partnership is essential to protecting local parks. Anyone who sees suspicious activity or has information related to vandalism or other crimes is encouraged to contact local law enforcement authorities immediately. If you see something, say something.

The Richland County Park District provides opportunities for county residents of all ages and abilities to learn about and explore nature through educational programs, preservation of natural areas, and the establishment of parks and trails throughout the county, including the Gorman Nature Center, the B & O Bike Trail, and Fleming Falls Nature Preserve.

The City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation maintains 21 neighborhood parks throughout the city with a variety of amenities aimed at providing free, safe and accessible public spaces in the city.



Photo By Mark Shutt

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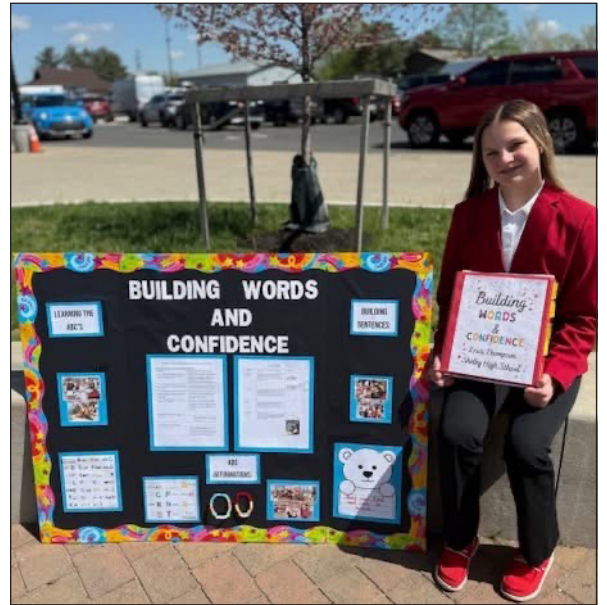
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SHELBY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL FCCLA students recently participated in competitions. Shelby High School students Erica Thompson, Sophie Penn and Olivia Byrd presented their projects in Columbus. Olivia Byrd earned first place and will travel to Washington, D.C., this summer to compete at the National Leadership Conference. Shelby Middle School students participating at the State Leadership Conference were Karlie Bowman, second place; Sydney Guder, first place; Tatum Dewald, first place; Audrey King, third place; and Payson Sensmeier, state qualifier.



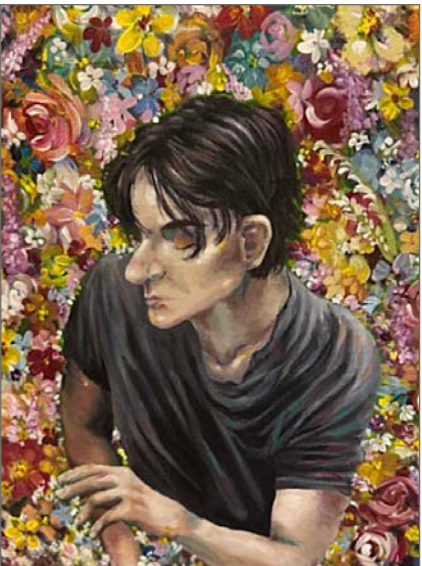
Mayor's show coming to main library

Building on the success of last year's inaugural exhibition, the Mansfield Public Art Commission (MPAC) and the Mansfield Richland County Public Library are proud to announce the return of "The Mayor's Show: Rising Artists of Mid-Ohio."

The dedicated gallery space, located in the second-floor lobby of the main library, continues to serve as a vital hub for local talent. Following its successful debut in 2025, the space remains under the coordination of MPAC to ensure high-quality public art is accessible to the entire community.

This year's exhibition once again features the top award winners from Artapoloosa, the Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center's annual student art show. These emerging artists were hand-selected to showcase their winning works in a professional gallery setting. Regarding the show, Mansfield City's Mayor, Jodie A. Perry states, "It is always wonderful to see the talent of our local youth at the Mayor's Show in May. This has grown to be a wonderful partnership with the Mansfield-Richland County Public Library and Mansfield Public Art Commission. I encourage everyone to stop in to see this exhibit!"

The show will be open May 5-29, at the main library, 43 W. Third St., Mansfield, open Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 8 pm, Friday and Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, 1-5 pm.



**Best of Show
Gracie Gallaway
Crestview High School**



Jesse Halfhill named to All-Ohio Academic First Team

A new class of Ohio community college academic all-stars is being celebrated as part of Community College Month.

The 52 students chosen for the 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team have been recognized for their excellence in academics, leadership, and community service. College faculty, staff and other campus leaders nominated these top-performing students, who come from all parts of the state.

Jesse Halfhill, North Central State College, Mansfield, is a member of the First Team 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team.

"Members of the 2026 All-Ohio Academic Team are the best and brightest this state has to offer, and they are driving this transformation," Zaffini said. "Their success in the classroom and their potential for their chosen careers shows the value of Ohio's community colleges in developing a well-educated, motivated workforce that will drive our state's economy for decades to come."

The All-Ohio Academic Team program is a collaboration among OACC, the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and event sponsors Honda, KeyBank, and Franklin University.

First-team honorees will receive \$1,000 scholarships, second-team members will receive \$500 scholarships, and third-team members will receive \$250 scholarships. The scholarships are meant to help the honorees transfer to universities to complete their bachelor's degrees. The teams also include students planning to move directly into the workforce. Those students will also receive recognition and awards.

Temple Christian students bring Neverland to life in elementary production of “Peter Pan”

Photos and Article By Traci Little

Adventure, imagination and a touch of pixie dust filled the stage Friday evening as Temple Christian School elementary students brought Peter Pan to life in their 2026 drama production.

Held April 24, the performance transported audiences to Neverland, where pirates, fairies and the Lost Boys took center stage in a lively retelling of the classic story. Families, friends and community members came together to support the young performers, who delivered a night full of energy, creativity and heart.

“Our elementary production of Peter Pan last night was truly something special,” a post from the school’s facebook shared. “It was full of energy, imagination, and moments that brought Neverland to life right before our eyes.”

Under the direction of Jillian Hannan, the production showcased not only the students’ acting abilities, but also their growth in confidence and teamwork throughout the rehearsal process—something she said was especially meaningful given how many students were new to the stage.

“I could not be prouder of this cast,” Hannan shared. “For many of these students, this was their first time ever acting, and you would have never known. They stepped on stage with confidence and made it something so special.”

The cast featured students across multiple grade levels, many making their stage debut. From Peter Pan and Tinker Bell to Captain Hook and Wendy, each role was brought to life with enthusiasm and personality, earning applause and smiles from the audience throughout the evening.

From the cast to the behind-the-scenes crew, the production reflected a full team effort. Lighting, sound, stage support and direction all came together to create an immersive theatrical experience for the audience.

“A huge thank you to everyone who made it happen,” the school shared. “From the cast to the behind-the-scenes crew, lighting, sound, and the teachers who directed it all—your hard work did not go unnoticed, and it made this production unforgettable.”

The story of Peter Pan — centered on imagination, friendship and the timeless question of growing up — resonated strongly with both the young cast and those in attendance.

As the curtain closed, the evening ended with brimming smiles and snapshots of a memorable night. For many students, stepping into the spotlight for the first time helped build friendships and sparked a confidence that will carry far beyond the stage.



Temple Christian School's "Peter Pan"



Photos By Traci Little

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Ontario Schools has a bond issue on the ballot this May. Recently a number of people recorded their opinions on social media. Many of those opinions were not backed by facts. I cannot comment on some of the concerns, because I do not know the facts. I would like to comment on a few things I do know about.

Fact: The Rocket swim team does pay to use the pool.

Fact: the Ontario Summer swim team does not pay to use the pool. They do charge their swimmers a fee that covers league fees, assistant coaches pay, food for concession stand and year-end awards for the swimmers.

Fact: the Ontario Schools and the community have always had a good partnership with the Fourth of July Festival, Family Swim, Summer Recreation activities, Girl Scout meetings in the schools, adult recreational activities, after school swim lessons, Special Olympics swim practice, use of city tennis courts for OHS teams and use of Marshall Park fields for OHS softball games (free)

Fact: We need our school secretaries. I invite anyone to come sit in Mrs. Eddleblute's chair for a day. This lady is very busy and does a great job. We need her. With her by his side, our athletic director is equally as busy. Those suggesting not paying coaches and extra curricular advisors, that will surely wipe out all those activities.

Fact: It is not the athletic director's job to oversee the cheerleaders. Years ago athletic council voted to no longer include cheer as a varsity sport under athletics direction. The building principals are in charge.

Fact: Our schools have too many students for one principal to handle by themselves. We need assistant principals and support staff.

Fact: If we (residents) pay 2/3 the state will give us the other 2/3 towards facility improvements

Fact: We are operating in an old school (Stingel and OMS). The OMS shower room has 10 shower heads and only four work. I am told the pipes behind walls are rusted and corroded. The heater in the OMS weight room has been broken since November. It is freezing in there in the winter. We have holes in the windows in the pool. The birds from outside get in and fly around. Their babies end up drowned in the pool. These are just a few issues in my familiar area. We have many more concerns.

We have a fantastic treasurer. Mr. Harvey can make a \$1 stretch into \$5. He has used creative planning, strong organizational skills and diligence to keep our schools on the right path. I know a local CPA who has worked with Mr. Harvey on a number of school issues. He admits he is working with one of the best.

Next week, please use facts to form your opinion when you vote. Keep the kids on top.

Debby Henry

Ontario Swim Coach and grandparent of two Ontario students



IN HONOR OF EARTH DAY, members of Ontario's Warrior Leadership Council cleaned up litter in Ontario. Culver's gave free milkshakes to the hard-working volunteers.

Pioneer accepts donations for scholarship funds

The Pioneer Board of Education met Monday, April 20 for its regular board meeting.

The board approved the interagency agreement and MOU with Ohio Head Start and adopted a Resolution for Staff Appreciation Week.

A Resolution was also adopted for the recognition of the Byron Carmean Award Winner Audrey Wolford, an Early Childhood Education student from Crestview High School.

Student insurance rates for the 2026-27 school year and textbook requests were both approved.

A Summertime Kids Grant was accepted from the Richland County Foundation and revisions were made to existing policy.

Donations were accepted from Makenna Laser, Bucyrus, \$700 to be used for Pioneer's B.E.S.T. Awards Ceremony; Dan and Lisa Naufzinger, Bucyrus; \$1,000 to be used for scholarships; Payton Sturts Foundation, Mansfield, \$4,000 to be used for scholarships; and Tiro-Auburn Volunteer Fire Dept, Tiro, fire fighting equipment with an estimated value of \$6,000 to be used in the First Responder program.

Donations to the Rene' Burtscher Memorial Scholarship Fund were provided by Walter and Barbara Burtscher, Dover, OH, \$100; Mark and Holly Korbas, Shelby; \$100; Kurt, Rashelle and Myles Korbas, Shelby; \$50; and Pioneer Student Services Department, Shelby, \$350.

The board approved student participation in competitive events including the FCCLA State Leadership Conference at the Ohio Expo Center, Columbus, April 15-17; FFA State Convention in Columbus, April 29-May 1; National Soils Competition, El Reno, OK, May 3-8; and SkillsUSA State Competition, Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, May 5-6.

The board accepted the retirement resignation of Melanie Studer, Colonel Crawford Family Consumer Science Instructor, effective May 31. Also resigning were Kevin Burke, Culinary Arts Instructor; and Jamie Wagers, social worker.

One-year contracts were awarded to Jason Adkins, Electrical Trades instructor; Matthew Roth, Wynford Satellite Agriculture instructor; and Alan Sears, math instructor.

Chaperone stipends were granted to Melinda Meisse, FCCLA Regional Event, \$100; Kris Bruce, FCCLA Columbus Blue Jackets Game, \$50; Melinda Meisse, FCCLA Columbus Blue Jackets Game,

\$50; Anne Kurtzman, FCCLA Columbus Blue Jackets Game, \$50; Google Training Stipends; Aaryn Evans, Google Level 2 Certified Educator, \$110; Amanda Glessner, Google Level 1 Certified Educator, \$110 and Google Level 2 Certified Educator, \$110; and Katie Getz, Google Level 2 Certified Educator, \$110.

Staff summer camp stipends were granted to Rick Harvey, Bill Dichtl, Amanda Glessner, Sandra Grau, Elizabeth Heinlen, Melinda Meisse, Colton Penwell, Tina Parr, Caitlin Roub, Justin Tuttle, Fritz Fagan, Carey Ransom, Jeffrey Evans, Mike Millward, Emma Jenkins and Terri Crain. These are for June 8-11, at \$1,000 each.

Dawn Thornsberry was hired as a substitute instructor. Part-time employment was granted to Hope Adams, cafeteria worker.

Mary Ritz resigned as the Success Center Tutor and Kristina Wharton resigned as a part-time cafeteria worker.

Summer custodial workers hired include Joshua Burtscher, Damien Dean, Cole Dorsey, AJ Haymaker, Brayden Hickman, Jason Hockenberry and Travis Slone.

Summer camp student workers were hired for June 8-11, at \$220 each. Hired were Truvy Conn, Lauren Roberts, Jazmine Valtierra, Liam Wolfe, Lillian Craft, Chloe Wetzel, Emma Randler, Zacarri Swisher, Kelly Clark, Britney Webb, Madilynn Sherman, Chloe Mahek, Dylann Larrabee, Grady Crim, Madelyn Welling and Nicholas Gosser.

Non-renewal of substitute personnel includes James Dunbar, cafeteria worker; Dala Greenslade, cafeteria worker; Brenda Grove, cafeteria worker; Mallary Gundrum, custodial worker; Julie Harless, high school education aide, ECE lead teacher/teacher; Jason Hockenberry, custodial worker; Darren Jackson, secretary/distribution/aide; Michele Karshner, custodial worker; Lisa Kilgore, cafeteria worker; Laura Leach, secretary/aide; Sarah Reiser, custodial worker; Tessa Slone, custodial worker; Kip Stevens, bus driver; Jennie Stevens, secretary; Dawn Thornsberry, cafeteria worker; Barbara Wade, cafeteria worker; Katelynn Ramsey, ECE lead teacher/aide; and Jessica Tabor, secretary/aide.

Part-time adult education employment was granted to Carrie Daugherty, LPN instructor; and Charles Eyerly, LPN instructor.

Madison Middle School earns Purple Star designation

Madison Middle School has received the Purple Star recognition from the state, marking the first time the school has earned this honor.

The Purple Star designation is awarded to schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting military-connected students and their families. This recognition highlights Madison Middle School's efforts to create a welcoming and supportive environment for those who serve or have served in the armed forces.

School officials shared that they are proud of this achievement and view it as a wonderful step in strengthening support for military families within the school community. Plans are already in place to expand programming and introduce additional activities in the coming years to further enhance these efforts.

More information about the Purple Star recognition and Madison Middle School's initiatives can be found on the school's website.



Renaissance to host auditions for Gilbert & Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore"

Under the direction of Lori Turner, the Renaissance Theatre will host auditions for the Renaissance Youth Opera Theatre (RYOT) production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Auditions will be held on Saturday, May 23, from 11 am to 4 pm, and Sunday, May 24, from 1-4 pm in the Ballroom of the Renaissance Theatre, 138 Park Avenue West, Mansfield. Appointments are not required for auditions.

Auditions are open to young performers from second grade through 12th grade. Anyone auditioning should prepare to sing 32 bars of a "Golden Age" Broadway song in their key with accompaniment (sheet music is preferred). Rehearsals will begin in June, and will take place weekdays from 4-7 pm; and on Saturdays from 11 am to 2 pm.

H.M.S. Pinafore will be presented for four performances on Saturday, June 27, at 2 pm and 7 pm and on Sunday, June 28, at 1 pm and 4 pm. The production will be presented in the Renaissance's Theatre 166, and is a part of the Mechanics Bank Education Series, with support from Buckeye Express Car Wash, Inc. The performances are free and open to the public.

RYOT provides young performers with hands-on experience in acting, singing, dancing, and technical theatre. Whether on stage or behind the scenes, students are immersed in the creative process, learning from industry professionals in an engaging and supportive environment.

H.M.S. Pinafore is a classic comic operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan, the songwriting team that charted the course for modern musical theatre. This lively and humorous tale unfolds aboard the British ship, the *H.M.S. Pinafore*, where romance, mistaken identities and social satire set sail for a delightful adventure.

For additional information regarding the RYOT's *H.M.S. Pinafore*, contact Lori Turner at: lori@mansfieldtickets.com.

Richland Public Health sponsors free lifeguard certification through Mansfield YMCA

Richland Public Health has announced a new partnership with Mansfield YMCA to sponsor free lifeguard certification courses for eligible individuals in Richland County. This initiative aims to strengthen the local lifeguard workforce, improve water safety, and expand access to essential lifesaving training.

Through this program, any resident of Richland County or individuals working as lifeguards within the county are eligible to receive free certification through the American Red Cross Lifeguard Training Program. This nationally recognized certification provides participants with comprehensive instruction in water rescue skills, CPR/AED for professional rescuers, first aid, and emergency response.

“Ensuring we have enough trained, certified lifeguards in our community is critical to protecting public safety,” said Dr. Julie Chaya, Health Commissioner at Richland Public Health.

“This idea came from recognizing a real need. Pools and aquatic facilities can’t operate safely without qualified lifeguards. By removing the financial barrier to certification, we’re helping more people step into these vital roles. We’re excited to partner with the Mansfield YMCA on this opportunity, and it reflects our ongoing commitment to improving the health, well-being, and quality of life for all residents of Richland County.”

The program not only benefits individuals seeking employment or skill development but also supports local aquatic facilities facing staffing shortages.

“This partnership is incredibly important for our community,” said James Twedt, Executive Director of the Mansfield YMCA. “By sponsoring these certifications, Richland Public Health is making it much more accessible for people to become lifeguards. That directly strengthens our workforce and enhances safety at our pools. Having well-trained lifeguards isn’t optional, it’s essential. This initiative helps ensure we can continue providing safe, high-quality aquatic programs for everyone.”

The American Red Cross Lifeguard Certification equips participants with the skills and confidence needed to prevent, recognize and respond to aquatic emergencies. Upon successful completion, participants are certified and ready to work in a variety of aquatic settings. For more information or to register for a free course visit <https://www.ymcanco.org/lifeguard-training> or call 419-522-3511.

Cleveland Harbor dredging will begin

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District awarded an \$11.7 million contract to New York-based DMYLES, Inc. to conduct dredging of the federal navigation channel in Cleveland Harbor twice this year. Dredging of harbors like Cleveland’s ensures accessible depths for large vessels, the continued flow of commodities across the Great Lakes, and nearly \$789 million in business revenue and labor income for the region.

Approximately 250,000 cubic yards of sediment are planned to be dredged from the upper Cuyahoga River from May 15 through June 30 and from Oct. 1 through Nov. 30. Sediment will be beneficially used through upland processing and placed in a confined disposal facility. Dredging of Cleveland Harbor is conducted annually by US-ACE, based on need and the availability of funding. The harbor was last dredged in 2025, with 255,651 cubic yards of sediments removed.

Cleveland Harbor is a deep draft commercial harbor which handled 13.8 million tons of cargo, including iron ore (64%), limestone (16%) and salt (9%) in 2023. Waterborne transportation facilitated by the harbor supports \$646.1 million in business revenue, 2,329 direct, indirect, and induced jobs, and \$142.6 million in labor income to the transportation sector.

Operation, maintenance and dredging of harbors like Cleveland by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is critical to the economy of Ohio, the Great Lakes region, and the United States.



Crestview library will be built across from school campus

The Mansfield Richland County Public Library has announced plans to build a new Crestview library.

After the careful review of several proposals, the Library Board has selected Bostwick Design Partnership to design the new space. Bostwick is based in Cleveland, Ohio and has worked on library projects, including ones in Cleveland, Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

The new, modern facility will be designed to meet the evolving needs of the Crestview community, offering expanded resources, technology, and community space. Key features of the new branch will include expanded children’s area, dedicated teen space, community meeting spaces, increased collection and sustainable design.

The new Crestview Branch will be constructed on land purchased from Faith Church along State Route 96. This standalone facility will replace the current location within Crestview Middle School, which has served the community since May 1998. The new building will be approximately 6,000 sq. ft. of usable space with additional outdoor green space and ample parking.

“The board and I are grateful for the continued partnership and support of Crestview City Schools for allowing us to house our current branch in the middle school building for many years. We look forward to giving the space back to the school as we continue to support their teachers and provide programming and a safe space for students and people of all ages,” says Chris May, library director. The new branch is expected to break ground in the fall of 2026 and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

Services at the current Crestview location will not be disrupted during the building process. The location in the Crestview Middle School is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9 am to 8 pm; Wednesday and Friday 9 am to 5 pm; and Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. For location details visit mrcpl.org.

Willard Sutton Bank announces drive-thru closure as remodel nears completion

Sutton Bank’s newly remodeled lobby of its Willard branch, located at 301 E. Walton St., reopened on Monday, April 27, marking a major milestone in the improvement project.

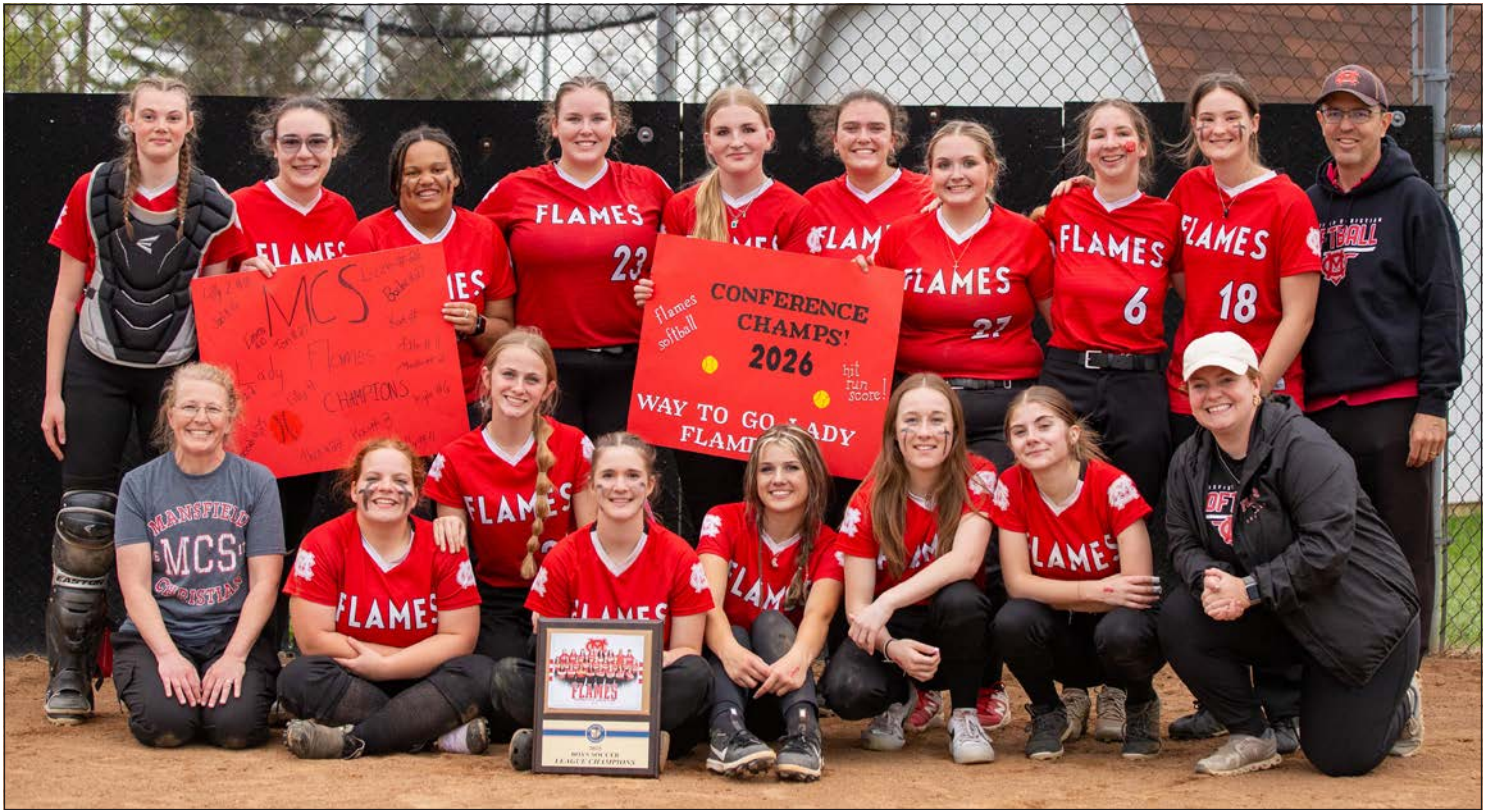
As construction enters its final phase, the branch will undergo exterior work, including cement improvements in the drive-thru area. As a result, the drive-thru will be temporarily closed. The closure began Monday, April 27.

During this time, customers are encouraged to use the ATM, which will remain open and accessible, and visit the newly remodeled lobby for full-service banking assistance.

Sutton Bank representatives appreciate the community’s patience and understanding throughout the renovation process and looks forward to fully opening all services soon.

For more information, please visit www.suttonbank.com or contact the Willard branch directly at 419-933-4305.

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights



MCS softball makes history

Photos and Article
By Traci Little

The Mansfield Christian Lady Softball Team made history.

The MCS Lady Flames softball team captured their first-ever conference title April 27 with an incredible 18-0 victory over Central Christian.

Bailee Nelson led the way with a dominant performance in the circle, throwing a no-hitter and recording 12 strikeouts.

“First and foremost, I want to give all the glory to Jesus Christ for my team, our coaches, and the ability to play softball,” said Bailee Nelson.

“It means so much to us as a program to win the first conference title in program history.”

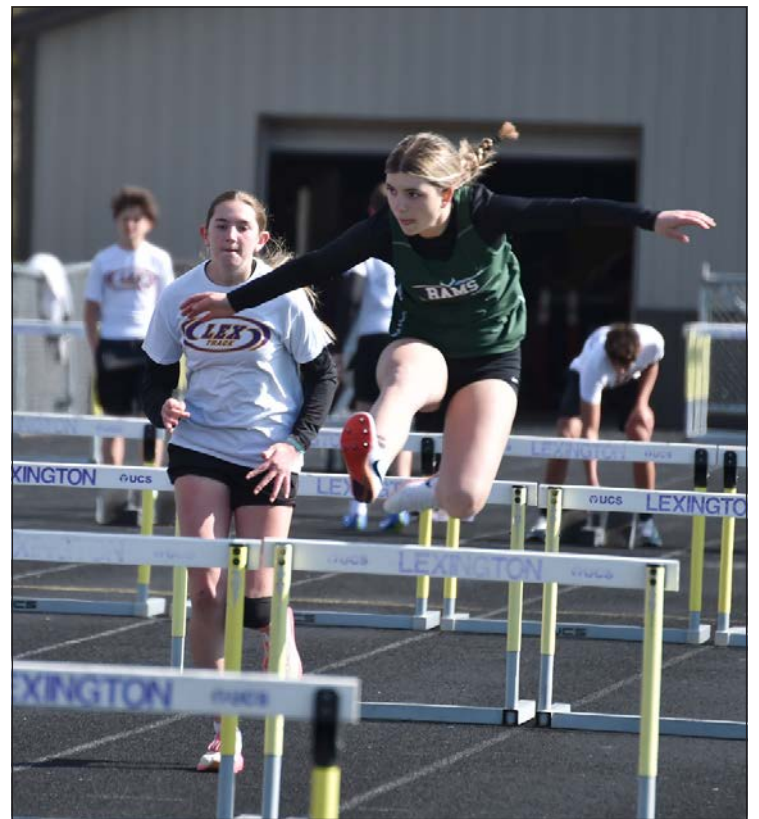
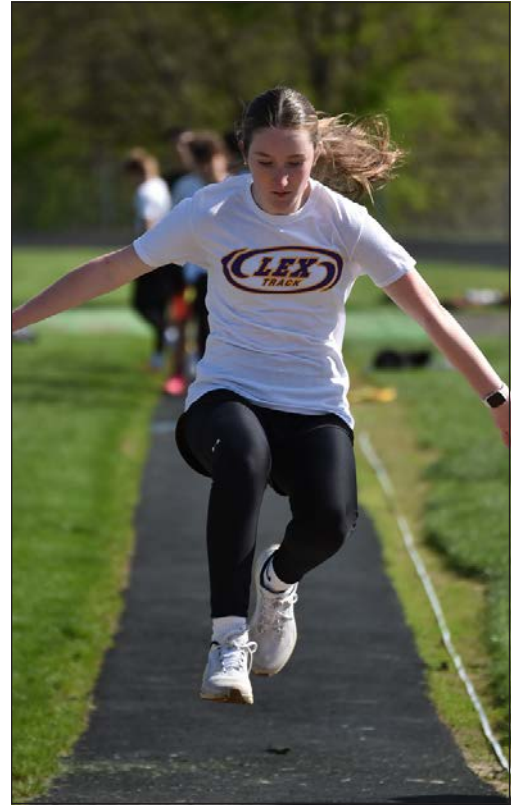
Prior to the game, Coach Taylor wrote ‘today’ on our hands and reminded us that we can’t change the past or worry about the future — we can only do our best with what’s right in front of us.”

“Today, our team showed up at the plate and in the field, making it possible to secure the win. I’m looking forward to what our team can accomplish in the future.”



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

LEXINGTON VS MADISON MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK AND FIELD · APRIL 20
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL TRI MEET TRACK AND FIELD · APRIL 22



University Hospitals first Ohio health system with all hospitals certified

University Hospitals has achieved ISO 9001 Quality Management System certification across all hospitals and its corporate headquarters. ISO 9001 is the world's most widely recognized quality management standard.

With this historic accomplishment, UH is the first health system in the nation to achieve ISO 9001 certification for its corporate headquarters, and the first system in the state to have all hospitals — and its headquarters — ISO 9001 certified.

“Our caregivers’ commitment to operational excellence have helped make this achievement possible, and we are grateful for their partnership as we raise the standard for healthcare in Ohio and across the United States,” said UH CEO, Cliff A. Megerian, MD, FACS, and Jane and Henry Meyer Chief Executive Officer Distinguished Chair. “This certification is not merely a plaque — it is evidence that UH honors the covenant with our patients, and operates with discipline, consistency, and measurable accountability. It standardizes best practices, reduces variation, strengthens management oversight, and empowers frontline teams to improve care every day.”

Surveyors employ a variety of assessment methods for organizations to achieve certification, including staff interviews, medical record reviews, organizational document reviews, building and offsite visits, and patient interviews and feedback. Certification demonstrates to patients, insurers, regulators and current and future employees that UH operates with transparency, rigor and measurable improvement.

“This milestone aligns directly with our Zero Harm Pledge and our culture of Living and Leading with Love,” explained UH Chief Quality and Clinical Transformation Officer, Peter J. Pronovost, MD, PhD, FCCM, Veale Distinguished Chair in Leadership and Clinical Transformation. “It ensures that high-quality care is predictable, reliable, and consistently delivered — reflecting our commitment to the patients and communities we serve. We look forward to building on this achievement together, continuing to advance quality, safety, and operational excellence across our system.”

ISO 9001 transforms how work gets done by standardizing what works, reducing variation, strengthening accountability, empowering frontline teams, and making excellence a daily habit.

“University Hospitals’ achievement represents an exceptional level of organizational maturity,” said Alex Imperial, Global Managing Director, Healthcare, DNV Life Sciences. “The institutional commitment demonstrated by UH is a direct reflection of the people behind it — teams delivering at an elite level every day. Achieving ISO 9001 certification across both corporate headquarters and every hospital is not symbolic; it demonstrates a systemwide commitment to consistency, accountability, and continuous improvement, supported by deeply embedded processes that enable reliable, high-quality outcomes at scale.”

CLASSIFIEDS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Separate sealed bids for the 2026 Resurfacing Program, Village of Lexington, Ohio will be received by the Village of Lexington, Ohio at the office of the Administrative Director at 44 West Main Street, Lexington, Ohio 44904 until 10:00 am, local time Friday, May 8, 2026, and then, at said office, publicly opened and read aloud.

Contractors will be required to purchase and download an electronic set of plans and bid documents via the KEM Web Site by visiting <https://kemccartney.com/project-bids/>. If you would prefer a hard copy be mailed, we will do so upon receipt of payment in the amount of \$50.00 per set, along with your UPS or FedEx account number so that shipping charges can be applied to your account. Checks shall be made payable to K.E. McCartney & Associates and all documents become the property of the prospective bidder, with no portion of the payment being refunded.

Should you have any questions during the bidding process please contact jburchholder@kemccartney.com.

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities. Contract will be awarded based on the lowest and best bid. The Village of Lexington may re-

ject any or all bids on any basis and without disclosure of reason. The failure to make such disclosure shall not result in accrual of any right, claim or cause of action by any unsuccessful bidder against the Village of Lexington.

Each bid must be accompanied by either an Ohio Revised Code Section 153.571 Bid and Performance Payment Bond in an amount equal to 100% of the bid; or, a cashier's check, bid bond, letter of credit to be duly executed by the bidder as principal and having as surety thereon, a surety company approved by the Owner in the amount of 10% of the bid.

Each bid must contain the full name of the party or parties submitting the proposal and all persons interested therein. The Owner intends and requires that this project be completed by August 14, 2026.

Bidders must comply with the prevailing wage rates on Public Improvements in Richland County and Village of Lexington, Ohio as determined by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, Wage and Hour Division, 614-644-2239.

Peter L. Them
Administrative Director
Village of Lexington, OH
(T-C 4-23, 30, 2026) 65L

Mental Health Month events planned

Richland County Mental Health & Recovery Services has released events celebrating May as Mental Health Month. Events include:

May 5, 9:30 am, The Richland County Commissioners will offer a proclamation in the commissioner's board room at the Richland County Courthouse.

May 6, 7 pm, On behalf of the City of Mansfield, Mayor Jodie Perry will offer a proclamation at Mansfield City Hall, 30 N. Diamond St.

May 7, 4:30–6:30 pm, Catalyst Life Services will host its annual kids carnival at 270 Sterkel Blvd., Mansfield. The event is free, but those attending are asked to bring a donation of hygiene products. Come join the us for snacks, prizes, games, and more!

May 16, the 6th Annual 33 Forever Mental Health Birthday Walk in downtown Mansfield. The walk starts at 11:33 am and registration starts at 10:33 am. Register at www.33forever.life

May 29, 12–2 pm, Food, Fun, and Family Life Event, 151 Marion Ave., Mansfield. This free community event celebrates and supports families through mental health services and support and will feature food, fun activities and opportunities to connect. Open to all.

May 30, 8 am to 12:30 pm, annual NAMI-Walks event at Marshall Park in Ontario. The event will feature a 1-mile fun walk and 5K Race with the goal of raising awareness about mental health and local resources available in the community. There will be food trucks, a DJ, balloon animals, face painting, yard games and family fun. To register visit: www.namiwalks.org or call 419-522-6264.

May 30, 12–4 pm, 6th Annual Party in the Park at South Park, 100 Brinkerhoff Ave. This celebration features food, games, bingo and line dance suitable for all ages. The event is open to the community and parking will be available on Brinkerhoff and Park Avenue West.

May 20, at 3 pm, Substance Abuse Treatment Court Graduation held at the County Building in Judge Naumoff's courtroom located at 50 Park Ave. West in Mansfield.

May 29, 5–9:30 pm, Mansfield UMADAOP and Mansfield City Schools Peace on My Block event at Arlin Field. The event will kick off with an F-16 flyover and a special appearance by the U.S. Army Golden Knights Parachute Team. The event features games, activities, food trucks and fireworks. Open to all.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

First Federal Bank of Ohio
THE RIGHT LOAN. THE RIGHT BANK.

LISA ANDERSON
Branch Manager/Loan Officer, NMLS 618735
landerson@firstfederalbankofohio.bank

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