



NO SENIOR SLUMP
Center Grove catcher follows up strong junior season by leading county in hitting this year. **B1**

BANKRUPTCY
Chrysler files for Chapter 11. **A2**



DAILY JOURNAL

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FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009

Johnson County, Indiana

75 cents

WEATHER



Today
Skies: Cloudy with a t-storm
Temps: High 70; low 51

MAP, PAGE A8

READER RESPONSE

Tell us your flood stories

Next month marks the first anniversary of the biggest disaster in Johnson County history.

Reporters are working on stories about the record-setting flood and the destruction it caused. But we want you to share your flood stories.

How did the flood affect you? Where were you when the flood hit? How has the disaster changed you? What do you do differently now because of the flood? How do you think the community has changed because of the flood?

Send your stories to flood@dailyjournal.net. Include your photos.

WEB EXTRAS

Get the early edition

For a sneak preview of what stories reporters are working on, sign up for the Daily Journal e-mail news update.



The daily e-mail keeps you up-to-date about what is going on in Franklin, the Center Grove area, Greenwood and central Indiana.

We will alert you to breaking news, tell you about stories we are planning and let you in on what is going on in the newsroom.

You can subscribe by sending an e-mail to newsupdate@dailyjournal.net. Put "subscribe" in the subject line.

Check out our photos

Visit the slideshow section of dailyjournal.net to see photos from local events.

FREE TIME

Spread the word

Want to have your own events added to Free Time?

The best way to get your event publicized is to get the information to us at least three weeks in advance.

Make sure to include all pertinent information and a phone number in case we have any questions. Send photographs if possible.

E-mail the information to freetime@dailyjournal.net or mail it to Free Time, Daily Journal, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

DEATHS

Greenwood

Clyde Wilson Byers, 63

Indianapolis

Jeffrey P. Kern, 46

Elsewhere

Anne F. Morse-Hackley, 89

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Child abuse rate puzzling officials

BY THE NUMBERS

The most recent annual figures regarding child abuse and neglect:

179: Number of substantiated neglect cases reported to child services in Johnson County in 2008

33: Number of substantiated sexual abuse cases reported to county child services in 2008

27: Number of substantiated physical abuse cases reported to child services in the county in 2008

\$100 billion: Annual cost of child abuse and neglect to the nation in 2007

86,110: Number of Hoosier children reported as victims of child abuse and neglect in 2007

36: Number of Indiana children who died as a result of abuse in 2007

80: Percentage of child abuse and neglect cases in Indiana committed by parents or family members in 2007

SOURCE: Prevent Child Abuse agencies of Johnson County, Indiana and America

By SARAH MICHALOS
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More Johnson County children are being reported as victims of abuse and neglect, and local and state workers aren't sure how to stop the increase.

In March 2008, reports were filed of 52 local children subjected to sexual abuse, physical abuse or neglect.

In March of this year, that number nearly quadrupled to 207 chil-

dren, according to Dawn Underwood, president of the nonprofit agency Prevent Child Abuse Johnson County.

She's unsure whether the economy has played a factor in the increase or if heightened awareness is causing people to make more reports.

"I wish I knew what was happening," Underwood said. "What I do know is that it's a good time for the community to come together and help strengthen these families."

The Indiana Department of Child

Services monitors local offices and will bring in more caseworkers if necessary, state spokeswoman Ann Houseworth said.

State law dictates that one caseworker handles 12 new investigations and 17 ongoing cases monthly.

Child abuse and neglect cases are rising statewide, partly because of an increasing population, but Johnson County's growth rate is faster than other counties, Houseworth said.

(SEE ABUSE, PAGE A5)

ONGOING COVERAGE

FUTURE OF THE CENTER GROVE AREA

MORE AT DAILYJOURNAL.NET

[If Greenwood sends officers to White River Township, sheriff's office will make adjustments.]

Who patrols what?



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@dailyjournal.net

The patrol car of Johnson County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Schaeffer sits in front of a White River Township home as officers respond to a report of a domestic dispute. The majority of calls taken by the sheriff's office come from the Center Grove area.

Most of sheriff's calls come from area under study

By JOSEPH S. PETE
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A merger between Greenwood and White River Township likely would mean that the Johnson County Sheriff's Office no longer would be responsible for its busiest area, a merger study group member said.



McLAUGHLIN

The Greenwood Police Department would take over most of the developed northern part of Johnson County unless the merger study group decided to work out an agreement for the county to continue to provide police service.

Seven of every 10 sheriff's deputies patrol the Center Grove area during each shift.

At least 60 percent to 70 percent of the calls to the sheriff's office come from the Center Grove area, which is the most heavily populated part of the county that the sheriff's office is responsible for patrolling, Sheriff Terry McLaughlin said.

He said he didn't have a position on the merger but hoped that township residents believe that they've been getting good law enforcement service from his office.

Center Grove area residents still would vote for the sheriff, but an appointee of Greenwood's mayor would be responsible for their police protection if a merger were to take place.

One scenario the merger study group is

considering is that the sheriff's office still would provide police coverage to a rural district largely south of Whiteland Road but that the Greenwood Police Department would take over most of the more densely populated suburban part of the township.

A merger would not mean the staffing and budget of the sheriff's office would shrink since it's already understaffed, McLaughlin said. The sheriff's office has been underfunded for years, he said.

"We never forget that we serve the taxpayer," he said. "But we have never been in a perfect world where we have the funding for all the employees and equipment we need to keep the taxpayers safe."

The FBI recommends that police have 2.2 officers for every 1,000 residents, McLaughlin said. Currently, the sheriff's office has about half as many deputies as recommended, he said. The sheriff's office has 57 deputies serving a population of about 139,000, and McLaughlin recently requested that the county council hire 17 more.

BY THE NUMBERS

- \$5,452,988: 2008 budget for Greenwood Police Department
- \$4,109,108: 2008 budget for Johnson County Sheriff's Office, excluding the jail division
- \$2.7 million: 2008 budget for the county jail
- \$179,000: 2008 budget for courthouse security provided by the sheriff's office
- 53: Greenwood Police Department road officers
- 57: Johnson County sheriff's deputies
- 46,000: Greenwood residents
- 139,000: Johnson County residents

McLaughlin estimates that he would need at least twice as many deputies to meet the standard for the office's current coverage area.

"We need a lot more deputies in the first place," he said. "With our current staffing, I couldn't see us even looking at any cuts."

Few police departments meet the federal standard, and the Indianapolis metro, Franklin and Greenwood departments all fall short.

The sheriff's office might not have to make cuts after a merger, but new hiring likely would be put off indefinitely if the department no longer had to patrol the Center Grove area, county council member Charles Canary said.

The council still would have to look at the staffing issue, but meeting the national standard for officers would have to be an important consideration, he said.

Greenwood Police Chief Joe Pitcher told a merger study group subcommittee that he would be ready to take over the area on short notice, public safety subcommittee chairman Forrest Chambers said.

He told the subcommittee that his department could handle the White River Township area with 15 additional officers, which would break down to at most five more per shift if they were all assigned to patrol, Chambers said.

The sheriff's office now has seven officers in the township at any given time. That level is needed to ensure quick response times to calls and regular

(SEE PATROLS, BACK PAGE)

Water firm asks for rate hike

Indiana American Water request may raise home's bill by \$12

By JASON MICHAEL WHITE
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Indiana American Water customers would see a 39 percent increase on their water bills if the company's rate request is approved.

INSIDE
Details of the water company's proposed rate increase. **Page A5**

The Greenwood-based company has filed a re-request with the Utility Regulatory Commission to raise its rates, according to a news release.

A typical residential customer uses about 6,000 gallons of water a month, and if the rate increase is approved, they would see about a \$12.51 increase in the monthly bill, the release said.

This would make the average monthly bill about \$44.62, said Joe Loughmiller, a spokesman with Indiana American Water. The rate increase request is for all the company's customers statewide.

The impact for commercial and industrial customers will vary depending on how much water they use, he said.

Indiana American Water wants to raise its fees because of the increased cost of water treatment, delivery and operating, the release said. Also, the rate request was prompted by the company's investments to improve its infrastructure, the release said.

The company has spent about \$198 million statewide to enhance its water infrastructure since 2007, the release said. In Johnson County, the company has spent more than \$28 million during the past two and a half years.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the country's water and wastewater utilities will need to make more than \$335 billion in infrastructure improvements during the next 20 years to replace thousands of miles of pipe and to upgrade treatment plants, storage tanks and other facilities, the release said.

The regulatory commission will have a pre-hearing conference and public hearing to consider

(SEE WATER, PAGE A5)

Fort Wayne-Allen County offers model for consolidation

By JASON MICHAEL WHITE
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Franklin used to have its own 911 center, but the department had to move after the June flood, and dispatchers now are in the sheriff's office.

But there still are two different departments. They're on two different payrolls. And they have two separate sets of supervisors.

The arrangements is leading city and county officials to ask: Why not consolidate the departments into a single dispatch center to improve efficiency and save



PRICE



PURCELL

on costs, since the two centers already share the same space?

Talk of consolidating dispatch centers was prompted by a new law that goes into effect in 2012 that limits counties' use of 911 funds to a maximum of two dis-

patch centers, county commissioner John Price said.

At the same time, county officials have considered whether to merge any of the county's planning departments.

"Anytime you can look at consolidating, once we do our due diligence and we find out there is a cost savings, we are charged with investigating the possibility," Price said.

An Indiana community already has consolidated planning departments and is considering consolidating 911 dispatch centers, too.

Fort Wayne and Allen County 911 dispatchers work in the same

basement office and can look at each other through a window, said Greg Purcell, Fort Wayne deputy mayor. But they're still two separate departments.

"They used to have a brick wall that separated them, but we finally got them to tear that wall down," Purcell said.

Planning departments

Fort Wayne and Allen County's planning departments combined into a joint department about a year ago.

Before the consolidation, the city had eight full-time staff members, and the county had 15. Now,

the joint planning department has a full-time staff of 20.

City and county officials estimate the joint department will save about \$100,000 in taxpayer money. But the biggest benefit to the consolidation has been the increase in efficiency, said Kim Bowman, executive director of the department of planning services.

Developers don't have to worry about whether they need to visit the city or county planning offices, and they never have to make trips between the two, Bowman said. Everything they need is in

(SEE MODEL, BACK PAGE)