

# JOHNSON COUNTY

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## This space for lease — still

### Embattled billboards have only one taker

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Two large billboards with space for four messages have greeted drivers on U.S. 31 on the north side of Franklin since the fall.

Since then, though, only one advertisement, for homebuilder C.P. Morgan, has appeared on the signs.

Three other signs proclaim "Advertise Here" and a toll-free phone number.

"We had people complaining initially when they first went up," city planner Krista Linke said. "They have a couple more locations, and we're hoping that if those don't get filled maybe they won't put more up."

Two other locations along State



Large billboards on U.S. 31 near Earlywood Drive in Franklin have only had one advertiser so far. The remaining three spaces are still open.

Road 44 and Interstate 65 are also expected to have billboards put up in coming years.

When the signs will appear is unknown.

The billboards are part of the settlement of a lawsuit with Ohio-

based American Outdoor Advertising, which sued Franklin in 2003 when the city denied petitions to build billboards on U.S. 31.

As part of the settlement, the city agreed to allow six billboards to be placed within three

areas on the major roads: U.S. 31, Interstate 65 and State Road 44 near the interstate. The company has the next two years to apply to build four more signs, the city's attorney, Robert H. Schafstall, said.

American Outdoor Advertising has hundreds of signs in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Florida and does not keep track of the number of daily inquiries for an advertisement in a particular location, company representative Ashley Ditty said.

Prices and lease periods are negotiable but typically range from \$1,200 to \$1,800 a month and include a 12-month lease, she said. The company also charges a fee to produce and install the sign, ranging from \$1,700 to \$2,500.

Company owner Chris Neary could not be reached to answer questions about when other signs might be put up.

Daniel S. Martin

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## Highway department seeks more funds

Daily Journal staff reports

Residents could see an increase in their property tax bills to pay for one more county office's wish list.

Highway department officials are seeking a bond to pay for more than \$700,000 in equipment.

The equipment was taken out of a wish list for more than 10 other county offices. County officials discovered the items the highway department requested could not be paid for with general funds.

Equipment on the highway department's list includes four dump trucks, two pickup trucks, a backhoe, a road widener and a tractor.

But commissioners aren't sure how the county will make the payments on the borrowed money.

An increase in property taxes will make payments on the general bond, which will total more than \$3 million and will pay for cars, software and equipment for county offices. But the highway department bond must be paid back with money collected for the highway department.

The board is considering a bridge savings account, which collects money from property taxes and other sources such as the excise tax, to pay back the borrowed money.

Commissioners don't know if there is enough money in the department's bridge fund to make the payments, commissioner Mitch Ripley said.

Commissioners approved 2-0 an ordinance asking the county council to start the process to borrow money for the equipment. Commissioner R.J. McConnell was not present for the vote.

### NEWS BRIEFS

GREENWOOD

#### Man arrested after police find pot, pills

A search of a Greenwood home Monday yielded about four ounces of marijuana, pills and items indicating that a resident was dealing the drug, according to a police report.

Terry Eugene Tucker, 643 Day Break Drive, Greenwood, was arrested on charges of dealing in marijuana/hashish, possession of marijuana/hashish and possession of a controlled substance.

Digital scales, packaging materials and various forms of marijuana were found at Tucker's home, according to the report.

A plastic bag with several white pills identified as clonazepam, a seizure control medicine, was also found on a dresser at the home, the report said.

Police received a tip that someone living at the residence might be selling marijuana. After watching the man's home, officers got a search warrant, Greenwood Police Chief Joe Pitcher said.

Officers smelled the odor of burned marijuana coming from Tucker's room when they searched the home at about 5 p.m., and asked him about it, the report said.

Tucker told officers that he was the only one smoking the substance, the report said.

A plastic bag with about a quarter of a pound of marijuana, digital scales, rolling papers, a metal

container and unused plastic bags and ledgers were found in a desk in the room, the report said.

The amount of marijuana would be worth about \$400, Pitcher said.

Empty plastic packaging and duct tape that had marijuana stuck to it were also found in the desk. Marijuana seeds and stems were also in the packaging.

The packaging is of a kind used for large amounts of marijuana, not personal use, the report said.

Tucker, 28, was released from the Johnson County jail on \$18,000 bond.

FRANKLIN

#### Power outage darkens businesses on U.S. 31

Wal-Mart Supercenter, Steak 'n' Shake and Fast Max Sunoco gas station in Franklin were in the dark for a few hours Tuesday.

Cinergy planned an outage to replace utility poles along U.S. 31 for a new power line.

Power was restored to all stores by 7:30 a.m.

EDINBURGH

#### Education funding group meeting today

The annual meeting of Edinborough Dollars for Scholars will be at 7:30 p.m. today at Edinborough Lions Club, 112 S. Walnut St.

At the meeting, the public will select a board of directors to direct the local 2006 Dollars for Scholars program.

Board members are volunteers and are responsible for the investment and control of endowments in excess of \$500,000.

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