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# April

## April 1

The Franklin Corner Bookstore, which was opened for less than a year at Jackson and Jefferson streets, planned to close April 15. Owner Carl Lau said a lack of customers and pedestrian traffic in the downtown area prompted him to look for a new location, likely on U.S. 31.

Most Indiana residents were willing to pay at least \$48 per year in taxes to keep the pride and intangible benefits of having the Indianapolis Colts in the state, according to a survey. Mark Rosentraub, dean of the College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, presented his findings at the Indiana Convention Center downtown.

## April 2

A state-run inspection program that employs youths to conduct inspections of local tobacco retailers showed the number of tobacco products being sold to underage buyers statewide dropped more than half since inspections started throughout the state. Through the Tobacco Retailer Inspection Program, off-duty police officers and the Indiana Excise Police recruit teens 15 to 17 to go into stores to try to buy cigarettes.

## April 3

A black cloth was draped above the doors of at least one Johnson County Catholic church to symbolize the death of Pope John Paul II. But much of the Roman Catholic community stayed upbeat and gathered for services in his honor, reflected on fond memories and looked to the future. Despite sadness after the death of John Paul II, Masses were full of tributes and encouragement that the pope's death would not set back the Catholic church.

During almost four years studying and teaching at a Vatican seminary in Rome, a Greenwood priest recalled seeing the pope frequently during daily prayers. No matter how much he tried, Monsignor Mark Svarczkopf was never able to beat Pope John Paul II to morning prayer at 5:30 a.m.

## April 5

A phone call and three text messages triggered a manhunt for a 20-year-old man police believed abducted his girlfriend from Franklin. Martha Ramirez, 35, disappeared after leaving work. Police believed she was abducted and was being taken to Mexico. The local police department worked with the FBI and U.S. Marshals Service to find Antonio DeJesus Soto, who lived with Ramirez for almost a year before she asked him to leave last week, Burton said.

As many as five businesses planned to move into proposed warehouse and office buildings southwest of County Line Road and Emerson Avenue. A Greenwood-based company planned to construct two 11,250-square-foot buildings southwest of Emerson and Sayre Drive, south of County Line Road. Contractors moved dirt for a Wal-Mart, and a medical technology company debated whether it wanted to build a distribution center along Graham Road.

## April 6

Former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton spoke at Franklin College about battling terrorism. Hamilton said the war would not be finished anytime soon and multiple generations must work together to keep America safe. Hamilton was the year's keynote speaker in the Williams Chair Lecture Series, which brings regionally and nationally known speakers to the campus to talk about issues in law and public service.

Cities and towns considered whether to support a new county tax that would pay for filling in potholes and paving roads.

## April 7

A 9-year-old Franklin boy nearly drowned after he fell into the deep part of a retention pond while he looked for frogs and tadpoles with a friend. Adam Huffaker was taken by helicopter to Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. Paramedics inserted a breathing tube after he was pulled from the water.

Greenwood officials hoped better roads for semitrailers and guidelines for tax breaks would improve their chances of attracting industrial businesses and jobs. The city lost its bid for a medical technology company wanting to build its largest distribution center. Becton, Dickinson and Co. decided to build its distribution center in Plainfield.

## April 8

The family of a White River Township man shot and killed a year ago by a neighbor planned to try to change Indiana's self-defense law, which shielded the shooter from criminal prosecution. Civilians should have to follow rules similar to what police must obey in a shooting and should have to attend classes before getting a permit to own a gun, the family said.

One building suggested as home for a new animal shelter might be too big, and a county task force planned to look at five sites for a new facility. The Johnson County Community Corrections facility was suggested as a potential shelter home. But task force member Dan Cartwright said he thought the building was far too big.

## April 9

Two women died after the car they were riding in left the road in Franklin and crashed head-on into a tree. Joanne W. Wentworth, 71, of Franklin died at the scene. Betty J. Whitesell, 83, of Franklin died later at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis.

A pregnant woman was killed in a head-on collision just east of Franklin according to the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. Just after the crash, a passer-by pulled the woman's 1-year-old son out of the crushed, smoking car and watched him until medics arrived. Anna Stevenson, 39, of Shelbyville was pronounced dead at Methodist Hospital.

## April 11

The chance to save a piece of the Old West brought more than 200 horse lovers to Hoosier Horse Park near Edinburgh. More than 60 wild horses and burros from places like Nevada and Arizona were up for adoption by the Bureau of Land Management.

Items confiscated by police raised money for law enforcement while giving auction goes great deals on others' ill-gotten gains. Money from auctions is put into the county or municipality's general fund, which acts as a checking account to pay daily expenses.

## April 12

A man injured in a fatal crash on State Road 44 died. James E. Creech, 51, of Shelbyville died at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. He was driving east on State Road 44 just east of Franklin when another vehicle crossed the center line and hit his car head-on. It was unclear whether Creech was wearing a seat belt.

Greenwood officials discussed a proposed water park again after working behind the scenes for three months to get parkland. The Aquatic Facility Task Force plans to discuss whether the current water park design needs to be changed, group member Pete Wiser said. Plans called for an \$11.8 million water park project on as many as 20 acres of an 85-acre site at 1348 Averitt Road.

## April 13

A woman who was reported abducted from Franklin on April 3 was found and hadn't been abducted after all. The woman had taken her employer's bank deposit and headed west to gamble and stay in hotels with her 20-year-old boyfriend. Police found Martha Ramirez, 35, and Antonio DeJesus Soto in Phoenix. Soto said Ramirez sent text messages that indicated she was being taken to Mexico against her will so that her six children wouldn't think poorly of their mother.

Some Center Grove parents will be able to pay for their children to go to full-day kindergarten in the fall. Center Grove Elementary School will be the site of a pilot program in which the district plans to offer a full school day to about 22 kindergarten students. If parents show interest and are willing to pay for it, the program could be replicated at other elementary schools in 2006, officials said.

## April 14

Committees, administrators and architects worked for years on the details of the building that will be the new Franklin Community High School. Members of the community started dreaming about what will happen inside that building. About 25 community members, including parents and students, were invited to evaluate the current high school program and make suggestions for new programs in the new high school.

Greenwood officer Gary Neeman confirmed that he has been offered the Whiteland town marshal position, a job his current boss left two months prior. The town council still has to vote publicly before hiring a town marshal. A Whiteland resident and native, Neeman said he was attracted to the position because he wanted to serve his hometown and its people.

## April 15

The Greenwood Fire Department planned to start building a fire station in the summer to serve the city's east side. The city's fourth fire station was planned for 2.5 acres on the east side of Graham Road, north of Main Street. The redevelopment commission bought the land in 2002.

United Way fell 3 percent short of its fund-raising goal. The loss of hundreds of Johnson County jobs in the past few years took its toll on the United Way, officials said. After setting a record in 2004 by raising \$1,143,000, the organization fell \$37,000 short of its goal this year.

## April 16

The Afghan toddler sent to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis died after returning home to Afghanistan to be with his family. Sixteen-month-old Quadrat Ullah Wardak's death shocked local residents who just days before watched the boy's reunion with his mother in Afghanistan after surviving heart surgery at Riley Hospital.

## April 18

The Greenwood Parks and Recreation Department wanted a loan from the city to pay for everything from planting seeds to fixing the pool. The department plans to ask permission from the city council to borrow \$215,000 from the city's rainy-day fund, unused income tax money saved for unexpected costs and emergencies.

The Interstate 65 interchange at Main Street in Greenwood was set for construction work in the summer that will add turn lanes from the interstate onto Main Street. The work on the interchange will cost about \$700,000 and will be funded by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

## April 19

Greenwood continued to develop bike paths and walking trails near Craig Park as part of a citywide trail system. The city was connecting its trails to the Greenwood senior center's proposed fitness pathway. The trail would extend along the east side of Greenwood Senior Citizen Center, wrap around the north end of the building and cross the railroad tracks into Craig Park.

## April 20

A Greenwood man who reported that his wife tried to kill herself was accused of murdering her. Jeffery M. Fox, 54, was arrested in connection with the death of his wife, Sherry A. Fox, 54. Investigators did not believe her death was suspicious until after preliminary autopsy results showed severe beating.

The Indiana Pacers' Reggie Miller made Nathan Milto's wish come true when he played basketball with the boy at Conseco Fieldhouse in March 2003. Nathan, 10, who suffers from Batten disease, a rare, genetic and terminal condition, was wheeled onto the basketball court in his wheelchair to play with Reggie. Make-A-Wish Foundation worked with Nathan's parents and the Pacers to make the event happen.

## April 21

A sellout crowd of 18,345 celebrated Reggie Miller's final regular-season game for the Indiana Pacers on. Former President Bill Clinton was one of a parade of celebrities, including current and NBA players, ex-teammates, coaches and actors who paid videotaped homage to Reggie's career on the center-court scoreboard during breaks throughout the game.

When developers started building Cricket Ridge subdivision a decade ago, the plan was for a nearly 100-home subdivision. Since then, owners abandoned the 40-acre site on Paddock Road north of Olive Branch Road, and the property became a dump littered with old couches, toys, empty paint cans, discarded hoses and bags of garbage and grass clippings. A new developer planned to build a 102-home subdivision called Derbyshire and overhaul the place.

## April 22

A Franklin woman who was a longtime player in the county's GOP was elected Wednesday to the second-highest post in the Indiana Republican Party. Sandi Huddleston, 57, was elected the new vice chairwoman of the Indiana Republican State Committee for the next two years. She was the first county resident to hold a position this high in the state political party.

## April 23

A grand jury will decide whether to charge a Greenwood man accused of killing his wife. The circumstances of Sherry A. Fox's death were too unclear to decide whether to file charges against Jeffrey M. Fox, 51, who was arrested on a preliminary charge of murder. Murder implies that Fox knowingly killed his wife, which was unclear.

## April 25

Nearly three weeks after almost drowning in a retention pond behind his home, Adam Huffaker was healing more quickly than expected and was likely to make a full recovery, doctors told family members. Huffaker was listed in good condition at Methodist Hospital's pediatric rehabilitation unit in Indianapolis, but he frequently had muscle spasms and could face weeks of recovery before being taken off a respirator to breathe on his own.

The FAA awarded Greenwood airport a \$1 million grant to extend the runway by about 600 feet. The extension would make the runway safer by giving planes extra time to take off and land, said Bill Jackson, president of the Board of Aviation Commissioners. Construction of the runway extension was expected to be finished by the end of the summer, Jackson said.

## April 26

The Johnson County jail could run out of space in eight months, even though it was expanded four years ago. When the county opened the jail after the renovation in 2001, the sheriff's office expected to have sufficient inmate housing until 2011.

Veteran dog breeder Shawn Donovan was hired as the county's new animal warden. He was chairman of the county's animal shelter task force.

## April 27

Johnson County's animal shelter task force found a potential home for the facility, but it could cost county taxpayers more than half a million dollars. Committee members began to negotiate the cost of five acres on the west side of Graham Road, just north of Commerce Drive in Franklin. Property owner Fred Linville and task-force members discussed a selling price of about \$30,000 per acre.

Widening of U.S. 31 at Whiteland Road planned to start in the summer, but some area business owners opposed aspects of the project. The proprietor of at least one of seven establishments on the northeast corner of the Whiteland intersection feared the \$1 million project could force him to close. The state had planned to overhaul the intersection for nearly a decade, but delays in buying land and funding the work pushed back the project.

## April 28

James C. Ledbetter, 29, who police suspected was a major supplier of methamphetamine in the Franklin area, was arrested after three county law enforcement agencies and a federal team raided his home in the Oakleaf Manor subdivision. Police broke down the front door of the home and found methamphetamine and marijuana, along with three rifles, a shotgun and a handgun.

## April 29

Franklin Mayor Norman P. Blankenship Jr. was in serious condition at Johnson Memorial Hospital after experiencing complications from a brain tumor, his family's spokesman said. Details about the complications were not being released at the family's request, but Franklin police Chief John Borges released a statement about the mayor's condition a week after Blankenship, 57, was taken to the hospital after suffering a seizure in his home.

Two days after the county commissioners voted unanimously to allow a committee to negotiate the purchase of land at Graham Road and Commerce Drive, county commissioner Mitch Ripley no longer wanted the property for an animal shelter. Poor conditions and a lack of visibility at the current shelter were two reasons why members of the shelter task force wanted a new location.

## April 30-May 1

A bill to finance a new Indianapolis Colts stadium passed both houses of the state legislature. The bill also included a host of other projects and taxes across the state.

The town of Bargersville wanted to treat sewage to end the problems with overflowing septic systems in seven White River Township subdivisions. But to hook those 322 homes up to Bargersville sewers, contractors would have to tear through county roads. County commissioners wanted the town utility to pay for replacing the roads, which were already in poor condition; but the town utility did not want to charge its sewer customers for repairing them.

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