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March

March 1

Johnson County animal control warden Julie Hively was suspended from her job and put on paid leave while the sheriff's office investigated accusations of money mismanagement. The board of commissioners refused to answer specific questions about the amount of money or how the money was mishandled. **Trafalgar Town Marshal Gary Hall announced his retirement** after eight years with the town's police force. Trafalgar was left with two full-time police officers. Council members discussed whether to hire a third full-time officer.

March 2

A fire destroyed a vacant house owned by Vineyard Community Church at Worthsville and Graham roads. This was the fourth suspicious fire in Whiteland in less than three months. Whiteland fire officials suspected the same individuals in all four fires.

Schools in Johnson County accommodated for children with severe food allergies. Teachers and staff members learned to give shots by practicing on oranges and cafeterias designated peanut-free tables.

March 3

The Franklin Fire Department considered hiring a collection agency to retrieve unpaid bills. The \$155,000 debt was to be added to a fund that keeps supplies and equipment updated.

According to a study of census data, people older than 30 were more likely to drive more than 44 minutes to get to work, whereas employees younger than 30 worked closer to home. Forty-three percent of working Johnson County residents worked in another county, such as Marion County.

March 4

A task force began to look at sites for a new Johnson County animal shelter. The committee also planned to review operation guidelines and procedures at the existing facility.

March 5

The proposed Clark-Pleasant Academy has a name, a location, a director and a list of students to enroll in the alternative school. What the school needs is \$150,000 to pay salaries. The school planned to open in the fall.

Injured Marine Sgt. Nick Bennett of New Whiteland visited students at Break-O-Day Elementary School. He was injured Nov. 11, 2004, in Baghdad when a missile landed and shattered 15 feet away from his unit. Students passed around his Purple Heart, awarded to him on Thanksgiving Day.

March 7

A fire destroyed at least eight units in the Library Park Apartment complex in White River Township and sent one individual to the hospital. The blaze began in a first-floor apartment and spread up the wall and to the attic.

A video, "In Memory of You," created by Terri Dunlap, focuses on eight teens who lost their lives in traffic accidents over the past few years. Dunlap wondered if her video, shown throughout area high schools, was enough to get through to kids about safe driving.

March 8

While Spc. Scott Cantwell was stationed in Iraq, his wife, Kim Cantwell of Franklin, and children tried to go about their day-to-day tasks. Kim Cantwell spoke about how Scott misses home life and how the family gets along without him.

County commissioners voted to rezone 33 acres on the northeast corner of State Road 135 and Stones Crossing. An assisted-living complex is planned to be the first development in the area. Construction is set to start in spring or early summer.

March 9

The bantam football league in White River Township agreed to continue leasing land from Center Grove School Corporation. School officials said they wanted to reserve the land for future school expansion.

A 14-member task force traveled Johnson County streets to determine which needed repaved first. They also explored an existing ordinance for weight restrictions on trucks and recruited police to enforce road rules and load limits.

March 10

The Johnson County animal shelter looked for a new home in the seven-year-old community corrections building. By moving the animal shelter into the building and relocating community corrections, the county would only have to pay for one new project.

Miguel Rivera, the first Hispanic on Gov. Mitch Daniels' executive panel and the first Hispanic to hold the position of commissioner of the Indiana Department of Labor, talked about his job protecting workers. Figures showed Indiana averaged 3.37 workplace deaths a month, Rivera said. He plans on limiting that to one by the end of the year.

March 11

A burning cigarette was blamed for the Library Park Apartment fire in White River Township. Apartment resident David Williamson fell asleep on his couch with a cigarette after drinking alcohol. The fire displaced seven families.

The Indianapolis Colts' Joseph Jefferson appeared in court and was sentenced to community service for his drunk driving arrest in Johnson County last year. The defensive back must also attend alcohol counseling sessions imposed by the NFL.

March 12

Judges lost power after Indiana's top court threw out part of the state's sentencing structure. Local judges will now have to get a jury's approval before extending criminal jail times. The legislation allows judges to increase jail time only if the defendant has previous criminal record or prosecutors can prove their facts to a jury.

Franklin parents and teachers formed a committee to discuss issues surrounding a kindergarten center. The proposed \$5 million center was part of a \$63 million building plan that also included reconfiguring grades to include the kindergarten center, elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school and a high school.

March 14

Taylor Forey became one of the youngest individuals to be inducted into the American Red Cross Hall of Fame. Last March, Forey pulled his grandfather out of a pond after their boat flipped and his grandfather suffered a heart attack.

Police began searching for a man with a teardrop tattoo under his left eye who robbed a Blockbuster video store in Greenwood on the morning of March 12. The robber entered the video store at 1280 U.S. 31 North, across from Greenwood Park Mall, shortly before 1 a.m. No one was hurt during the robbery.

March 15

County commissioners dismissed Julie Hively as Johnson County's animal control warden. Commissioners cited a lack of receipts given to donors and inadequate bookkeeping, which was discovered after the sheriff's office began investigating accusations of money mismanagement at the animal shelter.

March 16

West Grove Elementary School was placed on lockdown after police were called when first-grade students reported seeing a man dressed in camouflage with a gun in the tree line near the recess area. Sheriff's deputies and a police dog unit from the Greenwood Police Department searched the area but found no one.

About 25 percent of money set aside to pay for unforeseen problems with the new Franklin high school had been spent within the first eight months of construction. More than \$500,000 of the \$2 million contingency budget was spent on items such as steel and removing mud, said Bill Goley, Franklin director of operations and facilities. The total budget for the new high school was about \$103 million.

March 17

Some Whiteland Community High School students having a hard time making the grade had a new option for the fall as the county's first alternative school was planned in Whiteland. Clark-Pleasant school board voted to open Clark-Pleasant Academy in August.

March 18

Johnson Memorial Hospital neared capacity and tried to shuffle patients around the hospital to maximize available beds and rooms. Patients were not being turned away and at least one other hospital serving Johnson County residents directed ambulances to other places because of limited space.

The lockdown at Center Grove schools was lifted two days after several West Grove first-graders reported seeing a man with a gun in trees near the school. Police were still unable to locate the man.



DAILY JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Center Grove's Natalie Hesler performs her floor routine during the IHSAA gymnastics finals in Indianapolis. She was the individual state winner in the floor exercise and was the first-ever Trojan gymnast to win a state title.

March 19

Paul M. Heltzel, 39, a Franklin high school graduate, was killed in Iraq when a car bomb exploded in Baghdad on March 15. Heltzel was a member of the Louisiana National Guard. Shortly before his death, he had been honored as enlisted soldier of the year.

Criminal charges were not filed against former animal control warden Julie Hively. While no evidence of criminal activity existed, the sheriff's investigation showed that Hively did spend private donation money to buy animal shelter supplies and did not accurately account for those funds, the prosecutor's review said.

March 21

Center Grove gymnast Natalie Hesler won the individual state championship in the floor exercise. She was the first Center Grove gymnast to earn a state championship. She went on to place second on the uneven parallel bars and second in the all-around.

A community college surveyed businesses in Johnson County and other counties surrounding Indianapolis to help determine the workforce needs for the next several decades. The information collected was to be discussed at a summit in Greenwood in May and was to be used to help economic development officials figure out how to attract the kinds of businesses and jobs the community wants and how to better compete for new businesses.

March 22

A proposal was made in the state Senate to tax services in Marion County, such as the car wash on the north side of County Line Road across from Greenwood Park Mall. Under the proposed plan to fund a new Colts stadium and convention center expansion, Johnson County residents who use an attorney, an accountant or even a barber in Marion County would pay 1 percent in additional sales tax on those services.

A New Whiteland man broke into a stranger's home and hid in the bathroom after he ran from police and withstood two Taser shots, according to a probable cause affidavit. Anthony Michael Durham, 27, 125 Belaire Drive, was arrested on charges of battery, residential entry, resisting an officer, obstructing justice and two charges of criminal confinement.

March 23

Center Grove graduate Brad Rateik had spent the past 14 months in Uzbekistan. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the country of about 26 million north of Afghanistan. He worked at a 400-member student center in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, where he taught English, helped plan development, assisted with planning the center's programs and helped write grants.

Task force members planned to ask the county council on April 11 to consider enacting a wheel tax to pay for filling potholes and rebuilding roads. Of the seven-member county council, two said they support the wheel tax, three were against it, and two were undecided.

March 24

A man who police said pointed a gun at an Internal Revenue Service employee in a Greenwood office was arrested on charges of battery and criminal recklessness. A federal charge of assaulting a federal employee was also added. John Plemons, 62, had not told investigators why he was upset or where he stashed the weapon.

March 25

While classmates spent spring break in Florida, about 50 Johnson County and Perry Township students planned to build fences and nail up drywall. Since 2000, Mike and Pam Bandy have taken their youth group to In Pursuit camp in Freetown.

March 26

Center Grove officials were seeking enough sponsorship to purchase a giant replay screen for the high school's football field. At least two Center Grove school board members worry that a giant football scoreboard and big screen for instant replays would send the wrong message to the community and hinder future fund-raising efforts by the district.

March 28

Elected and appointed city and economic development leaders started to daydream: How could Greenwood offer businesses great food, a place to stay and comfortable conference rooms in a one-stop shop? The idea to recruit a convention or conference center to the city surfaced during recent discussions about how to lure the best new businesses to Greenwood and help existing businesses expand.

Experts and lawyers said that clearly spelling out your wishes can help people avoid ending up like Terri Schiavo of Florida, who was at the center of a battle over whether to remove a feeding tube that had kept her alive for 15 years.

March 29

A road-rage incident started on Interstate 65 near Greenwood and ended with gunfire as one driver shot through the other's window, missing a passenger's head by inches, police said. Both drivers were arrested after 14 miles of aggressive driving. Stephen B. Page, 49, of New Whiteland was arrested on a charge of criminal recklessness with a handgun. Evan J. Walker, 19, of Indianapolis was arrested on a charge of criminal mischief for throwing objects at Page's car.

More than a dozen representatives from Becton, Dickinson and Co. asked about the condition of roads around property they were considering for a medical distribution center. Company representatives came to Greenwood to visit the site, southeast of County Line Road and Interstate 65. The project would be the company's largest distribution center and its central U.S. location.

March 30

Yard Art in Taylorsville was forced to move several concrete sculptures of nude figures, including the "Venus di Milo," to the rear of their property after two complaints were received. Indiana law is not clear on whether statues created without clothes are considered obscene and constitute a danger to minors, but legal minds and civil rights advocates say they are more art than obscene.

Most Greenwood City Council members want more expensive homes in the city, but studies showed most people cannot afford a home that costs more than \$111,372.

March 31

Senior citizens on Social Security and Medicare struggled to pay for prescriptions they need along with the cost of keeping roofs over their heads. Some senior citizens drove as far as 15 miles to fill prescriptions at a cheaper price than at pharmacies just a block away.

Wal-Mart gave up its plans to squeeze a smaller store next to Home Depot on Smith Valley Road. The retail giant tried different ways to design a smaller store on the site but could not fit a building and sufficient parking space onto the property, said David Shank, a spokesman for Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart began looking for another White River Township location.

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