



DAILY JOURNAL

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2007

Johnson County, Indiana

50 cents

WEATHER



Today Skies: Mostly sunny Temps: High 23; low 3

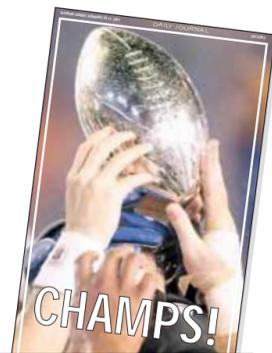
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COMING SOON

Remember the thrill

Don't miss a special section commemorating the Indianapolis Colts' dramatic victory in Super Bowl XLI.

SATURDAY



YOU SHOULD KNOW

Valentine's Day lights?

The lights on the courthouse in downtown Franklin won't be changed to all red for Valentine's Day.

But weather has thwarted crews charged with taking down holiday decorations.

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce is in charge of the decorations, but the organization pays a nonprofit group to put up and take down the lights.

This year, the Franklin Community High School baseball boosters put up the decorations, she said.

The group planned to take the lights down the past two Sundays, but weather interfered, team volunteer Doug Feyerabend said.

When the weather was nice in early January, the baseball team members were on break from school, Bechman said.

The decorations can be taken down only on a weekend morning when traffic is light downtown, she said.

High wind, ice or snow can prevent crews from taking decorations down by making work on the courthouse roof too dangerous, Bechman said.

DEATHS

- Greenwood Carolyn Jane Gagen, 92 Rodney D. Greene, 31 Indianapolis Charles Hubert Ludwig, 74 Marjorie Clark Mahoney, 90 Elsewhere The Rev. Floyd A. Blake, 76

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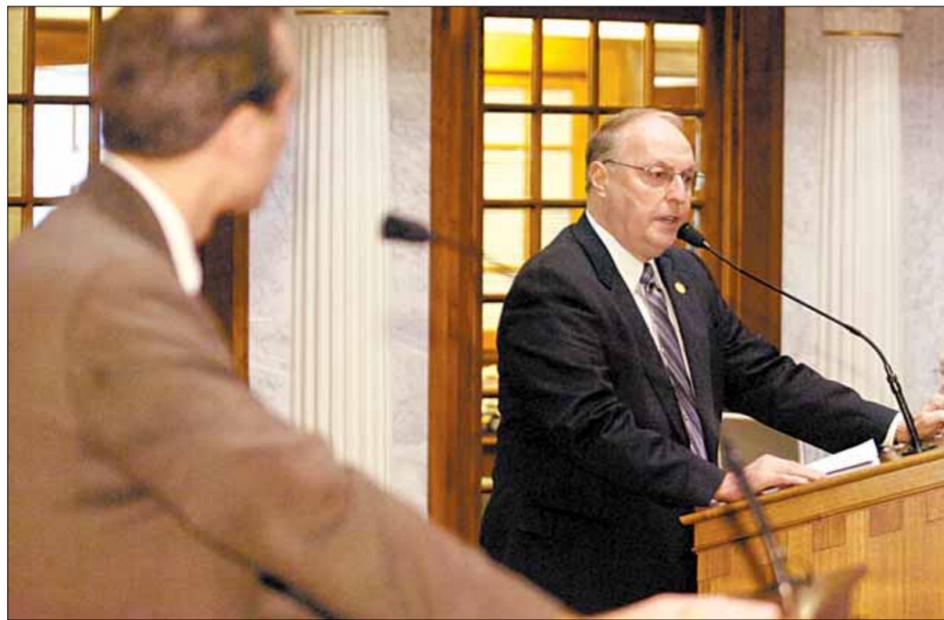
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INDIANA COMMERCE CONNECTOR

Senate defeats effort to sidetrack tollway



Sen. Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood, left, listens as Sen. Tom Wyss, R-Fort Wayne, speaks in favor of creating a tollway through Johnson County. The Indiana Senate rejected an amendment that would have delayed a vote on the road Thursday.

Local senators split on amendment that would delay beltway decision

By ANNIE GOELLER DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER agoeller@thejournalnet.com

Senators voted down a change that would have delayed a proposed toll road through six central Indiana counties.

The bill that proposes both the Indiana Commerce Connector and the Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana will go on to the full 50-member Senate for a vote as early as Monday.

Legislators disagreed about whether the amendment was necessary.

Opponents said the change duplicates review committees senators already created when the bill went to a Senate committee. Supporters said that the proposed central Indiana beltway was moving too fast and that legislators don't have enough information.

"To ask us as legislators and me as a new legislator to vote on something I know nothing about is foolhardy," said Sen. Jean Breaux, who proposed the amendment.

The change would slow the approval process and allow more time for legislators to consider all the information, said Breaux, D-Indianapolis, and other supporters.

"I want to be clear about what the bill does: It grants unfettered authority to the governor to proceed on both of these projects in any ways he sees fit," said Vi Simpson, D-Bloomington, who was in favor of sending the beltway to study committees before getting legislative approval.

"Once this legislation passes the Senate and House, you will never get a shot at it again," she said.

Opponents said they voted against the change because it takes power away from the governor's office and state agencies that normally design and build roads and because the legislation proposed this year does not approve building the road.

"They're not going to start this road any time soon. We're already going to look at those issues with what we have in the bill right now," said Sen. Michael Young, a Republican who represents

"To ask us as legislators and me as a new legislator to vote on something I know nothing about is foolhardy."

State Sen. Jean Breaux Who proposed an amendment that would have the Indiana Commerce Connector to a study committee this session, postponing a vote

part of northern Johnson County.

The proposed amendment failed 29-19. Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, and Anita Bowser, D-Michigan City, were not present for the vote.

Three local legislators, Sen. Richard Bray, R-Martinsville, and Patricia Miller and Young, who are both Indianapolis Republicans, voted against the amendment. Sen. Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood, and Greg Walker, R-Columbus, who also represents parts of Johnson County, supported the change.

The proposal would have sent the beltway to a study committee during this session and delayed a vote by legislators for at least this year. The tollway would have also been separated from the proposed Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana, which senators said had more support.

"These are not the same project. I don't think at this time the Indiana Commerce Connector is properly supported. The Illiana, I don't want to hold that back," said Sen. Timothy Lanane, D-Anderson.

If members of both the House and Senate approve the bill during this session, the projects will not need further legislative approval.

Senators said that was normal in any road project.

"I'm not comfortable with the idea that legislators are going to take over deciding how roads are built and where they go," said Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville.

The governor wants to make the route a toll road and lease it to a private company, which requires legislative approval.

The proposed road would loop around

(SEE TOLLWAY, BACK PAGE)

HOW THEY VOTED

Senators voted on four proposed amendments to the bill that proposes a toll road through central Indiana and the Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana. One amendment would have sent the beltway to a study committee this session and postponed a vote by legislators. Read how local lawmakers voted below.

Yea: 19



Greg Walker, R-Columbus



Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood

Nay: 29



Richard Bray, R-Martinsville



Patricia Miller, R-Indianapolis



Michael Young, R-Indianapolis

INSIDE

Find a complete list of how senators voted on an amendment to send the beltway to a study committee this session and postponed a vote by legislators.

Back Page

IF YOU GO

On Monday, all local elected officials and residents are invited to meet with the Indiana Department of Transportation about the proposed toll road that would pass through Johnson County.

After the meeting, the Johnson County Council could discuss taking a stand for or against the project at the group's monthly meeting, which also is open to the public.

What: Meeting between INDOT and all local elected officials about the Indiana Commerce Connector

When: 5 p.m. Monday

Where: Beeson Hall in the Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, 396 Branigan Blvd.

Summer start of crossroad work set

CG intersection to get turning lanes

Daily Journal staff report

The county's highway director hopes to get improvements to a major Center Grove intersection completed before school begins.

DETOUR

A tentative construction date for the intersection at Stones Crossing and Morgantown roads is set for after the school year ends, said Gary Vandegriff, county highway director.

Improvements include widening the roads and adding turn lanes and a traffic light.

In order to start on time, the county would need to have all the land purchased for the project. Negotiations with three landowners are still taking place.

The county has purchased land from 11 landowners. Initial offers were made for the properties in August.

Vandegriff hopes to conclude negotiations with the landowners by April, when bids for the project will be opened.

If construction starts as planned,

(SEE WORK, BACK PAGE)

Man gets 35 years in slashing Victim's throat was cut in dispute over debt

By CANDACE BEATY

DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER cbeaty@thejournalnet.com

A Mooresville man who pleaded guilty to cutting a Greenwood man's throat was sentenced to 35 years in prison.

The judge suspended five years of the sentence, and considering time already served and potential credit for good behavior, he could be out in less than 15 years.

Donald J. Shepard Jr., 41, went to the victim's home and cut his throat with a box cutter in January 2006.

Judge Cynthia Emkes gave Shepard the maximum 30 years in prison, which was the deal agreed to previously by the defense and prosecution.

The five years added by the judge will be suspended until any probation is completed.

(SEE SLASHING, BACK PAGE)

Quadruplets safe after blaze at house

Fifth-grade girl discovers fire in laundry room of rural Franklin residence

By SARAH LIPPS DAILY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER slipps@thejournalnet.com

Four children escaped a fire in their home Thursday morning while they were on a two-hour delay from school.

No one was harmed, but the home at 931 S. County Road 100S, less than two miles west of Franklin, sustained heavy damage, a fire official said.

The fifth-grade siblings, quadruplets, were being watched by their uncle.

Their parents, David and Maureen Smith, were away on a trip, said Mike Morris, a spokesman with the Bargersville Fire Department.

Around 8:30 a.m., one of the children went to the laundry room.

She saw fire and smoke. The girl shut the door and went to find her uncle.

He went to the room, saw the fire

and immediately got the children out of the house, Morris said.

The family lives in a rural area but have several neighbors nearby, he said.

They were able to find a neighbor who was home. The uncle took the children to the neighbor's house and called 911, Morris said.

(SEE BLAZE, PAGE A9)



Trafalgar firefighters work on a rural Franklin house that caught fire Thursday morning.