



THE WAR IN IRAQ
BIG IMPACT IN SMALL TOWNS
 Under-25,000 communities hit hardest by deaths in Iraq.
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AUTO RACING
YOU GOTTA HAVE FAITH
 Team owner convinced Harvick he could win in Daytona.
 PAGE B1

DAILY JOURNAL

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2007

Johnson County, Indiana

50 cents

WEATHER



Today
 Skies: Showers
 Temps: High 46; low 24

MAP, PAGE A10

YOU SHOULD KNOW

Mayor sets Wednesday to remember Alexa Shank

Wednesday is Alexa Shank Day in Franklin. Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews proclaimed the day to honor 10-year-old Alexa "Lexi" Shank, who died of leukemia Sept. 29. Wednesday would have been Shank's 11th birthday. Yard signs celebrating the day will carry the message, "Give a smile away, it's Alexa Shank Day," said Dana Shank, her mother.

WEB EXTRAS

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What do you think of the Pacers' performance so far this season? Do you think Indiana University will advance far in next month's NCAA men's basketball tournament?

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FREE TIME

Need something to do?

The Daily Journal wants to publicize your events. E-mail the information to freetime@thejournalnet.com or mail it to Free Time, Daily Journal, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

DEATHS

- Edinburgh
Jerry E. Downs, 66
- Greenwood
Gladys Arthur, 80
- Jane L. Boone, 94
- Stephen Lee Ernest, 60
- Stanley VanderMeulen Sr., 72
- Trafalgar
Sean C. Moore, 45
- Elsewhere
Albert B. Lawrence, 78

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State downplays tollway fear

Impact on local roads questioned

By ANNIE GOELLER
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Wording in a 2006 contract between the state and a private company is fueling fears about the future of road projects in Johnson County.

Two local attorneys say improvements to State Roads 252 and 44 and building an east-west corridor through the county could cost taxpayers extra money if the governor's proposed toll road is built through six central Indiana counties.

Residents and landowners have said it could mean local roads might

not be improved or built at all.

State officials disagree, saying the worries are premature and unfounded.

The debate is centered on a non-compete clause, a phrase that came up at two meetings in Franklin over the past month.

A similar clause was included in the lease of the Indiana Toll Road and will be part of a future contract between the state and a private company for the proposed Indiana Commerce Connector, said Franklin attorney Rob Schafstall and Greenwood attorney Phil Wilson.

(SEE ROADS, PAGE A5)

INSIDE

Who picks the path?

State official: Study, not private developers, will be determining the route for toll road in northern Indiana.

Page A5

Corridor land won't be taxed

By ANNIE GOELLER
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Property taxes that landowners and farmers pay on land in southern Johnson County will be lost if a toll road is built through six central Indiana counties.

The state would own the land where the proposed Indiana Commerce Connector would be built, meaning no property taxes would be collected there, said Gary Abell, spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation.

If the lease is the same as the one

for the Indiana Toll Road, the private company that would lease the beltway would not pay property taxes. The company also would not pay taxes on the tolls collected, he said.

Instead, the company would pay sales and excise taxes for equipment, such as for snowplows, he said.

Abell expects the leases would be similar, since the state is using the northern Indiana toll road lease as a basis for a future lease for the central Indiana tollway and because the governor has said the highway would be state-owned.

(SEE LAND, PAGE A5)

DOUBLE SLAYING IN FRANKLIN

Chynna Lynne Dickus
 1980-2006



Blake Michael Dickus
 1996-2006

Neighborhood nearly back to normal



This house in the Branigin Woods subdivision in Franklin is surrounded by snow now but in July was blocked off by police tape after a woman and her stepson were found dead inside. The investigation into the murders is still going on.



Latest police effort yields no new leads

By ANNIE GOELLER
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The crime scene tape and stream of police cars are gone. "Sold" signs and new homes now mark the streets.

Neighbors said life in a northside Franklin neighborhood is returning to what it was before a woman and her stepson were killed in their home nearly seven months ago.

"I think it's gotten back to normal. With us, we have kids; so we just tried to get it back to normal as fast as possible," said Sandy Vanderbur, who lives across

the street from the Branigin Woods home where the two were killed in July.

At the Franklin Police Department, calls about the murders of Chynna L. and Blake Dickus are slowing.

Specific information police released early this month, including a list of items stolen from a home ransacked the same day as the murders, didn't bring any promising new information, Franklin Police Chief John Borges said.

Two detectives are working on the case, down from the four who dedicated their time to the investigation three months ago. Borges has said the investigation will continue until police find who

is responsible for the murders of Blake, 10, and Chynna, 26.

Family members, including Blake's mother, Christina Dickus, hope someone will come forward with information.

"I just hope to see this person caught soon," she said. "I know the detectives are doing everything they can. My life has just been turned upside down."

During the past seven months, police have sorted through hundreds of leads and talked to hundreds of people, but nothing has led them to a suspect in the murders.

After releasing the latest information

(SEE NORMAL, BACK PAGE)

"If we were going to get anything, we would have gotten it by now."

Franklin Police Chief John Borges

On releasing burglary details in hopes of jogging neighbors' memories

Center Grove, Greenwood emergency calls rerouted

By SARAH LIPPS
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The voice at the other end of the line is changing for some Center Grove area residents who call 911 for a fire or ambulance.

When they dialed 911 for fire or a medical emergency before, the call was handled by a dispatcher from

the sheriff's office. Now, the call may be transferred to another dispatcher depending on what the situation is and where the caller lives.

Additional dispatchers will be needed to handle the more than 1,600 calls a year. The money to pay those people will come from a county fund to support emergency service and won't cost Greenwood taxpayers more, a city official said.

Residents of both the Center Grove area and Greenwood will benefit from the switch because it streamlines calls for the three departments, which already respond to the same fires and medical emergencies, officials with all three departments said.

For example, when a house catches fire in Greenwood, the city fire department responds to the

address, and some firefighters from the White River Township department might also go to help with the fire. Greenwood police will arrive at the scene, and a White River Township fire truck will be sent to cover the Greenwood Fire Department station in case another emergency happens.

Having the calls come from one place makes it simpler, said Jim

Engmark, White River Township Fire Department spokesman.

Switching dispatchers will mean less equipment on the road.

Now, White River Township firefighters will take only two vehicles and will send the other equipment if the Greenwood dispatchers determine it's needed, Engmark said.

(SEE CALLS, BACK PAGE)

We're having a heat wave ...

Warmer days to reduce snow piles; flood risk will rise

By CANDACE BEATY
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Forget the scarves, the shovels and the snow. Warmer weather may be here to stay.

Extreme cold and snow will be replaced with puddles and possibly flooding.

After weeks of freezing temperatures, piles of snow and layers of ice, temperatures are taking an upward turn.

Ice should melt during most of the week, as temperatures should stay above freezing during the day, National Weather Service meteorologist Steven Haines said.

High temperatures will be as much as 30 degrees higher than last week, he said.

Last week, school districts canceled classes when temperatures struggled to reach 20. By Saturday, the high should reach 50, Haines said.

In the past week, storms dropped almost a foot of snow on Greenwood, he said. On Sunday, there was a foot of snow on the ground in Indianapolis, a first in 25 years, Haines added.

Moving that snow blower or shovel into storage to make room for the lawn mower may finally be safe.

Don't expect another major snow until next winter, he said.

"(There's) always a chance for another snow, but it doesn't look too probable," Haines said.

The warmth, at least compared to the past few weeks, should stick around, he said.

High temperatures for next few days will be in the low to mid-40s,

(SEE HEAT, BACK PAGE)

THE FORECAST



Wednesday
 High: 47
 Low: 29



Thursday
 High: 49
 Low: 28



Friday
 High: 48
 Low: 36