



PET-TECH AND TRIPS FOR LESS

Also, learn about the greatest moment in Samuel L. Jackson's life. TODAY'S USA WEEKEND

WEEKEND



PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL WHITELAND AND EDINBURGH FACE SECTIONAL FOES

PAGES B1, B3

DAILY JOURNAL

www.thejournalnet.com

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10-11, 2007

Johnson County, Indiana

\$1.00

WEATHER



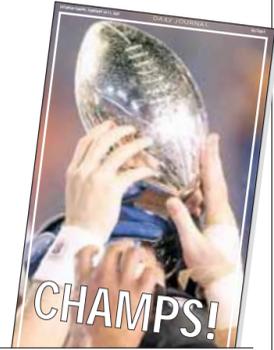
Today
Skies: Mostly sunny
Temps: High 26; low 3

MAP, PAGE A8

INSIDE

Remember the thrill

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



YOU SHOULD KNOW

Fund established to help family whose home burned

A fund has been set up to help a family whose rural Franklin home was severely damaged by fire Thursday morning.

Those interested can make a donation to the David A. Smith and Maureen T. Smith Fire Fund at any Lincoln Bank.

WEB EXTRAS

Get the early edition

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Tell us what you think

Send your comments about all things sports to speakout@thejournalnet.com.

DEATHS

- Edinburgh
James A. Farr, 78
- Franklin
Virginia Coleman, 78
- Greenwood
N. Franklin Burnett, 74
- Trafalgar
Floyd R. Richardson, 85
- Indianapolis
Alma L. Showecker, 68
- Elsewhere
James L. Pickett Sr., 65

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DANGEROUS CROSSINGS

Driver unhurt after train-semi collision



Bargersville firefighters work to contain diesel fuel leaking from a semitrailer that was struck by a train in Bargersville on Friday morning. The driver was not injured. The accident came less than a week after a fatal railroad crossing crash nearby.

Bargersville crossing had no warning lights, gates

By JOSEPH S. PETE

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A semitrailer driver was unhurt Friday after he drove in front of a train in Bargersville and his cab was hit.

The accident happened at the Old Plank Road railroad crossing in the downtown area at 8:47 a.m. The intersection does not have warning lights or gates to stop traffic, and the town's police chief was looking into safety upgrades in the wake of two deaths in a vehicle-train crash in the Center Grove area less than a week ago.

The driver, Jackson County resident Sam Huffman, 34, stopped at a stop sign at the intersection of County Road 144 and Main Street. Main Street runs parallel to the train tracks.

Police said the driver wasn't paying

COMING SOON

Two Center Grove area residents have been working to improve railroad crossings since long before the fatal accident last week.

MONDAY



PHOTO BY BRYAN WOLFE, JOHNSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
The same train sits on the tracks Feb. 3 after a train-sport utility vehicle accident that killed two boys in the Center Grove area.

attention. The driver said he didn't see the train.

Huffman, who has driven semitrailer rigs for eight years, hauls wood chips and mulch through the intersection daily.

Seeing the semitrailer advancing past the stop sign, the conductor blew the train's whistle, which Huffman said he couldn't hear over the radio.

The train, traveling about 30 mph, hit

near the rear of the cab on the driver's side.

The semitrailer was pushed 100 feet down the track, tearing off the railroad crossing sign.

The impact caused the cab to cave in and punctured the fuel tank, spilling diesel fuel. The rig's drivetrain was entirely dislodged, and glass was strewn along the locomotive.

Emergency crews checked out Huffman and found no injuries.

"He's very lucky to be alive," Bargersville Assistant Police Chief Lin Hunt said. "It's just amazing. He should start playing the lottery."

The conductor braked immediately when he saw the semitrailer approach.

The empty train, which was returning to Greene County after dropping off coal in Indianapolis, came to a stop after a few hundred feet. The accident would have been far worse if the train had been weighed down with freight and took longer to slow down, Hunt said.

Police ticketed Huffman, who works

(SEE COLLISION, BACK PAGE)

Same locomotive was involved in fatal crash

Daily Journal staff report

It's rare to have two major vehicle-train accidents in Johnson County in a year.

The average is about one per year over the past several years.

Even rarer is to have two in a week.

But the same train?

Indiana Rail Road Co. locomotive 6004 struck the vehicle occupied by Travis and Jacob Findley on Feb. 3. The boys suffered fatal injuries in the accident at the Stones Crossing Road crossing.

Then Friday, the same locomotive struck a semitrailer cab in Bargersville.

(SEE CRASH, BACK PAGE)

ON THE WEB

Concerned residents can download a copy of a petition requesting upgraded warnings at railroad crossings in Johnson County in the Communities section at thejournalnet.com.

The petition requests signs, bells, arms and lights at crossings throughout the county in light of the deaths of Travis and Jacob Findley in a train-sport utility vehicle crash last week.

You can print, sign and mail the petition. Addresses are included on the form.



Petition on safety devices e-mailed around county

By JOSEPH S. PETE

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A Center Grove resident received an e-mail petition Friday demanding improvements at rail crossings throughout the county.

Then she received it eight more times from others concerned about the issue. In turn, she e-mailed it to a few hundred people, Joyce Long said.

Residents are circulating a letter that asks that safety warnings be installed at Johnson County railroad crossings in light of the deaths of Jacob and Travis Findley.

(SEE PETITION, BACK PAGE)

New WRT trustee struggles with budget, building issues

Rental fee studied for government center

By JOSEPH S. PETE

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A fee to use community rooms at the White River Township Government Center is being considered by the new trustee.

Trustee Jay Marks has proposed charging a rental fee, perhaps \$25, for the rooms, which Center Grove residents have used for baby showers, homeowner association meetings and other functions.

A rental fee would be part of a cost-cutting effort Marks began when he took office Jan. 1. He's cut two positions and shifted office assistants to part time.

(SEE FEE, BACK PAGE)



White River Township Trustee Jay Marks has proposed charging a rental fee to use rooms at the White River Township Government Center as part of his efforts to trim government costs.

Shuffling staff, reducing hours cuts township expenses

By JOSEPH S. PETE

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New White River Township Trustee Jay Marks wants to provide government services more cheaply.

To do that, he has been trimming expenses since taking office this year.

He's cut positions, switched other workers to part time without benefits and cut the township's cell-phone use.

As a self-employed entrepreneur, Marks said he brings a business philosophy to the office.

The township trustee gives out relief for the poor, maintains cemeteries and keeps township records.

After assuming office Jan. 1, he got

rid of cell phones, stopped payment for business travel outside of 50 miles and canceled the township's government-issued credit card.

Last year, township advisory board members questioned expenses former trustee Dan Maple charged to taxpayers, including a four-day hotel stay for an Indianapolis conference and cell phone bills that ran as high as \$700 a month.

"As of the first of this year, the slate has been wiped clean," Marks said. "We're moving forward, not backwards."

To keep costs down, Marks reduced the township office's hours of operation

(SEE EXPENSES, BACK PAGE)

New C-P building to cost \$54M

Middle school one of six projects planned

By SARAH LIPPS

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The first of six construction projects in the growing Clark-Pleasant Community School Corp. now has a price tag.

ON THE WEB

Building a proposed new middle school east of the intermediate school on Sheek Road will cost \$54 million. The estimate does not include the cost to operate the building or hire new staff. The price does include architect fees and land development.

Architects have announced a budget for the new building, along with its impact on taxpayers. They discussed the proposals at a forum Thursday.

The portion of the school's tax bill going to pay off debt would go up \$92.64 for the owner of a \$100,000 home by 2011.

That's after \$60 million is borrowed to pay for three projects, including the new middle school.

The money would be used to pay off the debt for the construction projects but does not include other changes in school spending.

Taxpayers will also be paying back \$6 million the district will borrow to pay for two other projects at that time. The current middle school will be converted into a ninth-grade center, and

(SEE COST, BACK PAGE)

BY THE NUMBERS

A look at the projects planned for the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corp. and the impact they'll have on your pocketbook:

New middle school

\$54 million

Includes \$41,523,750 for construction and \$12,476,250 for soft costs such as architect fees, furniture, equipment and land acquisition.

Converting middle school to ninth-grade center

\$3 million

Includes \$2,310,000 for construction and \$690,000 for soft costs.

Work to be done: Repair roof, replace lockers, upgrade restrooms and add second entryway

Improvements to high school

\$3 million

Includes \$2,310,000 for construction and \$690,000 for soft costs.

Work to be done: Add portable classrooms and small serving line in the cafeteria, raze houses along Main Street to prepare for 2013 work

Tax impact

The debt for the projects will show up as increases on the school portion of tax bills by 2011.

\$92.64 a year

for a \$100,000 home

\$164.04 a year

for a \$150,000 home

\$235.32 a year

for a \$200,000 home