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46, still rainy

MORE WEATHER, PAGE A6.

THURSDAY

MARCH 24, 2022

Advance Leader
Cromwell water project advancing, A3

Kendallville, Indiana

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Road to State



The Central Noble boy's basketball team pose for a photo with Albion Pizza Depot owner John Moorhouse and the sponsors of Tuesday night's event to rally support for the team.

JOE MCQUEEN

Community Support

Albion rallies once again around its state contender

BY JOE MCQUEEN

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ALBION — As the boy's basketball team at Central Noble Jr./Sr. High School prepares for its biggest game of the year, people from the Albion community gathered together to show their support for the boys.

Players, coaches, parents and others gathered at the Albion Pizza Depot Tuesday night to host a special night celebrating how far the team has gotten as they prepare for the state championship game on Saturday in Indianapolis.

The Pizza Depot closed for the public as they hosted the team and their families as a private party. Owner John Moorhouse said they have been hosting the team for the past few weeks as they won the Class 2A sectional, regional and semi-state games.

"We've had them here every week since they've been on this run," he said. "We did the same for the girl's team when they made their state final run in 2018."

He describes himself as an avid basketball fan and has been to every girls and boys game for the past two years.

He said he's 80 year old and has always loved watching the game of basketball.

"It's been unreal watching this



A poster with cutouts of articles from The News Sun are displayed inside the Albion Pizza Depot Tuesday night to celebrate the Central Noble boy's basketball team's state final run.

team play the way they have and I commend their parents for how these boys conduct themselves when they come here," he said.

He said he has given a whole lot back to the community through his pizzeria including sponsoring little league baseball teams.

When the girl's team won the state title four years ago, he said the team came to Pizza Depot after arriving back to Albion and spent the night eating pizza there

to celebrate.

He said the players often come to his pizzeria after practices and is amazed by how polite they always are.

"When they come here during a typical day, there always very respectful and often don't make tons of noise," he said.

Moorhouse plans on heading down to Indianapolis himself Saturday to watch the game and

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BY MATT GETTS

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ALBION — Finally. Hopefully.

The Albion Town Council on Tuesday selected a company with a countrywide, solid reputation for doing good work to repair and install equipment at its sewage lagoon system.

The hope is that the fixes, which will involve pushing oxygen into the first of three sewage ponds, will bring the town's lagoon system into Indiana Department of Environmental Management compliance regarding the ammonia it releases from its ponds.

The town has spent in excess of \$1 million over several years to try and

get into compliance.

The town council voted unanimously Tuesday to spend another \$485,000 to hire Pennsylvania-headquartered Clean Infusion to do the work. More than \$200,000 in equipment has already been ordered for Clean Infusion to install.

"We've been throwing money at this a long time," Councilwoman Chris Magnuson said. "I just really hope this is the end. We've been doing this for years now."

The end-times remedy would be to construct a mechanical plant, which would cost millions.

Without having millions to spend, fixing the ponds is "the next logical

step we can take," Councilman Darold Smolinske said.

On March 7, the town's Wastewater Committee opened bids submitted by contractors to do the project.

The lowest bid was turned in by Clean Infusion at \$485,083. Mason Construction/Engineering of Mongomery submitted a bid of \$506,000. R.E. Crosby Construction of Fort Wayne submitted a bid of \$639,936.

The town was not obligated to take the lowest bid. By law, bids must be awarded based on a combination of three criteria: price, responsiveness and responsibility.

SEE ALBION, PAGE A6

Albion OKs deal for lagoon repair contractor

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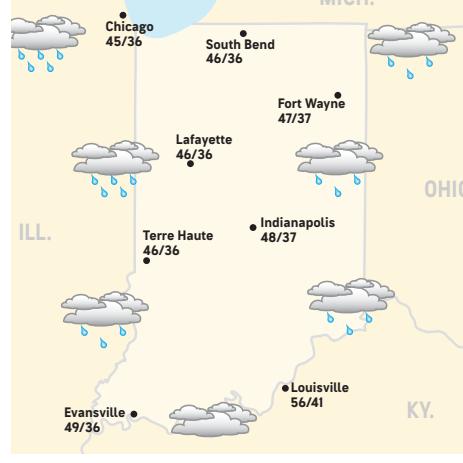
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Chance of rain continues as temperatures fall to the mid 40s for Thursday and Friday. Temperatures will remain cold this weekend and into next week.

Sunrise Thursday 7:49 a.m. **Sunset Thursday 7:57 p.m.**

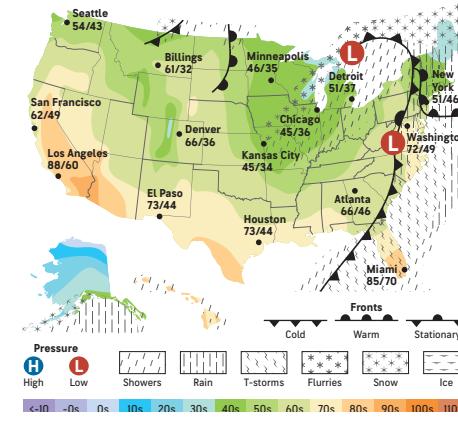


Today's drawing by:

Seth Bontrager

Submit your weather drawings to:
Weather Drawings, Editorial Dept.,
P.O. Box 39, Kendallville, IN 46757

Forecast for Thursday, March 24, 2022
Bands separate high temperature zones for the day.



FACADES: Redevelopment commission pitched in \$300,000 to help fund projects on additional buildings

FROM PAGE A1

deemed to have the biggest impact if they received a renovation — with architectural design and cost estimation wrapped up on those first 10 up earlier this month.

Architects and city leaders met with each of the 10 building owners last week, and while not everyone was able to do the works projects on their buildings due to the cost — projects ranged from \$25,000 at the lowest to around \$350,000, and even at an 85% grant with 15% match that adds up — but all 10 agreed to do something, even if their projects were scaled back a bit, Kendallville Mayor Suzanne Handhoe said on Tuesday.

With those first 10 firmed up, the city has around \$325,000 in budget still available, which means it can start moving down the list to its next buildings.

"According to estimates (and subtracting the funds set aside for the architect), there may be as much as \$325,000 left on the table to begin looking at the restoration of buildings that fell into the Tier 2 category," Kendallville Main Street Manager Kristen Johnson said in a press release announcing the expansion.

Those buildings include, in no particular order:

- 112 S. Main St. (Inspiration Ministries)
- 109-111 S. Main St. (Bargain Shoppe)
- 128 S. Main St. (Carla's 5 Bucks Antiques)
- 121 S. Main St. (The Pure Dream)
- 124 S. Main St. (Picture This in Print)

All five of those buildings are located on the block between William and Mitchell streets.

Architect Martin Riley will be reaching out to these property owners within the next two weeks to gauge their interest in the project and discuss next steps. In the meantime, the architects will be submitting their "first round proposal" to Shannon McLeod with Priority Project Resources, the city's grant administrator, for review.

How many projects ultimately get funded will be dependent on how construction bids pan out this summer.

All of the projects are being compiled together into one package, which is scheduled to go out to bid with contractors by May. Construction firms will then review and bid the projects, with the city then selecting its best price.

Bidding can go either way. Sometimes competition among many firms lands a good price, even better than engineering estimates. But the opposite can also happen, especially if few contractors are able to commit to the size and scope and work required in a big project, or if material costs and labor run higher than expected.

The final bid price will ultimately determine how many of the now-15 buildings



Pictured are the next five buildings being added to Kendallville's \$2 million PreservINg Main Street grant. From top, left to right, are: 109-111 S. Main St., Bargain Shoppe; 124 S. Main St., Picture This in Print; 112 S. Main St., Inspiration Ministries; 128 S. Main St., Carla's 5 Bucks Antiques and Such; and 121 S. Main St., The Pure Dream.

end up getting fixed.

However, Kendallville is already prepared to pick up additional work that falls outside of the \$2 million grant project.

Earlier this month, the Kendallville Redevelopment Commission approved setting aside \$300,000 in tax-increment-financing dollars for facade projects following similar guidelines to the PreservINg Main Street grant.

The match is a little less generous at 75/25 as compared to 85/15, but the grant is open to all downtown buildings, even ones that didn't initially apply for the state grant, although preference may be given to owners

who threw their hats in initially.

But grant contributions will also be capped at \$50,000 maximum, meaning at minimum six additional buildings could be funded, more if projects cost less.

Since that project won't be subject to state guidelines and oversight, projects will be quoted individually, allowing building owners some more flexibility on who might be hired to do the work they want to get done.

It's possible that even with the extra \$300,000 put in by the city redevelopment commission that, by the end of it all, there are still some building owners who end

ALBION: Ammonia continues to be a problem

FROM PAGE A1

A bid is not responsive if it doesn't include all of the work required. A company without a referenced history or a history of doing poor work is considered to be of poor responsibility.

Clean Infusion submitted its bid out of its Missouri offices.

Awarding the work to a company several states away required a lot of legwork by both the town and WET Environmental Engineering, which has designed the fix.

WET Engineering's Karl Tanner and Albion Town Manager Jacob Ihrie teamed up to call all of the references provided by Clean Infusion and Mason Construction/Engineering.

"We did a lot of background work on this," Ihrie said. "No one had anything negative to say about either company."

Ihrie added that not only were references contacted, but the town and engineering firm found recently completed projects by both and also called those communities. The results were the same.

Tanner said he walked through the project with a Clean Infusion represen-

tative prior to Tuesday's meeting, making the company aware of what exactly would be required, including the need for heavy equipment.

"He seemed like everything was covered," Tanner said.

Clean Infusion has done similar work throughout the country, from Texas to Washington state.

The town of Albion's Wastewater Committee opened a lone submitted bid on Oct. 18, 2021, on equipment it hopes will allow the lagoon sewage system to meet Indiana Department of Environmental Management standards for the amount of ammonia the lagoon system releases.

The cost of the equipment, which includes 68 aeration discs, a 40-horsepower blower and 3,900 feet of 3/4-inch feeder pipe which will take oxygen from the blower system and feed it into the discs, was \$239,868.

On Sept. 14, 2021, the Albion Town Council approved WET Engineering's request to prepare and advertise bid specs for aeration units which would be installed in the first

sewage pond. The council also gave WET Engineering permission to seek a construction permit from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for the entire project.

During the winter months, the town has routinely fallen out of compliance with IDEM standards on the level of ammonia released as effluent from its sewage pond.

Wet Engineering officials said some lagoon systems are allowed 10 parts per million of ammonia to discharge, with that number jumping to 15 parts per million in the winter months.

Albion is allotted only 5 parts per million, and it only increases to 5.3 parts per million in the winter.

The aerators would bring to life a stagnant first pond. The lack of oxygen in the first pond is killing the bugs used to eat the ammonia. The inflow and outflow areas of the first pond are also too close together because of a mechanical failure in the pipe which brings sewage into the first pond, so that also needs to be addressed.

PHOTOS BY STEVE GARBACZ