



**Mostly cloudy**  
MORE WEATHER, PAGE A8.

**Local**  
Hosler donates to  
Helping Hands pantry  
in Rome City, **A2**

**Parkview**  
New doc joins  
weight management  
clinic staff, **A2**

# THE NEWS SUN

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**TUESDAY** NOVEMBER 29, 2022

Kendallville, Indiana

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STEVE GARBACZ

The Emerick, Diggins and Zabona law office at 208 S. Main St. was getting a fresh coat of paint this fall as part of ongoing upgrades owner Linda

Zabona-Wooster has made since buying the former spa and moving the law office up the block from its previous location.

## Grant program hits \$100K

BY STEVE GARBACZ

sgarbacz@kpcmedia.com

KENDALLVILLE — Just five years ago, Kendallville was setting aside \$30,000 per year to help building owners fix up their downtown buildings and wasn't getting enough interest to use up all that money each year.

Fast forward to now, where the city used up its entire \$100,000 budget — in 10 months.

And that's not even including a second downtown grant fund reserved for bigger renovations, nor the city's \$2 million PresERVING Main Street state grant that will start construction next year.

Most communities in northeast Indiana now offer some type of matching grant program for building owners who want to spruce up their properties in historic areas or in downtowns. But none of them are doing it on the scale that Kendallville has been recently.

From humble beginnings just a few years back, Kendallville has seen its program grow year-over-year as

owners have opted to pour hundreds of thousands of dollars of new investment into the three-block Main Street corridor and beyond.

While other communities are still working to kickstart redevelopment and growth, Kendallville is now forced to ask itself, is \$100,000 per year even enough any more?

### 50/50 to \$15K

Kendallville's a conservative city, but its facade program is much more liberal than many locally and around the state.

Building owners within the city's tax increment financing district allocation areas can seek a 50% grant for up to \$15,000 annually, provided they are willing and able to put up their 50% match out of their own pocket. That \$15,000 cap is per year, but building owners can apply for as many grants as needed until they hit that limit.

That in itself puts Kendallville a step ahead. While Ligonier will also go up to \$15,000, Garrett maxes out at \$10,000, Angola at \$5,000 and Auburn at just \$2,500.

Kendallville's grants can cover any type of facade improvements — brick repair, new windows, new doors and painting — but the city goes a step further in its willingness to fund even more. Kendallville owners can get money for non-permanent improvements like awnings, signage and window clings that programs like the state's PresERVING Main Street grant won't allow.

Then, Kendallville also funds something some communities don't and it's been a biggie for the city — roofs. Nobody sees a roof, but Kendallville has always justified helping pay for repairs and replacements with the notion that if you can't keep the elements out, everything inside is at risk.

Roofs are OK in Ligonier and Angola, but not allowed in Auburn or Garrett facade programs.

And, if that wasn't enough, Kendallville is also willing to fund repairs and improvements on sides and rears of buildings, while many

SEE FACADES, PAGE A8

## Courthouse renovation price comes in high

BY MATT GETTS

mgetts@kpcmedia.com

ALBION — The Noble County Commissioners had loosely anticipated spending \$4 million to renovate the Noble County Courthouse.

On Monday, project manager Zack Smith provided a detailed preliminary estimate of \$7 million.

With inflation continuing to throttle costs of pretty much everything, Noble County Commissioner Gary Leatherman wasn't stunned by the figure.

"It was a little higher than I expected," Leatherman said. "I'm not shocked."

On Dec. 19, the commissioners will hold an afternoon meeting session in the new annex to discuss ways to potentially trim some of that cost.

Weigand Construction, which is the firm in charge of the project, will be on hand for that meeting, as will American StructurePoint, the project's architect. Sub-contractors who provided data for the estimate released Monday will also be on hand.

The commissioners had said that they wanted to use \$4 million in American Rescue Plan monies to pay for the project.

According to Smith, the plumbing, heating and electrical work alone are projected to eat up all of that money.

Smith said cost-saving ideas will be tossed around at the Dec. 19 meeting, including making use of existing materials and equipment.

"This is the worst-case scenario," Smith said of the \$7 million number. "We have options."

Some of those options include not providing brand

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"It was a little higher than I expected.

I'm not shocked."

— Commissioner Gary Leatherman

new mechanical services. Some of the current systems have some life left, and could last 20 years or more, Smith said.

Most of the mechanicals involved in heating and cooling the courthouse were installed in the 1980s.

Leatherman wasn't too keen on adding band-aids to existing band-aids.

"We're back to kicking that can down the street," Leatherman said. "That's been done for decades."

Leatherman pointed out that what's needed are not cosmetic fixes.

None of the courtrooms are federally mandated ADA-compliant. The probation department also has privacy issues which must be addressed to meet state oversight. The courtrooms, as they stand now, are having major technological issues. As programs such as Community Corrections have expanded, the space needs to house those efforts have greatly increased.

An option to trimming the work would be to find alternative funding sources.

According to Noble County Coordinator Jackie Knafel, there is \$1.9 million currently in the county's CREDIT Fund. The Rainy Day Fund has approximately \$1 million.

SEE COMMISSIONERS, PAGE A2

### Inside

Classified.....B7-B8  
Life.....A6  
Obituaries.....A4  
Opinion.....B5  
TV.....B6  
Sports.....B1-B4  
Weather.....A8

Vol. 113 No. 270



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### Info

#### The News Sun

P.O. Box 39, 102 N. Main St.

Kendallville, IN 46755

Telephone: (260) 347-0400

Fax: (260) 347-7281

Classifieds: (toll free) (877) 791-7877

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## LaGrange man charged with molesting child younger than 14

BY PATRICK REDMOND

predmond@kpcmedia.com

LAGRANGE — A 20-year-old LaGrange man was arrested earlier this month and charged with a single count of child molesting after police allege he was involved in an inappropriate relationship with an underage girl.

The LaGrange Police Department arrested Brogan Robert Knox, 20, of the 100 block of Mountain Street on

Nov. 18 and charged him with Child Molesting, a Level 3 felony. A Level three felony is punishable by between three and 16 years in prison, with a state's advisory sentence listed at nine years.

According to a probable cause document filed in the LaGrange Circuit Court by Nicolas Martin, the LaGrange Police Department detective, Martin alleges that on Sept. 14, Knox became involved

in a sexual relationship with a young girl under the age of 14. About a month later, that victim told police about that incident.

According to the documents, Knox took her to a wooded area near Mountain and Factory streets in LaGrange. Martin alleges Knox first touched his victim inappropriately and then engaged her in sex.

Knox was arrested by the

LaGrange Police Department and transported to the LaGrange County Jail. He made his initial appearance before LaGrange County Circuit Court Judge William Walz and was ordered held on a \$50,000 bond. Walz also issued a no-contract order prohibiting Knox from contacting his victim.

As of Monday afternoon, Knox remained in jail. He's scheduled for trial in June.



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0%	20%	60%	0%	0%	20%	0%	20%	30%	0%
44	56	55	33	45	50	43	46	47	32
35	46	22	24	39	34	32	35	25	

Highs in the mid-50s expected through Wednesday before temperatures plummet into the 30s to begin December. Slight chance of rain today, 60% chance Wednesday.

**Sunrise today 7:44 a.m.**  
**Sunset today 5:10 p.m.**

**Monday's Statistics**  
LOCAL HIGH 43  
LOW 36  
FORT WAYNE HIGH 44  
LOW 37  
SOUTH BEND HIGH 45  
LOW 35  
INDIANAPOLIS HIGH 46  
LOW 40

**Today's drawing by: Nora Kugler**  
Submit your weather drawings to: Weather Drawings, Editorial Dept., P.O. Box 39, Kendallville, IN 46755

## FACADES: TIF combination unleashed city's money

FROM PAGE A1

facade programs — including the state's \$2 million program — only will cover improvements to street-facing facades.

Garrett is one locally that doesn't allow for rear-of-building repairs, but other communities do.

Lastly, the scope of where Kendallville can fund projects is just vastly larger.

While the city program once was only for buildings located in the downtown corridor — like those currently in Auburn, Angola and Garrett — in 2020 the city combined and expanded its TIF allocation areas.

Although Kendallville only captures TIF money from its Downtown TIF, Eastside TIF and new 2020 TIF containing 25 hand-picked parcels primed for development, its allocation area — where it can spend those funds — extends all the way from Drake Road north to U.S. 6 along Main Street as well as the entire U.S. 6 commercial corridor from the west side of the city limits to the east side.

That makes almost every commercial property eligible now, although the brunt of Kendallville's investment is still happening downtown.

### Financial firepower

You've got to capture tax dollars to spend tax dollars, and Kendallville is reaping the benefits of decades of investment within its TIF districts.

Right now, Kendallville is capturing about \$575,000 annually in its three TIF districts. Most of that money comes from the Eastside TIF, which was created ahead of Walmart being developed and that's where almost all of that tax dollar capture comes from, to the tune of about \$440,000 per year.

The downtown TIF, where most of the work is happening, is much less lucrative, generating only about \$120,000 per year, while the new 2020 TIF was only recently formed and, while growing, has a small capture revenue of just about \$13,000 per year.

Although the city has been collecting more than a half-million dollars per year recently, it wasn't always able to utilize that.

Prior to the 2020 TIF combination, those pots of money were segregated, with the lucrative Eastside TIF building a balance that couldn't be used where it was most needed downtown, since TIF funds could only be spent within the zones where they were being collected.

But when Kendallville created its new TIF, it also linked those once-separate TIF districts and was able to then unlock the funds to be spent anywhere within its joined allocation area.

Five years ago, the city could only budget \$30,000 per year for downtown facades because that was all it could afford from its annual collections.

Now, that's no longer an issue, as the city can unleash the full weight of its TIF dollars into projects.

### Still growing

Although Kendallville has the money to do projects, setting a budget of \$100,000 per year for facades doesn't mean anything if no one takes the opportunity to use it.

But that hasn't been an issue, as city leaders have been more aggressive at informing buildings owners that the money is out there and encouraging them to apply for it.

In 2020, the Kendallville Redevelopment Commission paid out \$67,708.56 in 50/50 matching grants. Last year, it grew that total to \$91,636.81.

This year? The board approved \$99,877.51 in projects by October.

All together, that means the city funded nearly \$260,000 with matching investment actually higher than that, since some projects more expensive than \$30,000 cap out at a \$15,000 match.

At its November meeting, Kendallville Redevelopment Commission members were having to turn away applicants seeking money until January, telling them they would have to wait for a budget refill before their requests could be filled.

Redevelopment Commission President Loren Allen said he's seen the increase come due to building owners now being willing to put down bigger chunks of cash on bigger projects.

"It used to be cosmetics and now it's a roof. We're giving \$15,000 a whack instead of \$4,000 and I think the amount we're spending per job, per building is quite a bit higher," Allen said. "A big portion of our cash, that's where it went to. And that's great. There's no better way to preserve Main Street."

But why now? Why not five years ago? Why not 10 years ago?

It's the snowball effect, Mayor Suzanne Handshoe said. Investment breeds more investment and downtown renovation and revitalization work has picked up momentum.

That was keyed, in part, by the city finally being able to complete its \$1.57 million streetscape project in 2021, investing in new sidewalks and curbs, new decorative streetlights and new trees.

Then the city turned right around and clinched the new Preserving Main Street pilot program grant, promising another \$2 million in state funds for downtown work.

"I think that \$2 million facade grant to the city was really a catalyst to what's going on with the RDC," Mayor Handshoe said.

The facade programs themselves have been more visible and pushed harder too.



SHERYL PRENTICE

**Damion Bowker, an employee of Weber Contracting, takes old metal siding off the former A&G Supply building on Main Street in Kendallville.**



STEVE GARBACZ

**A contractor on a lift works on installing new windows in the second floor above Carla's 5 Bucks Antiques and Such at 128 S. Main St. earlier this year.**

## NWI remains identified

GRIFFITH (AP) — Human skeletal remains found last month in a northwest Indiana marsh have been identified as those of an Indiana woman who vanished more than two years ago.

Lake County Coroner David J. Pastrick said Tuesday that Dushawna Glover's remains were identified last week. The Merrillville woman was 48 when she was reported missing by her family in May 2020 after she walked away from a group home where she lived,

The (Northwest Indiana) Times reported.

Glover, who had an intellectual disability, had been staying at that home for only a week when she vanished, Griffith police said.

Numerous unsuccessful searches were mounted for Glover over the coming following months after video footage from a nearby business showed a woman believed to be Glover walking alone in the area prior to her reported disappearance.

A police officer who searched that area on an all-terrain vehicle located a sandal that looked similar to a pair Glover was known to wear, police said.

Her remains were found Oct. 22 by two hunters in a Lake County field when they stumbled onto a bone protruding from a piece of clothing in a marshy area.

An initial investigation by the Lake County Coroner's Office showed that Glover had been dead for over six months.



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