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Photos By Ashland County Pictures

MECHANICS BANK has opened its first Ashland location. A grand opening and ribbon cutting was held with City of Ashland Mayor Matt Miller and Mechanics Bank President and CEO Mark Masters speaking.

Mechanics Bank celebrates Ashland branch grand opening

Article and Photos By Ashland County Pictures

ASHLAND — On what felt more like an early spring afternoon than a mid-January day, Mechanics Bank officially opened the doors to its new Ashland branch with a ribbon cutting and open house that brought together city leaders, business partners and community members alike.

With temperatures hovering near 50 degrees and blue skies overhead on Thursday, Jan. 8, the weather perfectly matched the celebratory mood as guests gathered at the new location along the busy U.S. Route 250 corridor — one of Ashland's most visible gateways.

Among those in attendance were Ashland Mayor Matt Miller; Ohio State Representative Melanie Miller; Mechanics Bank President & CEO Mark Masters; Executive Vice President & CFO Jason Painley; Chief Marketing Officer Kristi Lord; Ashland City Council President Steve Workman (Ward 1); Dennis Miller (Ward 3); Angela Woodward (Ward 4); Dan Lawson (At-Large); Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce President Amy Daubenspeck; and numerous community leaders, business partners, and residents.

During the ceremony, Mechanics Bank leaders reflected on the institution's deep roots and long-standing commitment to community banking.

Mechanics Bank President & CEO Mark Masters opened the formal program by thanking the Ashland community for its warm welcome.

"We're grateful that you're all here today — and also grateful for this unseasonably warm weather," Masters said with a smile. "Most importantly, we're thankful for the business leaders, community leaders, and residents of Ashland who have welcomed us and made us feel like neighbors. It's been fantastic."

Masters also recognized the many Ashland-area businesses that helped bring the project to life, including Simonson Construction, Barefoot Flooring, Shackley Mechanical, DCU Electric, Old Parsonage, Nardo Landscaping, and MCB Paving, noting the importance of investing locally from the very beginning.

Mayor Miller: "A Commitment You Can See"

Ashland Mayor Matt Miller praised Mechanics Bank not only for its beautiful new building, but for the values behind it.

"This is a wonderful monument greeting people as they enter our city along the Route 250 corridor," Miller said. "About a million and a half people pass through this intersection every year—and they're

going to notice this."

Mayor Miller emphasized that Mechanics Bank represents what many in Ashland value most: a locally driven institution that reinvests local deposits back into the community.

"They use our local deposits to build our businesses, build our homes, and build our community," he said. "And the decision-makers

(Continued on Page 7)

RCCS collecting Valentine's Day cards

Richland County Children Services (RCCS) and the Mansfield United Lions Club are making Valentine's Day special for youths in foster care with Valentine's Day cards.

The Mansfield United Lions Club and RCCS will be collecting Valentine's cards for children in foster care ages 0-6, 7-12 and 13-18. Cards can be handmade, or store brought, but no sealed valentines. Cards may be signed and will be accepted through Jan. 23.

The community is invited to drop-off or mail the unsealed cards to Richland County Children Services, C/O Valentine's Day, to 731 Scholl Rd., Mansfield, OH, 44906.

"This Valentine's Day, let's come together to make sure every child in foster care feels seen, valued and cherished," said Brigitte Coles, RCCS Community Engagement Supervisor. "For many of these incredible youths, a Valentine's card may be more than just paper and ink — it can be a reminder that they are not forgotten."

Last year more than 9,000 items, including cards, books, candy, dolls and gift bags were collected. People from all over Richland County and out of state donated cards including families, schools, churches, businesses, public officials, colleges and correctional institutions, helping to make the community project a success.

In Ohio there are more than 14,000 youths in foster care and many of them do not have the chance to be part of Valentine exchanges. The Valentine's Day Card Project gives the community an opportunity to show children in foster care that they are loved, appreciated and not alone.

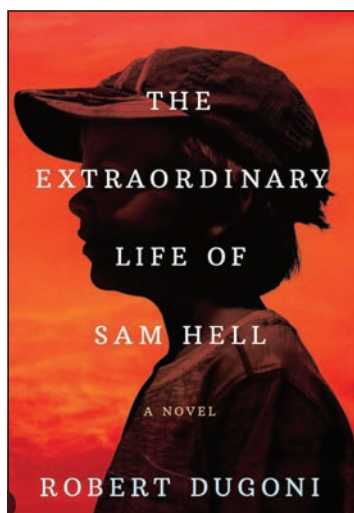
"The Mansfield United Lions have prioritized supporting the foster children of Richland County and we have pride that the project

(Continued on Page 7)

LOST IN A BOOK



A Book Review
By Mandy Belczak Gurney



I really loved *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* by Robert Dugoni. It was original and had such a cool back and forth of timelines that it kept me turning pages.

Sam Hill was born with albinism of the eyes. If you asked his faithful Catholic mother it was a gift from God, but Sam's growing up and trying to fit in meant sometimes he was treated like a devil child. The story is about his discovery of self in spite of and sometimes because of his eyes. It's a story of family and of true friendships. It's a story of laughter and loss. I truly loved it.

My rating: ★★★★★
Follow my blog at GreenGurneys.com

Donors have a chance to win Super Bowl trip

For the seventh year, the American Red Cross and the National Football League (NFL) are partnering in January for National Blood Donor Month to urge individuals to kick off 2026 with a blood donation.

As a thank-you, those who come to give through Jan. 25, will be automatically entered for a chance to win a Super Bowl LX giveaway. The winner and guest will get to enjoy Super Bowl LX in Santa Clara, California, access to day-of in-stadium pregame activities, tickets to the official Super Bowl Experience, round-trip airfare, three-night hotel accommodations (Feb. 6-9), plus a \$1,000 gift card for expenses.

Make an appointment to give blood or platelets by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

Thursday, Jan. 15, 12-5 pm, Heartland Church, 2505 Lexington Springmill Rd. S., Lexington

Friday, Jan. 16, noon to 5 pm, The Ontario Center

Monday, Jan. 19, 12-5 pm, The Ontario Center

Wednesday, Jan. 21, 12-6 pm, The Ontario Center

Thursday, Jan. 22, 1-6 pm, Community Building, 21555 Pealer Mill Rd., Butler

Friday, Jan. 23, 12-5 pm, The Ontario Center

Monday, Jan. 26, 12-5 pm, The Ontario Center

Wednesday, Jan. 28, 12-6 pm, The Ontario Center

Thursday, Jan. 29, 1-6 pm, Madison Adult Career Center, 600 Esley Ln., Mansfield

Friday, Jan. 30, 12-5 pm, The Ontario Center; and 12-5 pm, Resurrection Parish, 2600 Lexington Ave., Lexington

THE ENTERTAINMENT EXAMINER

— By Ian Stumbo —

The Housemaid is based on a very popular series of books by Freida McFadden.

Director Paul Feig, known for comedies, takes a genre turn here and does a great job with it. Sydney Sweeney stars as Millie, a young woman with a troubled past who needs a job and takes one as a housemaid for the wealthy Winchester family headed by Nina (Amanda Seyfried).

Soon, Millie realizes nothing is what it seems with Nina and her husband Andrew (Brandon Sklenar).

Feig directs this movie with ease as McFadden's story has so many twists and turns. As someone unfamiliar with this story, many elements come as a big surprise. Millie and Nina's sto-



ries are not what they seem and it is constantly interesting in the way everything comes together.

Seyfried gives a terrific rounded performance and this is the best I have personally seen Sweeney.

Elizabeth Perkins give a fine supporting turn as Andrew's mother.

The *Housemaid* is a great thriller in the vein of great 90s films like *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* and *Single White Female*.

Sweeney and Seyfried give great performances and it really seems like whether you have read the books or not, there is something to enjoy from this movie.



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News Briefs

A chili cook-off for charity will be held at First Congregational Church, 640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield, on Saturday, Jan. 17, from 4:30–6:30 pm in Blymyer Hall.

The Church Life Committee invites the public to the second annual event. A freewill donation will be collected at the door. All proceeds will benefit the Second Hope Pantry. Prizes will be awarded for the best tasting chili and the best table design.

A recycling trailer will be in the parking lot at Ontario United Methodist Church, 3540 Park Avenue West, Jan. 24 and 25. Acceptable items include steel and aluminum cans, crushed milk jugs, detergent bottles, plastic bottles with number 1 or 2 on the bottom, broken down cardboard, all papers included with the newspaper but no other magazines or paper. Please remove caps from bottles and rinse all containers well.

All Souls Unitarian Universalist of Bellville, 25 Church St., Bellville, will welcome Samuel Prince on Sunday, Jan. 18, at 10:30 am. The subject will be "The Flow of Our Sacred Energy and Our Finite Frame." For information visit www.allsoulsuuohio.org.

The Lexington Area Senior Citizens Inc., invites those 55 and older to attend meetings the third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am at Der Dutchman, Rt. 96, Bellville. Cost is \$17 for the meal, with an additional \$2 for pie.

The next meal will Jan. 21, and will include pork. Jan Maddy, world traveler, will speak to the group.

For information visit www.lexasc.org. Dues are \$10 per year.

Trinity Grace Fellowship, 1592 Grace St., Mansfield, is looking to hire an experienced choir director to fill the position with an adult volunteer choir. The choir meets each Wednesday from 5–7 pm to prepare for 9:30 am Sunday services.

The choir/congregation look forward each year to either an Easter or Christmas cantata. The choir consists of approximately 18 singers, an experienced pianist/organist and five potential instrument soloists to complement the choir.

Trinity supports a mixed contemporary/traditional theme during our service and Christmas songs, classics and hymns make up our typical musical selections.

If interested, to receive a job description, application and interview times contact Trinity at 1592 Grace St., Mansfield, e-mail secretary@trinitygacefellowship.org or call secretary Mary Stake at 419-589-5890.

Richland County Mobility Management hosts Mobility Steps at the Ontario Center (previously Richland Mall) between 10 am and noon on the first and third Wednesday of every month (excluding holidays).

Anyone that submits their steps at the walks is entered into a drawing for a \$10 gift card.

A special walking event will be held April 29, from 10 am to noon on the OSU-M campus, 1760 University Dr., Mansfield.

The walk starts at the campus recreation center and will be an easy walk through the campus while learning about local programs and services from the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging and Richland Mobility Management. No registration is required.

In the event of inclement weather, the walk will be held inside the recreation center. For information call Randy at 567-247-6483.

The Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet & Food Pantry recently opened and is offering free clothing and food for those in need. Open Mondays, 9 am to 2 pm, as well as every third Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm, the closet is located at the church, 2656 Taylortown Rd., Shelby. Church volunteers also serve a free hot meal every third Thursday from 5:30–6:30 pm with the next being Jan. 15.

There are no income or residency requirements. All are welcome.

Those wishing to donate can drop-off items during open hours or call or text Lyndi Oakley 419-814-0372 or Tonja Barnett 419-571-3846 to set up a time outside of normal hours.

The biggest needs are non perishable food, coats, hats, gloves and kids clothing. Food is distributed quickly and will probably always be the greatest need. 100% of all donations go to filling the closet and pantry. Follow on Facebook at Taylortown Community Church Blessing Closet.

The Pioneer Career and Technology Center Board of Education will hold its organizational and regular meeting at 6 pm, Wednesday, Jan. 21 in the Pioneer Board of Education Conference Room.

In honor of the Martin Luther King Jr Day holiday, Great Lakes Science Center will offer free general admission to all guests from 10 am to 5 pm on Monday, Jan. 19.

Parking is available for a reduced rate of \$9 per vehicle in the Science Center's attached garage. Due to the potential for large crowds, the Science Center's front drive parking spaces will all be converted for vehicles with handicap placards or license plates. Additional parking is available in the surface lot north of Huntington Bank Field. The center is located at 601 Erieside Ave., Cleveland. For information call 216-694-2000 or visit GreatScience.com.



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National award given to Farm Bureau program in Richland County

The American Farm Bureau Federation County Activities of Excellence awards celebrate unique, local, volunteer-driven programs that serve as models of innovation for local program development.

The winning 24 counties, including nine from Ohio, received a grant to fund participation in the Farm Bureau CAE Showcase at the 2026 American Farm Bureau Annual Convention & Trade Show Jan. 9–14 in Anaheim, California.

“One of the most fulfilling aspects of serving as the American Farm Bureau president is getting the chance to witness firsthand the remarkable things our members are doing within their communities,” said Zippy Duvall, AFBF President. “I have come to learn, starting

with my own Farm Bureau journey, that the spirit of community and innovation helps drive our organization at the local level. Our grass-roots leaders are constantly raising the bar and finding new ways to show up and support their communities.”

Projects for the CAE awards are categorized in the following areas: education and ag promotion, member services, public relations and information, leadership development and policy implementation and safety.

The Richland County project is “Cultivating Minds.”

The project provided three agricultural and environmental literacy kits to each elementary school in the county and the county public library to teach youth about agriculture, food, and natural resources. Supplying kits to the public library gave homeschooled children and other civic groups, like scouts and 4-H clubs, access to the lessons and materials as well.

Ohio Farm Bureau’s mission is working together for Ohio farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen communities. Learn more at ohiofarmbureau.org.



Alberta Canada • Photo By Mark Shutt

Church Directory

First Congregational Church

640 Millsboro Rd., Mansfield
419-756-3046 • www.mansfieldfcc.com
Pastor Brad Bunn
8:30 am Chapel • 10:30 am Sanctuary
10:30 am Sunday School (nursery–high school)
10 am Monday Morning Bible Study

Lexington Church of the Cross

236 Otterbein Dr., Lexington
419-884-2150 • Churchofthecrosslex.com
Pastor-Rev. Dr. Edna Stahl
Sunday Worship 9:30 am
Junior Church for 10 and under • Wesley Class 10:45
5th Sunday of the month–Do Something Sunday AA, Girl Scouts,
Yoga, Knotty Ladies
and Bible Study.

Ontario United Methodist Church

3540 Park Avenue West., Ontario
419-529-4345 • ontarioumc.com
Rev. J.P. Snyder
9:30 am Grace & Eggs
11 am Sunday Worship and Kingdom Kids

St. John's United Church of Christ

2010 Park Avenue West, Mansfield
(At Hope Lutheran Next to Drug Mart)
419-522-2813 • www.stjohnsmansfield.org
contact@stjohnsmansfield.org
Pastor Faith Proietti • 11 am Sunday Worship
Office hours: Mon–Fri 9 am to 1 pm
AA Meetings M & F 10 am & noon;
Wed. noon Brown Bag and Sat. 6 pm

Trinity Grace Fellowship

1592 Grace St., Mansfield
419-589-5890 • trinitygracefellowship.org
Pastor Larry Carnes
9:30 am Sunday Worship • 11 am Sunday School
Bible Study Mondays 2 pm

G & M Body & Paint Shop

1689 West Fourth St., Ontario • 419-529-2747

Wappner Funeral Home

Mansfield • Ontario • Ashland • 419-522-5211

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VALENTINE'S DAY... *Because Love Deserves to be Pampered (and Shared)*

Photo and Article By Traci Little

Valentine's Day has long been associated with flowers, chocolates, and candlelit dinners — but here in Richland County, love often looks a little different. A little more personal and meaningful.

More and more, people are choosing to give something that lasts longer than roses and sweeter than candy: time, care, and shared experiences.

Because sometimes the best gift isn't wrapped in a box at all. It's a massage after a long week. A facial that helps someone feel confident again. A pottery class where laughter matters more than perfection. A cooking class, a painting night, or a dance lesson — a memory made together.

This Valentine's season, local businesses across our community are helping couples, friends, parents, and even solo self-care seekers celebrate love in all its forms. From salons and spas to creative studios and experience-based venues, Richland County is full of beautiful ways to pamper the people you love — including yourself.

Love Looks Like Self-Care

For many of us, Valentine's Day is a reminder to pour into others. To show appreciation. To give. But local wellness professionals are



also encouraging something just as important: don't forget to pour into yourself.

Whether it's a massage to release stress, a fresh hairstyle, glowing skin, or a quiet moment to breathe in the middle of a busy season, self-care is more than an indulgence — it's restoration. And giving self-care is a simple but powerful way to say, "I see how hard you work. You deserve this."

Local spas, salons, massage therapists, med spas, and wellness centers are offering Valentine's specials, packages, and gift cards designed to help people feel their best from

the inside out. It's an easy, meaningful way to show love — and one that continues to give long after Feb. 14 has passed.

Love Looks Like Making Memories

At the same time, many are rethinking traditional gifts altogether. Instead of "things," they're choosing experiences.

A pottery class for two. A painting night with friends. A couples cooking class. A dance lesson that turns into laughter. A creative workshop that sparks conversation and connection.

These experiences do more than fill an evening — they create memories. They give people something to look forward to. They turn an ordinary night into a story you'll talk about later.

Richland County is full of creative businesses offering hands-on classes, date-night ideas, and unique experiences that bring people together. And Valentine's is the perfect excuse to try something new.

Love Local

What makes these gifts even more special is that they're local. When you book a massage, buy a gift card, sign up for a class, or reserve a spot at an event, you're not just celebrating someone you love — you're supporting a neighbor, a small business owner, and a dream built right here in our community.

That's the heart of this season.

Love that stays local.

Care that stays local.

Memories made right here at home.

So whether you're planning a romantic night out, a girls' night, a mother-daughter date, a surprise for your spouse, or simply a moment of peace for yourself — remember:

Love deserves to be pampered.

Love deserves to be experienced.

Love deserves to be celebrated.

And in Richland County, there are so many beautiful ways to do just that.

Stay tuned over the coming weeks as we highlight some of our featured local favorites.

Obituary Listings for Wappner Funeral Directors

John Dewey Tackett, December 25
Joseph Anthony Smith, January 1
Dan Stewart Leclair, January 2
Harlan Wesley Webb, January 2
Sophia Nickolaou, January 3
Charles Edward Brooks, January 4
Bhanumati Das, January 4
Barbara Jean Hipp, January 4
Gary Lynn Santee, January 4
Debra Ann Jeffries, January 5
Eva "Jeanie" J. Schluter, January 5
Betty Lue Cobb, January 6
Robert John Petruna Sr., January 8
Elaine Kay Armstrong, January 8
Lucinda Lee Spencer, January 8
Leigh Ann Burkhardt, January 9

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Ohio State Mansfield plans Spring Buckeye Preview Days

Future Ohio State students who would like to learn more about earning their degree in Mansfield can attend Buckeye Preview Days Jan. 23, Feb. 16, March 28 or April 24.

Each day includes interactive sessions with academic counselors and admissions staff, financial advisors, the dean at Ohio State Mansfield, and campus tours led by current students.

"It's a really helpful event with all of the admissions and academic people in the same room and you can ask questions freely throughout the day," said Clara Johnson, a junior studying social work and a current Buckeye Ambassador.

Johnson enjoys pointing out where all the buildings and classrooms are located, and some of her favorite places on campus – like where to eat, study and socialize.

In addition to the group sessions, the day provides an excellent opportunity for one-to-one conversations and networking, according to Serenity Lawson, a zoology major and another Buckeye Ambassador.

"I attended my first Buckeye Preview Day before I was a student, and now I help answer questions and lead tours," said Lawson. "Preview Days are very informative, and they provide a personal touch that goes beyond what people receive through the mail and email."

A key part of the day will be highlighting all of Ohio State's affordability initiatives including the recently announced Regional Campus Commitment, which provides free tuition to qualifying students.

Ohio State Mansfield offers 12 different bachelor's degree options for students to complete on campus, and students can start any of Ohio State's 200-plus undergraduate degrees and finish in Columbus.

"Whether you wish to just start your degree with us or complete all four years, there is a place on our campus for you," said Diane Kanne, director for regional campus recruitment strategies and initiatives. "We look forward to welcoming you soon and providing you with a Buckeye experience filled with exciting opportunities, growth and the ability to work toward a degree from The Ohio State University."

All events will begin in Riedl Hall and students can register online at go.osu.edu/visitmansfield

While registration is encouraged, unregistered guests are always welcome to join us. For more information, contact the Admissions Office at mansfield-askabuckeye@osu.edu or call 419-755-4317.

HEAP assistance now available

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc. has announced that assistance is available to help with home energy bills.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps Ohioans at or below 175 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of up to eight members and 60 percent of State Median Income for a household of nine or more members to pay their heating bills.

The benefit is applied directly to the customer's utility or bulk fuel bill. Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and completing the application or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to apply online or to download a copy of the application.

Applications must be received by May 31, 2026. For information call 419-524-4144.

When applying, individuals need to have copies of most recent utility bills, a list of all household members (including birth dates and Social Security numbers, proof of income for the past 30 days for all household members (12 months for certain income types), proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members and proof of disability (if applicable).

To be connected to a local energy assistance provider, call 800-282-0880 (hearing impaired clients may dial 711 for assistance) or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov.



ONTARIO STINGEL ELEMENTARY recently held its annual spelling bee, showcasing the hard work and determination of spellers. Students competed through multiple challenging rounds. The top three contestants were Evelyn Lee (third place), Brooke Meyer (second place) and Aaliyah Currie (first place). These students will represent Stingel at the Richland County Spelling Bee on Jan. 22.

News Briefs in Education

Kyle Collins of Mansfield has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's Fall 2025 Dean's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the dean's list. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) students have been named to the Fall 2025 President's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.7 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired eight-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Local students on the list are Micah Gillum of Mansfield, Jennifer Gallo of Mansfield, Reece Neuenschwander of Mansfield, Thomas Wilcoxson of Mansfield and Robert Broyles of Mansfield.

★

Ohio Wesleyan University has announced its dean's list for fall semester 2025. To qualify for OWU Dean's List recognition, students must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale in all applicable classes.

Local residents earning the outstanding academic achievement include Cooper Christie, Olivia Humphries, Will Kepple, Arianna Morris, Jameson Myers and Ava Swanson, all of Mansfield.

★

In recognition of academic performance, the Office of Academic Affairs at the University of the Cumberlands has announced the students named to the dean's list for the fall 2025 semester. Local students on the list are Karl Etzel and Abigail Little, both of Mansfield.



•Mechanics Bank celebrates Ashland branch grand opening

(Continued from Front Page)

are right here in the region. That matters.”

Miller also shared a personal example of the bank’s commitment, noting an unexpected charitable donation to support Ashland’s park system just before Christmas.

“We didn’t even ask for it,” Miller said. “They just wanted us to know they’re committed to being a valuable part of this community.”

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce President Amy Daubenspeck reflected on how quickly the project moved from open ground to a community landmark.

“Not too long ago, this was just grass, mud, and dirt,” Daubenspeck said. “Now it’s this beautiful building—and we’re so excited that Mechanics chose Ashland for its first location outside of Richland County.”

She highlighted the bank’s early efforts to build relationships, noting that Mechanics employees are already participating in Leadership Ashland and engaging with community initiatives.

“From day one, they said, ‘We want to be part of Ashland,’” Daubenspeck said. “And Ashland loves partners like that.”

Returning to the podium, Masters emphasized that the ribbon cutting marked more than just a physical opening—it symbolized a long-term commitment.

“We didn’t choose Ashland just because we had customers here, or just because we found a place to build,” Masters said. “We chose it because we see a community with momentum—people who care about one another and take pride in every corner of the community.”

He pledged that Mechanics Bank will focus on local hiring, local investment, and active participation in community life—supporting businesses, families, nonprofits, and local government.

“We make decisions close to home,” Masters said. “And we believe that’s a meaningful difference.”

The ceremony concluded with the official ribbon cutting, led by Masters, Painley, Ashland Branch Manager Nikki Herman, Assistant Manager Holly Jones, and special guest helpers Logan and Jacob Hoover — young customers representing the next generation of the community.

Guests were then invited inside to tour the new facility and enjoy refreshments, officially ushering Mechanics Bank into its newest chapter in Ashland.

Chief Marketing Officer Kristi Lord shared that Mechanics Bank is a full-service, independent community bank headquartered in Richland County, first opening its doors in downtown Mansfield in 1886. In 2026, the bank celebrates its 140th anniversary, a milestone that emphasizes its long history of independence and local decision-making.

“We’ve maintained our independence for 140 years,” Lord said. “We currently have nine offices in Richland County, and our new Ashland office marks our 10th location — and our first outside of Richland County.”

The Ashland branch stands as the fulfillment of a project first celebrated during a groundbreaking ceremony in November 2024, when Mechanics Bank announced its expansion into Ashland County and

its vision of being “more than a bank—a community resource.”

With its doors now open, that vision is officially a reality.

The Ashland branch is located at 1040 George Rd., Ashland, and the lobby is open Monday–Thursday, 8:30–5:30, Friday, 8:30–6; and Saturday 8:30–1. The drive-thru is open Monday–Friday, 8–6 and Saturday, 8:30–1.

Watch the full video at: https://ashlandcountypictures.com/.../mechanics-bank...

Richland County Foundation opens scholarship application

The Richland County Foundation offers scholarships to graduating high school seniors, current college or career tech students and non-traditional students.

Past recipients of an RCF scholarship are eligible to receive awards again. No scholarships through the Foundation are automatically renewable so applicants must apply each year.

New applicants, applying for college scholarships, including high school seniors must have at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA), and returning applicants must have at least a 2.0 GPA, attend an accredited school and be a resident of Richland County, or a graduate of a Richland County high school.

The deadline for college scholarship applications is April 1. Scholarships are awarded based on the financial need of the applicant.

All awarded scholarships will be sent directly to the school. Last year, the Foundation awarded over \$1M in scholarships.

The Foundation also awards career technical education (CTE) scholarships to individuals who want to obtain certifications and credentials at accredited technical institutions. A rolling deadline has been implemented for CTE scholarships to meet various enrollment deadlines. The Foundation wants to help fill the gap between job openings and certified employees as well as lead the way to support workforce development through CTE scholarships.

For more information visit richlandcountyfoundation.org or contact Community Investment Officer Bobby Rhea at 419- 525-3020 or brhea@rcfoundation.org.

Winter reading program underway

The Mansfield/Richland County Public Library (MRCPL) invites the community to take part in its annual Winter Reading Program, running Jan. 5–31. Community members are encouraged to cozy up indoors this winter and be rewarded for reading books, eBooks or audiobooks.

The program is open to readers of all ages, with prizes available for children, teens, and adults. Participants simply read a book and submit a completed ticket, either in person or online, to be entered into weekly prize drawings. Tickets are available at all nine MRCPL locations, at any Bookmobile stop, or through an online submission option on the Library’s website. Adults can also follow MRCPL on Facebook during the program for additional chances to win.

For added convenience, the MRCPL Ontario Branch offers 24/7 hold lockers for after-hours pickup. When placing an item on hold, select “Ontario Pickup Locker” as the pickup location.

For access to 24/7 digital resources, library hours, and complete details about the Winter Reading Program, visit mrcpl.org.

•RCCS collecting Valentine’s Day cards

(Continued from front Page)

has significant outreach with joy as the outcome,” said Dr. Debra Weaver, president of the Mansfield United Lions.

RCCS encourages all individuals to invest in the lives of children and to provide them with unconditional love, support, guidance, and every available resource. Those interested in becoming a foster parent can contact RCCS at 419-774-4100 or visit richlandcountychildrengservices.org. For information about the card project contact Brigitte Coles at 419-774-4168 or brigitte.coles@jfs.ohio.gov.



Photo By Mechanics Bank

ATTENDING THE MECHANICS BANK Ashland Branch grand opening on Jan. 8 were State Representative Melanie Miller, Ashland Mayor Matt Miller, Mechanics Bank CEO Mark Masters and Mechanics Bank Executive Vice President Jason Painley.

Madison board recognizes teachers for student growth

The Madison Local Board of Education held its organizational and regular meetings Jan. 7 in the Madison Comprehensive High School Library.

During the organizational part of the meeting, newly elected and re-elected board members were sworn-in. Board members are Mary Kotterman, Melissa Walker, Amy Walker, Adam Porter and Doug Mosier. Amy Walker will serve as president and Melissa Walker will serve as vice president.

Administrative committee liaisons chosen for 2026 are Mary Kotterman, Board Policy and Finance; Doug Mosier, Legislative and Athletic Board of Control; Adam Porter, Student Achievement and Finance; Amy Walker, Board Policy and Legislative; and Melissa Walker, Athletic Board of Control and Student Achievement.

Teachers were recognized with certificates where significant evidence demonstrated that each teacher's students made more growth than expected on the Ohio State Tests during the 2024-'25 school year. Certificates were presented to Madison Comprehensive High School teachers Kimberly Boehm, American Government; and Matthew Wade, American Government; Madison Middle School teachers Kristen Agee, sixth grade English/language arts; Wendy Caperton, fifth grade science; Judy Richardson, seventh grade math; Christa Shutt, eighth grade math; Goldie Spencer, fifth grade science; Troy Stimpert, fifth grade math; Megan Studer, fifth Grade English/Language Arts; Zinda Thomas, eighth grade science; Christine Vermillion, fifth grade science; and Sarah Weiser, eighth grade math; Mifflin Elementary School teacher Dane Henry, fourth grade math; and Madison South Elementary School teachers Valerie Barnhart, fourth grade math and Melissa Vetter, fourth grade math.

Lindi Holfinger, Madison Early Childhood Learning Center (MECLC) Director and Jennifer Eckenwiler, Madison South Preschool Coordinator, gave presentations.

A donation of scrap steel, in various sizes and thicknesses, including stainless steel drops, hot roll drops, aluminum drops and galvanized drops, was accepted from Matern Metal Works, in the amount of \$2,600. It will be used by the Welding Technologies Programs.

Treasurer Bradd Stevens' monthly financial report and Fiscal Year 2027 tax budget was approved. A requisition to Standard Plumbing and Heating in the amount of \$148,040.00 for the replacement of two boilers in the middle school was approved.

A resolution was approved to sell board-owned property. This is approximately 12.85 acres situated at 690 Ashland Rd. and Madison Rd., in Madison Township. This is the location of the previous junior high. It will be sold by public auction on Feb. 23. The sale is not final until the board accepts the bid at a meeting Feb. 24.

A resolution was approved declaring the necessity of raising an additional \$6,597,188 annually for school district purposes, specifically, current expenses. The item will be on the May 5 ballot and, if approved, would go into effect for a five-year period beginning Jan. 1, 2027.

A resolution was also approved declaring intent to cease collection of a 7.50 mill current expense levy upon approval of the 1.50% income tax on earned income only.

Substitute teachers hired on an "on call" basis, as needed for the 2025-'26 school year were Alexis Thomas, long-term sub for high school art and Abigail Zirzow.

Shanna Wake was hired as a four-hour cafeteria worker at the middle school and Reagyn Cox was hired as an assistant teacher at MECLC. Olivia Price resigned from this position, effective Dec. 18.

Cell phone allowance was approved for John Neron, Mark Pogue, Joshua Miller, Jeremy Thoman and Mike Yost for January-December 2026.

A Service Agreement between Madison Local School District and the Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board for speech therapy services beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 was reached.

A modified 2025-'26 school calendar was approved. The last day for elementary school students will be May 22, with no early dismissal. A modified 2025-'26 calendar for the Madison Early Childhood Learning Center was approved. Summer Rams Club will start on Tuesday, May 26.

House Bill 144, "Keith's Law," advances safety and understanding for individuals with developmental disabilities

Submitted by Troy Smith, Richland Newhope

House Bill 144, known as "Keith's Law," represents a significant step forward in improving safety, awareness, and communication during interactions between first responders and individuals with developmental disabilities.

Keith's Law is designed to enhance understanding during emergency situations, traffic stops, and other encounters by ensuring critical information is accessible to law enforcement and emergency responders. The legislation allows individuals with communication disabilities, and those who regularly transport them, to voluntarily enroll information into the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) and county 9-1-1 systems. This proactive approach provides first responders with advanced awareness, helping reduce misunderstandings and promote safer, more effective responses.

Mansfield Safety Service Director Keith Porch emphasized the importance of the legislation and its impact on both individuals and families, "Keith's Law is about improving understanding and safety during interactions between first responders and individuals with communication disabilities. By providing officers with advanced awareness through LEADS and county 9-1-1 systems, this law helps reduce misunderstandings and supports more effective, compassionate responses in the field. Keith's Law acknowledges that communication challenges not only affect individuals but also impact families and caregivers. Allowing those who regularly transport someone with a communication disability to enroll adds another layer of safety and preparedness during emergency or traffic-stop situations."

Richland Newhope Manager of Community Education Troy Smith highlighted the significance of the legislation for the disability community and those who support them:

"The significance of Keith's Law cannot be overstated. This legislation will greatly benefit individuals with developmental disabilities while also providing peace of mind to family members, guardians, and providers. By improving communication and awareness for first responders, Keith's Law helps ensure safer interactions and reinforces the dignity, rights, and well-being of people with disabilities and those who support them every day."

Advocates say the law reflects a growing recognition that communication disabilities can affect how individuals respond under stress and that awareness is critical to ensuring safe interactions. By expanding enrollment to caregivers and family members, Keith's Law strengthens protections for families and support systems as a whole, not just individuals.

House Bill 144 reinforces Ohio's commitment to inclusive public safety practices and ensures first responders are equipped to serve people with disabilities with dignity, understanding and care.

For more information about Keith's Law and enrollment information contact Troy Smith at Richland Newhope at 419-774-4215 or tsmith@rnewhope.org.

RCGS program will focus on AI

Richland County Genealogical Society will host a program called "Using AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Genealogy" on Saturday, Jan. 17.

Chapter President, Linda Collins, will be the presenter. The in-person session will be held at The Ohio Genealogical Society, 611 St. Rt. 97 W., Bellville, from 2-4 pm. Guests are welcome to attend in person or by Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent for those not able to attend in person. To receive the zoom link, text your request to rcgs48812@gmail.com at least two days in advance.

The chapter will also meet on Thursday, Jan. 15, from 10 am to 4 pm for the monthly work day at The Ohio Genealogical Society. The group is unfolding and processing early Richland County Court documents for filing and indexing its archives.

RCGS (local chapter) and OGS (state organization) are separate organizations at the same address. They have separate collections and websites. Both are nonprofit organizations with their own dues structure for membership. The RCGS website is <https://ohrichgs.weebly.com/>. The OGS website is <https://www.ogs.org/>.

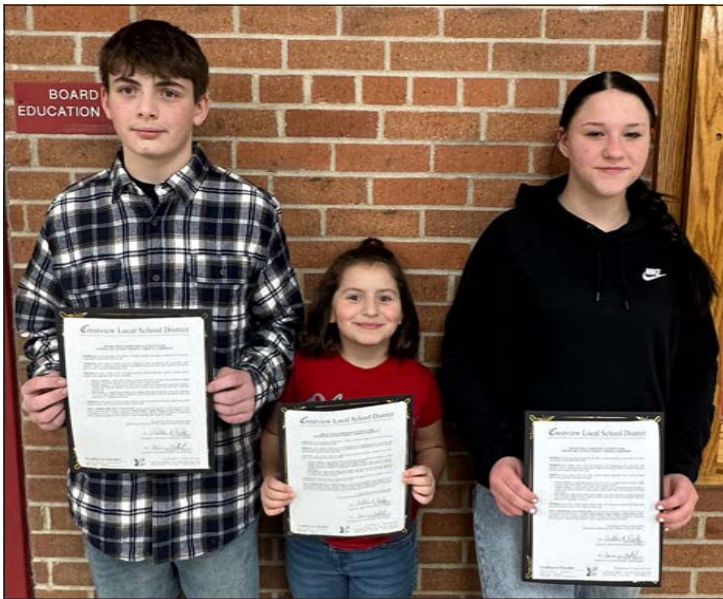


Photo By Jenna Wolford

THREE CRESTVIEW STUDENTS were recognized for their "exemplary actions during a medical emergency." This was in recognition of their actions on the morning of Dec. 19, when their school bus driver had a medical emergency. The resolution states, "the students aboard the bus responded with exceptional calm, awareness and maturity, quickly recognizing that assistance was needed and ensuring that district staff and emergency services were contacted without delay." Vital roles were played by students Charles Thomas, a seventh grade student who successfully used the bus radio to communicate with the district's transportation director and relayed vital information until help arrived; Catrina Thomas, a third grade student who was the first to recognize the emergency, sought assistance from older students and provided critical location details; and Kali Meeks, an eighth grade student who went to the front of the bus, attempted to use the radio, directed students to move to the back of the bus and remain calm and placed the 9-1-1 emergency call. The students were presented the resolutions from the school board during the meeting Monday, Jan. 12.

Renaissance Performing Arts to host auditions for "Shrek, The Musical, Jr."

The Renaissance Theatre will hold auditions for the Mansfield Youth Theatre ("MY Theatre") production of *Shrek, the Musical, Jr.* on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 2:30-5 pm, and on Monday, Jan. 26, from 5:30-8 pm at the Renaissance's Theatre 166 venue, located at 166 Park Avenue West in downtown Mansfield.

Appointments are not required for auditions. Those auditioning must be 18 years of age or younger (unless still attending high school) during the 2025-'26 school year, and should be no younger than nine years of age.

Anyone auditioning should be prepared to sing a 16-32 measure excerpt from a song of their choice and bring sheet music in the proper key. An accompanist will be provided. Some actors may be asked to read a short scene from the script. Those auditioning should bring a list of schedule conflicts between the dates of auditions and the performances of *Shrek, Jr.* Performance dates are March 27-29. All performances will be held on stage at the Renaissance. *Shrek, Jr.* will be directed by Dauphne Maloney, with musical direction by Brian K. Nabors.

Based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film, *Shrek, The Musical* is a Tony Award-winning fairy tale adventure.

Shrek: The Musical, Jr. will be presented as a part of the Mechanics Bank Education Series. Sensory-Friendly accommodations are supported by Gorman-Rupp Company.

For more information regarding auditions contact Dauphne Maloney at dauphne@mansfieldtickets.com, or 419-522-2726, ext. 212.

Crestview recognizes school board members' service

The Crestview Local School District Board of Education met for the organizational and regular meeting on Monday, Jan. 12.

The Oath of Office was administered to newly-elected board member Doug Eichelberger and returning board member Jessica Tucker.

Debbie Reidy was chosen to serve as board president and David Kissel will serve as vice president.

Board meetings were set to typically be held the third Monday of each month at 6 pm, with an exception for meetings to be held Feb. 9 and Aug. 10. Meetings are held in the Crestview Middle School Assembly Room.

In honor of School Board Recognition month in January, Crestview Superintendent Jim Grubbs recognized board members for their service: David Brennan, 3.5 years; Doug Eichelberger, newly elected; David Kissel, 11 years; Debbie Reidy, 10 years; and Jessica Tucker, 4 years.

Three students were recognized for their assistance in a medical emergency on their school bus Dec. 19. Charles Thomas, Catrina Thomas and Kali Meeks were presented with printed resolutions from Superintendent Grubbs.

The board heard from Kristi Barker, director of student services, of the need for a full-time intervention specialist to be added for next school year. She presented current data showing the increase in need for the position.

A grant donation of \$4,992 was accepted from Richland County AED toward purchase of three CR2 AEDs. Donations were also accepted from Honey Haven Farm, \$1,500 for varsity boys' soccer; Bureau of Workers' Compensation Safety Intervention 75/25 Matching Grant (SIG), \$16,055 for purchase of an electric scissor lift; Ohio State Eagles Charity Fund, \$2,000 for the high school Thanksgiving meal; and Greenwich Tri Community Fire Department, \$900 for the Special Services Department.

Student fundraisers were approved including the 20th Annual Road Apple Run 5K which will take place at the school on March 7.

Substitute personnel hired were James Adams, Shelly Adams and Kathryn Lindenberger. M. Riley Speicher-Bailey was hired as substitute cafeteria personnel.

One-year coaching contracts were awarded to Lane Fry, assistant middle school wrestling co-coach; Colton Campbell, assistant middle school wrestling co-coach; and Garrett Dudley, assistant varsity girls track coach. Brett Lloyd was approved as a volunteer assistant softball coach.

A discussion was held about open enrollment, showing 99 coming to Crestview this school year and 81 Crestview District students attending other schools. Seventy nine students from the 99 open enrolled are from neighboring school districts and 20 are considered statewide enrolled.

Another discussion about future bussing concerns was held. As bus drivers retire it has been difficult to find replacements. The school district is open to applicants, but if the staff shortage continues, an alternative plan will have to be made for next school year. The possibility of running a middle school/high school route separate from the elementary route may have to be looked into. This would allow bus drivers to run two routes. The elementary would then start at a later time. The district has consistently cut routes to try to resolve this issue, but with the district covering 104 square miles, cuts are at their limit.

Senior boxes available January 27

First English Lutheran Church, 53 Park Avenue West will be offering senior boxes of non-perishable food provided by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank from 10 am to 12 pm or until supplies run out.

This comes with a 30 lb. box of non-perishable food and a two lb. box of cheese. These items are free to those who qualify by age (60+) and low income guidelines. Recipients must have at least one person age 60 or older in the household. The minimum income begins at \$1,957 per month for a one-person household.

These items are available on the fourth Tuesday of each month, year round. The distribution is held in the South Mulberry Street parking lot. The next distribution is Tuesday, Jan. 27

Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

CLEAR FORK VS GALION VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL · JAN. 3
LADY COLTS WIN 64-19 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

CLEAR FORK VS GALION JUNIOR VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL · JAN. 3
LADY COLTS WIN 32-6 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MANSFIELD SENIOR VS DOVER VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL · JAN. 9
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Tribune-Courier Sports Highlights

MANSFIELD SENIOR VS DOVER JUNIOR VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL · JAN. 9
TYGERS WIN 39-29 · PHOTOS BY JEFF HOFFER



Sports Highlights



Photo by Jeff Hoffer/Caption by Kris Leiter

Four Lexington Swimmers were recognized at halftime of the Lexington vs Ontario Basketball game. They will be inducted into the 2025 Lexington Wall of Fame. The team of Oden Bell, Joe Hathaway, Trey Nickoli and Cooper Watters were named first team All-Ohio as they claimed their fame with an eighth-place finish in the 400-yard freestyle-relay team at the State Swim and Dive meet in 2025. These same four athletes were also named first-team All-Ohio as they earned a fifth-place accolades in the 200-yard medley. Trey Nickoli placed in the singles 100-yard breast-stroke with first-place All-Ohio honors by capturing third-place in both 2024 and 2025.

Mansfield Club to host Talkin' Cleveland Baseball event

The Kiwanis Club of Mansfield will host a "Talkin' Cleveland Baseball" luncheon featuring a live auction of baseball items. Keynote speakers are Bob DiBiasio, Cleveland Guardians Senior Vice-President of Public Affairs, radio broadcaster Jim Rosenhaus and television broadcaster Matt Underwood. The event takes place on Thursday, Feb. 12, at Der Dutchman Restaurant, 720 St. Rt. 97 W., Bellville.

Doors open at 10:45 am and the program begins at 11:30 am. Tickets are \$25 and include lunch buffet. Tickets are available at the Park National Bank Ontario office on Lexington-Springmill Rd. and from any Kiwanis Club of Mansfield member. Tickets may also be purchased online at <https://thekiwanisclubofmansfield.org/>. Click on the "event" tab to purchase. Net proceeds from the event will benefit The Friendly House Afterschool Program. Sponsorship is provided by Richland County Agricultural Society, Park National Bank, Ritter's Office Outfitters, Mechanics Bank and Warren-Rupp.

The Kiwanis Club of Mansfield was chartered in June 1920. It's partnership with the Friendly House dates to 1924. Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world.

Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for students ages 14-18, Builders Club for students ages 11-14, Kiwanis Kids for students ages 6-12 and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, dedicate annually more than 18 million service hours to strengthen communities and serve children.

America's 250th to be celebrated during Hocking Hills Winter Hike

This year's annual Hocking Hills Winter Hike is one of the nation's first celebrations this year of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Slated for Jan. 17, 2026, the 60th Hocking Hills Winter Hike kicks off at 9 am with continuous starts running through 11 am.

The six-mile trek from Old Man's Cave features a midway stop at Cedar Falls with complimentary hot bean soup and cornbread provided by the local Kiwanis Club. Donations are appreciated and help support Kiwanis' community work. The hike concludes at Ash Cave, where the Lions Club welcomes participants with hot chocolate and doughnuts.

For six decades thousands of visitors have flocked to Ohio's every January to experience the annual hike, which started 1967 when one of the world's most famous hikers, Grandma Emma Gatewood, started leading folks on the scenic trails.

Today, thousands of people attend to experience the region's magnificent scenery. Majestic rock formations, soaring cliffs, deep gorges and stunning waterfalls that freeze to icy, crystal sculptures make the Hocking Hills one of the Midwest's most popular winter destinations. In addition, many of the area's one-of-a-kind cabins and inns offer winter lodging specials and discounts.

Layered clothing and good traction footwear or crampons are recommended, as snow and ice can make trails slippery. Hikers are also encouraged to take photos and videos of the region's majestic winter beauty and to post them to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter tagging #MyHockingHills.

"Winter is truly magical in the Hocking Hills, as visitors have the opportunity to enjoy a completely different beauty and while immersing themselves in a spectacular winter wonderland," said Explore Hocking Hills Communications Director James Martin. "And they love the chance to be active in the outdoors, which combined with the deep gorges and rock formations warms hikers warm for an fantastic experience."

Also on Jan. 17, the Frozen Festival returns for its ninth year, with more than two dozen massive ice sculptures, ice carving demonstrations, live music, ice corn hole and Skee-Ball. The event also features local arts and crafts, food trucks and local dining.

Located 40 miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio's Hocking Hills offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences, including plenty of free activities. Complete traveler information is available at www.ExploreHockingHills.com or 1-800-Hocking (800-462-5464).



CLASSIFIEDS

PROBATE COURT OF RICHLAND COUNTY, OHIO, Kelly L. Badnell, Judge, IN RE: CHANGE OF NAME OF Ariella Rose Ripley to Ariella Rose Beursken CASE NO. 20259131.

NOTICE OF HEARING ON CHANGE OF NAME

Applicant hereby gives notice to all interested persons that the applicant has filed an Application For Change of Name in the Probate Court of Richland County, Ohio, requesting the change of name of Ariella Rose Ripley to Ariella Rose Beursken.

The hearing on the application will be held on the 3rd day of March 2026, at 11:00 o'clock am in the Probate Court of Richland County, located at 50 Park Avenue East, Second Floor, Mansfield, Ohio, 44902.

Julia Auer
440 Parker St.
Mansfield, OH 44906

LEGAL NOTICE

The following is a succinct summary of the legislation adopted by the Council of the City of Ontario, at their regular meeting held on January 7, 2026.

The complete text of this Ordinance may be viewed and copies obtained at the Office of the Clerk of Council, Ontario Municipal Building, 555 Stumbo Road, Ontario, Ohio, during regular business hours.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-01 – A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE CITY OF ONTARIO TO SELL PROPERTY NO LONGER NEEDED FOR MUNICIPAL PURPOSES THROUGH AN INTERNET AUCTION SALE DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-01 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO ASSISTANT LAW DIRECTORS, APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT OF JOHN D. STUDENMUND AND ANDREW J. BURTON OF RENWICK, WELSH & BURTON LLC TO THESE POSITIONS, ESTABLISHING THEIR COMPENSATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-02 – AN ORDINANCE AWARDING A CONTRACT TO PARR PUBLIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO 2026 DODGE DURANGOS AND THE UP FIT EQUIPMENT FOR THE TOTAL SUM OF \$155,848.58 THROUGH THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-03 – AN ORDINANCE AWARDING A CONTRACT TO VALLEY FREIGHTLINER FOR THE PURCHASE OF A 2026 FREIGHTLINER CAB/CHASSIS TRUCK THROUGH THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-04 – AN ORDINANCE AWARDING A CONTRACT TO HENDERSONS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A SNOW AND ICE PACKAGE FOR NEW TRUCK THROUGH THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Cathy VanAuker
Clerk of Council
City of Ontario, OH
(T-C 1-15, 22, 2026) 65L

Film available for parents of stuttering children

The Stuttering Foundation's film entitled *Help! My Child is Stuttering* is available at <https://www.stutteringhelp.org/content/help-my-child-stuttering>.

In this 16-minute film, parents and speech-language experts talk about how to promote easier talking as they interact with their children. The professionals offer simple tips that parents can follow easily.

The film features some of the world's leading therapists with children who stutter including Lisa A Scott, Ph.D. of the Florida State University's School of Communication Science and Disorders; Ellen Kelly, Ph.D., of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine; speech-language consultants Frances Cook, MBE, MSc, Willie Botterill, MSc, and Elaine Kelman, MSc., from the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London.

"This is an important tool for families and teachers of children who stutter," added Jane Fraser, president of the nonprofit Stuttering Foundation.

"This film is designed to give parents and teachers the tools they need to play a vital role in the process of helping children who stutter."

For more information about stuttering write the nonprofit Stuttering Foundation, PO Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749, call 800-992-9392 or visit www.stutteringhelp.org.

Since 1947, the nonprofit Foundation has provided free materials to public libraries nationwide. A library that will shelve the current offer can download a request form at <http://www.stutteringhelp.org/libraries-information> or e-mail info@stutteringhelp.org.

Broadway and television stars return to Mansfield for benefit

Major Broadway and television talent are coming together in Mansfield this winter. Emmy Award-winning and Tony-nominated composer, director and producer Jeff Richmond comes together with beloved television and Broadway stars for a benefit production of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, all in support of Mansfield's historic Renaissance Theatre.

Leading the cast are Richmond, television favorites Brian Stepanek (*The Suite Life of Zack & Cody*), John Lutz (*30 Rock*), *Late Night with Seth Myers*) and Broadway standout Kyle Selig (*Mean Girls*, *Monster High*). Directed by Richmond, the production is presented in association with Fancy Music Inc.

This production serves as a full benefit for the Renaissance Theatre, with proceeds partially supporting the organization's "Road to 100" initiative: an ambitious restoration effort as the Renaissance looks ahead to its 100th anniversary in 2028, and the next chapter of its nearly century-long role in Mansfield's cultural life. Planned upgrades include new seating, a restored curtain, and a revitalized marquee, ensuring the nearly century-old theatre remains a vibrant cultural home for generations to come.

Winner of 6 Tony awards, Stephen Sondheim's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is built for nonstop laughs. Mistaken identities, outrageous characters, and physical comedy collide with iconic songs like "Comedy Tonight" and a fast-paced story line about hijinks in ancient Rome, making for a hilarious production that's perfect for both seasoned theatre attendees and those new to Broadway musicals.

An Ohio native, Richmond is spearheading the project as a way to give back to the type of theatre that helped launch his own career. After first bringing his talent to Mansfield in 2023, he has continued to return, and bring friends who are drawn by the community, the theatre, and the experience of mentoring the up-and-coming artists who will follow in their footsteps. Richmond shared, "Our hope is that this collaboration could grow into a yearly tradition, connecting world-class artists with a community that embraces them wholeheartedly."

Also returning home is Stepanek, another Ohio native, who appeared on the Renaissance stage last season in *The Producers*. His return continues a growing pattern: nationally-known artists choosing to spend meaningful time in Mansfield as they work closely with local casts, form lasting ties to the community, and bring a wider circle of family, friends, and fellow artists to discover the Renaissance for themselves.

Performances will run Feb. 21, 22, 27, 28, and March 1. VIP and opening night reception tickets are limited.

For tickets and information, visit the Renaissance Theatre box office or rentickets.org.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

First Federal Bank of Ohio

THE RIGHT LOAN. THE RIGHT BANK.

1728 W. Fourth Street
Mansfield, Ohio 44906
Phone: 419-529-4687
Fax: 419-529-4154

landerson@firstfederalbankofohio.bank



Lisa Anderson
NMLS 618735

Branch Manager - Loan Officer