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December 27, 2024

St. Mary's Environmental Club enjoys sweet fieldtrip

Before the weather turned cold, the Environmental Club from St. Mary's Crown Point Community School was recently able to visit with beekeeper Dave Hayse. He spoke to the students about the lives of bees and the importance of bees to the environment. They were able to see the bees in their hive and watch Hayse spin the honey from the honey comb.

The kids were even able to taste the honey and take samples home with them! "The

hive looked much different than I thought it would! It was crazy seeing all the bees swarming the hive. I was nervous to get stung, but the bees didn't even bother us," said 3rd grader Tatum Adams.

"The kids had a great time and are already asking to go back," said Environmental Club co-sponsor, Brittany LaMere.

St. Mary Catholic Community School in Crown Point offers grade lev-

els Junior Pre-Kindergarten (for three-year-olds) through grade eight. All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as Academic Team, Chess Club, Science Olympiad, Scouts, Environmental Club, WSMW News Cast, athletics, art exhibits, Rosary Club, and more. To learn more about enrollment at St. Mary's School visit www.school.stmarycp.org or call 219.663.0676.



St. Mary's Environmental Club members clamour around beekeeper, Dave Hayes, for honey straight from the hive. Pictured are David Mlynarski, Bethany Cox, Braelyn LaMere, Bradley Januszewski, Carter Kovera, Camden Boyd, Nolen Cervera, and Niala McCain.

New Indiana diploma requirements approved with unanimous support

After more than a year of stakeholder feedback, the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) today unanimously approved the final diploma rule, which is designed to maximize the four years of high school for students.

"We started this process by asking Hoosiers across the state, 'how might we make the four years of high school as valuable as possible for students and better connect them to their unique future goals,'" said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "Listening to and incorporating significant stakeholder feedback has absolutely led us to a better place from where we started in March to where we are today. This new high school diploma will allow increased

flexibility for students to personalize their journey, as well as increase access to both work-based learning and credentials of value."

Over the past year, Indiana leaders have traveled the state to gather feedback and learn from schools that are working to blur the lines between K-12, higher education and the workforce. These examples served as a model for what new diploma requirements could look like and what is possible in all schools, to remove barriers for students and open doors of future opportunity.

As part of the rulemaking process, state statute requires two rule drafts, each with a 30-day public comment period. Prior to the final draft, adopted by SBOE today, Indiana leaders presented

the first and second drafts in March and August, respectively.

During the first public comment period, which took place from March 27 to July 30, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and SBOE received more than 8,000 online comments and heard hours of testimony from stakeholders seeking to improve the high school experience for Indiana students.

The second draft incorporated significant stakeholder feedback and garnered public support as the diploma was streamlined and simplified to include one base diploma with minimum requirements for every student, as well as the opportunity for students to earn readiness seals aligned with their unique path. During the fol-

lowing public comment period, which took place from October 9 to November 8, approximately 1,300 were received. These comments focused primarily on refining the second draft, as consensus around the diploma rule continued to grow.

In the final rule, requirements for the base diploma remain the same as those presented in August. This includes increased flexibility and course options for earning credits in core content areas, such as English, math, science, social studies, physical education and health. In addition to these core content areas, students will also take personalized electives which can include a variety of courses, such as career and technical education (CTE courses), performing or fine

arts and/or world languages.

The majority of the updates between the second draft and the final rule were improvements to the readiness seals, based on feedback from educators, higher education leaders, business and industry as well as the military. With the increased flexibility in the diploma, the readiness seal concept first emerged in June as a way to provide students and parents with a better understanding of a blueprint for success complementing the student's unique goals and aspirations. The readiness seals are designed to be permeable, allowing students to update their graduation plan and pivot throughout their high school journey, if their original interests and goals change.

Indiana leaders worked

with external stakeholders to develop two levels for each readiness seal:

- Enrollment honors and Enrollment honors plus seals - Developed with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, in conjunction with colleges and universities
- Employment honors and Employment honors plus seals - Developed with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and insights from Ascend Indiana's work with employers, in conjunction with the business representatives across multiple industries
- Enlistment honors and Enlistment honors plus seals - Developed with the Indiana National Guard, in conjunction with representatives

(See *Diploma* Pg. 2)

Crown Point Community Foundation awards over \$140,000 in grants to south Lake County

The Crown Point Community Foundation announced the awarding of \$142,070.87 in grants during its most recent 2024 Grant Cycle. These 21 grants are set to enrich the lives of residents across South Lake County, benefiting communities such as Winfield, Crown Point, Cedar Lake, and Lowell (Tri-Creek Townships). The grants cover a range of impactful projects, from supporting Northwest Indiana Symphony Society to expand its 83rd season, to supporting the TradeWinds Community Pantry.

Included in the funding of the September Cycle, the

CPCF awarded a \$5,000 proactive grant (\$2,666 Unrestricted Fund + \$2,334 Community Literacy Fund) to the Crown Point Community Library for hosting all three Nonprofit Academy events and Board of Directors meetings in 2024.

Community grants are made possible by donors who create Unrestricted Endowment Funds to support South Lake County causes and entrust the CPCF to allocate those funds to a broad range of community projects and needs.

Here are the recipients of the September Grant Cycle:

Alpha Family Resale - \$12,000.00; Funds to assist with one year of their Gift Card Program to help families in need.

Alzheimer's Association Of Greater Indiana - \$2,000.00; ALZ CARES (Community Alliances for Risk Reduction, Education and Support) exists to develop and leverage alliances with local community leaders, influencers and organizations to open doors, identify community needs, and meet and mobilize volunteers.

Best Buddies Indiana - \$2,500.00; Friendship programs build one-to-one friendships for people with

and without intellectual and developmental disorders (IDD), helping people to form meaningful connec-



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tions, gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and improve inclusion for all.

Bethel Church - \$10,000.00; Repair and remodel a newly purchased

building to serve as a community counseling center, video recording studio, and office space for not-for-profit

partners. DAV Indiana Service Foundation - up to \$8,335.00 (\$1 for \$3 Match); The DAV Transportation Network provides essential, no-cost

Golden Hope Ministries - \$5,100.00 (\$4,789.00 Unrestricted Fund + \$311.00

transportation services for veterans, ensuring they can access VA medical appointments, thereby improving their health outcomes and supporting their overall well-being.

Girls on the Run of Northwest Indiana - \$2,000.00; By providing scholarship assistance to girls in South Lake County, they can be a part of their Girls on the Run team to be joyful, healthy and confident through social-emotional learning and physical activity.

(See *CPCF* Pg. 7)

What should you know about RMDs?

You may spend many decades contributing to your IRA and 401(k), but eventually you will likely need to take the money out — in fact, you must take the money out or face penalties. What should you know about these mandatory withdrawals?

Here are some of the basics:

- What are they called? Mandatory withdrawals are technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs.
- When must I take RMDs? If you were born before 1951, you've probably already begun taking RMDs. If you were born between 1951 and 1959, your RMD age is 73. And if you were born in 1960 or later, your RMD age is 75. You can postpone accepting your first RMD until April 1 of the year after you reach your RMD age, but this will result in two RMDs for the year. After you take your first RMD, you must take subsequent ones by December 31 of each year.
- What penalties will be assessed if I don't take all my RMDs? For every dollar

not withdrawn, the IRS will charge a 25% penalty, but this can drop to 10% if you subsequently withdraw the correct amount within two years.

- Which accounts have RMDs? RMDs apply to traditional IRAs, as well as other types of IRAs, including SIMPLE and SEP IRAs. RMDs don't apply to Roth IRAs. RMDs also apply to traditional 401(k)s, but not Roth 401(k)s.
- Can I withdraw more than the RMD for any given year? Yes, you are free to take out as much as you want. However, if you take out more than the RMD for one year, you can't apply the excess to the RMD for the next year.
- How are RMDs calculated? Typically, your RMDs are determined by dividing your account balance from the prior December 31 by a life expectancy factor published by the IRS. Your financial professional should be able to perform this calculation for you.
- If I have multiple accounts, do I have to take an RMD from each one? If

you are taking RMDs from a traditional IRA, you must calculate each RMD individually, but you can take the total amount from one or more IRAs. If you're taking RMDs from a 401(k) or similar plan, you must take the RMD from each of your accounts.

- How are RMDs taxed? You are typically taxed at your income tax rate on the amount of the withdrawn RMD. You may be able to avoid taxes in a particular year if you transfer your RMDs to a qualified charity in what's known as a qualified charitable distribution.
- If I inherit an IRA or 401(k), am I subject to RMDs? Yes. When you take RMDs from an inherited account, you generally must withdraw all the funds within 10 years, as opposed to over your lifetime, which is the RMD window that applies to your own accounts. The rules are somewhat different if you inherit an IRA or 401(k) from your spouse. In any case, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor about how to take RMDs from an inher-

ited account.

If you're already subject to RMDs, be sure you've taken them before the year ends. And if you haven't yet started taking RMDs, learn as much as you can about them — because the more you know, the more likely you'll make the right moves at the right time.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Pat Hedge, 10618 Randolph St., Winfield, IN 46307 219-662-5999.

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Indiana Conservation Officers urge Hoosiers to practice ice safety: 'No ice is safe ice'

Indiana Conservation Officers advise being mindful of the potential hazards of frozen lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. It's also important to keep a watchful eye on neighborhood retention ponds, lakes and other waterways for others who may venture out and find themselves in trouble.

Every winter, thousands of Hoosiers safely enjoy fishing, skating, hiking, or just sliding around on frozen ponds and lakes. And every year, people drown after falling through ice.

Just like driving differently on snow versus clear roads, some may need to re-learn how to safely have fun on ice.

Put safety first. The best rule of thumb is, when thinking about getting on the ice, believe it is thin ice unless proven otherwise.

Here are a few tips to remember when considering standing on or walking on a frozen lake or pond:

- No ice is safe ice.
- Test the thickness of the ice with an ice auger. At least 4 inches of ice is recommended for ice fishing; 5 inches is recommended for snowmobiling.
- If you don't know the thickness of the ice, don't go on it.
- Wear life jackets or flotation coats.

- Carry ice hooks and rope gear.
- Before going on the ice, leave a note of your whereabouts with a friend or family member.
- Don't test the thickness of the ice while alone.

Wearing a life jacket is especially important when on the ice. If you fall through, a life jacket will keep your head above the water until help arrives.

Snow can insulate ice, causing it to freeze at a slower rate. When snow and rain freeze into ice, it is never as strong as solid, clear ice.

If you see a pet or other animal in distress on the ice, do not go after it. Doing so can often end in tragedy. Instead, contact your local emergency response personnel, who are equipped to make a rescue.

Some bodies of water will appear to be frozen solid but actually can have thin ice in several potentially unexpected areas. Flowing water, such as rivers and streams, should be avoided when covered by a layer of ice. Water that is surrounded by sand may freeze with inconsistencies in the thickness of the ice.

Underground springs, wind, waterfowl, and other animals can also keep areas of ice thin.

(Diploma from Pg. 1)

from each military branch, as well as public safety officials

The honors seals are similar to the opportunities many Hoosier students have today, such as the current academic honors designation, and are designed to be even more intentional, elevating what truly impacts future success. The honors plus seals reflect the opportunities that exist for some Indiana students today, and that Indiana leaders aim to expand access for more students across the state. The honors plus seals are designed to increase skill development, work-based learning experiences, as well as opportunities for students to increase their educational attainment by earning a credential of value. Students who earn a readiness seal will automatically fulfill all Graduation Pathways requirements. Students who do not earn a seal must still complete components 2 and 3 of Graduation Pathways.

Throughout 2025, a number of implementation resources and supports will be developed, including:

- Eligible course titles and descriptions, by category
- Additional comprehensive work-based learning guidance, including a landscape analysis, complementing existing published guidance
- Market-driven credential of value list
- Interactive advising tool to support local implementation
- Increased flexibility on who can teach high school and college courses
- Rulemaking on new accountability model aligned to

diplomas

Educators and parents are encouraged to submit questions and feedback regarding the implementation process at <https://form.jotform.com/243445268438060>. This will help to identify areas where additional guidance or clarification may be needed.

"Thank you to the many educators, parents, students, business and industry leaders, community members and other stakeholders who took the time to be a part of this important process," said Dr. Jenner. "As we begin to implement the new diploma requirements, it will again take all of us working together to get this right, and I look forward to continuing to work with community leaders across the state to set our Indiana students up for the best possible future."

IDOE and SBOE received multiple letters of support from superintendents, prin-

cipals, school counselors, special education directors, higher education presidents and leadership, business and industry leaders, voicing their support for the final proposal.

Following approval by SBOE, the rule must be reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General. The graduation requirements become law when signed by the Governor, which concludes the rulemaking process.

Per statute, Indiana's current graduation requirements will sunset October 1, 2028, making the new diploma requirements effective for all students beginning with the class of 2029, or students currently in eighth grade. Schools may opt-in beginning with the 2025-26 school year. Indiana will also continue to offer the federally-required alternate diploma, which is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

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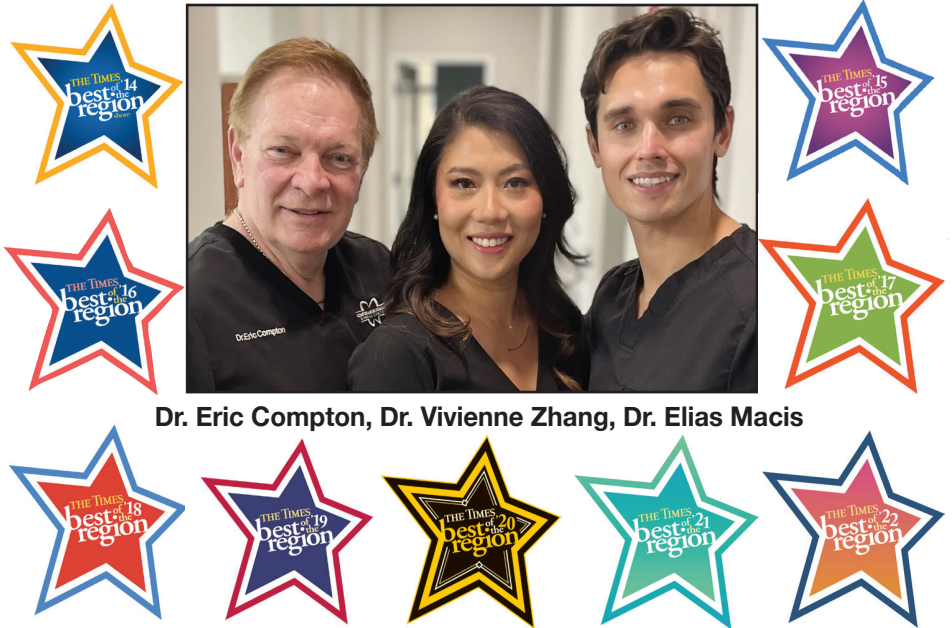
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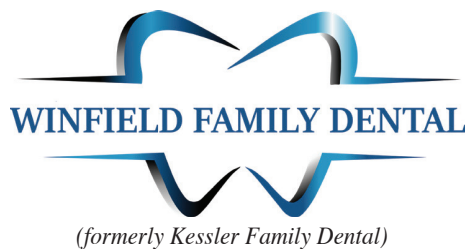
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The status of the monarch butterfly in the U.S. is listed as threatened or endangered

The monarch butterfly, known for its awe-inspiring migration across North America, has become a symbol of both ecological wonder and environmental decline. Once abundant across the continent, their numbers have plummeted in recent decades, raising concerns about the species' long-term survival.

In 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), a leading conservation group, petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to list the monarch as "threatened." FWS launched a review of the butterfly's status, concluding six years later that listing was warranted although other species took priority. In 2022, CBD filed a federal lawsuit and won a settlement calling for the gov-

ernment to decide whether to list monarchs by late 2024, which FWS did in December, finally granted "threatened" status to the species.

The monarch's eastern population, which migrates from the U.S. and Canada to central Mexico for the winter, has experienced a staggering 80% drop over the past 20 years, largely due to habitat loss, especially the destruction of milkweed—the sole food source for monarch larvae. The widespread use of herbicides and pesticides kill both milkweed and other pollinator-friendly plants. Climate is compounding the issue by altering the availability of suitable habitats, affecting migration patterns. The monarch's western population migrates along the U.S. West Coast to winter in

California, and has also seen a drastic decline. It has not yet been listed as threatened or endangered by FWS, but the western monarch is still considered to be in serious jeopardy, with some estimates suggesting a 99% decline since the 1980s.

Being listed as "threatened" means that while monarchs are not yet in immediate danger of extinction, their populations are at significant risk. This status has prompted federal agencies to prioritize monarch conservation, leading to a variety of initiatives aimed at halting or reversing the decline. FWS has created a recovery plan, which includes restoring migratory and breeding habitats, reducing pesticide use and raising public awareness about the importance of monarchs and

pollinators in general.

Despite official recognition of the problem and action, habitat destruction continues at an alarming rate, exacerbated by logging and urban sprawl. In response, conservation and governmental agencies and researchers are all working toward restoring monarch habitats and promoting the planting of milkweed.

Everyone can play a role in helping the monarchs. Readers can help by planting milkweed in your garden, backyard or community



space. You can also reduce pesticide use in your yard and choose organic gardening practices. Support organizations working to protect monarch habitats and advocate for policies that protect pollinators and raise awareness about their decline can also create broader change.

Sagamore Parkway Trail opens in Lafayette with support from Next Level Trails

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the city of Lafayette celebrated the completion of the Sagamore Parkway Trail in Lafayette.

The asphalt multi-use trail was constructed by the city of Lafayette with help from a \$2,706,700 Next Level Trails (NLT) grant. The award was announced by Gov. Eric J. Holcomb in April 2022 as part of the third grant round of NLT.

"Next Level Trails is all about making connections between and within communities," said Dan Bortner, DNR director. "The completion of the Sagamore Parkway Trail is the latest of more than 100 miles of new trail connections that have been built with support from Next Level Trails. DNR is proud to come alongside partners in Lafayette to make this new trail possible."

The new trail adds 0.90 miles of trail along Sagamore Parkway between 9th Street and the Wabash River Bridge. Trail connections occur on both sides of the completed project, including a connection to multi-use paths along 9th Street, the Wabash River Heritage Trail, and the city of West Lafayette's section of the Sagamore Parkway Trail. Completion of the project links Lafayette and West Lafayette over the Wabash River.

Today's ribbon cutting opens the Lafayette Sagamore Parkway Trail, funded by NLT and built by the city of Lafayette and the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation, as well as the new 0.6-mile West Lafayette Sagamore Parkway Trail, built by the city of West Lafayette and the Tippecanoe County Metropolitan Planning Organization. These trails connect via the protected bike lane on the Sagamore Parkway Bridge over the Wabash River.

These projects are the first of multiple, funded trail projects, which will create an eight-mile looped section of the Wabash River Greenway connecting the communities, county, and Purdue University to each other, Prophetstown State Park, and seven local, municipal, and county parks.

"This is an exciting time for Lafayette-West Lafayette, Tippecanoe County, and Purdue University," said Stanton Lambert, executive director of the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation. "The Wabash River Enhancement Corporation and the city of Lafayette, along with our community partners in West Lafayette and the county, are thrilled to open this newest section of the Wabash River Greenway, which connects Lafayette and West Lafayette and Purdue University to each other and to the Wabash River Corridor."

As part of Gov. Holcomb's Next Level Connections initiative, NLT is the largest infusion of trails funding in state history. The now \$180 million program is administered by the DNR and facilitates critical trail connections within and between Hoosier communities. Forty of the

89 NLT projects are complete, totaling more than 105 miles of trail built since the program's inception. Several projects are under construction, with many more slated to break ground during the next year.

More information about NLT is at www.on.IN.gov/NextLevelTrails.



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DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

SALLY SZUMSKI

Sally has been a funeral director since 2007. In her spare time, Sally is a proficient seamstress, and she enjoys sewing gifts for her grandkids, especially. She also enjoys traveling and spending time with her husband, children and grandkids.



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Happy New Year, Everyone!

Out With the Old Year, In With the New!

I **really** like the New Year celebration. It comes around and gives me a new chance **every** year to do a little better or start doing something in a new way. What do you know about the celebration of the new year? **Read these clues to help you fill in this New Year puzzle:**

- in Ancient Rome, the new year started in _____ because the month of January did not exist yet
- to represent the birth of a New Year we use a newborn _____ dressed in a top hat and a sash
- by the end of the year the child grows into a wrinkled _____
- _____ time is used to represent the passage of years; he usually carries an hourglass
- to celebrate the new year many people gather to eat, drink and dance at a _____; the biggest is in New York City in Times Square
- _____ light up the sky in celebration; they can be seen behind the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower and the Forbidden City in China
- the new year officially begins when the clock strikes _____
- everyone's favorite New Year's _____ is "Auld Lang Syne," which means 'old long since'
- after the parties of New Year's eve, many people relax by watching the big _____ game, "The Rose Bowl"
- after the game people line the streets to watch the "Rose _____," which takes place in California
- friends wish each other a happy, _____ New Year
- people use the start of a new year as a way to better themselves through New Year's _____



What's a New Year's Resolution?

Have you ever heard of a **New Year's resolution**? It is a promise you make to yourself to change something or add something to your life. My New Year's resolution is to do my chores without being reminded by my Mom. What will be **your** New Year's resolution?

This 2-part puzzle has ideas that **you** might like to try. **First, read the clues and fill in the crossword puzzle. Next, match each resolution to its 2nd part that would "kick it up" a bit.**

- get more fresh air and _____
- finish all your _____
- spend less time talking on the _____
- try out a new _____ or sport
- clean your _____
- watch less _____
- develop a new, special _____ (singing, dancing, juggling)
- feed your _____
- think about how to make yourself healthy _____
- do your _____ well before it is due
- save up your _____
- get to _____ on time

- and invite friends and family over instead
- and help your brother and sister with theirs
- and put on a show for your family to enjoy
- and take on a few extra little jobs without being asked
- and choose an exciting book to read instead
- and spend it on someone else
- and make a chart of your progress
- with clean clothes and a clean you!
- and help your parents shop and pick out fruits you like
- and help with the rest of the house too
- and play with it every day, and keep it clean too
- and become the best you can at it

Forecast for a New Year!

Circle "yes" if you think an item could happen in the new year and "no" if it is just silly:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Small drones will be delivering pizzas and packages. | yes | no |
| 2. We will build a colony on the moon and live there. | yes | no |
| 3. Art shown on computer displays as well as canvases. | yes | no |
| 4. Cars will travel on the roads with no one driving them. | yes | no |
| 5. An entire meal will fit into one tiny pill. | yes | no |

Follow the color key to see one thing you can count on next year:

Color Key: B = Blue R = Red O = Orange Y = Yellow P = Pink G = Green

NIPSCO shares tips about the 'Silent Killer' – Carbon Monoxide

NIPSCO urges customers to beware of the "Silent Killer" that claims the lives of hundreds of Americans each year. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless, and non-corrosive gas that is produced when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane or oil) burn incompletely. While natural gas does not contain CO, it can be generated when there is insufficient oxygen for fuels to burn correctly.

NIPSCO shares tips to protect families from CO poisoning:

- Get a CO detector. The most reliable way to determine whether you have a CO

leak is to have fully functional CO detectors in your home on every level and in every room where someone sleeps. Remember to test and replace your detector batteries regularly.

- Know the symptoms. With CO poisoning, you may experience flu-like symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and irregular breathing. You may feel tired at home but fine when away from home. Don't ignore the warning signs. Carbon monoxide can be fatal within five minutes at high concentrations.

Know the prevention measures. Follow these basic guidelines to prevent the build-up of CO in your home or business:

- Have fuel-burning equipment, like your furnace, inspected annually by a qualified technician to ensure appliances run and use energy efficiently. For a list of qualified natural gas contractors, visit www.NIPSCO.com/contractors.
- Keep vents and chimneys clear of debris or other blockages
- Use space heaters in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines, and never use a

stove or oven as a source of heat in your home.

Know what to do if you detect a leak. If you think carbon monoxide is present or your CO detector sounds, leave the area to get fresh air, call 911 and DO NOT GO BACK until repairs are made and it is safe to reenter. As always, if you smell the rotten-egg-like odor of natural gas, leave the area and from a safe distance call 911 and the NIPSCO emergency line at 1-800-634-3524.

To learn more about how to stay safe from Carbon Monoxide, please visit www.NIPSCO.com/co.

Indiana's men among the best dressed in America, finds poll of women

America's diversity isn't just reflected in its food, music, and dialects - it's also reflected in the way people dress all across the country. Each region has its own distinct style, shaped by climate, culture, and tradition. Take Hawaii, for instance, where men's fashion emphasizes comfort and color, from aloha shirts with floral designs to casual shorts and sandals that suit the tropical vibe. Contrast this with Indiana, where Midwestern sensibilities merge with sports culture, creating a look of practical jeans, plaid shirts, and team apparel, especially during game seasons. Then there's Texas, where the iconic Western aesthetic shines through cowboy boots, hats, and jeans, with cities like Austin infusing eclectic, trendy twists. But what regional style do women find most attractive when a man wears it?

DatingAdvice.com wanted to find out which states earn the title of 'America's Best Dressed' when it comes to men's fashion and surveyed 3,000 women to find out what they thought. Will the relaxed, casual look win them over, suggesting an easy-going, laid-back kind of guy? Or do they like the preppy, clean-cut

look, which might suggest an Ivy League education and a job in finance? What about someone who looks like they spend their days up a mountain and is fit, healthy, and outgoing? Or the romantic Western, cowboy style?

Well, the overall winner was the 'Urban Edge' style popularized in New Jersey. Blending street style with urban chic, New Jersey fashion includes fitted jeans, designer sneakers, and leather jackets. Influenced by proximity to NYC, it has a trendy, polished look, feeling cutting edge, and like the man who wears it has his finger on the fashion pulse. Also popular, in 3rd place, was Oklahoma's 'Cowboy Classic' look: think cowboy hats, jeans, and button-downs for a lifestyle spent on the ranch (perhaps it indicates that the man wearing it actually has a horse) with a touch of rustic charm.

And of course, you can't go wrong with the Classic Americana look, which was made popular in Pennsylvania. A mix of preppy and practical, with jeans, polos, sneakers, and sportswear, it combines Northeast polish with a touch of blue-collar roots, so there really is

(See Best Dressed Pg. 8)

(CPCF from Pg. 1) The Manis Family Fund); A national speaker with expertise on grief and bereavement will present two seminars to the Lake County community informing professionals in Education and Human Services on how to support the bereaved population.

Hanover Community School Corporation (Middle School) - \$485.87; Providing options for students who prefer to sit on the floor and work at tables with a small group instead of at a traditional desk.

Hanover Community School Corporation (Red Cedars Social Work Dept.) - \$3,050.00; Providing necessities for students in need through the Hanover Schools Caring Closet.

Hearts In Motion - \$3,000.00; The New Directions Program helps family transition from a traumatic event into a new home with necessary life essentials and follow up supportive services.

Holy Spirit / St. Vincent DePaul Society - \$20,000.00; The Holy Spirit / St. Vincent

DePaul Food Pantry & Housing Assistance Programs continue to provide supplemental food and offer emergency assistance with rent, mortgage and utilities to our neighbors in need.

Humane Indiana - \$7,500.00; Enhancing TNRE efforts in South Lake County by providing free spay/neuter, vaccinations, and flea treatment for community cats, supported by essential medical equipment.

Indiana Plan for Equal Employment - \$8,600.00; Creating opportunities for the under-represented, minorities and women in the construction trades by providing basic construction awareness training to prepare them for the apprenticeship application process.

Indiana Youth Group (IYG) - \$6,250.00; IYG is launching an LGBTQ+ Youth Center in Northwest Indiana to establish safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ young individuals within a one-hour drive, ensuring accessibility and support for them, regardless of their geographical location.

Junior Achievement of Chicago - \$5,000.00; The JA Town combines in-class learning with a day-long visit to a simulated town, allowing students to operate banks, manage restaurants, write checks and connect what they learn in school with the real world.

New Leash on Life - up to \$11,250.00 (\$1 for \$1 Match); By creating three-dimensional renderings for a new animal welfare facility, it will inspire donor enthusiasm and enable community members to fully visualize the future facility.

Northwest Indiana Symphony Society - \$10,000.00; The Northwest Indiana Symphony will produce and expand its 83rd season to five full Symphony concerts, two small ensemble matinees, and one standalone Symphony Chorus concert.

South Shore Arts - \$5,000.00; Providing free elementary school arts & literacy outreach program and support for the annual exhibit celebrating high school & middle school artists.

TradeWinds Services -

\$10,000.00; The TradeWinds Community Pantry serves Lake & Porter County residents in need of a helping hand due to food insecurity.

Visiting Nurse Association of NWI - \$5,000.00; Providing hospice and palliative care and support to seriously or terminally ill patients and families in the South Lake County region.

The Crown Point Community Foundation (CPCF) awards grants from the CPCF Unrestricted Endowment Funds three times a year. The three application cycles close on February 1, June 1 and September 1. Only one grant application per organization or agency will be eligible within a 12-month period. The CPCF Grant Committee reviews all applications. The Crown Point Community Foundation is accepting grant applications online. To apply for a grant, visit: www.cpcfgrants.communityforce.com. For more information about the CPCF, visit the Crown Point Community Foundation's website at www.thecpcf.org.

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RV association recognized nationally for volunteering at two Indiana State Parks

America's State Parks and the National Association for State Park Directors (NASPD) awarded their 2024 President's Award to the RV Industry Association's (RVIA) Emerging Leaders Coalition for their volunteer efforts at Potato Creek and Chain O'Lakes state parks, where more than 700 volunteers contributed over 2,000 hours of service.

The group, which includes individuals from more than 40 RV-related companies and is coordinated by RVIA Emerging Leaders Coalition co-chairs Michilah Grimes of Lippert Components, Inc. and Mike Gaeddert of Forest River, provided materials, equipment, and several hundred volunteers for two one-

day events at Indiana State Parks in 2022 and 2024.

"Their efforts resulted in the completion of multiple projects that would have taken months for our park staff to complete," said Terry Coleman, director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of State Parks. "They are highly deserving of this recognition."

At Potato Creek, near North Liberty, RVIA volunteers planned, completed design work, and provided materials, equipment, and physical labor to build a new walking bridge and a new outdoor interpretive program area. More than 400 volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours of service. More about the project and its

impacts is at www.rvia.org/news-insights/potato-creek-restoration-project-deemed-amazing.

At Chain O'Lakes, near Albion, the group sent more than 300 volunteers who contributed more than 900 hours of service. They replaced flooring in the family cabins, constructed a firewood storage enclosure, built and stained 40 park benches, power washed and cleaned rental kayaks, stained fences, painted comfort stations and bridges, and more. More about the projects and their impacts is at www.rvia.org/news-insights/industry-park-volunteer-event-makes-impact.

"It's incredibly inspiring to see everyone coming togeth-



er to make a difference at our local parks," said Grimes, Lippert's social impact strategist, corporate partnerships. "This achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering generosity

and dedication of our industry volunteers and sponsors. Their contributions have truly brought these projects to life in the most impactful way. Being recognized on a national level is a humbling

honor, and we are deeply grateful for everyone who made this journey possible."

Coleman accepted the award on behalf of RVIA at the NASPD conference.

Lakeshore Public Media selected for Public Media Digital Transformation program

Lakeshore Public Media is among 50 public media stations selected to participate in the Digital Transformation Program, a virtual program developed by the Poynter Institute to educate, assist, and coach public media senior leaders and their staff on the best strategies and tactics to transform their organization's digital operations and culture.

"It is a great honor to be selected for the Digital Transformation Program by our friends at CPB. There are great things going on here at Lakeshore Public Media and this program will help to take them to the next level on our digital platforms and create more opportunities to interact with the communities of Northwest Indiana. The LPM team looks forward to what we will accomplish through the support of this program," Chuck Roberts, President and CEO of Lakeshore Public Media, said.

The program includes online coaching and training to station leader Roberts

and four to six other staff members, to accelerate their digital transformation efforts. Designed in partnership with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and funded by CPB, the new program builds on the strength and success of the first Digital Transformation Program, which in 2022-23 trained 79 public media entities and 458 station personnel.

"CPB is committed to advancing innovation," said Patricia Harrison, CPB president and CEO. "The Digital Transformation Program will provide coaching and resources to help stations accelerate their digital development and share best practices for achieving audience and revenue growth."

In addition to one-on-one and peer group coaching sessions, the program will include a series of educational webinars, work exercises, and resource materials that span the program curriculum. The new phase of training, known as the Fundamentals Track, will be delivered, virtually,

over nine months to two cohorts of 25 station leaders and their station's personnel each year for three years.

"Poynter is excited to welcome these public media professionals to the program as part of our partnership with CPB," said Poynter President Neil Brown. "We're proud to be able to help these stations transform to a more audience-first, digital focus and build deeper connections with their community as well as grow revenues to strengthen their financial foundations."

The stations selected, from Alabama to Washington State, Hawaii to New York, include 22 public radio stations, 12 public television stations and 16 joint license stations. One group of 25 stations will start in January 2025 and the other in March.

Lakeshore PBS broadcasts on channel 56 over the air as well as on DirecTV, DISH Network and AT&T U-verse. Comcast Xfinity viewers can find Lakeshore PBS on channel 17 or 21, while RCN viewers can tune to channel

44. Lakeshore Public Media's radio broadcast can be heard on 89.1 FM. Lakeshore's television and radio broadcasts can be streamed online at LakeshorePublicMedia.org. Additional viewing is available on the free PBS Video App, YouTube TV and other popular streaming services like Hulu Live and Local Now. A free Lakeshore Public Media, all-access app, is available in Apple, Google, Amazon, and Kindle app stores, allowing users to stream Lakeshore's television and radio broadcasts with on demand viewing plus additional features.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private, non-profit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,500 locally managed and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program de-

velopment for public radio, television, and related online services. For more information, visit cpb.org, follow us on Twitter @CPBmedia, Facebook and LinkedIn and subscribe for email updates.

The Poynter Institute for Media Studies is a global leader in journalism education and a strategy center that stands for uncompromising excellence in journalism, media, and 21st-century public discourse. Poynter faculty teach seminars and workshops at the Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, and at newsrooms, conferences, and organizations around the world.

Its e-learning division, News University, offers the world's largest online journalism curriculum, with hundreds of interactive courses and tens of thousands of registered international users. The Institute's website

produces 24-hour coverage about media, ethics, technology, and the business of news. Poynter is the home of the Craig Newmark Center for Ethics and Leadership, the Pulitzer Prize-winning PolitiFact, the International Fact-Checking Network and MediaWise, a digital information literacy project for young people, first-time voters, and senior citizens.

The world's top journalists and media innovators rely on Poynter to learn and teach new generations of reporters, storytellers, media inventors, designers, visual journalists, documentarians, and broadcasters. This work builds public awareness about journalism, media, the First Amendment, and discourse that serves democracy and the public good. Learn more at poynter.org.

(Best Dressed from Pg. 7) something for everyone here.

Indiana men's 'Midwestern Comfort' look was also recognized among the most stylish in the country, in 7th place overall. Practical and relaxed, Indiana's style showcases plaid shirts, jeans, and cozy work boots, with a touch of sports culture—team jackets are a must. This laid-back approach reflects the state's easygoing vibe, and women adore the dependable, no-frills image it conveys, hinting at a man who's loyal and hardworking.

DatingAdvice.com also asked a few more fun questions, including the key one of which men's fashion faux pas women would ban forever if they had the chance. The clear winner was socks with sandals: over a third of women (35%) can't tolerate such sartorial hideousness. A close second was over-the-top bling (23%) - it's flashy and showy, and perhaps sug-

gests that the man in question is a bit shallow. 18% of women said low-rise jeans should have been left where they belong - in the early 2000s - while 14% feel oversized sports jerseys should only be worn on game day.

As for the men's style trend women would happily 'retire', the clear winner (or rather, loser) was neon gym wear - over a quarter (27%) feel this trend should have stayed in the 90s. 24% feel that men should never wear flip-flops as everyday shoes, while 20% think big belt buckles belong at the rodeo and nowhere else. Loud, colorful Hawaiian shirts were a no-no for 18% of women, while 11% thought edgy leather jackets were only suitable for rock stars.

The survey also asked what women consider a 'dealbreaker' look on a first date, and men should take note that they must NEVER wear head-to-toe camo. A

third of women (32%) said it looked 'too rugged' but surely it also looks as if a man has just come back from a sweaty deer hunt. 19% felt jeans and sneakers were just too casual and signified he hadn't made an effort, while 18% felt sandals and shorts were even more laid-back. 15% felt cowboy boots should probably be

best left to actual cowboys.

"It's obvious that men's fashion is a bit of a minefield," says Amber Brooks, senior editor. "There are so many unspoken rules about what women find attractive, so even if men think they're looking good, their date might not agree!"



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This week in history

December 28, 1908

At dawn, the most destructive earthquake in recorded European history struck the Straits of Messina in southern Italy, leveling the cities of Messina in Sicily and Reggio di Calabria on the Italian mainland. The earthquake and tsunami it caused killed an estimated 100,000 people.

Sicily and Calabria are known as la terra ballerina—"the dancing land"—for the periodic seismic activity that strikes the region. In 1693, 60,000 people were killed in southern Sicily by an earthquake, and in 1783 most of the Tyrrhenian coast of Calabria was razed by a massive earthquake that killed 50,000. The quake of 1908 was particularly costly in terms of human life because it struck at 5:20 a.m. without warning, catching most people at home in bed rather than in the relative safety of the streets or fields.

The main shock, registering an estimated 7.5 magnitude on the Richter scale, caused a devastating tsunami with 40-foot waves that washed over coastal towns and cities. Telegraph lines were cut and railway lines were damaged, hampering relief efforts. To make matters worse, the major quake on the 28th was followed by hundreds of smaller tremors over subsequent days, bringing down many of the remaining buildings and injuring or killing rescuers. On December 30, King Victor Emmanuel III arrived aboard the battleship Napoli to inspect the devastation.

www.history.com