

WGL QUARTERLY PROGRAMMING

October 2023 through December 2023

●Incumbent Mayor Tom Henry won a fifth term by earning about 51.8% of the ballots cast, defeating Republican candidate Tom Didier, according to final unofficial results. Henry, 71, beat his opponent by more than 1,700 votes. The Fort Wayne election drew about 24% of voters to the polls. Henry thanked Didier for his kindness and generosity throughout the mayoral campaign.

●A week before Lutheran Hospital's new Emergency Department opens in northeast Fort Wayne, another is closing. Lutheran's Statewood ER at the corner of State and Coliseum boulevards is closing Nov. 13 at 7 a.m., the hospital announced Tuesday. The new ER, located at 6515 Stellhorn Road, is opening Nov. 18 at 7 a.m. Crews broke ground on the building in March 2022. The new free-standing ER on Stellhorn Road has 10 exam rooms, imaging services, and will be available to walk-in patients as well as those brought to the ER by an ambulance.

●The Dekko Foundation has awarded Joe's Kids a \$75,000 grant. "We are very happy that the Dekko Foundation believes in our mission and understands our passion for serving children," said Rebecca Bazzoni, executive director for Joe's Kids.

●Two boys, ages 15 and 17, were arrested Tuesday on gun charges after an "Armed Disturbance" caused a lockdown at an elementary school, Fort Wayne Police Department says. The teens, each face charges of unlawful carrying of a handgun near a school; dangerous possession of a firearm by a juvenile; and resisting law enforcement. Sgt. Jeremy Webb says in the release that officers were called just after 3 p.m. Tuesday to the 3000 block of South Hanna Street. The teens were found near the corner of Eckart and John streets, which is next to Weisser Park Elementary School and Weisser Park. The teens were caught after a short foot pursuit. Two handguns were found along the path of the foot pursuit.

●An opportunity for people to learn to fly an airplane is coming to the Warsaw Municipal Airport in early 2024. A presentation on the Lake City Aviators flying school was given to the Warsaw Board of Aviation Commissioners (BOAC) Tuesday. Board President Jay Rigdon said they were glad to have them and thanked them for their interest. “We certainly hope you are as successful as successful can be,” he stated.

●On Tuesday, the Fort Wayne Fire Department (FWFD) and Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry gathered to dedicate the FWFD’s newest fire station in northeast Fort Wayne. The new station relocated Fire Station 14 from Reed Road across from Snider High School to the southeast corner of Reed Road and E. State Boulevard. According to the City of Fort Wayne, the new location provides easier access to major roadways while also offering more space for firefighters.

●Kosciusko County Sheriff’s Office and Warsaw Police Department have jointly decided to encrypt and remove much of the radio traffic available on police scanners. County Sheriff Jim Smith confirmed the change, saying it boiled down to a safety factor for officers.

●The City of Fort Wayne is still accepting applications for the HVAC program. The Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services began accepting applications for the city’s Heating and Air Conditioning Program (HVAC) on August 15. The program will provide qualified residents with a zero-percent interest loan to replace or install new heating and air conditioning systems in their homes, according to the news release. The press release states that the loans will be secured by a mortgage, and repayment will be made through monthly payments over ten years. Some qualifications to apply for this program include applicants needing to own their home, and the home must be their primary residence. The home must be located within Fort Wayne city limits, and applicants must have a household income at or below 80% of the local median income.

●OrthoWorx and Warsaw Community Schools have struck a deal and are collaborating on a program that will give students the chance to prepare to hold a career in the orthopedic manufacturing industry. At the wrap of their junior year, program participants will interview with the companies to be placed into internships through their senior year. The prospective program participants will also go through an interview process to be accepted. The program will be available to a select group of juniors and seniors starting as early as the 2024-2025 school year.

●The Mentone Town Council on Thursday, Nov. 9, hired Keaton Schopf to head up the Mentone Police Department. He will fill the vacancy made by Jim Eads retiring and moving to Tennessee. Schopf, who lives in Mentone, has worked as a correctional officer at the Kosciusko County Jail for the last four years and is a current reserve officer for the Winona Lake Police Department. He should start as marshal in December and will be sworn in at a future Mentone Town Council meeting.

●Humane Fort Wayne announced Thursday that their new shelter would house twice as many cats and dogs. The new facility is located at 901 Leesburg Road. Executive director Jessica Henry-Johnson said "It's really exciting, hats off to Weigand Construction and all the sub contractors because they have been on the move and we are going to be in our new facility in June of 2024." Humane Fort Wayne has just over \$1 million of their public campaign left to raise. Those funds will go toward all the animal equipment and furnishings inside the new building.

●The Kosciusko County Sheriff's Merit Board approved three conditional hires and two promotions during a Nov. 9 meeting. With these new hires, the KCSO's merit division will be fully staffed. KCSO Patrol Commander Lt. Mike Mulligan also said Corporal Justin Smith was promoted to sergeant, and Deputy Mike Heady was promoted to corporal.

- More than 120 people Thursday attended a public hearing about rezoning for a proposed data center in east Allen County. But only two people spoke in favor of the development, citing economic gains for the area. If approved, the center would sit on 892 acres bordered by Adams Center Road on the west, Tillman Road on the south and the railroad corridor on the east. Many area residents say they don't see any benefits to the 12-building campus. Construction would take up to 10 years to complete, and the first phase would generate \$850 million and create 30 jobs.

- Financial services provider, Merchants Capital, announced it has secured \$17.4 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity financing for the new construction of Reserve on Park Place, an affordable senior property in Fort Wayne. The property will bring 187 age- and income-restricted units to a high-demand area for affordable housing. Reserve on Park Place will sit in a neighborhood among single-family and multi-family homes, with easy access to restaurants, hotels, a grocery store, a pharmacy and local businesses along State Route 1. Construction is expected to be completed in April 2025.

- Applications are now being accepted for Fort Wayne's neighborhood accelerator program, which is in its second year. The 2024 FORT-ify Neighborhood Accelerator Program is a leadership development program for new, reestablishing or registered neighborhood associations. The neighborhoods will participate in monthly workshops from April through July. The four workshops will focus on community listening and asset-based approaches to development; governance and succession; civic engagement and testimonials; and fundraising and grant writing. All registered neighborhood associations can apply by Jan. 31 to be one of four chosen for the 2024 program at fortwayneneighborhoods.org. Neighborhoods will be notified whether they've been accepted by Feb. 29.

- Snider high school athletics facility is set for nearly \$2 million in upgrades, including installation of synthetic turf. Spuller Stadium on Northrop High School's campus serves as the home field for both Northrop and Snider. Meanwhile, North Side's Chambers Field will benefit from various improvements by the start of next academic year with approval of the \$1.9 million contract with the Motz Group. The upgrades, which were identified in FWCS' capital projects plan, will be funded from the district's operations fund.

