

QUARTERLY ISSUES PROGRAMMING REPORT
WEHT-TV
Henderson, KY / Evansville, IN

First Quarter (January 1 – March 31) 2016

ISSUE ONE: Kentucky Republican Presidential Caucus

For the first time in history, Republicans in the commonwealth of Kentucky held a presidential caucus for this year's election cycle. The caucus was held on Saturday, March 5. The caucus was held to allow U.S. Senator Rand Paul to run for president as well as re-election for his Senate seat. Each county held a caucus with the votes counted by the Republican party.

HOW THE ISSUE WAS TREATED:

News story [2/25 / :50] ...Henderson County Lincoln Day Dinner / Republicans from Henderson County and other parts of western Kentucky were on hand for the annual Lincoln Day dinner. We spoke to party leaders about the upcoming caucus and what they expected.

News story [2/27 / :24] ... Republican presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson's campaign announced that he will be attending a campaign rally in Lexington on February 29.

News story [2/28 / :53] ... More details regarding Dr. Ben Carson's campaign event in Lexington on February 29 and news that Donald Trump will host a campaign event in Louisville on May 1.

News story [2/29 / :58] ... Republican presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson holds a campaign rally in Lexington.

News stories [3/1 / various lengths] ... Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump holds a campaign rally in Louisville. Anchor/reporter Tina Stein went to Louisville and provided coverage and reports throughout our newscasts.

News coverage [3/5] ... Eyewitness News provided live coverage of the first Republican presidential caucus. Brad Byrd was lead anchor for our coverage in Henderson, while Tina Stein and Mike Pickett anchored our coverage from our western Kentucky bureau in Owensboro. In addition, Owensboro City Commissioners Bob Glenn joined Brad in Henderson, providing insight into the caucus and the returns as they were being reported. Our coverage included visits to every Kentucky county in our viewing area to get reaction to the caucus and the turnout.

News stories [2/29 to 3/4] ... Eyewitness News began daily stories reminding Republican voters in Kentucky about the upcoming caucus on Saturday. In addition, complete information about the caucus and site information was posted to our website.

ISSUE TWO: Evansville Icemen v. City of Evansville

Evansville's professional hockey team, the Evansville Icemen, had been in contract negotiations with the city of Evansville for a new lease to continue playing at the Ford Center. Owner Ron Geary said late last year that both sides were far apart on an agreement.

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

News story [1/13 / :52] ... we went to an Evansville Icemen home game to get reaction from fans since owner Ron Geary announced that he and the city were deadlocked over an agreement to continue playing at the Ford Center.

News story [1/14 / 1:24] ... Eyewitness News reports that Icemen owner Ron Geary and Owensboro Mayor Ron Payne have been in discussion about moving the hockey team to Owensboro. We also got reaction from Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke to the news.

News story [1/18 / 1:19] ... we did a story on obstacles the Evansville Icemen would face in moving to Owensboro and the Owensboro Sportscenter. The facility is more than 50 years old and the floor is not large enough to accommodate a hockey rink. We spoke to City Commissioner Bob Glenn

News coverage [1/19] ... Owensboro Mayor Ron Payne and Evansville Icemen owner Ron Geary hold a press to announce the two sides have reached an agreement to move the Icemen from Evansville to Owensboro beginning with the 2016-17 season. We streamed the announcement live on our website, and provided coverage in our newscasts throughout the day. Our coverage included details of the deal with the city and the team, and reaction from Evansville city leaders to the announcement.

News story [1/20 / 1:45] ... we spoke to people in Owensboro to the announcement that professional hockey would be coming to the city next season.

News story [1/21 / :30] ... a Facebook post from the Evansville Icemen raises concerns and confusion with fans about whether the team was actually moving to Owensboro. A team spokesperson clears up the confusion, but some fans were not happy with what they read.

News story [1/26 / :40] ... we reported that the Icemen may have to play all of their games on the road for the first two months to allow time for renovations to be completed at the Owensboro Sportscenter

News story [1/27 / 2:01] ... we spoke to other tenants on the availability of the Owensboro Sportscenter for their 2016-2017 season because of renovations that will be required to play hockey there.

News story [1/29 / :25] ... the Icemen announce that people who purchased season tickets for the 2016-17 season as part of a two-year package deal will get a refund on their tickets.

News story [2/17 / :25] ... the Owensboro City Commission approves changes to the city's budget for the Owensboro Sportscenter. These were part of the deal reached with the Icemen.

News story [2/26 / :30] ... the city of Owensboro gives Icemen owner Ron Geary an 15-day extension to secure financing for the deal between the two sides for team's move to Owensboro.

News investigation [3/2 / 5:45] ... reporter Jordan Vandenberg, using emails from Owensboro and Evansville city leaders obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, puts together a timeline of contact between the city of Owensboro and Icemen owner Ron Geary as well as the timeline between the city of Evansville and Ron Geary regarding negotiations on the future of the team.

News story [3/4 / 1:00] ... the city of Owensboro give Icemen owner Ron Geary a second two-week extension to secure financing to move the team to Owensboro.

News event [3/14] ... a joint news conference with Owensboro Mayor Ron Payne and Icemen Ron Geary is held to announce that the Icemen will suspend operations for the 2016-17 ECHL hockey season and plan to return to the ECHL for the 2017-18 season. The news conference was streamed live on our website, and our news coverage went into detail on why the decision was reached.

ISSUE THREE: Thank You Tristate

Eyewitness News will spotlight special events and programs in our area in an ongoing series we have titled Thank You Tristate.

HOW THE ISSUE WAS TREATED:

Thank You Tristate [2/4 / 4:03] ... Anchor / reporter Shelley Kirk spotlights the Evansville African American Museum and what it offers.

Thank You Tristate [2/11 / 4:13] ... Anchor / reporter Shelley Kirk spotlights the Lyle Station Museum. This place served as a stop on the Underground Railroad and exhibits from the museum will be part of an exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C.

Thank You Tristate [2/18 / 4:00] ... Anchor / reporter Shelley Kirk spotlights the Bicycle Recycle program. This is a program operated by the Henderson County Detention Center where offenders incarcerated at the jail are involved in a program to rehab bicycles and repurpose them for people who can't afford bicycles.

Thank You Tristate [2/25 / 4:01] ... Anchor / reporter Shelley Kirk spotlights the Pirouette Program. This is a dance program that introduces elementary school children in an Evansville to dance lessons that they could not afford.

ISSUE FOUR: Regional Cities Program and Funding

In late 2014, the Indiana Economic Development Commission voted to approve three regions of the state, including southwestern Indiana, to receive \$42 million in funding for various projects within each region. However, the Indiana General Assembly had only approved funding for two projects, so lawmakers were asked to fund the third region.

HOW THE ISSUE WAS TREATED:

News interview [2/23 / 5:00] ... during our Lifestyles show, we aired an interview with Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke on various topics, including Regional Cities funding.

News story [2/24 / :33] ... the Indiana House Ways and Means Committee hold a hearing at the Statehouse in Indianapolis. One of the topics was Regional Cities money, and Mayor Lloyd Winnecke testified at the hearing.

News story [2/28 / :25] ... a vote is expected today by the House Ways and Means Committee on Regional Cities funding

News story [2/29 / :43] ... the Indiana House Ways and Means Committee ties the Regional Cities funding to a road funding measure which is also being considered by the committee

News story [3/10 / :50] ... a compromise bill put together by a conference committee of the Indiana House and Senate is approved in final votes by the Indiana House and Senate.

News story [3/11 / 1:10] ... we get reaction from local leaders to the approval of the road funding / Regional Cities funding bill approved by the Indiana House and Senate yesterday.

News story [3/23 / :53] ... Indiana Governor Mike Pence formally signs the road funding / Regional Cities funding bill.

ISSUE FIVE: Alcoa announces shutdown of smelter / layoffs

In early January, Alcoa announced they would cease operations of their aluminum smelting operations at its facility in Warrick County, with hundreds of jobs being lost.

HOW THE ISSUE WAS TREATED:

News coverage [1/7] ... a written release late in the afternoon announced that Alcoa will cease smelting operations at its Warrick County plant with more than 600 workers losing their jobs. We were live outside of the plant with the news and got a statement on camera from the company about the announcement. Later, we got reaction from people in nearby communities, including current and retired Alcoa workers on the announcement.

News coverage [1/8] ... we continued to get reaction from people in the community as well as local leaders to the news of the smelter shutdown

News story [1/21 / :53] ... leaders with the United Steelworkers, the union which represents workers at Alcoa, says they are in negotiations with Alcoa to try and minimize the loss of jobs at the plant. So far, things are not going well.

News story [1/25 / 2:02] ... union leaders with the United Steelworkers hold a series of meeting with workers at Alcoa to discuss benefits and options

News coverage [2/9] ... leaders with Alcoa and the United Steelworkers announce an agreement has been reached. It includes offering “quit packages” to workers for early retirement. We also reported that Alcoa has sent a formal WARN notice to WorkOne about the upcoming layoffs at the plant.

News story [2/18 / :40] ... representatives from Heritage Federal Credit Union, the credit union formed for Alcoa workers, gives presentations to Alcoa workers about financial options.

News story [2/22 / :35] ... the local United Steelworkers union announces they have applied for federal money for work transition and work training program to help with displaced workers.

News story [3/2 / :35] ... the deadline is approaching for workers at Alcoa to decide if they will take a quit package or retire.

News story [3/9 / :33] ... Alcoa releases the new layoff numbers, saying 325 people will be laid off when the smelter is shut down.

News story [3/10 / 2:07] ... we speak to Greg Wathen of the Southwest Indiana Economic Development Corporation about the new layoff numbers from Alcoa

News story [3/11 / 1:33] ... local United Steelworkers officials announce they are setting up job fairs and other program to help displace workers.

News story [3/18 / :40] ... WorkOne officials hold a series of seminars at the United Steelworkers union hall to talk to Alcoa workers about programs which will be available to laid off workers.

News story [3/24 / :30] ... Alcoa confirms that smelting at the Warrick County plant has ended and cleanup in that part of the plant will conclude on April 7.