

The following is a summary of issues filed for the radio station WZDM for the period between January first and March 31st, 2014. The issues were covered in newscasts every thirty minutes from five a-m to nine a-m, and at 12 noon, 4 p-m, and five p-m, and by 1-minute newscasts evenings and overnights. This list is by no means comprehensive.

(Watermelon Drop-- guests)(Wednesday 1/1/14 ... tlz 6a)

The National Watermelon Drop featured various guests as celebrants to help Vincennes ring in the New Year. At midnight last night, 14 watermelons dropped from a large symbolic watermelon to help bring in the New Year.

Chef Joe Poon was among the celebrities on hand. Chef Poon is known for his artistic and speed-carving skills, and has been featured on late-night shows such as "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

(Colder weather-- NWS)(Monday 1/6/13 ... tlz 6a)

Area residents are digging out from a combination of snow and cold today. Four to five inches of snow that fell since yesterday afternoon has been joined by a polar air mass to deep-freeze the area.

(Bicknell BPW-- Unsafe buildings hearing)(Tuesday 1/7/14 ... tlz 6a)

The Bicknell Board of Works has approved the demolition of three vacant structures in the 100-block of Main Street. The approval affects the structures at 105, 107, and 111 North Main Street; the demolition came after a mandatory public hearing on the issue at the Bicknell City Hall.

(NWS-- Polar vortex)(Tuesday 1/7/14 ... tlz 6a)

The National Weather Service says a large "polar vortex" is responsible for the bitterly cold weather in the area from Sunday through today. The vortex descended from northern Canada, and brought the coldest temperatures to this area in decades.

(VCSC-- Clark Crossing signing)(Wednesday 1/8/14 ... tlz 12n)
(updated 1/9)

The Vincennes Community School Corporation signed papers yesterday to set financing on renovation and demolition on Clark's Crossing. The Crossing consists of Adams Coliseum, the former Corporation Administration building, and the former Clark Middle School.

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(Westall Pleads Guilty) (1-9-14...JT 6a.)

Helen Marie Westall will spend at least 20 years in an Illinois Department of Corrections prison. On Wednesday she agreed to plead guilty as part of a deal.

Westall plead guilty to solicitation of murder for hire, a class X felony, in the slaying of her uncle, then 78-year-old Robert Westall. As a part of the deal, a second original charge of Solicitation of Murder was dismissed. Under terms of the agreement, Westall's sentence will be no greater than 30 years but no less than 20 years.

(Bicknell Finances) (1-14-14...JT 6a.)

The Bicknell City Council agreed to pay 30-thousand dollars in loans back last night.

The City had three outstanding internal loans as of last night for 42-thousand dollars total. The loans were left over from the loans to make payroll last year. The Council paid 20-thousand back to the local road and street fund and 10-thousand to the fire donation fund. Left outstanding was 12-thousand to the general industry clinic fund to be paid back by May 1st.

(SK-- Cash crunch) (Tuesday 1/14/14 ... tlz 6a)

The South Knox School Board is facing a potential shortfall in its General Fund cash on hand for this coming year. South Knox Schools Superintendent Tim Grove says spending at the current rate, the account would be in the red by the end of 2014. Grove made his comments last night during the annual South Knox Board of Finance meeting.

(School accountability grades-- Knox) (Thursday 1/16/14 ... tlz 6a)

The Indiana Department of Education released 2013 letter grades yesterday for the state's school corporations.

In Knox County, two school corporations improved their overall grades. Vincennes Community Schools moved up to a C grade for 2013, up from a D the year before, while South Knox Schools are up to a B grade, from an 2012 C grade. North Knox Schools retained a D grade for 2013, similar to the Corporation's 2012 mark.

VU Students to Provide Free Tax Preparation Assistance Jds 1-20-14

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Vincennes University students majoring in accounting will be preparing tax returns for people in the Vincennes community and students at VU.

The students are under the direction of Lisa Nash, associate professor of accounting, and are certified by testing through the IRS.

The service is free to the community as part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service.

(USB-- Wastewater completion) (Thursday 1/23/14 ... tlz 6a)

The Industrial Park water and sewer extension project south of Vincennes is near completion. The extension is designed to help Farbest Foods and other nearby businesses with water and sewer service.

Vincennes Water Utilities general manager Kirk Bouchie reported the concrete has been poured at a new sewer lift station.

(Sumner Child Abuse) (2-4-14...JT 12n.)
(updated 2/5)

Two more arrests have been made in connection with the abuse of an infant last week in Sumner.

Lawrence County State's Attorney Chris Quick filed warrants Monday for 22-year-old Ashley Armes and 24-year-old James Choate the 3rd both of Sumner. Armes was arrested for one count of aggravated battery to a child a Class X felony. Choate is charged with one county of Predatory criminal sexual assault to a child in an incident which occurred in the same house - also a class X felony. Both were booked into the Lawrence County Jail on 700,000 dollars bond.

(VCSC Grade Changed - Now What?) (2-7-14...JT 6a.)

The Vincennes Community School Corporation celebrated a victory this week as Clark Middle School's near failing ISTEP grade was changed to reflect glitches in the online ISTEP testing.

VCSC Superintendent Greg Parsley says he bears no ill will toward the state for the mix up, but he does hope it's been a learning experience.

(Election filings-- a few races) (Monday 2/10/14 ... tlz 6a)

Knox County voters have a few contested races to sort out during the coming May sixth primary.

Most of the races will be for spots on the Republican side of the

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ticket. Ryan Johanningsmeier will face Dirk Carnahan for the Republican nomination. The contest will be to replace retiring Prosecutor John Sievers. The winner will face current Knox County Deputy Prosecutor Hal Johnston, who is running un-opposed.

(City assessment drop) (Tuesday 1/12/14 ... tlz 6a)

The City of Vincennes has suffered a three percent drop in its assessed valuation for the last year. Knox County Auditor Cathy Lane says that loss doesn't look like much at first, but it adds up when you consider the amount of money lost.

(YMCA New CEO) (2-14-14...JT 6a.)
(Went Online Last Night)

(Vincennes, IN) -- There's a new CEO at the YMCA of Vincennes.

The Y announced on Thursday, Rob LaRoy will begin his duties on March 10th. Current CEO Brenda Cummings is retiring after 25 years of services.

YMCA officials say that LaRoy's skill-set will be a good fit in Vincennes and that his past success is a cause for high optimism.

(NWS-- Warming weather) (Monday 2/17/14 ... tlz 6a)

Warmer weather is coming to the area, after a slight layer of sleet turns to rain by afternoon. Temperatures will top out in the upper 30's today, after one more day of early-morning cold weather.

National Weather Service forecaster Joe Skowronek expresses where temperatures will be by midweek.

The City of Vincennes is looking into expanding the city's TIF district to include Willow Street. Vincennes Mayor Joe Yochum said that even though Willow is technically state highway, that could change in the future.

Yochum said the Willow Street area may be one of the most improved business spots in Vincennes along with the Vincennes Plaza's addition of Dunhams Sports. He said he also expects some new business activity to come to Hart Street soon.

Another possible reason for the expansion could include fallout from Illinois' push for 10-dollar-per-hour minimum wage.

Progress is being made on the new Rainbow Beach Family Aquatic Center, but

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it's not quite what the city would have liked.

Vincennes Mayor Joe said the weather has hurt some of the progress in the construction but nothing could be done about it. Rainbow Beach is still not officially "behind schedule." Yochum they'll have to figure that one out this spring.

Despite the weather several elements are already in place including the block for the bath house and the flume slide.

The Knox County Public Library Board voted to hire Myszak and Palmer to conduct an energy audit at the Main Library building.

Library director Emily Bunyan said that energy readings from Duke Energy showed energy usage and fees ran higher on average in 2013. She said that it was a cause for concern. One possible explanation was the new air conditioning unit that was installed at the library in November of 2012.

Myszak and Palmer will conduct the energy audit for a total cost of 2,500 dollars and gave a 30 day window for its completion.

The board approved the measure unanimously.

The Knox County Commissioners passed an ordinance on first reading Wednesday to fix a zoning issue within the county.

During a recent disaster situation county officials discovered that 16 residential properties on Schoolhouse Road and Sixth Street road were zoned for commercial use.

The commissioners passed an ordinance to bring all of those residences into R-A Residential zoning. This measure will save time in case of another disaster in the area. County officials said it made no sense for the properties to be zoned commercial anyway.

It now will go before the Knox County Area Plan Commission for approval and then come back to the commissioners for final approval.

The new elevator project for the Knox County Courthouse is a go.

The Knox County Commissioners took the first step Wednesday night by hiring Josh Palmer of Myszak, Palmer and Associates to come up with a design. The commissioners passed a design and engineering budget not to exceed 26-thousand dollars.

By the next regular meeting, the commissioners should hear an update on the plans with the goal of taking and awarding bids at special meetings in May. The elevator is expected to be in place and operational by early September.

The total budget for the project is expected to be between 350 and 380 thousand dollars. The Commissioners voted to ask for an additional 400 thousand to cover their bases. Commissioners President Larry Holscher also

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noted that he would like to see the funding come from the Rainy Day fund instead of EDIT.

The National Weather Service has issued a FLOOD WARNING for the White River in Petersburg from Saturday afternoon until further notice.

The river is expected to rise to near 20 feet by Wednesday morning, or four feet above flood stage.

Additional rises are possible after that.

The White River at Petersburg stood at 9.1 feet Wednesday morning.

FLOOD WARNINGS have also been posted for the east Fork of the White River and The Wabash River.

The North Knox School Board Accepted two donations at Monday's meeting.

The Most significant was a monetary donation from the Trabant Foundation for just over 17,900 dollars. The donation was for maintenance and upkeep on the North Knox Bus - the vehicle used for special school trips.

Superintendent Darrell Bobe said the Trabant Foundation approached him about setting up a fund for this donation last year. In December a fund was set up specifically for the donation. Bobe said the foundation's goal is to donate a little money every year so the corporation doesn't have to take a huge hit when a major issue with the bus comes up.

The Other donation was from the Vincennes Rotary Club which donated several books to the libraries at the North Knox Primary and Intermediate Schools.

(NK - School Days) (2-26-14...JT 6a.)

The North Knox School Corporation is on track to get out of school on time.

North Knox graduates on Friday, May 23rd. Thanks to several built-in snow days, students will get out on that day - barring any more severe weather.

North Knox Superintendent Darrell Bobe says he's contemplating going to school on Good Friday - an abnormality for North Knox - to give everyone a break.

Bobe said he believes students would still have plenty of time to make it to church activities planned for Good Friday if the corporation were to make the decision to be in session. However no plans are set in stone.

The Knox County Parks and Recreation department is behind on its taxes. Knox County Convention and Visitors' Bureau officials told Parks Superintendent Rama Sobhani the department is a year behind on its Inn

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Keeper's Tax from the cabin rentals at Ouabache Trails.

The Parks Department will begin charging the tax at the time of a cabin rental on the bill. The actual fee for renting the cabin will be the same, but the tax will be tacked on like sales tax.

The Inn Keeper's tax is a five percent tax on hotels and tourist lodging.

(KC Parks - Campground Opening) (2-27-14...JT 6a.)

The Knox County Parks Department is gearing up for the 2014 Camping season and preparing the campground at Ouabache trails for visitors.

Parks Superintendent Rama Sobhani said the official date for the opening is April 1st but if the weather cooperates, they could open up at the end of March.

Sobhani also says several people have already asked about cabin and campsite rentals he just hopes everything will be ready. Sobhani said another big concern for the camping season is all of the work that needs to be done. The parks board recently contracted with City Engineer John Sprague to do a study of the erosion issues at the campground. Several of those issues will have to be addressed in the coming months or else the park could have a bigger problem.

The road to the campground is also suffering severe erosion damage and will need to be addressed soon.

(VCSC Elementary Day Extension) (2-28-14... JT 6a.)

The Vincennes Elementary Schools are making the most the extension of the school day.

K through 2 students are spending the time in fine arts classes so they'll have hands on management of the extra time. Third, Fourth and Fifth graders are doing iStep prep at Clark Middle School to make up for lost time from the snow days. Testing will go on as scheduled in mid-March.

Students are nearing the end of the first week of extended class periods with about two weeks to go. Shepard says the transition has been smooth and the students are adapting well. She also praised the VCSC for adding on to the school days rather than deciding to go to school into June.

Students are being provided with snacks near the end of the day to help them deal with being at school longer than normal.

(KC Sheriff's Bus Rider) (3-3-14... JT 6a.)

(SAVE FOR MONDAY!!!)

Knox County Sheriff's deputies have eyes in the back of their heads...

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or at least on the school busses.

Sheriff Mike Morris said the school corporations had been receiving a lot of complaints about people passing school busses with stop arms out. To combat that, school resource officers have been riding busses to help monitor traffic violations and then calling into other deputies in the area to make the stop. Morris said they've issued several citations thanks to the move but that doesn't stop some from trying to lie about it. Morris said the deputies seem to really enjoy the time spent on the bus as well and its been a good situation for all involved.

Morris said this program is just one of the several things the sheriff's department has been working with the school corporations on.

(County Council - Rainy Day) (3-3-14...JT 6a.)
(SAVE FOR MONDAY!!!)

With several big projects coming up within the county, the Knox County Commissioners have been talking about which fund the money will come from.

Most recently, the commissioners talked about the 400,000 dollars that will need to be allotted for the courthouse elevator project. Commissioner Larry Holscher said he would like to give the EDIT Fund a break and take those funds out of the Rainy Day Fund.

(TIF Zone - Yochum) (3-5-14...JT 6a.)

The City of Vincennes is looking into expansion of the Tax Increment Financing Zone to include the Willow Street Corridor. Several community leaders and officials have expressed concerns about the expansion. They believe it would take funding away from schools, the city itself and other taxing bodies and put it in the hands of the Vincennes Redevelopment Commission - causing those groups to have to ask for that money back.

VU: Campus Apartments Getting \$4M Makeover

Jds 3-5-14

Indianapolis-based student housing developer Annex Student Living is investing four-million dollars to remodel and upgrade the former Campus Habitat apartment complex on West Saint Clair next to the Vincennes University Campus.

Annex of Vincennes, as it's now called, is undergoing a complete remodel. It includes two buildings of 2-bed/1-bath units and three buildings of town homes comprised of 6-bed/3-bath units.

Each unit will be fully furnished.

Leasing rates start at \$480 per student per month, utilities included.

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(Planting Season) (3-7-14...JT 6a.)

After two consecutive years of weather disasters during the planting season, area farmers are hoping for a little relief this year.

Two years ago, Drought plagued the midwest causing sever damage to crops in the area. Last year heavy rainfall and flooding caused several crops to be late and some were left standing even into this year.

(Mayor's Round Table) (Monday 3-10-14...JT 6a.)
(Save For Monday)

Vincennes Mayor Joe Yochum recently attended a meeting of several mayors around the state. The hot button topic: elimination of the business personal property tax.

Locally, several taxing entities have officially opposed the tax cut through a resolution at a public meeting. Yochum said the sentiment seems to be the same statewide. However Yochum also said they aren't out of the woods yet. Most officials believe a watered down version will pass. If that happens it will force most cities and counties to pass a Local Option Income Tax to replace some of the lost funding.

Toyota Indiana Surpasses \$20 Million in Donations since 1997

Jds 3-10-14

30 nonprofits in the Tri-State will share more than 140-thousand dollars in grants from Toyota Indiana this quarter.

The amount moves the needle past the \$20 million dollar mark donated in the area since 1997.

The grants will be used by nonprofit agencies to improve the quality of life in the Tri-State, something Toyota says is part of its mission.

(Bicknell - Blight) (3-12-14...Jt 6a.)

The Federal Government has allotted funding for demolition of blighted properties and the city of Bicknell is looking to take advantage.

Mayor Jon Flickenger said there are several properties in Bicknell that need to come down. Right now there isn't a specific plan in place to take care of Bicknell's blight problem, nor is there a specific area to which its confined. Flickenger and city officials will make the rounds around the city and put together a plan of action.

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(County Roads - MFT Money) (3-13-14...JT 6a.)

The Knox County Commissioners believe they can do more than originally thought with the additional Motor Fuel Tax funds recieved from the state this year.

Commissioner Larry Holscher said the extra 735 thousand dollars is going a lot farther than he expected initially. He said the county normally has around 80-thousand dollars per district to spend on roads. With the extra he said the county is now working with about 170,000 per district with some of the MFT funds specifically allocated for the Keller Road Project.

(County Possibly Getting More Inmates) (3-13-14...JT 6a.)

The state is changing the way it charges inmates with crimes and that could mean more prisoners in the county jail.

Knox County Council President Randy Crismore said very little is known about what will happen with the state changing the classification of felonies. However, one possibility is that some of the Department of Corrections prisoners could end up in county jails state wide.

(Knox County Storm Spotter) (SUNDAY 3-16-14...JT 6a.)

The Knox County Emergency Management Agency will be hosting a Storm Spotter Training class Tuesday, March 18th in the Vincennes University Technology building.

The Class is instructed by the National Weather Service.

Pre-registration is not required for the event. Officials expect the class to last around 2 hours from 6:30-8:30. Attendees are not required to be Knox County Residents and anyone interested will be allowed to attend.

(Lawrenceville Cemetery Rates) (3-16-14...JT 6a.)

Starting May 1st it will cost more to be buried in the Lawrenceville City Cemetery.

Alderman Wendell Stephens said the City Cemetery committee had reviewed the rates and despite rising costs, the city hadn't had a rate increase since 2003. Mayor Don Wagner said the city tax dollars that go to the cemetery can only do so much, especially when working in the cemetery is so labor intensive.

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(Lawrenceville Roads) (MONDAY 3-17-14...JT 6a.)

Some city streets in Lawrenceville are set to get pavement this summer. As is the case with several area streets and roads, this year's harsh winter has taken its toll on the streets in Lawrenceville. The Lawrenceville Streets and Alleys committee has put together a list of 13 city streets and roads that will need work this paving season.

(Lawrenceville Trash) (Tuesday 3-18-14...Jt 6a.)

The City of Lawrenceville is having issues with people leaving televisions, miscellaneous junk and large garbage items in their yards for extended periods of time.

Alderman Jep Blacketer brought the issue up during Thursday's city council meeting and Mayor Don Wagner said the city has been working on it in the last couple weeks. Wagner explained the city has been picking up items that have been sitting for a while that would normally require a special pickup sticker.

(Road Rehab) (3-20-14...Jt 6a.)

The Knox County Highway department is looking at how best to spend the 750,000 dollars the county council offered up at their last meeting.

Highway Superintendent Ron Cardinal and County Engineer John Sprague told the commissioners they believe the best course of action is to use lime stabilization for county roads once construction season begins. Sprague said the process was a little more expensive, but the pavement is at the point that putting a layer of asphalt over the existing road would only be a band-aid. He said the roads would be in just as bad shape within two years.

Severe Weather Can Strike at Any Time 2

jds 3-20-14

Spring is almost here and with it comes severe weather.

This is Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana.

Dave Tucek with the National Weather Service in Indianapolis says Hoosiers not only need to keep an eye on the forecast this time of year, but also be aware that severe weather can strike at any time.

Tomorrow (THURSDAY), the National Weather Service will conduct a statewide test of communication systems in Indiana, one at 10:15 A-M and the other at 7:30 P-M.

(LC Board - No Gambling on Sundays) (3-21-14...JT 6a.)

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The Lawrence County Board voted 3-2 to amend the county gambling ordinance Wednesday.

Chairman Bill Gray Brought up the issue. He proposed at first video gaming would only be allowed Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to Midnight. Games would not be played Sundays from Midnight to 7 a.m. the next morning. He also proposed exempting non-profit groups from the Sunday rule.

The measure was introduced because Gray said the county didn't have the man power to enforce all of the regulations that come along with gaming in addition to keeping watch on the restaurants to make sure their alcohol sales were balanced at the legal rate. Food sales must be at least 50 percent of their income.

(Parks - New Beverage Contractor) (3-21-14... JT 6a.)

The Vincennes Parks board will start serving Pepsi products once Rainbow Beach opens.

The department's contract with RC is ending and they advertised for bids for the new contract. Both RC and Pepsi submitted bids. Parks Superintendent Steve Beamon said the proposals were comparable. Soda was a little cheaper with RC, but sports drinks and water were cheaper with Pepsi. Pepsi offered a lower commission charge and also offered more money for promotions. Beamon however said the department could get away with selling RC products for about a dollar, where as Pepsi products would have to be sold at 1.50.

(RDC - Street Paving) (3-22-14...Jt 6a.)

City Enginer John Sprague said after having lunch with a federal official he learned his plan for city street paving needed to be tweaked.

Sprague said he attended a road school conference and ended up having lunch with a federal official. The person explained to him that there are two types of road work which require different adhearance to regulations: alterations and maintenance.

Alterations require ADA updates. The work that Sprague has been planning for Hart and Sixth Street is considered an alteration.

(Battles-- session recap) (Monday 3/24/14 ... tlz 6a)

The Indiana General Assembly closed out its short legislative session last week. The short session was a productive one, with a lot of bills being considered through the just under three month term.

Washington AVenue Fire - for 3 24 14

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Vincennes City and Township firefighters controlled a large fire last night along Washington Avenue. The first call came in at 11:45 pm (Sunday) to the old building near the Railroad Tracks that formerly was occupied by businesses including Northside Pharmacy and the Pine Box.

(BPW--CMS closures) (Tuesday 3/25/14 ... tlz 6a)

The Vincennes Board of Works has approved closures of various roads around the former Clark Middle School starting April seventh. The closings are needed as part of the demolition of the former Clark in downtown Vincennes.

The first closure will affect parts of Fifth Street and Buntin Street from April seventh through April 18th. The second phase would close part of Sixth Street from April 21st through 25th, with Phase Three to close part of Perry Street from April 28th to May second. The parts of the roads to close will be those closest to the former Clark Middle School.

(Citco-- State of the City overall) (Tuesday 3/25/14 ... tlz 6a)

Vincennes Mayor Joe Yochum is urging Council to find ways to make up for a 400-thousand dollar decline in the general fund. The Mayor made his comments last night during the annual "State of the City" address. Mayor Yochum says if the deficits continue, it could lead to a loss of City jobs to keep the budget balanced.

(Bandwagon-- Annual meeting) (Wednesday 3/26/14 ... tlz 12n)
(updated 3/27)

Tables are still available for the annual Knox County Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet. The session will be held May first at the Green Activities Center at Vincennes University. Current University of Toledo women's basketball coach Tricia Cullop will speak. Cullop was an Indiana All Star from North Knox High School in 1988.