

PROGRAMMING & QUARTERLY ISSUES

WRQY-FM -- RAGE 96.5



1st Quarter 2024

January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024

HEADLINS 1-2-24

#1
The Village of Wintersville sworn ⁱⁿ multiple individuals on Sunday at the Village Building. Continuing their commitment is current Mayor, Mike Petrella for his first full term as mayor. Councilwoman, Pennie Scarpone for her first full term and councilwoman, Gael Damron for her second term. Each person ran unopposed and Petrella says this shows that the community trusts them. Simultaneously, retired Wintersville Police Chief Edward Laman was sworn in as a Wintersville Police Officer. Laman retired from the department in 2016 after 42 years. Now he will be working part-time as one of the department's training officers. Also sworn in was Jason Fabian as Cross Creek Township Trustee.

*O
Authorities continue to assess the damage after fire caused significant damage to a home in Jefferson County on Friday night. Crews were called to a home in the 3600 block of Ohio 152 in Wayne Township about 8 p.m. Upon arrival, they found the structure fully engulfed. Officials said there was an occupant home at the time of the fire as well as several dogs. No injuries have been reported. This was the second fire call in the Richmond area in as many days.

#1
pay your bill
The Wheeling Water Department has changed how you can ^{pay your bill}, now offering a new third-party online provider. Utilities Accounting & Revenue Supervisor Marci Embrey said for several years, customers have been asking for the ability to use more payment options like their checking or savings account, PayPal, Venmo, or Google Pay. Previously, the only option was with a credit or debit card. But along with this addition comes the way fees are processed. Wheeling City Manager Bob Herron said fees have always been in place but were previously absorbed by the system, totaling roughly \$126,000 a year. Now, the fee is subsidized by customers paying with any of the new features or credit and debit cards at 3.5 percent of their bill. The minimum fee is \$2. For those paying with checking or savings accounts, it is \$1.95 flat rate. Paying by mail or in person is still available with no fee.

*D

The rink at Franciscan Square is the new spot for pond hockey. Pond hockey is a simplified version of ice hockey, usually played outside on a natural frozen body of water. There is no goalie and it's played with a sponge puck, making the game perfect for beginners. The Rink at Franciscan Square being the only fully outdoor, real ice skating rink in the valley, it makes the unique take on the game even more memorable. Sessions are split into two sections, based on age. One for kids aged 12 and under and another for kids aged 12-16. For adults, there are two sessions ages 16 and up. Sessions are \$10 per person. Coming up, there is an adults' matchup set for January 4th starting at 9 p.m. and a kids' version on January 6th at 8:30 a.m.

#D

Wheeling's camping ban is now in effect. Wheeling City Council gave its approval to ban camping on public property on November 7th, 2023. The ban was passed by city council by a vote of 5 to 2, with Mayor Glenn Elliott and Councilwoman Rosemary Ketchum voting against it. Vice Mayor Chad Thalman voted for the ban saying he disagrees with camping on public property without permission for several reasons. Thalman says it is his expectation that the city will work with the homeless organizations and liaisons to provide one city approved area for people to stay. After City Council gave its approval to ban camping on public property, the Wheeling Life Hub Winter Shelter opened in December, 2023, and hopes to become a year-round shelter with a wide range of resources for the homeless.

*L

Kevin Jones was sworn in Friday as the new Cadiz mayor. Jones said he hopes to bring change to the city with more jobs and development. Jones will give his introductory speech at a town hall meeting on Jan 6 from 4-7 p.m. at Sally Buffalo Park.

HEADLINES 1-3-24

#1
Just before 4 on Tuesday afternoon, the Weirton Police Department was dispatched to a crash along Marland Heights Road. The crash involved a Hancock County school bus and a car at the intersection of Grant Street. Lieutenant Eric Redish of Weirton Police Department and Hancock County Schools Superintendent Dan Enich say there were 9 students present on the bus. Neither the students nor the bus driver were injured. There's been no word about any injuries to the driver of the car or whether any charges have been filed.

#1
The Ohio County Commission is looking ahead to the New Year with several objectives in place. Those include the new TIF district that was established two weeks ago called "The Fort Henry Centre Development District Number Two." Plans for their new development district are also underway, something commissioners think will be an economic boost just like The Highlands. Commissioners will continue to discuss the future of the second district at the next commission meeting in just a few weeks.

#2
A multi-vehicle accident closed U.S. 250 around 12:30 on Tuesday afternoon. According to the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Office, the crash involved a grain truck and a car. One of the drivers was transported to a local hospital with minor injuries. The road was closed in both directions as 80 gallons of diesel fuel were spilled. Crews worked to move the grain truck off the road and clean the fuel before reopening the road fully in both directions.

#1
Drug crimes and overdoses were a growing concern nationally in 2023, but in Brooke County, the trends are a little different—they're actually being reduced year after year. Sheriff Richard Beatty said there are some individuals that will be repeatedly troublesome, but his department knows when they're in the community and can watch out for them. Beatty also says community involvement has been a big help in lowering the county's numbers, as people are speaking up when they see something out of the ordinary.

#2

It's a New Year, and West Virginia has changed its car inspection laws. Vehicle owners will now be required to take their vehicle in for an inspection every 2 years instead of each year. Brooke County Sheriff Richard Beatty says the change will be a benefit, and he does not expect to see a significant impact from the updated law. With the change, the price of an inspection will increase to \$19.78.

#1

The Sycamore Youth Center in Steubenville will host its 6th annual Martin Luther King Youth and Children's Day to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 15. The event will take place at the center and is geared to teaching youth about the legacy of Dr. King. This year's keynote address will be delivered by Cookie West. Steve Forte from the Sycamore Center says they target this audience so they can continue with Dr. King's mission, and also perform service projects to show the importance of giving back and unity. The event will start at 10 a.m. with several performances and conclude with service projects at 2:30 p.m.

#2

Roads and bridges were the big topics of Follansbee City Council on Tuesday night with many expressing concerns of the removal of traffic lights and the future of the Market Street Bridge. Follansbee Mayor David Velegol announced that there will be a discussion today with representatives from both states and the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission about the need for the Market Street Bridge. The infrastructure conversation continued with traffic lights in Follansbee. In December, council teamed up with the BHJ to install trip wires at four key traffic lights in the city, which the West Virginia Department of Highways are set to remove. These are located at the intersections of Main Street and State, Ohio and Raymond as well as the former Coke Plant entrance. Mayor David Velegol says the data collected from the trip wires has been received and city officials will review the data and submit it to the DOH. Velegol also mentioned the closing of De Stefano's staple restaurant in Follansbee after serving the community for 97 years.

HEADLINES 1-4-24



A ban on camping on public property went into effect Monday in the city of Wheeling, and efforts were made to bulldoze a homeless camp on Wednesday. That homeless camp is located near Perkins Restaurant & Bakery. Upon arrival by demolition officials, members of the encampment refused to leave. They argued they weren't given any notice after being asked to gather their belongings and leave the site within four hours. So, the city manager's office postponed the bulldozing for two weeks to provide ample notice. Councilwoman Rosemary Ketchum noted the order passed by Judge Bailey two years ago that stated that it is the legal requirement to inform members of the encampments that they must vacate within two weeks. According to the notice later given by the city of Wheeling, all personal property remaining on the sites after 5 p.m. on January 17, 2024 is subject to removal by the city of Wheeling. The first location for demolition has yet to be determined.

2023 was a successful year for Jefferson County when it came to getting into communities and targeting the opioid epidemic, as officials are seeing a dramatic decrease in overdose fatalities. The focus was on collaboration through the HEALing Communities Study, amping up on naloxone distribution, and breaking the stigmas connected with it. In 2022, there were 40 overdose fatalities in the county. In 2023, that number was cut in half. Jefferson County Health Commissioner Andrew Henry says the county also needs to work with the non-fatal overdoses. The numbers for 2023 indicate that 250 people sought medical attention for an overdose, and the county wants to get that number down in 2024. Henry says one of their biggest goals in 2024 is to get people access to care and make sure they stay in the treatment. Jefferson County Prevention and Recovery Executive Director Bill Holt says the county has two main initiatives in 2024. One is trying to connect people from the jail to recovery services and supports. The other is having a quick response team that includes peer support when people do overdose.

USW Local 2911 President Mark Glyptis is set to testify before the U.S. International Trade Commission on tin tariffs in Washington, D.C. The commerce department said in August it would impose tariffs on tin plate steel imports from Canada, Germany and China, including cans for food, paint and aerosols. The Cleveland Cliffs Mill in Weirton makes tin plate. Glyptis said other countries have been selling product in the U-S at costs lower than in their home markets, which cost American steel jobs.

Monday 1/8/24 there will be lane reduction on State Route 7 North bound between the South Street intersection and the Franklin Street intersection. The reduction is necessary for the Wastewater Department to perform maintenance on ~~our~~^{the} sewer system. The lanes will be reduced from 8 AM until the work is completed.

*J

Crossroads North River Church has partnered with the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities to host the Night to Shine Prom for those with special needs in the Ohio Valley. For the past 10 years, the Tim Tebow Foundation has sponsored churches around the world so they could host the event. This year's event is set for February 9 from 6-9 at Toronto Elementary School. Admission is free and everything will be provided for participants ahead of the big night, including hair, nails, makeup, and boutonnieres for the outfits. The participants will ride in a limo around the parking lot of the school, and they'll enter on a red carpet. There will be a photo booth, a catered meal, a DJ, dancing, karaoke. There will also be a sensory room if any of the participants become over stimulated. Another way to experience the night is virtually. All participants will receive a crown or tiara during the crowning ceremony. If you are interested in attending or being a volunteer, they still have spots available.

*J

You're probably ready to toss out your Christmas tree. But keep in mind that places like the Good Zoo at Oglebay in Wheeling can use your live tree for environmental enrichment within the animals. Zoo director Joe Greathouse says the trees create a lot of different experiences for the animals. The zoo works with local business and the community to get the trees. Each year it gets around 15-20 trees, but they hope for about 30 or more. When you upcycle your tree, not only will the animals get to use it for a brief period, but the zoo will also repurpose it as mulch or other environmental necessities. If you're interested in dropping off your tree, head to the good zoo's admission gate during operation hours.

*J

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office says a man who fled an apartment where a search warrant was being executed was found hiding in an upstairs crawl space of an adjacent apartment. It happened on Tuesday along Market Street in Clarington. 37-year old Orville D. Baughman, III, was arrested and transported to the Monroe County Jail. During a search of his residence, detectives say they found used and unused heroin stamps, two firearms, and multiple other items concurrent with drug trafficking ~~were found~~. Baughman is facing weapons under disability, drug trafficking, and possession charges.

River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has set dates for a special election to fill the 6th district U-S Representative seat coming open as incumbent Bill Johnson takes over the president's job at Youngstown State University.

DeWine's office says the special primary for the unexpired term will take place on the same day as the primary for the full two-year term -- March 19. The special general election to fill the remainder of the current term will take place June 11th... with early voting starting May 14.

The owner of the Wayne Six Toll Bridge has asked the West Virginia Department of Transportation to synchronize the traffic lights on the West Virginia approaches to the bridge. Frank Six tells News 9 near-miss incidents prompted him to make the request.

<<sound full>>

The Times-Leader reports the village of Bellaire has a new Village Administrator... Frank Shaffer. Village Council voted Thursday to give Shaffer the position... left vacant since June 2021, when former administrator Mike Wallace retired.

You're listening to River News Network.

A man who had an explosive experience in a Dunkin' Donuts restroom wants the chain to pay up. John Saucier explains.

<<sound full>>

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

With River News Network headlines, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

People at a homeless camp at the I-70 and Route 88 interchange have two weeks to vacate the site. City of Wheeling crews came to demolish it Wednesday... but had to postpone it owing to a federal court order mandating two weeks notice before local government may clear a site.

Ohio's new concealed carry law has had no effect on law enforcement deaths or injuries since taking effect. Attorney General Dave Yost says a new study his office and Bowling Green State University undertook also shows crimes involving firearms in Akron, Piqua, and Toledo decreased by about a fifth.

Korean electronics firm L-G Electronics announced it will spend 700 million dollars in West Virginia to spur technology research and development. No word on if the northern panhandle will see any of that investment.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

HEADLINES 1-5-23

#7

West Liberty University is helping students overcome financial barriers In a pledge to make education more accessible. It will be done through a new initiative called the Tuition Free Toppers Program, where new in-state students who are Pell Grant eligible will receive free tuition for up to 4 years, starting in the fall of 2024. Students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form and be admitted into West Liberty to receive any compensation. The program takes base tuition for undergraduate students and will pay the difference in tuition off that. And it does not cover room and board and other fees. This also comes as FAFSA has changed its guidelines for next year, with the FAFSA Simplification Act making it easier for students to get money. But it has delayed its release to the school and students. No other local university offers this program.

#1

The Noble County Sheriff's Office said Caldwell schools were placed on a soft lockdown this afternoon after the office received a call that a man ~~was~~ with a weapon ^{was} chasing another man in Caldwell. Deputies say they arrived on the scene within seconds and interviewed the caller and checked the neighborhood and found no evidence of the initial report. The Sheriff's Office does not believe the report to be credible and the lockdown has been lifted. The Sheriff's Office also say deputies remain in the area at this time.

#2

The owner of the Wayne Six Toll Bridge is making strides towards a safer intersection on the West Virginia side of the toll bridge. Frank Six requested the West Virginia Department of Highways put a delay into the traffic light system to allow traffic to exit the bridge safely. Six expressed concerns over the current system, citing near-miss incidents as drivers navigate the intersection. Six also had two led streetlights installed where drivers enter West Virginia, which should enhance visibility and provide improved lighting conditions for traffic. Six said there is someone monitoring the bridge 24/7 to ensure overweight trucks cannot cross.

A lawsuit has been filed against the village of Bellaire for a project that began nearly two years ago. In February 2022, the village was experiencing a hazardous waste break. Southpointe Industries, of Bellaire, was then hired by the village to fix the break. The work totaled more than \$30,000. But a purchase order was not filed at the time of service, therefore Southpointe has still yet to be paid. Efforts were made to avoid the lawsuit, as council crafted an ordinance at its last meeting that would ultimately pay Southpointe, if passed. But it didn't, ending in a split vote, 3-3. Although the lawsuit was filed against the village, additional repercussions could take place, for instance, if someone would try to countersue. The village is facing interest of \$1,600 in addition to the initial cost. Mayor Ed Marling did not comment on the situation and said that this conversation will not continue until the village's solicitor is present.

Two men have been indicted for stealing the identities of West Virginians and withdrawing cash from their credit union accounts. 33-year old Benjamin Britford of Tuscaloosa, Ala., and 29-year old Brandon Watkins of Douglasville, Ga., have been charged with making unauthorized transactions from accounts at Bayer Heritage Federal Credit Union in New Martinsville. In July and August 2023, Britford and Watkins obtained the personal identifying information and account numbers for numerous credit union customers and then withdrew cash from those accounts. The defendants withdrew more than \$10,000 in cash from accounts in West Virginia and withdrew additional funds from accounts of Bayer customers in South Carolina during the same time period. Britford and Watkins are each charged with bank fraud, conspiracy to commit bank fraud, and bank larceny. Watkins faces an additional charge of aggravated identity theft.

Commissioners in Belmont County have announced a project for a new animal shelter. It has been in the works for more than a year as part of the initiative to update facilities in the county. Last spring, the board started looking for architects and legal counsel. Commissioner President JP Dutton announced Thursday the county signed a contract with TC Architects from Akron, where they will begin discussing plans for the new facility. Dutton said that the current animal shelter was designed in the 80s. While he does not expect groundbreaking this year, he sees this project as an initiative-taking approach in providing the best space and facility for the volunteers and the animals for decades to come.

River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

The Korean electronics firm L-G Electronics says it will spend 700 million dollars in West Virginia to spur technology research and development. In an announcement in Charleston Wednesday... L-G C-E-O William Cho announced the firm will locate its NOVA North American Innovation Center project in West Virginia. No word on if the northern panhandle will see any of that investment.

West Virginia State Senator and Republican Majority Whip Ryan Weld tells The Intelligencer this spring he intends to push top brass at the state Department of Transportation for better communication with both legislators... and the public. Weld cited recent bridge closures in our area... as well as the Wheeling Streetscape Project... as reasons for his push.

Sports betting in Ohio during November 20-23 hit 864-million dollars... according to the latest report from the Ohio Casino Commission. So far... only January has seen more sports betting in the state. Bettors in Ohio also put a hurt on the bookies... as the hold the sports books kept fell to seven-point nine percent... the lowest in Ohio history.

You're listening to River News Network.

A powerful little dog breed has received official recognition from the American Kennel Club. John Saucier tosses us a bone.

<<sound full>>

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

With River News Network headlines, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

Ohio 6th Congressional District voters will head to the polls on June 11th to fill the unexpired term of incumbent Bill Johnson... who's resigning to assume the presidency of Youngstown State University. A special primary will take place March 19th – the same day as the primary for the full, two-year term.

Ohio Auditor Keith Faber said agents from his office... along with other law enforcement agencies... executed a search warrant Thursday in support of an ongoing investigation at Eastern Gateway Community College. Officers skilled in digital forensics made up part of the search team.

The Intelligencer reports demolition will commence Monday on the former Ohio Valley Medical Center campus. Asbestos present in the buildings required substantial preparation before demolition work could proceed.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

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Members of the Ohio State Auditor's Special Investigations Unit, along with a group of local law enforcement officers... raided the offices of Eastern Gateway Community College Thursday.

In a press release... Ohio Auditor Keith Faber said the agents executed a search warrant in support of an ongoing investigation concerning the college's finances. Faber said he could not comment any further because of the ongoing investigation.

The Times-Leader reports a routine traffic stop by Belmont County Sheriff's Deputies resulted in the arrest of a couple wanted for stealing a half-million dollars of antique coins in the Columbus area. Chief Deputy James Zusack says the deputies stopped a suspicious-looking vehicle... one thing led to another... officers discovered fentanyl and other illegal drugs... and turned up the half-million dollar coin collection.

Form Energy's job fair at the Milsop Center in Weirton saw people from up and down the valley lining up for the chance to compete for a job at the new battery making factory. Form Energy founder and C-E-O Ted Wiley told News 9 his firm hopes to keep people in the valley.

<<sound full>>

You're listening to River News Network.

If all goes well... Monday should see demolition work begin on the former Ohio Valley Medical Center campus... according to The Intelligencer. The former Northwood building will go first... followed by the Nurse's Residences... and demolition of the West Tower will complete the job.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

HEADLINES 1-8-24

The Museums of Oglebay Institute have achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. This marks the 50th year of the highest national recognition for museums. According Director Christin Byrum, Museums of Oglebay Institute was among one of the first 172 museums in the nation to get accredited. Byrum said there are more than 35,000 museums in the United States, and there are just 1,107 that are accredited. Earl Oglebay was the benefactor who left his farm to the city of Wheeling after his death to what is now Oglebay Park. Byrum explained that the city of Wheeling owes a great debt to Oglebay and his descendants, as they play an important role in Wheeling's history.

A Wheeling man faces multiple charges^{#8} after fighting with law enforcement and EMS personnel in Wheeling. Around 5 p.m. Thursday, the Wheeling police and fire departments responded to an overdose on 14th Street in East Wheeling. When Wheeling Fire Department EMTs/paramedics personnel arrived on the scene to offer medical treatment to Brandon Losby, 50, he became aggressive and started punching and biting them. Police then intervened, and Losby continued his fight with law enforcement. Officers and fire department employees were then able to get Losby to stop the fighting and place him in handcuffs. After being medically evaluated at Wheeling Hospital, officers took him to the Northern Regional Jail in Moundsville. Losby faces two counts of obstructing, two counts of battery on a government official, and assault on an officer.

An open letter regarding infrastructure help in the Northern Panhandle has been signed and sent off to the West Virginia Division of Highways. While it took place at a Weirton City Council meeting, representatives from Hancock, Brooke and Jefferson counties came in support of the letter, which expressed dissatisfaction with the conditions of roads and bridges in the area. A major focus was on the closures of the Market Street and Jennings Randolph bridges, impacting commutes, emergency response times, and future economic growth. Officials are hoping the letter will open the eyes of those in Charleston and bring in more state funding to fix the infrastructure in the area.

Multiple officials in Hancock County say the word from the West Virginia West Division of Highways is that one lane in each direction on the Jennings Randolph Bridge was to open either today or Tuesday. The bridge was closed on Dec. 11 after a safety inspection of the structure discovered an issue that required repair. Workers were seen on the bridge this morning. First responders say having even one lane of the bridge will help with response times.

The Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County's Schiappa Branch is under construction. What was once a café area will soon become a Maker Space—a dedicated space with high tech equipment that is available to the public. In May, you'll only need a library card to have free access to a laser engraver, a Cricut, and upgraded 3D printer and more. Also, in May the library system will introduce a Library of Things. The Library of Things will allow patrons to check out nontraditional items, like a fishing pole, a Roku, or even a ghost hunting kit. The library received two grants totaling nearly 22-thousand dollars to fund these projects. The Maker Space will be available at the Schiappa Branch, and the Library of Things will be at all locations. In March, a public survey will be conducted to find out what items the public would like to check out.

#1
MPLX Marathon Petroleum presented the Utica Shale Academy \$20,000 to be used for personal protective equipment. Utica Shale Academy is a tuition-free publicly funded school where students are taught traditional coursework along with specialty courses targeting the trade workforce. It became Ohio's first outdoor welding lab in 2023. Utica Shale Academy Superintendent Bill Watson says the academy has implemented a work-based program for seniors. This initiative entails 35 out of their 54 senior students engaging in three days of work each week. The academy began in Salineville and now has six Ohio locations. Ohio's 33rd District State Senator Michael Rulli worked with the academy when it was a concept and finds it gives young adults the chance to stay out of trouble and work toward a successful future.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced Friday morning that he has signed an executive order banning gender transition surgeries for minors in Ohio. The governor said the order will take effect immediately. DeWine vetoed House Bill 68 last week, saying he "cannot sign this bill as it is currently written." It is also referred to as the SAFE Act or the trans bill. Ohio House Republicans own enough of a majority that an override of the veto is likely. They are scheduled to convene next week, but would need at least some support from the senate, which isn't scheduled to meet until later in the month. At a news conference about the bill, DeWine reiterated his position that families -- and not the state -- know what is best for their children.

#1
The closing of one of two roads used to access the Martins Ferry High School campus is raising questions. Rider Alumni Road connects Colerain Pike to the campus, and officials are concerned because of its condition. Martins Ferry City Service Director Andy Sutak noted a slip that is quite long. The road is narrow, and the hillside is slipping a bit too, drivers coming around the turn down the road may not be able to see vehicles coming. The city has limited access to bus traffic only, changing the road to one lane. Sutak said they are looking for funding to fix the road, but it will likely cost about a million dollars to fix it correctly and make it safe for vehicular traffic.

With River News Network headlines, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

Weirton's City Council says the West Virginia Division of Highways has short-changed them concerning highway maintenance... according to The Weirton Daily Times. Council has sent a sharply worded letter to D-O-H which suggests while local crews do what they can... far too many resources are diverted downstate.

The chair of the West Virginia Republican Party says she's quitting. In a letter to West Virginia Republicans... Wheeling attorney Elgine McArdle says her resignation will take effect after the party's winter meeting on January 20th.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine on Friday issued an executive order prohibiting transgender surgeries on those under 18... but did not ban hormone therapies. DeWine's order comes as the Ohio General Assembly seeks to override his veto of a bill restricting so-called "gender-affirming" care in the state.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

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The chair of the West Virginia Republican Party – Wheeling attorney Elgine McArdle – says she's quitting. In a letter to West Virginia Republicans... McArdle says the party has remained in solid financial shape... and the party has paid in full past invoices totaling about 35-thousand dollars. McArdle says her resignation will take effect after the party's winter meeting January 20th in Charleston.

Two men will have to answer charges of bank fraud in connection with accounts at Bayer Heritage Federal Credit Union. In a press release... the United States Attorney's office for the Northern District of West Virginia says a grand jury has indicted Benjamin Britford, 33, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Brandon Watkins, 29, of Douglasville, Georgia. The pair allegedly siphoned cash from West Virginia accounts in July and August last year.

In an apparent effort to mollify critics of his veto of a bill prohibiting so-called "gender-affirming care" in Ohio... Governor Mike DeWine on Friday prohibited Ohioans from receiving transgender surgery until the age of 18. Ohio's House seeks to override Governor DeWine's veto... with a vote possibly coming Wednesday.

You're listening to River News Network.

While negotiations continue on a federal budget deal to avoid a shutdown... Ohio U-S Representative Jim Jordan said on Fox's Sunday Morning Futures one issue stands out.

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For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

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Local government officials in West Virginia's northern panhandle say the West Virginia Division of Highways has short-changed them concerning highway maintenance. The Weirton Daily Times reports Weirton City Council has sent a sharply worded letter to D-O-H which asserts the state agency has performed – quoting now – “low-grade road and highway maintenance.” The letter goes on to suggest while local D-O-H crews in the northern panhandle do what they can... far too many resources are diverted to Charleston and other areas in the state.

The chair of the West Virginia Senate Finance Committee wants answers concerning West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. On Sunday... West Virginia State Senator Eric Tarr grilled the organization's executive director concerning allegations of nepotism and personal use of donated items for flood victims. The Intelligencer reports Tarr seeks further investigation of those allegations by the Legislative Auditor and State Auditor's office... as well as the Legislature's Commission on Special Investigations.

You're listening to River News Network.

Online gaming helped solve the mystery of a missing Ohio teen. Deborah Valentine reports.

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For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

HEADLINES 1-9-24

The Jennings Randolph Bridge has re-opened in both directions. Word came from officials from the West Virginia Division of Highways on Monday. The bridge was closed on Dec. 11 after a federally mandated inspection discovered cracking in two welds on the steel bridge structure. The cracks were not visible to the naked eye, but the ~~WV~~DOH, in an abundance of caution, decided to close the bridge while repairs were completed. And the DOH says intermittent closures of the outside lanes will be required at times as additional repairs are completed. They say those repairs can be completed with traffic present.

Last month, the Ohio County Clerk's Office collected record-breaking taxes from the highlands TIF District. In December, the county brought in more than \$200,000 solely from real estate taxes at The Highlands. Of that, \$94,000 ~~of that~~ came from the sale of a large vehicle dealership ~~and is something Kelly sees as a success for the development district.~~ In nearly 2 decades, The Highlands has brought in more than \$65 million in tax, with more than 40 percent of that going to schools. With more land available around the shopping center, there's potential to continue to grow revenue in the area.

A Feb. 6 deadline put in place by The International Trade Commission could determine the fate of the Cleveland Cliffs tin plant in Weirton. The United Steel Workers and Cleveland Cliffs are asking that foreign companies not be allowed to dump into the American market with cheaper tin, something USW officials are arguing that they cannot fairly compete with. The Feb. 6 deadline is when it will be determined if action will be taken by the federal government to ensure American companies can compete with foreign tin manufacturers. The list of nations that could face tariffs has grown to four with the addition of South Korea, to China, Germany, and Japan. The United Steel Workers are asking that foreign companies not be allowed to dump into the American market with cheaper tin and pushing for a tariff to be implemented to make a more level playing field.

#1

A Bellaire man was sentenced Monday to 200 months for possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. According to court documents and statements made in court, officers conducted a traffic stop on 25-year-old Charles E. McGhee, Jr.'s vehicle in Harrison County. A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of a half-pound of methamphetamine and \$2,154 in cash.

#2

A Belmont County man entered a plea agreement on Monday morning before Common Pleas Judge Chris Berhalter. Douglas Gibson was sentenced to 4 years in prison for child pornography. He was initially booked on charges of pandering obscenity involving a minor, tampering with evidence, and drug possession.

#3

The American Red Cross is experiencing an emergency blood shortage. During the last 20 years, the number of people donating blood to the Red Cross has fallen by about 40 percent. American Red Cross of the Upper Ohio Valley Executive Director Sharon Kesselring says it's common in January to see a lack of donors, for any number of reasons. But these critically low levels have rarely, if ever, been seen by the organization. Only 40 percent of Americans are eligible to donate blood. And of that number only 4 percent do. Kesselring noted that blood cannot be stockpiled, and that it has a shelf life. Locally, on Jan. 22-23, the Red Cross is holding its Media Day Blood Drive at the Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack. But because of the shortage, Kesselring also said donors can sign up for an appointment sooner. You can visit Red Cross Blood dot org.

With River News Network headlines, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

The EQT Foundation has donated 28-thousand dollars toward training in skilled trades at Bellaire High School. That foundation grant will pay for a CNC plasma metal cutter for the shop at the high school... according to the Times-Leader.

In Hancock County... the Jennings Randolph Bridge has reopened to traffic. West Virginia Division of Highways officials closed the bridge about a month ago after a routine inspection discovered cracks in welds on the span.

Brooke County Public Library has set aside time for middle and high school students to learn how to play Dungeons and Dragons. From six to nine P – M every Tuesday... the library will have a class on the fantasy game... and will have people provide everything one needs to start a campaign.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

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At the Bellaire Board of Education meeting Monday... Superintendent Derrick McAfee says the EQT Foundation has donated 28-thousand dollars toward training in skilled trades. The Times-Leader reports the foundation money will pay for a CNC plasma metal cutter for the shop at the high school. The computer controlled cutter will give students experience with technology more up-to-date than the shop's current machine tools.

In West Virginia... Monday saw the first day of candidates filing for elections. Incumbant Ohio County Commission President Republican Don Nickerson filed for re-election... as did Incumbent Democrat County Assessor Tiffany Hoffman. Howard (John) Haglock filed for sheriff as a Democrat.

A new Ohio program seeks to encourage potential homeowners saving for down payments and closing costs... according to a press release. The Ohio Homebuyer Plus program grants Ohio state tax benefits and increased returns on savings for participants. Locally... the nearest bank participating in the program is the Community Bank branch in downtown Cambridge.

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After a month out of commission... the Jennings Randolph Bridge connecting Hancock County to East Liverpool, Ohio has reopened to traffic. West Virginia Division of Highways officials said in a press release some additional work needs done... but workers can complete those tasks without shutting down the bridge.

The Cleveland Browns team doctor says student-athletes should avoid specialization in just one sport. In a report from W-E-W-S T-V... Dr. James Voos... who also serves as the Chair of Orthopedic Surgery at University Hospitals in Cleveland... says he's seeing younger and younger patients suffering A-C-L injuries... sometimes at age 14. Dr. Voos also says the data he's reviewed suggests young athletes specializing in a single sport show a dramatic increase in injuries.

Continuing coverage of the biggest political scandal in Ohio history now. Matt Borges... convicted in connection with the House Bill 6 scandal... wants his conviction tossed. In a 73-page court filing... attorneys for Borges argue U-S District Court Judge Timothy Black abused his discretion... and federal prosecutors didn't prove Borges's guilt.

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A major food company wants weiner drivers. Hilarie Barskie has the details.

<<sound full>>

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

HEADLINES 1-10-24

#1
At Tuesday night's village council meeting, Yorkville officials discussed several issues, including not having a police chief since John Morelli stepped down. Morelli submitted his letter of resignation December 12 and it went into effect January 3. Since then, the police department presence has become non-existent. Yorkville Mayor Sandy Reasbeck instructed residents to call 911 and said departments from Jefferson and Belmont County will be responding to the calls in the village.

#1
The state of Ohio has dismissed charges against former Eastern Gateway President Jimmie Bruce and ex-Vice President James Miller. The move came in Jefferson County Common Pleas Court by Attorney Thomas Anger of the Special Investigations Unit at the Ohio Auditor of State's Office. Bruce and Miller were indicted in August by a Jefferson County grand jury on allegations they used college credit cards for purchases unrelated to school operations. EGCC Spokesman Dennis Willard said the college will continue to fully cooperate with all agencies involved. A separate investigation, which is ongoing, came to light just a few days ago after the auditor's office led a raid of the EGCC offices on Friday.

#2
A statewide grant will assist officials in making needed improvements at the Ohio County Animal Shelter. In September, the shelter received a \$16,000 award from the federation of humane societies of West Virginia. The funds will be used toward painting the kennels and a new wash tub. The washroom hasn't been used in years because of a drainage issue, so that will be cleared up as well. Within the past year, Ohio County commissioners have made improvements to the facility with a new roof, landscaping, and lighting. This current project is state-funded.

* 2
The Belmont County Tourism Council is accepting applications for its Grant Assistance Program (GAP). The program is designed to "fill in the gaps" and assist non-profit organizations. This includes future events, projects, improvements, or maintenance to a Belmont County Tourist Attraction or an historical site. Applications are open until March 4 and will be awarded March 31. They can be submitted either online or in person in the tourism office at the Ohio Valley Mall. You can learn more online at Visit Belmont County dot org.

* 2
West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has scheduled an inspection of the Market Street Bridge for later this month. The bridge was closed in late December after an inspection showed suspension cables inside the cable anchorages were deteriorating faster than expected. No exact date for the inspection was given. The Market Street Bridge is supported by two massive steel cables. The span was closed after inspectors found accelerated deterioration in sections of the cable anchorage on the upstream support cable. Each support cable is made up of 14 bundles of steel, with each bundle made up of 107 individual strands of wire. When the bridge was built in 1905, it was expected to last between 50 and 100 years. In 2010, the WVDOH awarded a contract for approximately \$14 million to extend the life of the bridge another 10 years; those repairs kept the bridge functional for 13 years.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose recently announced deadlines for a special election set by Governor Mike DeWine for the vacancy in Ohio's 6th Congressional District. The changes in the upcoming elections are following the resignation of U.S. Representative Bill Johnson, which is effective January 21. This requires some changes to the voting process this year as that seat is temporarily filled. Jefferson County Board of Elections Executive Director Bob Gale said that Governor DeWine set the primary to be on March 19. With that ballot citizens will select the representatives for the full term for next year and the unexpired term for this year. Those candidates who win on March 19 for the unexpired term will then appear in a special election on June 11 to see who will represent the 6th District for the remainder of the year.

Monday was the first day to declare candidacy for the May primary in West Virginia and the secretary of state said 132 candidates filed. Included in that number is current state treasurer Riley Moore, who is running for West Virginia's 2nd District Congressional seat. Moore said the experience he's gained in the treasurer's office would make the transition to Capitol Hill an easy one. Currently, Moore is one of three candidates on the Republican ballot.

With River News Network headlines, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

A federal judge has stayed enforcement of Ohio's new law governing the use of social media by teenagers. Attorney General Dave Yost says his office will vigorously defend the new law in court... with a hearing set for February 7th.

West Virginia's Public Service Commission has substantially cut back on a request from AEP – Appalachian Power to recover costs associated with coal prices. In an order filed Tuesday... the P-S-C criticized the utility's logistics management... saying it left consumers vulnerable to price swings.

Retired Brigadier General Chris Walker... the former assistant Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard... has joined a crowded Republican Primary race in the state's 2d Congressional District. That seat opened up when incumbent Alex Mooney chose to run for the U-S Senate.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.