

River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

The Ohio County Sheriff's Department told the Ohio County Commission it will have to act quickly... if they want new cruisers for the department. The Intelligencer reports the department ordered five cruisers last year... but only received four due to shortages. Commissioners said they'd consider it... but said they faced a time crunch to finish the bidding process by the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

Steubenville's City Council shot down a proposed change in how they conduct the public forum part of meetings. News 9 reports the proposal went down to defeat by a seven – zero vote.

Ohio Republican Governor Mike DeWine says he thinks transgender candidates should not have to list their so-called "deadnames" – that is, the names given to them at birth -- on elections paperwork if they've changed their names within the last five years... according to state law. But Governor DeWine told the Cleveland Plain Dealer editorial board Tuesday he hasn't thought much about how to change that state law.

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California's State Assembly has under consideration a bill to ban tackle football for kids under 12. William LaJenuess has the details.

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Governor Gavin Newsom says he'll veto that bill if it passes.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

## HEADLINES 1-19-24

U.S. attorneys from the Northern and Southern districts of West Virginia held a human trafficking workshop on Thursday in Wheeling to discuss statewide solutions to the problem. Discussions were held with guest speakers sharing a case study, the intersection of human trafficking and substance use disorder, and making a difference together. Assistant United States attorney Andrew Cogar says cases are difficult to build a case and identify. But he believes that the workshop will help the community find a solution.

Eastern Gateway Community College has eliminated its free college benefit program. With this, the college is expecting a student enrollment reduction to about 9,000 students as a result. To adjust from its decline in enrollment, EGCC spokesperson Dennis Willard explained it will be offering fewer online classes. This will result in a reduction of 28 staff members at the Steubenville and Youngstown campuses.

Last December, the city of Steubenville's engineering department opened up bids for Phase 3 of the project, which will be a widening project. Seven bids were received. The lowest bid submitted was for \$2.66 million. That was within 10% of the engineer's estimate and is considered awardable. City Engineer Mike Dolak said the project has been awarded to Tucson, Incorporated, of New Philadelphia. Construction is expected to start in mid-March with a completion date of late October and will span the distance from the intersection of Princeton Avenue and Lovers Lane back to the roundabout. Lovers Lane will widen to 24 feet.

The Jefferson County Humane Society is reporting an outbreak of kennel cough. Officials say there are various strands impacting dogs throughout the county, including at the animal shelter. They're being proactive by taking the steps of vaccinating any animals coming into the shelter as the Humane Society is a no kill shelter. According to the American Kennel Club, symptoms of kennel cough range from runny nose, loss of appetite to a low fever.

Franciscan University of Steubenville ~~has~~ sent hundreds of local students to march on Capitol Hill today for the annual March for Life. Students for Life chapter President Holliemann Geike said they have about seven bus loads of students heading to Washington D.C., with this year's route ending at the capitol, rather than the Supreme Court, as Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022. The students planned to leave the University earlier than usual, due to the snowy forecast.

A Weirton couple who was indicted nearly two years ago in connection with the death of their 3-year-old son has been sentenced. According to the Hancock County Prosecutor's Office, 47 year old Michael Johnston and 40 year old Heather Johnston, will both spend time in prison after their son, Keegan, died in a house fire in March 2021 in Weirton. Two other children made it out of the home alive. Michael Johnston was sentenced to the maximum of one to five years in the West Virginia Division of Corrections for gross neglect of a child creating substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury. Heather Johnston was sentenced to the maximum of 3 to 15 years for child neglect resulting in death and was sentenced to the maximum of one to five years for gross neglect of a child creating substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury. She will serve these sentences consecutively for a total cumulative sentence of 4 to 20 years in the West Virginia Division of Corrections. Due to their convictions, Heather and Michael Johnston will have to register as child abusers for 10 years and, after they are released from prison, each will be on supervised release for 20 years.

Ownership of 21 parcels of land was the topic of discussion at the Jefferson County Commissioners meeting on Thursday morning. It's an area that's off Market Street in Wells Township that is collecting a high volume of garbage. The property is owned by the county, but the trustees want to take it over. Commissioners are speaking with legal counsel to see if it is even possible to switch the property over.

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

Eastern Gateway Community College's Board of Trustees have announced a Reduction in Force at the school... according to News 9. Ohio State Auditor Keith Fabor's office says it has an investigation going concerning the school... but will not say more.

The West Virginia branch of the A-C-L-U has filed a lawsuit against the City of Wheeling's ban on camping on public property. That federal lawsuit alleges – among other items – the city's ordinance violates rights under the First, Fifth, and Eighth Amendments to the U-S Constitution.

High school sports in Ohio could see expanded tournament divisions in seven sports... perhaps in the 2024-25 school year. The Ohio High School Athletic Association plans to meet with school administrators before putting the measure up for a possible vote in February.

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West Virginia's branch of the A-C-L-U has followed up on its threat to take the City of Wheeling to court over its ban on camping on public property. In a 23-page lawsuit... naming the House of Hagar as plaintiff... the public interest group claims among other items the camping ban violates rights under the First, Fifth, and Eight Amendments of the U-S Constitution.

Eastern Gateway Community College's Board of Trustees have announced a Reduction in Force at the school. According to News 9... the Board made the decision at its meeting Wednesday. Ohio State Auditor Keith Fabor's office conducted a search of offices at the school earlier this month... and will only say an investigation is ongoing.

The U-S Supreme Court will decide on a number of cases... concerning limitations government agencies have to determine rules. Shannon Bream explains.

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Ohio High School Athletic Association board of directors will meet with school administrators... with one meeting set for Cambridge on February 7th... concerning a proposal to expand tournament divisions in seven sports. If approved... the changes could start with the 2024-25 school year.

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St. Clairsville's City Council... in a meeting posted to social media... has appointed Joseph Vavra as the new City Solicitor. Mayor Kathryn Thalman made the nomination... and council approved. Previously... Vavra served as the solicitor for the villages of Rayland and Bellaire.

Local House of Delegates member Charley Sheedy... representing part of Marshall County in District 7... has co-sponsored proposed legislation which would require restrooms and locker rooms in public schools designated... based on biological sex. The House Education Committee will now consider House Bill 48-06.

A federal judge in Virginia has ruled U-S Marshals may seize a helicopter owned by one of West Virginia Governor Jim Justice's companies and sell it. Justice's legal team argued money from the sale of the helicopter would not go to the company bringing the lawsuit.

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One city's tourism efforts have literally gone out of this world. Lisa Brady has the story.

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American Electric Power is laying off 170 workers in Ohio... according to the Columbus Dispatch. The Dispatch reports affected workers have already received notification... and their last day of work will be sometime around February 1<sup>st</sup>.

The City of Wheeling has started to enforce a ban on camping on public property in the city. On Thursday morning... city crews demolished several homeless camps. West Virginia's branch of the A-C-L-U has filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn the city ordinance.

Eastern Gateway Community College says it has dropped its free college benefit program. News 9 reports the college expects an enrollment drop... will let go 28 staff members... and not hire as many adjunct professors.

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The City of Wheeling began demolishing homeless camps in accordance with an ordinance prohibiting camping on public property. News 9 reported a worker from Catholic Charities complained the camp demolition took place in the morning... without any notice from the city.

A follow-up now to a story concerning police cruisers for the Ohio County Sheriff's Department. The department had requested the Ohio County Commission purchase police package S-U-Vs... as no manufacturer made police package sedans. River News Network contacted Stellantis... the parent company of Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, and Ram. In an email... a P-R manager confirmed the company would NOT make model year 20-24 Dodge Charger Pursuit police sedans. However... model year 20-23 Dodge police sedans had been manufactured... and were in stock, available for order.

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The U-S House Judiciary Committee says it has evidence major banks invaded the privacy of individuals involved in the January 6<sup>th</sup> riot. Mike Emanuel reports.

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Eastern Gateway Community College will no longer offer its free college benefit program. A spokesman for the college tells News 9 admissions officials expect the student number to drop from 15-thousand to nine-thousand. The decline in enrollment will result in the layoff of 28 staff members... and a reduction in the need for adjunct professors to teach online courses.

The Herald-Star reports the Jefferson County Port Authority board seeks to build on speculation a building in the Jefferson County Industrial Park. Port Authority directors received a presentation from a consultant the county has worked with in the past... who stressed while a spec building could bring a big win... it also brought risks to the county as well.

A former Ohio County Schools teacher will have to answer a felony charge of sexual abuse of a minor 16 years or older. Prosecutors believe they can prove in court Micah Kovacs Farmer of Wheeling, West Virginia guilty of that charge... he's out on a five-thousand dollar bond.

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A video game champ from the 19-80s will keep his title... after facing accusations of cheating. Eamonn Dignam has the story.

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For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

## HEADLINES 1-22-24

The Brilliant Fire Department was called to a fire on the 200 block of Grace Street around 11 pm Saturday evening. The structure was the home of the Rawson family and the fire caused loss to all of their belongings. The fire was ~~the~~ on 1st and 2nd floor of the home. The cause of the fire is unknown and has now been turned over to the state fire marshal's office. No injuries were reported to the family, but family pets were lost in the fire. A Go Fund Me account has been set up.

Strong Towns Steubenville and re-craft Steubenville held a mending workshop at the Urban Thrift in down town Steubenville. The event was meant to teach people basic repair techniques and sewing skills while fostering a sense of community among those with an interest in sewing, creating an opportunity for mentorship networking. Four workstations were set up, teaching hemming and basic alterations, sewing machine operations and reading patterns, patching, and notion repairs - like zippers, hooks and eyes and buttons. The crafts used were donated by re-craft Steubenville who accepts donations of old crafting supplies and non-traditional crafts such as sea shells and marbles. Re-craft Steubenville then resells the supplies for at least 50% off retail prices. Strong Towns Steubenville hopes to continue holding events like this in the near future.

East Liverpool Mayor Bobby Smith's decision to remove the Blessing Box on 6th Street has sparked concerns among citizens. Smith said he was able to see the box from his office, and noticed things like someone opening a can and then returning it to the box, or questioning how long fresh foods have been in the box. Smith and the coordinator of the Blessing Box, Holly Reynolds-Russell have been in contact and things have since been resolved. A new box will be located at The Way Station at 125 West 5th Street in East Liverpool. The new Blessing Box should be open soon.

#1  
After nearly two years--the Market Street Bridge in Wheeling is set to reopen in July. The bridge has been under construction since June 2022 -- following a fire that occurred underneath the structure within a homeless camp. The West Virginia Department of Transportation says that starting today--a deck replacement project will be underway. During the construction, the bridge will be closed to pedestrian traffic.

#1  
Trinity Health System awarded three recipients with the Community Health Improvement Grant. A total of \$105,000 was distributed among three community organizations. **The Ohio Valley Health Center** was awarded \$42,500 to support it's "Free to be Healthy" program. **The Ohio Valley Youth Network** received \$20,000 for the well-being and emotional well-being at the Sycamore Center. And **the Urban Mission** was granted \$42,000 in hopes of providing the community with fresh and healthy meals. The Urban Mission will be collaborating with the Ohio Valley Health Center to provide patients with healthy meals.

#2  
At the end of last week, Wheeling City Manager Robert Herron issued an exemption to the city's public property camping ban. It is for a leased parking lot near Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center. Catholic Charities, along with other homeless agencies, are developing rules for this temporary exemption. Catholic Charities has extended its hours to care for more homeless people while working with other shelters to keep people out of the cold.

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

McMechen Volunteer Fire Department has sent a letter to the Marshall County Commission... requesting its financial support to organize a partially paid E-M-S crew. In a report in The Intelligencer... Chief John Davis says his volunteers do great work... but they have trouble answering calls through the day due to paid employment.

West Virginia's Public Service Commission will hold a virtual public hearing on a rate increase for Mon Power customers at five-thirty P-M today. More information is at the P-S-C's website... [www.psc.state.wv.us](http://www.psc.state.wv.us). That's w-w-w-dot-psc-state-dot-wv-dot us.

The cost of mailing a first-class letter has gone up two cents today to 68-cents. U-S Postal Service officials say they need to keep up with increased costs of doing business.

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A Belmont County resident lost his life in a weekend fire. The Times-Leader reports firefighters got the call for a fire at a home on Morristown-Flushing Road around one A-M Saturday. Coroner Amanda Fishers confirmed the death. Officials did not immediately release his name.

The Intelligencer reports the McMechen Volunteer Fire Department has sent a letter to the Marshall County Commission... requesting its financial support to organize a partially paid E-M-S crew. Chief John Davis says while he has great volunteers... not enough of them can respond between eight A-M and eight P-M.

As of today... first class stamp prices go up. Ryan Schmeltz reports.

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A Moundsville woman's big buck picture has won in the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources third annual Big Buck Photo Contest. Leah O'Neil was one of five winners in the Resident Adult Division. She has to choose between a lifetime hunting license or a two-night state forest cabin stay at a state park.

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In Jefferson County... a Saturday night fire on Grace Street in Brilliant destroyed a family home. News 9 reports the Rawson family escaped injury... but lost all their belongings... and family pets.

Belmont County Common Pleas Judge Chris Berhalter will take over the newly recertified drug court. The Ohio state certification will allow counseling opportunities for low-level drug offenders to continue for another three years... according to the Times-Leader.

Catholic Charities of West Virginia and the City of Wheeling have come to an agreement on the establishment of a managed homeless camp. The Intelligencer reports the deal announced Friday means the city will postpone dismantling the remaining homeless camps in the city until next Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.

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An ordinary abandoned pooch required some extraordinary care at the vet. Kathleen Maloney has the story.

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For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

## HEADLINES 1-23-24

#1

A 91-year-old flushing man lost his life in a house fire over the weekend. John Cieselka was a veteran and active part of the community and American Legion. Cieselka served as grand marshal at the Flushing Christmas parade a few years back. Community members say he will be missed.

#2

The city of Steubenville is partnering with Service Line Warranties of America through a new program. The city will receive a 10 percent rebate, which will go toward the city water department accounts. City Manager Jim Mavromatis says for the homeowner, it's very inexpensive insurance for your waterlines. Mavromatis says many other cities in Ohio have adopted the program. Mavromatis says residents who have already received their first mailer may now sign up at a reduced rate but more are expected to be sent out.

#3

The Brooke County Board of Education met in special session Monday to discuss the renewal of the district's excess levy. The excess levy is budgeted to be around \$12 million, which represents just over 30% of the district's operating budget. The levy funds full compensation and benefits for the district's unfunded positions, extra-curricular activities and events, vision and dental plans to employees, plus any and all stipends. Board President Ted Pauls says if the excess levy passes, nothing will change. That means citizen's taxes will not rise. If the excess levy fails, Pauls said the district's finances would take a huge hit. And Pauls noted that the continual levy goes back about forty years. The board will host town hall meetings in the coming months to address those concerns.

#1

Miklas Meat Market in Wheeling is having a Soup Sale now through Jan. 31, and all the proceeds will benefit Easterseals. Soups are \$10 per quart and the selection varies by day. Mikla's is open 9 till 6 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 8 until 4 on Saturday. Mikla's says the best variety is available in the morning, and they suggest calling ahead to take out four quarts or more.

Grand Vue Adventures in Moundsville is lining up its second Polar Zip, and it includes a special way to give back to the community. Half of the proceeds from the polar zip will be donated to the Appalachian Outreach. Grand Vue Adventures General Manager Nick Cifaldi says the Polar Zip gives a different view of the valley, when there is no foliage to obstruct your vision. The Polar Zip is Saturday at 1 p.m. at Grand Vue Park. The cost is \$39. Appalachian Outreach serves Ohio, Marshall, And Wetzel counties.

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Jefferson County 911 ~~incidents~~ reports that crews were called to a house fire around 3 p.m. Monday in the 4000 block of Ohio 152 in Dillonvale. The fire started inside the home and was able to be contained to one bedroom. The homeowner was not home at the time the fire started. No injuries were reported.

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Wheeling Attorney ~~General~~ Teresa Toriseva announced that she is running for Attorney General of West Virginia. Toriseva said she is running on her courtroom experience and the impact of her 30 years of legal work. Toriseva was born and raised in West Virginia. John B. McCuskey and Mike Stuart are also running for Attorney General of West Virginia.

# \ # 2

The West Virginia State Senate overwhelmingly voted to put "In God We Trust" in all Mountain State classrooms and allow teachers to discuss theories other than evolution on how the world was created. The two major bills involving religion in public schools are going through the legislature. So far, the debate has been passionate. Critics say both bills violate the separation of church and state. Supporters say that's not true. With the approval in the Senate, the two school-related bills will head down the Capitol hall to the House of Delegates.



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

Wheeling Park High School could start the day later... if West Virginia Senate Bill 465 becomes law. That bill would prohibit the school day from starting before seven-45 A-M. The Intelligencer reports the Ohio County Board of Education will consider alternative school schedules in the event the bill passes.

A reminder – the Red Cross has made an emergency appeal for blood donations. The second day of the Media Blood Donor Drive takes place today at Wheeling Island Hotel – Casino – Racetrack between 11 A-M and five-30 P-M. For additional information... visit [redcrossblood – all one phrase – dot-org](http://redcrossblood-allonephrase-dot-org). That's [red-cross-blood-dot-org](http://red-cross-blood-dot-org). You can also call 1-800-RED-CROSS to schedule an appointment now... or in the future.

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The Brooke County Board of Education's chief financial officer says without a renewal of the excess levy for the next five years... the district would have to replace or cut over 30-percent of the operating budget. News 9 reports the county's excess levy... has been in place for more than 40 years. The board said at its Monday night meeting it plans public hearings on the renewal.

Staying with education news... West Virginia Senate Bill 465 has Ohio County Board of Education members talking. The bill under consideration – co-sponsored by West Virginia District 2 State Senator Charlie Clements – would prohibit high schools from starting classes before seven-45 A-M. Currently... Wheeling Park High School starts at seven-25 A-M. The Intelligencer reports board members at their Monday night meeting discussed the impact of Senate Bill 465 should it become law.

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Shopping trips to the grocery store have zapped family finances across the nation. Paul Stevens reports on the big picture.

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West Virginia's Public Service Commission received nothing but negative comments during a virtual public hearing concerning a proposed rate hike for Mon Power and its sister Potomac Edison. The hearing came as part of a base-rate increase proposal which would cost households just over 18-dollars more per month.

Ohio's House of Representatives has taken up legislation which would prohibit requirements for law enforcement officers to meet ticket quotas. House Bill 333 would also prohibit quotas for evaluating, promoting, compensating, transferring, or disciplining an officer.

Officials have released the name of an elderly Belmont County man killed in a Saturday fire. News 9 reports 91 year-old John SI-sel-ka died in the blaze. He had served as Grand Marshall for the Flushing Christmas Parade several years ago.

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In another sign of the times... a North Carolina school removed mirrors from its restrooms. C-J Papa explains.

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For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

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A group of Republican lawmakers seek to introduce bills in the Ohio General Assembly to phase out by 20-30 both the state's personal income tax... and commercial activities tax... according to the Cincinnati Inquirer. Both taxes together yearly raise ten billion dollars for the state.

Democrat Teresa Toreseva says she's in the running to become West Virginia's next Attorney General. On the Republican side... Mike Stewart and J-B McCuskey will compete in the primary for the candidacy.

Moundsville Police say they need your help to locate a teen missing since New Years Eve. Katelyn Thomas disappeared then... she's five feet four inches tall... 140 pounds... blue eyes... and blond hair dyed black at the time she went missing. Those with tips should call either Moundsville Police... or local law enforcement.

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The West Virginia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union has formally agreed to dismiss a lawsuit concerning a camping ban on public property in the city. Both sides have agreed homeless individuals may use a site across the street from the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center. The city will provide trash and some sanitation services.

Local Red Cross account manager Phyllis Riccadonna says she's grateful for all the donors who gave at the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Media Blood Donor Drive at Wheeling Island Hotel – Casino – Racetrack. The drive collected two hundred units of blood. Riccadonna explains the Red Cross has other blood drives... perhaps one closer to your town.

<<sound full>>

Ohio's Senate today may take up an override of Governor Mike DeWine's veto of a bill prohibiting so-called "gender affirming care" for minors... and banning transgender girls from female sports. The Senate session is scheduled for one-30 P-M. Ohio's House has already voted to override the governor's veto.

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Moundsville Police say they need your help to locate a teen missing since New Years Eve. Katelyn Thomas disappeared then... she's five feet four inches tall... 140 pounds... blue eyes... and blond hair dyed black at the time she went missing. Those with tips should call either Moundsville Police... or local law enforcement.

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In Ohio... a group of Republican lawmakers plan to introduce bills to abolish the state's personal income tax... and the commercial activity tax by 20-30.

The Cincinnati Inquirer reports the group will introduce two bills in the General Assembly to phase out the taxes. Those taxes raise ten-billion dollars a year for state services... which for current services to continue... would require a combination of raising other taxes... or cutbacks in services.

Wheeling attorney Teresa Toriseva says she's running for West Virginia Attorney General on the Democrat ticket. On the Republican primary ticket... voters will choose between current West Virginia State Senator Mike Stewart... and State Auditor J-B McCuskey.

Steubenville's City Manager James Mavromatis says he's taking enforcement action regarding deep potholes in the road at the Fort Steuben Mall. News 9 reports Mavromatis told City Council at its Tuesday night meeting the owner of the mall needs to fix the potholes... as it's their responsibility.

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You're listening to River News Network.

A master of radio broadcasting... Charles Osgood... has died from dementia, aged 91. Michelle Polino looks back at a storied career.

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We'll always think of seeing him on the radio. For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

## HEADLINES 1-25-24

<sup># 2</sup>  
The Wheeling non-profit House of Hagar is asking for community assistance as they look out for the future of the homeless population. Tuesday, a parking lot on 18th Street became an approved city exempted site. This means individuals can temporarily camp without being fined or ticketed. To begin the transition, the city installed porta-potties and dumpsters on Wednesday. However, the House of Hagar stresses this is not the managed camp that city council was aiming for. Facilitator Kate Marshall said that typically, camps are on dirt or grass where you can anchor a tent into the ground, and this new site is on asphalt. Cinder blocks or rubber matting are just a few alternatives. In a social media post, the organization asked for a variety of items from sleeping bags and tarps to home improvement gift cards and bus passes. All items can be mailed or dropped off to 114 14th Street. Monetary donations and e-gift cards can be sent to H O H Share dot org.

The House of Grace in East Liverpool is accepting donations so that it can remain open five days a week to provide those in need with food, clothing, and a fresh meal. The resource center is behind the Grace City Church in the 200 block of West Fifth Street, and was created by Pastors Jeff and Lisa Smith. It's a non-profit organization with no governmental assistance. It operates strictly on donations. Not only does the resource center provide basic life necessities, one of the center's main goals is to eliminate obstacles for those in need. House of Grace offers shelter and a safe space Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Meals are also served throughout the week at various times. The center is open to any and all donations.

<sup># 2</sup>  
Weirton Medical Center officials released a statement on Wednesday evening regarding an apparent computer breach at the medical center. It reads: "Recently, Weirton Medical Center detected a malware event that caused a temporary network disruption in its internal network that affected the operability of certain systems and services. The hospital's main clinical system was not directly impacted. Patient care continued during this process safely utilizing standard downtime procedures and normal services have largely been restored."

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The Wheeling Police Department is down more than a dozen patrol officers right now. A short staff not only affects day-to-day operations but overall help for the community. On average, it takes about 8 months to be trained and ready to go on the road, so Wheeling Police are hosting an open house next Wednesday at the department's new headquarters from 6-9 p.m. The department is hoping to bring in more potential patrol officers and answer any questions about the job.

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Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel was in East Palestine this week to reflect on one year since the toxic train derailment. Vogel said she was really focusing on the work that's been done. Vogel said they are in a new phase in East Palestine focusing on the characterization and restoration phase as they've completed the remediation to remove that contaminated soil and water out of streams, like Leslie Run and Sulfur Run. Vogel said the EPA will continue to make sure that contamination never reaches groundwater by establishing a network of monitoring wells. Vogel said the restoration is set to be complete by June and hopes a lot of the stigma will go with it.

# 2

The Belmont County Sheriff's Office has released a new mobile app for the community and residents of the county. Sheriff Dave Lucas said the app has many useful resources and is free to download for Google Play Store and Apple App Store users. The app gives a direct connection to the sheriff's office of all the different functionalities inside, like the jail, concealed carry, sex offenders and sheriff sale. The app gives you access to the Belmont County Jail roster, community resources, weather updates, department resources and more. And Lucas said the app allows users to allow push notifications, so users to be aware of any emergency immediately. And the app has a complaint side to it, so you can leave anonymous tip for Belmont County law enforcement.

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There's now an update on the nearly eight-hour standoff between police and a Weirton man that took place on December 22 on Pennsylvania Avenue. According to the West Virginia State Police, the case is now being investigated by the state medical examiner. Officers with the New Cumberland detachment of the West Virginia State Police say the case is being handled by the Marshall County prosecutor.

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The American Red Cross's Annual Media Days Blood Drive held at Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack on Monday and Tuesday far exceeded its goal. The American Red Cross of the Ohio River Valley was looking to gather 160 units of blood. The 2-day event, through the donors' participation, collected 200 units. Of course, the need never goes away, so if you didn't make it to media day and still want to donate blood, visit Red Cross Blood dot org.

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

Steubenville City Manager James Mavromatis gave details of a tentative contract with Steubenville Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 1 to City Council in an executive session. According to the Herald-Star... reportedly the agreement calls for three percent wage hikes in each of the three years of the contract.

Ohio's Senate has voted to override Governor Mike DeWine's veto of a bill banning so-called "gender affirming care" for minors. That bill will now come into effect in 90 days.

Proposed legislation which would require schools in West Virginia to require bathroom use based on biological sex has advanced in the House of Delegates. The House Judiciary Committee will now consider the bill before it advances to the House floor.

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With a vote by the Ohio Senate... the General Assembly has voted to override Governor Mike DeWine's veto of a bill prohibiting so-called "gender affirming care" for minors. Gurnal Scott has more.

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In West Virginia's House of Delegates... the House education committee has advanced two bills. House Bill 48-06 would require bathroom use in schools based upon biological sex. House Bill 42-99 would authorize teachers or other school employees to carry concealed weapons... with regulations... broadly speaking... similar to ones currently in effect in Ohio.

An update now on a Moundsville teen missing since New Years Eve. Police say 17-year-old Katelyn Thomas was found safe Tuesday evening.

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You're listening to River News Network.

One more thing from the House of Delegates. The House passed House Bill 47-93... which if becomes law... would allow adults to make up to 25 gallons of moonshine. Couples in a household could make up to 50 gallons. The catch? The moonshine made is for personal use only... and can't be sold. The bill now heads to the state senate.

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

In an executive session of Steubenville's City Council... City Manager James Mavromatis sketched out details of a tentative contract with Steubenville Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 1. Mavromatis tells the Herald-Star he cannot give further details until the contract is approved... but reportedly the agreement calls for three percent wage hikes in each year of the three-year contract.

By unanimous vote... West Virginia's State Senate has passed a bill making it a crime to assault a police dog. The bill... introduced by local state Senator Ryan Weld... calls for a one to three year sentence for unlawful assault of a police animal... and for fines plus two to five years for knowingly committing battery on the animal.

An update now on a gas leak which sent students home early Wednesday at St. Clairsville Middle and High Schools. The superintendents office tells River News Network an strong odor of natural gas caused them to send students home at 11 A-M. Belmont County Sheriff Dave Lucas confirmed to River News Network... Cumberland Trail Fire Department came... the leak was isolated and fixed by early afternoon.

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One American scientist's way to brew tea brewed up reaction from the U-S Embassy in London. Lisa Lacerra has the details.

<<sound full>>

For River News Network, I'm Kurt Weinschenker.

## HEADLINES 1-26-24



The College of St. Joseph the Worker in Steubenville hosted its Blue Collar Scholars event on Thursday to introduce its mission to the community and business leaders. The college will be North America's first Catholic trade college offering students a six-year enrollment program. College President Mike Sullivan said students will Earn a bachelor's degree in Catholic studies and then they will also be able to enter the apprenticeship program for Apprenticeship Ohio. ~~College President Michael Sullivan said.~~ The focus is on skilled training in carpentry, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical. The college is located at 157 N. 3rd St. in Steubenville with a carpentry workshop. Sullivan said the school will be building other labs for electrical and plumbing and HVAC. For a student's first three years, tuition will be \$15,000 per year with more of a focus on studies. The last three years will be \$5,000 per year with more of the hands-on experience in the labs and not as much class work. Applications are being accepted now through Feb. 5 as the college is expected to open in the fall. For more information, visit College of St Joseph dot com.



A truck accident along State Route 43 in East Springfield has residents concerned. This latest accident took place Thursday morning near Scassa's Laney Tire, as a semi smashed into a guardrail, causing significant damage. There were no injuries reported, but it's the latest in a series of crashes on a sharp curve. Residents say it's the third accident in the same area since Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, there have been seven crashes in the area in the past year alone. And since 2019, there have been 24, including two with serious injuries along the road. Sixteen wrecks were speed related. Ohio Department of Transportation District 11 Spokesperson ~~Laura~~ Borell said they try to not clutter with too much signage, but there are places that do warrant additional signage. Flashing LED lights are being considered.

#2

Officials with the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology cut the ribbon for their new building on University Boulevard on Thursday, marking a start for a worldwide headquarters in Steubenville. The center was founded by Dr. Scott and Kimberly Hahn in 2001 to teach people how to read the scriptures and formulate stronger connections with them. There are more than 40 full-time employees, most of whom will work out of a new home base that is equipped with a library, media studio, office spaces, among other amenities. The center will be open most days 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

#1

Friendship Park in Jefferson County is looking to make some renovations. Members of the park board expressed to Jefferson County commissioners the need for American Rescue Plan funds to make upgrades to shelter roofs and bathroom spaces. Commissioners voted to proceed on with the fixes, pending legal review. Recently, commissioners approved ARPA funding to add kayaks to the park, which would also be handicap accessible, to promote more recreation. The grand opening to launch the new kayaks is planned for May 18.

#2

Because of the large response to the Conquer the Cones, downtown Wheeling dining program, some additions have been made and you have a better chance to win some cold hard cash. To support local restaurants affected by the downtown construction, the program has grown. The campaign calls for people to order at least six of the 13 restaurants on the contest card to be entered to win \$1,000. The original campaign was supposed to only give one winner 1,000 for the first quarter. Now there will be six winners over the next six quarters. You can pick up a card at any of the local restaurants listed to start your chance to win.

#2

The former Cadiz Post Office building off Route 9 has been deteriorating for several years, and this week, the facility was demolished. A state Brownfield grant was applied to the demolition and site cleanup in 2023. The post office is now located at a plaza on the north side of U.S. 22 outside downtown. Now comes the look ahead with the potential for a roundabout to be built. The mayor said the Community Improvement Corporation will need to ask the Ohio Department of Transportation to do a study before plans for a roundabout would move ahead.