



## Inside this issue:

### SPORTS



Lady Pilgrims back on the court **A9-A10**

### OPINION



My view from the Pilot House **A4**

### COMMUNITY



Triton Scholars **A3**

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**PILOT NEWS GROUP PHOTO / JAMIE FLEURY**  
Della Watson of Thistle & Clove was recognized on the REES marquee early this week for her contribution of space to display and sell a selection of REES keepsake gifts. Watson said, "The REES is a childhood memory. I grew up going to the REES Theatre. You want to help the community any way you can. This was just a small part that I can play here to help them. It's a contribution to something bigger for your community." The store is located at 109 N. Michigan St. in downtown Plymouth. Store hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Project c-chairs Randy Danielson and Donna Pontius are grateful for every donation of time, money, and talent to the REES project. Monetary gifts may be made online at [www.reestheatre.com](http://www.reestheatre.com) or on the Marshall County Community Foundation website at [www.marshallcountygive.org](http://www.marshallcountygive.org) [search: The REES]. Donations may be mailed directly to: The REES Project, c/o Marshall County Community Foundation, 2680 Miller Dr., Suite 120, Plymouth, Ind., 46563. Additional information and personal tours can be arranged by calling 574-286-2391. The REES is holding the fourth and final phase of their capital campaign for A/V equipment and furnishings. The 2021 "Puttin' on the Blitz" is active now; which includes sponsorship opportunities for a limited number of individual theater seats at \$250 each; inscribed sidewalk bricks at \$500 each; with increased levels of giving up to bronze recognition stars on the south side of the building.

## Marshall County Crossroads Team Projects progress with signage

### Marquee makeover to benefit Plymouth and Marshall County

By JAMIE FLEURY  
STAFF WRITER

**PLYMOUTH** — Through the efforts of the Marshall County Crossroads Team; Ginny Bess Munroe secured grant funding for electronic signage in each city and town of Marshall County to communicate not only local events and messages for each entity; but county wide communications including local advisories and alerts.

Though the signage was initially scheduled as a Marshall County Crossroads Regional Stellar Award project; Munroe identified eligibility for funding through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) COVID Relief Grant. Marshall County was awarded \$150,000 for six LED message boards; one for each incorporated community which included Culver, Plymouth, Bourbon, Argos, Bremen and Lapaz.

This grant frees up that Regional

"In a very real sense, this is the first very visible and tangible sign of the Marshall County Crossroads Team initiatives."

- Martin "Marty" Oosterbaan

Stellar funding for another project. Marshall County Tourism also contributed \$20,000 to the project.

After reviewing public bids; the contract for installation was awarded to Graycraft Signs out of Warsaw. Installation will begin this winter through March with an anticipated completion date of March 15 for the last of six signs.

Each entity was financially responsible for any funding beyond the grant amount to have electric run to the designated site and finance any upgrades; including the sign cabinet frame.

See MARQUEE A3



PHOTO PROVIDED

## Dustin's Place receives COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant

CONTENT PROVIDED

The 23rd round of COVID-19 Rapid Response grants were awarded Jan. 14, to organizations addressing critical basic needs such as food, childcare, and housing/utility assistance for households impacted by COVID-19. United Way, in partnership with the Marshall County Community Foundation, is working with a network of businesses, educators, faith-based and disaster relief organizations, nonprofits, and volunteers to provide aid for immediate and urgent needs. Total grant awards to date are \$255,392.

Organization(s) that received 23rd round COVID-19 Rapid Response grants -

- Dustin's Place

The first round of COVID-19 Rapid Response grants from the Marshall

See GRANT A2



## Solar ordinance approved, shipping container ordinance denied

By JAMES MASTER  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The County Commissioners saw light at the end of the Solar Ordinance tunnel. During Monday's meeting, they passed Ordinance 2020-14, Solar Amendments on its third reading.

The ordinance has been a topic of discussion for over a year. On Feb. 17, 2020, the commissioners had passed three ordinances, two on all three readings and one on the first, pertaining to solar farms. One was an ordinance that provided the County Board of Zoning Appeals a better framework when considering solar projects. Another was a solar fee ordinance,

See SOLAR A3



PHOTO PROVIDED

## Pokagon Band donates to Beacon Children's Hospital

STAFF REPORT

**SOUTH BEND** - Beacon Children's Hospital is pleased to announce it received an annual contribution of \$100,000 from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi as part of the Tribe's voluntary local agreement with the City of South Bend to share revenue from its Four Winds® South Bend casino. This is the third annual contribution Beacon Children's Hospital has received from the Pokagon

Band, which will reach a total of \$500,000 over five years.

"We are humbled and honored to be one the selected organizations through The Pokagon Band's agreement with the City of South Bend. Their generosity ensures we are able to provide the best care for children in our community, close to home and near their families," said Susan King, President of Beacon Health Foundation.

See DONATION A3

## Solar, cont. from front

which was passed on all three readings during another meeting. The third ordinance that meeting was one that set up a 12-month moratorium against development of solar farm projects 10 acres or more. It was stressed that the moratorium could be rescinded early if deemed necessary by the commissioners.

Fast forward to 2021 with an ordinance concerning solar amendments. Having been passed by the County Plan Commission, it went before the Commissioners for its first reading with the second reading being passed on Jan. 4. The ordinance gives a list of requirements and guidance for commercial properties, addressed top soil and grading preservation, preferred locations, and some other items.

The commissioners ratified and approved the amendment on all three readings on Monday, Jan. 18.

After the unanimous vote was taken, County Attorney Jim Clevenger brought up the status of the moratorium. He said that while the time limit on the moratorium was 12-months, "but the intention, I think, was to have the moratorium in place until the amendments were approved." He then asked the commissioners if they'd like to end the moratorium.

Commissioner Kevin Overmyer reasoned that passing the amendments would have been enough of an indicator that the moratorium was lifted. Commissioner Mike Burroughs asked Clevenger if there should be a formal motion to that effect.

County Plan Director Ty Adley encouraged a formal motion. "There was no specification within the moratorium itself that upon passing it would be terminated at

that point."

The commissioners unanimously approved to terminate the moratorium.

Switching gears, the commissioners discussed a proposed storage container ordinance. The ordinance would prohibit shipping containers from being used as storage containers.

Overmyer stated that since it was proposed in late 2020, he's had more contact from the public regarding this and called it a "hot button" issue.

Adley summarized that the commissioners could deny the ordinance and send it back to the Planning Commission so that it could be taken back to "the drawing board." This action would allow a more in-depth look at how the Plan Commission would approve and allow those types of uses on properties.

The plan director stated that the issue has already been scheduled for the next Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, Jan. 28 at 7:30 p.m.

"At that point, once the Plan Commission makes their recommendation or affirms your recommendation, it'll come back to you for kind of finishing out," said Adley. A motion to deny and send it back to the Plan Commission was approved by an unanimous vote.

"I just want to reiterate that the commissioners did not initiate this. This was brought to this board by the Plan Commission. We did not go looking for this. When it came to this board, we kind of thought it was a bad idea. I know we had a couple comments about this, but in any way, shape, or form we did not initiate this. This was all initiated by the Plan Commission," said Overmyer.

## Food from A2

Community Foundation and the Marshall County Commissioners and Council will serve up to 400 households.

**Wednesday, Jan. 27 – Starke County**

10 a.m. – Noon, CST  
WHERE: Knox United Methodist Church, 210 S. Shield Street, Knox

Assorted food items are offered free of charge. All items are pre-boxed and pre-bagged. First come, first served, while supplies last for those in need of food assistance. Distributions are first come, first serve, and offered free of charge, while supplies last. One box per household.

Distributions are drive-thru. Please remain in your vehicle and open your trunk to receive items. An area will be available for self-loading if your trunk does not open.

## Marquee, cont. from front

The City of Plymouth designated the iconic and highly visible REES marquee for the electronic signage display for the city.

A generous donation made by Brad and Patty Serf and Art and Lisa Jacobs enabled the REES committee to retain the authentic, historic visage of the marquee while at the same time accommodating the electronic upgrade which will enable more efficient communication.

Of particular importance to the donors was that marquee volunteers will not be required to manually change the signage using a ladder. An exclusive interview with Serf and Jacobs will be featured in a later edition of the Pilot News where they share their memories of the REES and their passion for giving back to their community.

Marshall County Crossroads Director of Communications and Marketing sub-committee Martin "Marty" Oosterbaan said, "It's important to use all the channels that we can to communicate. The goal is to improve the quality of life across the county. Part of that is informing folks in each city and town what is happening across the county." The pandemic made the need for swift, broad communication even more important.

The original purpose of the signage project was to market and communicate Marshall County Crossroads regional work; shape each community and the county as regional destinations; communicate regional plans, local news and community events; cross promote each town and city to one another when appropriate; reach members of the community beyond social media efforts; create positive first impressions as visitors enter the community; promote the Regional Stellar Designation; and promote tourism and community festivals.

That original vision expanded to include additional uses relating to the pandemic including the communication of emergency declarations and stay-at-home orders; dates, times and locations of mobile food pantries; COVID-19 testing sites and other pandemic related information; promotional and marketing resources to inform and assist businesses as they navigate the restrictions and re-open safely in stages; and communicate local quarantine requirements and provide updates to any changes.

Agencies including the Marshall County Crossroad Committee, the Marshall County Economic Development Corporation, the Marshall County Community Foundation, and other approved organizations will be allowed to submit public service and community announcements to Marshall County Tourism to be displayed on the signage.

Oosterbaan stated, "Consistency in county messaging is now possible across six towns in addition to town specific messages."

The REES Theatre was selected as one of several projects for the City of Plymouth within the Marshall County Regional Stellar Plan. The REES marquee has long been the visual symbol of the historic icon in downtown Plymouth. It will not only continue to communicate messages important to Plymouth; but will now be part of a much larger regional electronic communication system that will benefit the whole county.

REES Project co-chairs, Donna Pontius and Randy Danielson echoed this collaborative effort between The REES, Plymouth, City Administration and the Marshall County Crossroads Team. "The entire REES Committee is not only excited about this advancement in



PHOTO PROVIDED

This digital rendering shows a sample of what the updated electronic marquee will look like. The REES committee has also ensured the retention of the neon lights and the appearance of the historic display through sophisticated software and advanced LED technology. That preservation was made possible by the generous donation of Brad and Patty Serf, and Art and Lisa Jacobs. An exclusive interview with Serf and Jacobs will be featured in a later edition of the Pilot News where they share their memories of the REES and their passion for giving back to their community.

the functionality of the marquee in providing more comprehensive promotion of events taking place at The REES, but also the ability to provide informational alerts from throughout Marshall County. The generosity of families like Brad and Art continue to inspire us and others in fulfilling this mission to revive a landmark of entertainment for the enjoyment of all!"

The Marshall County Crossroads Team consists of over 100 volunteers that support eight subcommittees. They formed to achieve the Regional Stellar Designation which is awarded by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA).

Initially the program was designed for individual communities; at which time Culver was named a Stellar Community in 2017. The program has since gone regional when the state recognized that rural economies have become interdependent on each other. Their first attempt in 2018 was unsuccessful; they did achieve stellar designation in 2019. Marshall County Crossroads Director of Communications and Marketing sub-committee Martin "Marty" Oosterbaan said, "These are just people who are interested in their community who are trying to make a difference."

A group of dedicated volunteers in rural Indiana set their minds and hearts on a vision to benefit the whole county; while setting goals for each community. Oosterbaan stated, "What became obvious is the power that comes with that type of teamwork." Oosterbaan noted that the designation and award will assist Marshall County in completing projects they had aspired to complete much quicker than what they could have accomplished without the funding and collaboration.



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Town  
SAVINGS

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FORD ESCAPE

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PHOTOS FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY. NEW 2020 ESCAPE SE PN-070K. INCLUDES ALL REGARDS AND INCENTIVES. NO CASH VALUE. NOT AVAILABLE WITH SOME OTHER OFFERS. RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY. SEE DEALER FOR DETAILS. MUST PURCHASE A VEHICLE OVER \$10,000 TO RECEIVE VACATION. EXPIRES 2/21/2021.

